



Department of Political Sciences
Master's Degree in International Relations
Major in Security

Chair of Comparative History of Political Systems

**Between the Press and the State-Mafia Pact: Analysis of
the Influence of Italian Media on a Matter of National
Importance**

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Academic Year 2022/2023

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Introduction

How much does the media influence the relationship between citizens and politics? How much does it influence trust in the institutions, the basis of a democratic society? The analysis of this thesis starts from these questions. It aims at becoming part of the extensive research on the influence of the media on politics and public opinion. The standard assertion in most recent empirical studies is that "media affect what people think about, not what they think." The findings here add to this type of research but indicate that media make a significant contribution to what people think-to their political preferences and evaluations-precisely by affecting what they think about. This study proposes to examine in depth the impact of the main Italian newspapers - Il Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica and Il Giornale - on the perception of public opinion regarding the Mafia-State Pact, with particular attention to the evolution of the media narrative in outlining the image of an apparently weak State influenced by organised crime. The historical context of post-Clean Hands (Mani Pulite) Italy, characterized a widespread distrust towards institutions and political elites, has contributed to create a fertile ground for the manipulation of public opinion by the media. The State-Mafia Negotiation emerges as an emblematic case in which newspapers played a crucial role in shaping the collective perception of Italian political reality, directly influencing the formation of citizens' opinions and beliefs.

Through an in-depth analysis of historical archives and journalistic articles produced over the years, this study intends to outline the ways in which the media contributed to building and maintaining a distorted image of the State-Mafia negotiation and its protagonists. It will investigate how the media have been able to transform public opinion, contributing to the creation of an image of Italy as a weak democracy, apparently incapable of effectively combating the penetration of organized crime in the institutions, and easily fall foul of the rule of law due to the "state of emergency" and haste. From magistrates to journalists, everyone talked about mafia, extolling their protean nature and their capacity for camouflage. Warning us that, behind every shadow of our apparent normality, their purulent ramification may be inciting. This is why the whole of normality must be dissected, and broken down, as a potential criminogenic find. Otherwise, there is a rhetoric that supports and encourages the advancement of

exceptionalism in the rule of law. It is important not to be sucked, unwittingly, into the attractive vortex that certain commonplaces have when the seriality of messages imposes them on the public sphere. Does this not encapsulate the fundamental duty of ethical journalism?

The aim of this work is therefore, to analyse how newspapers have interpreted Italian history in relation to the State-Mafia Negotiation, highlighting the narrative strategies adopted and the political and social implications of these representations. Through rigorous empirical research and a critical analysis of journalistic texts, the aim is to understand the role played by the media in the construction of the collective imagination and in the orientation of public opinion during a crucial period in the history of the Second Italian Republic. Through this analysis, this thesis seeks to address the following research questions: How did the selected newspapers frame the State-Mafia negotiations and their aftermath? What narratives and themes emerged in the media coverage of these events? How did media representations influence public perceptions of state institutions and democratic governance in Italy?

By critically examining the role of the media in shaping public discourse on the State-Mafia negotiations, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of the complex interplay between media, politics, and historical memory in contemporary Italy. The first chapter will undertake an in-depth examination of the role played by mass media in shaping public opinion and democratic discourse. Through a historical overview, attention will be directed towards the Italian political landscape of the early 1990s, characterized by the collapse of the "First Republic" and the rise of organized crime as a national security threat. The second chapter will explore the tumultuous transition from instability to routine reporting following the tragic events of the 1990s, including terrorist attacks and the assassinations of key figures such as Paolo Borsellino. Analysis will be conducted on the interactions between the Italian state and organized crime during this period of "state of emergency," alongside an examination of societal and media responses to these events. In the third chapter, focus will be placed on the "media trial" surrounding the alleged pact between the Italian state and organized crime. The discourse will scrutinize how major Italian newspapers, including *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, and *Il Giornale*, addressed this contentious issue, exploring the diverse political and linguistic perspectives presented by the media.

CHAPTER ONE

The Influence of Mass Media on Politics

1.1 Media's Role in shaping Public Opinion and Democratic Discourse

Nowadays, we are faced with a reality in which the media are one of the most powerful forces in shaping public opinion, influencing political decisions, and shaping democratic debate. Be it television news, printed newspapers, social media or online platforms, the media have the power to convey information, interpret it and contextualise it according to their own perspectives. In this thesis, there will be explored the multiple ways in which the media influence politics, analysing the case study of the narrative proposed by Italian newspapers on the State-Mafia Negotiation, and the empirical evidence illustrating how information was filtered, processed, and transmitted to the public. It will also be examined the role of citizens and political leaders in interpreting and responding to media narratives, as well as the long-term implications of this dynamic on the image of Italy as a democratic state. Through this critical analysis, we aim to stimulate reflection and debate on how the media can shape public opinion and change the public's idea of its institutions.

The relationship between the mass media and politics, together with the problem of the media's influence on citizens' political opinions, has very often been the subject of Communication Research¹. The latter still tries to explain that the reason why the mass media have become the undisputed actors in the political sphere and influence democracy concerns the functions they perform in the public sphere. There are four main functions they perform. The first and most important is to select and examine news about politics, which spreads quickly and in large quantities. The media are the main source of information on politics, also shown live, and the filtering role of the media, gatekeeping² in this case is decisive for democracy. In the early 1900s, Walter Lippmann³ had already emphasized the significant responsibility inherent in this role for journalists: “The news of the day, as it reaches the newspaper offices, is an incredible mixture of facts, propaganda, rumours, suspicions, clues, hopes and fears, and the task of sorting and ordering this news is one of the truly sacred, quasi-sacerdotal tasks in a democracy⁴”.

The process of selecting information takes place at three levels: firstly, the selection of political events and topics that become news; secondly, the classification of the topics already selected to highlight some of them, for example by putting them on the front page, or devoting more space to them. Lastly, the level of thematization, when a political topic is re-proposed by the media over several days, making it a topic of in-depth coverage, thereby mobilising public opinion. By choosing and ranking the topics deemed important, the media set the citizens' 'agenda of priorities', engaging in the agenda setting by delineating which subjects warrant discussion. Agenda setting, i.e. the process by which the media determine which topics are considered important by the public, has been extensively documented in academic research. Studies by McCombs and Shaw (1972) have shown that the media have the power to influence which issues are the focus of public attention and, consequently, which political issues receive priority on the

¹ *Communication Research* originated around the 1920s and 1930s when exponents of the Chicago School began to investigate certain social issues and the role of the media in contemporary society.

² The expression gatekeeping is used to describe the mechanism by which media choices are made, and decisions about whether to let a particular piece of news filter through the 'gates' of a media outlet. The gatekeeper is the one who implements the gatekeeping action. He or she occupies the position of 'expert' (politicians, scientists, sociologists, writers) in a specific area of society and oversees filtering information in that specific area).

³ Walter Lippmann was an American journalist and political scientist. His most important work *'Public Opinion'* of 1922 was fundamental to all studies on the sociology of communication.

⁴ W. Lippmann, *L'opinione pubblica*, (Milano, Donzelli, 2018) p. 23.

political agenda. People try to understand events in light of what touches their lives. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's "dependency theory" (1976, 1982) suggests that the role of the media in the process of constructing meaning will vary from issue to issue. On some issues, the audience has little experience by which to judge media-generated images and meanings; concerning other issues, they have a great deal. The media-dependency hypothesis suggests that the relative importance of media discourse depends on how readily available meaning-generating experiences are in people's everyday lives.⁵ In conclusion, it can be argued that the media function as agents that shape the political agenda.

The news media has a great influence on how we see public affairs, playing an important and sometimes contentious role in selecting which problems receive public attention and action. The immense growth and extension of media institutions, which are now such a compelling component of modern life, has been a major aspect of the last century's research. As the media transmit the news to the public, it influences the methods by which voters assess and judge politicians. At times, the media itself also influences politicians and they often find themselves compelled to address and take positions on issues raised by journalists, thereby illustrating the reciprocal dynamic between media influence and political responsiveness. Indeed, the second function of the media, which is considered very important for democracy, is to create new fields of discussion and electoral confrontation. The media often act as political arenas, hosting debates and events that resonate in public life. Television programmes or national newspapers become the venues for communicating important decisions or creating political events. It must be remembered that the media not only provide the citizen with the event from which the programme is broadcast, but even more so they judge the performance, thus creating expectations.

The media's third function, deemed critical for democracy, is that of political criticism or oversight. This function involves scrutinizing the actions of politicians on behalf of the citizenry, advocating for their interests—a concept often termed "watchdog journalism," signifying a surveillance role akin to that of a vigilant guardian in the citizenry's domain. In nations where the media operate with a degree of independence from governmental influence, this watchdog function can manifest as adversarial

⁵ McCombs, M., & Valenzuela, S. (2020). *Setting the agenda: Mass media and public opinion*. John Wiley & Sons.

journalism, characterized by overt and purposeful criticism of politicians and investigative pursuits into their conduct. This phenomenon was notably exemplified also in the United States, where in the aftermath of events such as the Vietnam War and Watergate, journalists routinely challenged the ideas and objectives of political figures, subjecting their actions to scrutiny. Within this context, a sceptical and audacious journalistic attitude toward politics, underscored by a focus on perceived political apathy toward citizens, is often referred to as negative journalism.

It is crucial to acknowledge that mass media wield an active role in the political sphere, often aligning themselves firmly with political ideologies or parties and purposefully shaping the perspectives of citizens or readers. This influence is deemed significant and is manifested through the unwavering stances of journalists or columnists within newspapers, explicit endorsements of political candidates, or the promotion of electoral campaigns. The fundamental role of the media is to illuminate the realm of politics and present its protagonists in as transparent and comprehensible a manner as possible. However, this visibility does not always benefit politicians positively. Instances such as the live coverage of politicians under interrogation during judicial inquiries, or the depiction of leaders in satirical cartoons that are going to be analysed in the next chapters, highlight the potentially detrimental effects of media portrayal. The media often magnify images of political figures, employing nicknames or caricatures that may tarnish their reputations and sway public perception. According to some scholars, these images persist in the minds of voters more prominently than political debates or party platforms, significantly influencing their understanding of politics and even their opinions. They serve as informational shortcuts for interpreting political realities and making decisions.

One may also conceptualize the media as enterprises operating within the realm of economics, wherein they adapt their supply in response to the quantity of demand with the objective of increasing product sales. The depiction of the world presented by these media entities meticulously mirrors the values and interests of the producers, consumers, and the product itself. In Italy, during the late 1990s, amidst the dismantling of the established party system and the “Mani Pulite” (Clean Hands) investigation, newspapers found themselves compelled to align with the prevailing public perception of corrupt and power-seeking institutions.

It is next required to address an issue of critical relevance in today's political landscape: the media's impact on politics images. It is indisputable that the media has a substantial influence on public opinion, political decisions, and even the operation of democratic institutions.

A public realm is essential to any democratic society because it facilitates information and opinion exchange. Habermas' (1962) is one of the most famous theories on the public sphere, and his (later refined) approach has had a significant impact on academic debate. Citizens can share ideas and influence public policy through public debate and rational argumentation. Habermas acknowledges the mass media as a crucial influential factor in the public sphere, subject to normative criteria, such as offering a plurality of political opinions.⁶ But for this to happen, foremost among considerations is the recognition that citizens' opinions are susceptible to influence not solely by erroneous assertions propagated in newspapers.

1.2 The early 1990s in Italy and the downfall of the “First Republic”

In order to initiate a comprehensive exploration of the role of mass media and its impact on Italian society, it is imperative to start the analysis from the early 1990s. Many believe that the elections on April 5 and 6, 1992, would be the most dramatic since 1948. The Italians who have been summoned to the polls were a different people, shaped by events that have irreparably altered the national and international balance of power. The Old World was changing but, on the horizon, no one had yet understood how.

The Soviet Union was disintegrating completely: Eastern European countries rose from the dust of the Berlin Wall and gained recognition and independence. However, the transition was not peaceful everywhere. In Yugoslavia, a civil war broke out, the first in Europe since the end of World War II, which would drag on for years. Elsewhere, the scenario remained unresolved with consequences that we still see today, with the Russian aggression of Ukraine. In the meantime, the United States of a new

⁶ In 1962, Jürgen Habermas wrote the important work 'Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit' ('The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'), in which he analyzed the concept of the public sphere and its role in modern society, as well as examining the historical changes that have influenced the public sphere over time.

Republican president, George H.W. Bush reaffirmed their supremacy, ensuring the triumphant legitimacy of liberal democracy as the best system of government over what was seen as the last alternative system: Soviet communism. This paved the way for what Francis Fukuyama considered to be the “final form” of human social evolution and “The End of History”⁷. The European Union was formed with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, which permits the single currency to arrive on the EU scene as the worldwide market continues to globalize.

In Italy, the end of the Cold War undermined a traditional system that was essentially based on the opposition between the Christian Democrat majority and the Communist opposition. Indeed, with record abstentionism, the 1992 general election revealed a ruling class shaken to its core. For the first time since the birth of the Italian Republic, the Italian Communist Party's symbol did not appear on the ballot paper.

The results of the vote seemed to pave the way for a new era. On 7 April 1992, the *Corriere della Sera* headlined “Italy protests, elections earthquake”⁸ and suggested that the result should give those in Rome food for thought. The Christian Democracy remained the leading party, but for the first time lost 4.6 percent of its consensus compared to 1987, settling at less than 29.6% and it's the most punished party. The newly formed, from the ashes of the Italian Communist Party, Party of Socialists (PDS) gathered slightly more than 16%, while the Italian Socialist Party stalled at 13.6%. On the right, the emerging party, born in northern Italy from the union of six autonomist movements entered the elections under the name “Lega Nord”. Founded by Umberto Bossi, this party gathered people's dissatisfaction with the old ruling class and achieved an unexpected 8.65%. A northern populist, such as Bossi, was matched by a Sicilian populist, such as Leoluca Orlando, who was quite successful with his 'Rete', a movement that obtained 1, 86% of the vote.

In this tumultuous political environment, for which former President of the Republic Cossiga feared ungovernability and proposed the Presidential Republic⁹, the Socialist Giuliano Amato was appointed to oversee the new administration. In the formation of the new executive, Amato was to play an autonomous

⁷ F. Fukuyama (1992), “*The End of History and the Last Man*”, (ed.) Penguin Books UK (2020)

⁸ “*L'Italia protesta, elezioni terremoto*”, in *Corriere della Sera*, Archive.Tuesday, April 7 1992 – L. 1.200, p. 1.

⁹ G. Buccini, *Il Tempo delle Mani Pulite* (Editori Laterza, 2021), p. 21.

role, especially regarding the choice of men he trusted to head certain important ministries: a sort of 'government of the president', as it was called at the time, was thus born, concerning which the parties, while guaranteeing the trust of a large majority, would play a subordinate role.¹⁰

The goal of establishing a new administration was challenging, and the context was made even more difficult by the case of the Milan judicial investigations that emphasized the national trend. Since the beginning of the year, all the major political groups of what had previously been the 'first republic', were compromised.

From an economic point of view, in Italy, the lira was under attack on the markets in the early months of 1992. Money was tight, and the agreement between business and politics that had guaranteed bribes and contracts was breaking down. The balance of payments imbalance with foreign countries was about nine thousand billion lire in 1991, and the CENSIS ranked Italy first among industrialized countries, in terms of the rate of organized crime. Italians became furious after waking up from the “hangover of welfare clientelism and state debt from the 1980s”.¹¹ And it was in this context that on 17 February, with the arrest for corruption of the engineer and socialist party member Mario Chiesa (at the time president of the Pio Albergo Trivulzio), the Milan public prosecutor's office began the “Clean Hands” (in Italian: “Mani Pulite”) investigation that revealed a corrupt system involving Italian politics and business in collusion. This is how the First Republic's downfall began.

Certainly, the destabilizing power of “Mani Pulite” was also reflected in the trial's extensive media coverage and the increasingly confidential relationship that developed between magistrates and journalists in the early 1990s. Along with the pool of magistrates, a 'pool of journalists' was developed, consisting of 'backroom guys' from five or six newspapers who progressively found themselves in the hands of sources that would allow them to write a piece of history.¹² Already a few months before Tangentopoli and the “Mani Pulite” case, another significant trial, dubbed 'Maxi' due to the number of

¹⁰ P. Craveri, *L'arte del non governo*, (Marsilio Editori, 2016), p. 473.

¹¹ G. Buccini, *Il Tempo delle Mani Pulite* (Editori Laterza, 2021), p. 16-17.

¹² *Ivi*, p. 26-27.

defendants present in court, dominated the news, appearing on the front pages of major national newspapers multiple times.

The so-called “Maxi-Trial” first instance began on 10 February 1986 in the bunker room of the Ucciardone prison and continued with the appeal on 22 February 1989. The trial included 475 people charged with mafia-related charges, including mafia conspiracy. But it was the 16th of December 1987 that marked a historic date: the Palermo Court of Assizes sentenced nineteen of the most powerful “men of honor” to life imprisonment on that day. All the bigwigs, beginning with the 'boss of bosses' Totò Riina, who spearheaded Cosa Nostra's carnage in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in Sicily. On that historic day, it took the President of the Court of Appeal of Palermo, Alfonso Giordano, one hour and twenty-eight minutes to read in one breath, all fifty-four pages of the judgment of the first instance of the 'Maxi trial'. To write that judgment, he was locked in a council chamber, together with the court, for 35 days. He was remembered by the media as 'the judge with the beard' because he entered the council chamber clean-shaven and came out a month later with a long, unkempt beard. ¹³

In prior years, there had also been important arrests of mafia criminals, but it had never happened before that a major portion of the command hierarchy was put on trial and convicted. For the first time, beginning with the “collaborator of justice” Tommaso Buscetta, who had irrevocably broken the taboo of silence, the pool of anti-Mafia judges in Palermo realized that Cosa Nostra existed ¹⁴and was organized unitarily and vertically. So much so that the murders were planned by the highest levels of authority: provincial and regional commissions. Among the convictions of the Maxi-trial were life sentences for the bosses Salvatore Riina, Bernardo Provenzano, Pippo Calò and Michele Greco, the 'Corleonesi'¹⁵, who headed the mafia-like “parallel state” that was Cosa Nostra in that period. These bosses, at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, launched a bloody war in Sicily, with an exceptional string

¹³ F. Cabibbo, “Morto Giordano, fu il presidente del Maxiprocesso a Cosa Nostra”, Cittanuova.it, cultural section. July 13, 2021. <https://www.cittanuova.it/morto-giordano-fu-presidente-del-maxiprocesso-cosa-nostra/?ms=003&se=028>

¹⁴ Public Prosecutor Nino Di Matteo, interview for “*Il Patto Sporco*” by Salvatore Lodato (Chiarelettere editore, 2018) p. 56.

¹⁵ From the name Corleone of the municipality, where they came from, in the metropolitan city of Palermo, Sicily.

of outstanding murders between 1979 and 1983. Their goal was to destroy everyone who opposed the untouchable mafia business system, the subversives of Cosa Nostra.

Besides the new information from the confessions of the turncoat Buscetta, this trial was also possible thanks to two other innovations. The first was a 1982 law establishing the crime of the 'Mafia Association', what we now hear referred to as the '416bis crime'. This is the “Rognoni-LaTorre” law¹⁶, which introduced the word 'mafia' into the penal code for the first time.

The second important innovation was the presence of the joining forces of leading magistrates who created the Palermo Anti-Mafia Pool. The creation of the Pool had two prerequisites. The first was to centralize all the investigations into Cosa Nostra, which were dispersed among too many offices and too many hands. The second was to prevent mafiosi from thinking that by killing a magistrate they could erase the memory of his work through a sort of *damnatio memoriae*. In fact, within the pool, everyone had to share everything. “The Mafia is a major business and economic power”, magistrate Chinnici explained in 1980.¹⁷ Therefore, Pool's initiative should have followed the lead that the Mafia's great economy is based on drugs. Then, it was necessary to investigate the cheques and the connections between those cheques and certain Mafia circles. To this end, the Pool was entrusted to the best magistrates of the time in this field: Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino.

That 16th of December 1987 marked the end of the Mafia's reign of impunity. It ended for at least part of the network: the underworld ballast, which had become an embarrassment to many of its Italian defenders. 475 people were indicted for mafia association, drug trafficking, robbery, extortion, and 120 murders. The revolutionary idea was to prosecute the mafia itself, to cage it and bring it into the homes of Italians eating dinner, through live television images of the trial: 600 journalists were accredited to follow the trial at the Ucciardone prison. The first instance sentence, handed down in 1987, included 19 life sentences, 11.5 billion lire in fines, and the number of acquitted was 141.

¹⁶ Law No. 646 of 13 September 1982, known as the 'Rognoni-La Torre' law, introduced in the penal code the provision of the crime of 'mafia-type association' (Article 416 bis) and the consequent provision of patrimonial measures applicable to the illicit accumulation of capital. <https://archiviopiolatorre.camera.it/1-impegno-parlamentare-nazionale/legge-rognoni-la-torre>

¹⁷ R. Chinnici, in “*Speciale Tg2*”, September 1982.

Then, the appeal trial started on the 22nd of February 1989 and ended on the 10th of November 1990, the day on which the Court of Appeal entered the council chamber. The verdict, pronounced by President Vincenzo Palmegiano on the 10th of December 1990, greatly reduced the first instance verdict. Life sentences were cut from 19 to 12, prison sentences decreased by more than a third, and there were 86 newly acquitted.¹⁸

Between 1990 and 1991, Cosa Nostra became, with no more mediation, more involved in politics. It was concerned that the national ruling class would suddenly stop granting it the favors it had previously obtained, so it established a slew of southern leagues, South Leagues and Independent Leagues, to pursue the objective of isolating the South from the rest of Italy. The Mafiosi have been closely monitoring the Lega Nord's activities in the northern areas. Cosa Nostra had a distinct secessionist vision, and the massive following amassed by Umberto Bossi's party led the mafiosi to believe that the moment had come in the south as well to launch an autonomist movement.¹⁹

Concita De Gregorio's articles for the daily 'La Repubblica' on November 11 and 13, 1990, further disclosed the involvement of two ambiguous figures in those Southern Movements. Licio Gelli, the “venerable master” of the P2 Masonic lodge, was the first.²⁰ The second was Vito Ciancimino, former Palermo mayor and mafia boss who was decisively convicted of mafia affiliation.²¹

The Southern League project, on the other hand undoubtedly a rash step, was short-lived and died soon after the 1992 national elections. In truth, the list, which was only present in a few constituencies, received 27,870 votes in the Chamber of Deputies and 24,051 votes in the Senate (0.07%).²² Nevertheless, it was not elected or reached its aim, let alone leave a lasting impression on the political scene.

¹⁸ [MaxiProcesso - Fondazione Falcone](#)

¹⁹ [lega meridionale | Yes, political! \(yespolitical.com\)](#)

²⁰ C. De Gregorio, *Dalla P2 al Parlamento Gelli vuole tornare in scena*, La Repubblica, November 11, 1990.

²¹ C. De Gregorio, *Gelli già parla da candidato “Votate fratelli”*, La Repubblica, November 13, 1990.

²² Ministero dell'Interno – Archivio storico delle elezioni.

<https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/index.php?tpel=S&dtel=05/04/1992&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S>

However, at the end of 1991, the most powerful members of Cosa Nostra faced their most tense moment. They awaited the Court of Cassation's decision on the Maxiprocesso, their final chance.

1.3 The War against the State

On January 30, 1992, the first section of the Court of Cassation, presided over by Arnaldo Valente, validated the sentences of the maxi-trial. Riina, delegitimized in the eyes of Cosa Nostra, initiates the true mafia strategy of assaulting the State, which would be unleashed between 1992 and 1993 after a few years of deliberate 'submergence' while waiting for the end of the so-called "maxi-trial". Thus, between 1992 and 1993, a violent offensive was launched against state institutions, more specifically against representatives of these institutions who had betrayed expectations and promises or formed the operational nucleus with which the state had most effectively countered the mafia organization Cosa Nostra. Totò Riina himself had told his close associates that 'he had bet his teeth'²³, still convinced of the possibility of relying on the old, tried, and tested political-judicial relations on the Palermo-Rome axis.

As a result of this disappointment and anger, Riina compiled a list of politicians who had to perish: Salvo Lima, Ignazio Salvo, and Calogero Mannino of the Christian Democrats, Carlo Vizzini of the Social Democrats, Salvo and Claudio Martelli of the Socialists, and Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti (DC senator for life and favorite in the race for the Quirinal that was about to open when Francesco Cossiga's term expired). It was intended to punish those considered to be close to the mafia association or who, in any case, had benefited from its actions in various ways. Who, however, had failed to achieve the outcome of the maxi-trial. This approach was begun because of discussions and deliberations of the Cosa Nostra mafia organization's top echelons, which resulted in at least two sessions of its highest deliberative bodies toward the end of 1991.

²³ Public Prosecutor Nino Di Matteo, interview for "*Il Patto Sporco*" by Salvatore Lodato (Chiarelettere editore, 2018) p. 56.

These meetings have been documented by various justice collaborators of significant depth and proven dependability. Among them were Antonino Giuffrè and Filippo Malvagna. The former was the 'boss' of one of the most important “mandamenti”²⁴ of the time, Caccamo (in Palermo province). As a result, he had direct and personal relationships with the heads of the mafia organization, Riina and, most all, Provenzano, as well as knowledge of many illegal occurrences, both personally experienced and known through his function. Giuffrè has stated that, due to his role as 'mandamento' chief, he took part in a meeting of the Palermo 'provincial commission' in December 1991, during which the killing of these people was decided. He further claimed that all the 'mandamento' leaders who attended the meeting accepted the decision in “complete silence”²⁵.

Riina's choice was essentially, first and foremost, one of achieving a “showdown” with all those who had provided guarantees that, in the end, it would be possible to avoid the life sentences already issued in the levels of merit of the Maxi Trial. This was because, by this point, Riina had realized that, thanks to an intervention ascribed to Giovanni Falcone, the Court of Cassation's final verdict would uphold the life sentences already imposed by the judges of merit.²⁶ Judge Falcone's involvement was to have the President of the Supreme Court of Cassation's First Criminal Chamber, Corrado Carnevale, replaced. The press nicknamed Carnevale "the judgment killer" because of the nearly 500 appellate sentences and verdicts he overturned. He was then accused of favoring certain defendants in Mafia trials and occasionally overturning convictions owing to procedural faults.²⁷ Falcone decided to rotate Mafia trials so that they did not invariably end up in the first section presided over by Carnevale. The presence of the “judgment killer” must have fueled Riina’s anticipation that the Maxi Trial sentences would be overturned. Expectations that were not met because of this substitution maneuver.

Giovanni Brusca, another significant justice collaborator, confirmed what happened at the time. He, too, was a 'reagent' of the 'mandamento' of San Giuseppe Jato (in the province of Palermo) and was eligible

²⁴ “Mandamento”, in Cosa Nostra jargon, indicates the area of influence of three families affiliated with the organization.

²⁵ M. Lillo e M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 108.

²⁶ Testimony of defendant Giovanni Brusca, Palermo Assize Court ruling on the “State-Mafia” Pact, 2013. <https://www.giurisprudenzapenale.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Sent.-n.-2-2018-Bagarella-9.pdf>

²⁷ S. Mazzocchi, *Un Altro No Dalla Corte di Cassazione*, from the Archive of La Repubblica, 1987 .

to attend 'provincial commission' sessions. Brusca confirmed that a further meeting was held in December 1991, attended by almost all the 'mandamento' leaders, and in which Riina took the floor, expressing his intention to kill Falcone and Borsellino as historical enemies of Cosa Nostra, as well as some politicians who, in his opinion, had betrayed Cosa Nostra, including Lima and Mannino.

On the 5th of February 1992, Calogero Mannino, the Minister for Extraordinary Interventions in Southern Italy, who had previously dealt with members of the Agrigento gangs, began getting mafia threats but did not report them to the judiciary. Instead, he told his colleague Carabinieri marshal Giuliano Guazzelli, who was close to ROS commander Subranni, in private, "Either they kill Lima, or they kill me."²⁸ Mannino was the subject of a case alleging him of having connections with the Mafia in 1991. The Sciacca public prosecutor's office, which had been involved in the investigation, decided to file the case²⁹.

After the Maxi-Trial's final judgment, the atmosphere around all those political (and other) figures who were in some way involved with the Mafia, became increasingly tense. The boss Salvatore Riina had complained about politicians' false promises and suggested that at that point, it was necessary to act with a frontal attack against the State and actions designed to confuse the matrix of the criminal act. It would then be decided to initiate a series of terrorist actions against the State and institutions that would be claimed by the acronym "Falange Armata", to avoid, at least initially, a direct connection with Cosa Nostra. Indeed, from a historical standpoint, the Italian national context was defined by events that alternated between slaughter and terrorism. Two extremely diverse matrices that are linked by ethereal and very solid red threads. Riina is believed to have declared at that meeting, 'Here, we must first create war and then make peace,'³⁰. That is, to instil dread through bombings to force the State to compromise. He was preparing for the beginning of a war of attrition in which he was certain that the losers would have been, as always up to that point, the magistrates, and the state. What he missed (and indeed

²⁸ M. Lillo e M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 44.

²⁹ A. Bolzoni, "Mannino non è mafioso e il caso viene archiviato", La Repubblica, Archive. October 12, 1991.

³⁰ Domani, La Strategia di Totò Riina "Fare la guerra per poi fare la pace", Sentenza Corte D'Appello, 2022, <https://www.editorialedomani.it/fatti/trattativa-stato-mafia-x2g0qdbx>

everyone had missed that year) is that, under the crust of immutability imposed by the old judiciary and the old parties, much was bubbling over compared to just a few years earlier and the Italian socio-political contest, as previously mentioned, had completely changed.

Despite this, the Cosa Nostra bosses began, to all intents and purposes, the war on the state. On the 12th of March, a Cosa Nostra commando killed Salvo Lima, a Christian Democrat, on the Mondello coast (Palermo). The attack was claimed by the acronym Falange Armata.

Salvo Lima was the “top man” among the Andreottians of Sicily³¹, the point of contact between the mafia and the institutions from the 1960s onwards, according to the testimony of mafioso and justice collaborator Francesco di Carlo (he said: “It was in the late 1980s that there was a meeting, and I was in Lima's office in Rome I mean...”).³² Relationships between Cosa Nostra members, notably Salvatore Riina through his cousins Antonio and Ignazio Salvo, and the Hon. Lima were also confirmed in the judgment of the first instance of the trial on the State-Mafia negotiation.³³ The decision to assassinate Lima had been made a few weeks before after he failed to show up for an appointment to discuss the outcome of the Maxi trial.³⁴ That is because Riina had an imperative need to rebuild respect among the men of honor who, after a decade, began to lose faith in the boss's influence.

The killing of Salvo Lima on March 12, 1992, was the first act of war. It was the start of the Great Blackmail. Killing to negotiate, spreading panic throughout the country, and exporting the terror strategy beyond Sicily. According to public prosecutor Nino Di Matteo, the Lima murder was immediately recognized for its actual meaning. An attack on the national government, and the start of a butchery

³¹ G. Buccini, *Il Tempo delle Mani Pulite* (Editori Laterza, 2021), p. 36.

³² “...è stato nell’80, a fine ’80, che c’è stata una riunione e io ero nell’ufficio di Lima a Roma intendo..”. Palermo Court of Assizes, second section, presided over by Alfredo Montalto, Judgment of the first instance of the trial on the State-Mafia negotiation, April 20, 2018. p. 897. <https://www.giurisprudenzapenale.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Sent.-n.-2-2018-Bagarella-9.pdf>

³³ Ivi, p. 894.

³⁴ “*Perché quando una persona, se ci dai un appuntamento e non si presenta, ci si va subito a sparare, (...) perché certamente se non si presenta vuol dire che ha capito qualcosa... Per quanto riguardava questa sconfitta che si era avuto per il maxi processo*”. Ivi, p. 909.

involving other Sicilian officials.³⁵ All of the pacts that had kept Italy afloat in the 1980s had crumbled, including those between entrepreneurs and parties, as well as politicians and Mafiosi.

