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government of national unity: the two faces of the Italian  
Republic in the 1970s**

*Historical analysis of a failed attempt at political-social  
equilibrium*

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this thesis is to frame the changes that have taken place in Italy, first in the social context and, consequently, in the political context, in a time frame that necessarily covers the years from the post-World War II period (second half of the 1940s) to the very early 1980s, that is when the political season of "national solidarity " had finally ended and the season of terrorism and subversion could be said to have been largely eradicated.

In particular, I have chosen to look at the decade between 1968 and 1978, since -- having established the necessary historical-political premises and considered the immediate consequences -- it is the one that, in my opinion, was most traversed by traumatic changes and upheavals in the democratic process and growth of our country's history.

Below, in brief: on the one hand, the (unsuccessful) attempts of coup d'état, the so-called "strategy of tension" (aimed at destabilizing in the foundations the democratic hold - not yet firm - of our institutions), the protests born in the student world and then in the factories (in the class of workers of the large industries, beginning with FIAT in Turin), terrorism and armed struggle, the season of attacks and massacres (of extra-parliamentary matrix of the right and left); on the other, the patient and fundamental work, for the purpose of safeguarding the institutions of democracy, of the Christian Democrat leader Aldo Moro and the General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party, Enrico Berlinguer. In the background there is a complex scenario, in which I have tried to balance the analysis of our country's internal dynamics within a much broader framework at the international level, stemming from the Jalta Conference of February 1945, later crystallized into the two opposing EAST-WEST blocs, led respectively by the Soviet Union and the United States, from which Italy and, therefore, the Christian Democrats and The Communist Party, could certainly not disregard (although important attempts were made to achieve an autonomous policy and, at least in part, to disengage from obligations arising from the international scene).

Therefore, the choice of the decade 1968 - 1978 as the time frame for this thesis, derives from the foregoing and, from a more specifically academic point of view, from further reasons which I shall explain below.

First, this historical period represents a crucial chapter in Italian history and, consequently, deserves a deeper analysis. The 70s in Italy are a period characterized by

events and transformations that have left an indelible mark on Italian history and society. The project was therefore conceived with the aim of contributing to a more specific intelligibility of this period and its lasting impacts, to better understand how and why certain dynamics were developing, political, social, and economic in our country.

One of the main objectives of this historical analysis lies, moreover, certainly in the importance of learning from the mistakes of the past to avoid them being repeated in the future; in fact, it is precisely by examining the causes and consequences of political violence and conflicts, particularly of the 1970s, that we can draw important lessons for the prevention and resolution of contemporary conflicts.

Another reason why I chose this topic for my thesis is that understanding this historical-political phase necessarily requires an interdisciplinary approach. This historical period, in fact, involves elements of history, politics, sociology, psychology, law and other disciplines. Examining the topic from different perspectives can lead to a richer and more complete understanding of the factors involved and the long-term implications.

In the first chapter I decided to start talking about the so-called "anni di piombo", starting from their origins, and then getting to the most relevant periods. Armed groups, extreme left and extreme right, have perpetrated attacks, kidnappings, and murders, endangering the stability of the country. Understanding the origins and dynamics of these episodes can provide keys to understanding, for example, the challenges facing the world today in relation to international terrorism.

Moreover, this period was marked by a strong political polarization in Italy, with ideological tensions between the different political factions. This polarization had a lasting impact on Italian politics, influencing the formation of coalitions and party fragmentation. Today, in many societies, we see similar polarization phenomena affecting civic dialogue and governance. An accurate analysis of the "anni di piombo" offers us a magnifying glass through which to analyze these dynamics. After the historical analysis of these years, I thought it necessary to analyze and deepen the response of the political system to these events, with the political collaboration Moro - Berlinguer (which will lead to the so-called "historical compromise") resulting from Aldo Moro's approach to the so-called "strategy of attention".

In the second chapter, I will focus on Democrazia Cristiana. The DC was the main party in power in Italy at that time, so understanding its role becomes indispensable for an

extended understanding of the events and dynamics that took place. The DC represented a kind of "backbone" of the Italian political system during much of the postwar period, and its leadership was often seen as a bulwark against political extremism. However, the 1970s posed several extraordinary challenges to the country's political stability, straining the role of the DC. The party was involved in complex coalitions, negotiated with a range of political actors, and faced internal and external challenges. By studying the decisions, strategies and challenges faced by the DC, a more complete view of the political dynamics of that period can be gained.

After the chapter on the DC, I will try to analyze the figure of Aldo Moro, because his presence in politics and his role as a government leader are fundamental to understanding the crucial events and decisions made during that period. Aldo Moro faced several political and social challenges during his tenure as prime minister and beyond. He promoted a policy of compromise and dialogue among the different political forces of the time, trying to mediate conflicts and build bridges between different factions. This role of mediator requires in-depth analysis to fully understand its impact and historical relevance. What we will try to explore most are two important fundamental aspects of Aldo Moro, which will characterize him throughout his life.

The first is represented by his great ability to read and understand reality, in its many facets. This ability manifests itself very early on, both in legal studies and in that of political reflection. This explains why Moro was to prove in the years to follow, not only an able statesman, but also a great interpreter of politics and its growing difficulties in giving adequate answers to the questions coming from a society in continuous and rapid evolution.

The second aspect is constituted by his marked propensity to open, always, and up to the limits of what is possible, new spaces for negotiation and confrontation with all the actors involved, without preclusions. Symptomatic, in this regard, is the stubborn persuasive action that he made towards the Catholic world and the ecclesiastical hierarchy itself so that they would adhere to the constituent process and agree to become effective builders of the common house of all Italians, accepting the confrontation, on a totally secular ground, with the communists and socialists.

To these reflections, I would like to add that I am also moved by special personal and emotional reasons. My grandfather, Walter Distaso, was a student and volunteer assistant

to Aldo Moro during his teaching years at the University of Bari. A lawyer, he later followed Moro into politics, and was DC City Secretary and City Councilor in Bari when Moro was kidnapped and then killed. My father, Antonio, also a lawyer and a Member of Parliament between 2008 and 2018, was a member of the last Bicameral Commission of Inquiry into the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro (2015-2017).

## **Chapter 1 – the experience of historical compromise and national solidarity: historical reasons, models, and experimentation in governance**

The 1970s were difficult years for Italy, extremely eventful and a harbinger of great changes in society. Since those difficult years, Italian intellectuals (and others) have written extensively about both the nature and significance of the protests that erupted in Italy in the late 1960s and their degeneration into episodes of terrorism and massacres. The socio-historical analysis of the decade 1968-1978 takes its starting point from the social struggles of the "anni di piombo"<sup>1</sup> (years of lead), with an in-depth examination of the reasons and consequences. It was from the intense social ferment that politics (particularly the Italian Communist Party) drew inspiration for the strategy of "compromesso storico"<sup>2</sup> (historic compromise) in order to pursue the goal of an agreement among popular forces that would lead to mass consensus and maintain national unity.

A strategy that combined with Moro "strategia dell'attenzione"<sup>3</sup> leads, albeit briefly, to the formation of the "governo della non-sfiducia"<sup>4</sup>, which owes its name to the episode of the passing of the vote of confidence in Parliament thanks to the abstention of the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

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<sup>1</sup> For more details see: Montanelli, I. Cervi, M. (2018) *L'Italia degli anni di piombo*, Rizzoli

<sup>2</sup> For more details see: Chiarante, G. (2007) *Con Togliatti e con Berlinguer. Dal tramonto del centrismo al compromesso storico (1958-1975)*, Carocci

<sup>3</sup> Enunciated by Aldo Moro at the DC Congress on June 29, 1969, the strategy of attention arose from the need to make possible the widest dialogue with a view to a new and qualified majority. In effect, this strategy opened the door to negotiations toward the historic compromise, which was elaborated from 1973 and 1979 to form a majority government, which, legitimized by a broad mass consensus was capable of resisting any attack.

For more details see: *Ceci, M. G. (2014) Moro e il PCI. La strategia dell'attenzione e il dibattito politico italiano (1967-1969)*, Giovanni Mario Ceci.

<sup>4</sup> Parliament exercises a function of political direction towards the government primarily through the instrument of trust: in fact, before starting its activity, every government must obtain the trust of Parliament, which decides whether or not to grant it through a vote of confidence motion, based on the program communicated to the Houses.

## **1.1 The social struggles of the 1970s: “anni di piombo” and the Italian political and social situation as a domestic and international problem.**

The years of lead were years, roughly from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, of political and social violence, with the greatest number of terrorist attacks and active terrorist organizations from the far left and far right. Some numbers may help: 2712 were attacks by terrorist organizations, 324 of which caused personal injury.<sup>5</sup>

The expression "anni di piombo", with the word lead referring to bullets, comes from scene of a film by German director Margarethe von Trotta, who used it to refer to the leaden climate of West Germany.<sup>6</sup>

To understand the origins of this phenomenon, we need to go back a few years. The economic boom of the 1950s had a positive impact on Italy's growth, as evidenced by the 6.3 percent annual increase in GDP from 1958 to 1963, which helped the country overcome its postwar difficulties. Private consumption also increased: while between 1950 and 1953 average consumption stood at 10,380 billion liras per year, by 1963 it rose to 20,500 billion liras, a sign that Italians had doubled their spending in just over a decade.<sup>7</sup>

One of the main consequences of the moment of economic expansionism was the depopulation of small towns in favor of large cities, resulting in mass emigration, with many moving from the South to the North. People accustomed to living in a rural environment were thus catapulted into the big cities, with serious problems in adapting to the dominant values of profit and individualism. The country's economic transformation was bringing with it changes in various aspects of society, creating quite a few problems in the population. This context and these dynamics ended up fueling the emergence and

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<sup>5</sup> Musolino, S (2018) *Verso una memoria autocritica: ripensare i racconti e i ricordi degli anni di piombo*, Università di Roma 3.  
Available at: <https://romatrepress.uniroma3.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/06.Memoria-autocritica-e-anni-di-piombo-Musolino.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Anni di piombo* (Die bleierne Zeit) is a 1981 film directed by Margarethe von Trotta. The film won the Golden Lion for Best Film at the 38th Venice International Film Festival.

<sup>7</sup> Villa, A. (2013) *Il miracolo economico italiano*, Treccani.  
Available at: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/il-miracolo-economico-italiano\\_%28II-Contributo-italiano-alla-storia-del-Pensiero:-Tecnica%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/il-miracolo-economico-italiano_%28II-Contributo-italiano-alla-storia-del-Pensiero:-Tecnica%29/)



rise of social subjects capable of mobilizing themselves on the public stage in confrontation and conflict with dominant actors. In fact, when the ideologies, right-wing as well as left-wing, began to radicalize, all the problems associated with the intensification of modernization processes were present: the exploitation of the weakest, the assertion of the values of individualism and profit, but also the low wages of workers, the inadequacy of state services, the inadequacy of the educational system.

As early as 1959, consistent signs of a country on the move had affected the labor base, especially in the textile and mechanical industries. Between 1959 and 1962, a climate of protest had been created that largely escaped the control of the political apparatus. The events of 1962 in Turin's Piazza Statuto confirmed this: on July 8, 1962, the city's Federazione Impiegati Operai Metallurgici (FIOM) and Federazione Italiana Metalmeccanici (FIM) proclaimed a strike by all Turin metalworkers in support of the struggle against Fiat, which had begun in June <sup>8</sup>. For two days the square was the scene of an extraordinary series of clashes between protesters and police.

The protagonists were mostly workers who had migrated in 1960 to the industrial areas of the North from the South, where they had always suffered from a lack of work. As the years went by, the level of worker protest grew, with actual acts of sabotage, sudden work stoppages, as well as insults and threats that, added to the succession of strikes, raised the already substantial level of conflict. At one point it appeared impossible to contain the demands of a labor movement in perpetual mobilization.

In fact, in the fall of 1969 (September 11, 1969, is considered the starting date of this period) began the so-called "autunno caldo"<sup>9</sup> (hot autumn), a period marked by an unprecedented wave of strikes and mobilizations in the world of labor. While initially the protests involved a core of skilled workers supported by the unions, the extended mobilization phase later involved ordinary workers as well. Turin became the site of almost daily strikes beginning in September 1969, due to revolts by Fiat workers. But that is not all: in all industrialized areas of northern and central Italy, from Genoa to Milan to Terni, from Lombardy to Friuli-Venezia Giulia to Tuscany, there was a climate of continuous protests.

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<sup>8</sup> Zaru, E. *Piazza Statuto: quando lo scontro sociale interroga la politica*, Fondazione Feltrinelli. Available at: <https://fondazionefeltrinelli.it/piazza-statuto/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://archivio.fiom.cgil.it/autunno69/autunno\\_caldo.htm](http://archivio.fiom.cgil.it/autunno69/autunno_caldo.htm)

The “hot autumn” saw its epilogue between 1970 and 1972, when factory councils were established, which gave rise to a new social stratum: that of departmental delegates, whose task was to look after the interests of workers and facilitate dialogue between bosses and employees. In this way, at least in part, the power of the bosses was limited. The conditions of the work environment and the demands of the bosses in terms of hours worked, however, did not change, so much so that strikes resurfaced in 1973.<sup>10</sup>

Before moving on to talk about another very important category of protagonists of those years (the students), it is important to emphasize the intertwining of students and labor movements, because more and more young people in those years joined workers' strikes. Anti-authoritarianism and anti-fascism seemed to be the common traits of the large student and worker masses. Many believe that student '68 was the moment when the social and cultural change that had been taking place for some time acquired a dimension of collective consciousness. For others, it was the "hot autumn" workers' protests that transferred to much of the social fabric what the student protest alone would never be able to prolong.<sup>11</sup>

However, student mobilization is extremely important in reconstructing the tensions of the decade examined: young people accounted for nearly 40 percent of the actors involved in the protest demonstrations observed between 1965 and 1975<sup>12</sup>. The mobilization of university students should be fully framed within the ferments of rebellion that had agitated young people born in the 1940s since the 1950s. In those years, the international context fueled the potential for rebellion in the face of novelties from overseas, where the youth world had long been projected to challenge prewar patterns of life.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, university student protests began with the occupations of university campuses in Pisa in 1965, Trento in 1966, and Turin in 1967. At this early stage, student assemblies

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<sup>10</sup> D'Auria, F. (2019) *Cinquanta anni dall'autunno caldo. Le lotte operaie in Italia nel 1969*, Università di Padova.

Available at: <https://ilbolive.unipd.it/it/news/cinquanta-anni-dallautunno-caldo-lotte-operaie#:~:text=Nell'autunno%20caldo%20del%201969,contro%20il%20potere%20del%20padronato.>

<sup>11</sup> Colarizi, S. (2019) *Un paese in movimento*, Editori Laterza

<sup>12</sup> Pilati, K. (2018), *I sessantotto studentesco e gli altri movimenti*, Università di Trento

Available at: <https://webmagazine.unitn.it/eventi/47460/il-sessantotto-studentesco-e-gli-altri-movimenti>

<sup>13</sup> Colarizi, S. (2019) *Un paese in movimento*, Editori Laterza

helped to create a common space, and student demands were mainly concerned with issues internal to the university (e.g., demanding greater student participation in decision-making bodies, lowering fees), although there was no shortage of interventions that posed the problem in terms of the struggle between capitalism and labor, as evidenced by the so-called "Tesi della Sapienza" (Sapienza Thesis) of February 1967.<sup>14</sup>

In February 1967, at a national meeting of Italian university chancellors at Scuola Normale in Pisa, student associations organized a protest initiative by occupying Palazzo della Sapienza, home of University of Pisa. The student condition and the social role of students were discussed at length. The arguments raised were developed into a programmatic statement, Sapienza Thesis, a document that, starting from a harsh critique of the Italian academic system, offered indications on how to orient and organize the protest.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, starting in 1967, university life came to a standstill, and it was inevitable that the protest would go beyond the walls of the universities and spill out into the squares where clashes with the police became fiercer. This happened in Rome in March 1968, where the so-called battle of Valle Giulia marked a quantum leap in the protest of students who opposed police charges with stones and sticks.<sup>16</sup>

1969, as I have already mentioned, like 1968 was a year of major events: between January 3 and December 12 there were as many as 145 bombings, about one every three days<sup>17</sup>. The most striking episode of 1969 occurred on December 12 in Milan: a bomb exploded inside Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura in Piazza Fontana, killing 16 people and injuring 88. A second unexploded bomb was found in Piazza della Scala, headquarters of the Banca Commerciale Italiana, while three other bombs were found in Rome between Banca Nazionale del Lavoro and Altare della Patria<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Tolomelli, M. (2009) *Luce sul Sessantotto, Storicamente*  
Available at: <https://storicamente.org/sites/default/images/articles/media/1106/sessantotto-tolomelli.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Adorni, M. (2020) *1° marzo 1968: la «battaglia di valle giulia», Il Mulino*  
Available at: <https://www.rivistailmulino.it/a/1-marzo-1968>

<sup>17</sup> Barbieri, D. (2019) *Vi ricordate di piazza Fontana? Fu «strage di Stato», La bottega del barbieri*  
Available at: <https://www.labottegadelbarbieri.org/vi-ricordate-di-piazza-fontana-fu-strage-di-stato/>

<sup>18</sup> (2019) *Strage di Piazza Fontana, Rete degli archivi per non dimenticare.*  
Available at: <https://www.memoria.san.beniculturali.it/>

From that year to 1980 there were several attacks in Italy aimed at carrying out massacres among the civilian population, such as in Piazza della Loggia in Brescia and on the Italicus train<sup>19</sup>. It was in this context that, starting in 1969, several individuals gave birth to so-called red terrorism<sup>20</sup>, a type of armed subversion linked to far-left political ideologies: Gruppi di Azione Patriottica (GAP), Gruppo XXII Ottobre and Red Brigades<sup>21</sup> were three of the most prominent.<sup>22</sup>

Let's take a step back to frame the phenomenon historically. After 1969, left-wing extremist groups accused the PCI of becoming part of the system, of betraying the working class and not wanting to implement the communist revolution: groups such as Potere Operaio and Lotta Continua appeared in factories, organizing, and gathering support. Red Brigades distinguished themselves by the vindictiveness of their attacks: neo-fascists' cars were set on fire and industrial leaders were beaten or kidnapped. The goal was to demonstrate the necessity of the armed struggle: they were ready to put down anything that did not openly espouse the communist faith<sup>23</sup>. The official act of the birth of Red Brigades was issued by Sinistra Proletaria in October 1970 through the propaganda document "foglio di lotta" (struggle sheet). In the first phase, the organization engaged in demonstrative actions inside some factories, culminating in the brief kidnapping of Idalgo Macchiarini, an engineer at Sit-Siemens. In 1974, after the kidnapping of Judge Mario Sossi, the militarist escalation began.<sup>24</sup>

However, there was not only red terrorism on the scene, but also black terrorism inspired by a totalitarian and authoritarian fascist regime. This terrorism is related to all the neo-

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<sup>19</sup> Deaglio, E. (2023) *La strage del treno Italicus, Maremosso*  
Available at: <https://maremosso.lafeltrinelli.it/news/strage-treno-italicus-attentato>

<sup>20</sup> For more details see: Oliva, G (2019) *Anni di piombo e di tritolo. 1969-1980. Il terrorismo nero e il terrorismo rosso da piazza Fontana alla strage di Bologna*. Mondadori.

<sup>21</sup> For more details see: Fasanella, G. Franceschini, A. (2021) *Che cosa sono le BR*.

<sup>22</sup> For more details see: Benadusi, M. (2016) *Terrorismo rosso. La sinistra eversiva nell'Italia repubblicana, Tra le righe libri*.

<sup>23</sup> Bianconi, G. (2021) *La rivoluzione che non c'era: il terrorismo degli Anni di piombo*, Focus.  
Available at: <https://www.focus.it/cultura/storia/terrorismo-rosso-anni-di-piombo>

<sup>24</sup> (2020) *Brigate Rosse, Treccani, Dizionario di Storia*.  
Available at: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/brigate-rosse\\_%28Dizionario-di-Storia%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/brigate-rosse_%28Dizionario-di-Storia%29/)

fascist groups that were formed from the second half of the 1950s in the extra-parliamentary right. On April 25, 1969, a bomb exploded at a Fiat booth near Milan. The bombing caused no deaths but six people were seriously injured. Also in 1969, a second unexploded bomb was found at Milan Central Station on 9 August and, the same day, several bombs exploded on eight trains in different parts of Italy, injuring 12 people <sup>25</sup>. Although at first it was thought that anarchists were responsible, a few years later, careful investigations identified the perpetrators as two neo-fascists belonging to the organization Ordine nuovo, an extreme right-wing, nazi-fascist-inspired political grouping that was founded as a study center but had a covered armed structure that was recognized in historical and judicial circles as responsible for serious attacks and violent acts <sup>26</sup>. According to many, both the bomb that exploded in the headquarters of Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura in Piazza Fontana in December 1969 and the bomb found unexploded in Banca Commerciale Italiana in Milan can be attributed to neo-fascists. The 1970s witnessed a further radicalization of all right-wing extremist movements: these were years marked by bombings and massacres, many of them by the organizations Ordine Nuovo and Avanguardia Nazionale first and Ordine Nero later (an extreme right-wing terrorist group, created after the outlawing of Ordine nuovo in 1973). After the prospect of an alliance between the Christian Democrats and the PCI began to circulate, to avert a possible shift to the left of the Italian political system, neo-fascist revolutionaries quickly realized that it was necessary to fight with terror, with revolutionary warfare, and intensified the attacks.

In the Italian context, both extremisms rebelled against the lack of firmness in their respective political alignments. Their criticisms converged on the political and economic set-up of the post-war period, challenging the dominance of the Christian Democrats, adherence to the alliance with the United States, bourgeois elites and the capitalist system. Both extremist factions on the left and right had a deep contempt for pragmatic reformists, moderates, and any form of democratic government.

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<sup>25</sup> (2019) Speech by President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Piazza Fontana massacre, Milan.

<sup>26</sup> (2019) *Ordine nuovo, Rete degli archivi per non dimenticare*. Available at: <https://www.memoria.san.beniculturali.it/organizzazioni/-/organization/detail/be3c59cc-71ff-4f64-a3e2-912d9595e559%233195faf8-6a92-4755-9e92-cf193d3d095c/Ordine+nuovo>

The years of leadership in Italy have emerged as a decade of deep ferment and tension. With the latent violence unleashed in terrorist acts, kidnappings and murders, the country lived in a constant state of uncertainty. This phase, characterized by a growing ideological and political polarization, had an indelible imprint in the collective history of Italy, placed in the wake of memories shared by the trauma of the two world wars.

## **1.2 From the Unidad Popular government of S. Allende to the historic compromise of Berlinguer and Aldo Moro: the strategy of an agreement among popular forces for a mass consensus to keep the country united.**

In the second half of the 1960s, as extensively described in the first paragraph, a series of strong anxieties manifested themselves in all their force and, the groups in question (students, workers), had very particular relations with the main party of reference in that political area, the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The relations were marked by a continuous "meet-contrast"<sup>27</sup>: students and workers were extremely critical of the traditional political structures, which they considered incapable of guaranteeing the effective and complete participation of the masses in the radical renewal of Italian society, which they saw as necessary and irreducible. Moreover, the PCI was accused of moving away from revolutionary ideology, pursuing a reformist type of practice, aimed at the complete legitimization of the party within the Italian political-institutional system.<sup>28</sup>

Within the PCI, a timely debate was sparked about the posture the party should take toward the protesters, and several different positions were taken by some of the PCI's most prominent leaders. The most sensitive to the questions posed by the protesters were the youth of Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana (FGCI), who felt the need for

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<sup>27</sup> Perrone, R. (2020) *Il pci e i movimenti di contestazione: un rapporto di incontro-scontro (1968-69)*, Policlic.

Available at: <https://www.policlic.it/il-pci-e-i-movimenti-di-contestazione-un-rapporto-di-incontro-scontro-1968-69/>

<sup>28</sup>Hobel, A. (2017) *Pci e movimento studentesco (1967-68): un incontro mancato? Istituto Storico Resistenza*.

Available at: <https://www.istitutostoricoresistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Hobel-Pci-e-movimento-studentesco.pdf>

"new bodies of democracy"<sup>29</sup> that went beyond the simple party organization. In fact, FGCI Secretary Claudio Petruccioli modeled the structure of the party's youth federation on the basis of movement organization.

Much more cautious about the attitude to be taken were exponents such as Giorgio Napolitano and Giorgio Amendola. The latter, in an article that appeared in *Rinascita*, on June 7, 1968,<sup>30</sup> rejected the revolutionary initiative thesis. Amendola's position thus implied the rejection of any kind of extremist approach, in favor of a political strategy that would gradually lead to the achievement of tangible results.

The thought of Luigi Longo, Palmiro Togliatti's successor at the head of the PCI, was between these two different positions because of the position of Secretary he held in those years, which required him to make a synthesis between the currents present in the party; he intended to bring the demands of the protesters back within the framework of respect for the democratic rules that characterized the Italian political system.

After Luigi Longo, Enrico Berlinguer became Secretary of the PCI, but to understand Enrico Berlinguer's importance in the national and international political landscape, it is necessary to take a step back<sup>31</sup>.

After World War II, the Italian Communist Party actively participated in the rebirth of the country and the drafting of the Constitution. At the same time, the relationship with the Soviet Union remained strong<sup>32</sup>. On March 6, 1953, *L'Unità*, the party's press organ, broke the news of Stalin's death. On the same day, Palmiro Togliatti gave a speech in the Chamber of Deputies in which he called Stalin "a giant of thought and a giant of action."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Perrone, R. (2020) *Il pci e i movimenti di contestazione: un rapporto di incontro-scontro (1968-69)*, *Policlic*.

Available at: <https://www.policlic.it/il-pci-e-i-movimenti-di-contestazione-un-rapporto-di-incontro-scontro-1968-69/>

<sup>30</sup> Amendola, G (1968) *Necessità della lotta su due fronti*, *Rinascita*

<sup>31</sup> Perrone, R. (2020) *Il pci e i movimenti di contestazione: un rapporto di incontro-scontro (1968-69)*, *Policlic*.

Available at: <https://www.policlic.it/il-pci-e-i-movimenti-di-contestazione-un-rapporto-di-incontro-scontro-1968-69/>

<sup>32</sup> For more details see: Rossi, E. A. Zaslavsky, V. (2018) *Togliatti e Stalin. Il PCI e la politica estera staliniana negli archivi di Mosca*, *Il Mulino*

<sup>33</sup> Togliatti, P. (1953) *Commemorazione di Giuseppe Stalin, Camera dei Deputati*.

Available at:

[http://files.spazioweb.it/aruba27963/file/palmiro\\_togliatti\\_commemorazione\\_di\\_giuseppe\\_stalin\\_6\\_marzo\\_1953.pdf](http://files.spazioweb.it/aruba27963/file/palmiro_togliatti_commemorazione_di_giuseppe_stalin_6_marzo_1953.pdf)

Toward the end of the 1960s, something began to change. Berlinguer began a path toward democracy, gradually becoming a party independent of the Soviet Union, and this was even before he was elected General Secretary in March 1972.

In fact, from some discreet CIA documents, Berlinguer is cited among the politicians most critical of Soviet operations, and confirmation comes with the speech he gave in June 1969 in Moscow at the International Conference of Communist Parties, speaking after Leoníd Il'íc Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and, in fact, head of the USSR, from 1964 to 1982. On that occasion Berlinguer said that there could be no single model of socialist society and that the very substance of Marxism provided for historically determined and unrepeatable realities.<sup>34</sup>

Elected party Secretary in 1972, Berlinguer then began to work more seriously on his project. In an article published in October 1973, in the aftermath of the military coup in Chile that had overthrown Allende's government, Berlinguer wrote: *"The gravity of the country's problems, the ever-looming threats of reactionary adventures and the need to finally open to the nation a sure path of economic development, social renewal and democratic progress, make it ever more urgent and mature to reach what can be called the new great 'historic compromise' between the forces that gather and represent the great majority of the Italian people"*<sup>35</sup>.

On September 4, 1970, socialist Salvador Allende<sup>36</sup>, candidate of Unidad Popular, garnered a relative majority of support in the presidential election. Having failed to obtain an absolute majority, the vote was sent back to Congress, which in similar situations would ratify the investiture of the candidate most voted for by the people.<sup>37</sup> Allende's election would lead to the formation of a leftist government that included the Communist

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<sup>34</sup> Madonia, M. (2022), *Berlinguer in Italia ha rivoluzionato il comunismo, non inchinandosi all'Urss e preferendo la Nato*, *The Vision*.  
Available at: <https://thevision.com/cultura/berlinguer-nato/>

<sup>35</sup> Berlinguer, E. (1973) *Riflessioni sull'Italia dopo i fatti del Cile*, *Rinascita*.  
Available at: <https://enricoberlinguer.org/home/enrico-berlinguer/documenti-politici/5-riflessioni-sull-italia-dopo-i-fatti-del-cile.html>

<sup>36</sup> For more details see: Martinez, J. M. (2019) *Salvador Allende: L'uomo, il politico*, *Castelvecchi*.

<sup>37</sup> For more details see: Verdugo, P. (2003) *Salvador Allende. Anatomia di un complotto organizzato dalla Cia*, *Baldini Castoldi Dalai editore*



and Socialist parties, raising international concerns and interference and opposition from the far right.<sup>38</sup>

The Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), for its part, was in a difficult situation. Its candidate, Rodomiro Tomic, represented the party's progressive current and had entered the elections with a reform program very similar to that of the left, while, in order to democratically prevent Allende's election, he would have had to support Jorge Alessandri, the right-wing candidate. An agreement between Allende and the Christian Democrats, which sanctioned the adoption of the Estatuto de garantías democráticas, an amendment to the Constitution under which the future executive would be bound to respect certain basic democratic principles, such as freedom of expression and the maintenance of free elections, gave the Socialist candidate the support of the majority of Congress, which ratified his election on October 24 with 153 votes in his favor, 35 for Alessandri and 7 abstentions.<sup>39</sup> The formation, by democratic means, of a government that avowedly aspired to achieve socialism was an event of historic significance that would attract international interest.

In the eyes of the PCI, the victory of Unidad Popular was greeted as proof of the validity of that path of unified research on the left that already involved, at the Italian level, not only communists and socialists, but also large sectors of the Catholic world.

While interest, debate and, often, controversy about the "Chilean way" were lively throughout the duration of the Unidad Popular government, it was only after September 11, 1973, when a coup d'état led by General Augusto Pinochet<sup>40</sup> overthrew the democratically elected government led by President Allende, that Chilean events seriously conditioned the Italian political context.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For more details see: Allende, S.. (2023) *La via cilena al socialismo, Scritti e interventi di un presidente democratico Mimesis*

<sup>39</sup> Morra, M. (2022) *Le Brigate Rosse di fronte al golpe cileno, Open Edition Journals*. Available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/grm/3392>

<sup>40</sup> On September 11, 1973, the military led by Augusto Pinochet decided to seize power in a coup by directly attacking the Presidential Palace. Allende, from inside the Palace, spoke over the radio to Chileans to condemn the military's action and shortly afterward, according to versions later circulated by the military dictatorship, committed suicide.

<sup>41</sup> In Italy, the executive led by Christian Democrat Mariano Rumor had to reckon with tough resistance from Socialists and Communists, who were clamoring for the interruption of diplomatic relations. Within the DC there were divergent positions: on the one hand, the dutiful official condemnation of the coup; on the other hand, the concern not to weaken the Chilean Christian Democracy, guilty of having

The Chilean coup was meant to convince the PCI leadership that, in the condition of the division of the world into two spheres of influence, it was not possible to come to power even by winning general elections. This reinforced the thesis of the need for convergence among the country's popular forces, which translated into seeking an understanding with the Socialist and Christian Democrat components in order to isolate the reactionary groups and avert the danger of a Chilean-type situation.<sup>42</sup>

Berlinguer therefore discarded a leftist alternative for the leadership of the country and proposed a "democratic alternative" that is, a collaboration of popular forces of communist and socialist inspiration with popular forces of Catholic inspiration.

But Berlinguer's proposal of the historic compromise was not enthusiastically received in the PCI: at the party leadership, its president, Luigi Longo, expressed discomfort (*"I don't like the expression 'compromise'"*<sup>43</sup>) and, especially in the working-class base, there was resistance and concern.

To make his proposal plausible, both domestically and internationally, Berlinguer had to distance himself from the USSR. In 1975, he declared that the watchword "get Italy out of NATO"<sup>44</sup> was outdated, because unilateral exits by individual countries from the Atlantic Pact or the Warsaw Pact would disrupt the process of international détente. In the same year Berlinguer removed from the party secretariat the leader most closely linked to the USSR, Armando Cossutta; also 1975 was the year of the joint Berlinguer-

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advocated the coup solution. All other political forces represented in Parliament censured the coup without hesitation, with the exception of the MSI.

In the debate on the Chilean events held on September 26 in the Chamber of Deputies, Foreign Minister Aldo Moro blamed the violation of the principles of democracy and the use of violence as an instrument of political struggle. But there was no break with Pinochet's Chile. Moro chose a "wait-and-see" line that left the door open to Italy for any future development. The Italian government's wait-and-see attitude would soon lead, however, to de facto non-recognition of the military junta, and officially bilateral relations remained frozen until democracy returned.

Available at: <https://fondazionefeltrinelli.it/le-mostre-digitali/mostra-cile/cile-pannello-5/>

<sup>42</sup> Morra, M. (2022) *Le Brigate Rosse di fronte al golpe cileno*, *Open Edition Journals*.

Available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/grm/3392>

<sup>43</sup> Gorresio, V. (1976) *Berlinguer, Feltrinelli*.

Available at: <https://www.lafeltrinelli.it/berlinguer-libri-vintage-vittorio-gorresio/e/2562863035431>

<sup>44</sup> Pagliaro, P. (2023) *Quando Berlinguer scelse la Nato*, *9colonne*.