As a result, the assassination sparked widespread worry both inside institutions and among some individuals, primarily Hon. Lima's party colleagues, who saw the risk of becoming the subject of Mafia 'punishments'³⁶ or revenge at the time. Already a few days after that 12th of March, the Chief of Police Vincenzo Parisi, and the Minister of the Interior Vincenzo Scotti sent out worrisome circulars to prefectures around Italy, warning of the threat of future assassinations. Possible attacks on the serving Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, Minister for Extraordinary Interventions in Southern Italy Calogero Mannino, and Minister for Postal and Telecommunications Carlo Vizzini were mentioned.³⁷ On March 20, 1992, Interior Minister Vincenzo Scotti bravely raised this dreadful prospect in Parliament. However, Giulio Andreotti mocked the situation as an absurdity.³⁸ It was quite doubtful that Andreotti did not know what the Mafia had planned at the time, but he could not admit it. In fact, upon Cossiga's parting, parliament was to begin voting to install a new head of state. The outgoing premier, Andreotti, was considered the favourite. To claim knowledge of the plan made by organized crime would have implied guilt to those who accused him of having links with Cosa Nostra. Precisely for this reason, the Christian Democrats' Andreottian current decided to take a wait-and-see approach, never directly divulging the name of the Prime Minister in office since 1989. The plan was to wait until other candidatures were scuttled, such as that of Arnaldo Forlani.³⁹

³⁵ Public Prosecutor N. Di Matteo, interview for "*Il Patto Sporco*" by S. Lodato (Chiarelettere editore, 2018) pp. 60-61.

³⁶ M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 110.

³⁷ Palermo Court of Assizes, second section, presided over by Alfredo Montalto, Judgment of the first instance of the trial on the State-Mafia negotiation, April 20, 2018; p. 955. <https://www.giurisprudenzapenale.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Sent.-n.-2-2018-Bagarella-9.pdf>

³⁸ "*E' una patacca*", the words of PM Giulio Andreotti recalled by prosecutor N. Di Matteo in his interview for "*Il Patto Sporco*" by Salvatore Lodato (Chiarelettere editore, 2018) p. 61.

³⁹ L. Romano, *Le tre mete mancate di Andreotti*, Il Giornale, May 6, 2013

Giovanni Falcone was one of the few protagonists who supported the alarm over the impending war. He agreed with Scotti's choice to report to Parliament⁴⁰. He knew what Cosa Nostra was planning and didn't want the public to be kept in the dark about what was going on.

The Hon. Calogero Mannino, a major Sicilian politician at the time, was particularly impacted and scared by Lima's murder. He belonged to the same party as Hon. Lima, the Christian Democrats, and was, as previously said, Minister for Extraordinary Interventions in Southern Italy at the time. After the maxi trial, he was also a target of Cosa Nostra. Political elections were due for April 6, and Cosa Nostra committed a new crime just two days before, on April 4. Marshal Guazzelli, the man to whom Mannino had originally revealed his fears, was assassinated this time. While driving across the viaduct, along the Agrigento-Porto Empedocle Road, Marshal Guazzelli was overtaken by a small Fiat van⁴¹. The killers opened the rear door and shot him dead⁴². The Falange Armata claimed responsibility for the crime in question. The circle around Minister Mannino became increasingly tight.

The so-called "State-Mafia Pact" (or State-Mafia Negotiation), the subject of verification in this thesis, would start right here. In fact, according to the reconstruction of the facts in the nineties, it was the Hon. Mannino who, fearing for his life, asked some Carabinieri officers to take actions that could save him. Mannino did not trust the protection offered by the State and thus contacted some loyal Carabinieri to help him escape the Cosa Nostra's increasing clutches. Among them was General Antonio Subranni, who has served as commander of the ROS, the Carabinieri's primary investigative organization with jurisdiction over organized crime and terrorism, since 1990. However, the choice to address the General was unusual, because the ROS lacked the authority to take actions to safeguard the Honourable Mannino from potential assaults. It did not appear that he took any effort to increase or strengthen Mannino's protective measures, either directly as ROS commander or by intervening with individuals who had those competencies. Furthermore, Mannino himself believed that an escort could not have saved him. The motivation for contacting Subranni seemed thus to be another. He sought to urge Arma's loyalists

⁴⁰ M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 123.

⁴¹ F. Cavallaro, *Ecciso il "mastino" dell'antimafia*, Corriere della Sera. Archive. April 5, 1992, p. 13.

⁴² A. Bolzoni, *Una pioggia di piombo contro il Carabiniere*, La Repubblica. Archive. April 5, 1992.

to break new ground: establish contact with the perpetrators of his assassination and persuade them to rethink their intentions. As a result, the media refers to Mannino as the 'Solicitor' of the so-called Mafia-State Negotiation.⁴³

Between May 21 and 22, 1992, three dispatches from the Repubblica agency, coordinated by Lando dell'Amico, examined the new President of the Republic's election. The comments criticized the parties' inability to achieve an agreement, and the phrases were "It is to be feared at this point that someone will dust off the typically national temptation of the "big hit." "⁴⁴ "Strategies of tension constitute in this country a methodology in current use in certain conjunctures of political blockade."⁴⁵, "a big external bang like in Moro's time, justifying an emergency vote" to persuade the parties to replace Andreotti with an outsider to the Quirinal.⁴⁶ These words, read 31 years later, seem like an alarming prophecy.

Indeed, the next day, 23 May 1992, magistrate Falcone, his wife Francesca Morvillo, and three men of the escort were blown up by 500 kilos of explosives, on the Capaci highway. The attack was claimed by the Falange Armata. Falcone had to be killed in the most theatrical and scenic way possible. A massacre in "grand style" to send a way more powerful message to the State. That Saturday, May 23, Falcone was attended for the afternoon at his sister's house, in Palermo. He took the Secret Services airplane from Ciampino (Rome) at 16:45 and landed 53 minutes later in Punta Raisi. At the airport, his escort was waiting for him with the three armored Fiat Croma. Falcone took the wheel of the white Croma, next to him was his wife Francesca, and on the backseat was his driver, Giuseppe Costanza. In front, and right behind his car there were the other two Croma, each with three men of the escort: Antonio Montinaro, Rocco Dicillo, and Vito Schifani. The speed of three cars was directly monitored by the two Mafiosi Gioacchino La Barbera (driving on the same highway but in opposite directions) and Giovanni Brusca (lurking on the hill). At the 17:55, Brusca pressed the button. The first of the three cars was blown away for 60 meters. The second car, driven by Falcone, hit the wall of debris that rose from the explosion. In

⁴³ M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 117-118.

⁴⁴ *Ivi*, p. 45. "C'è da temere a questo punto che qualcuno rispolveri la tentazione tipicamente nazionale del colpo grosso"

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*. "Le strategie della tensione costituiscono in questo paese una metodologia d'uso corrente in certe congiunture di blocco politico"

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*. "Un bel botto esterno come ai tempi di Moro, a giustificazione di un voto d'emergenza".

the third one, the agents were wounded but survived. The crater was 15 meters long and large 14. It was Brusca himself that described the attack and the minutes after. He and his men ran away and were left in the villa of the boss Girolamo Guddo, where he had an appointment with Raffaele Ganci and Totò Cancemi. In the house, the TV was on and tuned to Tg3, which did the special edition. During the first minutes, no one was sure of Falcone's death but then the announcement arrived. He and his wife didn't die on the spot, but they managed to be extracted from the crumpled sheets of the cars. However, they had severed inside bleeding and the hospital's doctors couldn't do anything.

The Capaci's carnage, within the ante facts of the so-called "State-Mafia Negotiation", assumed a central and decisive role, because of its disruptive tragedy. It was the emblematic event in which with extreme clarity the Vengeful and punitive intent moved the fierce reaction of Salvatore Riina for a long time. In other words, at that moment it was far from Riina's intention to formulate negotiation requests to the Institution of the State. He only wanted to demonstrate the strength and the ineluctability of the reaction of Cosa Nostra after the sentences of the Maxi-Trial, against the magistrates as fabricators of that State's success.

These are the facts and scenarios of the great fear, of the great blackmail of politicians, of a state that was now in checkmate. The country was on its knees, without a leader, caught in the crossfire between the State and the Mafia. The attention of all of Italy quickly turned to Palermo, shaking public opinion from the ground up. Millions of people watched with open mouths on live TV. Corriere della Sera's journalist Goffredo Buccini remembers that day vividly: "None of us were able to utter a word, not even the old men who had seen it all".⁴⁷ Falcone was the judge who sentenced Cosa Nostra to the cages of the bunker room. In the next few days, ordinary people in Palermo automatically determined which side they supported, and they struck out against organized crime like never before. Strikes, rallies, and public outrage: the death of the symbol of the fight against the Mafia was too profound an offense to be forgotten. Forty thousand people came to the 14th-century church of San Domenico, on the parvis and

⁴⁷ G. Buccini, *Il Tempo delle Mani Pulite* (Editori Laterza, 2021), p. 36.

in the streets surrounding it, mothers, students, the elderly, families, and workers: they invoke the name of Falcone. At the same time, they aggressively insulted politicians, saying to them "Shame, shame, murderers, murderers,"⁴⁸ as well as ministers and deputies who gave the dreadful impression that they were merely parading. Then to the altar went Rosaria Costa, the widow of agent Schifani. She managed to hold back her sobs to deliver the speech that went around the world: "I address the men of the mafia, who are also in here [...] Get down on your knees if you dare to change! [...] But they do not change, they do not want to change!"⁴⁹

Two days after the Capaci tragedy, and at the same time as Palermo's funerals, in Rome, a Parliament in shock reached an agreement to elect the new President of the Republic. The favorite for victory was Giulio Andreotti but, after the murders of Lima and Falcone, was taken out of the game. Former President Cossiga was succeeded by a President of the Republic who had hitherto been out of the picture. The DC and allies elected former magistrate, and former President of the Chamber of Deputies, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro who was installed as the new head of state on May 28, 1992, at the Quirinale. The 'big external bang' produced the desired effect.

On the same day, the SISDE (Service for Information and Democratic Security) in Palermo sent a confidential notification to the headquarters in Rome with the topic "Project to assassinate Dr. Paolo Borsellino."⁵⁰ No one, however, informed the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office. No one from the Viminale ordered the Questore or the Prefect of Palermo to take even the most basic precautions, such as forcibly removing automobiles from Via Mariano D'Amelio, where Borsellino's elderly mother lived and whom the judge visited every Sunday. Borsellino worked night and day on the murder of his friend Falcone, telling his wife that "he had no time" and that "he must hurry".⁵¹

The story, in this exact moment, becomes complicated, or rather crumbles into numerous versions and reconstructions, which are frequently varied and conflicting. This is the narrative that began here and is

⁴⁸ G. D'Avanzo, "*Vergogna, Vergogna Assassini*", La Repubblica, 25 May, 1992.

⁴⁹ <https://www.archivioantimafia.org/schifani.php>

⁵⁰ M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 45.

⁵¹ G. Lo Bianco, S. Rizza. *L'agenda rossa di Paolo Borsellino*. (Chiarelettere, 2010).

still ongoing: the one of the State-Mafia Negotiation. We strive to fix only those accounts that have enough convergence. After the Capaci massacre, and on the same days as Borsellino was conducting the investigation, some officials of the Ros department of the Carabinieri attempted to approach some Mafiosi for investigative purposes. The officials were General Antonio Subranni, head of the Ros, Colonel Mario Mori, and Captain Giuseppe De Donno. Vito Ciancimino was chosen to approach them. He was a Christian Democrat who was the former mayor of Palermo and councilor for public works of the so-called “Sacco di Palermo”⁵², together with it, he has been described as the most political of mafiosi and the most mafioso of politicians.⁵³ Ciancimino had a direct line of communication with the fugitives Riina and Provenzano. So, with the creation of a channel between the Carabinieri and the top echelons of Cosa Nostra, a new chapter began. They turned to Ciancimino's son Massimo to arrange the first of many following appointments, at least five until the end of 1992.⁵⁴ Between the 28th and 29th of May, on the Rome-Palermo flight, ROS Captain Giuseppe De Donno meets Massimo Ciancimino, urgently asking to speak with his father.⁵⁵ The request, and subsequent organization and confirmation of the meeting with him, were made possible by Carabiniere Giuseppe De Donno and Massimo Ciancimino's familiar relationship; the two first met in the 1980s during the trial at first instance involving Vito Ciancimino, whose investigation was carried out by De Donno himself. Essentially, between the end of the 1980s and 1990s, Captain De Donno was transferred from Bagheria to the Palermo Operations Unit and began to resolutely search for the thread that linked the large business groups in Sicily. At the same time, he breathed new life into some pioneering elements concerning a municipalised company in Palermo, around which the shadow of Don Vito, known as Vito Calogero Ciancimino, was hovering. He and the rest of the investigation team were able to prove that the municipality's waterworks, sewers, and school buildings were managed, through some local and national companies, by the former Corleone

⁵² The expression 'Sacco di Palermo' refers to the building boom that occurred between the 1950s and 1960s, which affected the architectural physiognomy of Palermo but which revealed irregularities in building permits, involving figures linked to front men and suspicious connections between builders and political figures, signalling complicity between Mafia gangs and local power.

⁵³ Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission, chaired by Giuseppe Pisanu, *Comunicazioni del Presidente Pisanu sui grandi delitti e le stragi di mafia del 1992-'93*, 9 gennaio 2013, pp. 95-96.

<https://www.parlamento.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/DF/289522.pdf>

⁵⁴ Public Prosecutor N. Di Matteo, interview for “*Il Patto Sporco*” by S. Lodato (Chiarelettere editore, 2018) p. 64.

⁵⁵ M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 46.

mayor of Palermo. And indeed, later on, Dr. Falcone requested and obtained in 1990 two pre-trial detention orders against Vito Calogero Ciancimino, whom everyone believed to be retired by then.⁵⁶

The goal of contacting him was clear: facing extreme difficulty at the start of the massacres and fearing that leading members of politics and the judiciary would be targeted as the months passed, the State concluded that to put an end to terror, it was necessary to talk to the Mafia. According to reconstructions, therefore, the meetings with Vito Ciancimino took place in his Roman home and the substance of those conversations took on the weight of a real negotiation.

1.4 “State of Emergency”: Uncharted Territory

To completely grasp the media's impact on politics, we must first analyze the notion of framing, which refers to how the media presents and interprets events. Numerous studies, including one conducted by Entman in 1993, have found that framing has a significant influence on popular perception of difficult political problems. For example, framing an issue as a national security concern can result in significantly different policy reactions from the public and legislators.⁵⁷

Emergencies, ranging from economic crises to catastrophic natural events, have always had a significant impact on politics. However, it is in the context of modern media that this impact has been amplified in an unprecedented way. The speed with which news spreads through the various media channels and their ability to shape public opinion have radically transformed the way in which emergencies influence contemporary politics. Firstly, the media play a crucial role in shaping public perception of emergencies. Media coverage of an event, influenced by editorial choices and journalistic narrative, can determine whether a crisis is perceived as a manageable challenge or an imminent catastrophe. This, in turn, can influence the reaction of politicians and public policy makers.

Furthermore, the media serve as a channel through which politicians communicate their responses to emergencies. However, this communication is often subject to scrutiny and criticism by the media and

⁵⁶ M. Mori, F. Ghiberti, *M.M. Nome in codice UNICO* (La nave di Teseo, 2023), p. 100.

⁵⁷ Entman, R. M. (1993). *Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm*. *Journal of communication*, 43(4), 51-58.

the public, which can further influence the political climate. For their part, the media are also political actors in their own right. Editorial decisions on which emergencies to cover and how to do so can be influenced by political, economic, and ideological considerations. For instance, a media outlet may choose to emphasise certain aspects of an emergency according to the interests of its owners or the views of its readers, influencing the political and public agenda as mentioned above.

Moreover, the media can also play a role in shaping political responses to emergencies through public pressure. Intense media coverage of an issue can lead to the mobilisation of public opinion and demand for immediate action by politicians. In response to this pressure, politicians may be pushed to take more drastic measures or change their policies to deal with the emergency. Underlying these general ideas is Schmittian reflection on sovereignty: if “sovereign is he who decides on the state of exception”⁵⁸, then it is in exceptional moments that sovereign political authority gathers in unity by suspending the ordinary institutions of democratic pluralism.

During times of crisis, the press plays a crucial role in communicating and negotiating the crisis. Considering the Magistrates' strong judicial role in Italy at the beginning of the '90s, the Italian media perspective on mafia issues had a major influence on Italy. On January 15, 1993, the “boss of bosses” Riina was arrested, followed by the arrest of his deputy, Bernardo Provenzano, and then the second rank of the Mafia. The bosses were given the choice between death in prison or cooperation with the authorities. As Leonardo Sciascia repeatedly pointed out, the latter demonstrated little authority and morals. Since then, it has been debated whether the oldest and most dangerous criminal organization in our country's post-unification history has been eradicated or severely weakened. Credit is due to Giuliano Amato and his government for significantly enhancing anti-mafia efforts and implementing successful new regulatory tools. The achievements of the socialist intellectual's government during the ten months in power have not been widely publicized. An unexpected and catastrophic event took place. The Capaci and D'Amelio atrocities led to mafia terrorism replacing political terrorism. In other words, fourteen

⁵⁸ C. Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Doctrine of Sovereignty*, p. 33, in C. Schmitt, *Le Categorie del 'Politico'*, edited by G. Miglio and P. Schiera (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1972).

years later, the same request for the state to yield its opposition had become the main issue. It is important not to diminish or underestimate the importance of Minister Conso's defense of the non-renewal of ministerial orders applying the 41-bis to 140 Ucciardone convicts at the outset: “Need to stop the threat of more massacres”.

The term "State of Emergency" encapsulates the societal shift towards a state of heightened alertness and a willingness to embrace extraordinary measures. The urgency for reassurance and stability led to a recalibration of the societal contract, with citizens reluctantly accepting compromises on civil liberties in exchange for promises of enhanced security. A State of Emergency, in this context, wasn't merely a political response but a nuanced reflection of a populace caught between the desire for safety and the preservation of individual freedoms. The rapid adoption of special laws and extraordinary measures showcased a nation in transition, grappling with the delicate balance between security and personal liberties.

There was a demand for the State to take back the land which was seized by the bosses. The troops were deployed to Sicily, and as a result, the measure became known as the 'Sicilian Vespers'. Officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers were appointed as officers or agents of public security, granting them the public power of intervention that they lacked as army members. The committees were strengthened, and their commanders were selected in a manner that demonstrated the strictness of the executive on 41-bis. The situation resembled that of a civil war. Giuliano Amato, despite having a troubled conscience, did not hesitate to sign orders that sentenced mafiosi to harsh prison conditions.

The ruling class's cultural State of Emergency was based on the principle that the end justifies the means. If this occurs, it is not due to the strength of crime, but rather the weakness and immaturity of democracy. Leonardo Sciascia suggests a civil strategy called the “autopoiesis” of the emergency, which refers to the emergency's ability to reproduce itself within the solutions that oppose it. When chronicling a conflict that uses the emergency as a paradigm, the Anti-Mafia demands that the Mafia justify itself. Fragile democracies often respond to significant crises with an autoimmune reaction that not only targets the enemy besieging them (such as the mafia or a pandemic) but also turns against themselves. This

excessive antibody response leads to the formation of a single alliance, which comes at the expense of the system hosting the conflict.

In this tumultuous period, the media emerged as a critical player, wielding the power to shape public opinion and frame the national narrative. Lost battles are real intellectual nourishment for journalism. Civil debate is created. Concern for the Palace excites the anarchic spirit of the journalist, that portion of calculated risk-taking that brings us back to the watchdog model, fixed in their professional imprinting: “people worry, and we have no intention of reassuring them”. As a result, even among journalists who are supposed to be bearers of truth and justice, mass conformism and assumption are created⁵⁹ and that is what happened in Italy with the narrative of the “Pact” between the State and the Mafia after the massacres. The trifecta of *Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica*, and *Il Giornale*, each with its unique political leaning, became the major conduits through which information flowed.

1.5 Navigating the Complex Tale of the State-Mafia Pact

Over the course of two decades, the Italian media has extensively addressed the State-Mafia Pact, delving into its historical underpinnings, and associated conspiratorial elements, thereby elevating its significance to a matter of national import and security. This thesis endeavours to scrutinize the intricacies of these mechanisms. On 27th of May 2013, the trial concerning the State-Mafia negotiations began. Hence began the long chapter, concluded only in 2023, on the real or alleged negotiation: a story laden with ambiguities, false trials, and judicial theories, from which those who come out worst will be the very servants of the state, forced to tread a dark stage on which everything seems to appear in a grey shade and even heroes seem maligned. According to investigators, the so-called “sinking strategy”⁶⁰ began, which was very much wanted by the boss Provenzano. He stopped with the massacres so as not to cause social alarm but used that saved energy to search for new contacts and infiltrate more and more in the economy. According to Tullio Cannella (a mafioso who later became a justice collaborator),

⁵⁹ A. Barbano, *L’inganno*, (Marsilio Editori, 2022. Venice), p.20.

⁶⁰ Report of the Anti-Mafia Investigative Directorate (DIA), *La “strategia di inabissamento”- gli “assetti” della mafia catanese*. <https://livesicilia.it/la-strategia-dellinabissamento-gli-assetti-della-mafia-catanese/>

Bernardo Provenzano and the Graviano brothers abandoned the separatist Sicilia Libera project to provide electoral support to Silvio Berlusconi's new political movement 'Forza Italia'.⁶¹ According to Justice collaborator Nino Giuffrè, the Graviano brothers negotiated with Berlusconi through businessman Gianni Jenna to obtain judicial benefits and the revision of the 41-bis in exchange for electoral support for Forza Italia; Giuffrè also claims that Provenzano used certain channels to reach Marcello Dell'Utri and Berlusconi to present a series of requests on Cosa Nostra-related topics.⁶² Other justice collaborators also discussed Cosa Nostra's backing for Forza Italia in the 1994 elections.⁶³

On the 20th of April 2018, the first instance judgment was pronounced. President Alfredo Montalto, accompanied by Judge Stefania Brambille and six other popular judges (Ruvolo, Gargano, Geraci, Meccia, Ilarda, and Miano), read the sentence. The Court had filed its grounds the day before, laying out point by point in 5,252 pages that explain every arrangement, intrigue, and machination with Cosa Nostra throughout the two years 1992-1993 at the instigation of State officials. Colonel of the Ros Mario Mori, General Antonio Subranni, the creator of the Forza Italia party Marcello Dell'Utri, and Doctor Antonino Cinà were sentenced to 12 years in prison, Captain Giuseppe De Donno and Massimo Ciancimino to eight years, Leoluca Bagarella to 28 years; the charges against Giovanni Brusca were time-barred, as requested by prosecutors, and Nicola Mancino was acquitted. Former minister Mannino, a co-defendant who selected the shortened procedure, was acquitted on November 4, 2015, of threatening a political body of the State “for not having committed the deed”. The acquittal was confirmed in appeal on February 3, 2020, and in Cassation on December 11, 2020, making it final. Then, on July 13, 2020, Massimo Ciancimino, who was accused of aggravated slander against former police head Gianni De Gennaro and conspiracy to commit mafia conspiracy and whose case had been separated by the courts at the request of his lawyers, was prescribed.

For the remaining defendants, the appeal trial began in Palermo in April 2019. In June 2021, the public prosecutor's office sought confirmation of the first-instance convictions. On the 23rd September of the

⁶¹ F. Viviano, *Ciancimino jr e il biglietto del boss “Dell’Utri parlò con Provenzano”*, in *la Repubblica*. Archive. December 2, 2009.

⁶² *Giuffrè, il boss Graviano era il tramite con Berlusconi*, in *la Repubblica*, Cronaca. Archive. December 3, 2002.

⁶³ *Trattativa Stato-Mafia: indagato dell’Utri*, in *Corriere della Sera*, Cronaca. Archive. November 24, 2011.

same year, the Palermo Court of Appeal acquitted former ROS officers Mario Mori, Antonio Subranni, and Giuseppe De Donno because “the fact does not constitute an offense” and former senator Marcello Dell’Utri “for not having committed the deed”, accused of threatening a political body of the State, while the charges against Giovanni Brusca were prescribed, the sentence of boss Leoluca Bagarella was reduced to twenty-seven years and the twelve-year sentence.⁶⁴ On August 6, 2022, the grounds for the verdict were filed, proving that the agreement was an “improvised attempt” by Carabinieri officers (who had already been cleared of the criminal accusations) to avoid more atrocities, rather than political.⁶⁵

In the years following the repeal of 41-BIS, some events added to the imagery of the State-Mafia Negotiation narrative. In 2001, Totò Riina's solitary detention was lifted and some attempted to alter Article 41bis.⁶⁶ Calogero Mannino, who was being investigated for the negotiation, received a notice of guarantee in which "there was generic talk of pressure that Mannino allegedly exerted on members of the institutions, on the issue of 41-bis", the hard prison that the Mafia bosses were trying to have revoked.⁶⁷ Carlo Azeglio Ciampi and Oscar Luigi Scalfaro were also heard on the matter since they were asked by letter to revoke the 41-bis decree-law on hard prison.⁶⁸

A magistrate from Florence, Gabriele Chelazzi, spoke of the opening of an ongoing 'negotiating table'.⁶⁹ Having ascertained that in 1993 the negotiations had continued with bomb explosions and massacres, in April 2003 he wanted to interrogate Colonel Mori, formulating the crucial question: why was it that between 4 and 6 November 1993, 140 Mafiosi locked up in the Ucciardone prison had their 41-bis regime revoked? What could have allowed the decision to set out on the path of terrorist attacks, which were tried in Rome, Florence, and Milan in 1993? On the one hand to exercise revenge, to take it, against the State, having already deliberated on it a couple of years earlier. On the other hand, to associate with

⁶⁴ S. Palazzolo, “*La trattativa con la mafia ci fu ma i carabinieri volevano solo fermare le stragi*”. *Ecco le motivazioni della sentenza che ha assolto Mori*, in *la Repubblica*. Palermo. August 6, 2022.

⁶⁵ G. Bianconi, *Stato-mafia, “Nessun patto politico con i mafiosi. La trattativa voleva fermare le stragi”*, in *Corriere della Sera*, August 6, 2022.

⁶⁶ F. Cavallaro, *Revocato l’isolamento a Totò Riina*, in *Corriere della Sera*. Archive. March 13, 2001.

⁶⁷ S. Palazzolo, *Trattativa, indagato Mannino. I pm: pressioni sul 41bis*, in *la Repubblica*. Archive. Palermo, Cronaca. February 24, 2012.

⁶⁸ A. Ziniti, *L’ultimatum dei boss a Scalfaro: ora revocateci il carcere duro*, in *la Repubblica*. Archive. Cronaca. November 17, 2011.

⁶⁹ S. Sechi, *La Mafia non è finita. Dalla trattativa con lo Stato all’arresto di Messina Denaro (1993-2023)*. goWare, 2023.

it something that was the subject of an interminable controversy, of frontal confrontations by magistrates and public opinion (represented by the newspapers). That is, “also to be able to open, in future, a negotiating table with the representatives of the institutions, who could not have remained insensitive to the dismay and panic that such attacks would have created in the population”⁷⁰. It could not be ruled out, therefore, that faced with the initiative of the ROS leaders (i.e. important sectors of the State), Riina and his closest collaborators were convinced that the State, if Cosa Nostra had insisted on using violence, could have been forced to yield further.

On April 27, 2023, the Court of Cassation acquitted former ROS officers Mario Mori, Antonio Subranni, and Giuseppe De Donno, as well as former senator Marcello Dell'Utri, of the charge of threatening a political body of the State for 'not having committed the deed', while the charge against Leoluca Bagarella and Antonino Cinà was renamed 'attempted threat to a political body of the State' and declared time barred. The final acquittal in the “State-Mafia Pact” trial has put an “end” to the whole affair. In its communiqué, the sixth section of the Court of Cassation stated:

*"The sentence [...] excluded any responsibility of the ROS officers Antonio Subranni, Mario Mori and Giuseppe De Donno - who had already been acquitted on appeal on the grounds of lack of guilt - denying any hypothesis of complicity in the attempted crime of threatening a political body".*⁷¹

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned trial results, time was not kind. In belatedly attributing their exclusion to their excessive commitment to the Mafia, high-profile state figures appeared in mass culture as the culprits. Hence in public opinion a feeling of uncertainty, of lack of credibility persists to this day, and of which the newspapers are the bearers. all these institutional figures were condemned by another penal code, a “media penal code”, forged with moralistic derived categories. The journalist and essayist Alessandro Barbano explains how the effect of this is to blur the boundaries of factuality to the point of matching them with the boundaries of the power being targeted. In this case, the high ranks of the

⁷⁰ Hearing of Prosecutor Sergio Lari before the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission - Senate of the Republic - Chamber of Deputies - XVI LEGISLATURE Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the mafia and other criminal associations, including foreign ones. 102nd sitting: Monday, 26 March 2012, p.8.

⁷¹ M. Mori, F. Ghiberti, *M.M. Nome in codice UNICO* (La nave di Teseo, 2023), p. 95.

carabinieri and institutions in general. Based on the belief that all institutions are corrupt, a new black-and-white universe is created with which to narrate the country. This narrative has three fixed coordinates: the urgency-emergency, moralism without discounts, and the abjuration of power, that is, the objective of sterilizing any form of it, denying its legitimacy. A distorted view of public opinion in which, in addition to judicial and political power, a third is also added: journalistic power.⁷²

In this thesis, there will be examined the salient events that characterized the 1990s in Italy, focusing on the intricate dynamics of the State-Mafia Pact and the ensuing investigations and trials. However, the journey through this pivotal period does not stop here; it is going to deepen the analysis of media influences, focusing on three major newspapers: Repubblica, Corriere della Sera, and Il Giornale. We will explore how the language used, the political orientations and the editorial choices of these newspapers have contributed to shaping the collective imagination regarding the Pact, directly influencing public opinion. Through this in-depth investigation, we aim to understand how the power of words and political connections helped shape a context of emergence in Italy in those years, thus contributing to the formation of a collective narrative that still permeates the country's historical memory today.

CHAPTER TWO

From Chaos to Chronicle: Contacts with the Mafia and post massacre “State of Emergency”

2.1 First contacts between Ciancimino and the Carabinieri: the beginning of negotiations

As introduced, in the contemporary socio-political landscape, the role of the media in influencing political dynamics is increasingly evident and complex. This phenomenon is clearly manifested through significant historical events, such as the State-Mafia Pact, which provides an exemplary context for exploring the intricate connection between media and politics. The State-Mafia Negotiation, portrayed as an obscure and complex interaction between the institutions of the Italian state and the criminal

⁷² A. Barbano, *L'inganno*, (Marsilio Editori, 2022. Venice), pp. 171-175.

organization of the Mafia, has attracted widespread media interest over the past two decades. This interest has contributed to raising the issue to a dimension of national relevance and bringing to the fore its connection to the political dynamics of contemporary Italy. In this chapter, an in-depth analysis of the history and salient facts of the State-Mafia Pact is proposed to contextualize the role of the media in influencing national politics.

Parallel with the meeting between the men of Cosa Nostra and the Ros members, a key event in Italian judicial and criminal history occurred. The decree adopting the final form of Article 41-bis of the Penitentiary Ordinance, to provide for a harsher prison regime for mafia bosses was signed on June 8, 1992, by Ministers Scotti (of the Interior) and Martelli (of Justice). Already established in law on October 10, 1986, but only applicable in circumstances of urgency within jails⁷³, because of the new provision enacted in the context of major public order and security concerns⁷⁴, at the request of the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Justice has the authority to suspend prison system guarantees and take all necessary measures against terrorism and mafia convicts, to prevent the criminals in prison from passing orders or communicating with their organizations on the ground. However, because this was simply a decree law, Parliament had 60 days to change it into law. Meanwhile, in the second week of June 1992, Captain De Donno saw Vito Ciancimino (who was under house arrest following a first-degree Mafia conviction) for the first time at his home in Rome.

The dynamics experienced within the Ros are extremely obvious from Mori's testimony. An endemic fact such as criminal associationism, the bosses' total control of the region, the omertà (code of silence), and other peculiar elements such as the complete absence of 'sources' necessitated a reconsideration of the investigative technique. Specialization was required. Giuseppe De Donno, referred to as “Great”, is described by Mori as “the most intellectually brilliant officer he had ever met”.⁷⁵ Capable of dealing

⁷³ Legge Gozzini, October 10th, 1986, n. 663.

https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/atto/serie_generale/caricaDettaglioAtto/originario?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=1986-10-16&atto.codiceRedazionale=086U0663&elenco30giorni=false

⁷⁴ *17th Legislature - Dossier no. 152* of the Senate of the Republic, Edited by C. Andreuccioli, collaborators: S. Bonanni.

https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/17/DOSSIER/0/1006019/index.html?part=dossier_dossier1-sezione_sezione1

⁷⁵ M. Mori, F. Ghiberti, *M.M. Nome in codice UNICO* (La nave di Teseo, 2023), p. 93

with complicated operational problems by devising innovative and unanticipated solutions for its adversaries. Mori explained once more that “within a job in the Territorial he would have been idolized by the employees but would certainly have had problems with a good part of the superiors”.⁷⁶ The choice to 'deal' with the Mafiosi was certainly unconventional. However, the prerequisite was to implement the basis of the Ros operational concept: to achieve 'information superiority'⁷⁷ over the adversary. It came down to having sensitive cognitive data. This method, which is only practicable in the battle against major crime, due to its practical and regulatory complexity, was and is known to be Ros's distinctive investigative aspect. So, at that historic moment, a nucleus was formed solely with the purpose of capturing the boss Riina, and Captain Giuseppe De Donno was authorized to pursue his idea of contacting Vito Ciancimino to obtain cooperation and useful information for the identification of the target. The Carabinieri called into question would invariably defend themselves, specifically, by claiming that the meetings were held to gather information from within Cosa Nostra. "It was no longer the time for low-level informers", as Colonel Mori recounts⁷⁸ and it was decided to use one of the legal investigative options, namely the use of 'confidential sources', which Article 203 of the Code of Criminal Procedure allows to be kept secret.⁷⁹ The invocation of this article was also the way the Carabinieri defended themselves later, during the Mafia-Treaty trial in 2018, against criticism of their work.