Available at: <https://www.9colonne.it/355791/quando-berlinguer-br-scelse-la-nato>

Carrillo declaration<sup>45</sup> on building socialism in Western Europe by democratic means. Berlinguer proposed the formula of Eurocommunism, an alliance of European communist parties (particularly Italian, French, and Spanish) to have greater autonomy from the Soviet Union.<sup>46</sup>

On February 26, 1976, speaking in Moscow at the 25th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, Berlinguer declared "*We strive for a socialist society that is the highest moment in the development of all democratic achievements and that guarantees respect for all individual and collective freedoms, religious freedoms, and freedom of culture, art, and science. We believe that a socialist society can and must (...) be built in Italy with the contribution of different political forces, organizations, and parties, and that the working class can and must affirm its historical function in a pluralist and democratic system.*"<sup>47</sup>

### **1.3. The short life of the "non-sfiducia" executive: the 591 days of the 33rd government**

By the mid-1970s, Italy's economic situation was steadily deteriorating. By 1975, inflation was at 11 percent and showed no signs of abating. Because of the devaluation, banks began to issue so-called "mini-checks", a kind of paper money substitute for change that lasted several months<sup>48</sup>. The economy, after the oil crisis<sup>49</sup> that had affected the entire West, was in a terrible situation: in 1975 the Gross Domestic Product had fallen by 2.1 percent.

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<sup>45</sup> On July 11, 1975, in Livorno, Berlinguer and PCE Secretary Carrillo made a joint statement on building socialism in Western Europe by following democratic ways. For more details see: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41057609>

<sup>46</sup> Bedeschi, G. (2022) *La Nato di Berlinguer, uno schiaffo a Mosca, Il Foglio*. Available at: <https://www.ilfoglio.it/politica/2022/05/21/news/la-nato-di-berlinguer-uno-schiaffo-a-mosca-4021953/>

<sup>47</sup> Berlinguer, E. (1976) *Lottiamo per la costruzione di una società socialista nella libertà, nella democrazia e nella pace, dall'intervento al XXV Congresso del PCUS*. Available at: [https://www.enricoberlinguer.it/enrico/le-idee/lo-strappo-con-mosca/socialismolibertademocraziapace/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1692542787.4995360374450683593750](https://www.enricoberlinguer.it/enrico/le-idee/lo-strappo-con-mosca/socialismolibertademocraziapace/?doing_wp_cron=1692542787.4995360374450683593750)

<sup>48</sup> Marsili, M. (2011) *Italia Svegliati! La più grande truffa del secolo, Termidoro Edizioni*.

<sup>49</sup> <https://urbrick.com/materiale/le-crisi-petroliere-degli-anni-settanta/>

It was in this context that 1976 opened with a political crisis: Prime Minister Aldo Moro had shown, in the government he had led since November 1974, that he favored an opening toward the Italian Communist Party (PCI), led by Enrico Berlinguer. The Socialist Party, which supported Moro, strongly disagreed with this line, and finally decided to withdraw its support from the government, which resigned on January 7, 1976. A month later, the Christian Democrats formed a new government, and the Prime Minister was again Aldo Moro. In those days, however, the Christian Democrats also had to deal with two scandals: the first in January, when reports emerged in American newspapers of alleged U.S. financing of prominent Christian Democrat figures such as Giulio Andreotti and Donat Cattin; the second was the "Lockheed scandal"<sup>50</sup> in which some Italian politicians were accused of receiving bribes for the purchase of some military transport planes. The case came to involve President of the Republic Giovanni Leone and former Prime Minister Mariano Rumor: under mounting pressure, Moro went up to the Quirinal Palace on April 30 to resign, and the President of the Republic dissolved the Chambers early.<sup>51</sup>

In this political landscape, the PCI was on the rise: in the local and regional elections of June 15-16, 1975, the PCI had achieved an excellent result with 33 percent of the vote, only three percentage points behind the Christian Democrats. The PCI governed five regions (Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Piedmont, and Liguria) and the top five Italian cities (Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin and Genoa). In total, adding to the Communist Party's votes those of the Italian Socialist Party (12 percent) and some far-left parties, the Italian center-left approached 47 percent of the vote.<sup>52</sup>

The lack of enthusiasm for the Christian Democrats, paralyzed by scandals and internal divisions, was summed up by the famous journalist Indro Montanelli, then editor of the newspaper *Il Giornale*, who, taking up a phrase by Gaetano Salvemini before the 1948

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www.orizzontipolitici.it/lockheed-il-caso-che-fece-dimettere-il-presidente-della-repubblica/>

<sup>51</sup> For more details see: <https://www.governo.it/it/i-governi-dal-1943-ad-oggi/vi-legislatura-25-maggio-1972-1-maggio-1976/governo-moro-v/3193>

<sup>52</sup> Romeo, I. (2023) *Il risultato storico del Partito Comunista, Collettiva*. Available at: <https://www.collettiva.it/copertine/culture/2023/06/21/news/elezioni-1976-pci-berlinguer-3160351/>

elections, wrote the slogan that later became very famous in Italian political history: "Let's turn our noses up and vote DC."<sup>53</sup>

During that same period, however, there was a growing presence of terrorism. To give an idea of the climate of those months, between December 1975 and January 1976 four Carabinieri barracks, two in Milan and two in Genoa, were attacked with bombs and machine guns, amid a whole series of kidnappings and injuries that appeared in the news on an almost weekly basis. Alongside the terrorist acts, directed against industrial executives, policemen and magistrates, there were also frequent violent clashes between demonstrators and police forces and between right-wing and left-wing extremists.

Then, on May 27, 1976, the trial of the so-called "historical core"<sup>54</sup> of Red Brigades had begun in Turin, with several historical leaders, including Renato Curcio of Red Brigades, as defendants.

Despite this, and a series of arrests in the early months of that year, Red Brigades managed to carry out an action that had great resonance in public opinion: on June 8, 1976, only twelve days before the elections, the Attorney General of Genoa Court of Appeals, Francesco Coco, was killed along with his escort. Coco's killing was claimed by Red Brigades in a communiqué read in Turin courtroom by jailed leaders during a hearing in the trial.<sup>55</sup>

It is in this tense and complicated atmosphere that the parliamentary elections of 20 June 1976 are held. The count gave the PCI the highest result ever in the general election, with 34.4%: 12.6 million votes and 228 deputies. However, the overtaking did not happen, because the Christian Democrats got 38.7% and about a million and a half more votes<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Mieli, P. (2022) *Le elezioni del 1976: la carta del sorpasso del PCI, «gli italiani che si turarono il naso» e l'apparizione di Andreotti*, *Corriere della sera*  
Available at: <https://video.corriere.it/politica/storia-elezioni-italia-paolo-mieli-100-secondi/elezioni-1976-carta-sorpasso-pci-gli-italiani-che-si-turarono-naso-l-apparizione-andreotti/1e46be60-39b3-11ed-88d4-6f9687a3379e>

<sup>54</sup> For more details see: Ravelli, F. *Torino 1978: il processo al nucleo storico delle BR*, *Gazzetta dello Sport*.

<sup>55</sup> (2008) *Per le vittime del terrorismo nell'Italia repubblicana*, *Presidenza della Repubblica*.  
Available at: [https://presidenti.quirinale.it/ExPdrAPI/api/11/static/pdf/Vittime\\_Terrorismo\\_2EDR&C-201304.pdf](https://presidenti.quirinale.it/ExPdrAPI/api/11/static/pdf/Vittime_Terrorismo_2EDR&C-201304.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Romeo, I. (2023) *Il risultato storico del Partito Comunista*, *Collettiva*.  
Available at: <https://www.collettiva.it/copertine/culture/2023/06/21/news/elezioni-1976-pci-berlinguer-3160351/>

Despite the difficulties and internal divisions, the DC managed to recover many of the votes it had lost in 1975, while also taking away support from minor center parties such as the Republicans and Liberals. The third party in those elections was the Italian Socialist Party, which stopped at 9.6%: the result was seen as a defeat and led to the replacement of Secretary Francesco De Martino with the leader of a minority current, the then 42-year-old Bettino Craxi. In the end, the left bloc (PCI, PSI, and some minor parties) had obtained about 45% of the votes, more or less the same as the center block (DC, Republicans, Social Democrats, and Liberals). Without a clear parliamentary majority - at the time it was a pure proportional system - the question arose of how to form a government. The central question was whether communists could participate in government without internal and international consequences. The US State Department had said in March that, with the Communists in government, relations between the United States and Italy would change a lot.<sup>57</sup> Gianni Agnelli, then powerful and influential head of FIAT and Confindustria, had clarified that in his opinion the Christian Democrats should not come to terms with the PCI, which on its part had to voluntarily give up government positions in order not to cause paralysis.<sup>58</sup>

The PCI did not enter the government, but in the political negotiations that followed, open to all parties except the Italian Social Movement (MSI), it was decided to divide the highest institutional offices of the state among the various parties according to their electoral weight, with the participation of the PCI: the Christian Democrat Amintore Fanfani became President of the Senate, the Communist Pietro Ingrao President of the Chamber of Deputies (first member of the PCI in the history of the Chamber of Deputies). It was the first time this mediation took place, which continued in the following years (Pietro Ingrao was succeeded by Nilde Iotti, the first woman president of the Chamber of Deputies).

The government was ultimately a one-party Christian Democrat government, led for the third time by Giulio Andreotti. On the day of the government's oath, 10 August 1976,

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<sup>57</sup> Ciulia, A. (2020) *L'amministrazione Carter e la "questione comunista" in Italia: elaborazione e azione politica, 1976-1978*  
Available at: <https://journals.francoangeli.it/index.php/icoa/article/view/10245/680>

<sup>58</sup> (2013) *Il governo della "non sfiducia" nel 1976, Il Post*.  
Available at: <https://www.ilpost.it/2013/04/10/il-governo-della-non-sfiducia-nel-1976/>

Berlinguer told Parliament that the PCI had decided to abstain because it had put the good of the country before questions of political opportunity. Because of this abstention, the government, which lasted until February 1978, will go down in history as "governo della non-sfiducia". This formula was used by Andreotti himself, who said to the Chamber of Deputies: *"I therefore proposed to the Head of State the appointment of ministers who are with me today to obtain the confidence or at least the non-sfiducia of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies"*.<sup>59</sup>

Confidence in the Andreotti III government was in fact voted by 258 deputies out of 630, with 44 no and 328 abstentions; in the Senate there were 137 out of 315, with 17 no and 161 abstentions.<sup>60</sup> For a year and a half, therefore, the Andreotti government negotiated all the main measures with the PCI, in a continuous work of mediation that saw Giulio Andreotti on one side and Enrico Berlinguer on the other <sup>61</sup>. And after months of subtle balancing acts, at the end of 1977 the government had major problems. It is from the strong institutionalization of the PCI that the foundations for the government crisis are laid. During a meeting of the party leadership, Secretary Berlinguer called for the formation of an emergency government to cope with the growing difficulties of the country and involving all parties of the constitutional arch. The crisis did not open in time that the Communist appeal was met by the PSI, PSDI and PRI, all in favor of the composition that the emergency government should have.

On 31 December, during a press conference, Prime Minister Andreotti declared that the Christian Democrats could not accept direct and official participation in the government without first returning to the polls.

Andreotti resigned on 16 January to be reappointed by the President of the Republic four days later. Giovanni Leone, in fact, moved cautiously, trying first to resolve the friction through negotiations for the formation of a new executive. Although in the premises of the crisis there was apparently no possible solution, it arrived just a week after the beginning of Andreotti's exploratory mandate, but from the opposite side. Berlinguer, in fact, in his speech to the central committee of the PCI, dismissed the request for a

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid

<sup>60</sup>Ibid

<sup>61</sup>Ibid

government of emergency with a mixed composition, opening up to Communist participation in the majority that would support the new government, always one-color Christian Democrat.<sup>62</sup>

The substantial difference between the pre-crisis situation and the communist proposal is a direct support, a full and official confidence of the PCI, leaving behind the lack of confidence of abstention that characterized Andreotti III. Moro was decisive in February and March 1978 when the attention of the public moved from the interparty negotiations on the program of the new Andreotti government to the debate within the DC between the factions in favor or against the entry of the PCI in the majority. Moro managed to calm the waters by passing the solution of a single-party Christian Democrat executive supported by the PCI, PSI, PRI and PSDI (the liberals, opposed to the project, went to the opposition). On 11 March 1978 the Andreotti IV was formed: five days later, on 16 March, Red Brigades kidnapped Aldo Moro and killed his escort, a few hours before the presentation of the new government to Parliament <sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> S Ghidini Ottonelli di Cadignano (2021), *Storia della crisi di governo: l'evoluzione del gioco dei partiti*, LUISS.  
Available at: [http://tesi.luiss.it/31467/1/641362\\_GHIDINI%20OTTONELLI%20DI%20CA.pdf](http://tesi.luiss.it/31467/1/641362_GHIDINI%20OTTONELLI%20DI%20CA.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> Ibid



## **Chapter 2 – Democrazia Cristiana and the governments of the 1970s: protagonists, goals, limits, and failure of a project**

In the late 1960s, the DC began to encounter many difficulties in preserving the consensus and legitimacy present from Christian-inspired associations, groups, and movements.

One of the most important issues at the center of the political debate is that of divorce, which will also create a rift in the traditional relationship with secular governing parties.

On May 12 and 13, 1974, the first abrogative referendum was held in Italy. The referendum, sponsored by Amintore Fanfani's DC, aimed to repeal the divorce law that came into effect in December 1970. 33,023,179 voters went to the polls, and 19,138,300 voters (59.26 percent) voted against repealing the law. There were 13,157,558 votes in favor (40.74 percent).<sup>64</sup> Fanfani had seen in the referendum on divorce the instrument to recompose a Catholic bloc around the party to restore to the DC that centrality that the party seemed to have lost, but his project failed. The June 15, 1975, regional elections created a climate of defeat within the DC, leading to Fanfani's downfall. The new party leadership entrusted to Benigno Zaccagnini the phase of renewal or refoundation. This project became very difficult, however, as the need for a return to the party's tradition and historical roots clashed with the need to maintain hegemony in the national political scene and thus garner votes.

The difficult emergency that the country was experiencing on the economic level and the recurrence of terrorist attacks on democratic institutions were the contextual conditions in which the figure of Aldo Moro re-emerged, which favored an alliance with the PCI and the formation of a government of national unity, with the aim of ferrying the country toward a "third phase," which was supposed to mark the overcoming of the old balances of the Italian political system. Moro's tragic death and international hostilities contributed to the sinking of this ambitious renewal plan.

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<sup>64</sup> Bisconti, D. (2022) *12 maggio 1974: storia divorzio e referendum abrogativo*, *Vivi centro*  
Available at: <https://vivicentro.it/ultime-notizie/accadde-oggi-12-maggio-1974-storia-divorzio-e-referendum-abrogativo/>

## **2.1. Moro's strategy of attention and the dialogue for the formation of a new government majority: the internal actors of the change project.**

On April 28, 1967, the study conference "I cattolici italiani nei tempi nuovi della cristianità"<sup>65</sup> opened in Lucca. This conference represented a moment of historical and political reflection and arose from the need to give a response on a political and cultural level to the civil and religious ferments that were running through Italian society in those years. It was a group of Catholic intellectuals, in a brief but incisive document, who asked the DC to rediscover its tarnished ideals. The letter that follows, written by Vittore Branca, Sergio Cotta, Gabriele De Rosa, Cornelio Fabro and Vittorino Veronese, emphasizes how *"the problem of alliances, of the necessary political consistency of parliamentary balances, risks overshadowing the problems of fidelity to the mother idea, of the ethical and civil responsibility of the party, of its fundamental ideological choice. It was necessary, in the face of the ideologies of society, to reaffirm the validity and continuity of a political and cultural heritage accumulated not for sect and consortiums, but to serve the country with love of justice and thirst for truth."* The document calls for a political renewal and *"a comprehensive and unprejudiced reexamination of the commitment of the parties that have responsibility for the public life of the country"*.<sup>66</sup>

The DC responded to the document by promoting the Lucca conference, which was attended by the most representative personalities of Catholic culture and the party. Mariano Rumor, Secretary of the DC, drew in his speech the lines for a revival of the cultural roots that are rooted in the history of Italian democratic Catholicism. According to him, in the face of the ferments running through society, there was a need to give a response, an effort of commitment to give political outlet to this yearning for renewed authenticity. This search for adaptation to social ferments led Rumor to indicate, the need

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<sup>65</sup> For more details, see Rossini, G. (1967) "I cattolici italiani nei tempi nuovi della cristianità " Edizioni Cinque lune

<sup>66</sup> Branca, V. Cotta, S. De Rosa, G. Fabro, C. Veronese, V. (1967) *Ai cattolici che operano nella politica e nella cultura*, *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*.

Available at:

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42735077.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ad25a2d6e1799a13e0a7118e1e0fde0f8&ab\\_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42735077.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ad25a2d6e1799a13e0a7118e1e0fde0f8&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1)

for a lightening of the state, for a demolition of the old trappings of what he called the "bureaucratic centralization of the state" which, in his view, "*blocks development and stands not only as an obstacle but also as a powerful multiplier of the tensions that emerge from time to time in civil society*".<sup>67</sup>

Rumor himself, speaking on November 23, 1967 at the Milan congress of the DC, expressed his fears for the fate of Italian democracy. In his speech he warned against the creeping polemic against parties and the party system, the result of the disappointed impatience of those who do not grasp the necessarily gradual and long pace of renewal.<sup>68</sup> These indications reflected a difficult situation, a situation that tested the DC's ability to still put itself forward as an expression of the political unity of Catholics, to gain consensus and to achieve a strong relationship with associations, groups, and movements of Christian inspiration. On this basis, the phenomenon of collateralism<sup>69</sup> had developed, through which the DC had enjoyed a broad consensus in various and diverse sectors of Catholic associationism from 1945 until the mid-1960s; by the end of that decade, however, started the gradual disconnection and in many cases the rupture of these traditional ties that held together the vast and articulated archipelago of Italian Catholicism.

In August 1968, at the annual convention in Vallombrosa, the total enfranchisement of the ACLI (Italian Christian Workers Associations) from all ties with the parties was sanctioned. In the new context, it was inevitable that Azione Cattolica<sup>70</sup>, too, would have to somehow rethink its role and ways of intervening in Italian society.

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<sup>67</sup> Malgeri, F. Paggi, L. (2003) *L'Italia Repubblicana nella crisi degli anni settanta. Partiti e organizzazioni di massa*, Rubettino Editore.

<sup>68</sup> Rumor, M. (1967) *La relazione del Segretario politico, X congresso nazionale della D.C.*  
Available at: <http://www.dellarepubblica.it/congressi-dc/x-congresso-milano-23-26-novembre-1967>

<sup>69</sup> Support and flanking work carried out by movements and bodies that are not overtly political in favor of a party, as a form of indirect political participation.  
For more details see: Massaccesi, S (2023) *La Dc non è stata solo un partito di leader ma anche molto organizzato. Con quadri dirigenti su tutto il territorio. E con il sostegno del collateralismo*, Bee magazine

<sup>70</sup> Azione Cattolica is an association of lay people made up of boys, young people, and adults. Founded by Catholic Action in 1969 to enhance the role of the youngest in the Church, ACR is a path that aims to introduce boys to a personal encounter with Jesus by making a living and concrete experience of the Christian community.

After a long and controversial period of preparation, the new statute of Azione Cattolica was approved by Pope Paul VI on October 10, 1969. The new statute renewed the character and way of being of Azione Cattolica not only within the ecclesial reality, but also in its relationship with Italian society. That choice marked the end of political collateralism, of direct involvement and participation in the fate of the party of Christian inspiration.

Problems, however, also arose within the party itself. It should not be forgotten that, in the months between 1967 and 1968, there was even a temptation in a historic group in the DC to break away from the party as the Social Left, which had its roots in the tradition of trade union Catholicism. As Carlo Donat-Cattin himself later recalled, he himself had made it clear that within five years the split and the birth of a new Christian-inspired party would mature. This temptation was curbed by Moro's speech to the National Council in November 1968, when the Apulian statesman grasped and interpreted the irreversible movements that were affecting Italian society and the school in those months.

The problem of relations with the Church and the waning of a privileged relationship with the Catholic world had already emerged clearly within the party in the period leading up to the 1968 election campaign, when Arnaldo Forlani, during the January 10, 1968 National Executive, had stressed the need to work to re-establish contact with the Church and the clergy.

However, the party, concerned about governability, difficult relations with other components of the government and the need not to alter internal balances, did not always seem to grasp in its true dimension the scope and effects of these changes. Perhaps Aldo Moro alone appeared to be able to make a careful and penetrating analysis of Italian society in those years, of youth restlessness, of the women's movement, of the emergence in the country of a climate of contestation and protest. Moro was among the few who lucidly interpreted the new social reality and the ferment that was crossing the country, which also challenged truths and ancient values.

On November 21, 1968, he had called on the DC's National Councilors not to abdicate, no matter how great the difficulties. He pointed out to the DC the road to a renewed presence and a new way of dealing with a world that was changing and to which it was necessary to give a signal of presence and attention: "*After all, it is a new humanity that wants to make itself, it is the irresistible motion of history [... ] And refinement of every*

*person, in every social condition, from school to work, in every place in our country, in every distant and unknown region of the world; it is the emergence of a law of solidarity, of equality, of respect far more serious than has ever appeared in the course of history*".<sup>71</sup> Moro became aware of civil society's claim to autonomy and grasped the increasingly irritating and hostile character that power was taking on in the eyes of public opinion. Hence the invitation to his party, *"If we still want to be there, well we must be for the things that are born, even if they have uncertain outlines, and not for the things that die, even if they are conspicuous and apparently very useful. Unfortunately, I would not say that this is our experience today."*<sup>72</sup>

A few months later, in January 1969, Moro again, in a speech that also aimed to recompose the front of the Christian Democrat left, manifested the need, emerging from the party's base, to *"finally open the windows of this castle in which we are entrenched, to let in the wind that blows in life, around us"*.<sup>73</sup>

The fractures experienced by the DC, in this crucial period between the late 1960s and early 1970s, did not only concern relations with Catholic-inspired circles, groups and associations. The traditional relationship with the secular governing parties also suffered a fracture, when faced with an issue such as the divorce law<sup>74</sup>, which also came to affect the delicate balance of relations between parties, the Vatican and Catholic circles. An issue that had an initial effect on the Rumor government, when, in the summer of 1970, the Prime Minister was informed, through a letter from the ambassador to the Holy See, Gianfranco Pompei, of the position taken by the Holy See with respect to the divorce law, which was by then in advanced discussion in Parliament.

The document reported on a conversation between Pompei and Monsignor Giovanni Benelli, who had informed the Italian ambassador of the Holy Father's considerable irritation, who judged the divorce law to be a profound offense to a fundamental moral norm of the Christian conception of life.

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<sup>71</sup> Moro, A. (1968) *Discorso al Consiglio nazionale della Democrazia cristiana*.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Malgeri, F. Paggi, L. (2003) *L'Italia Repubblicana nella crisi degli anni settanta. Partiti e organizzazioni di massa*, Rubettino Editore.

<sup>74</sup> For more details see: Scirè, G. (2007) *Il divorzio in Italia. Partiti, Chiesa, società civile dalla legge al referendum (1965-1974)* Mondadori Brun.

Faced with this situation, Catholics, both clergy and faithful, were obliged - according to the Pope's pen - to take a sharply contrasting stance toward their representatives.

Rumor, who had to reckon with his government allies and the secular parties, socialists, social democrats, republicans, and liberals, who maintained an intransigent position with respect to the divorce issue, had no choice but to resign.<sup>75</sup>

The DC operated on the level of parliamentary debate, trying to bring the weight of its orientations to the discussion, accepting the outcome with bitterness<sup>76</sup>, but in the conviction that it had performed an act of sacrifice and wisdom because of its responsibility toward the country.

The outcome of the parliamentary debate famously paved the way for the referendum, which was promoted by a group of Catholic leaders. The initiative, as is well known, divided the Catholic world and contributed in no small measure to fueling the various forms of dissent, accentuating that growing detachment between the realities of the Catholic world and the Christian Democrats, which, under Fanfani's impetus, officially committed itself to the referendum battle, even though, within it, there were different gradations in commitment and judgment on the issue under discussion.

There had been no shortage of calls for caution toward Fanfani from many of his party colleagues, and the risk of putting the DC's credibility on the line and accentuating the isolation that had already emerged during the period of parliamentary discussion of the law was evident. Fanfani saw in the referendum the instrument to recompose a Catholic bloc around the party in the defense of common values and to restore to the DC that centrality and political weight it seemed to have lost.

One of the most lucid analyses of this delicate moment in the life of the party is contained in the so-called memoir written by Moro in Red Brigades prison. According to Moro, Fanfani had accepted the opportunity of the referendum as a "good political opportunity," a chance to assimilate votes of various.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid

<sup>76</sup> December 1, 1970, during the Colombo government, through Law No. 898 of December 1, 1970 - "Disciplina dei casi di scioglimento del matrimonio"

<sup>77</sup> Malgeri, F. Paggi, L. (2003) *L'Italia Repubblicana nella crisi degli anni settanta. Partiti e organizzazioni di massa*, Rubettino Editore.

Indeed, the outcome of the referendum appeared to be the logical result of the economic, social, and customary changes that had taken place since the 1950s. It was utopian to believe that a society now based on the consumerist models of the great capitalist-industrial societies of the West could be refractory to the process of secularization. A part of the Catholic world and the Christian Democrats themselves did not realize that the changes that had taken place in the country over the past two decades could not fail to influence and break pre-existing patterns.

At the government level, the immediate effects of the referendum were the resignation of the Rumor government on June 10. Despite the resignation, on June 13, 1974, the President of the Republic, Giovanni Leone, faced with the seriousness of the economic situation and the recognized need for the adoption of initiatives to facilitate economic recovery, did not accept the government's resignation and invited it, to want to make every effort to achieve an agreement. The Head of State did not ask for a parliamentary confrontation, however, on June 27 Rumor reported to the Houses of Parliament on the crisis, obtaining the renewal of confidence.<sup>78</sup>

On the electoral level, the effects manifested in the regional elections in Sardinia, which marked a 6.3 percent loss of support for the DC. But it was above all the regional elections of June 15, 1975, that created a climate of defeat within the DC that went far beyond the decline that saw it fall from 37.9 to 35.3 percent. It was especially the advance of the PCI (which rose from 27.9 to 33.4 percent) that worried the Christian Democrat leadership.<sup>79</sup> The fact that the Communist Party was now behind them, ready to overtake, determined a sense of frustration in the party that resulted in an indictment of Fanfani's Secretariat, judged to be most responsible for the opponents' success. Fanfani's defense was firm and confident and, speaking to the party leadership on June 19, he sharply identified the factors of defeat as *"cultural changes and the consequent crisis of traditionally accepted peoples; novelties within Christianity and the repercussions on the customs of the teeth; persistent local conflicts in the world and the simultaneous progress of international*

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<sup>78</sup> (2022), *Crisi governo, no a dimissioni Draghi e rinvio a Camere: scelta Mattarella, precedenti*, *Enti Locali online*.

Available at: <https://www.entilocali-online.it/crisi-governo-no-a-dimissioni-draghi-e-rinvio-a-camere-scelta-mattarella-precedenti/>

<sup>79</sup> Malgeri, F. Paggi, L. (2003) *L'Italia Repubblicana nella crisi degli anni settanta. Partiti e organizzazioni di massa*, Rubettino Editore.

*détente; residential, professional, structural and customary changes within the Italian population*"<sup>80</sup> and in a whole series of other changes that had touched the economic, cultural and social life of the country.

The debate that followed the Fanfani report highlighted the traumatic effect the election result had had on the party. Andreotti asserted that the DC had never found itself "*in such a dramatic situation as it is now*".<sup>81</sup> Piccoli called the situation "*not only dramatic, but also consolidated,*" saying that the traditional sources from which the party drew had disappeared.<sup>82</sup>

The indictment of Fanfani's leadership prepared and served as a launching pad for the solution that matured in the National Council of July 1975, with Fanfani's dismissal and the subsequent election of Zaccagnini as General Secretary, under the able direction of Aldo Moro.

It was then Moro again, in the mid-1970s, when the country's social crisis and the crisis of Christian Democracy became more acute, who took his party by the hand and guided it toward that new political project he called the "third phase"<sup>83</sup>. A project he tried to lead by reasoning and reasoning, with the patience to measure steps, with attention to the delicate relationship between institutions, society and political parties, with the ability to read the signs of his time.

Zaccagnini's secretariat opened a new phase in the history of the DC, the so-called renewal or refoundation phase. A phase of waiting that mobilized above all the party's liveliest energies and that manifested itself in new forms at the 13th Congress (March 1976), during which Zaccagnini called for a radical process of change, which should have stimulated in leaders and militants the need to rediscover politics as a service and not only as an exercise of power.

The expectation of renewal and refoundation also seemed not to exclude other hypotheses, which emerged on the Catholic left front with the idea of a second party or

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> Stasi, D. (2018) *Aldo Moro. Cattolicesimo politico e "terza fase"*, *Studi nuovo meridionalismo*. Available at: <http://nuovomeridionalismostudi.altervista.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NMS-7-5-Stasi.pdf>



with new political expressions of Christian inspiration not unrelated to the debate that developed from 1975 onward. Political and cultural men, such as Piero Bassetti, Ermanno Corrieri, Pietro Scoppola, Luigi Pedrazzi, Piero Pratesi and others, did not fail to question what to do. It was a debate that spanned the years from 1975 to 1978 and, after Moro's assassination, had a further revival in the early 1980s.

However, the only certainty was that DC had undergone substantial changes in its appearance. In the first place, it was definitively sanctioned the decline of collateralism and the detachment of many circles and men who mainly reflected the ideal instances closer to social tradition than those who expressed the thought of democratic Catholicism. The DC was losing its electorate and was gaining support that did not belong to its traditional social base, an expression of an electorate that reflected moderate and conservative public opinion.

The 1976 elections <sup>84</sup> were emblematic in this sense: after the referendum on divorce and after the regional elections of 15 June 1975, there was a sort of referendum on the Christian Democratic regime. It was on the occasion of these elections that Umberto Agnelli was nominated in Rome, causing the harsh reaction of Donat Cattin, who prevented his candidacy in Turin. The electoral violence of the DC was exerted to a large extent in this operation, which aimed to deceive the productive sectors and the business classes, also of secular tradition, by subtracting the consensus of the right forces and the parties of the secular center. In this way, liberals, and social democrats, came out of the vote with broken bones. This is what Roberto Ruffilli called "*the logic of the catch-all party, trying to channel in its favor a consensus of less and less matrix based on class, exploiting the possibilities offered by consumerism and the welfare state, was put into action*". <sup>85</sup> This logic was largely a reflection of the fear of overtaking, particularly present before the 1976 elections, and led to the creation of the conditions for the emergence of a kind of bipolarity between the DC and the PCI.

In this context, Zaccagnini project of refoundation and renewal of the party became very complex and difficult, since the need for a return to the tradition and historical roots, to

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<sup>84</sup> For more details see: Ligorio, P (2023) *1976, la svolta*, PAV Edizioni.

<sup>85</sup> Di Filippo, G. (2016) *Il compromesso storico: 1976-1978 Analisi storica, politica e giornalistica sulle pagine de «L'Espresso» e di «Panorama»*, Luiss.  
Available at: [https://tesi.luiss.it/17569/1/073492\\_DI%20FILIPPO\\_GIULIA.pdf](https://tesi.luiss.it/17569/1/073492_DI%20FILIPPO_GIULIA.pdf)

the saints of the founding fathers, clashed with the need to maintain the field on the electoral level.<sup>86</sup>

The difficult reality of these years cannot be considered in all its gravity if one ignores the weight of the terrorist emergency and the problems of public order that shook the life of the country. These were difficult and burdensome years for Christian Democracy, which became the greatest victim of savage ferocity, with the thread of terrorist attacks and actions that struck the men and the properties of the party.

Going back a moment, the 1976 elections, which highlighted a contrast in two blocks, did not offer a clear alternative solution but opened the way to a consociative solution, which led for the first time in July 1976, the partial involvement of the PCI in the government majority with the "non sfiducia" in the third Andreotti government and, in March 1978, the support brought to the government "national solidarity", always led by Andreotti, under the auspices of Aldo Moro. It is in fact to Moro the arduous work of sewing and persuasion, aimed at bringing his united party towards this step, considered necessary to manage the difficult emergency that the country was experiencing economically and in the face of the terrorist attack against democratic institutions. The "third phase", theorized by Moro already in 1975, indicated the need for change and the overcoming of the political and institutional system, to create a democracy of alternation. This project was the vision of the need to overcome a political system that no longer allowed an orderly development of democratic life.

Moro turned to the political forces that had built the new republican state and the traditional government leagues to manage the emergency and crisis of democratic order. He said in his last political speech, speaking on 28 February 1978 to the Christian Democratic parliamentary groups " *If you tell me at some time what will happen? I reply that there may be something new. If it were possible to say jump this time and go directly to this tomorrow, I think it could be accepted. But, dear friends, it is not possible. Today we must live, today it is our responsibility. It is a question of being courageous and confident of living the time that has been given to us, with all its difficulties. What is*

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<sup>86</sup> Malgeri, F. Paggi, L. (2003) *L'Italia Repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta. Partiti e organizzazioni di massa*, Rubettino Editore.

*important is to refine the soul, to better delineate the physiognomy, to enrich the ideal patrimony of the Christian Democracy."*<sup>87</sup>

His invitation to parliamentarians - largely reluctant to accept a cross-party political collaboration that seemed to contradict party history - took on the meaning of a political testament. He turned to his party in the belief that only a unified choice would allow him to overcome the difficult emergency. Unfortunately, he did not have time to clarify his indications.

In Moro's last public lines there is, in essence, an intuition, a first drawing, even if not yet clear and defined: only with the competition and the solidarity of all the democratic forces that had built the Republic could corrections be made to a system that had to adapt to the tumultuous changes that had crossed Italian society between the 60s and 70s. The rapid conclusion of the governments of national solidarity will lead instead to the crystallization of the old political system, with the immobilization of power relations in a sort of block pivoting on the DC-PSI axis, without alternatives and with the objective, almost exclusively to privilege the interests of men and groups.