The difficulty of conducting this type of operation, which is time-consuming and increases the risk of failure, requires qualified personnel and the firm commitment of all investigative components, including magistrates. In the first instance verdict of the Florence Assize Court of 6th June 1998 (on the instigators and perpetrators of the 1993 massacres), De Donno recalled that at the time, they thought that the best method to draw Ciancimino closer and closer to their demands was to get him to collaborate with Justice.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*

⁷⁷ *Ivi*, p. 94.

⁷⁸ *Ivi*, p. 96.

⁷⁹ In the context of testifying in court proceedings, the Italian Code of Criminal Procedure states that: “*Il giudice non può obbligare gli ufficiali e gli agenti di polizia giudiziaria nonché il personale dipendente dai servizi per le informazioni e la sicurezza militare o democratica a rivelare i nomi dei loro informatori. Se questi non sono esaminati come testimoni, le informazioni da essi fornite non possono essere acquisite né utilizzate*” (Codice di Procedura Penale italiano, s.f., Libro Terzo - Prove, Titolo II - Mezzi di prova, Capo I - Testimonianza). <https://www.brocardi.it/codice-di-procedura-penale/libro-terzo/titolo-ii/capo-i/art203.html>

⁸⁰They likewise asked him to contact members of the Cosa Nostra Mafia organization on their behalf. To find a point of contact, a point of communication aimed at putting an end to this clear-cut and murderous hostility to the State. And Ciancimino said yes. He accepted by conditioning his intervention on the possibility of giving the Mafiosi the identities of the Carabinieri with whom he had communication.⁸¹ Mori and De Donno granted this request, making Ciancimino believe that they had the authority to represent the State as an institution. Colonel Mori then alerted General Subranni, and Ciancimino and his son Massimo contacted Salvatore Riina via Antonino Cinà (a doctor and Mafioso from San Lorenzo)⁸².

During Captain De Donno's first attempts with Ciancimino's son in June 1992, Magistrate Liliana Ferraro, Giovanni Falcone's close partner at the Ministry of Justice as Director of Criminal Affairs, was made aware of this, and the magistrate informed Minister Claudio Martelli and Paolo Borsellino⁸³. The captain and Ferrario met on June 22nd; three days later, the Palermo judge requested a secret conference with the captain and Mori. This meeting did not take place in the public prosecutor's office, but in a more secluded location: the Carini barracks. According to what is reported by Mori and De Donno, during this meeting Borsellino discussed with the two officers the investigation of the 'mafia and tenders' inquiry. This inquiry had been initiated by Falcone in 1990, with the help of Captain De Donno himself during an investigation in Baucina. Falcone at that time had ordered the Ros agents to deposit a summary report of the work carried out. This was the 'Mafia and Tenders' report, dated 16 February 1991 and filed on 20 February. Magistrate Borsellino, who had already obtained the report from the Ros while in Marsala, stated that he wanted to continue the investigation already coordinated by Giovanni Falcone, whom he had repeatedly informed him about, and requested the operational availability of Captain De

⁸⁰ M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 161.

⁸¹ Palermo Court of Assizes, second section, presided over by Alfredo Montalto, Judgment of the first instance of the trial on the State-Mafia negotiation, April 20, 2018; p. 1306. <https://www.giurisprudenzapenale.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Sent.-n.-2-2018-Bagarella-9.pdf>

⁸² *Ivi*, p. 1310.

⁸³ "Ferraro: dissi a Borsellino dell'incontro Ciancimino-Ros", ANSA, April 1, 2014. <https://livesicilia.it/borsellino-il-ricordo-di-quegli-anni-i-fascicoli-fino-al-soffitto/>

Donno and the other military officers who had conducted the investigation.⁸⁴ Then, on the evening of that same 25 of June, at a public event organized by the magazine Micromega, in the atrium of Palermo's Municipal Library, Borsellino declared passionately to the audience of one thousand people present: "In this moment, as well as being a magistrate, I am a witness".⁸⁵ He insisted on being heard as a witness, and he wanted to recount the last conversations he had with his colleague Giovanni Falcone, "I may know some elements and I can help reassemble them, as I said, I will report it to the judicial authorities".⁸⁶ For the last remaining days, he repeated to be heard but the investigations progressed slowly and Borsellino received a summons for the 20th of July, twenty-four hours too late. In retrospect, it is clear that the judge was aware of what had occurred over the previous month, and his conversation with Liliana Ferrario on June 28th, according to a diary of Dr. Borsellino himself, provides incontrovertible proof of this. The two met in the reserved police room at Fiumicino airport and there Ferrario informed him of the Ros-Ciancimino talks. He, however, the magistrate recounts, 'did not react, and was almost indifferent to the news, telling me in any case that he would take care of it'.⁸⁷

A month after the Capaci massacre, people in indignation shoved and shook outside the courthouse. In remembrance of Falcone, a hundred thousand people demonstrated against the Mafia on the 27th of June, in Palermo. The next day in Rome, Giuliano Amato, a key member of the Italian Socialist Party, formed his government. The Christian Democrats (DC) and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) had applied intense pressure in the previous days to remove Scotti from the Ministry of the Interior and Martelli from the Ministry of Justice⁸⁸. Specifically, the two ministers of the Andreotti government who had enacted severe anti-mafia legislation under Falcone's soliciting in the previous two years. One example is Decree-Law No. 306, enacted on June 8, 1992, and known as the 'Scotti-Martelli Anti-Mafia Decree,' which established the rigorous jail regime and a paragraph to Article 41 bis, as detailed at the start of

⁸⁴ M. Mori, F. Ghiberti, *M.M. Nome in codice UNICO* (La nave di Teseo, 2023), pp. 101-104.

⁸⁵ "L'ultimo discorso di Borsellino", by Linkiesta, July 19, 2012. <https://www.linkiesta.it/2012/07/lultimo-discorso-di-borsellino-e-necessario-che-io-ricordi-a-me-stesso/>

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*

⁸⁷ M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 175.

⁸⁸ *Ivi*, p. 47.

this sub-chapter. Nonetheless, Martelli was re-confirmed, while the DC dismissed Scotti, who was replaced in the Viminale by Nicola Mancino.

The next day, 29th of June 1992, according to Massimo Ciancimino, Riina handed the 'papello' to Cinà, who took it to him in a bar in Mondello to pass it on to his father Vito. It was a sheet of white paper written in block letters, with twelve handwritten requests from the Mafia to the State in exchange for an end to the massacres. First, they demanded the revision of the maxi trial, then to repeal the newly instituted 41bis hard prison, the benefits to turncoats, life imprisonment, and the seizure of assets from Mafiosi. Furthermore, they requested to introduce new rules to extend to Mafiosi the 'dissociated benefits' provided at the time for the Red Brigades, house arrest after the age of 70, the closing of the super-prisons of Pianosa and Asinara, imprisonment close to family members' houses, no censorship of family members' correspondence, preventive measures and relationships with family members, arrest only in *flagrante delicto*, and the defiscalisation of petrol in Sicily. The magistrates never got the original paper, and the contents are in a photocopy that was faxed to Massimo Ciancimino's lawyer, who brought it to the Prosecutor's Office only in 2009.⁸⁹ Reading the requests, Vito Ciancimino was shocked by Riina's daring and confided his anxieties to his son Massimo, to whom he said that, in his opinion, one should not deal with certain people because of their ignorance and rashness, “because when the State shows itself and shows its flank to these people, these people take advantage of it [...] in the list of 10-12 requests there were 3-4 that one could even discuss, but 7-8 were from those who do not want to... if I have to sell this bottle of water for 100 euro, I'd better say that I don't want to sell it”⁹⁰.

2.2 Paolo Borsellino's assassination and the Riina Hunt

Borsellino arrived in Rome on July 1, 1992, to interrogate a new informant: Gaspare Mutolo, a former Partanna-Mondello boss involved in the 1986 Maxi trial and sentenced to ten years in prison at first

⁸⁹ G. Bianconi, “*Trattative tra mafia e Stato. Il papello consegnato ai giudici*”, in *Corriere della Sera*. Cronaca section. Archive. October 15, 2009.

⁹⁰ R. Lo Verso, “*Massimo Ciancimino: così Binnu vendette Totò*”, in *Città Nuove Corleone*, January 16, 2012. https://www.cittanuove-corleone.net/2012/01/massimo-ciancimino-cosi-binnu-vendette_16.html

instance, who decided to cooperate with Justice after Capaci. The “pentito” stated his desire to speak about the Mafia connections of men from the institutions, such as police officer Bruno Contrada and Judge Domenico Signorino.⁹¹ During the interrogation, Borsellino received a phone call summoning him to the Viminale to meet the newly appointed Interior Minister Mancino. Borsellino was escorted to the Viminale and greeted by the Chief of Police, Vincenzo Parisi, and that Contrada, number 3 of the SISDE, about whom Mutolo had just told him. When he returns to the turncoat, the judge is taken aback and tells Mutolo that he has just seen Contrada. Mutolo's reconstruction, depicted on 21 February 1996 in the courtroom of the Via D'Amelio massacre trial, is detailed: «I remember that when he came, he came all angry, agitated, worried. I didn't know what was wrong with him, so I asked him: 'Doctor, what's wrong with you?' He was very worried and serious, and he told me that he had met with Dr. Parisi and Dr. Contrada, and he told me to write that Dr. Contrada was in collusion with the Mafia and that Judge Signorino was a friend of the Mafia. »⁹²

In the meantime, however, the Sicilian mafia put its strategy of terror on hold. It was aware that it would take time to see results from those talks with the carabinieri and the demands made by the bosses were not acceptable to anyone. However, as the days passed, Riina expressed to Brusca all his anger at the sudden stalemate in the negotiations. The latter received from Mafioso Salvatore Biondino the order to suspend the preparation of the assassination attempt against the Honourable Mannino because there was “a wall to overcome”. Indeed, in those days, Riina insisted on speeding up the assassination of Borsellino and carrying it out in a sensational manner.⁹³ The reason was that Borsellino's response to this wait-and-see strategy was a further intensification of the investigation. Several things happened in the days before the judge's death, which was recalled by Colonel Mori of the Ros. On 12 July 1992, Prosecutor Giammanco sent almost the entire Ros report on the tenders to other Sicilian judicial offices 'for their

⁹¹ G. Lo Bianco e S. Rizza, *L'agenda rossa di Paolo Borsellino*, (Chiarelettere, Milano, 2007) p. 137.

⁹² *Ivi*, p. 141.

⁹³ Hearing of Prosecutor Sergio Lari before the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission - Senate of the Republic - Chamber of Deputies - XVI LEGISLATURE Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the mafia and other criminal associations, including foreign ones. 102nd sitting: Monday, 26 March 2012 The President Giuseppe PISANU presiding. (Pdf). <https://web.archive.org/web/20131029192933/http://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/Reso.ste.no.26.3.2012Int..pdf>

information and the appropriate determinations of competence'.⁹⁴ This circumstance did not help to investigate as planned, i.e. in secrecy. The following day, deputy prosecutors Guido La Forte and Roberto Scarpinato requested that the first section's facts and remaining positions be archived. The remaining evidence was insufficient to sustain the charge adequately, yet none of the Ros were approached for additional examination. On 14 July, at a meeting of the magistrates of the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office, Borsellino asked about that very investigation and expressed his interest in taking it up and developing it further. According to subsequent testimony to the CSM by individuals present at that meeting, it does not appear that anyone on that occasion informed him of the above-mentioned request for closure, although Guido Lo Forte was among those present.⁹⁵ Borsellino, who was still in Rome at the time, interviewed Mutolo one last time on July 16, who consented to verbalize the accusations against Bruno Contrada. Later that day, Borsellino went to the Prosecutor's Office to place the report in the safe. Borsellino, the Honourable Carlo Vizzini, and Palermo magistrates Guido La Forte and Gioacchino Natoli dined together in Rome that evening. Borsellino was still very interested in mafia relations and tenders at the meeting, as Vizzini testified about in court. "The topic that occupied the greatest amount of time during the dinner was a strong interest of Dr. Borsellino in the matter of the mafia and tenders."⁹⁶

Then two days later, on Sunday 19 July 1992, once again the attention of the whole of Italy was drawn to Palermo, where the Mafia killed the Marsala prosecutor Paolo Borsellino with a car bomb. That day he was at the seaside with his family, in Villagrazia di Carini and, after lunch, he returned to Palermo for his usual Sunday visit to his elderly mother in Via D'Amelio. It was a street that ended with a low wall and behind that low wall was a man hiding with a remote control in his hand. A few days earlier the Mafioso stole an amaranth-coloured Fiat 126, packed it with 90 kg of TNT, and parked right there in front. Borsellino rang the intercom and went through the first gate. It is Antonino Vullo who recounts the last seconds, the only survivor among the men of the judge's escort who, at that moment, was parking

⁹⁴ M. Mori, F. Ghiberti, *M.M. Nome in codice UNICO* (La nave di Teseo, 2023), p 104.

⁹⁵ *Ivi*, p. 105.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

the lead car of the escort. It was at that very moment that the Fiat 126 packed with explosives detonated and blew up the street. The explosion was recorded by the geo-seismic observatory at 16:58 and was felt throughout Palermo.

Borsellino and the five escort agents died. A few hours later, with two telephone calls to the Ansa editorial offices in Turin and Rome, a person announcing himself as the spokesman of the Falange Armata claimed the massacre. After Falcone, Borsellino was also gone. The voice of an Italy on its knees was that of magistrate Antonino Caponnetto: "It's all over."⁹⁷ What followed were months of mysteries and glaring mistakes that can be recounted with a symbol and a story, which keep the public imagination and journalism in Italy on its toes. The first is a red leather diary, which Borsellino had received from the Carabinieri. Especially after Falcone's death, he wrote appointments and considerations in it, and never left it behind. He also had it with him on 19 July and it is the only object that was never found. Some speculate that it was stolen, those who banally claim it was lost in the chaos of those minutes, and some simply think it was destroyed by the explosion because Borsellino had it with him under his arm. But what is certain is that it ended up symbolizing the struggle for truth around Via D'Amelio.

That is because, immediately afterward began the story of one of the most clamorous errors, or deception, in the history of the Republic. The most delicate investigation of the decade took a sudden turn on 27 September 1992, when the police arrested a certain Vincenzo Scarantino. For investigators, he was the petty criminal to whom Cosa Nostra turned to commission the theft of the Fiat 126 used in the massacre. At first, Scarantino said he knew nothing about the massacre. He was only a 27-year-old from the Guadagna district who was a plaster craftsman and had a few criminal records for theft and drug dealing. But then the pressure began to get to him: he was sentenced to nine years in prison for drug possession, saw his relatives arrested, and was accused by his cellmate of having confessed to the massacre. So, in March 1994, he suddenly ran to the judges to accredit himself as a Mafioso of the highest order and declare himself ready to talk. He said he had stolen the Fiat 126, recounted in detail

⁹⁷ A. Caponnetto, "E' finito tutto", the sentence he said to a journalist as he exited the morgue where Giovanni Borsellino's body was laid to rest. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URjLajLSvAQ>

how the Via D'Amelio bombing had been organized, and said he knew the great secrets of Cosa Nostra, that he committed a lot of murders, that he strangled victims. He even recounted that he had decapitated a person with a razor cutter. The confessions were a skillful mixture of lies and truths. Among the latter were the first accusations against the bosses of Brancaccio, the brothers Giuseppe and Filippo Graviano, who 15 years later turned out to be the real direct mandators of the massacre, thanks to the revelations of the “pentito” killer Gaspare Spatuzza. Scarantino, as Spatuzza's confessions later revealed, was uninvolved in any phase of the assassination attempt. Why the massive deception? Only because some detectives were anxious to find an immediate solution to the investigation? Others will argue that this was due to the necessity to “calibrate” the probe downwards while discouraging any research upwards, i.e. on the external instigators of Via D'Amelio hiding behind Riina and the Graviano brothers. The latter were very closely related to the commercial and political worlds and divided their time between Sicily and Milan in 1992⁹⁸. In both hypotheses, the history of Via D'Amelio has yet to be rewritten.

As long as they are 'courtyards' they can be ignored, or rather tolerated. If they become squares, the discourse changes. This is what was happening in Italy. The law of villains became the ordinary norm, surrogate dangerousness; guilt, suspicion archived the search for proof, punishment anticipated condemnation. An overthrow of the rule of law radically changed the citizen's relationship with justice. The emergency swept away the guarantees that qualify this relationship as liberal: innocence until proven guilty and the protection of the innocent. The legal system enshrines them in two principles: the principle that no one can be considered guilty until finally convicted, and the principle that no one can be punished for an act that is not provided for as a crime by a law already in force. The illiberal use of judicial instruments was a constant in the history of the Second Republic. So far it has been achieved through a twisting of ordinary law. ⁹⁹Mafia crime journalist Attilio Bolsoni later stated that: "us journalists had realized that Scarantino was not credible, but we did not feel like going against the magistrates". If this happens, it is not because crime is too strong but because democracy is weak and immature.

⁹⁸ *Il capitano De Donno: "Falcone prese il dossier e disse: ora ci divertiamo"*, in *Corriere della sera*. Historical Archive. February 10, 1999. p. 17.

⁹⁹ A. Barbano, *L'inganno*, (Marsilio Editori, 2022. Venice), p. 16.

The assassination of Paolo Borsellino, which occurred in such a brutal manner, shocked and outraged public opinion. Moreover, the curtain of mystery and miasma that dragged behind it was perceived by the people of Palermo from the very beginning. On July 21, they reacted angrily at the funeral: President Scalfaro, Prime Minister Amato, and Police Chief Parisi, the heads of the national institutions, were attacked by colleagues and friends of the victims outside the church and were compelled to leave. “We felt an atmosphere of civil war growing around us”.¹⁰⁰ The Italian society was astonished, and disillusionment, anxiety, and fear dominated the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office and the police force, leading to “office work being preferred to meaningful investigations and work on the street”.¹⁰¹ There was a lack of directives and coordination for action to counter a phenomenon that was perceived as overwhelming. Within this context, just two days after Borsellino's death, Prosecutor Giammanco forwarded to the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office the request to archive the famous investigation called 'Mafia and Tenders' on which both Giovanni Falcone and, later, Paolo Borsellino had worked with great interest. The following day, July 23, 1992, eight members of Palermo's Anti-Mafia District Directorate (Ignazio De Francisci, Giovanni Ilarda, Antonio Ingroia, Alfredo Morvillo, Antonio Napoli, Teresa Principato, Roberto Scarpinato, and Vittorio Teresi) drafted a document denouncing Giammanco's conduct and the unsafe conditions in which their work was carried out, even considering resignation.

Three weeks after the Via D'Amelio massacre, Parliament was working on converting many decrees, including the decree on 41 bis, which was set to expire. It was on August 7, 1992, that the "Scotti-Martelli" Act went into effect, increasing the penalties for mafia-related crimes: approximately 100 detainees were immediately taken with helicopters from their continental prisons and transferred in bulk to the insular and isolated prisons of Pianosa and Asinara, where they were subjected to the 41 bis regime, which also applied to another 400 detainees.

¹⁰⁰ G.Buccini, *Il Tempo delle Mani Pulite* (Editori Laterza, 2021), p. 53.

¹⁰¹ M. Mori, F. Ghiberti, *M.M. Nome in codice UNICO* (La nave di Teseo, 2023), p. 96.

Meanwhile, following the massacre, “the ROS military considered it a professional and moral duty to take the initiative”,¹⁰² so the State-Mafia contacts were reopened, and talks between the Ros and Ciancimino resumed- this time with the sole aim of capturing Riina. Colonel Mori spoke with Fernanda Contri, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, on July 22 and informed her of the ongoing meetings with Ciancimino. Contri then informed Prime Minister Amato.¹⁰³ However, within Cosa Nostra, the balance began to shift.

After the summer of 1992, the massacres continued. On 17 September, Totò Riina commissioned the murder of Ignazio Salvo, a Mafia businessman and Christian Democrat from Trapani.¹⁰⁴ As Giovanni Brusca recounted, Riina wanted to punish politicians who were damaging Cosa Nostra.¹⁰⁵ The same motivations that previously led to the killing of Salvo Lima. Despite this show of strength, at this time, according to some reconstructions, the Corleone group of Cosa Nostra began to split. On one side was Totò Riina, the leader, on the other was the boss Bernardo Provenzano, who was more skeptical about the bombing strategy.

In the same period, the talks with Ciancimino were to continue for one huge last score: the arrest of Riina. This is why Luciano Violante, President of the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission had some interactions with General Mori following Via D'Amelio, during which he was offered a meeting with Don Vito, which he declined.¹⁰⁶ It was November when the Ros approached him for assistance in carrying out an operation that would generate a stir and, according to plans, restore trust in institutions among Italians. The carabinieri gave him a map of Palermo and told him to circle with a felt-tip pen the

¹⁰² Ibidem.

¹⁰³ Hearing of Prosecutor Sergio Lari before the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission - Senate of the Republic - Chamber of Deputies - XVI LEGISLATURE Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the mafia and other criminal associations, including foreign ones. (PDF)

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131029192933/http://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/Reso.ste.no.26.3.2012Int..pdf>

¹⁰⁴ A. Bolzoni, *Ucciso Ignazio Salvo, l'Intoccabile*, in La Repubblica. Archive. September 18, 1992.

¹⁰⁵ Ignazio Salvo murder trial. Archivio Antimafia.

https://www.archivioantimafia.org/sentenze2/salvo/ignaziosalvo_primo_grado.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Hearing of Prosecutor Sergio Lari before the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission - Senate of the Republic - Chamber of Deputies - XVI LEGISLATURE Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the mafia and other criminal associations, including foreign ones. (PDF)

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probable locations where 'Totò' Riina was a fugitive.¹⁰⁷ Ciancimino did what was asked of him, thereby marking the end of his cooperation. He was arrested in mid-December to serve a residual term after requesting that the police return his passport, which was physical proof of his intention to flee abroad.

However, public opinion became confused at the beginning of December, and the links between the Mafia and politics became increasingly public, in the face of the obscure revelations of a turncoat, Leonardo Messina, already interrogated by Paolo Borsellino before his death, who claimed that Cosa Nostra wanted its own State and spoke of contacts with a political force born in the North with ambitions of expansion in the South. Of fact, these were ramblings since the only political force born in the North at the time was Bossi's Lega, which, as a prisoner of a violent anti-Southern narrative, had little chance of expanding below the Gothic line unless it became the "Lega Sud" or "Southern League". However, the Mafia's search for new political references in the wake of the collapse of the First Republic was based on reasoning rather than records.¹⁰⁸ At the beginning of 1993, though, the Mafia was finally hit at the top. On 15 January 1993, operation "Beast" began, and on the same day of the official inauguration of Gian Carlo Caselli as the new head of the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office, Riina was captured by the team of the Ros of the Carabinieri. Men of Colonel Mori and General Delfino (director of the Military Intelligence and Security Service), who used the neo-collaborator of justice, and former driver of Riina, Baldassare Di Maggio to identify him. On the day they caught him, Riina was leaving with his new driver from a gate at 54 Via Bernini, a residential complex in Palermo.

"Watch out, our friend Sbirulino's coming out," said Officer Ombra, a life spent inside the 'whales', the Arma's observation vans.¹⁰⁹ Riina was then followed in his car by Captain Sergio De Caprio, known as 'Ultimo', and his men, and at half past eight in the morning, on the Palermo ring road, the hunt ended. "The friend Sbirulino", Totò Riina, the boss of bosses, was stopped and captured after a few hundred meters in Viale Regione Siciliana. He had been a fugitive for 23 years. When they caught him, he tried

¹⁰⁷ *Ciancimino si offrì di far catturare Riina*. In *La Repubblica*. Archive. January 24, 1998.

¹⁰⁸ Goffredo Buccini, *Il Tempo delle Mani Pulite* (Editori Laterza, 2021), p. 69.

¹⁰⁹ *Mangiafuoco*, Rai, Radio 1, <https://www.raiplayradio.it/audio/2020/01/Cosi-abbiamo-arrestato-Riina--A-Mangiafuoco-Sono-io-Sergio-De-Caprio-il-capitano-Ultimo-6883e8be-a97f-4b66-bd8e-62c82a8cd37e.html>.

to say that they were taking the wrong person but the Carabinieri of the Ros deserted him: 'We are being sent by Falcone and Borsellino'.¹¹⁰ The fiercest boss was in the cage and from there he continued to deny the existence of Cosa Nostra, claiming that he had only read about it in the newspapers and heard about it on television.

Decisive facts, however, are important to underline, as they changed the course of events and were the basis for certain choices. In the moments following Riina's capture, Caselli first attended a summit in the Public Prosecutor's Office with his deputies and a meeting in the Dalla Chiesa barracks with the top brass of the Arma. In both meetings, the hypothesis of conducting a thorough search of the various houses in Via Bernini 54 was considered, to identify one belonging to Riina. But 'Ultimo' and General Mori with him, had no doubts: it was not to be done, and they expressed their disagreement. Therefore, they asked to cancel the search and to wait. The mafia 'hideout' had not been located and the hope, they explained, was that Riina's accomplices, i.e. the Sansone brothers who were hiding him and looking after his absconding, unaware of the discovery of the address in Via Bernini, would go and pick up the boss's wife, Ninetta Bagarella, and their four children. Moreover, the Mafia's practice was not to keep anything of relevance with the family so as not to compromise them, and they had purposely arrested him far from his home precisely so as not to give the impression that they had spotted the house.¹¹¹ This made it possible to postpone the raid and continue the observation of the location with the retrieval of further useful information. All this was thanks to cameras hidden in a van and in a light pole just out front, so that they could see "who would come to pick up Riina's family members" and nab them.¹¹²

Caselli then demanded a 'guarantee of absolute and constant control'¹¹³ and ordered the search to be postponed. With this decision, the Carabinieri remained consistent with their strategy of 'information superiority' discussed earlier in the chapter. With this technique, however, there was no shortage of unforeseen events of which, those who later supported the charges against the Ros lacked full

¹¹⁰ A. Cucciolla, *Quel 15 gennaio 1993 che cambiò la storia d'Italia*, in *L'Opinione della Libertà*. January 17, 2022.

¹¹¹ M. Mori, F. Ghiberti, *M.M. Nome in codice UNICO* (La nave di Teseo, 2023), p. 94.

¹¹² M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 53.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*

understanding. An officer of the Palermo Territorial Armed Forces revealed the address and his sudden inattention caused swarms of journalists to gather in Via Bernini. An accident that effectively burnt any chance of continuing their strategy. Not only that, but it became dangerous to leave men out there, who knew a lot of information about the investigation, at the mercy of the Mafiosi who were now aware of the Carabinieri's knowledge of the locations. Under these conditions, apart from the strategies already agreed with the magistrates, the perennial guard was suspended and the analysis of the 'pizzini' found on Riina began. Thus, they traced some of his aides who were in turn arrested one after the other.¹¹⁴

The search of the boss's family villa took place only days later by the public prosecutor's office, which relied on the constant monitoring of the carabinieri and did not know it had been suspended. But it was too late. On 2 February 1993, the carabinieri entered Riina's villa and found it practically empty. Just a few pieces of furniture piled up in one room, the upholstery and coverings detached. The walls were freshly painted. The rooms were refurbished by a construction company. No organic traces were useful for DNA testing. The misunderstanding gave rise for Mori and Ultimo to the opening of legal proceedings for aiding and abetting the Mafia, which however immediately proved to be unfounded to such an extent that the assigned prosecutors, Antonio Ingroia and Michele Prestipino, twice requested the archiving of the case,¹¹⁵ which however the GIP rejected with an order of coercive indictment against Colonel Mori and Captain De Caprio. The case ended with their full acquittal, motivated by the third criminal section of the court of Palermo with these words:

This investigative option entailed a risk that the judicial authority chose to run, sharing the assessments expressed by the judicial police bodies directly operating in the field, on the relevant possibility of obtaining greater results by omitting to search. The decision to postpone the search appears, in fact, logically inherent in the acceptance of the danger of the dispersion of investigative material which could be present in the house, which had not yet been identified by the forces of law and order, since nothing could have impeded "Ninetta" Bagarella (wife of Riina, NDR) who lived

¹¹⁴ M. Mori, F. Ghiberti, *M.M. Nome in codice UNICO* (La nave di Teseo, 2023), p. 94.

¹¹⁵ *Ivi*, p. 95.

there, or the Sansone, who lived in other villas, but in the same district, to destroy or conceal any documents kept by Riina - which they could have done on the same afternoon of 15 January, after the news of the arrest had been spread at the press conference, i.e. when the observation service was still active - or third parties who, if known to the police, could have gone to the complex and removed them without arousing suspicion. The visual observation of the complex, as it was inherent to the entrance gate of the entire complex, certainly could not have been aimed at preventing such outcomes, lending itself only to the identification of any fugitives who might have entered it and to filming the removal of Bagarella, who was not under investigation anyway, and the frequentations of the site.¹¹⁶

As for the hypothesis, which had already emerged in that trial, of a hypothetical negotiation with the men of Cosa Nostra, the judges just as firmly ruled it out: "The handing over of the Corleone boss in which the Mafia's services were supposed to have consisted of, is a circumstance that has remained denied by the factual elements acquired in the present trial."¹¹⁷ The Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office, which had already promoted the closure of the investigation, did not appeal.

2.3 Italy Shattered: The 1993 Bombings, Mafia Menace, and the Birth of the Second Republic

After the arrest of 'Totò U Curtu', with the Corleonesi led by Bernardo Provenzano, the threats continued. On February 3, 1993, another anonymous phone call at the Ansa of Bologna, in the name of the 'Falange Armata' acronym arrived, threatening Minister Mancino, Police Chief Vincenzo Parisi, and Nicolò Amato (at the time, director of the DAP, the prison administration).¹¹⁸ On 10 February, Minister of Justice Martelli was forced to resign due to the Tangentopoli investigation in which he was involved in

¹¹⁶ "Questa opzione investigativa comportava evidentemente un rischio che l'autorità giudiziaria scelse di correre, condividendo le valutazioni espresse dagli organi di polizia giudiziaria direttamente operativi sul campo, sulla rilevante possibilità di ottenere maggiori risultati omettendo di eseguire la perquisizione. Nella decisione di rinviarla appare, difatti logicamente, insita l'accettazione del pericolo della dispersione di materiale investigativo eventualmente presente nell'abitazione, che non era stata ancora individuata dalle forze dell'ordine, dal momento che nulla avrebbe potuto impedire a "Ninetta" Bagarella (moglie del Riina, ndr) che vi dimorava, o ai Sansone, che dimoravano in altre ville ma nello stesso comprensorio, di distruggere o occultare la documentazione eventualmente conservata dal Riina – cosa che avrebbero potuto fare nello stesso pomeriggio del 15 gennaio, dopo la diffusione della notizia dell'arresto in conferenza stampa, quando cioè il servizio di osservazione era ancora attivo- o anche terzi che, se conosciuti dalle forze dell'ordine, avrebbero potuto recarsi al complesso e asportarla senza destare sospetti. L'osservazione visiva del complesso, in quanto inerente al cancello di ingresso dell'intero comprensorio, certamente non poteva essere diretta a impedire tali esiti, prestandosi solo ad individuare eventuali latitanti che vi avessero fatto accesso e a filmare l'allontanamento della Bagarella, che non era comunque indagata, e le frequentazioni del sito." *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁸ *Nuove minacce telefoniche "dalla Falange Armata"*, in La Repubblica. Archive. February 3, 1993.