## **2.2. The limits of the historical compromise in relation to the international scenario; US and USSR concerns.**

Also perceived retrospectively as a periodizing date in the history of the Republic, the death of Aldo Moro identifies the crisis of that "special democracy"<sup>88</sup> attempted in Italy. For a better understanding of this historical moment a deeper reflection on the compatibility of the international system and its interaction with the national political system is necessary. The strict conditioning exercised by the Cold War system in Italy even during the 1970s is a fact now accepted by historiography. But the meaning of this conditioning divides historians. Today, Italian political events of those years are often described exclusively as an attempt to pursue an autonomous national policy that was too uncomfortable for both superpowers and therefore ruthlessly stifled by them.

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<sup>87</sup> Moro, A. (1978) *Il governo di solidarietà nazionale: intervento, gruppi parlamentari del partito (DC)*. Available at: <https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/318554/il-governo-di-solidarieta-nazionale-intervento-di-aldo-moro-ai-gruppi-parlamentari-del>

<sup>88</sup> For more details see: Moro, A. (1999) *La democrazia incompiuta*, *Corriere della Sera*

The external constraint directly exercised by the United States on Italy was a decisive element <sup>89</sup>. Indeed, at the time of its launch, "national solidarity" received less than benevolent international reception. At a summit of the five most industrialized countries held in Puerto Rico at the end of July 1976, a position was expressed against the entry of the communists into the Italian government, made known by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. This position already reflected not only the American point of view, but that of the major European governments, including the Social Democratic government in Germany. A few months later, Jimmy Carter's victory in the US presidential election seemed to herald a relaxation of Western hostility to the project. But a different scenario had yet to be built. Faced with this hostile situation at the international level, the main actors continued to follow the same strategies that had led to national solidarity. Aldo Moro became even more the spokesman for a line that aimed at mutual recognition between the main national political forces and the gradual consolidation of the foundations of a common vision of the international position of the country, with the aim of involving the communists in institutional responsibility. Enrico Berlinguer called for the defense of national sovereignty as a shield of the "historical compromise", continuing the path of Eurocommunist innovation, with the aim of forming a coalition government inspired by the precept of anti-fascist unity.

Moro and Berlinguer's strategies were largely different, but central to both was the idea of détente as a process of political change. For both Italian leaders, national legitimization (mutual recognition between political forces) was a priority over international legitimization (the search for understanding or tolerance with respect to the evolution of the Italian political system) which was much more difficult and uncertain to achieve under the given conditions. <sup>90</sup>

It was only between October and December 1977 that the "national solidarity majority" expressed in Parliament a joint document on Italian foreign policy<sup>91</sup>, particularly on the

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<sup>89</sup> For more details see: (2008) *Uno sguardo americano su Aldo Moro. Gli anni Settanta nell'archivio Robert Katz*, Polistampa

<sup>90</sup> Pons, S. (2008) *I limiti internazionali della «solidarietà nazionale»*, Il Mulino  
Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24653153>

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<https://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1977%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf>

country's link with the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance, to form the basis of a shared international vision. The PCI participated in the vote and considered it the prologue to overcoming the formula of external support and its full entry into the government. The parliamentary vote on that occasion represents, historically and politically, the moment of maximum cohesion of the parties of national solidarity on foreign policy and the last genuine attempt to consolidate the political system according to the pattern of national unity.

Berlinguer put everything on Eurocommunism<sup>92</sup>, which had undoubtedly ensured the PCI a growing national credibility and a serious international attention until then. In early 1977, the creeping Soviet hostility and the abandonment of a prejudicially negative attitude on the American side seemed to create an evolving scenario. But the limits of that strategy were also obvious. Eurocommunism could create empathy in Western public opinion, but no meaningful understanding or alliance: the relationship with social democracies remained vague and fragile.

The reaction of the great powers to the development of 'national solidarity' has been as harsh as it has been predictable. The Soviet Union publicly supported the demands of the Italian communists, but in confidence began to attack their orientations in both domestic and international politics. Berlinguer avoided the conflict, believing that a break with Moscow would hurt far more than the persistence of old ties.

In the United States, however, initially the Carter presidency seemed to be one of the American administrations most open to communism, so much so that it took very different positions with respect to the Nixon administration regarding the Eurocommunist policy. In fact, the Carter administration not only granted visas to members of the Italian Communist Party but created on the territory of the peninsula a real network of relations with some representatives of the PCI.<sup>93</sup> At one point there was a change of view, especially about the relationship with the Soviet Union (since Carter eventually decided to follow Brzezinski's policy) and thus also changed the attitude of the PCI, just when the party

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<sup>92</sup> For more details, see Raito, L. (2013) *Enrico Berlinguer e il sogno eurocomunista*, Fondazione L'Arca; Carrillo, S. (1977) *L'eurocomunismo e lo stato*, Editori Riuniti

<sup>93</sup> Wall, I. (2006) *L'amministrazione Carter e l'eurocomunismo*, Il Mulino.  
Available at: <https://www.rivisteweb.it/doi/10.1412/22097>

would have the chance to hold an important position in the government.<sup>94</sup> The PCI had deluded itself into thinking that it was blessed for the first time by an American president, but after the explicit statement made by the president on January 12, 1978, the PCI was denied "American support"<sup>95</sup>. The statement was disappointing for those who had hoped for more possibility: *"Government experts have repeatedly expressed such views on the question of the participation of communists in Western European governments. Our position is clear: we are not in favor of such participation, and we would like to see the Communist influence in the countries of Western Europe diminish. As we have said in the past, we believe that the best way to achieve these goals is through the efforts of democratic parties to meet the popular aspirations of an efficient, fair, and open government to social demands"*.<sup>96</sup>

The reasons that led to the end of national solidarity governments lie in the complex systems of Italian national democracy; however, important influence can also be attributed to external events such as the Cold War. The period of national solidarity was to represent an attempt to go further, but this could be compatible with the not yet mature international framework. No preconditions for civil and political life had been created.

### **2.3. The interruption of the process of change: the failure of a project**

When Moro was kidnapped on 16 March 1978, an attempt was made to keep together, in governmental collaboration, the two main forces that had fought each other since the foundation of the Republic: The Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party. The kidnapping of Moro is an opportunity to make Berlinguer understand that it is necessary to guarantee external support to the government<sup>97</sup>. The nation is in danger and the unity of the parties is the only effective response. On this occasion it is the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> Magliocco, M, (1981). *Stati Uniti e Pci 1943-1980, Roma-Bari, Laterza*

<sup>97</sup> Caruso, E. (2003) *Ricordo di Andreotti. I governi di solidarietà nazionale*, "ImpresaOggi.com"  
Available at: <http://www.impresaoggi.com/it2/618-ricordo-di-andreotti-i-governi-di-solidarieta-nazionale/>

Communists who identify themselves as a responsible government force, willing to abdicate its own interests instead of the superior state ones. Thus the government of national solidarity is launched as a response to those brigatists who on the other hand want to obstruct the project cultivated by the two large mass parties <sup>98</sup>. The alliance of government reinforced by the terrorist crisis generates the approval of a package of exceptional laws on public order while the party of negotiations makes its way (identification in those years of the PSI) who instead seeks compromise with the brigades to save Moro.

The government of national solidarity desired by Moro followed his conception of the political method: many small steps cover a great distance. While stressing the urgency of the times, Moro himself had shown he was in no hurry. In his last speech to the parliamentary groups, on 28 February 1978, he said that his imagination did not extend beyond twelve months and that the formation of a majority that included the PCI was the maximum-minimum on which he felt he could be satisfied for the moment.

On May 9, 1978, with the discovery of Moro's lifeless body killed by his kidnappers, the Communist Party found itself isolated, responsible for having enacted unpopular laws for public and economic order and put the corner from the right and center pushing for early elections and from the PSI, engaged in a work of renewal with the new leader Bettino Craxi.

This is the background to Berlinguer's speech at the meeting of the parties with Prime Minister Andreotti on 26 January 1979, with which the communist leader expresses the reasons that prevent the PCI from remaining in the majority that supports the government. The first of these was the unfaithful attitude of the Christian Democrats, who had pointed out the communists as the ideological and political leaders of violence and terrorism.

The rupture of the government of solidarity comes with a declaration of distrust in Parliament, at the hands of the PCI, as a result of which the executive of Andreotti resigns on 31 January 1979.<sup>99</sup>

A long and complex period of institutional political crisis begins, which in March 1979 seems to find a solution at the hands of Andreotti with the formation of a government

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<sup>98</sup> Colarizi, S. (1994) *Storia dei partiti nell'Italia repubblicana*, Laterza

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

composed of Christian Democrats, Republicans and Social Democrats which, however, not achieving a majority inevitably leads to early elections.

The vote of 3 and 4 June marks the defeat of the PCI because of the disappointment of young people, middle classes and disadvantaged social strata too disappointed by the governments of '76 and '78.<sup>100</sup>

After Moro's death, the Christian Democrats quickly returned to their usual tactics, declining their duty to govern on the basis of the concrete possibilities offered by the situation. Without the Andreotti government, it was Francesco Cossiga who took over the leadership of a new executive. A little over a year after the tragedy, the DC men were demonstrating that they had metabolized the poisons and were plunging into state affairs. Only Zaccagnini distinguished himself for a detachment made manifest when, on the eve of the first congress after the death of Moro, the same Zaccagnini announced that he would no longer appear as Secretary.

The break with the PCI by the DC at the 14th national congress of the Christian Democrats in 1980 marked an irreparable rupture. Its hallmark was the so-called 'preamble', a small page written by Donat Cattin and signed by Donat Cattin, Piccoli, Fanfani and Prandini, whose key phrase was as follows: "*The congress, while noting the evolution so far achieved by the PCI, Notes that the conflicting positions still existing on the problems mentioned do not allow the Christian Democratic Party to share management responsibility with this party*". The text evoked the '*spirit of national solidarity*' but limited its scope "to the equal dignity of the political forces that intend to collaborate".<sup>101</sup>

From that moment, the entire political framework was oriented towards the search for the conditions for the widest possible governmental collaboration, provided that the communists were excluded. The latter, for their part, had no other way out than to re-establish the option for the left alternative, to be managed with an PSI that, in the meantime, with Bettino Craxi was tightening ties with the DC.

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<sup>100</sup> Colombo, E. M. (2015) *Elezioni presidenziali/7. Pertini o del 'partito della fermezza' (1978)* Available at: <https://www.quotidiano.net/blog/colombo/elezioni-presidenziali7-pertini-o-del-partito-della-fermezza-1978-123.107>

<sup>101</sup> [https://www.fondazione-donatcattin.it/?page\\_id=8991](https://www.fondazione-donatcattin.it/?page_id=8991)



If therefore the seventies had only one strategy, the one proposed by Aldo Moro, the eighties opened with a look at the First Republic, now practically dead with the murder of Moro: it was opted for an old centrist formula, but no longer characterized by a single dominant party, as had been until then the DC. The novelty was proposed by Bettino Craxi, Secretary of the PSI: the socialists aimed to break the mechanisms that prevented the system to renew itself and create new balances between the parties.

### Chapter 3 – Aldo Moro's politics in the DC and his contribution to the growth of the democratic system

Constituent father, prime minister, several times minister and historic leader of the Christian Democrats, Aldo Moro has been outspoken since the fall of Fascism when, with the end of the war, the Italian masses entered politics with wide participation, voting and discussing politics with passion.<sup>102</sup> Inevitably, when we talk about Aldo Moro, we risk crushing the narrative of his life on those dramatic 55 days in 1978, those that Moro spent as a prisoner of Red Brigades and that led to his death. But the human and political story of Aldo Moro cannot be exhausted in the account of his tragic ending.<sup>103</sup>

Of Apulian descent, Aldo Moro was born in 1916 in Maglie, a town in Puglia. Moro's path, who graduated at only 22 years old with a degree in law from the university of Bari, seemed marked from his university days: he had good dialectical skills, a gift particularly suited for a public role. In fact, he joined the Federazione Universitaria Cattolica Italiana (FUCI) at a very young age, on the recommendation of Giovanni Battista Montini, the future pontiff under the name of Pope Paul VI (to whom he would also write during the kidnapping), and very soon became its national president in 1939.<sup>104</sup> To understand the historical moment in which he took his first steps in politics<sup>105</sup>, suffice it to say that in 1938, when he became a Doctor of Law, the party he later joined did not yet exist. He later participated in the first clandestine meetings in 1942 - at the height of the fascist regime – which later led to the founding of the DC (March 19, 1943).<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Lecis, L. (2020) *L'eredità politica di Aldo Moro, Storia digitlae UniCA*.  
Available at: <https://storia.dh.unica.it/2020/05/09/leredita-politica-di-aldo-moro/>

<sup>103</sup> Abate, C. (2023) *Aldo Moro, il presidente del dialogo: 45 anni dopo quel 9 maggio che cambiò la storia, il Riformista*  
Available at: <https://www.ilriformista.it/aldo-moro-il-presidente-del-dialogo-45-anni-dopo-quel-9-maggio-che-cambio-la-storia-369285/>

<sup>104</sup> (2020) *Biografia di Aldo Moro, Istituto De Gasperi Bologna*  
Available at: [http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470\\_04062020a2.pdf](http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470_04062020a2.pdf)

<sup>105</sup> For more details, see: Saita, F. (2008) *Aldo Moro politico: dalla Costituente a via Caetani, sviluppo e crisi del pensiero di uno statista, Reality book*.

<sup>106</sup> (2023) *Il rapimento di Aldo Moro, uomo del compromesso, Focus.it*  
Available at: <https://www.focus.it/cultura/storia/aldo-moro-uomo-del-compromesso>

### 3.1. The State and Institutions

To understand Moro's political approach, his experience at the Constituent Assembly is fundamental<sup>107</sup>; it is there, in fact, that the reflections and elaborations made by the statesman in the preceding years, both as a university professor and as an active exponent of Catholic movements, come to maturity<sup>108</sup>. With the support of church circles, he was a candidate in the June 2, 1946, elections for the Constituent Assembly in the Bari-Foggia constituency. There the DC emerged as the leading party electing 7 deputies; Moro was the second of the elected<sup>109</sup>. A member of the executive of the parliamentary group (of which he became vice-president in 1947), Moro joined the Commission for the Constitution (also known as the Commission of 75), then the first subcommittee, on rights and duties<sup>110</sup>. In each of his reflections during the work of the Constituent Assembly, Moro understood that he was about to embark on the long journey necessary to restore the norms protecting the rule of law by adapting them to the needs of a post-fascist democracy in which the autonomous development of individual and social rights was to be guaranteed.<sup>111</sup>

For Moro, the chances of success of a shared elaboration of the Republican Constitution rested above all on the ability of the anti-fascist parties in integrating the masses on democratic perspectives and methods. Moro, with other young scholars and professionals, participated in that cultural enterprise in which democracy understood in its essence as an inalienable achievement of modern civilization was embraced; as was to be expected, in

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<sup>107</sup> For more details, see: Loiodice, A. Pisicchio, *Moro e la Costituente, Principi e libertà, Edizioni scientifiche italiane*.

<sup>108</sup> Falduto, F. (2018) *Stato e società nel pensiero di Aldo Moro*, Luiss. Available at: [https://tesi.luiss.it/21720/1/076782\\_FALDUTO\\_FLAVIA\\_Stato%20e%20Societ%C3%A0%20nel%20pensiero%20di%20Aldo%20Moro%20.pdf](https://tesi.luiss.it/21720/1/076782_FALDUTO_FLAVIA_Stato%20e%20Societ%C3%A0%20nel%20pensiero%20di%20Aldo%20Moro%20.pdf)

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.aldomoro.eu/mostra/?stanza=7>

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.aldomoro.eu/mostra/?stanza=7>

<sup>111</sup> Antonetti, N. (2018) *Aldo Moro: politica e diritto. Premesse alla Costituente*, *Rivista dialoghi*. Available at: <https://rivistadiologhi.it/articolo/22016/aldo-moro-politica-e-diritto-premesse-alla-costituente>

that context the redefinition of the legal role and unitary principle to be attributed to the new democratic state became preeminent.

In addition to the debates of the Constituent Assembly, this redefinition had matured in Catholic intellectual circles already with the elaboration and, later, the publication, between July 1943 and the spring of 1945, of *Principi di un ordinamento sociale cristiano*,<sup>112</sup> better known later as the *Codice di Camaldoli*.<sup>113</sup>

Chapter I of il *Codice di Camaldoli* was devoted to the solution of this issue. That chapter circumscribed the state's task to the guarantee of rights (both individual and communal), while reviving the idea of the preeminent subsidiary function of public institutions and powers in the conduct of social and economic processes. Having fixed the limits of legal action and urged forms of control of public authority by citizens and parties, Chapter I concluded by fearing the danger of a new tyranny: of that tyranny which in a democracy is nothing but politics overpowering law.<sup>114</sup> These issues were destined to emerge starkly during the work of the Constituent Assembly.