Milan for an old 1980 bribe to the PSI, Italian socialist party. Amato replaced him with a 'technician': the Honourable Giovanni Conso, senior president emeritus of the Consulta. On 12 February 1993, at the urging of Police Chief Parisi and the Ministry of the Interior, the director of the Department of Penitentiary Administration (DAP), Nicolò Amato, sent a long note to Minister Conso in which he expressed his position of softening Article 41-bis to rely on other penitentiary instruments to combat the mafia. The fear of massacres, despite Riina's capture, was still on everyone's shoulders.

On 17 February 1993, some 'relatives of Mafia detainees from Asinara and Pianosa' sent a threatening letter that was delivered to the President of the Republic Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and, for information, to the Pope, the Bishop of Florence, the Cardinal of Palermo, the Prime Minister Giuliano Amato, Ministers Mancino and Conso, the journalist Maurizio Costanzo, the Honourable Vittorio Sgarbi, the CSM and the *Giornale di Sicilia*. In a threatening tone, it called for Scalfaro's intervention to put an end to alleged prison violence against detained relatives, of which Nicolò Amato, described as a 'ruthless dictator'¹¹⁹, was accused. Another anonymous phone call to the Ansa of Rome from the 'Falange Armata', threatened President Scalfaro and Minister Mancino on April 1.¹²⁰

Those were incomprehensible times for Italians and their politics. At the beginning of April, Palermo issued the first warrant notice for Giulio Andreotti for alleged Mafia ties: what had previously been popular Vulgate and Forattini cartoons in the daily newspaper *la Repubblica*, appeared to become reality. The atmosphere was still palpable in Parliament, where the majority was crumbling (the Liberal secretary, Altissimo, who had also been investigated by Mani Pulite, resigned), and the opposition Lega and Missini parties were launching direct attacks. Luca Leoni Orsenigo, a Bossi supporter, took out a noose from under the bench and began waving it in his colleagues' faces, while chants of 'thieves' and 'mafiosi' were raised.¹²¹ The image circulated across the foreign media, marking a key moment: the

¹¹⁹ Report of the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission XVI LEGISLATURE. (PDF) https://web.archive.org/web/20140321212616/http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg16/lavori/documentiparlamentari/indiceetesti/023/016t01_RS/00000023.pdf

¹²⁰ S. Palazzolo, *Stato-mafia, l'indagine bis punta sui Servizi: si riapre il mistero della Falange Armata*, in *La Repubblica*. March 9, 2013.

¹²¹ G. Da Rold, *E' il leghista Leoni Orsenigo allontanato dall'aula di Montecitorio per sette giorni*, in *Corriere della Sera*. Archive. March 17, 1993.

country did not exactly seem to be moving in the direction of an enlargement of the democratic area. These are therefore days of dynamic political movements. On April 18, 1993, in referendums organized by Mario Segni and the radicals, Italians rejected the proportional system in favor of the majority system and repealed public financing of parties, still shaken by the Tangentopoli scandal. President Scalfaro then appointed the governor of the Bank of Italy, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, who formed an executive of only technical ministers. Except for Mancino, who remained Minister of the Interior, and Conso was confirmed as Minister of Justice.¹²² When the new executive took office, Cosa Nostra resumed its massacre strategy: to finally bring the State to its knees and force it to yield to its demands, albeit with two variations. The first was that the bombs exploded outside Sicily, and the second was that they struck the artistic and cultural legacy. The first bombings outside of Sicily began in Rome on the night of May 14, 1993, with a car bomb in Via Fauro, Parioli district. The attempted murder was claimed by the Falange Armata. Although there was no direct connection with the bombing, the following day, the deputy director of the DAP, Edoardo Fazzioli, at the request of director Nicolò Amato, revoked 121 decrees subjecting ordinary non-Mafia detainees to the 41-bis regime. During 1993, the 41-bis decrees halved.¹²³

The attacks continued during the night of May 26-27, 1993, when the Via dei Georgofili massacre occurred in Florence. The bomb attack injured 48 people and killed five, including two little girls aged nine years and two months. The explosion also caused the collapse of a wing of the Torre del Pulci, the site of the Accademia dei Georgofili, as well as damage to other ancient structures, notably the Uffizi Gallery, which lost three paintings and damaged over two hundred others. An anonymous caller named 'Falange Armata' claimed responsibility for the action shortly after, as expected. According to Giovanni Brusca's testimony, the assassination attempt was ordered by boss Salvatore Riina "to poke the other

¹²² S. Colarizi, *Storia politica della Repubblica. 1943-2006: Partiti, movimenti e istituzioni*, Editori Laterza, Rome, 2007.

¹²³ Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission, chaired by Giuseppe Pisanu, *Communications of President Pisanu on the major mafia crimes and massacres of 1992-'93*. January 13, 2013. P. 108. (PDF) <https://www.parlamento.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/DF/289522.pdf>

side”, i.e. to restart negotiations and reiterate the will to put an end to the 41-bis orders issued the year before by Minister Martelli and which were due to expire on 20 July 1993, just two months after.¹²⁴

On June 4, 1993, Nicolò Amato was dismissed from leadership of the DAP after eleven years, to serve as Italy's representative in the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture. His deputy Edoardo Fazzioli was also dismissed. Amato was succeeded by Adalberto Capriotti, Attorney General at the Trento Court of Appeal, a very conservative man, Catholic, and connected to the Vatican.¹²⁵ Capriotti was joined as a deputy by Francesco Di Maggio, a Sicilian anti-mafia magistrate who previously worked for the Milan Public Prosecutor's Office. The Palermo prosecutors discovered that on June 14, the Falange Armata had called again, 'expressing delight with the appointment of Capriotti in place of Amato'. The phone operator mentioned a 'victory for the Falange'. More threatening phone calls were made to Mancino and Police Chief Parisi (on June 19), then to Capriotti himself and his deputy Di Maggio (on September 16).¹²⁶ The message provided by Cosa Nostra members is promptly received by state entities. On June 26, Dr. Adalberto Capriotti issued a note to Minister Giovanni Conso, Minister of Justice, explaining his new policy of silent non-extension of 373 41-bis subsection orders expiring in November, which would have constituted “a positive signal of distention”.¹²⁷ The note was left in the drawer by Conso, who, in contrast to what was requested of him, renewed some of the 41-bis convicts who were about to expire, including several potentially dangerous Mafia detainees¹²⁸, between July 20 and 27. On 27 July, Colonel Mori met with Dr. Di Maggio, his friend and deputy director of the DAP, to address the "Mafia detainee problem".¹²⁹

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁵ *Ivi*, p. 103.

¹²⁶ S. Palazzolo, *Stato-mafia, l'indagine bis punta sui Servizi: si riapre il mistero della Falange Armata*, in *la Repubblica*. Archive. March 9, 2013.

¹²⁷ S. Palazzolo, F. Viviano, *Conso: fu solo mia la scelta di non rinnovare il carcere duro*, in *la Repubblica*. Archive. November 25, 2010.

¹²⁸ Report of the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission XVI LEGISLATURE (PDF).

https://web.archive.org/web/20140321212616/http://www.camera.it/dati/leg16/lavori/documentiparlamentari/indiceetesti/023/016t01_RS/00000023.pdf

¹²⁹ Hearing of Prosecutor Sergio Lari before the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission - Senate of the Republic - Chamber of Deputies - XVI LEGISLATURE Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the mafia and other criminal associations, including foreign ones (PDF).

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131029192933/http://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/Reso.steno.26.3.2012Int.pdf>

The extension of the measures of subjection to 41-bis triggered an immediate reaction by the Cosa Nostra, which on the night of the same day detonated three car bombs in the space of an hour between eleven and midnight. The first attack in chronological order was the Via Palestro massacre in the heart of Milan, right in front of the Contemporary Art Pavilion. Smoke came out of a grey Uno parked in front of it, so help was called. Alongside the urban police patrol, the fire brigade arrived. Someone opened the bonnet, then the scream was heard: 'It's a bomb! It's a bomb!' which resulted in the death of five people and thirteen injured. Just half an hour later, a bigger and more serious scene, involving the whole country, became clearer in the eyes of Italians. Two other Fiat Uno bombs, loaded with pentrite and T4, blew up in Rome within four minutes of each other, the first in front of the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano, the second in San Giorgio al Velabro, not far from the Capitol and the Imperial Forums. These bombings caused the injuring of twenty-two people and serious damage to churches. The following day, two anonymous letters were sent to the editorial offices of the newspapers *Il Messaggero* and *Corriere della Sera* threatening new and more serious attacks. In total, the Cosa Nostra bombs outside Sicily caused ten deaths and dozens of injuries.¹³⁰ What the bosses were looking for, after the sentences of the maxi-trial, the arrests of the excellent godfathers, and after the fall of all the political points of reference, was to reconcile a pact with the State, similar to that which had governed the State-Mafia equilibrium in the years of the First Republic. Perhaps July '93 was the darkest month of the First Republic, perhaps it was already the so-called Second Republic, the Italians had not yet realized but the criminals had anticipated them.

On 3 and 4 August of that summer, the Senate and Camera approved the new electoral law: they called it the Mattarellum (after its creator, Christian Democrat Sergio Mattarella, brother of Sicilian president Piersanti killed by the Mafia thirteen years earlier); and, given the discredit of the proportional system so closely linked to the camarillas of preferences and the related corruption, it had a strong majority content, such as making it necessary to present the election with cohesive coalitions and a strong,

¹³⁰ Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission, chaired by Giuseppe Pisanu, *Communications of President Pisanu on the major mafia crimes and massacres of 1992-'93*. January 13, 2013. P. 111. (PDF) <https://www.parlamento.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/DF/289522.pdf>

recognisable leader. Before celebrating the inauguration of the Second Republic, expected with the elections in the spring of 1994, it was then a matter of a formality: the burial of what remained of the Republic of parties, murdered by the bribe system. Among the men of the State, the hypothesis of submitting to Mafia blackmail was thus becoming even stronger and the Director of the Anti-Mafia Investigative Directorate himself, Gianni De Gennaro, in a report sent to the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office on 1 September, stressed how it was "clear that the possible revocation, even if only partial, of the decrees providing for the application of the 41-bis article could represent the first concrete yielding of the State, intimidated by the bombing season".¹³¹

In the following months, specifically in October 1993, Colonel Mori met again with Dr. Di Maggio to discuss the issue of prisoners again, while Cosa Nostra, determined to conclude the political trial begun in 1991, founded a party. The businessman and mafioso Tullio Cannella (a trusted man of Leoluca Bagarella and the Graviano brothers) founded the secessionist movement 'Sicilia Libera' in Palermo, which joined other similar movements in the formation of the 'Southern Leagues' created throughout the South.¹³² Also at that time, the collaborator of justice Gaspare Spatuzza, according to what he later declared, met the boss Giuseppe Graviano in a bar in Via Veneto in Rome to organize another attack, perhaps the most violent of all: the elimination of an entire platoon of carabinieri on security duty at the Olympic Stadium¹³³. The bombing plan at the Olympic Stadium in Rome was carried out on January 23, 1994, but failed owing to a glitch in the remote control that was supposed to activate the explosion and was never repeated.¹³⁴ Four days later, the Graviano brothers, the bosses of Brancaccio who had been in charge of organizing all of the explosions, were arrested in Milan: Cosa Nostra's terrorist strategy came to an end.

¹³¹ M. Lillo, M. Travaglio, *Padrini fondatori* (Paper First by Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018), p. 314-315.

¹³² Request for closure of criminal proceedings no. 2566/98 R.G.N.R., against Gelli Licio+13 - Public Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Palermo - District Anti-Mafia Directorate (PDF).

<https://web.archive.org/web/20140116132223/http://www.genovaweb.org/indagine-SISTEMI-CRIMINALI.pdf>

¹³³ Hearing of Prosecutor Sergio Lari before the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission - Senate of the Republic - Chamber of Deputies - XVI LEGISLATURE Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the mafia and other criminal associations, including foreign ones. 102nd sitting: Monday, 26 March 2012 The President Giuseppe PISANU presiding. (Pdf).

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131029192933/http://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/Reso.ste.no.26.3.2012Int..pdf>

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*.

In the same hours, all of Italy was talking about Silvio Berlusconi. The patron of Fininvest had just released the speech of his 'coming into the field'¹³⁵, as he called it, referring to the football jargon that, as president of AC Milan, he knew very well. In Milan, the 'Mani Pulite' investigation swept away all the traditional parties: the Communist Party changed its name, the Christian Democracy and the Socialist Party dissolved. Within two months, the entire political class was wiped out and replaced by a new system. Italians were summoned to the polls on March 27 and 28, 1994, and only two years after the previous round of elections (for the first time in republican history), the Second Republic was born. The vote decreed the victory of newcomer Berlusconi, who, thanks to an innovative style in promoting himself and the party he represented, managed to persuade 49.2% of Italians, including his allies, to declare him the winner and take office on May 10 at Palazzo Chigi.¹³⁶ The Berlusconi government, led by the 'Cavaliere', received a large majority in the Chamber of Deputies but, in the Senate, it needed the intervention of three life senators: Giovanni Agnelli, Francesco Cossiga, and Giovanni Leone.¹³⁷

And after more than twenty-one dead and one hundred and ten wounded, Cosa Nostra stopped targeting the State. On November 1, 334 41-bis regimes expired. Minister Conso, who was expressly instructed by the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office to renew them, decided it was time to refuse the suggestion and let the hours run out so that the disciplinary procedures might finally expire, allowing this to “stop the atrocities”.¹³⁸

2.4 The Aftermath of Tragedy: Societal Impact and National Trauma

The bombings in Capaci (1992) and Via D'Amelio (1993) stand as dark milestones in Italy's history, reshaping the nation's socio-political landscape. These acts of terror not only claimed the lives of esteemed figures but reverberated through the corridors of power, prompting a seismic shift in Italy's collective psyche. The aftermath of the bombings plunged Italy into a period of collective mourning and

¹³⁵ M. Bresolin, M. Corbi and M. Feltri, *Quei 9 minuti e 25 secondi*, in La Stampa. January 26, 2014. [Quei 9 minuti e 25 secondi - La Stampa](#)

¹³⁶ S. Colarizi, *Storia politica della Repubblica. 1943-2006: Partiti, movimenti e istituzioni*, Editori Laterza, Roma, 2007

¹³⁷ *Fini: senatori a vita stanno solo da una parte*, in Corriere della Sera. May 20, 2006. [Fini: senatori a vita stanno solo da una parte - Corriere della Sera](#)

¹³⁸ Documents of the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission XVI LEGISLATURE (PDF). May 8, 2013. https://documenti.camera.it/_dati/leg16/lavori/documentiparlamentari/indiceetesti/023/016t01_RS/00000025.pdf

introspection. The loss of key figures like Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino not only created a void in the Italian justice system but also shattered the illusion of invulnerability. Citizens across the nation grappled with the harsh reality that their lives were intricately woven into the fabric of a society under siege.

The pervasive shock and grief, extending beyond regional boundaries, contributed to the emergence of a climate of national trauma. Fear, anger, and a profound sense of vulnerability permeated communities, reshaping the societal ethos. This emotional landscape became fertile ground for the growth of emergentism, a collective response fuelled by a desperate yearning for security in the face of unprecedented threats.

In the summer of 1992, Italy lived through the crisis of the 47th Republic, led by Giulio Andreotti. And a more vivid, if still miniaturized, picture of what the country was going through emerged, namely a general delegitimization of the political system (not just of parties). Civil society and institutions gradually collapsed. Citizens were thus exposed to an uninterrupted and terrible daily narrative of the decline of the most Mediterranean of the European countries. It was a story of corruption in political and economic relations, as well as between citizens and the government.

From 1989 to 1994, three governments succeeded each other. They were led by Giulio Andreotti, an experienced political professional, Giuliano Amato, a liberal-socialist academic, and Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, a former governor of the Bank of Italy. In June 1992, Giuliano Amato, the socialist, headed the new government. As mentioned above, the country was currently suffering from a delegitimization of its entire political system. The binding/filtering activity of the same social demand that most parties have historically carried out concerning people, companies, etc. has begun to dissolve, revealing features and forms of true perversion. It was an incredible experience. The network of corruption in political parties and public and private organizations, the trail of crimes implicating magistrates, legislators, state officials, police and carabinieri of all ranks, and innocent individuals, widened as an institutional crisis deepened. A general pathophysiology for the country.

Two heads of state had changed. Tangentopoli also brought about the disintegration of the major political organizations that had emerged or reappeared after the fall of fascism. It was no longer just professional politicians who were appointed to the presidency of the Council of Ministers or to head important ministries, but also intellectuals, professionals, and technicians at the highest levels, even the governor of the Bank of Italy himself.

An almost astonishing scenario, recounted by Amato in his appearance before the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission, reveals what they were reduced to. At 8.30 a.m., the morning after Paolo Borsellino's death, the secretary general of CESIS had an urgent meeting with the head of government, who wanted to know who was to blame and where the massacre had taken place. Instead, the senior official, Amato, was given a list of CESIS vehicles used by the leaders of the main parties. "[...] I sent him away and told him that I would expect him to bring me something else that morning, not that list...Now, because CESIS is a collector, I understood that nothing had gone into the collector"¹³⁹. There was no information. The statement of the President of the Council was distressing: "At the beginning I directly perceived an unsatisfactory condition of the level of information of which the two services were able, in a situation like that, to enrich my analytical capacity and that of the Government".¹⁴⁰ Verbal caution does not diminish the seriousness of bad judgment. In fact, the premier had a "clear perception of inadequacy. There was nothing from the information services to help us unravel that skein and, on the other hand, it became a priority [...]."¹⁴¹

On the night of 27-28 July 1993, after the bombings of churches in Rome and Milan, Di Maggio attended an extraordinary meeting at 2 a.m. in Palazzo Chigi. There he claimed Serbian paternity (the war against Yugoslavia was still going on) for the explosions, but the police chief, while not denying it, chose to blame the Mafia.

¹³⁹ S. Sechi, *La Mafia non è finita. Dalla Trattativa con lo Stato all'arresto di Messina Denaro (1993-2023)*, 2023, goWare, Florence. p. 28.

¹⁴⁰ *Ivi*, p. 29.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

When considering the historical perspective, which is the only valid means of evaluating the significance of individual events in long-term processes, the executive led by Amato achieved an almost extraordinary feat in a very short period - just ten months from 28 June 1992 to 28 April 1993. This is not about the more well-known cyclopean maneuver of 120 thousand billion lire. In 1992 and 1993, the European Commission sought information on Italy's plans to address the economic and financial crisis resulting from the devaluation of the lira and the significant increase in the deficit. Instead, it appears that the difficulties of dealing with the Mafia emergency, which had resurfaced with the assassination of Paolo Borsellino, were compounded. This revealed Cosa Nostra's increasingly obvious terrorist and subversive nature. Justice Minister Claudio Martelli even went so far as to strongly advise the Prime Minister. The edict, which authorized the harsh imprisonment of Mafiosi following the Capaci massacre, had to be promptly made into law. Despite opposition from most political forces, the edict was enacted. Although many barriers had arisen, Amato was aware of the demand articulated by his minister and did not require any further impetus to share it: "I went in the evening to Senate President Spadolini and obtained an *ad horas* scheduling of the measure",¹⁴² as he recalled. Martelli saw Giovanni Falcone, head of the Department of Criminal Investigation, killed in an explosion that ripped through 500 meters of the motorway at Capaci. Falcone was Cosa Nostra's main opponent and closest collaborator with the Ministry of Justice.

However, it is important to objectively identify Capaci from previous massacres. Capaci occurred during the period preceding the Andreotti government's June decree, which reinforced the 41-bis. Therefore, the deaths of Falcone, his wife, and his escort could be interpreted as a vengeful reaction to the Court of Cassation's decision, which confirmed the heavy penalties imposed on the bosses of the Maxiprocesso. It is crucial to maintain a balanced and precise language, avoiding biased or emotional expressions. It may have sounded like an invitation or a warning to the government to halt, but this is not clear. The

¹⁴² "Andai di sera dal presidente del Senato Spadolini, e ottenni una calendarizzazione *ad horas* del provvedimento". *Ivi*, p. 33.

prevention and repression apparatuses were then able to apprehend the boss Totò Riina on January 16, 1993.

On the other hand, Cosa Nostra seemed to have intended to oppose or alleviate the 41-bis in the atrocities that occurred in Florence, Milan, and particularly in Rome. This was evident when Minister Conso implemented measures with the Ciampi government in November 1993. It cannot be denied that there was a design among political exponents and ministers to reduce the coercive measures against the mafia phenomenon.

The slaughter campaign had two significant components that were then highly covered by the media. Firstly, Riina was arrested by Colonel Mario Mori's soldiers. Secondly, the Mafia was portrayed as an organization that increasingly appeared to operate in tandem with other entities, rather than being isolated.

2.5 Il Corriere della Sera, la Repubblica and Il Giornale: The Media Perspective on National Trauma

Corriere della Sera, with its centrist stance, sought to provide a balanced view of the unfolding events. Through poignant editorials and in-depth analysis, the newspaper aimed to guide its readers through the labyrinth of emotions while fostering a sense of unity in the face of adversity. On 7 April 1992, two days after the political elections, the Corriere della Sera opened with the following headline: "Italy protests, earthquake elections".

Rubble”¹⁴³ discussed the political victory of the Lega party. On page 15, “A Few Shocks for Italy Without Leagues” provides details of the vote in the South. The article also reports on the fears of Sicilian public opinion. To explain this, Monsignor Bommarito, the Bishop of Catania, expressed his concern about the earthquake in Lombardy and Bossi's triumph. He acknowledged the voters' will but was alarmed by the outcome “But I would not like this statement to affect the service that the government will have to render to the South; a service of which we always have a special need” referring to the Mafia.¹⁴⁴ Falcone's death was announced in nine columns on Sunday 24 May 1992. It was a turning point.

¹⁴³ M. Gianzonio, *La Lega trionfa sulle macerie dei partiti*, in *Corriere della Sera*. Archive. April 7, 1992. P. 20.

¹⁴⁴ *Ivi*, p.15.

On 25 April, the President of the Republic, Francesco Cossiga, resigned. On 13 May, the Parliament in joint session was convened by Chamber President Scalfaro for the election of a new head of state. However, for several days, multiple ballots were held without success. It was not until the Capaci massacre on 25 May that the parliamentarians were finally induced to elect Scalfaro on the 16th ballot with 672 votes. In the editorial, Vertone went on to speak of “a disoriented and perhaps sick country”, of “an enormous public debt”, of “three regions in the south that are leaving the state to join the South American underworld”. The conclusion was drastic: “After Falcone's assassination, no inertia, no calculation, no reasoning, no vein geometry of politics could still justify the destruction of a country that is certainly not the best in the world but does not deserve what is happening to it. In the absence of possible predictions and plausible judgments, the naked confrontation of facts remains. In the same state and at the same time, some can uncover a street undisturbed, undermine it, with a thousand kilos of TNT; and there is a Parliament shattered into a hundred splinters that cannot reassemble itself to fulfill its elementary task and elect the highest authority in the state. Once again, the power of terrorism grows in correspondence with the political impotence of governments and parties”. On page 2, in the same issue of the Corriere, Felice Cavallaro gave the details of the attack, titled '18:20 Apocalypse of the Mafia' (in the image below).

Mille chili di esplosivo polverizzano uomini e macchine, poi Cosa Nostra rivendica: «È il regalo di nozze per Madonia»

Ore 18.20: Apocalisse di mafia

Il botto, la strage e l'unico testimone racconta: «Ho soccorso Falcone, era ancora vivo»

DAL NOSTRO INVIATO

PALERMO - L'hanno ammazzato come lui temeva, facendo una strage, usando mille chili di esplosivo ammassati in un sottopassaggio pedonale scavato sotto l'autostrada fra Palermo e Punta Raisi. Un'autostrada che in quel punto, a cinque chilometri dalla città, non c'è più perché il boia che ha pigliato il tasto del telecomando alle 18.20 di questo maledetto sabato ha scatenato l'Apocalisse: un'eruzione di ferro, terra e massi ha aperto una voragine larga trenta metri e profonda otto facendo volare in un giardino di ulivi la prima auto di scorta con tre agenti e spezzando in due quella guidata da Giovanni Falcone, il simbolo della lotta alla mafia. Il bersaglio da eliminare a ogni costo, anche se aveva accanto la moglie, Francesca Morvillo, pure lei magliata, pure lei magliata, le gambe spezzate,

più noto di Palermo perché gli piaceva scherzare, andare in giro fiero del suo incarico di angelo custode di Falcone. Si occupava pure lui delle contromisure per prevenire gli attentati. E un paio di anni fa si pensò proprio a un attentato con esplosivo celato sotto l'asfalto. Tutto che in via Notarbartolo, davanti all'abitazione di Falcone, fu murata e deviate una fognatura. Era una delle tante misure di prevenzione saltate in un attimo ieri sera con l'agguato che lo stesso Falcone aspettava in difesa da dieci anni.

Un agguato che farà giustizia delle dicerie degli umtori, del vocio su una presunta «resa» legata al suo trasferimento romano e smentita con una intervista al «Corriere»: «Io sono un siciliano... Uno o è un uomo o non lo è. Non ho mai pensato alla morte. Il fallito attentato di due anni fa

1.000 chili di tritolo erano collocati nel cunicolo di aerazione posto sotto la sede autostradale

Isola delle Femmine
Aeroporto Punta Raisi
Autostrada A 29
PALERMO

Figure 3, Corriere della Sera. Archive. May 24, 1992. p.2

While at the bottom of the page Enzo Mignosi described the terrible evening experienced the night before in Palermo. This last account deserves to be quoted, at least in its opening part: “A city astonished,

dismayed, petrified in the face of the most ferocious attack ever carried out by the Mafia executioners in so many years of war against the State and its representatives. One does not know, in these moments of bewilderment, whether grief or despondency, anger or resignation prevail in the cocktail of emotions. The news of the massacre falls like a heavy cloak over this viscous Palermo condemned to massacres, slaughter, and poisons."¹⁴⁵



Figure 4, Corriere della Sera. Archive. May 24, 1992. p.4

On page 4 (in figure 4), the first polemics emerged: Vittorio Grevi titled his commentary: 'The hour of shame for those who betrayed him', while Maria Antonietta Calabrò reconstructed the last tormented phases of Falcone's life, denouncing the “envy, jealousies, and power games” to which he had been subjected; she reported a conversation he had had a few weeks earlier with a “magistrate friend” (Borsellino) in which Falcone had made a disenchanting and atrocious prediction: "Cosa Nostra always does this: first it soils the victim and then takes him out. This time they really kill me”.

And the “friend magistrate” was then reported dead, 55 days later, on the 20th of July 1992. The image of Italy at that time was clear and was described on the front page by Giulio Anselmi as follows: 'The

¹⁴⁵ F. Cavallaro, *18.20 Apocalisse di Mafia*, in Corriere della Sera. Archive. May 24, 1992. p.2.

charred body of Judge Borsellino, with his right arm, severed cleanly, and the macabre allegory of the impotence of the State and Justice in Sicily. As if the mafia, with its bloody symbolism, wanted to send an even more atrocious and violent message than the killing itself.

1988 - 25.10.1988

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

DEL LUNEDÌ

COLPITO DALLA MAFIA IL CANDIDATO ALLA SUPERPROCURA, L'UOMO CHE INDAGAVA SUI KILLER DI FALCONE

Massacro, ucciso Borsellino

Autobomba a Palermo: assassinati il giudice e cinque agenti di scorta tra cui una donna Scalfaro: guai a noi se non saremo uniti, forti e, soprattutto, credibili. E' l'ora dell'azione

I COMPLICI E GLI INETTI

di ENRICO ANTONIETTI

Il super commissario del giudice Borsellino, con il suo gruppo di lavoro, è la macchina d'indagine che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso. E' un fatto che non può essere ignorato, perché è un fatto che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso. E' un fatto che non può essere ignorato, perché è un fatto che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso.

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PALERMO - Una delle auto devastate dall'esplosione che ha ucciso il giudice Borsellino e la sua scorta. (Foto Ansa)

Il giudice Borsellino è stato ucciso con un attentato che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso. E' un fatto che non può essere ignorato, perché è un fatto che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso.

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Il giudice Paolo Scalfaro

Attacco a prefetta, questore, carabinieri e alta commissaria

Martelli ora ci dovranno spiegare perché non hanno evitato la strage

ROMA - Il presidente della Repubblica ha detto che il fatto è un attentato che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso. E' un fatto che non può essere ignorato, perché è un fatto che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso.

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M. Antonietta Albanese
Gesù di cognome si chiamava Dio
 prefazione di T. De Maio
 Ediz. 1988

Fernando Savater
Etica per un figlio
 seconda edizione

Editori Laterza

ALL'INTERNO

SE JUDICIALI
 Orsini a Milano
 80 tribunali dell'ordine
 di Saragat
 2 luglio 88

MEME SERRE
 Baxter in missione a Gerusalemme
 2 luglio 88

IL POPO MALATO
 Giovanni Paolo II: speranza via radio
 2 luglio 88

LEGGI
 L'Europa

DA
 Da oggi a puntate «Il servizio di Sclai»

Ventiquattro anni, biondina, minuta, assegnata alle scorte: è la prima a uscire in servizio

Storia di Emanuela, da sessanta giorni al fronte

EMANUELA - La biondina di ventiquattro anni, minuta, assegnata alle scorte, è la prima a uscire in servizio. La sua storia è quella di una donna che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso. E' un fatto che non può essere ignorato, perché è un fatto che ha fatto scendere il giudice dalla Sicilia e lo ha ucciso.

MIRAGE
Ma non sono invincibili

CINQUEMILA
Fateci vedere le facce dei killer

SEMANO
Quanto vale una vita?

Thus began, also for the newspaper of the center, the War Against the State. Anselmi goes on to narrate it: "Does this dark signal of war reach Rome?" Only one thing seems clear from the articles after the death of the two magistrates: 'The State and the Mafia move at sidereally distant speeds. The first announces the establishment of a super-prosecutor's office that it is unable to get off the ground, the other kills, one after the other, the potential candidates for the post of super-prosecutor.'

The government is then urged that "against another emergency, it must immediately show its determination" "But do they realise that their attitude may make them unwilling allies of the mafia?"

The idea that was recurrent among Italians was that power was no longer in the hands of the state but of Cosa Nostra. That the men in power were so blinded by matters of bribes and money that they did not realize that an entire war had just begun. "How many deaths will it take to realize that we are at war?" wrote the Corriere on page 4. The only ones who had realized, who had immolated themselves and sacrificed themselves to fight it, were the magistrates who had been killed, 'Priests of a throne of blood'. Enzo Biagi recounted this feeling of impotence very well, again on page 4: 'Men of honor, they do as they please, they have real power, and they show it. They strike how and when they want. In their territory, Sicily, which they intend to protect from the intrusions of another force, much weaker, but which disturbs them. The State.'

4 LUNEDÌ 20 LUGLIO 1992 CORRIERE DELLA SERA

IN PRIMO PIANO



L'ATTENTATO DI PALERMO

Quanti morti occorreranno per rendersi conto che siamo in guerra? Chi mandare allo sbaraglio? Che fare?

Sacerdoti di un trono di sangue

Uomini d'«onore», fan quel che gli pare, hanno il vero potere

Falcone, gli appunti dimenticati

DAL NOSTRO INVIATO

PALERMO — Quelle due paginette di appunti pubblicate dalla giornalista del Sole 24 Ore, Liana Miliella, perché Giovanni Falcone gliel'aveva consegnate «a futura memoria» avevano fatto un po' di rumore nei primi due giorni e poi basta. Ora una riletta attenta appare auspicabile.

I giudici di Caltanissetta non se ne sono occupati perché li valutavano «penalmente irrilevanti». Quelli di Palermo li hanno ignorati anche perché le fecce di Falcone sono dirette soprattutto contro alcuni di loro, a cominciare dal procuratore della Repubblica, Giammasco.

Il ministro degli Interni, Nicola Mancino, dopo aver presieduto una riunione per accertarne l'autenticità, aveva spiegato di non aver titolo per indagare e che ne aveva però parlato al Viminale con Giovanni Galloni. E quest'ultimo, come vicepresidente del Csm, si era limitato a passare una copia del Sole 24 Ore alla Prima commissione. Ma al Palazzo dei Marsicelli a Roma tira aria di smobilitazione perché stanno per essere com-

questa Sicilia luttuosa dove una cappa di disagio grava su uno dei centri nervosi cruciali del pianeta Giustizia: la Procura della Repubblica.

Un Palazzo dove molti tirano la carretta senza crederci troppo, dove qualche assassino viene assolto e qualche pentito screditato, dove il sistema forse è ben rappresentato dalla vista delle grandi vetrate che separano lo sbruciatro atrio dal cortile interno, trasformato in discarica: una collina informe alta 10 metri di suppellettili, vecchi divani, sedie rotte, travi, scrivanie e armadi arrugginiti che sembrano lanciati dalle finestre della Corte di Assise, del tribunale, della pretura, da dove giudici e cancellieri, imputati e curiosi s'affacciano a scrutare lo sfascio.

In tanti hanno provato a innestare la marcia della memoria. Il giudice Ayala, adesso parlamentare repubblicano, ha parlato per primo di un diario, il cronista Francesco La Licata, su *La Stampa*, ne ha dato conferma, un altro giornalista, Saverio Ledato, su *l'Unità*, ha aggiunto riflessioni di tono, sembra a quella di La-





The citizens of Palermo had lost every shred of trust. The men of the State and Justice, who had been unable to prevent the massacre were accused. "Martelli: prefect and quaestor owe us explanations"¹⁴⁶, it is important to analyze the article at the end of page 5. Minister Martelli had met Borsellino a few days earlier. The anti-mafia strategy was working. The first important cracks were appearing in Cosa Nostra's wall of omertà, probably the most difficult enemy to fight. Paolo Borsellino had discussed this with the Minister of Justice and listed a series of small but significant successes achieved by the maxi-decree passed at the end of June before it was approved by Parliament (as described in the previous chapter). Claudio Martelli, who was grieving, returned to Palermo to mourn once again. The minister had requested an account of what happened from those responsible for public order, including the prefect, quaestor, commander of the Palermo carabinieri, and other commissioners. "They must explain to the government and the country why they failed to prevent the recent massacre and the death of the Sicilian magistrate who was leading the investigations against Cosa Nostra".¹⁴⁷ For Carmine Fioriti of the Autonomous Police Syndicate (Sap), "either the facts are done now, or the state is doomed to succumb irreparably".¹⁴⁸ On page 7, the same idea was expressed in "Reaction for clean Italians", with the words of President Scalfaro: "The State is credible if those who represent it have credibility".¹⁴⁹ The reaction took place the same day, and the following day, 21 July 1992, *Il Corriere della Sera* headlined: "Operation Palermo, two thousand agents and carabinieri sent, 800 soldiers" (figure 5).

¹⁴⁶ R.R, *Martelli: prefetto e questore ci devono spiegazioni*, in *Corriere della Sera*. Archive. July 20, 1992. p.5.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibidem*. "Debbono spiegare al governo e al paese perché non sono riusciti ad impedire questa nuova strage e la morte annunciata del magistrato siciliano più determinato nelle indagini contro Cosa Nostra"

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem*. "O si fanno i fatti subito o lo Stato è destinato a soccombere irreparabilmente".

¹⁴⁹ M. Manno. *Reagire per gli italiani puliti*. In *Corriere della Sera*. Archive. July 20, 1992. p.7. President Scalfaro's Statement: "*Lo Stato è credibile se lo sono coloro che lo rappresentano*".

potential turning point in Italy's fight against the mafia's grip on society. The event not only had profound implications for the country's judicial and law enforcement systems but also sparked widespread public interest and jubilation.

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

REDAZIONE: Quotidiani | DIREZIONE, REDAZIONE, AMMINISTRAZIONE, TIPOGRAFIA: Via Solferino 28 MILANO 20121 - Telef. da Milano 6339 - Intercom. (02) 6363 - Indirizzi integr. CORRIERE - Telex 310021 | SEDE DI ROMA 00100: Via Tomacelli, 180 - Tel. (06) 698.021 | PUBBLICITÀ RCS Pubblica S.p.A. - 20124 MILANO - Via Vespucio 2 - Telef. (02) 6290.1

CLAMOROSO ARRESTO DEL NUMERO UNO DI COSA NOSTRA RICERCATO DA 24 ANNI. ORDINO' STRAGI E DELITTI

Preso Riina, decapitata la mafia

La trappola dei carabinieri è scattata ieri mattina in una strada di Palermo. Il boss era in auto, non ha fatto resistenza Mancino: resti vivo e si pente. La sorella di Falcone: gran giorno per lo Stato. E nelle piazze i giovani festeggiano

SVOLTA VINCENTE
di SAVERIO VERTONE

Non è il caso di chi-
dersi perché sia stato ar-
restato solo adesso. Da
tempo tutti sapevano e
tutti dicevano che Totò
più saldi di quello di Pita-
gora. Adesso che è stato
arrestato sapremo final-
mente se questo rozzo se-
mianalfabeta era davvero

PALERMO — La trappola per la
«Belva» è scattata alle 8.30. Totò Riina
aveva appena lasciato un apparta-
mento alla periferia di Palermo e percorreva
la circosollazione a bordo di una Ci-
troën ZX. A metà della rotonda davanti
al Motel Agip, due macchine hanno
bloccato l'auto del boss: ne sono scesi
gli uomini dei Ros, con le pistole in ma-
no. «State sbagliando persona» ha det-
to il sanguinario capo delle cosche ten-
tando il bluff con una carta d'identità
falsa, ripresa dal giovane fido. Invece

persone. E' bene che parli. Deve essere
controllato a vista 24 ore su 24, gli si
deve controllare il cibo, quello che beve
e anche l'aria che respira». Al termine
di una giornata di vittoria le preoccupa-
zioni per l'incolumità di Totò «o cur-
tu» si intrecciano all'appello pressante
perché il boss dei boss si pente e passi
«dalla parte giusta». Prima il coman-
dante generale dei Carabinieri, Antonio
Viesti, poi il capo della Polizia, prefetto
Vincenzo Parisi, infine lo stesso mini-

I magnifici otto che l'hanno preso
Il generale Viesti racconta il blitz
■ Marco Nese a pagina 2

Ninetta, la moglie devota
e i quattro figli della latitanza
■ Enzo Mignosi a pagina 3

Figure 6, Front Page Corriere della Sera. Archive. January 16, 1993.

The newspaper also published an anonymous and cautious profile of Sergio De Caprio, what passed his command: the "Serpico dei carabinieri" (figure 7), headline without much imagination, telling "the young captain who prepared the trap "The cop without a uniform blending in with the bad guys to catch them one by one". The journalist of Corriere Goffredo Buccini recalls how it appeared that the "big generals of Viale Romania do not love him". Because in the profile they put an evaluation of the characteristic notes: they wrote "an official in the average", "but you read annoying". De Caprio wasn't average at all, but he certainly was "a pain in the ass"¹⁵⁰, like many of his own in that first Ros, the special operations unit that did the big job.

¹⁵⁰ "Si capisce che i generaloni di Viale Romania non lo amano [...] scrivono ufficiale nella media, ma si legge rompicoglioni". Goffredo Buccini, *Il Tempo delle Mani Pulite* (Editori Laterza, 2021), p. 77.

MILANO ANTONI E LA MUCCHIA
 minazione nel sopprime-
 re «chiunque ostacoli o
 intralci» i suoi affari. Per
 questo è stato liquidato
 Libero Grassi, per questo

PROBABILMENTE SONO STATI LONTANI DALL'ISOLA,
 in questi anni. Nessuno
 aveva documenti.

Qui sopra, Salvatore
 Riandino; a
 sinistra, il generale Carlo
 Alberto Dalla Chiesa

grande, stampando an-
 che su cartoncino le
 partecipazioni.
 Giuliano Gallo

centi questo Totò Riina
 non potevano catturarlo
 sei mesi fa? Prima che a
 Capaci...
 Andrea Purgatori

ARMANDO PER IL PRU
 schiosa delle missioni.
 Soldi? Un posto al sole
 nelle gerarchie di Cosa
 nostra?

tor, smaniosi di capire
 chi è davvero il bracciale
 disoccupato.
 Enzo Mignosi

IL CACCIATORE

Il «Serpico» dei carabinieri un capitano in divisa jeans

PALERMO — È un timido, almeno in apparenza. Le prime volte che parla con una persona sta sulle sue, ascolta attentamente e studia, inquadra, analizza chi gli sta di fronte. E non sbaglia mai la valutazione. Siamo parlando dei carabinieri che ha preparato la trappola per Totò Riina. È figlio d'arte, ha respirato l'aria particolare delle caserme dell'Arma fin da bambino. La scelta di indossare la divisa nera con gli alamari l'ha presa quando ancora aveva i calzoni corti, anche se ormai da anni non la indossa più. La sua divisa è infatti quella resa famosa da Serpico: blue jeans, camicia senza cravatta, e giubbetto. Perché a lui non piace stare seduto dietro una scrivania e dare ordini ai suoi collaboratori. Lui preferisce, anzi ama, vivere in mezzo alla strada, fianco a fianco con i suoi uomini.

Ha imparato a conoscere la mafia quando a poco più di vent'anni è stato mandato in una caserma a pochi chilometri da Palermo. E ha subito cominciato a studiare i siciliani, si è immedesimato nella loro mentalità. «Solo capendo con chi hai a che fare — ripete spesso —, scoprendo in quale mondo si muove e agisce, puoi riuscire a prevedere i comportamenti e le mosse di chi poi devi arrestare».

La filosofia investigativa del Serpico dell'Arma prevede inoltre che non vale la pena arrestare un pesce piccolo, ma che è meglio seguirlo, magari per mesi, per arrivare poi al capo dell'organizzazione. Un metodo seguito lavorando giorno e notte, ma che non sempre è stato apprezzato dai suoi superiori. Tanto è vero che nelle note caratteristiche è stato valutato: «ufficiale nella media». Per questo non ha potuto entrare nella Dia.



Accanto, il ministro dell'Interno Nicola Mancino e, a destra, il comandante generale dei carabinieri, Antonio Visti (Foto AP)

LA RIVINCITA

L'Arma festeggia il trionfo sulle polemiche del passato

MILANO — Non è Pastrengo, ma quasi. In quella battaglia i carabinieri salvarono la Monarchia, venerdì a Palermo hanno salvato la Repubblica dall'incubo di una mafia invincibile. Certo Cosa nostra non è sconfitta, ma la foto di Riina in manette ha restituito agli Italiani la fiducia. E per i carabinieri è il giorno della grande riscossa: la gente li ringrazia, si riscopre l'orgoglio della divisa.

Gli otto carabinieri di Palermo hanno regolato all'Arma una rivincita spettacolare dopo anni di amarezza. Un calvario cominciato intorno al 1986. Sindacalisti in lotta, scioperi del pasto, un comandante contestato a tutti i livelli. E tanti fatti oscuri

Da quel momento è iniziata la risalita. Il primo passo lo ha fatto un pugno di uomini vestiti di nero: i sei commandos del Gisnero nell'aprile 1990 liberano la piccola Patrizia Tarciella. Un blitz da manuale, tanti applausi. Ma la strada è ancora lunga. A Milano qualcuno sta lavorando. Pochi, decisi, iniziano a fiutare una pista che porterà lontano. E la Duomo Connection, l'indagine sull'infiltrazione della mafia in Lombardia, che è anche lo scossone premonitore del terremoto di Tangentopoli.

A dare la caccia ai colletti bianchi del clan c'erano tre ufficiali, quasi gli allievi della riscossa dell'Arma. C'era Sergio Gebbia, che stanò l'uccisore di Cristina Mazzotti e avviò l'inchiesta «Mani pulite». C'era Roberto Zailani che arrestò Mario Chiesa e incastrò big della politica e dell'economia. E c'era l'«Ultimo», il capitano che venerdì mattina ha catturato Riina.

La risalita non è stata facile. Bisognava ancora attraversare la tempesta del dossier. Alla Camera la Fedelissima viene accusata d'infedeltà, l'offesa più grande. E subito dopo la confusione dell'appello di Cossiga e del documento del Coer. Il sin-

dacato impugna il piccone e scrive: «pronti a difenderci con ogni mezzo». È la bufera. C'è chi urla al golpe, da più parti si parla di smilitarizzare l'Arma, di fonderla con la polizia.

Mentre nel Palazzo discutono, la grande criminalità lancia l'offensiva. Tutti i comandi, dalle sezioni alle stazioni di provincia, si trovano in trincea. Molti carabinieri cadono. I tre ragazzi del Piastro di Bologna, i due di Salerno, il maresciallo Guazzelli. Ma aumenta la fiducia. A Milano uno dopo l'altro vengono scoperti i corrotti. A Napoli scovano Carmine Alfieri, il padrino della camorra. Sull'Aspromonte fermano Ierino, il sequestratore di Roberta Chidini.

Dietro i titoli da prima pagina ci sono migliaia di fatti quotidiani. Cronache di violenza minore ma non meno feroci. Furti, scippi, rapine. La gente va nelle caserme in cerca di protezione. E, più che altro, vi trova ancora sicurezza, ordine, onestà. Un punto di riferimento nel caos istituzionale. Appuntati con un milione e mezzo di stipendio che rifiutano mazzette da 200 milioni. Ragazzi che rischiano la vita per bloccare un ladro.

E c'è una sigla che poco alla

volta si fa spazio nelle cronache: Ros, raggruppamento operativo speciale. Gli ottocento specialisti del reparto ieri hanno brindato, sperando che il colpo grosso di Palermo allontanò lo scioglimento. Da tempo viene prospettato l'incorporamento nella Dia. Loro invece, pur vestendo sempre in borghese, sperano di conservare le stellette. E rimangono carabinieri.

Il Ros è stato creato nel 1990, ma gli uomini dell'unità vantano un altro compleanno: «Veniamo da molto più lontano, dal 1978 — spiega un ufficiale —, il Ros è nato dalle sezioni anticrimine e antiterrorismo volute dal generale Dalla Chiesa. I metodi sono quelli di allora, con la serietà e l'umiltà di quegli anni. Lavoriamo in silenzio da due anni. E ora i risultati si vedono».

Eredi di Dalla Chiesa, quindi. E mentre Totò Riina veniva ammanettato, gli uomini del Ros pensavano al «loro» generale che con i corleonesi aveva un conto aperto dal 1948. Nel 1982 il padrino ha fatto uccidere un Dalla Chiesa, solo e senza mezzi. Dieci anni dopo i suoi ufficiali hanno chiuso la partita. In nome della legge.

Giuliano Di Feo

Figure 7, in Corriere della Sera. Archive. January 18, 1993. p.4.

Read after 30 years, they seem outlandish moments, an agency photo immortalized the magistrate Ilda Bocassini touched, that kisses the hand of Mario Mori, the tough colonel who created the department. The magistrates and the agents killed would have had justice. Considering these recent events, a discernible moral dichotomy emerged, delineating the virtuous of the malevolent. In the ensuing months attention will be directed towards addressing the underlying malaises, precipitating investigations aimed at recalibrating the socio-political landscape and attenuating prevailing emotional disquietudes. However, economic indices depicted a horrific trajectory, as the lira depreciated vis-à-vis the mark and the dollar, concomitant with a ballooning deficit running into the billions. Against the backdrop of these economic uncertainties, the pall of an impending crisis loomed ominously, largely unabated by the palliative effect of Sicilian news.

The atmosphere remained charged, particularly within Parliament, where fissures within the majority coalition became increasingly apparent. The resignation of Liberal secretary Altissimo, who had also come under investigation by the Mani Pulite anti-corruption probe, further underscored the precariousness of the political landscape. Meanwhile, opposition parties such as Lega and Missini seized upon the moment, launching scathing direct attacks. In a startling display of dissent, Luca Leoni Orsenigo, a supporter of Bossi's Northern League, dramatically brandished a noose from beneath the bench, provocatively waving it in the faces of his parliamentary colleagues (figure 8). Against a backdrop

of chants denouncing “thieves” and “Mafiosi”, the scene captured media attention, serving as a stark indicator that the nation was not unequivocally advancing toward an expansion of the democratic sphere.

Lega e Msi, gazzarra alla Camera

Un deputato lumbard esibisce un cappio, Napolitano lo espelle. Spugne e insulti per il presidente Amato. Altissimo si dimette dalla segreteria del Pli, è accusato di corruzione nell'inchiesta sugli appalti dell'Enel

NESSUNA GIUSTIFICAZIONE

di LEO VALIANI

Nessuna giustificazione può essere ammessa per le scene violente e disgustose che hanno turbato anche la seduta della Camera dei deputati dedicata alla questione morale. È vero che dell'esistenza di questa non sono responsabili le opposizioni in quanto tali, ma i partiti, il più delle volte di governo, che hanno beneficiato per lunghi anni delle tangenti e di altri illeciti, per somme molto grosse. Ma il solo risultato che le sceneggiate possono avere è di ridurre il desiderio spontaneo del Paese di vedere giustizia fatta nelle sedi appropriate, che sono i tribunali, e trasferire la vertenza sul terreno della forza, sul quale vince

sito, ma possiamo supporre che anche esso sarà diverso. Non è detto con questo che sia molto migliore, anche se approviamo l'energica condotta del presidente della Camera Napolitano.

Il torto di Amato non è stato di voler provvedere rapidamente, l'errore, gravissimo errore, è stato di voler affrettare le sentenze dei finanziamenti illeciti, togliendole alla Magistratura che costituisce una autorità indipendente e affidandole ai prefetti, che sono solo funzionari del governo.

È esatto, come dice Amato, che per le connessioni fra i vari reati i magistrati non sarebbero stati estromessi dalle in-



ROMA — Il leghista Leoni Orsenigo agita un cappio

I giudici contestano a Craxi altri 30 miliardi di tangenti

ROMA — È arrivato anche il cappio di corda nell'aula di Montecitorio. Lo ha estratto dalla tasca ieri mattina il deputato leghista Luca Leoni Orsenigo, mentre il presidente del Consiglio Giuliano Amato concludeva il dibattito sulla «questione morale». Come la settimana scorsa al Senato, ieri per mezz'ora alla Camera c'è stata una rissa verbale, con urla «Ladri» e «Mafia», minacce, interventi dei commessi, missini che, guanti bianchi alle mani e spugne colorate, mimavano la pulizia di vetri immaginari. Leoni Orsenigo diceva che, con il cappio, intendeva simboleggiare il governo che strangola l'economia. Non ha convinto nessuno. Poi è stato espulso dal presidente Napolitano e sospeso per sette giorni. E la sorpresa è arrivata in serata, quando anche il capo della Lega, Umberto Bossi, lo ha sospeso per sette giorni dal «lumbard», condannando il suo comportamento.

La mozione della maggioranza è passata con 295 sì, 248 no e 7 astenuti. Amato ha aperto un nuovo fronte: con la riforma elettorale, ha detto, sarà necessario dimezzare il numero dei deputati. Trambusto in casa dc: la presidente Terzolino chiede agli inquisiti di tenersi alla larga dal consiglio nazionale.

Credazzi, Da Rold, Folli a pagina 2

ROMA — C'è anche l'accusa di corruzione nell'avviso di garanzia per il segretario liberale Renato Altissimo, chiamato in causa da un imprenditore per una tangente di 50 milioni, ilone Enel. Spuntano anche i nomi degli altri due destinatari dei 10 avvisi di garanzia spediti lunedì da Milano: sono Giorgio Moschetti e Angelo Picano, senatori della Dc.

Investito dall'uragano tangenti, Altissimo si è dimesso dalla guida del Pli. «Anche se sono del tutto innocente ho il dovere di lasciare per difendere il mio onore e quello del Pli», ha dichiarato al Corriere. «Piena solidarietà» da parte del Pli, che gli ha chiesto di restare. Ma lui intende seguire l'esempio di La Malfa: resterà fuori della mischia fino a quando i fatti non saranno chiari.

Sul presunto accusatore, dice: «Lo conosco da anni. Ha sempre raccolto liberamente contributi per noi. Perché avrei dovuto chiederglieli?». Intervista a Zanone. Patuelli reggente? Deciderà il Consiglio nazionale.

I giudici di «Mani Pulite» nell'ottavo avviso di garanzia inviato a Craxi contestano all'ex segretario del partito socialista tangenti per 30 miliardi, incassate dal 1983 al 1991.

Proietti, Rosaspina a pagina 3

E' morto Testori cattolico contro

MILANO — È morto ieri all'ospedale «San Raffaele» lo scrittore, drammaturgo, critico d'arte, polemista cattolico Giovanni Testori. Era malato di cancro. Aveva 70 anni. I funerali domani alle 15 a Novate Milanese.



Cederna, Fertilio Garzone, Grasso Minervino, Raboni a pagina 7

L'URLO DELLA VERITA'

di CARLO BO

Nell'ora del distacco, meglio nel momento in cui Gianni Testori si impadronisce definitivamente della memoria del nostro cuore, le ragioni della riconoscenza per tutto quello che ci ha detto sono molte. Ci basti restare su tre aspetti della sua generosa offerta: la scrittura, la poesia e la critica, ma se guardiamo bene si tratta di una sola vocazione, di una vocazione che lo ha posseduto e alla fi-

perità nasce dalla disperazione e dall'urlo. Se non si possedeva la sua forza, se non si poteva disporre del coraggio di guardare dentro il nostro cuore, scattavano le difese offerte dalle nostre abitudini e dalle nostre comodità intellettuali. Sotto questo aspetto è stato l'unico scrittore impegnato, lo scrittore pronto a manifestare le sue colpe e i suoi errori fino al sacrificio, fino alla Croce su cui

Figure 8, in Corriere della Sera. Archive. March 17, 1993. p.1.

These were indeed days characterized by dynamic political movements, where tensions simmered, and the trajectory of Italian democracy appeared uncertain. Then the shock, the anger, the response. Leafing through the pages of the Corriere della Sera from 28 May 1993 to 21 June of the same year one can grasp these three colours clearly. When the first reports of the 1.04 am explosion in Via dei Georgofili in Florence reached Milan in the middle of the night, the edition was already closed. It was the next day, 28 May precisely, that the opening of the front page left no doubt as to what had happened: “Massacres return, death in Florence”. Less than two weeks after the Parioli bombing in Rome, another car bomb exploded this time a stone's throw from the Uffizi. The first five pages devoted to the massacre covered everything from the chronicle to the investigation, with the prosecutor Piero Luigi Vigna saying of the perpetrators: "Mafia, but not only". "We will never forgive the murderers", shouted the Florentines, and Carlo Bo wrote in italics of a "ruthlessness that not even the war had achieved".

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

TREDICI GIORNI DOPO L'ATTENTATO AI PARIOLI UN'AUTOBOMBA SEMINA DISTRUZIONE E SCONVOLGE L'ITALIA

Tornano le stragi, morte a Firenze

Cinque vittime, uccise anche due bambine. Decine di feriti. Gravissimi danni alla Galleria degli Uffizi
Mancino: terrorismo mafioso. Allarme nelle stazioni e negli aeroporti, oggi sciopero generale di due ore

SUBITO ALLE URNE

di PIERLUIGI VERDI

Un'esplosione nella città di Firenze, il 25 maggio, ha ucciso cinque persone, tra cui due bambine, e ne ha ferite decine. I danni alla Galleria degli Uffizi sono gravissimi. Mancino: terrorismo mafioso. Allarme nelle stazioni e negli aeroporti, oggi sciopero generale di due ore.



Il presidente del Consiglio nel capoluogo toscano, che fra i politici, arretrava tra i Bersi

Ciampi: «Lo Stato combatterà»

Sospetti sui Servizi. Se sono devianti smantelliamoli, dice Martinazzoli

Il presidente del Consiglio, Romano Prodi, ha detto che lo Stato combatterà il terrorismo. Ha criticato i servizi segreti, dicendo che se sono devianti vanno smantellati. Ha parlato di un attacco aereo contro il capoluogo toscano.

CONTRO UN SIMBOLO

di PIERLUIGI VERDI

Un'esplosione nella città di Firenze, il 25 maggio, ha ucciso cinque persone, tra cui due bambine, e ne ha ferite decine. I danni alla Galleria degli Uffizi sono gravissimi. Mancino: terrorismo mafioso. Allarme nelle stazioni e negli aeroporti, oggi sciopero generale di due ore.

Il presidente del Consiglio nel capoluogo toscano, che fra i politici, arretrava tra i Bersi

Il presidente del Consiglio nel capoluogo toscano, che fra i politici, arretrava tra i Bersi

La svolta degli imprenditori
La Confindustria
«Governi addio»
«Patto sociale per 50 mila posti»

INVESTIRE
QUANTO RENDONO VERAMENTE
FONDI COMUNI
LA PRIMA CLASSIFICA
SENZA COMMISSIONI

Arrestata la «talpa»
che tradì Borsellino
Cariere Napolità

La svolta degli imprenditori
La Confindustria
«Governi addio»
«Patto sociale per 50 mila posti»

Figure 9, in Corriere della Sera. Archive. May 28, 1993. p.1.

Florence was still raging the next day when a hundred thousand people filled Piazza Santa Croce with whistles at politics and a message to Cosa Nostra: "You don't scare us" (Figure 10). The dead were mourned, and the damage counted. But they immediately rolled up their sleeves: at the helm of the Uffizi was a petite but determined woman. Her name was Annamaria Petrioli Tofani. On 29 May she made a bet: "The Uffizi will reopen in a month". Despite everything, despite the violence. Some of the works were badly damaged, apparently to death. And Luigi Baldacci wrote: "There are three masterpieces that we will no longer be able to admire".

La rabbia in piazza: no al terrore

Scalfaro nella città ferita: «Libertà e democrazia vinceranno». Mancino in Parlamento accusa la mafia dei narcotrafficienti: la stessa mano che ha colpito ai Parioli. «Va rivisto il ruolo dei servizi segreti». Tre identikit. Il 20 maggio era scattato un allarme nella capitale: attentato imminente

Richiamato a Roma il questore di Palermo, un pentito di camorra fa il suo nome

ADESSO DUREZZA

di LEO VALIANI

Tutte le stragi, a cominciare da quella che il 12 dicembre 1969 ha seminato numerosi morti in Piazza Fontana, a Milano, sono state stigmatizzate con giusto sdegno. Nessuno dei colpevoli è stato, però, definitivamente ed adeguatamente condannato. La strage che adesso, oltre a mettere altre vittime innocenti, ha devastato uno dei massimi centri di scotti artistici che onorano Firenze, l'Italia e il mondo intero, ha suscitato una collera di folle che maggiore delle prece-

FIRENZE — La gente è scesa in piazza contro il ritorno della strage. Centomila persone a Firenze, cortei in tutte le principali città del Paese. Il presidente della Repubblica, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, ha fatto visita a Firenze, ancora sconvolta dall'autobomb che morti e decine di feriti. «Libertà e democrazia vinceranno», ha detto il capo dello Stato. In Parlamento il ministro dell'Interno Mancino ha accusato dell'attentato la mafia dei narcotrafficienti: la stessa mano che ha colpito ai Parioli. Ed ha parlato di riconsiderare il ruolo dei servizi segreti. Intanto le forze dell'ordine hanno elaborato tre identikit degli attentatori mentre è emerso che il 20 maggio era scattato un allarme nella capitale.

ROMA — Il questore di Palermo, Matteo Ciriaco, è stato rimosso dal suo incarico perché il pentito della camorra Pasquale Galasso ha fatto il suo nome. Non si sa cosa abbia detto Galasso, ma si suppone che abbia parlato di episodi relativi al periodo in cui Ciriaco era capo della squadra mobile di Napoli. Appreso che nei verbali dei magistrati napoletani era finito il nome del questore, il ministro Mancino ha deciso l'immediata sostituzione. Ciriaco viene richiamato a Roma, «a disposizione», e al suo posto va Aldo Gianni, che era questore a Reggio Calabria. Grande lo sconcerto per la vicenda che travolge un questore che aveva fama di persona incorruttibile. Lo avevano mandato a dirigere la questura di Palermo nel luglio dello scorso anno, dopo



LE IPOTESI / Onorevoli come James Bond Dove si trova la verità? ■ Bruno Tacci a pagina 2

I SOCCORRITORI / Tornano gli «angeli» La solidarietà tra polvere e macerie ■ Paolo Fallai a pagina 3

L'INTERVISTA / Pecchioli: «I signori della P2 sono ancora nel gioco. Prevenzione inefficiente» ■ Paolo Graldi a pagina 4

L'ANALISI / Torbida area del sistema che è rimasta impunita ■ Franco Ferraresi a pagina 4

I MUSEI / Mobilitazione generale Gli Uffici vogliono riaprire tra un mese ■ Paolo Cottì a pagina 5

I CAPOLAVORI / Tre opere perdute

Figure 10, in *Corriere della Sera*. Archive. May, 29, 1993. p.1.

An attack with a greater terrorist value: threatening an irreplaceable historical-artistic heritage outside Sicily and demonstrating that, if they like, you can strike during the day and kill ordinary people. As in the neo-fascist massacres of the 1970s, in a new edition of the "strategy of tension", this time of the Mafia matrix. This continued two months later, on the night of 27-28 July, with the bombings in Milan - at the Pavilion of Contemporary Art – and in Rome - at the church of San Giorgio al Velabro and behind the Basilica of San Giovanni.

In fact, on the evening of Tuesday 27 July, in Via Palestro in Milan, at 11.15 p.m., another Cosa Nostra bomb. This was described in detail by Goffredo Buccini, who stayed late that night in the editorial office of the *Corriere* in Via Solferino, about a thousand steps from Via Palestro. “A crater four meters deep and wide two. Tearing up the asphalt, tearing away the gas pipes. The flames come out high from the chasm. They lap and blacken the shattered and shaky walls of the municipal villa. I immediately have tears in my eyes at what I see. Bodies. Decomposed under a blue sheet stained with blood minute by minute, the corpse of a fireman.”¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ G. Buccini, R. Orlandi, *A Milano una trappola per la strage*, *Corriere della Sera*. Archive. July 28, 1993, p.3.

A Milano una trappola per la strage

«E' una bomba!», poi lo scoppio. Sei morti, in fiamme le condutture del gas

MILANO — Un cratere profondo quattro metri. Largo due. Che strazia l'asfalto, strappa via i tubi del gas. E quello l'inferno, lì c'è la morte, la paura. Le fiamme escono alte dalla voragine. Alte lambiscono e anneriscono le mura vacillanti della Villa comunale. Mura scrostate, distrutte. Finestre vuote, senza infissi, senza vetri, senza vita. Attorno i corpi. Scomposti sotto un lenzuolo azzurro che si macchia di sangue minuto dopo minuto, il cadavere di un pompiere. Una gamba ripiegata sull'altra, uno stivale che spunta. Il suo casco è lì, a terra, sul marciapiede coperto di macerie, foglie, detriti, pezzi degli alberi squartati. Velato di polvere.

Ho visto i vigili del fuoco, c'erano già i vigili urbani. Due pompieri si sono avvicinati, uno ha aperto il cofano, poi il bagagliaio. E ha gridato: «Vial Vial!». C'era un pacco con dei fili. Per un minuto e due non è successo nulla. Loro si sono riavvicinati. E allora è successo tutto. La trappola si chiude. Scatta. Un doppio boato. Poi il silenzio assurdo che dura una frazione di secondo. Poi la babbecchia di tutte le sirene, di tutti gli allarmi che s'accendono contemporaneamente

nella città. Di tutte le luci che si spengono per un attimo nel quartiere. Nell'inferno due metronotte vedono un'altra macchina, una Golf bianca, targata Roma, che scappa via a tutto gas.

l'altro lato degli alberi, oltre il cancello della villa, nei vialetti. E il corpo di un passante, forse un ragazzo nordafricano. «È un marocchino, cercava un posto per la notte», dice qualcuno. Chissà se è vero.

Citroën Ax grigia che sembra colpita in pieno da un missile, attorcigliata sul suo scheletro, senza finestre, senza cofano, sbattuta contro un albero del parco. Su un tetto della Villa, un cartoccio di lamiera nere: è tutto quello che resta dell'autobomba, forse. A duecento metri, su un prato, il cadavere di un vigile urbano. A terra, i feriti che si lamentano.

che gridano, che rompono il silenzio assurdo che sta calando di nuovo su quel pezzo di strada massacrata.

Via Palestro diventa un imbuto di sirene. Due ambulanze, cinque, quindici. E le gazzelle dei carabinieri, i lampeggianti della polizia, i carri dei pompieri che vomitano inutilmente torrenti d'acqua contro quel buco nero che sprizza lingue di

fuoco, mentre tutt'intorno l'aria si riempie dell'odore del gas, che sale dalla voragine dove le tubature sono strappate via. Piazza Cavour è bloccata in dieci minuti. Le macchine impazziscono all'incrocio, davanti al Palazzo dei giornali. Centinaia di ragazzi corrono verso l'incendio, vogliono vedere, capire, hanno sentito il boato. Vengono respinti in parte, i carabinieri cercano di bloccare

la folla che adesso preme da piazza Venezia. Spinge verso il cratere. «Tutto è transennato adesso. I carabinieri fanno cordone. Gli ufficiali lanciano con i cellulari le prime notizie al comando. Arriva Achille Serra, il questore di Milano. Dirige lui le operazioni, cerca di tenere la gente lontana, perché c'è ancora pericolo, perché l'odore del gas ormai è insopportabile e all'angolo con piazza Cavour c'è il distributore di benzina. Serra ha accanto il capo della Digos, Finotti. Mormora: «Sì, è una strage». Quanti morti? Quanti? «Sono due, due vigili del fuoco, uno è lì a terra. «No, sono tre, c'è anche un vigile urbano». «Sono cinque, sei». «Sono sei i morti». L'ultima notizia arriva da un funzionario della questura, davanti alle trasmene, con gli occhi rossi. E sette feriti.