Moro argued, in his book *Appunti sull'esperienza giuridica, lo Stato. 1946-1947*, that the individual is the protagonist of a historical and ethical journey that makes him or her a person capable of combining the willingness to relate to others with the ability to give legal organization to society: that is, to build a State at the service of individuals and the community. This transition from individual individuality to the state can take place because the latter is an area of social experience that, without assimilating with other social formations, is capable of "realizing the universal ideal of justice".<sup>115</sup>

Moro warned in his writings that a democratic system is such if it favors the dynamism and processuality of rights, starting with the fundamental rights of freedom, regulating

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<sup>112</sup> For more details see: (2016) *Per la comunità cristiana. Principi dell'ordinamento sociale*, Editrice Studium Roma.

<sup>113</sup>

In July 1943, a group of Catholic professionals and intellectuals met in the Camaldoli monastery to gather common ideas for the rebirth of Italy. The document elaborated later, published in 1945, on the eve of the country's Liberation, characterized the drafting of our Constitution and the reforms proposed by Alcide De Gasperi.

<sup>114</sup> Antonetti, N. (2018) *Aldo Moro: politica e diritto. Premesse alla Costituente*, Rivista dialoghi. Available at: <https://rivistadiologhi.it/articolo/22016/aldo-moro-politica-e-diritto-premesse-alla-costituente>

<sup>115</sup> Moro, A. (1978) *Appunti sull'esperienza giuridica. Lo Stato (1946-1947)*, Cacucci, Bari.

them on the basis of shared norms. It is no coincidence that in the plenary session of the Constituent Assembly, Moro affirmed that the Constitution had to establish conditions of development for rights, without crystallizing social dynamics, without entrusting it with the task of structuring society itself in its various expressions.<sup>116</sup>

Moro also spoke of the significance, both political and legal, that would assume the institutional choice between monarchy and republic to which an audience of voters was called, which, with the right to vote granted to women, had never been so large in the history of Italy: with that choice not only the form of the state but also the form of government was going to be established.<sup>117</sup> It was precisely on the structure of the new democratic system that Moro expressed his opposition to any monistic arrangement of powers and did not make silent his distrust of the exclusive functions of political direction that were being assumed by the parties, to which a function of integration and representation of the plurality of interests present in the country should be reserved, together with the other social and territorial organizations.

Aldo Moro, at the Constituent Assembly explained that, unlike the Albertine Statute, the State does not grant rights, but recognizes them and that rights are of the person and not of the citizen, because the person comes before the State<sup>118</sup>. In his March 13, 1947, speech to the Constituent Assembly, Moro stressed the need for a *"non-ideological Constitution that would make possible a free action, not only of the various political forces, but also of all the ideological movements that lie in the background of the political forces themselves. We want to achieve through the new Italian Constitution an effective instrument of democratic coexistence by building the new state we determine a formula of coexistence; we do not just make the organization of the state."*<sup>119</sup>

Moro during his work in the Constituent Assembly demonstrated the primacy of a personalist and pluralist state, which would find no *raison d'être* if the rights of the human

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<sup>116</sup> Antonetti, N. (2018) *Aldo Moro: politica e diritto. Premesse alla Costituente, Rivista dialoghi*. Available at: <https://rivistadialoghi.it/articolo/22016/aldo-moro-politica-e-diritto-premesse-alla-costituente>

<sup>117</sup> Ibid

<sup>118</sup> Grassi, G. (2016) *Aldo Moro dalla Puglia con il cuore all'Europa e alle persone, L'Italia, la Costituzione e l'Europa nel pensiero di Aldo Moro Raccolta di interventi*. Available at: <https://gerograssi.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/centenario-moro.pdf>

<sup>119</sup> Moro, A. (1947) *Intervento all'Assemblea costituente, seduta del 13 marzo 1947*

person were not guaranteed: "*The solemn declaration of rights, defined as inalienable and sacred, responds in this situation to a need of, we might say, historical order and to a pedagogical function that is part of the purpose of a Constitution, which closes one agitated period of history and opens another.*"<sup>120</sup>

### **3.2. The party concept and the experience of government**

Before talking about Aldo Moro's experiences of government, it is important to understand and analyze his conception of a political party. Moro's political commitment developed constantly and simultaneously in two precise directions: one within the party, the other towards other political forces.

Political initiative, however, for Moro, had to be exercised above all within the party. In fact, when in the DC, around the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the situation appeared in many respects complicated (as widely discussed in the previous chapter) the renovation had to be mainly internal. The DC, Moro asserted, must be "*an alternative to itself: that is, find within itself the impulses to regenerate itself and thus interpret the broader and deeper innovative needs present in the country*".<sup>121</sup>

In one of the most tormented phases of the internal life of the party, Moro admonished: "*There must be, after all, a reason, an ideal foundation, a human purpose for which power is established and power exercised. Outside them, apart from the respect of a moral criterion, and therefore, from the development of an authentic internal democracy, a party ceases to be an effective point of reference and its ability to present credible ideals ceases, instrument of a free and progressive social order. It is only by the unconditional acceptance of a moral reason that the patrimony of our social ideals and the complex of commitments for our time are developed with consistency*"<sup>122</sup>.

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<sup>120</sup> Formigoni, G (2016) *Aldo Moro. Lo statista e il suo dramma, Il Mulino*.

<sup>121</sup> Fontana, S (1981) *Moro e il sistema politico italiano, Il Politico*.

Available at:

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43097908.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A9ec5ef9a9119711ff692917390ea2cee&ab\\_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43097908.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A9ec5ef9a9119711ff692917390ea2cee&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1)

<sup>122</sup> Moro, A. (1969) *Discorso al Consiglio Nazionale D.C., 18 gennaio 1969*

Moro knows the party represents-both sociologically and ideologically-only a part of society: it refers to certain social strata and interests and is based on a precise conception of the world and life. However, he is also convinced that this is only one element of the party's constitution and the reasons for its political personality and historical success. The other element lies in its ability to derive from the defense of specific social interests and ideals a general project that can interpret the expectations of society as a whole and in which even those who do not vote or refer to that party can recognize themselves. From the organic and dialectical relationship between these two elements - one attributable to the necessary social and electoral ties, the other resulting from the autonomous activity of political and cultural elaboration - flows the attraction force and the leadership capacity of the party. This is, of course, a balance that is not given once and for all but must be sought with persistence and patience precisely because there are always new and pressing demands coming from society. <sup>123</sup>

It is certain, however, that when one of the two elements fails or the one prevails over the other, the party is inexorably destined to decline and marginalization: it would be reduced either to the static defense of their own corporate and confessional interests or to the abstract enunciation of cultural themes, perhaps valid to entertain a club of intellectuals certainly not to affect reality. It is no coincidence that the role of government of the DC appeared uncertain and tarnished whenever a certain balance was broken within it and whenever the defense of certain, albeit legitimate, was put before the defense of the general interests of the country. In fact, precisely because Moro possessed a clear awareness of the nature and limits of his party, he strongly felt the need for openness to others. <sup>124</sup>

Speaking now of Moro's experience within the D.C, from September 1942, Aldo Moro begins to meet clandestinely with other exponents of the Catholic movement: with him are among others Alcide De Gasperi, Mario Scelba, Giovanni Gronchi, Giulio Andreotti, and Amintore Fanfani. The following year the group met in Rome, where the document

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<sup>123</sup> Fontana, S (1981) *Moro e il sistema politico italiano, Il Politico*.

Available at:

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43097908.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A9ec5ef9a9119711ff692917390ea2cee&ab\\_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43097908.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A9ec5ef9a9119711ff692917390ea2cee&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1)

<sup>124</sup> Ibid

*Le idee ricostruttive della Democrazia Cristiana*<sup>125</sup>, considered the founding act of the new party, was approved. After his work within the Constituent Assembly, he was elected to Parliament in the April 18, 1948, elections and became undersecretary for foreign affairs with responsibility for emigration in the fifth De Gasperi government (1948-1950).<sup>126</sup> For the time being, his government experience ends there. In 1951 Moro participated in the formation of *Iniziativa Democratica*<sup>127</sup>, current of former Dossettians<sup>128</sup> and followers of De Gasperi who want to affirm a generational discontinuity. In the second legislature of the Republic (1953-1958) he was re-elected to the House and in the new parliamentary group of the DC Moro was elected to the presidency.<sup>129</sup> This legislature saw a succession of weak and subsiding DC-led governments, which had meanwhile become the orphan of De Gasperi, who died in August 54. From the activity of parliamentary impulse and mediation Moro moved on to governmental activity: He was minister of Justice in the Antonio Segni government from 1955 to 1957.<sup>130</sup> In this capacity he initiates work to reform the penal code, engages in a tight series of visits and inspections of the prison system, achieves an initial overcoming of the historic ban on women's access to the judiciary.<sup>131</sup>

Between May 1957 and February 1959 (Adone Zoli and Amintore Fanfani governments) he was Minister of Education. In this experience of government, he introduced the teaching of civic education in middle schools (two hours a month linked with the teaching

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<sup>125</sup> <http://www.aldomoro.eu/biografia.php>

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

<sup>127</sup> *Iniziativa Democratica* was one of the main structured currents within the Christian Democrats. Formed in late 1951 from the meeting of some members of the Degasperian center and ex-Dossettians of the Cronache Sociali current, *Iniziativa Democratica* quickly established itself as one of the main components of the DC.

<sup>128</sup> The movement or current that clustered around Christian Democrat MP Giuseppe Dossetti (1913-1996) during the years of his political engagement.

<sup>129</sup> (2020) *Biografia di Aldo Moro, Istituto De Gasperi Bologna*  
Available at: [http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470\\_04062020a2.pdf](http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470_04062020a2.pdf)

<sup>130</sup> Mazzoni, F. (2017) *L'Italia L'Italia di Aldo Moro. Breve ricostruzione biografica dello statista pugliese, Istituto storico resistenza*.  
Available at: <https://www.istitutostoricoresistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Aldo-Moro-Biografia.pdf>

<sup>131</sup> Ibid



of history) and advocated the unification of middle school (a reform that would be carried out in 1962).<sup>132</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, Iniziativa Democratica gained more and more ground in the DC, a current that benefited but also suffered from the volatility of its major exponent, Amintore Fanfani, who was decidedly in favor of a leftward opening toward the Socialist Party. On March 13, 1959, at a meeting, the majority of the current, having developed criticism of Fanfani, decided to accept his resignation as Party Secretary. He was succeeded by Moro, who was elected Secretary of the DC on March 16, 1959 (he would hold the post until January 1964).

From his inaugural address to the Secretariat, Moro moves with the intention of pursuing the achievement of center-left, a political line that Fanfani's DC had decided to undertake at the Vallombrosa National Council in the summer of 1957<sup>133</sup>, but which in the Catholic world and within the party itself finds much opposition. Center-left and party unity constitutes a bit of a masterpiece of Moro's, given the different souls of the party and the difficulties of the Catholic world. Both at the congress in Florence (Oct. 23-28, 1959) and at the following one in Naples (Jan. 27-31, 1962), with his mediation skills he succeeded in having many current contrasts thawed and in sending the center-left line, which would have achieved a broadening of the bases of democracy, thus reflecting precisely the historic function that the DC intended to fulfill in Italian society (in March 1962, in fact, Fanfani would set up a government with the external support of the PSI).<sup>134</sup>

After the 1963 general elections, it was Moro's turn to preside over organic center-left governments with the presence of socialist ministers led by Pietro Nenni. He would hold that office for the entire legislature (1963-1968), with three consecutive governments supported by a coalition of four parties (Christian Democracy, Socialist Party,

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<sup>132</sup> (2020) *Biografia di Aldo Moro, Istituto De Gasperi Bologna*  
Available at: [http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470\\_04062020a2.pdf](http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470_04062020a2.pdf)

<sup>133</sup> Mazzoni, F. (2017) *L'Italia L'Italia di Aldo Moro. Breve ricostruzione biografica dello statista pugliese, Istituto storico resistenza.*  
Available at: <https://www.istitutostoricoresistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Aldo-Moro-Biografia.pdf>

<sup>134</sup> Pellegrini, G. (2018) *Aldo Moro. Un profilo culturale e politico, Cosmopolis, rivista di filosofia e teoria politica.*  
Available at: <https://www.cosmopolisonline.it/articolo.php?numero=V12010&id=6>

Republican, Democratic Socialist).<sup>135</sup> In its programmatic statements it affirmed that the new executive aimed to carry out a vast and orderly renewal of the structures of the state and social life. It indicated the goal of greater freedom, insisted on local autonomy and in particular the introduction of regions. Beyond that he promised public administration reform, an organic school plan, and an economic planning policy. He stressed the need for interventions in urban planning, social security, agriculture and for the Mezzogiorno. Finally, about foreign policy, he affirmed that it would remain pro-European and Atlanticist in inspiration.<sup>136</sup>

Navigation faced difficult times, partly because of internal tensions within the DC, and two government crises. The first in the summer of 1964, as a result of a vote against related to private school funding the government headed by Aldo Moro resigned, convulsive and tension-filled days would follow<sup>137</sup>. On July 15, President of the Republic Antonio Segni received Carabinieri General Giovanni De Lorenzo at the Quirinale. Three years later, journalists Eugenio Scalfari and Lino Jannuzzi would make public disturbing aspects of that meeting. In particular, the two revealed the existence of a plan called "Solo"<sup>138</sup> under which the occupation of prefectures, RAI - TV, civil and military institutions, prisons as well as the headquarters of parties, trade unions and newspapers was planned. Finally, thousands of people already registered in a list prepared by SIFAR were to be arrested or interned. On July 18, 1964, the parties reached an agreement for the continuation of the center-left experience. Moro, on July 20, would thus form his second government, which would be characterized by an increase in the minimum pension. This crisis of government had the consequence of reducing the expectations of renewal under whose auspices the center-left had been born, reducing it to an "update

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<sup>135</sup> (2020) *Biografia di Aldo Moro, Istituto De Gasperi Bologna*

Available at: [http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470\\_04062020a2.pdf](http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470_04062020a2.pdf)

<sup>136</sup> Mazzoni, F. (2017) *L'Italia L'Italia di Aldo Moro. Breve ricostruzione biografica dello statista pugliese, Istituto storico resistenza.*

Available at: <https://www.istitutostoricoresistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Aldo-Moro-Biografia.pdf>

<sup>137</sup>

Ibid

<sup>138</sup> The Solo Plan, devised in 1964 by then-Commander of the Carabinieri Giovanni de Lorenzo was an attempted coup. The Solo Plan was prepared with the intention of "protecting public order" and approved by Antonio Segni, President of the Republic.

centrism” (centrismo aggiornato)<sup>139</sup> as Moro himself wrote in the Memoir drafted in Red Brigades prison.

What brought down this second government was the vote on the establishment of the State Nursery School, one of the key points of the program agreed upon with the Socialists. On January 20, 1966, the Chamber of Deputies rejected the measure by secret vote. Just the day before, the government had asked for and obtained confidence on a procedural agenda. Moro resigned on January 21, 1966.<sup>140</sup>

The following February 23 Moro formed his third center-left government. This government headed by the Apulian statesman would be characterized by the preparation of the Ponte Law by which it was established that it would be the owners and not the state who would pay the costs of primary urbanization and partially for secondary urbanization as well. The third Moro government was also responsible for the measure that was to lead, twenty years after the Constitution came into force and after a long journey, to the final implementation of regional decentralization after a close parliamentary debate. With the approval of Electoral Law No. 108 of February 17, 1968, the constitution of regions with ordinary statutes was concretely initiated, whose regional councils were elected for the first time in 1970.<sup>141</sup>

In the fifth legislature (1968 - 1972) he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies and was simply a member of the Education Commission. The 1968 elections marked a holding of the DC (first Mariano Rumor government) and the affirmation of the PCI. In January 1969 Moro announced a critical position within the DC, breaking with *Iniziativa democratica* and moving to the party's internal opposition.<sup>142</sup>

The analysis of the student and workers' unrest of those years (with the counterpoint of a growing violence in Italian life) and the concern for the consolidation of Italy's fragile democracy will lead Moro to open a more pronounced focus beyond the socialists (the

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<sup>139</sup> Gotor, M. (2018) *Aldo Moro, Lettere dalla prigionia*, Einaudi editore

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.dellarepubblica.it/iv-legislatura-ii-moro>

<sup>141</sup> Mazzoni, F. (2017) *L'Italia L'Italia di Aldo Moro. Breve ricostruzione biografica dello statista pugliese*, Istituto storico resistenza.  
Available at: <https://www.istitutostoricoresistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Aldo-Moro-Biografia.pdf>

<sup>142</sup> Ibid

strategy of attention toward the communists) and to consider the problem of the renewal of the Christian-inspired party as crucial.