Il sindaco è stato tra i primi ad accorrere in via Palestro dopo il boato
Tutti in strada, è l'incubo
Formentini: golpismo strisciante, ma la città non cederà



Figure 11, in Corriere della Sera. Archive. July 28, 1993, p.3.

But this was only one aspect of a wider and more serious picture that affected the whole country. The first confirmation came just half an hour after the explosion in Via Palestro: two other Fiat Uno bombs, filled with pentrite and T4, exploded in Rome within four minutes of each other, the first in front of the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano, the second in San Giorgio al Velabro, not far from the Capitol and the Imperial Forum: 22 people were injured, and churches were badly damaged.



LA NOTTE DEL TERRORE / Il primo boato a mezzanotte e 8 minuti a San Giovanni, il secondo 120 secondi dopo vicino al Campidoglio

Esplosioni a catena, Roma sfregiata

Panico nel cuore della capitale, 14 feriti. Un testimone: ho visto gli attentatori

E' un turista a bordo di un camper «Non dico nulla, ci tengo alla vita» Al Velabro l'ordigno più potente Sventrato un convento di frati

ROMA — Uffizi bis. Questa è l'allucinante strategia dei gruppi oscuri che stanno cercando di seminare il terrore nel Paese attentando ai più prestigiosi monumenti.



LE CHIESE COLPITE
Devastati due monumenti-simbolo

ROMA — Due esplosioni fragorose hanno squarciato il cuore della città. E ora due chiese di Roma sono in pericolo: San Giovanni in Laterano e San Giorgio in Velabro. Non si conosce ancora esattamente l'entità dei danni procurati dalle deflagrazioni. Di sicuro sono andate parzialmente distrutte alcune delle testimonianze monumentali più significative della Capitale.

Figure 12, in Corriere della Sera. Archive, July 28, 1993, p.2.

The disturbing facts remain. On the night of 27-28 July, while tears and deaths were being counted in Milan and injuries and damage were being counted outside churches in Rome, the telephone lines at Palazzo Chigi were mysteriously cut: Ciampi was unable to communicate with the security apparatus

and his staff for several minutes, in a surreal atmosphere of coup d'état. In front of the magistrates investigating the massacres, the then Prime Minister recounted: "I remember perfectly well that I convened an extraordinary meeting of the Supreme Defence Council. The President of the Republic, Scalfaro, was also informed of this convocation. I remember that, in an atmosphere of general bewilderment, during that meeting, someone advanced the hypothesis of a terrorist attack of Islamic origin. Others, certainly including the Chief of Police Vincenzo Parisi, excluded the validity of that track, advancing the hypothesis of the Mafia matrix".¹⁵² Parisi was right. It was the mafia, but not alone. There were "external inputs", said the magistrates in Florence when they opened the investigation into external mandates against Berlusconi and Dell'Utri. This was never found. But in the meantime, the dissolution was general. July '93 was perhaps the darkest month of the First Republic. On the 30th the city of Milan said goodbye to its dead, with a funeral parlor in Palazzo Marino and a solemn funeral service in the Duomo presided over by Cardinal Martini. A few hundred steps and the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele separated the two theatres of mourning, where, as always in 1993, anger, resentment, and rejection of anyone who embodied national politics poured out.

Scalfaro and Spadolini, the first and second offices of State, among the best politicians that the Italian institutions could display at that time, were booed, and protested at like two malefactors, as they left the funeral chamber and entered the cathedral, "Go back to Rome!". The overheated and angry crowd had eyes only for the magistrates of the Mani Pulite pool. Borrelli, Colombo, and Di Pietro decided to walk the few hundred meters between Piazza della Scala and Piazza Duomo, crossing the Galleria (not in the blue armored car). The Milanese ringleaders among the common people, the image could not have been more iconic and inflammatory. As if at the head of a procession, hundreds and hundreds of citizens followed and cheered the three magistrates. It is one of the moments that best sums up this period of Italian history.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Abbate, "27 luglio 1993: tre bombe, dieci morti e il dubbio che non sia stata solo la mafia", cit.

¹⁵³ M. Breda, *Milano piange, applaude inveisce*, in *Corriere della Sera*. Archive, July 31, 1993, p.2.

2.5.2 la Repubblica: The Left's Voice Admits Crisis

La Repubblica, leaning towards the left, assumed the role of a critical commentator on societal structures and governance. Its coverage not only chronicled events but also questioned the underlying systems that allowed such tragedies to occur, igniting conversations about systemic change.

In the first weeks of 1992, "la Repubblica" analyzed the political, economic, and institutional situation in Italy from the point of view of the electorate. Having long since exhausted the resources generated by the strong economic growth of the years of the 'economic miracle', the political system was tottering on the edge of inefficiency, waste, corruption, clientelism, the aggression of organised crime against the state and its inability to renew and reform itself. There was also a very serious financial crisis, with a very high budget deficit and, as a result, an ever-increasing public debt. The debt burden had become overwhelming at the very time when the Maastricht Treaty, to which Italy had adhered, imposed strict management of public finances. The newspaper thus described Italy as a country in which a perverse nexus existed between the interests of the many companies that shared resources and the ruling political class. La Repubblica also devoted considerable attention to the final stages of the PDS's election campaign, highlighting its strong polemic against the PSI rather than the DC.

With the elections of 5 and 6 April 1992, after decades of electoral stability, Italian politics experienced a kind of seismic shock. In his commentary, Mino Fuccillo argued that the majority that had governed Italy had been "rejected and beaten by the electorate", but he failed to mention the decisive element for the future political scenario: that the four parties, which had been in the minority in the polls, had nevertheless won a majority of seats, albeit a small one.¹⁵⁴ From the start of the election campaign, the newspaper's attitude was decidedly hostile towards the political forces that made up the outgoing government, and in particular towards the DC and the PSI. Already on the 5th of January, the editor

¹⁵⁴ M. Fuccillo, *Il referendum punisce quei quattro*, in "la Repubblica". Archive. April 7, 1992.

Scalfari attributed the main responsibility for the "degradation of the state and the discontent of the people"¹⁵⁵ to the majority parties and in particular to the DC, which he considered to be an exhausted political force after almost fifty years of patronage.

la Repubblica
Direttore Eugenio Scalfari

Anno 17 - Numero 81 - L. 1200

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Vincono Bossi e Cossutta, La Malfa non sfonda, Occhetto si ferma al 16,6%

E' crollato il Muro Dc

Il voto di protesta ha punito anche Craxi

E il Quadripartito è in minoranza

Nomenclatura licenziata...

CAMERA	1992		1987		Regionali 88-89-90-91
	(vot. 87,2%)	% seggi	(vot. 88,8%)	% seggi	
Dc	28,9	202	-5,4	234	-5,2
Psi	13,3	91	-1,0	94	-1,7
Psdi	2,5	18	-0,4	17	-0,5

SENATO	1992		1987		Regionali 88-89-90-91
	(vot. 86,8%)	% seggi	(vot. 88,4%)	% seggi	
Dc	27,3	108	-6,3	125	-6,8
Psi	13,5	45	+2,6	36	-1,5
Psdi	2,6	3	+0,2	5	-0,4

Figure 13, in *La Repubblica*. Archive, April 7, 1992. p.1

In this delicate moment of uncertainty and political instability for the country, here is how *La Repubblica* covered the Capaci massacre. Through Eugenio Scalfari's editorial, the stories from Capaci and Palermo, and Giuseppe D'Avanzo's analysis. The last interview with Giovanni Falcone was conducted a few days earlier. The parties' reactions. Politics and the Mafia were immediately linked, the connections between Rome and the underworld in Palermo. "At the opening of the election campaign, Salvo Lima was killed in Palermo; before the presidential election was over, Falcone was mowed down. It is terrible this scansion that intertwines the acts of the underworld with political deadlines, polluting and poisoning the

¹⁵⁵ E. Scalfari, *Se Segni si muove qualcosa accadrà*, in "la Repubblica", January 5, 1992.

entire public life of this unfortunate country. A comparison was made with the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, reiterating the three types of emergencies that Italy was facing: the criminal, the financial, and the institutional.

la Repubblica

ROMEO GIGLI

ROMEO GIGLI

Directore Eugenio Scalfari

Numero 17 - Numero 121 - L. 1208

domenica 24 maggio 1992

Una tonnellata di tritolo: 5 morti e 8 feriti. Mea culpa dei partiti a Roma

Falcone assassinato

Strage di mafia, è morta anche la moglie

Shock a Montecitorio: oggi il Presidente

Non c'è più tempo

di RUGGERO SCALFARI

Uccisi i tre agenti di scorta. "Mi hanno delegittimato. Ora Cosa Nostra è pronta a colpire..." Scaffaro o Spadolini al Quirinale

Edizione speciale domani Repubblica sarà in edicola

Figure 14, in la Repubblica. Archive. May 28, 1992, p.1.

Giovanni Marino also recalled how Falcone had confided his fears to La Repubblica on the Tuesday before his death. It was his last interview for the paper's Neapolitan culture supplement. The subject was the similarities and differences between the Camorra and La Cosa Nostra. But unofficially in the interview, Falcone confessed his great worry: the fierce and ongoing controversy over the DNA, the National Anti-Mafia Directorate, immediately renamed Superprocura, the central body that is supposed to coordinate investigations into organised crime throughout Italy. "There is no point in having illusions. I don't think I will be a super prosecutor. But I don't really care. What I really care about is that the national DNA becomes operational as soon as possible. He also explained that the mafia is not the sick fruit of a healthy society, but an autonomous reality with strict laws created within it. Cosa Nostra is autonomous from politics. The relationship is one of equality. On several occasions, we have even seen the superiority of the boss over the white-collar".¹⁵⁶ But on 20 July 1992, the day after the Via D'Amelio massacre, the situation seemed inevitably to take a turn for the worse as Italy "went into the trenches" in the war against the Mafia. "At dawn, uniforms and helmets appeared on the streets of Palermo: it was the army that took up arms against the enemy that owned the city and the state," the government declared: "The forces of law and order will try to retake Palermo, neighbourhood by neighbourhood". The cartoon depicting Sicily being crushed by a military boot is iconic.

¹⁵⁶ G. Marino, *Cosa Nostra è pronta a colpire*, la Repubblica. Archive, May 28, 1992, p.5.



la Repubblica

Direttore Eugenio Scalfari



Anno 17 - Numero 169 - L. 1200

SEDE: 00186 ROMA, P.zza Indipendenza 17/b, tel. 06/49821. Telex: 490217. Fax: 06/49821. Giorn. 2413 Roma AD. Sped. in abb. post. n. 170. PREZZI DI VENDITA ALL'ESTERO: Austria Sc. 36; Belgio P. 5; Canada S.C. 3,6; Danimarca Kr. 10; Francia F. 700; Germania DM. 20; Giappone Yen. 1.200; Lussemburgo Lit. 360; Olanda G. 1,20; Portogallo Esc. 120; Spagna Ptas. 300; Svezia Kr. 75; Svizzera Fr. 2,00; Svizzera It. Fr. 2,50; Ungheria Ft. 200; U.S.A. \$2,25; U.S.A. West Coast \$ 2,50. La Repubblica è pubblicata 5 volte a settimana, da lunedì a venerdì, per un anno. Seconda classe postale (post. di Long Island City N.Y.) and additional office. Contact: send address changes to Speedy News 45-49 79th Street Long Island City N.Y. 11154. Pubblicità concessionari: A. MONTI/CPA S. Milano - via Nervesa 21 tel. 02/654941

martedì 21 luglio 1992

Dopo il massacro di Borsellino il governo invia 800 soldati in Sicilia e vara norme eccezionali

L'Italia in trincea

"Contro la mafia come ai tempi di Moro"

A Milano crolla la Borsa, la lira trema



"We must regain the confidence of the whole country," wrote Mino Fuccillo on the front page. Just below, however, was the title of Tranfaglia's book "Mafia, politics, and Business, the documents that Explain the links between Cosa Nostra and the Italian political world". The Repubblica in those years it was truly an alternative newspaper to the others, explicitly and often criticizing the political class and not letting anyone off the hook. Politicians must answer for their sins and make amends. The tug-of-war should be "shifted to the responsibility of the men of the institutions", as it says on the next page. Indeed, the criticism of the half-empty courtroom in Montecitorio during the debate on the special regime will be subtle but effective. A half-empty courtroom that gave a cold reception to the Interior Minister's reconstruction: not even a round of applause at the end of his speech calling for unity in the fight against the Mafia. The hour of responsibility had struck everyone.

Then, on 15 January '93, Riina was arrested. Newspaper articles emphasized the work of the Carabinieri, explaining that the fact that the boss of Cosa Nostra had been captured without having the chance to react and without the forces of law and order having to use their weapons was eloquent and implied a

lot of previous work in terms of surveillance and planning. There was, however, the hypothesis of a "competitor who was not yet ready to openly challenge Riina and who had relied on the right 'tip', passed on to the investigators, which could have accelerated the closing of the circle already in place". Having said that, Pino Arlacchi's article immediately put an end to some dangerous illusions that could have deceived public opinion and the authorities in this country. The capture of Riina did not mean the defeat of Cosa Nostra and the Mafia, nor even the beginning of their end. It was a turning point of historical significance, it is true. "But it is not the event, the decisive and undeniable fact that triggers an inevitable process of decline. Riina's arrest affects the mafia organization, but it does not affect the mafia business, nor the mafia as a social group and an element of the overt and covert politics of Italy". The only acceptable demonstration was to continue to use violence to make it clear to all citizens that "the democratic state has decided to use its resources and its power even against a part of itself, fighting against collusion and entrenched complicity as well as the known and visible part of Cosa Nostra."¹⁵⁷

Therefore, during those turbulent times, Italians found themselves grappling with complex political dynamics. At the outset of April, the issuance of the first warrant notice for Giulio Andreotti by Palermo authorities, alleging Mafia ties, thrust the nation into a state of disarray. Forattini satiric cartoons in *La Repubblica* were a media verdict and explicit attack.

¹⁵⁷ P. Arlacchi, *Cinque anni per battere l'inferno criminale*, *la Repubblica*. Archive. January, 16, 1993.

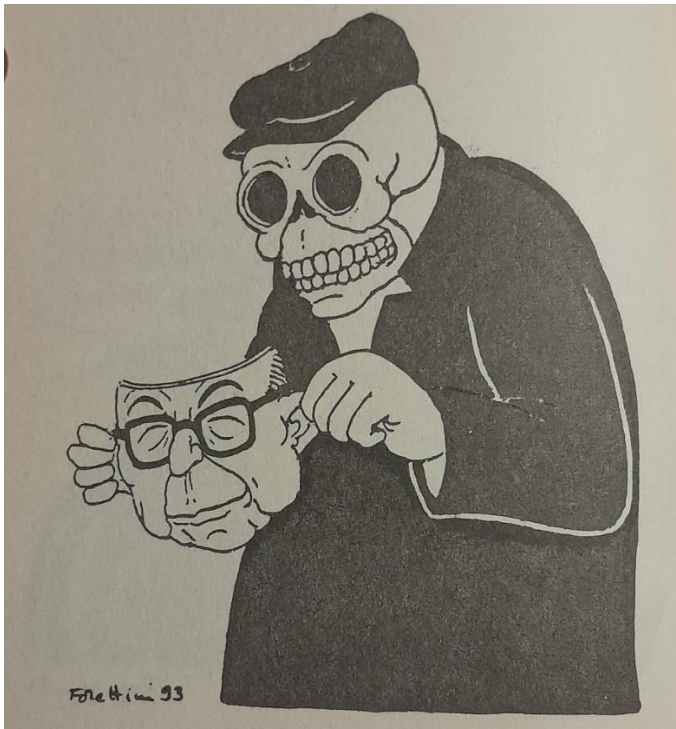


Figure 15, Forattini's Cartoon. Notice of investigation by the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office against Giulio Andreotti on suspicion of conspiracy to commit mafia-related offenses. *la Repubblica*, March 1993.



Figure 16, Forattini's Cartoon, Deputy police officer and Sidae agent Bruno Contrada, suspected of links with the Mafia, was arrested in Palermo. *la Repubblica*, December 1992.

Then the massacres returned and on May 27th, 1993, five innocent people died in Florence, where a car bomb struck in the heart of the Italy of art. There also came those two telephone calls claiming responsibility from the Falange Armata to Ansa in Florence and Cagliari. The second massacre was

outside Sicily. Politics was now done with bombs and the Italian State was at a distinct disadvantage. The State was being blackmailed by the Mafia, which was demonstrating that it could also make its brutal violence felt on the artistic heritage. "Not even the Nazis dared so much," wrote Repubblica, comparing the attack to the bombings of the Second World War. "Hitting Florence gives the whole world the image of mafia terrorism attacking the state". These were the words of Interior Minister Nicola Mancino as he left the prefecture of Florence, where the meeting of the national committee for order and security was held. "We will respond by raising our guard, countering to the utmost this authentic offensive of organized crime that moves according to strategies proper to subversion". The newspaper also reported the decision, taken at that meeting, to strengthen security measures to protect other possible targets.

Autobomba nella notte: cinque vittime tra cui una bambina di due mesi, decine di feriti, palazzi sventrati

Morte a Firenze Tornano le stragi

Devastato il museo degli Uffizi

Un ricatto all'Italia
di EUGENIO SCALFARI

TORNANO le stragi, dopo nove anni dall'ultima volta, dopo il terrore di Natale, come fu battezzato quell'offensiva del '90, ultimo assalto d'una lunga catena di omicidi che per un quindicennio aveva straziato corpi innocenti e devastato coscienze e istituzioni.

Tornano le stragi - le bombe ai Partiti di Massa quando il giorno fa i feriti escono a cinquanta metri dal più grande museo d'arte del mondo, nella città che il secolo intero ve ne era come la culla della civiltà e della cultura moderna, nella Firenze che fu patria del Magellano e scuola di artisti di Rivoli, di poeti, di cronisti, di politici, del libro Comane e dello splendore della Signoria rinascimentale. Ci sono state, cinque le nove vittime, un' Italia in espansione premonitrice distrutta, il terrore resterà chiaro per molti mesi. Il tortura scongiurato e insano, la grece esasperata.

Ma il nome, oltre a queste conseguenze dirette, altre istituzioni ancor più rilevanti: l'opinione pubblica sempre più allarmata; un governo in piena crisi; che vede i problemi dell'ordine pubblico crescere di giorno in giorno; un tessuto istituzionale in una fase di transizione contro il quale minano gli interessi degli italiani per il fatto che la vecchia spionata dalla quale vorrebbe prender le distanze. Detto è lo scenario nel quale dobbiamo riflettere, come già tante altre volte partigiana il scandalo di fare un piano per analogie e tentare ricatti.

SEGUE A PAGINA 10



Il ferito, tra le braccia dei soccorritori, di Calvi in Firenze, la vittima più giovane della strage: non aveva neanche due mesi

La politica delle bombe

Ciampi Mancino: "Terrorismo mafioso"

Figure 17, la Repubblica. Archive. May 28, 1993.

There were also articles in which the newspaper wondered who the members of the “Falange Armata” were, making assumptions that could steer public opinion towards the idea of institutional circles. Minister Mancino's words were reported, emphasizing the need to identify “who is hiding behind this acronym”, saying that “it is people who always operate during office hours” because of the phone calls that are always made at peak times.¹⁵⁸

2.5.3 Il Giornale: A Right-Leaning Perspective on Security Measures

Il Giornale, with its right-leaning perspective, advocated for robust security measures to combat the rising threats. It positioned itself as a voice of reason, urging citizens to prioritize safety in a climate

¹⁵⁸ *Ma chi si cela dietro la sigla “Falange Armata”*, la Repubblica. Archive. May 29, 1993.

fraught with uncertainty. Already on 7 April 1992, when the election results were announced, *Il Giornale* published an article by Indro Montanelli titled “And now?”. Two key points were revealed: firstly, the four-party majority (DC, PSI, PSDI, PLI) remained in power, but with a precarious hold, “like an acrobat on a tightrope with only one foot”. The second point is that even if a majority had been achieved, the resulting government would have been “the typical patchwork of alliances, out of sync and discordant like a Fellini rehearsal orchestra, intended only to survive. Success would be a miracle”.¹⁵⁹

In this climate of political and economic uncertainty, massacres occurred. On 24 May '92, the front page of the Sicily Envoy read 'Scenes of war on the seafront'. There was talk of a 'Lebanese technique' for the killing. The political world in Rome was shocked and struck in a moment of weakness, during an institutional vacuum. The Mafia killed Falcone, and as in Mario Cervi's title, it was 'Bandiera Bianca' for Italy. The Quirinale was empty, the government had resigned, and Parliament was consumed by unproductive voting. Rome was burdened by complex and tiring Byzantine rituals while the Mafia carried out attacks. This is the image of a state that is inward-looking and fails to look beyond its capital. It is the image of a South that has been abandoned to the laws of the mafia, to the “other state”. The author denounced the hypocrisies of the governing elite. "On the eve of the elections, the candidates promised to take a firm and rigorous stance against the criminal organizations plaguing Italy, such as the mafia, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta, and Sacra Corona Unita. However, despite these promises, Salvo Lima was killed. The senators and deputies who championed this firmness and rigor are now silent. This represents a significant abdication of the State and a blatant disregard for anti-State efforts". The atmosphere was one of civil war and the Italian public's trust in the government was at an all-time low. To regain the trust of patriotic Italians, the rulers must react as the country expects them to, taking note of the fact that the Mafia has declared war on the institutions and that this war must be met with a strong response. Here he continues with a phrase that is emblematic of the investigative events and the decisions taken regarding the later State-Mafia negotiations: “Ignoring, for once, the purists who split hairs and

¹⁵⁹ I. Montanelli, *E adesso?*, *Il Giornale*. Archive. April 7, 1992.p.1.

the hesitant who always see authoritarianism lurking. A political class that seems to have a taste for discredit should finally wake up to the reality that has the mangled face of Giovanni Falcone".

The next day, 25 May 1992, the *Giornale* opened again with the news of Falcone's murder: "Palermo challenges the state. "You have lasted too long for so little good. In the name of God, go". This is how Cromwell apostrophized the MPs of West Minster in the second half of the seventeenth century, before dissolving the 'Long Parliament', and writes Federico Orlando, 'we will not be accused of Qualunquism, populism, fascism if today we make this cry our own. [...] against the men who today represent the Parliament and the government in Italy and against their moral deafness'. There is talk of 'high treason' on the part of the thousand electors of Montecitorio against the moral conscience of the Italian people. One wonders if this behavior does not make the defeat suffered by the party system on 5 April a 'final Waterloo'. A final defeat. "Because in the rubble of 5 April, a majority has survived to elect the president and form the government. Battered, unseemly, but survived. It has only itself to blame if it has been divided in the face of the country's overriding needs, chasing ideological butterflies, table strategies, or personal grudges. So, it is not the vote on 5 April, but these divergences that will lead Italian democracy to Waterloo.

The same feeling of defeat and mistrust, if not deeper, would then reappear not even two months later, on 19 July 1992 with the Via D'Amelio massacre and the assassination of Paolo Borsellino. *Il Giornale* of Monday, 20 July '92 opened with "Borsellino too, two months after the massacre in which Falcone was killed, the Mafia struck again, with a car bomb at the Palermo fairground". That day "the hope of the Sicilians and all honest Italians died". A murder carried out with a deadly technique, "Lebanese-style". Marco Cherubini reconstructed the invention of the car bomb as a deadly instrument of death: a terrible invention of the Lebanese war. "The Islamic Jihad in April 1983 killed 69 people at the US embassy in Beirut. An incredible display of criminal efficiency that could not go unnoticed by the Mafia"¹⁶⁰. Natale Conti's three-column article described the 'Law of War' in the tear-stained words of Palermo correspondent Elda Pucci: 'This country has understood nothing, it fools around with peacetime

¹⁶⁰ M. Cherubini, *Tecnica alla libanese*, *Il Giornale*. Archive. July 20, 1992. p.2.

constitutional guarantees instead of defending our lives is [...] there is no limit to criminal over-power, they are dismantling the State piece by piece: justice, security apparatus, region, municipalities, economy; they are terrorizing people'. There was talk of the need for 41 bis. "But their lawyers are striking against the Scotti-Martelli decree in the name of the rights of the defense, disregarding the rights of the innocent". The anti-State is stronger and more decisive than the State it is in, the Mafia appeared as "the only power capable of imposing a law and enforcing it with TNT and machine guns, eliminating one after the other the few and isolated who organize resistance". The big Sicilian industrialists were calling for the militarisation of Palermo: "We need tanks here"¹⁶¹ and the MSI was calling for a state of war in Sicily.

The institutions reacted promptly this time, deporting the Ucciardone inmates to maximum security prisons the following morning. *Il Giornale* featured an article by Palermo correspondent Andrea Pucci titled "Deported Mafiosi". The government's response had been planned secretly between 11 pm and 2 am on the night of the incident. The Minister of Defence, Salvo Andò, the Minister of the Interior, Nicola Mancino, and the Minister of Justice, Claudio Martelli, responded by launching Operation Pianosa. At midnight on Sunday, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Stelio Nardini, received a phone call requesting military aircraft to transport prisoners. The Army and Navy transported the Caltanissetta magistrates involved in the investigation in their helicopters. The soldiers, dressed in war gear, surrounded L'Ucciardone and escorted 55 still sleepy bosses to Punta Raisi airport. The emergency was of such a high level that another headline on the front page read 'To the army the control of the territory'. The situation was no longer under the control of the law, and it was clear to everyone. Simultaneously with the decision to deploy the army, the police in Palermo cautioned politicians against attending Borsellino's funeral due to the possibility of citizen uprisings. Tensions were extremely high.

To comprehend the transformation of the Italian political and social context in the early 1990s, it is crucial to analyze the subsequent events that marked this transition. The assassinations of Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino in 1992 were a turning point in the fight against the Mafia. These events

¹⁶¹ N. Conti, *Legge di Guerra*, in *Il Giornale*. Archive. July, 20, 1992. p.2.

provoked a strong public and political reaction, as we have seen. However, the subsequent period of the War against the State demonstrated the complexity and variability of the Italian landscape. In 1993, there was the failed Via Fauro bombing in Rome, followed by successful attacks such as the Florence bombing, the bombing of the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, and the Rome attacks. In 1993, there was the failed Via Fauro bombing in Rome, followed by successful attacks such as the Florence bombing, the bombing of the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, and the Rome attacks. In 1993, there was the failed Via Fauro bombing in Rome, followed by successful attacks such as the Florence bombing, the bombing of the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, and the Rome attacks. These events further highlighted the vulnerability of Italian institutions and the need to strengthen the fight against mafia terrorism. After nearly a year of focusing solely on resolving the severe economic crisis in Italy, the explosion on Via Fauro in Rome's Parioli district reminds us of a reality that must not be forgotten, as stated by President Scalfaro.

On Sunday 16 May 1993, *Il Giornale* opened with another "Mafia car bombing". On the front page, Mario Cervi recalls "the striking analogy between the technique used in Rome and that of the Falcone and Borsellino attacks, especially the latter". The target was Maurizio Costanzo, the popular author of an "inconvenient" program that only miraculously averted a massacre. Costanzo's name and fame "could have had a symbolic value for the Mafia bosses, against whom his talk show had repeatedly and vehemently taken sides". And the Mafia's signature on Via Fauro led investigators to fear "a new season of terror, inaugurated not coincidentally on the eve of the first anniversary of the Capaci massacre".¹⁶²

And so, it was. Once again, terror struck the Italians, this time in the heart of Florence. 28 May 1993 "More terror, a car bomb in Florence. Five dead and 29 injured, the Georgofili Academy devastated serious damage to the Uffizi and many works of art". Dismay and bewilderment were the feelings that Mario Cervi evoked on the front page of the newspaper with the headline "Tell us the truth". Confusion because it was not immediately clear who was behind this attack, "the enemy to be fought". The claims of the 'Falange Armata' seemed 'boastful and improbable, and the range of hypotheses is wide'. The

¹⁶² G. Mulé, *E Riina ordinò: "L'Italia come Capaci"*, in *Il Giornale*. Archive. May 16, 1993. p.2.

whole of Italy was at a loss. It was at this moment that the *Giornale*, in a distracted manner, mentioned for the first time what was going on in secret during the investigations of the Carabinieri's Ros department, which only the main Italian authorities knew about. "Minister Mancino says that the Mafia aims to intimidate the state into a truce. Perhaps he is under the illusion that he is inducing a caretaker government and an Italy at the crossroads that will take it from the First to the Second Republic to lower its guard".

These events have emphasized the necessity for thorough reflection on the causes and dynamics that fuel the Mafia. This reflection is crucial in developing effective strategies to prevent and counteract it.

Additionally, the events have highlighted the need to enhance internal security and implement concrete measures to safeguard citizens and institutions.

2.6 Special Laws and Extraordinary Measures

In times of heightened urgency or pervasive mafia infiltration, the State have resorted to extraordinary measures to confront the mafia menace. These measures, which may include the imposition of emergency decrees, the deployment of specialized task forces, or the dissolution of mafia-infiltrated institutions, underscore the severity of the state's response to organized crime. While these measures may yield immediate results, their long-term implications for democratic governance and the rule of law merit careful consideration.

It was in the summer of 1993 that the Amato government found itself forced to take note of the deadly effect of the bombs that had exploded twice in Sicily. It is the institutional set-up itself, the foundation of the State, that receives a terrible jolt. We can better grasp what happened and the situation in which the government found itself if we say that the new emergency (more serious than that of the 1970s) had transformed the nature of the Republic: from a state of law into a state of emergency. Just think of the significance of the “Sicilian Vespers” operation. The army was sent to Sicily with the task of public order and security to bring under State control a territory that the Mafia had taken over. It is a spectacle reminiscent of the 19th-century Piemontesi units when they were sent to the south to combat banditry and the social uprisings that had broken out against the new unitary state. Secondly, a measure against which there had been long resistance in Parliament, the Martelli-Scotti decree on 41-bis, was converted into law. Commenting on the DIA's analysis document dated 10 August 1992, the latter reiterated his hostility to a “possible revocation, even if only partial”, as it “could have represented the first concrete yielding of the State intimidated by the bombing season”.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ S. Sechi, *La Mafia non è finita. Dalla Trattativa con lo Stato all'arresto di Messina Denaro (1993-2023)*, 2023, goWare, Florence. p. 44.

In this regard, Riina's arrest was a decisive act and had a historical significance of the first magnitude that we still hesitate to accept in its actual value. Not only because the undisputed head of the Mafia was put in chains, but also because, with his transfer to the special prison of Asinara, the Mafia was forced to change part of its strategy. What was affected by the Martelli-Scotti decree was the possibility for the bosses to exercise their power of command inside and outside prison. Since communication, and the transmission of orders did not exist, it was the very existence of the hierarchical chain, i.e. the very source of sovereignty, that was seriously compromised. In the same timeframe, the widespread phenomenon of the "pentiti" took place, i.e. the season of mafiosi who gave themselves up betrayed Cosa Nostra and started collaborating with magistrates and police forces. It is also possible that the campaign of slaughter, which began with the assassination of Lima in 1992 and ended with the bombing of the Olympic Stadium in 1993, was motivated by a need for self-defense. The DIA document of 10 August 1993 suggested this. And it was repeated by De Gennaro, who is now the Undersecretary of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, during the night hearing on 10 September. The Mafia had indeed entered a scenario in which its very survival was threatened. These were the consequences of the final decision of the Court of Cassation on the maxi-trial convictions in January 1992, as well as an increase in the number of judicial collaborators, a tightening of prison sentences, and increasingly secure and effective (judicial and investigative) responses. However, the timely application of the 41-bis raised more than one question about Cosa Nostra's capacity for rehabilitation. It was plunged into a long silence. It was silent. As a result, the Minister of Justice Conso decided not to use his discretionary powers under the law to prevent the slaughter from resuming. This was the start of another series of extraordinary measures and actions by the institutions, which were, however, accused of being done out of relentlessness and fear of the Mafia. That undermined the vision of Italian history, making it less and less interpreted as a democracy.