Moro after 1 year will start another experience: foreign minister from August 1969 to July 1972 (second Rumor government), a position he will hold in the third Rumor government, the first Emilio Colombo government and also in the first Giulio Andreotti government.<sup>143</sup> During this governmental experience Moro was in search of a foreign policy in tune with the new demands for freedom that influenced the spirit of the times, both domestically and internationally, between the harshness and convenience of the bipolar world order, the need for peace and true progress, and the development of bilateral relations. Other important aspects of Moro's foreign policy were the enhancement of the UN, the strengthening of Europe as the fourth pole of world politics, attention to the emerging countries of Africa and Asia and relevant regional issues.<sup>144</sup>

In May 1972, general elections are held. Aldo Moro is re-elected, but with significantly fewer preferences than those obtained in the previous round of elections. He will be a member and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. This legislature, the sixth, (1972-1976) is inaugurated by the return to a centrist alliance (DC, PSDI, PLI, second Andreotti government) from which Moro wanted to distinguish himself clearly by not participating in the government.<sup>145</sup>

Upon the resumption of collaboration with the Socialists (Rumor fourth and fifth governments, from 1973 to 1974) Moro was again foreign minister.<sup>146</sup>

In November 1974 Moro reassumed the presidency of the Council for the fourth time, this time with a DC-PRI government and the only external support of the PSI and PSDI. During his term of office, the law lowering the age of majority to eighteen, the Royal Law

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid

<sup>144</sup> (2020) *Biografia di Aldo Moro*, Istituto De Gasperi Bologna  
Available at: [http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470\\_04062020a2.pdf](http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470_04062020a2.pdf)

<sup>145</sup> Ibid

<sup>146</sup> Mazzoni, F. (2017) *L'Italia L'Italia di Aldo Moro. Breve ricostruzione biografica dello statista pugliese*, Istituto storico resistenza.  
Available at: <https://www.istitutostoricoresistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Aldo-Moro-Biografia.pdf>

on Public Order<sup>147</sup> were approved; in addition, pensions were indexed to the cost of living and real wages.<sup>148</sup>

It is precisely in this period that Moro gives a concrete start to the strategy of attention by weaving a dialogue with the Communist opposition, which becomes an important interlocutor on issues of economic policy and reform. The latter circumstance causes alarm in the U.S. administration (Gerald Ford administration and Jimmy Carter administration) and heavy fallout in Moro's relations with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. In September 1974, Aldo Moro, made a trip to the United States as foreign minister (he had not yet been re-elected prime minister) and met with the U.S. Secretary of State. Kissinger gave Moro a speech that did not lend itself to misunderstanding: he illustrated to him cases of other countries where open-minded, leftist leaders had come to a bad end. He said that he did not agree at all with all those openings to communists, that communists remained such and should be treated as such. Hence the invitation to let it go but knowing the American mentality it was actually an imposition, an order, and to Moro Kissinger's speech seemed so harbinger of danger and threat that he was shaken by it.<sup>149</sup> Despite this meeting, Moro continued the strategy of attention, a strategy of dialogue toward the major opposition party, a strategy that, as described extensively in the previous chapter, was in some ways a response to the move that a year earlier, in 1973, PCI Secretary Enrico Berlinguer had made by launching the famous proposal of the historic compromise between Catholic and secular masses (in political terms between the DC and the PCI).

Going back to the governments of those years, after a while, during the 4th Moro government, there was the socialist call for "more advanced balances"<sup>150</sup>: the idea was proposed in an article by Francesco De Martino in the *Avanti* of December 31, 1975,

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<sup>147</sup> The legislation introduced a harsh tightening of criminal legislation in order to counter and combat the Italian terrorist phenomena that strained the country's democratic order during the years of lead.

<sup>148</sup> Mazzoni, F. (2017) *L'Italia di Aldo Moro. Breve ricostruzione biografica dello statista pugliese*, Istituto storico resistenza. Available at: <https://www.istitutostoricoresistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Aldo-Moro-Biografia.pdf>

<sup>149</sup> Nanni, M (2023) *Kissinger, quando mortificò due Grandi Italiani*, *Bee magazine*. Available at: <https://beemagazine.it/kissinger-quando-mortifico-due-grandi-italiani/>

<sup>150</sup> De Martino, F. (1975) *Soluzioni nuove per una crisi grave*, *Avanti*.

entitled *Soluzioni nuove per una crisi grave* in which the socialist Secretary questioned the majority, attacked the DC that was deaf to the socialists' proposals and called for the involvement of the PCI in the government program.<sup>151</sup>

The Socialist demand for more advanced budgets is the most important determinant of the government's crisis with the Republicans and the subsequent one-party Christian Democrat government which, again led by Moro, would last only a few months, until the early dissolution of Parliament on May 1, 1976.

Elections to the new Parliament in June 1976 saw the PCI assert itself, coming within striking distance of a DC that unexpectedly confirmed positions. The confrontation between the parties leads to the formation of a one-party DC government, with abstentions by all others, (third Andreotti government, 1976 - 1978, known as the government of non-confidence). But the disruptive novelty is the abstention of the Communists.

The congress of the DC held in March in 1976 had elected Benigno Zaccagnini to the Secretariat along the lines Moro hoped for of party renewal. In October, after the installation of the no-confidence government, Moro assumed the position of chairman of the DC's national council, a position formally of little importance but which, given the person and the moment, confirmed in the holder the value of "noble father"<sup>152</sup> for difficult navigations, between the need for solidarity, to lift the country's fortunes on the basis of the republican and constitutional project and the hostilities, domestic and international, motivated by the approach of the PCI to the government area.

Toward the end of 77 the Communists demanded to go beyond "non-sfiducia"<sup>153</sup>: in February 1978 the understanding was found in the formation of a program majority to be expressed in parliament, which is propitiated by the Prime Minister, which will result in an explicit and important fact: the yes of the parties concerned.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> (2020) *Biografia di Aldo Moro, Istituto De Gasperi Bologna*  
Available at: [http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470\\_04062020a2.pdf](http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470_04062020a2.pdf)

<sup>153</sup> Mazzoni, F. (2017) *L'Italia L'Italia di Aldo Moro. Breve ricostruzione biografica dello statista pugliese, Istituto storico resistenza.*  
Available at: <https://www.istitutostoricoresistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Aldo-Moro-Biografia.pdf>

<sup>154</sup> (2020) *Biografia di Aldo Moro, Istituto De Gasperi Bologna*  
Available at: [http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470\\_04062020a2.pdf](http://www.istitutodegasperi-emilia-romagna.it/pdf-mail/470_04062020a2.pdf)

On March 16, 1978, on his way to the House of Representatives for the vote of confidence in the new Andreotti government supported by the explicit vote of the PCI and the parties that abstained on the previous government, Aldo Moro's car and that of his escort were attacked by a Red Brigades commando.<sup>155</sup>

### 3.3. The kidnapping and murder

On March 11, 1978, after a long government crisis lasting almost two months, Giulio Andreotti forms his fourth monocolored DC executive also supported by Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats and Republicans. Five days later, on March 16, the two chambers are convened to discuss and vote on the confidence. That morning in Rome's Via Fani, a Red Brigades commando kidnaps Aldo Moro and kills his five escort men: Domenico Ricci, Oreste Leonardi, Raffaele Jozzino, Giulio Rivera, and Francesco Zizzi. Immediately news of the ambush spreads to every corner of the country and Italy comes to a standstill. At 10 a.m. Bruno Vespa opens the Tg1 edition and a few minutes later Paolo Frajese, live from Via Fani, gives an initial description of what happened.<sup>156</sup>

That day, shortly after 10 a.m., an anonymous phone call reached the switchboard of the Ansa agency in Rome.<sup>157</sup> The message communicated by the unknown person reports that Red Brigades have "kidnapped the president of the Christian Democracy Aldo Moro and eliminated his bodyguards."<sup>158</sup>

Demonstrations and strikes involve citizens nationwide. From students to workers, Italy stops, it's a united cry against terrorism.<sup>159</sup> One of the most important rallies was in Piazza

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid

<sup>156</sup> Agalliu, A. (2022), *44 anni fa l'omicidio di Aldo Moro, cosa successe nei 55 giorni di prigionia?* Orgoglio nerd.  
Available at: <https://orgoglionerd.it/sequestro-aldo-moro-cosa-successe-nei-55-giorni-di-prigionia/>

<sup>157</sup> Romeo, I. (2022) *Il rapimento di Aldo Moro, Collettiva*.  
Available at: [https://www.collettiva.it/copertine/italia/2022/03/16/news/il\\_rapimento\\_di\\_aldo\\_moro-1954972/](https://www.collettiva.it/copertine/italia/2022/03/16/news/il_rapimento_di_aldo_moro-1954972/)

<sup>158</sup> Nesticò, M. (2021) *Aldo Moro, il 16 marzo 1978 il sequestro del presidente della Dc, Ansa*  
Available at: [https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/speciali/2018/03/12/moro-le-carte-della-commissione-presto-ai-pm\\_cfadce04-ac8f-4c28-b7f5-2cd249804b76.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/speciali/2018/03/12/moro-le-carte-della-commissione-presto-ai-pm_cfadce04-ac8f-4c28-b7f5-2cd249804b76.html)

<sup>159</sup> Agalliu, A. (2022), *44 anni fa l'omicidio di Aldo Moro, cosa successe nei 55 giorni di prigionia?* Orgoglio nerd.

San Giovanni in Rome, where CGIL General Secretary Luciano Lama held a rally with 50,000 people. Here one sees white DC flags with the effigy of the crusader shield mixed in among the red flags of the PCI. This is the first time ever, and the scene causes some bewilderment. For the leaders of the PCI and the trade union the time has come to make scorched earth around what they call the armed party, no ambiguity, justification, attempt at understanding, minimization or worse divergence will be tolerated any longer, from this moment only one choice becomes possible: *"either with the State or against the State."*<sup>160</sup> For Lama, *"it is necessary to expel from the masses not the terrorists who are not there or are very few but those who justify them, those who flirt with them ... those who still too frequently regard them as boys who perhaps would be right under other conditions."*<sup>161</sup>

On the government side, on March 16, Interior Minister Francesco Cossiga sets up a committee to manage the crisis, and an hour and a half later, the identity cards of 16 alleged kidnappers are made public.

The following day, March 17, the Chamber of Deputies and Senate vote confidence in the new government formed by the DC itself, with the support of the PCI. In this new government, Aldo Moro was supposed to have a key role, but after the kidnapping the new government was led by Giulio Andreotti. Meanwhile, Red Brigades claimed the president's kidnapping, but without expressing any special demands or blackmail.<sup>162</sup>

On March 18, Italy pauses to celebrate the funeral of Moro's escort members, while at the *Messaggero* a call from the BR indicates the location where an envelope with the communiqué and a snapshot showing Aldo Moro being held by Red Brigades will be found. On the third day after the kidnapping, the photo of Moro with the words *Brigate Rosse* and star behind him finds echoes in all national and international newspapers.<sup>163</sup>

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Available at: <https://orgoglionerd.it/sequestro-aldo-moro-cosa-sucsesse-nei-55-giorni-di-prigionia/>

<sup>160</sup> (2020) *La reazione nelle fabbriche e nelle scuole dopo l'annuncio del sequestro Moro, Insorgenze*  
Available at: <https://insorgenze.net/2020/03/26/la-reazione-nelle-fabbriche-e-nelle-scuole-dopo-lannuncio-del-sequestro-moro/>

<sup>161</sup> L. Lama (1978) *Discorso pronunciato in piazza san Giovanni il 16 maggio 1978*  
in <https://www.rassegna.it/articoli/il-caso-moro-nelle-carte-della-cgil-1>.

<sup>162</sup> Agalliu, A. (2022), *44 anni fa l'omicidio di Aldo Moro, cosa successe nei 55 giorni di prigionia?*  
Orgoglio nerd.  
Available at: <https://orgoglionerd.it/sequestro-aldo-moro-cosa-sucsesse-nei-55-giorni-di-prigionia/>

<sup>163</sup> Nesticò, M. (2021) *Aldo Moro, il 16 marzo 1978 il sequestro del presidente della Dc, Ansa*



Along with the photo, which has become a symbol of Moro's kidnapping over the years, Communiqué No. 1 is also published, in which Red Brigades announce that Aldo Moro will be tried by "a people's tribunal"<sup>164</sup>.

On March 20, a team of 32 German police officers arrives in the capital ready to investigate the Moro case, Germans who will be joined in the following days by Israeli and British experts. During these days the Andreotti government, which has set itself the goal of saving President Moro, passes new emergency laws to deal with the terrorist phenomenon. Identification detention is instituted in addition to provisional arrest for those suspected of preparing crimes. In addition, interrogation at police headquarters can be carried out even without the presence of defense counsel.<sup>165</sup>

On March 27 with Communiqué No. 2, Red Brigades announced to Italians the start of the trial of President Aldo Moro, a defendant without a defense.<sup>166</sup> Delivered on the evening of March 29, 1978, along with letters addressed to his wife, Eleonora, and to collaborator Nicola Rana, a letter from Aldo Moro to Interior Minister Francesco Cossiga was published on March 30.<sup>167</sup> In his letter to Cossiga Moro writes under "*full and uncontrolled domination, subjected to a popular process that can be appropriately graded, with the risk of being induced to speak in a manner that could be unpleasant and dangerous.*"<sup>168</sup> He immediately proposes the subject of negotiation, of hostage exchange, as the only way out.<sup>169</sup>

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Available at: [https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/speciali/2018/03/12/moro-le-carte-della-commissione-presto-ai-pm\\_cfadce04-ac8f-4c28-b7f5-2cd249804b76.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/speciali/2018/03/12/moro-le-carte-della-commissione-presto-ai-pm_cfadce04-ac8f-4c28-b7f5-2cd249804b76.html)

<sup>164</sup> *Il rapimento Moro Comunicato BR n.1*  
[http://www.scudit.net/mdmoro\\_com1.htm](http://www.scudit.net/mdmoro_com1.htm)

<sup>165</sup> Agalliu, A. (2022), *44 anni fa l'omicidio di Aldo Moro, cosa successe nei 55 giorni di prigionia?* Orgoglio nerd.  
Available at: <https://orgoglionerd.it/sequestro-aldo-moro-cosa-successe-nei-55-giorni-di-prigionia/>

<sup>166</sup> *Il rapimento Moro Comunicato BR n.1*  
Available at: [http://www.scudit.net/mdmoro\\_com2.htm](http://www.scudit.net/mdmoro_com2.htm)

<sup>167</sup> Greco, R (2018) *Aldo Moro: la lettera a Francesco Cossiga, Mediterraneo.*  
Available at: <http://www.mediterraneocronaca.it/2018/03/30/aldo-moro-la-lettera-a-francesco-cossiga/>

<sup>168</sup> Delgado, P. (2018) *La lettera che uccise Moro, Il dubbio.*  
Available at: <https://www.ildubbio.news/cultura/la-lettera-che-uccise-moro-nomhssjv>

<sup>169</sup> [https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Le\\_lettere\\_di\\_Aldo\\_Moro\\_dalla\\_prigionia\\_alla\\_storia/I\\_testi](https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_lettere_di_Aldo_Moro_dalla_prigionia_alla_storia/I_testi)

On March 31, all Italian newspapers report on the front page the outright no of the government and the DC to deal with the BR kidnapers, believed to be terrorists. A few days later, Pope Paul VI, during the Angelus <sup>170</sup>, appeals to the kidnapers to free the DC president as soon as possible, while on April 4, Andreotti strengthens the non-treaty front with the BR, even ruling out opportunities for public debates on the Moro case. On the same day, Aldo Moro writes to DC Secretary Benigno Zaccagnini and more forcefully proposes a hostage exchange with the Brigatists. Tones are raised as investigations continue *"I am a political prisoner whom your abrupt decision to close down any discourse concerning other persons similarly detained places in an untenable situation. Time is running fast and there is unfortunately not enough of it. Any moment may be too late»*.<sup>171</sup> In this context, world of politics remains firm on its position. Premier Andreotti in the Chamber declares that *"One cannot bargain with people whose hands are dripping with blood."* <sup>172</sup> From the pages of *Il Corriere della Sera*, the DC explains its decisions thus, *"The attitude was agreed upon, by the party leaders, with death in their hearts."*<sup>173</sup> The family of Moro disassociates itself from the line of firmness adopted by the DC and, in the days that follow they try to secretly get in touch with members of Red Brigades. Communiqué No. 5 of the Br, announced with a phone call to the Milan editorial office of *La Repubblica*, is found on the afternoon of April 10, in a trash can on Via Palestro. Identical envelopes are also found in Rome, Turin and Genoa.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> The Angelus (or Angelus Domini) is a Catholic prayer in honor of Mary (mother of Jesus) that devotees recite in thanksgiving for the mystery of the Incarnation.