The first was November 1993. It was the month in which 41-bis was not proposed. Totò Riina presented Vito Ciancimino with the iconic "papello", asking for its elimination. And from him to the ROS officers Giuseppe De Donno and Mario Mori. 41-bis was an institution of the prison system that should have been reviewed and rectified in due course. Secondly, and in line with the above, Scalfaro initiated

something more unpleasant but not unwanted by the Corleone bosses. Perhaps an act was carried out in the name of security, as demanded by the Mafia in a letter dated February 1993. It was addressed to President Scalfaro. He was instructed to have Nicolò Amato removed from office by the DAP, the important office of the Ministry of Justice, which the Prefect had headed for eleven years.

Thirdly, there was a clear breach of protocol in the nomination of Francesco di Maggio as Amato's substitute. He could be appointed vice-president of the DAP because of patronage and an alleged career adjustment by the Quirinal authorities. However, he appears to have been placed behind the Trentino magistrate Adalberto Capriotti.

In June 1993, Nicolò Amato was removed from office. In November of the same year, Guardasigilli Conso failed to prolong article 41-bis, a new fact that the Anti-Mafia Commission, chaired by Pisanu, learned of, and discussed. Unfortunately, since 1992, with the emergence of the Mani Pulite, the relationship between the magistracy and politics has changed significantly. A new era had begun. Two breaches of the rule of law had coincided with the demise of a long legal tradition. The practice of applying for hard labor on an emergency basis, rather than uniformly and universally, was becoming increasingly accepted. A principle was lost: not all prisoners were the same. And a practice: the detention treatment outlined in 41-bis could be administered differently. It was a line of action that was de facto recognized but not adopted by the DAP:

“The Mafia wanted my head because of the harshness of my prison policy towards organized crime: the documents in my possession show that the request was basically granted with my dismissal on 4 June 1992, I do not know whose responsibility it was, but certainly to prevent further massacres.”¹⁶⁴

It is necessary to make a realistic analysis of the matter. The application of 41-bis does not outline a prison as harshly as it was portrayed by the press. The measure had, above all, one objective: to prevent contact between the mafia system and the prisoner and thus to reduce, if not to zero, the possibility that

¹⁶⁴ *Hearing of Professor Nicolò Amato on the great crimes and massacres of the Mafia of the years 1992-1993, as Director of the Department of Penitentiary Administration pro tempore, sessions n. 66-67, 18 and 25 January 2011, shorthand n.64-65.*

the inmate could, through communication with the outside (relatives, lawyers, close associates, etc.) reiterate his role as leader, i.e. the power of command within the Cosa Nostra network. Therefore, it could not be claimed, as Conso led us to believe, that the 140 inmates of the Ucciardone became inoffensive with the suspension of the 41-bis treatment. Neither he nor his offices could provide the parliamentarians who questioned them with information on the extent of the damage that all 140 inmates could cause. Not to mention that he could not say whether he had simply not renewed all the expiring 41-bis measures or whether he renewed some of them, and to what extent.

Another link was also missing. Martelli did not inform his successor (i.e. Conso) that relations (i.e. a negotiation) had taken place between ROS exponents and Vito Ciancimino. No one from the DAP (including President Nicolò Amato and his successor Adalberto Capriotti) made known to the Ministry of Justice their personal (and the office's) perplexity or reaction to the introduction of 41-bis. Nor did they ever ask him, with official proposals, to revoke the one applied to mafia prisoners because it had become untenable, rather than arduous, to maintain order inside the penitentiaries. The consent of the DAP was circumscribed. On the other hand, they did not fail to express their approval when he did not reiterate, as he did in November 1993, the measure. In other words, there was consent as long as it was an extraordinary, emergency intervention, such as the killing of Falcone and Borsellino. There was no consensus at all until the appropriateness of the derogation was put forward when Martelli seemed to lean towards maintaining 41-bis indefinitely.

Since 1992, when Mani Pulite broke out, Milanese magistrates have played a significant role in shaping Italy's political and social landscape. However, there has been a growing perception that politics and public morality could only be achieved through extra-constitutional, i.e. judicial, means. This has led to the emergence of a “judicial republic”¹⁶⁵, which has raised concerns about the state of democracy in the country. The previous entity had ceased to exist or transformed due to the strict enforcement of penal law, which prioritized fear and obedience over the protection of citizens' rights.

¹⁶⁵ S. Sechi, *La Mafia non è finita. Dalla Trattativa con lo Stato all'arresto di Messina Denaro (1993-2023)*, 2023, goWare, Florence, p. 15.

After the judicial revolution in Milan and the huge success of the Mani Pulite magistrates, the feeling grew in the population that politics was all corrupt. Therefore, political overexposure has led to the emergence of a paradigmatic “judicial populism”¹⁶⁶. This situation arises when a magistrate, often through frequent media appearances, claims to be the true representative or interpreter of the citizens' interests and expectations of justice. This can create a competitive and, in some cases, openly oppositional relationship with the official political power.

Italians shamelessly display a gloomy imitation of the maladies, difficulties, and tensions of an unhealthy ethos on a continental scale. This is reflected in public opinion like a mirror. On the other hand, we see that what has been called the “Calimero complex”¹⁶⁷ has resulted in a dangerous jurisprudential practice. The reference is to a more negative concept: the idea of criminal justice being viewed as a duty or educational requirement. It consists in the claim of the magistrates, inflamed by the findings of the Mani Pulite team, that it is up to them to “control both the legality and the virtue of the ruling classes”¹⁶⁸. As a result, one may feel it is reasonable, if not necessary, to initiate investigations that focus on specific criminal activity rather than seeking out potential crimes to be fought but, it is also important to acknowledge the trial's legitimate goal of publicly disclosing events or conduct that the investigators themselves have determined to be relevant “symptomatic of malpractice or disregard for public interests, whether or not criminally relevant”.¹⁶⁹

Contacting Vito Ciancimino was found to be beneficial to the investigation. This urge took on different, more vivid colors as each interlocutor was interviewed. For instance, it was portrayed as the start of a discussion between the state and the mafia. From Martelli's perspective, it was an appeal for political assistance to build an effective bridge with Vito Ciancimino and those who supported him, Cosa Nostra. Ciancimino, who was born in Corleone and had previously served as mayor of Palermo, was a key figure in the investigation. The individual was a member of the mafia on permanent active duty. They

¹⁶⁶ *Ivi*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁷ R. Perisich, *L'unione Europea. Una storia non ufficiale*, introduction of Giorgio Napolitano, Longanesi, Milan, 2008.

¹⁶⁸ G. Findaca, “*Il labirinto penale*”, *Il Foglio*, March 15, 2017, p. 11.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

maintained close ties with fellow residents Riina, Provenzano (above all), and other bosses. Mori concluded that the information they provided could be useful for the investigation into the Via D'Amelio massacre. And this is where we come to the most out-of-the-ordinary anti-Mafia measure of all, which was criticised, denounced, and investigated because it was considered a 'State-Mafia negotiation'.

Of all the emergency measures taken in this historical period just described, was it not ethically right of the Carabinieri to do everything in their power to fight the mafia? History and time answer positively as the sentence of 27 April 2023, of the Court of Cassation, acquitted former ROS officers Mario Mori, Antonio Subranni, and Giuseppe De Donno, of the charge of threatening a political body of the State for 'not having committed the deed'.

After two decades of investigations, show trials, media reconstructions and public abjurations, we know that the men who defeated the Mafia of the Corleonesi, the commander of the Carabinieri's Ros Mario Mori, General Subranni and Colonel De Donno, were prosecuted without reason, indeed against all rules of justice. We know that the contacts established, after the Capaci and via D'Amelio massacres, with the so-called “dialoguing wing of the Mafia”, represented by Bernardo Provenzano, were aimed at safeguarding public safety, putting an end to the massacres and, above all, decapitating Cosa Nostra by capturing the bloodthirsty boss of bosses, Totò Riina. We still know that General Mori's initiative was taken autonomously from politics, that no negotiation between the State and the Mafia was ever established, and that it was “ungenerous and misleading”, and even “the result of an error in legal syntax” - as the grounds of the judgment of the Court of Appeal of Palermo state - to cast a shadow on the figures of personalities such as former President of the Republic Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and former Minister of Justice Giovanni Conso.

At the same time, all these institutional figures were condemned by another penal code, a “media penal code”, forged with moralistic derived categories. The journalist and essayist Alessandro Barbano explains how the effect of this is to blur the boundaries of factuality to the point of matching them with the boundaries of the power being targeted. In this case, the high ranks of the carabinieri and institutions in general. Based on the belief that all institutions are corrupt, a new black-and-white universe is created

with which to narrate the country. This narrative has three fixed coordinates: the urgency-emergency, moralism without discounts, and the abjuration of power, that is, the objective of sterilizing any form of it, denying its legitimacy. A distorted view of public opinion in which, in addition to judicial and political power, a third is also added: journalistic power.¹⁷⁰

CHAPTER THREE

The “Media Trial” on the State – Mafia Pact.

3.1 Language and Political Perspectives: Analysis of Media Coverage of the State-Mafia Negotiations by Repubblica, Corriere della Sera, and Il Giornale.

The media coverage of the State-Mafia Negotiation by the main Italian newspapers from the late 1990s until the 2023 verdict, played a significant role in shaping public opinion and the interpretation of the events related to this complex plot between organised crime and state institutions. In this chapter, we will take a close look at how Repubblica, Corriere della Sera and Il Giornale have dealt with this topic from the late 1990s when the first doubts and investigations began, until the final verdict of the Cassazione in April 2023. In order to fully understand the impact of media coverage on the public perception of the State-Mafia Negotiation, it is essential to identify the key moments when the media devoted particular attention to this issue. During the 1990s, there were several periods when the issue emerged strongly on the national media agenda, helping to shape public opinion and political debate.

One of the first salient periods was the period immediately following the revelations of the turncoat Tommaso Buscetta in 1992, in which he provided explosive details on the alleged connivance between politicians and the judiciary and members of the Mafia. His testimony shook the country, bringing to light the depth of the Mafia's infiltration of institutions and paving the way for unprecedented investigations and court trials.

¹⁷⁰ A. Barbano, *L'inganno*, (Marsilio Editori, 2022. Venice), pp. 171-175.

Another critical moment came in 1993 when the findings of the so-called “Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission” investigating the connections between the Mafia and politics were published. This commission issued a report that confirmed many of Buscetta's accusations and revealed further shocking details about the involvement of prominent politicians with organized crime. The publication of this report catalyzed the attention of the media and the public, bringing the issue of the Mafia-State Pact to the forefront and sparking a heated debate on corruption and morality within institutions.

This is because the “great old man” will be a reoccurring topic in newspaper articles about the subject. The instigator, the director, the mafia's defender, or all three at once, placed at a specific political level, in the shadow of an institutional façade figure. The Palermo magistrates believed, based on certain confessions of turncoats, and bolstered by the tabloids, that Silvio Berlusconi was the champion of public deceit. A perfect super-guilty, capable of ensuring that the probe into the negotiations takes an exceptional qualitative leap. Berlusconi took up the mantle left by Giulio Andreotti ten years earlier. The idea that the creator of Forza Italia exploited Mafia massacres to assist his political rise remains, despite the fact that the inquiry into him has been archived. The temptation was to make the criminal investigation the story of democracy, removing it from the more natural venue of a historical reconstruction. It was a two-decade-long journalistic effort that accepted the prosecutors' claims as true. The culmination of a cultural trend that began with the Second Republic. A continuum of public narrative manifestations.¹⁷¹

Then, a third significant period was in 2013, when the trial of Ros carabinieri, accused of alleged collusion with the Mafia, began. This trial attracted national attention and raised fundamental questions about the loyalty of the Carabinieri corps and the state's ability to effectively fight organized crime. Media coverage of this trial further amplified public interest in the Mafia-State Pact, leading to increased scrutiny of the relationship between institutions and criminality. Finally, on September 24th, 2021 almost all newspapers on the newsstands devoted their interviews to the verdict in the Palermo trial, where the

¹⁷¹ A. Barbano, *L'inganno*, (Marsilio Editori, 2022. Venice), p. 180.

Assize Court acquitted Mori and dell'Utri. La Repubblica and Il Giornale host Marcello dell'Utri's words.

3.2 la Repubblica's Crusade against the State-Mafia Nexus

As analysed in the previous chapter, La Repubblica, a historic Italian daily newspaper with a left-wing political orientation, has distinguished itself in the national media landscape for its critical and scrutinising approach to politicians and institutions. In the context of the uncovering of the so-called State-Mafia Pact, the newspaper adopted an investigative and “watchdog” approach in Italian journalism, placing particular emphasis on the importance of a thorough and transparent investigation to bring out what they thought was the truth and pursue justice.

The newspaper played a key role in exposing the connections between certain sectors of the state and the Mafia, highlighting the political, social, and economic implications of these collusions. Through journalistic investigations, editorials, and in-depth reports, La Repubblica has sought to raise public awareness of the urgent need to counter the penetration of organised crime into institutions and the social fabric, highlighting the damage done to democracy and the rule of law.

On 24 January 1998, the article entitled “Ciancimino offered to capture Riina” was published. It is set in the context of the State-Mafia Negotiation, focusing on the figure of Vito Ciancimino, former mayor of Palermo, and the alleged negotiations for the arrest of Totò Riina, head of the Sicilian mafia, by the Ros leadership of the Arma. La Repubblica presented a detailed account of the dynamics that led to the contacts between the Ros and Ciancimino, emphasising the former mayor's central role as a possible intermediary between the Mafia and the institutions. The article reveals that Ciancimino offered to cooperate with the Ros to identify and capture Riina, as part of a series of informal contacts initiated in the second half of 1992. Through the presentation of minutes and testimonies of the turncoat Giovanni Brusca, Repubblica highlights the complexity of the relations between the Mafia, politics, and law enforcement during that historical period, questioning the role of the institutions in the management of the fight against organised crime. In particular, it highlights the involvement of senior Carabinieri

officers in alleged negotiations with Mafia representatives to put an end to the massacres and obtain Riina's arrest. "We bosses were played by the Carabinieri". The article raises critical questions about the implications of such informal contacts and the motivations that led Ciancimino to offer his cooperation to the Ros. It also emphasised the depth of the contacts between Mafia figures and political and institutional figures of the time, with reference to the crisis following the Tangentopoli scandal and the consequences of the emergence of new forms of criminality, Silvio Berlusconi. "In 1994, Cosa Nostra was sending messages to Silvio Berlusconi who had become Prime Minister, but there was no pact with Forza Italia". After the open accusations against Andreotti, *la Repubblica* was not afraid to attack another head of the Italian government.¹⁷²

Again, on 4 December 2002, the Chronicles section of the newspaper opens with an article by Giuseppe D'Avanzo who writes "Giuffrè, the targets of the confession"¹⁷³. He analyses a confession by Antonino Giuffrè, a Mafioso who reveals details about the alleged relationship between the Mafia and the political world, in particular with Silvio Berlusconi and his Forza Italia party. Giuffrè claims that the Mafia had a 'direct role' in Berlusconi's rise to power and that there was a 'pact' between Cosa Nostra and Italian politics, with significant implications for both spheres. From a journalistic point of view, the article uses the narration of Giuffrè's confession to paint a picture of mafia-political relations in Italy, suggesting that political power was influenced or even controlled by the mafia. The author dwells on the implications of this confession from both a political and judicial perspective, suggesting that there may have been a strategy by Giuffrè to demand compliance with an alleged 'pact' signed years earlier. The article raises important questions for readers about political corruption, the relationship between organised crime and state institutions, and the fragility of legal evidence in mafia investigations.

And still on the subject of the rise of Forza Italia thanks to the mafia, on 2 December 2009, *La Repubblica* published an article by their correspondent in Caltanissetta Francesco Viviano: "Ciancimino jr and the boss's note. Dell'Utri spoke with Provenzano". It reports statements by Massimo Ciancimino in front of prosecutors concerning alleged links between Senator Marcello Dell'Utri and Mafia boss Bernardo

¹⁷² *La Repubblica*, *Ciancimino si offrì di catturare Riina*. *la Repubblica*. Archive. January, 24, 1998.

¹⁷³ G. D'Avanzo, *Giuffrè, gli obiettivi della confessione*. *la Repubblica*. Archive. December, 4, 2002.

Provenzano, as well as suggestions of collaboration between politics and the Mafia to influence State decisions. Provenzano's last “pizzino” sent to Vito Ciancimino, the one concerning the meeting with “our friend the senator, was allegedly sent in 2000, Massimo Ciancimino explained, confirming that the “negotiation” between the State and the Mafia started with Riina and Provenzano and then continued with the brothers Filippo and Giuseppe Graviano, which continued and would never be interrupted.

¹⁷⁴The allegations concerning Marcello Dell'Utri and Berlusconi and their alleged involvement in Mafia business raise questions about the morality and integrity of some members of the Italian political class. This has significant political consequences and influence on the public opinion on corruption and illegality in the political system.

The narrative concerning the "Pact" underwent a shift in emphasis during the subsequent year, as documented by Salvo Palazzolo and Francesco Viviano, who detailed the proceedings of the hearing conducted by the magistrates of the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office involving the former Minister of Justice, Giovanni Conso. Conso reiterated on multiple occasions during the hearing that “In 1993, there was not even a glimmer of a possible negotiation”. ¹⁷⁵He further asserted that the decision not to renew the 41 bis measure for the 140 imprisoned Mafiosi at the Ucciardone prison in November 1993 was solely his, motivated by the imperative to mitigate the threat of additional massacres. In essence, this was Conso's testimony, which, notwithstanding, La Repubblica endeavored to align with their own narrative, underscoring the Minister of Justice's acknowledgment that "A lot of time has passed, my memories are vague". This had become the real mystery of the investigation into the State-Mafia negotiation: at the beginning of '93, a few months after the Falcone and Borsellino massacres, the government's official position was the hard line against the bosses: instead, in some authoritative fora, the dismantling of the 41-bis was discussed. It was not 140, but about 300 mafiosi who had their hard prison sentences revoked. They were held in Palermo, but also in other Italian prisons. The former minister took note of the documentation shown by the magistrates and reiterated: “It was a personal

¹⁷⁴ F. Viviano, *Ciancimino jr. e il biglietto del boss. “Dell’Utri parlò con Provenzano”*. la Repubblica. Archive. December 2, 2009. Section Cronaca.

¹⁷⁵ S. Palazzolo, F. Viviano, *Conso: fu solo mia la scelta di non rinnovare il carcere duro*, la Repubblica. Archivio. November, 25, 2010.

choice; I did not communicate it to anyone. The decision was not an offer of a truce or to open negotiations. I was only trying to stop more massacres”.

The discrepancy between the number of detainees involved and the documents presented by the Palermo magistrates aroused interest and raised doubts about the veracity of the information provided by the authorities.

There was still talk in 2011. of an explicit request from the Mafia on the elimination of the 41bis that had been heard by the Italian authorities. Alessandra Ziniti wrote an article for *La Repubblica* that would become famous because it mentioned a letter, which the editorial staff had come into possession of, from 1993. This letter was filed by Palermo prosecutors Di Matteo and Ingroia at the trial against prefect Mario Mori. It constituted a valuable background to explain some sensational measures, such as the revocation of the hard prison for about three hundred Mafiosi adopted by the then Minister of Justice Conso. Seven months after the Capaci and Via d'Amelio massacres, the newly elected President of the Republic, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, was in Cosa Nostra's sights. To him, “in very heavy tones with the unmistakable flavour of a warning, were addressed the relatives of some Mafia prisoners who for months, in the super prisons of Pianosa and Asinara, had been subjected to the rigours of the 41 bis, the hard prison regime which - as we would learn only many years later - constituted one of the hottest topics in the negotiations between the State and Cosa Nostra”. The letter constituted a valuable background to explain the revocation of the hard prison sentence that “Conso says he adopted in absolute solitude. This version - recently provided to the Palermo prosecutors investigating the negotiation - has never been convincing and has been undermined by other documentary and testimonial acquisitions”.¹⁷⁶

On 24 February 2012, a further development exacerbated the already bleak perception of Italian institutions. The Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office issued a formal notification of indictment against Calogero Mannino, the former minister from the Christian Democrat party, citing allegations of engaging in acts of violence or issuing threats against a political, administrative, or judicial entity in connection

¹⁷⁶ A. Ziniti, *L'ultimatum dei boss a Scalfaro: “Ora revocateci il carcere duro”*. *La Repubblica*. Archive. November, 17, 2011.

with the implementation of the 41 bis detention regimen. Mannino responded by asserting, “I unequivocally refute any insinuations or allegations.”¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the article refrains from offering any evaluative assessment of the veracity of Mannino's assertions, thereby leaving readers to formulate their own interpretations. From the perspective of public sentiment, the revelation of an investigation targeting a former minister serves to sustain public attention on the enduring ramifications and implications of such pivotal historical episodes for the Italian polity.

In 2013, the year the first-degree trial began, Salvo Palazzolo penned an article focusing on the possible involvement of the Italian secret services, and in particular on the reopening of the investigation into the Falange Armata, the mysterious organisation that claimed responsibility for the '92-'93 attacks. The Palermo prosecutors were convinced that the secret dialogue with the Mafiosi involved not only politicians and members of the police force who had already been indicted, but also secret service agents. “Were the Mafiosi still calling during the negotiations? The former director of Cesis, Francesco Paolo Fulci, suspected the men of the Seventh Division of Sismi.”¹⁷⁸ The article raises questions suggesting that the threats and actions of the Phalange may have been instrumentalised to influence crucial political decisions, such as the revocation of the hard prison for mafia bosses. Overall, the article still contributes to keeping the public's attention on the intricate power dynamics and possible collusion between government institutions and organized crime during a crucial period of Italian history, offering a picture of the Italian state as less and less an independent democracy and increasingly colluding with the Mafia.

Then came the first instance verdict, on 20 April 2018. The article in *la Repubblica*, written with vigour by Liana Milella, addresses the reactions to the outcome of the verdict in the context of a new Italian politics, with particular attention to the impact of the State-Mafia negotiation on the future government, in which the 5Stars Movement was seeking external support to form it and had also set its sights on Berlusconi's Forza Italia. “The verdict on the trial comes down to the political Berlusconi”, the magistrate said in Palermo. The text opens with an emphatic statement. “The verdict, delivered by the prosecutor Di Matteo, produces a singular effect among the 5Stars leadership, it seems like the prince's

¹⁷⁷ S. Palazzolo, *Trattativa, indagato Mannino. I pm: “Pressioni sul 41 bis”*. *la Repubblica*. Archive. February, 24, 2012.

¹⁷⁸ S. Palazzolo, “*Stato Mafia, l’indagine punta sui Servizi*”, *la Repubblica*. Archive. March, 9, 2013.

kiss on the lips of sleeping Snow White. A shock. Which, in order, affects Di Maio, Fico, Di Battista, Fraccaro”. Not only that, but the article also uses language rich in metaphors and vivid images to convey a sense of urgency and importance of the event described. “A political suicide”, “a slap in the face”, a “tombstone”¹⁷⁹ for the new government. The idea that the verdict has a significant impact on the country's political future, influencing party strategies and alliances is underlined.

Figure 18, la Repubblica's headline. Archive. September, 23, 2021, p.1.

The president of the Court of Appeal Angelo Pellino chimes in: “In partial reform of the sentence issued by the Palermo Court of Assizes on 20 April 2018 acquits”. He first cites the names of the former officers of the Carabinieri Ros: "Giuseppe De Donno, Mario Mori and Antonio Subranni". Acquitted because the “fact does not constitute a crime”. Then, he mentions former senator Marcello Dell'Utri: he too was

¹⁷⁹ L. Milella, *Sentenza Stato-Mafia: il M5S scarica Berlusconi dopo aver aperto ai suoi voti*, la Repubblica. Archive. April, 20, 2018.

acquitted, “for not having committed the fact”.¹⁸⁰ But the commentary by the journalist Carlo Bonini on page 3, in line with the prosecution line of the newspaper up to that point, immediately reminds readers that the sentence nevertheless leaves a “grey area” and that “it would do a disservice to truth and intelligence, as well as to the clarity of its operative part, if the sentence of the Palermo Court of Appeal were to be read as a Rubicon of the history of the Mafia in this country”¹⁸¹.

On 6 August 2022, after the publication of the grounds for the verdict, Salvo Palazzolo wrote “There was negotiation with the Mafia, but the carabinieri only wanted to stop the massacres”.¹⁸² The sentence raised controversy and debate in public opinion and among legal experts. On the one hand, the Carabinieri's attempt to stop the massacres and establish a dialogue with the Mafia to protect the country is highlighted. On the other hand, there are criticisms regarding the decision to acquit the defendants and the interpretation of the events related to the State-Mafia negotiation. Furthermore, the court rejected the hypothesis of involvement of prominent institutional figures such as Minister Conso and President of the Republic Scalfaro in the crime, calling this hypothesis “ungenerous and misleading”. The article provides a complex picture of the sentence and the arguments used by the court of appeal but leaves room for different interpretations and opinions from public opinion and experts.

This paragraph will conclude the analysis with an emblematic article from Repubblica because it sums up the newspaper's vision up to that point. After the definitive acquittal by the Court of Cassation, on 23 April 2023, Lirio Abbate wrote: “The facts of 1992 cannot be forgotten with a definitive acquittal sentence for the carabinieri and the other defendants. Because it is a story, also reported in the motivations of the decision of the Court of Appeal of Palermo that the Supreme Court confirmed, that cannot be tried in the courtrooms: because they are facts that do not belong to the penal code but belong to the dignity of a society that wants to be against the mafia”.¹⁸³ Isn't it in a mature and functioning

¹⁸⁰ S. Palazzolo, *Stato-Mafia: assolti Mori e Dell'Utri*, la Repubblica. Archive. September, 24, 2021. p.1.

¹⁸¹ C. Bonini, *La sentenza e la zona grigia*, la Repubblica. Archive. September 24, 2021. p.3.

¹⁸² S. Palazzolo, *La trattativa con la Mafia ci fu, ma i carabinieri volevano solo fermare le stragi. Ecco le motivazioni della sentenza che ha assolto Mori*, la Repubblica. Archive. August 6, 2022.

¹⁸³ “I fatti del 1992 non si possono dimenticare con una sentenza di assoluzione definitiva per i carabinieri e gli altri imputati. Perché si tratta di una storia, riportata anche nelle motivazioni della decisione della Corte d'appello di Palermo che la Cassazione ha confermato, che non può essere processata nelle aule di giustizia: perché sono fatti che non rientrano nel Codice penale, ma appartengono alla dignità di una società che vuole essere contro la mafia”. L. Abbate, *Trattativa Stato- mafia, il peccato originale che le sentenze non cancellano*, la Repubblica, Archive. April, 27, 2023.

democracy, where the judiciary is independent of the other powers, that citizens should trust their own system and their own laws? It is precisely in this article, that la Repubblica is advocating a “media trial”, different from that of the State and with its own judges: the public opinion.

3.3 A Balanced Approach: “Il Corriere della Sera” on the State-Mafia Inquiry

The approach of the newspaper of the centre "Corriere della Sera" to the investigations and rulings regarding the State-Mafia Negotiations can be characterized as balanced, objective, and informative. The publication endeavors to report events, investigations, and judicial decisions in a neutral manner, providing comprehensive and accurate coverage of case developments.

After Totò Riina's solitary confinement was lifted, in March 2001, Palermo correspondent Felice Cavallaro wrote for Il Corriere that this measure, together with the one eliminating fixed escorts for magistrates, were “distinct but with disturbing signs and coincidences”. The discontent within the Palace of Justice after the news was described, even though Prosecutor Grasso had later downsized the scope of the measure: "As soon as a new life sentence is definitive, Riina will no longer see anyone". A 'technical' choice was criticised by the magistrate who investigated the Capaci massacre Luca Tescaroli: “We live in a country without memory. The softening of the hard prison was precisely Riina's request." Ironic but bitter is the comment of the relatives of the massacre of Via dei Georgofili, in Florence: “perhaps it was during a few hours of airtime that Riina gave the order for the massacre of Via dei Georgofili”.¹⁸⁴

Then in 2009, as the investigation progressed, Giovanni Bianconi inserted an in-depth article in the newspaper about the famous “papello” that was handed over to the judges¹⁸⁵. Through meticulous reporting and contextualization, the article delves into the intricate details of the document, revealing its handwritten contents and discussing its potential implications. It underscores the divergent narratives surrounding the document's origins and dissemination, with conflicting accounts provided by different

¹⁸⁴ F. Cavallaro, *Revocato l'isolamento a Totò Riina*, Il Corriere della Sera. Archive. March 13, 2001, p.16.

¹⁸⁵ G. Bianconi, *Trattativa tra Mafia e Stato, il papello consegnato ai giudici*. Il Corriere della Sera. Archive. October, 15, 2009.

parties involved, notably Vito Ciancimino and his son, Massimo Ciancimino. The analysis carefully examines each point outlined in the "papello," ranging from requests for revising judicial sentences to proposals for changes in prison conditions and legal procedures. It highlights the significance of certain demands, such as the abolishment of the "41 bis" prison regime and the recognition of benefits for convicted Mafia members akin to those granted to former members of the Red Brigades. Moreover, the article explores the broader socio-political implications of the "papello," including its references to prominent political figures such as Nicola Mancino and Virginio Rognoni. It raises questions about the extent of governmental involvement in negotiations with the Mafia and suggests potential links between key policymakers and the clandestine discussions outlined in the document.

As explained earlier, between 2008 and 2013, the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the Mafia attempted to characterize some of the early 1990s' darker features. The commission was chaired by Senator Giuseppe Pisanu, a Sardinian former Christian Democrat, and Minister of the Interior. With the appointment, as chairman of the commission, of the former Minister of the Interior, Giuliano Amato stated that politics would resurface and use its prerogatives instead of the courts and magistrates. *Corriere della Sera*, with its centrist stance, sought to provide a balanced view of the unfolding events. Through poignant editorials and in-depth analysis, the newspaper aimed to guide its readers through the labyrinth of emotions while fostering a sense of unity in the face of adversity. It covered Pisanu's presidency of Parliament's investigatory commission on mafia in 2010: *"In my opinion, Pisanu's work is legitimate and valuable, because it can help politics to seek keys to interpretation that cannot always come from the judiciary. And to finally find the right way to tackle the mafia issue. By trying to understand what happened in the past we can also better tackle the present."*¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ *"Secondo me il lavoro di Pisanu è legittimo e prezioso, perchè può aiutare la politica a cercare chiavi di lettura che non possono sempre venire dalla magistratura. E a trovare finalmente il giusto modo di affrontare la questione mafiosa. Provando a capire che cosa è accaduto in passato si può affrontare meglio anche il presente"*. Interview with journalist and essayist Giovanni Bianconi, "Stragi del '92 con matrice oscura. Giusto l'intervento di Pisanu", *Corriere della Sera*, 2 July 2010. Archive, p. 13.

Then the description of the events of PDL Senator Marcello Dell'Utri in November 2011. Investigated by the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office in the enquiry into the so-called negotiation between the State and the Mafia. Convicted on appeal to 7 years for conspiracy in mafia association, "Dell'Utri is allegedly accused in this investigation of violence or threatening a political, administrative or judicial body". The words of the son of Vito Ciancimino, the former Mafia mayor of Palermo, were reported. "It was he who told the trial of General Mori, accused of mafia aiding and abetting, that he had learned from his father of close relations between the senator and Provenzano". Dell'Utri's name was also mentioned to the prosecutors by the turncoat Stefano Lo Verso, who claimed to have learned from Provenzano that, after the massacres of '92 and '93, Dell'Utri, 'a former manager of Publitalia who was one of the founders of Forza Italia, would offer himself as a political guarantor of Cosa Nostra's interests. On the other side of the table again Provenzano who, in the name of the agreement reached, would have ensured the electoral support of the bosses to the party of former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi'. "Me under investigation for the negotiation between the State and Cosa Nostra? It is truly hallucinating'. Thus, Marcello Dell'Utri commented on his inclusion in the register of suspects. "The Palermo public prosecutor's office has made a big Russian salad," he went on to say, "as far as I'm concerned, the magistrates are stepping on water in the mortar."¹⁸⁷

On 23 May 2013, the "Pact" trial was starting and the Corriere wrote "That historic trial climate as with Andreotti in '95". From the benches of the Assize Court, the State "looked at itself, as if those called to judge were mirrored in those who asked for the judgement and those who wanted to be judged". In the courtroom packed with lawyers, journalists, cameras, and the public, one "breathed the air of a historic trial". On that day, the defendants had to respond to the events that followed the same season for which Andreotti had been investigated. "The Mafia cannot exist without the relationship with politics," explained Assistant Prosecutor Teresi, who sought to "downplay the expectations and perhaps the

¹⁸⁷ Online editing, Trattativa Stato-Mafia: indagato Dell'Utri, Il Corriere della Sera. Archive. November, 24, 2011.

polemics, always lurking in a trial where the prosecution wants the highest representatives of the institutions of yesterday and today to testify".¹⁸⁸

After a five-year trial, on 20 April 2018 the first instance verdict. "For the judges there was a State-Mafia negotiation. Berlusconi: falsified reality, I denounce the pm". The sentencing device was greeted by the public present in the Pagliarelli bunker room with 'applause and shouts of incitement towards the magistrates'. While the public prosecutor Vittorio Teresi, a member of the pool that prepared the trial, dedicated the sentencing "to Paolo Borsellino, Giovanni Falcone and all the innocent victims of the Mafia". The news poured in "with the force of a tidal wave on the already tense political situation". In fact, the sentence says that Dell'Utri had "acted as a transmission belt between Cosa Nostra's demands and the then Berlusconi government", which had recently taken office. There was also comment in the *Corriere della Sera* on the influence the ruling would have on the birth of the government. The public prosecutors had rewritten or underlined a dramatic and bloody piece of Italian history, claiming that at the time of the massacres ordered by Totò Riina's Corleonesi there were men of the institutions - investigators and politicians- who became objective accomplices of the Mafia blackmail of the State. What came out about Berlusconi therefore invalidated the birth of the government that envisaged a possible alliance with Forza Italia.¹⁸⁹

On appeal then, as we can understand from the device, 23 September 2021 changed the perspective with which the same facts were interpreted. Everything revolved, in substance, around the initiative of the Carabinieri Ros explained by General Mori himself in 1998, at the trial for the 1993 massacres, summarising his dialogue with Ciancimino: "But what is this story? By now there is a wall against wall, on one side Cosa Nostra and on the other side the State. But you can't talk to these people?". He threw it out there convinced that he was saying "what do you want from me?", but instead he said, "but yes, you could, I'm in a position to do it". Then I said, "try it". For the defence, it was a simple explanation of an uphill and, in any case, lawful information-investigative activity; for the prosecution and the first

¹⁸⁸ G. Bianconi, *Quel clima da processo storico come Andreotti nel '95*, *Il Corriere della Sera*. Archive. May, 28, 2013, p. 24.