<sup>171</sup> Moro, A (1978) *Lettera di Aldo Moro Zaccagnini 4 aprile 1978*.  
Available at: [https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Le\\_lettere\\_di\\_Aldo\\_Moro\\_dalla\\_prigione\\_alla\\_storia/I\\_testi](https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_lettere_di_Aldo_Moro_dalla_prigione_alla_storia/I_testi)

<sup>172</sup> Agalliu, A. (2022), *44 anni fa l'omicidio di Aldo Moro, cosa successe nei 55 giorni di prigionia?* Orgoglio nerd.  
Available at: <https://orgoglionerd.it/sequestro-aldo-moro-cosa-successe-nei-55-giorni-di-prigionia/>

<sup>173</sup> Mauro, E. (2018) *Cronache di sequestro, La Repubblica*.  
Available at: <https://lab.gedidigital.it/repubblica/2018/cronaca/aldo-moro/italia-78>

<sup>174</sup> Bartali, R. (2004) *"Da Via Fani a Via Caetani: cronologia dei 55 giorni con i comunicati delle BR"*, Roberto Bartali. Available at: <http://www.robertobartali.it/cap08.htm>

On April 16 BR Communiqué No. 6, the one declaring the end of Aldo Moro's trial and his death sentence. At this precise moment everyone understands that the situation is critical, the risk is so high, that on April 17 the DC makes an appeal to save the life of its president. An appeal that is not made directly to the BR because the government cannot show itself weak and open to negotiations with the terrorists. There will be Initiatives and appeals by many intellectuals, such as the first appeal by UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim.<sup>175</sup> On April 19, a message of Red Brigades reports the death of President Aldo Moro and where to find his body, but it is Red Brigades' own lawyers who question the veracity and deny what was written on behalf of the BR. Despite the denial of the BR lawyers, on April 20, all national newspapers reported the search for Aldo Moro's body in Duchessa Lake, as indicated in the fake communiqué No. 7. The real communiqué No. 7 is not long in coming. On April 21, the BR accuse Andreotti of staging the publication of the fake communiqué in their name and accompany their statements with a photo of Aldo Moro holding a copy of the April 19 La Repubblica newspaper to show the president's state of health.<sup>176</sup> On April 24, the BR spread communiqué number 8 with the names of the 13 detainees for whom they want release in exchange for the release of the hostage. Moro calls for funerals without state authorities or party men.<sup>177</sup> Party inaction continues, and many accuse the Christian Democrats of forgetting their president on death row. Moro's family also makes harsh accusations against the president's party, but to no avail, nothing changes the position of the DC. The only one who does not stop fighting for a solution and for the release of Aldo Moro seems to be his political enemy Bettino Craxi. It is precisely to Craxi on April 30 that the DC president addresses his umpteenth letter where he reads, "*Woe, dear Craxi, if your initiative fails.*"<sup>178</sup> Ten days pass from communiqué

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<sup>175</sup> Mauro, E. (2018) *Cronache di sequestro*, La Repubblica.

Available at: <https://lab.gedidigital.it/repubblica/2018/cronaca/aldo-moro/italia-78>

<sup>176</sup> Agalliu, A. (2022), *44 anni fa l'omicidio di Aldo Moro, cosa successe nei 55 giorni di prigionia?* Orgoglio nerd.

Available at: <https://orgoglionerd.it/sequestro-aldo-moro-cosa-successe-nei-55-giorni-di-prigionia/>

<sup>177</sup> Mauro, E. (2018) *Cronache di sequestro*, La Repubblica.

Available at: <https://lab.gedidigital.it/repubblica/2018/cronaca/aldo-moro/italia-78>

<sup>178</sup> [https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Le\\_lettere\\_di\\_Aldo\\_Moro\\_dalla\\_prigionia\\_alla\\_storia/I\\_testi](https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_lettere_di_Aldo_Moro_dalla_prigionia_alla_storia/I_testi)

8 to communiqué 9, days in which Moro multiplies his appeals for negotiation. The terrorists' language becomes crude in offloading the responsibility for a trial on the firmness of the Christian Democrats. The BR write "*We conclude the battle by executing the sentence to which Moro was sentenced*".<sup>179</sup> On May 9, after 55 days of detention, Moro is assassinated at the hands of Mario Moretti.<sup>180</sup> The body is found the same day in a red Renault 4 in Via Caetani, near the headquarters of the DC and PCI in the center of Rome. According to statements by the brigatists more than a decade after the assassination, Moro was made to get up at 6:00 a.m. on the pretext of being transferred to another hideout, was stuffed into a wicker basket, and taken to the garage of the Via Montalcini hideout. He was made to enter the trunk of a red Renault 4 and was covered with a red sheet. Then a few shots were fired first with a pistol and, after the pistol jammed, with a machine gun, with which a barrage of 11 shots were fired that pierced the hostage's lungs, killing him. Then, once the crime was carried out, the car with Moro's corpse in Via Caetani where it was left parked about an hour later. After wasting time searching for a safe place to make a phone call and to contact one of Moro's aides, at about 12:30 p.m. Brigatist Valerio Morucci managed to make the final phone call with Professor Francesco Tritto, one of Moro's aides, initially qualifying as Dr. Nicolai. In a cold but correct tone, he asked Tritto to notify the family immediately that the president's body was in the trunk of a red Renault 4 on Caetani Street.<sup>181</sup> Moro wrote, during his imprisonment, in a letter addressed to the Secretary of State Benigno Zaccagnini "*Due to an obvious incompatibility, I ask that neither state authorities nor party men attend my funeral. I ask to be followed by the few who truly loved me and are worthy therefore to accompany me with their prayers and love*".<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Frittoli, E. (2018) *Sequestro Moro: tutti i comunicati delle BR nei 55 giorni di prigionia*, Panorama. Available at: <https://www.panorama.it/sequestro-moro-tutti-comunicati-delle-br-nei-55-giorni-di-prigionia>

<sup>180</sup> Mario Moretti is a former Italian terrorist and brigatist, one of the members of the historic core of the Red Brigades during the years of lead.

<sup>181</sup> <https://www.fattiperlastoria.it/rapimento-aldo-moro-sequestro-morte/>

<sup>182</sup> Moro, A (1978) *Lettera di Aldo Moro Zaccagnini 4 aprile 1978*. Available at: [https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Le\\_lettere\\_di\\_Aldo\\_Moro\\_dalla\\_prigionia\\_alla\\_storia/I\\_testi](https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_lettere_di_Aldo_Moro_dalla_prigionia_alla_storia/I_testi)

In compliance with his wishes, the funeral was held in a strictly private form, with very few friends. Then, on May 16, his wife Eleonora promoted a mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Christ the King, saying from the pulpit the following words, *"For the instigators, perpetrators and flankers of this horrible crime; for those who out of jealousy, cowardice, fear and stupidity ratified the death sentence of an innocent man; for me and my children so that the sense of despair and anger we now feel may be transformed into tears of forgiveness, let us pray."*<sup>183</sup>

Completely different, however, had been the funeral commemoration officiated on May 13 by Cardinal Vicar of Rome Ugo Poletti in the basilica of St. John Lateran, in the presence of Paul VI and institutional and political authorities. Neither Moro's body nor his wife and children were there: only the statesman's brothers had agreed to take part, in a final attempt at mediation. Paul VI, who out of friendship had quite exceptionally broken protocol by attending a mass outside the walls, and who a few months later would also die, was the image of a vanquished pope, a thunderstruck pope who stammered oppressed by the vestments the last and confused lines of his own defeat. Many saw in that much-divided commemoration the celebration of the funeral of the First Republic.

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### **3.4. The legacy of Aldo Moro**

Forty-five years ago Aldo Moro was kidnapped. He was a man of great practicality and professionalism, but at the same time capable of taking risks. A man with a far-reaching vision, whose political actions were certainly a gamble and, as is often the case with people accustomed to approaching complexity with a constructive will, he was attacked by many or remained partly misunderstood. He taught us that sometimes the most revolutionary people are those who quietly, but also with great courage, develop principles of progress that un hinge from within an entire system, which must evolve and transform to survive. *"Tomorrow does not belong to conservatives and tyrants, it belongs*

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<sup>183</sup> (2018) *La morte di Moro, le commemorazioni divise, Treccani.*

Available at:

[https://www.treccani.it/magazine/atlante/cultura/La\\_morte\\_di\\_Moro\\_le\\_commemorazioni\\_divise.html](https://www.treccani.it/magazine/atlante/cultura/La_morte_di_Moro_le_commemorazioni_divise.html)

<sup>184</sup> Ibid

*to careful, serious innovators, without rhetoric. We do not want to be the men of the past, but those of the future.*"<sup>185</sup>

So, what is left of Aldo Moro's lesson? Moro strove to read the meaning of events by placing them in relation to the characters of the time in which they occurred. In this way, politics did not depend on facts or, worse, on the news; but it was able to govern them, to direct them. Other political cultures, his contemporaries, attempted to solve the problem of the relationship with reality through the caging of experience within preconstituted models that were apparently rational, but which history has shown to be arbitrary and dense with tragic consequences.

The intelligence of history that Moro proposed in his analyses did not derive from the relationship with abstract models; instead, it derived from the habit of evading clichés and the ability to propose interpretations that went to the roots of reality and identified its direction of travel. This method was the result of a profound ability to go beyond appearances, to grasp the connections between seemingly distant events, their sense of direction, and their connection with the deep processes of society.

The speeches made by Moro in 1968, for example, warned the political leaders of the time that those movements should be taken seriously and let glimpse issues that, if left to themselves, would lead to tragedies that would affect the entire Italian society. The appeal went unheeded, there were tragedies.

Today we too often lack the ability to understand the meaning of the facts. This lack often puts us at the mercy of the news to which we react with established logics, imputing the facts favorable to our merits and others to the wickedness of others. Moro would probably suggest us to have the courage of the truth because the political lie, in its many forms, becomes the tomb of freedom.<sup>186</sup>

One of the constant concerns of Moro was the government of "difficult democracy"<sup>187</sup>. To those who considered democracy an acquired fact once and for all and never in real

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<sup>185</sup> *Dal discorso di Aldo Moro al Supercinema di Roma, 24 marzo 1963*

<sup>186</sup> Violante, L (2018) *La grande lezione di Aldo Moro è stata la cura della democrazia, Il mattino di Padova*.

Available at: <https://mattinopadova.gelocal.it/padova/cronaca/2018/03/16/news/la-grande-lezione-di-aldo-moro-e-stata-la-cura-della-democrazia-1.16598674>

<sup>187</sup> (2023) *Italia democrazia difficile: la cornice politico-sociale del caso Moro, Opinio juris*.

Available at: <https://www.opiniojuris.it/italia-democrazia-difficile-la-cornice-politico-sociale-del-caso-moro/>

danger, Moro proposed that the parliamentary system was in continuous evolution and worked to integrate those who were out of it either by choice or because socially marginalized. Hence the importance he attached to the concept of fluidity: not to close things, not to make unilateral choices, always leave an open path to make democracy capable of welcoming, integrating, unifying while respecting differences. Only the flexibility of political processes can allow democracy to accommodate the wishes and hopes of those who were far from democratic participation.<sup>188</sup> Democracy, for Moro, is not the result of a natural predisposition of citizens and peoples but is the result of sophisticated balances between the different public authorities, the active participation of citizens, the balance between rights and duties, contexts of respect and inclusion, the ability to curb political conflict. When these qualities are not present, democracy decays, its instruments jam, primacy of individual interests over the common good manifest themselves in society. Therefore, one of the great and current teachings that he has left us is the civil duty of assiduous care for democracy, its rules and its values. Moro was equipped to see events unfold in advance, to foresee scenarios, to draw scenarios. His idea of making Italy a complete democracy, of making possible a mature democracy of alternation, will not be implemented until the mid-1990s. 1992 saw the end of the First Republic in Italy, which ended ingloriously in the meat grinder of numerous judicial investigations that spared none of the governing parties. The First Republic, the one started at the end of the Second World War, it also fell because the ruling class of the country had remained the same since the time of Aldo Moro. None of the leaders of the Christian Democrats and other parties had really bothered to raise a ruling class capable of assuming the political and governmental responsibilities of the second floor. Power, in the long run worn out but, above all, it can act as a corrupting agent, especially when there is no possibility of replacement. And this is one of the dangers that Moro already saw.<sup>189</sup> If we are to grasp the lesson of Aldo Moro in its entirety, we remain committed, each at his or her own level of responsibility, to building a state in which as many citizens as

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid

<sup>189</sup> De angelis, L. (2021) *La lezione di Aldo Moro, la notizia condivisa*.

Available at: <http://www.lanotiziacondivisa.it/index.php/rubriche/noidiscuola/item/1071-la-lezione-di-aldo-moro>

possible recognize themselves, with a stable structure of freedom and justice. A State which, as Moro emphasized in Bari in his visit to the Apulia Region in the 1960s, is constantly nourished by a genuine faith in pluralist democracy without which there can be no harmony of intentions and commitments between all political forces that is truly an expression of freedom, consciously lived by all citizens. In freedom, pluralism, and respect for the dignity of man Aldo Moro has always believed, until the end of his days.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Nicola Rotolo, Presidente della Regione Puglia, Aprile 2018, Moro vive, Regione puglia



## **Conclusion**

The main object of this work was to explore the two faces of the Italian Republic during the decade under review, 1968 - 1978.

On the one hand, through an accurate historical analysis of the social claims and struggles, of the phase of subversion and terrorism, both red and black; on the other, by analyzing the attempts (failed, at least with reference to their final landing) put in place by Italian Christian Democrats and Communists, in order to govern the instability arising from a very complex and delicate, potentially destabilizing social and political phase.

With this thesis, I sought to provide a deeper understanding of the social struggles of the 1970s in Italy, the circumstances and social dynamics that characterized this phase, framing it in the domestic context of the country, but not leaving out the necessary and broader international context, for which domestic political dynamics were by no means irrelevant.

In Chapter 1 I set out to start from a solid historical and conceptual base, explaining the roots of social struggles, the consequent political response, in years particularly dense with change, the landing place of which was to be (and in fact was, albeit briefly) a government of national unity. In analyzing this period, I tried to identify the causes underlying the growing social tensions, from the economic disparities following the phase of the so-called "economic boom", to the social and political differentiations present in the large urban centers and the new industrial realities, which became fertile ground for the subversive projects of the most extremist and extra-parliamentary movements and political formations.

Within this framework, I also considered it my duty to delve into the internal dynamics of the main Italian party of the so-called First Republic, Democrazia Cristiana, a real pivot of the political-parliamentary system from the post-World War II period (until the early 1990s) to the point of being defined and considered a real Party-State.

In analyzing the main protagonists of the internal life of the DC, I considered it preeminent to deal with and delve into the strategy of Aldo Moro - who was its main leader, after the season of Alcide De Gasperi - who always favored dialogue and confrontation, both within his own party and with other political forces.

As already mentioned, the variation in internal, social, and political dynamics could not fail to be matched by adequate attention from the major powers in the international arena

and, in particular, the growing concerns on the part of the United States and the Soviet Union, and how these geopolitical dynamics sought to influence the evolution of Italian politics.

Moreover, while examining the figure and role of Aldo Moro, within the overall scenario of the so-called First Republic, I have been able to see how his work contributed - in a decisive way - to the process of development and consolidation of the Italian democratic system. Within the chapter devoted to this aspect, I set out to arrive at an understanding of Moro's conception of the State, as the final goal of a path that started from the centrality of the person and society (Moro was Professor of Philosophy of Law, as well as of Criminal Law) and how this vision decisively influenced his approach to the governance of institutions and to the role of parties as an inescapable tool to the proper functioning of parliamentary democracy, provided that they themselves were the bearers of a real consensus in society. Finally, I considered it essential to try to assess the medium to long-term impact of Aldo Moro's work on Italian politics and its democratic system.

I did not find a problem of lack of sources during the writing of this elaborate; on the contrary, the problem is in the plurality of existing sources: dozens of books (some of them enriched by the decadence of the State Secret and, therefore, by new documentation that arose) various parliamentary committees of inquiry, and numerous trials carried out by the judiciary (the Moro quinquies process has arrived); for this, in fact, the work of discernment of the material to be used, within the plurality of available sources, has been challenging.

As for future prospects, the study of those years is essential for anyone who really wants to undertake and understand the birth and development of the democratic system in our country, after the years of fascism and war. A fragile democracy for many and many years, although all the anti-fascist parties (except the MSI, which for many years was considered outside the constitutional arch, as present in Parliament with its representatives) were found, in the aftermath of the constitutional referendum and the election of the Constituent Assembly, in the writing of the new Constitutional Charter.

Initially, in the years 1946-1947, the Communist Party also became part of the government of the Republic; but, even at the end of the government experience, continued, until December 1947 to collaborate in the writing of the Constitutional Charter. That said, I believe that the development and torments ("crisis of growth", we

could define them) of Italian democracy in the 60s and 70s are still fundamental to understand our current situation.

Aldo Moro was killed in 1978 and with him ended the season of national solidarity; in the meantime, a new and important leadership of the Socialist Party appeared; then, in 1984, the sudden death of Enrico Berlinguer.

I believe that the tragic death of Aldo Moro marked the beginning of the end of Democrazia Cristiana first and, to follow, of the party system of the so-called First Republic, which in the 1980s were all crossed by a growing system of business and patronage, in which the politics of ideas has covered less and less space.

To follow, the referendums promoted by Mario Segni, the political-judicial phase remembered as "Tangentopoli", the rise of new political formations (from Lega Nord, at the end of the 1980s, until, more recently, Movimento 5 Stelle), the so-called Second Republic, today probably the Third. The so-called "anni di piombo", accompanied by various attempts to destabilize the democratic system, have put a strain on the resilience of our fragile democracy of the time, but, on the other hand, there were men and parties able to govern the system.

To anyone today interested in deepening the history of those years, I would suggest, preliminary, this type of reflection: with the due differences related to the change of times and society, today we are in a system substantially "leaderistico", in which emerges the lack of complexity of the parties (with their limitations and defects), especially in their essential function (and constitutionally provided) of necessary filter between society and institutions.

Therefore, recovering the best part of that experience, could surely be an incentive to the improvement of our current political system and, consequently, of our republican institutions.

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