¹⁸⁹ D. Gor., *I giudici: lo Stato trattò con i mafiosi, Ira di Berlusconi: denuncio i pm*. *Il Corriere della Sera*. Archive. April, 21, 2018, p.10.

judges, it was an offer of willingness to negotiate that reinforced the Mafia's conviction that the massacres were producing results. Finally, the appeal judges established that there was neither the will nor the awareness, nor even the acceptance of the risk that with that proposal, the blackmail of the bosses could be facilitated. The 2018 judicial decision was subsequently invalidated, as articulated by the Palermo correspondent Giovanni Bianconi. The acquittal of Marcello Dell'Utri represents a decisive exoneration, asserting that he bore no culpability for the alleged transgression. Specifically, Dell'Utri was found not to have relayed the threat to the government under Silvio Berlusconi's leadership in 1994; an action that, while attempted, did not culminate in its intended fruition. Noteworthy is the following observation: "And the clamor - for some tantamount to scandal, notwithstanding the inherent procedural norms of the judicial system - is further amplified due to the fact that this trial has not merely subjected to scrutiny a facet of political activity and the investigative apparatus; rather, it has entailed an institutional discord that has reverberated at the highest echelons." Despite the pronounced public outcry and the gravity of its implications for the State, the overarching sentiment remains that such proceedings are inherent to the *modus operandi* of the judicial system.¹⁹⁰

The Court of Cassation, on 23 April 2023, definitively acquitted the defendants in the trial on the so-called State-Mafia negotiation, with the formula "for not having committed the deed", thus also annulling the appeal sentence that had declared the defendants not guilty, but because the deed committed "did not constitute a crime". Last year, however, as the defendants had requested, not only did the indictment fall, but also, it seems, the assessment made by the Palermo Court of Appeal of the events charged - among others - to former Carabinieri officers Mario Mori, Antonio Subranni and Giuseppe De Donno in the period of the Mafia massacres, between 1992 and 1994. The reconstruction by the appeal judges themselves and 'the less than flattering judgments' towards their initiative to contact the former Mafia mayor of Palermo Vito Ciancimino (immediately after the Capaci massacre) had prompted Mori and De Donno to appeal against the appeal sentence as well, despite the acquittal. So did the Mafiosi and the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office, which insisted on the conviction of all the defendants. But 'in front

¹⁹⁰ G. Bianconi, *Dell'Utri assolto al processo Stato-mafia. Assolti anche i carabinieri*, Il Corriere della Sera, Archive. September, 23, 2021.

of the judges of the Court of Cassation, the prosecution against the representatives of the institutions found itself without charge': The public prosecutor's office of the third instance, in fact, asked for the annulment of the verdict with referral to a new court of appeal, but only because they did not consider "the deed" (i.e. the alleged threat to a political body of the State) sufficiently proven; as if they were asking for a new assessment that could lead to an even more radical acquittal: the deed does not exist or, in any case, was not committed by the defendants, beyond the will or otherwise of helping the mafia. Now the Court of Cassation has ruled that that 'deed' was not committed. For the Mafiosi, the charge of 'attempted' threat to the State's political body having been reduced to 'attempted', the statute of limitations of the crime has been declared.

La storia
di **Giovanni Bianconi**

Processi e polemiche politiche dall'Arma al Quirinale

La parola fine dopo oltre 10 anni

Dal patto con Cosa Nostra alle ultime ipotesi: tutte le accuse cadute

ROMA Sul filo del traguardo finale, il processo alla cosiddetta trattativa Stato-mafia perde anche l'ultimo pezzo, quello che teneva in piedi il ricatto di Cosa nostra veicolato attraverso rappresentanti delle istituzioni: bombe, e minacce di altre bombe, per convincere il governo alla retromarcia sulle più pesanti misure antimafia. A cominciare dal «carcere duro» per i boss.

Gli ex generali dei carabinieri Antonio Subranni e Mario Mori, come l'ex colonnello Giuseppe De Donno, erano stati assolti già in appello, ma «perché il fatto non costituisce reato»; avevano fatto la trattativa ma con l'obiettivo di

re dell'ala meno violenta di Cosa nostra, guidata da Bernardo Provenzano, contrapposta a quella di Totò Riina.

Era la parte che restava all'accusa: un pezzo di Stato che favorisce un pezzo di mafia, al di là delle valutazioni tecnico-giuridiche sull'esistenza o meno del reato. Ora la Cassazione pare aver cancellato anche questo segmento, e chiude un processo durato dieci anni. L'indagine invece molto di più, sempre accompagnata da polemiche e contestazioni non solo in ambito giudiziario.

traballanti, e in gran parte sconfessate, dichiarazioni di Massimo Ciancimino, una sorta di «maggioromo della trattativa» che accoglieva in casa i carabinieri del Ros e li vedeva dialogare col padre Vito, subito dopo la strage di Capaci che aveva ucciso Giovanni Falcone, sua moglie e tre agenti di scorta.

Le parole di Mori
Di «trattativa» con l'ex sindaco mafioso di Palermo agli arresti domiciliari aveva parlato, del resto, lo stesso genera-

le Mori testimoniando al primo processo di Firenze; senza immaginare che quella parola si sarebbe poi tramutata, qualche lustro più tardi, in un capo d'imputazione contro di lui; aggiuntosi a quelli formulati per la mancata perquisizione al covo di Totò Riina, dopo il suo arresto nel gennaio 1993, e per la mancata cattura di Bernardo Provenzano nell'autunno del 1995: altri processi e altre assoluzioni, che però non hanno mai scacciato le ombre. Riproposte come elementi d'accusa prima

nell'indagine e poi nei dibattimenti sulla trattativa. Conclusi da verdetti inizialmente favorevoli alla Procura di Palermo, che nel frattempo cambiava vertici e volti.

L'udienza da Napolitano
In primo grado — in aula c'erano il procuratore aggiunto Vittorio Teresi e i sostituti Nino Di Matteo, Francesco Del Bene e Roberto Tartaglia, dopo che Antonio Ingroia aveva abbandonato la toga per la politica — la raccolta delle prove durò cinque anni e art-

vò fino al Quirinale, con la testimonianza dell'allora presidente della Repubblica Giorgio Napolitano. Nel corso dell'indagine era stata intercettata la sua voce, mentre parlava con l'ex presidente del Senato Nicola Mancino; ne scaturì un conflitto approdato alla Corte costituzionale, insieme a incomprensioni e polemiche mai sopite. Nel 2018 giunse la condanna per tutti gli imputati (tranne Mancino, assolto dall'accusa di falsa testimonianza). Tre anni dopo, in appello, verdetto ribaltato a metà: condanna per i mafiosi e assoluzione per i carabinieri e Del'Utri. Con motivazioni molto pesanti per gli ex ufficiali dell'Arma, protagonisti di «un'iniziativa quanto mai improvida oltre che in totale spregio ai doveri del loro ufficio e ai loro compiti istituzionali», dalla quale derivò «una sorta di ibrida alleanza» con la fazione mafiosa di Provenzano, siglata per «indicibili ragioni di "interesse nazionale"»: meglio la «strategia dalla ineluttabilità e dalla com-

Figure 19, *Il Corriere della Sera*, Archive. April 28, 2023, p. 17.

In the interview conducted by Fulvio Fiano with General Subranni, poignant sentiments were expressed in the concluding remarks: "We risked our lives every day, for the war against the clans we sacrificed everything." When prompted to elucidate the significance of this statement, the general responded by asserting that they had engaged in a veritable struggle, vehemently refuting any insinuation of treachery.

¹⁹¹This exchange underscores the human dimension of the former defendants, articulating the myriad

¹⁹¹ F. Fiano, "Non eravamo dei traditori, rischiamo la vita tutti i giorni", *Il Corriere della Sera*. Archive. April, 28, 2023, p. 17.

sacrifices endured in their relentless pursuit of justice. Through its portrayal of empathy and deference towards the ultimate verdict rendered by the Italian justice system, *Corriere della Sera* evinced a profound acknowledgment of the complexities inherent in such legal proceedings.

3.4 Il Giornale's Critical Lens

The approach of the right-wing newspaper 'Il Giornale' to the State-Mafia Trattativa trials has often been characterised by a critical perspective towards the investigations and sentences issued by the judicial authorities. The newspaper tends to emphasise the alleged lack of concrete evidence or solid foundations in the accusations against politicians or public officials involved in the alleged negotiations with the Mafia. Moreover, *Il Giornale* tends to adopt a defensive tone towards the accused political or institutional figures, trying to emphasise alleged procedural errors or judicial bias against them. The newspaper also tends to question the objectivity and impartiality of the magistrates involved in the trials, suggesting an alleged political or ideological involvement in judicial decisions. Overall, *Il Giornale's* approach to the State-Mafia Pact could be described as defensive of the defendants and critical of the judicial investigation, with an emphasis on the alleged shortcomings in the trial and the need for greater transparency and impartiality in the judicial system.

In the wake of this analysis, it is indeed important to speak of an issue raised by *il Giornale*, which is not found in the other newspapers encountered: the reliability of the turncoats. Already in January '98, Andrea Tornielli entitled his article: "I tell you the lies of the pentiti". The magistrate Alberto Di Pisa recounted that when he was part of the anti-Mafia pool (throughout the 1980s) 'there was an almost maniacal search for pentiti and they were only the starting point for the investigation, they always had to be duly integrated' whereas now 'the words of pentiti are considered as evidence even before the trial'. There was talk of 'convergence of the multiple', i.e. if three turncoats said the same thing, this became evidence even in the absence of other evidence. This highlights another important aspect of the State of Emergency in which Italy lived in the years after the massacres. There was a thirst for justice, even at the cost of being rushed and injuring the rule of law. The journalist goes on to say 'those who criticise the handling of pentiti are often accused of delegitimising the judiciary and the fight against the Mafia'.

To these words the magistrate replied: 'if we continue with this kind of trend, turncoats will end up self-destructing. Since the turncoats contradict themselves, their words will be worth less than zero. And continuing in this way will delegitimise the fight against the mafia.'¹⁹²

In fact, even in February 1999, after the accusations against Dell'Utri because of his appointment in the declarations of several turncoats, the most important of all, Tommaso Buscetta, said 'Never heard of him or Berlusconi in Mafia circles'. *Il Giornale* then, headlined 'The great accuser defends Dell'Utri'. The 'nervousness of Caselli's public prosecutor's office' moved the courtroom and the corridors, 'then anything can happen'. For example, that Tommaso Buscetta is called as a prosecution witness against Dell'Utri (and Berlusconi), and that the 'Boss of two worlds' turns into an ace at the disposal of the defence. Dell'Utri described an 'inquisitorial climate typical of countries where freedom does not exist'. And the journalist Renato Farina does not hesitate to write 'However, the Palermo Public Prosecutor's Office is nervous. It is a pity that it takes out its anger on its political enemies'¹⁹³.

On 13 March 2001, the day of the announcement of the lifting of Riina's solitary confinement, it is interesting to precisely analyse the granting of space on the page to two different news items. One column on the right is dedicated to the judges' decision, while more space is given to the "Sfogo dei Ros: ormai ci mandano al massacro" ("The Ros' outburst: by now they are sending us to the slaughter"). This assertion holds significance as it effectively delineates the ideological stance of the *Giornale*. In the first news article, unlike the other newspapers, it is also explained that, although the "hour of airtime" for Riina with the prisoners has been granted, they will be chosen by the administration of the prison in Ascoli Piceno. Moreover, the 41bis imposed on him on 15 January '93, would remain in force. This meant that he would continue to stay in solitary confinement and that talks with family members would always be subject to strict surveillance. Also added was the statement by the Palermo Prosecutor, Pietro Grasso, who intervened to "eliminate any misunderstandings whatsoever", who in a statement of few

¹⁹² A. Tornielli, "Vi racconto le bugie dei pentiti", *Il Giornale*. Archive. January, 25, 1998, p. 7.

¹⁹³ R. Farina, *Il grande accusatore difende Dell'Utri*, *Il Giornale*. Archive. February 2, 1999, p.7.

words said: “This is an accessory penalty that has a term. If Totò Riina is given another final sentence of life imprisonment, with day solitary confinement, this measure will be applied to him again”.¹⁹⁴

From Rome, however, the Ros' outburst is much more representative. "Excellent credentials, anger to sell, maximum distrust in the institutions to which he swore an oath offering his own life, that of his family members". The carabinieri of the Ros “” infiltrated” a dozen times at least and presented himself to *Il Giornale* and on behalf of the Special Operative Group. He had much to tell "to those who speak out of turn, to those who speculate, to those who do not know what it means to risk one's life every other day". He began by saying, “It's all crap now”. That no one “protects you anymore”, especially among magistrates “who once understood and turned a blind eye to the success of the operation, now they always think the bandit is you”.¹⁹⁵

At the start of the judicial trial for the Pact, on 27 May, 2013, Gian Marco Chiochi and Mariateresa Conti of *Il Giornale*, described the situation in the courtroom, in an article on page 10. "The politicians, the cops, the bosses, the real pentiti and the pseudo-criminal super-witness defendant already arrested for slander. And then 180 witnesses, from the President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano to that of the Senate, Pietro Grasso. All together in the bunker room of the Pigliarelli prison in Palermo." This description perfectly conveys the level of historical importance of this trial. But “the spectacle” of the previous day, “It was very brief. An hour or so and everything adjourned, new charge to Mancino included”. In recalling the events leading up to the Pact trial, reference is once again made to the evidence and to the “not exactly exhaustive, not to say belated, statements by the turncoats Brusca and Mutolo, and the supporting evidence provided by Massimo Ciancimino”. And in fact, conflicting versions aside, it is mainly the expert reports that will get him into trouble. That Ciancimino jr. had serially delivered forgeries to the prosecutors, “made through a skilful use of copy and paste” of pieces of documents, was previously proven. "In short, even the main evidence could be a photomontage".¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ [MaBa], *I giudici tolgono Totò Riina dall'isolamento*, *Il Giornale*. Archive. March, 13, 2001.

¹⁹⁵ [DA], *Lo sfogo dei Ros: ormai i mandano al massacro*, *Il Giornale*. Archive. March, 13, 2001.

¹⁹⁶ G. Chiochi, M. Conti, *Patto coi boss, i pm alzan il tiro su Mancino*. *Il Giornale*. Archive. May 28, 2013, p.10

Saturday 21 April 2018 plunged the nation once again into a climate of uncertainty and distrust of institutions. The first-degree verdict in the Pact case had convicted everyone except Mancino. It affected everyone but as explained earlier in this thesis, Mariateresa Conti also explained in the newspaper's 'political scenarios' section: "The outcome, all things considered, was a foregone conclusion. Not because of what emerged at the trial in five years of hearings, over 200 witnesses and mountains of papers, but because of its political significance, also linked to the historical moment".¹⁹⁷ Macioce's comment is even more charged with meaning: "The heart of the negotiation is this: you take a big step backwards with the 41bis and Cosa Nostra stops with the attacks". Put like this, it is "the absolute surrender of the Italian State before the criminal and murderous anti-State. Stuff to be ashamed of forever".¹⁹⁸

On 24 September 2021, *Il Giornale* devoted its front page to the rejection of the "State-Mafia negotiation theorem" and the acquittal of the defendants (figure 20), deeming it worthy of public attention. This trial was a 'fabulous construction' by a group of prosecutors. If it were not for the fact that the lives of dozens of people who for twenty years suffered the most infamous of accusations, especially if they were men of the institutions, had passed through it'. "A sentence worth more than a reform," wrote Nicola Porro about the 2021 justice reform. The latter in fact stipulated that 'to hold a trial it is not enough to have elements to support the accusation'. Whoever thought up this rule 'thinks he lives in another world'. A headline that provokes public debates on the fairness of judicial processes, the fairness of laws and the role of prosecutors in the legal system.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ M. Conti, *Stato-mafia, sentenza choc: tutti colpevoli tranne Mancino*, *Il Giornale*. Archive. April, 21, 2018, p.8.

¹⁹⁸ V. Macioce, *Le domande senza risposta*, *Il Giornale*. Archive. April, 21, 2018, p.8.

¹⁹⁹ N. Porro, *Demoliti i pm. Dell'Utri: 10 anni di fango*, *Il Giornale*. Archive. September 24, 2021, p.1.



Domani in edicola il terzo e ultimo volume sui «ragazzi di Salò»

BOCCIATO IL TEOREMA TRATTATIVA STATO-MAFIA DEMOLITI I PM Dell'Utri: 10 anni di fango

Crollano le accuse di toghe e sinistra. Scagionati Mori, De Donno, Subranni e l'ex senatore di Forza Italia: il fatto non sussiste

Stefano Zurlo

La Corte d'Appello di Palermo assolve dopo oltre 10 anni l'ex senatore Marcello Dell'Utri, i generali dei carabinieri Mario Mori e Antonio Subranni e il colonnello Giuseppe De Donno. Crolla il teorema dei pm sulla trattativa Stato-mafia.

a pagina 8
con un commento di **Vittorio Sgarbi** a pagina 4

UNA SENTENZA CHE VALE PIÙ DI UNA RIFORMA

di **Nicola Porro**

Chi che ha dell'incredibile non sono le assoluzioni di ieri nel cosiddetto processo Stato-Mafia, ma il fatto che per venti anni siamo stati ostaggio di un gruppo di procuratori che ha costruito un teorema tanto mostruoso quanto fragile sin dalle fondamenta. Ci auguriamo che sia la fine dei processi, anzi delle accuse costruite sui teoremi. Il reato di trattativa avrebbe coinvolto diversi governi, presidenti della Repubblica, generali dei carabinieri, ministri e forze politiche di tutti gli schieramenti. Il teorema è così riassumibile: dopo le stragi di mafia di inizio anni '90, un pezzo delle istituzioni è più o meno sceso a patti con la mafia per evitare che si ripetersero e per tutelare la reputazione personale (il caso di Calisto Tanzi, per primo assolto). Ad un certo punto si è addirittura pensato che circolasse un vero e proprio contratto che sancisce questo accordo un «papello» che, ovviamente, non è mai stato prodotto.

Una costruzione favolosa. Finisco l'arresto di Rita da parte di uno degli imputati, ieri assolto, come il generale Mori, è stato considerato dall'accusa come una prova della trattativa. Verrebbe da dire: così vale tutto. Se non fosse che di mezzo è passata la vita di decine di persone che per venti anni hanno sofferto la più infamante delle accuse, soprattutto se uomini delle istituzioni «filtrano» con i boss.

E nei ieri pomeriggio la Corte di Assise di Palermo ha assolto i generali del Rus Mori e Subranni, il colonnello De Donno e Marcello dell'Utri che sarebbe stato, secondo l'accusa, lo sponsor della trattativa con Berlusconi.

Nulla di tutto ciò si è verificato. Questa clamorosa assoluzione si innesta sulla recente vittoria della giustizia, spacciata come epocale. Essa tra l'altro prevede che «per celebrare un processo non sia sufficiente avere elementi per sostenere l'accusa». Il pm infatti dovrebbe richiedere l'archiviazione «quando gli elementi acquisiti nelle indagini non consentono una ragionevole previsione di condanna».

Secondo il legislatore è sufficiente questa ipotetica presunzione di principio, senza la previsione di alcun parametro oggettivo, affinché i procuratori, semplificando, invece di andare a processo chiedano archiviazioni. E non perché il ritrattino inaccusato, ma perché pensino di non avere elementi sufficienti perché un giudice li condanni. Una cosa è pretendere che il procuratore, se in possesso di prove a tutela dell'indagine, le produca (cosa peraltro che non sarebbe avvenuta a Milano nel processo Eni), una cosa obbligato ad avere anche la testa del giudice terzo.

Chi ha pensato questa norma pensa di vivere in un altro mondo. Con una sua decisione la Corte di Assise di Palermo ha fatto molto di più di una riforma che non c'è.



INCUBO FINITO L'ex senatore Marcello Dell'Utri

DA INGROIA A TRAVAGLIO, ECCO I VERI SCONFITTI

I giustizialisti di cartapesta

di **Paolo Guzzanti**

Un altro mostro di cartapesta viene giù dalla diabolica Disneyland italiana: la trattativa fra Stato e mafia, uno dei mostri più laboriosi, complicati, labilica-

to a tavolino, non c'è stata. Mai. Assolti tutti: da Marcello Dell'Utri - l'unico ad essere assolto - per non aver commesso il fatto - che, nel fantastico e travagliato (...) segue a pagina 4

LE REAZIONI

Spiazzati il Pd e i forcaioli

di **Laura Cesaretti**

Spiazzati, confusi, imbarazzati e colpevolisti che avevano sponsorizzato lo scombiccherato teorema della «trattativa», a

che per utilità politica lo avevano silenziosamente analizzato, si trincerano dietro la polverosa formula di rito: «Aspettiamo le motivazioni». a pagina 7

LA RICOSTRUZIONE

Così si sgretola l'ultima balla

di **Mariateresa Conti e Luca Fazio**

Una vergogna durata 15 anni si sgretola nel pugno di ministri che basta al giudice Angela Pellicani per leggere la sentenza d'appello. Che assolve i servizi dello Stato

culturisti e distrutti e condanna senza appello il circo giudiziario, politico e giornalistico che per quindici anni ha raccontato la favola cupa di uno Stato sceso a patti con Cosa Nostra. a pagina 2

LO SCONTRO SUL GREEN PASS

Gli onorevoli No Vax sono almeno 130

di **Pasquale Napolitano**

Le stime sono al ribasso. La percentuale di parlamentari no vax, no pass, si attesta tra il 15 e il 20%. Un numero che oscilla tra i 90/100 deputati a Montecitorio e 40/50 senatori a Palazzo Madama. Intanto il boicottaggio ai virologi voluto dai Cinque stelle fa insorgere il mondo scientifico: «Sono meno di facili».

a pagina 10; servizi da pagina 12 a pagina 15

IL RETROSCENA

Asse Bonomi-Draghi Patto per la crescita

di **Adalberto Signore**

Rivendica i risultati ottenuti nella lotta alla pandemia, fa il punto sulla situazione economica e lancia un Patto per l'Italia «dal quale nessuno può chiamarsi fuori». Mario Draghi parla all'assemblea di Confindustria dopo il discorso del presidente Carlo Bonomi, un appello all'ex Dce affinché «continui a lungo la sua attuale esperienza».

con De Francesco e Lettieri alle pagine 8-9

ANSIA LIEVE E SONNO DISTURBATO?
Pura presenza

LAILA
Pura presenza

Più spazio alla vita.

Then came the time of the final verdict of the Cassazione, in April 2023. From a journalistic point of view, *Il Giornale* article of that day was a detailed and reflective account of the acquittal in the State-Mafia trial, focusing on the importance of the event and the judicial and political implications associated with it. The author, Luca Fazzo, offers a critical analysis of the Supreme Court's decisions and the broader context in which they were made, with particular attention to the reactions of the defendants and their families. "Ten years of ordeal," he wrote. An ordeal that ends with Colonel De Donno saying that the sentence "repays so much suffering and unjust humiliation"; and with General Mori who instead feels repaid "only in part", because "he knows his job, he knows that if he had made a mistake he would have realised it"; and with his colleague Subranni, who has been ill for some time, with his daughter Danila who went down hard, "honour to the combatants but I do not have the gift of forgetfulness, whoever makes a mistake must pay".²⁰⁰ The article provides an overview of the Supreme Court's reasoning behind the acquittal, discussing both the arguments presented by the prosecution and their challenge by the defence and the court. In addition, the reactions of the people involved in the trial are quoted, offering a human and individual perspective on a far-reaching court case. From a public perspective, this article could generate debate and discussion on several fronts. First, it raises questions about the fairness of accusations and judicial processes. Furthermore, the opinions expressed by politicians such as Matteo Renzi could fuel controversy regarding the role of the media and politicians in the justice process.

Overall, the articles seem to offer a thorough overview of the developments in the State-Mafia trial, inviting the reader to reflect on the implications of this decision for the Italian justice system and Italian society as a whole.

²⁰⁰ L. Fazzo, *Processo Stato-mafia. Arriva l'assoluzione per l'azzurro Dell'Utri e gli ufficiali del Ros. Dieci anni di calvario*. *Il Giornale*. Archive. April, 28, 2023.

Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to provide a comprehensive overview of the complex dynamics between the media, politics and public opinion, paying particular attention to the State-Mafia negotiation as a significant case study for understanding the role of the media in the construction of historical memory and the orientation of public opinion in Italy.

Undoubtedly, the referenced period was characterized by a profound transformation in the societal ethos of Italy, its democratic framework, and the institutions emblematic of its governance. Concurrently, a prevailing sentiment among the populace suggested apprehension towards clandestine forces cultivating agendas misaligned with the rejuvenation of the Italian political landscape. Furthermore, it is imperative to underscore the impropriety inherent in the routine consumption of such a consequential and intricate matter solely through the lens of journalistic and televised narratives. These mediums, often inclined towards sensationalism, possess the capacity to tarnish the reputations and personal integrity of individuals through the mere relay of third-party statements and declarations. While the research acknowledges the imperative of the public's right to information, it is equally vital to uphold the rights of individuals and their families amidst such scrutiny. In fact, according to the Court of Cassation's verdict on April 23, 2023, “the deed does not exist”, but the newspapers ignored the criminal importance of the activity discovered. This made it evident, for two decades, that the institutions involved (both the Ros carabinieri and politicians) experienced moral criticism because of the process, which was carried out by the media.

If that media narrative was true, it would demonstrate the existence of a “white mafia”, built through intimidation and fed by it, in a relational exchange made of mystifications and apparent naivety, of tacit promises, capable of investing at the highest levels of all sectors of institutions and public bodies, and of influencing political and administrative choices, and judicial investigations. A system founded on “corrupt, but not necessarily unlawful, conduct”. However, this does not exist in justice. One can only presume that they are “media criminal code” offenses.

The idea of the media criminal code manages to explain how, in a liberal democracy, a mistake of justice such as the one on the 'Mafia-State Negotiation' could have occurred. After two decades of investigations, show trials, media reconstructions and public abjurations, it is known that the man who defeated the Mafia massacre of the Corleonesi, the commander of the Carabinieri, Mario Mori, was tried without reason. It is well known that the contacts established after the Capaci and via d'Amelio massacres were aimed at safeguarding public safety and, above all, at capturing the bloodthirsty capo dei capi, Totò Riina. At the same time, it is known that the false accusations of the false turncoat Vincenzo Scarantino for the murder of Paolo Borsellino were considered credible. The unsuccessful outcome of the trial on the alleged State-Mafia negotiations raises important questions. Because it was not only the result of a fallacious judicial reconstruction, but also and above all a media one. Because of the state of emergency, commonplaces, and conspiracy theories, which the media have helped to fuel, the idea of a corrupt establishment, and not of a well-functioning democracy, is now part of the common Italian image.

In conclusion, the analysis of newspaper coverage of the State-Mafia negotiations reveals a complex interplay of competing narratives and interpretations. Each of the three newspapers examined—*Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica*, and *Il Giornale*—presented distinct perspectives on the events, reflecting their respective ideological orientations and editorial priorities. *Il Corriere della Sera*, with its centrist stance and commitment to objective reporting, provided balanced and comprehensive coverage of the negotiations. The newspaper's coverage emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in confronting the legacy of Mafia influence on Italian politics and society. Through meticulous investigative journalism and thoughtful analysis, *Il Corriere della Sera* sought to inform readers about the intricacies of the negotiations and their implications for Italian democracy. *La*

Repubblica, known for its progressive outlook and critical stance towards established power structures, offered a more adversarial perspective on the State-Mafia negotiations. The newspaper's coverage highlighted allegations of corruption and collusion between state officials and organized crime, fueling public outrage and calls for accountability. Through investigative reporting and editorial commentary, La Repubblica challenged the official narrative promoted by government authorities and demanded greater transparency in addressing the legacy of Mafia infiltration in Italian institutions. On the other hand, Il Giornale, a conservative newspaper aligned with the political interests of its owner, presented a skeptical and dismissive view of the State-Mafia negotiations. The newspaper's coverage downplayed allegations of state complicity in Mafia activities and portrayed the investigations as politically motivated attacks on conservative politicians. Through opinion pieces and editorial commentary, Il Giornale sought to discredit the findings of judicial inquiries and undermine public trust in the rule of law.

Overall, the comparative analysis of newspaper coverage highlights the divergent narratives and ideological biases that shape public discourse on the State-Mafia negotiations in Italy. While each newspaper offers a unique perspective on the events, media representations play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of power, corruption, and justice in democratic societies. As Italy continues to grapple with the legacy of Mafia influence, the media's role in fostering transparency, accountability, and democratic governance remains as important as ever. The divergent narratives propagated by newspapers have had a collective impact on public opinion, leading to a resurgence of ideological divisions characterised by competing theories and conspiracies. This phenomenon, which runs counter to the ideals of an impartial and just judiciary within a state, underscores the central role of the media as a conduit of public opinion.

The protracted narrative, spanning two decades, of collusion between the upper echelons of Italian institutions and the Mafia has profoundly shaped citizens' perceptions of governance, perpetuating the notion of Italy as an embryonic democracy dependent on expedient and cunning stratagems emblematic of cultural stereotypes. This cyclical dynamic, akin to a self-perpetuating cycle, also speaks to the secondary question posed in this discourse. Trust in institutions, fundamental to the democratic fabric in

which collective engagement ensures the effectiveness of governance, has been conspicuously absent since the 1990s. Incessant media coverage, disseminated through daily news cycles and journalistic discourse, has gradually eroded this trust, making the media a powerful arbiter in shaping public trust in institutions and, consequently, the political landscape. The individual who absorbs news content and experiences its impact is inherently intertwined with the electoral process, a nexus where voting preferences are shaped by media narratives and disillusionment can culminate in abstention. The tumultuous state of emergency that characterised Italy during this period served as a catalyst for media intervention, catalysing public discourse through revelations such as the Mani Pulite investigation, which laid bare the foundations for perceptions of institutional corruption and greed. The indelible imprint of the Mafia and its associated atrocities, which has left a lasting trauma on Italian society, has reinforced the media's role in reinforcing the prevailing belief that power equals moral turpitude. This pernicious disease, which afflicts the corpus of democracy, continues unabated. After the arrest of Messina Denaro on 16 January 2023, little attention was paid in the media to praising the performance of the Carabinieri. Instead, there was a resurgence of conspiratorial discourse, questioning the long delay in his capture and suggesting negligence. This narrative trajectory underscores the ascendancy of the mass media over the traditional pillars of justice and governance, epitomised by the judiciary and law enforcement. By assuming an investigative mantle and orchestrating 'media trials', the media have usurped the institutional prerogatives traditionally ascribed to judges and police authorities. In sum, the pervasive influence of the media extends beyond the political and judicial spheres, eclipsing these institutional bastions in the eyes of the public.

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