6 Moro's Voice and its Annihilation

6.1 Sanctity of Human Life

On March 16, several social actors had already taken a stand against the possibility of undertaking negotiations for the release of Moro, thus forming what was called the «party of firmness». Their refusal was immediate, despite the absence of any mention of negotiations in the communiqué of the Red Brigades (BR) in which they claimed responsibility for the attack. On March 17, the director of the Italian second national radio station Gustavo Selva reported that «Carlo Donat-Cattin [then vice-secretary of the Christian Democracy (DC)] […] has justly said that no blackmail could or would be accepted from the BR.»[1] The following day, in a meeting of the leadership of the DC, the position of the party in case of a negotiation request was discussed. The nearly unanimous decision of the party was negative. Interviewed by the *Corriere della Sera*, the Christian Democrat Luigi Granelli said that «it is clear that there are fundamental values on which we can only be inflexible. And there is, on the other hand, the salvation of a human life that is always unrenounceable. How to reconcile these two requirements depends on the circumstances in which this eventuality should be configured.»[2] Thus, as early as in the immediate aftermath of the via Fani attack, the situation is described in terms of a moral dilemma, in which the state has to decide between *fundamental values* and the salvation of *human life*. Although Granelli seemed to be considering it possible to find a line of action that could reconcile the defense of both values (the values of the state and the value of human life), the party majority had already decided that the «sense of the state» had to prevail. The Italian Communist Party (PCI) also immediately took on an uncompromising position, as is exemplified by all the editorials of *L'Unità* published from March 27 onwards during the duration of Moro's imprisonment. The

1 Quoted in Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 129.

2 Russo, Giovanna, «La direzione Dc discute la linea da tenere nel caso di un ricatto», *Corriere della Sera*, 18.3.1978, 2; it.: «È chiaro che ci sono valori fondamentali su cui non si può che essere inflessibili e c'è, dall'altra parte, la salvezza di una vita umana che è sempre un dovere irrinunciabile. Come conciliare queste due esigenze dipende dalle circostanze in cui questa eventuale ipotesi dovesse configurarsi.»

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Communists, who for the first time after thirty years felt part of the government and not the opposition, all wanted to prove that they could be a legitimate government party and willing to defend the state from its enemies. They also felt compelled to distance themselves from the BR to avoid being accused of being too indulgent with those who referred to the same or similar cultural and ideological backgrounds.[3]

In the first communiqué issued on March 18 and published by newspapers the day after, the BR made no reference to the possibility of an exchange of prisoners and wrote that their goal was to «unify the revolutionary movement» and to try Aldo Moro, «the political godfather and the most faithful performer of the directives imparted by imperialist powers.»[4] The absence of a request for the exchange of prisoners resulted, halting for a short period of time the debate on the question of firmness and negotiation. On the day of the communiqué's publication, Gianfranco Piazzesi wrote that «the Christian Democrats will not be subjected to the harsh dilemma between the protection of the dignity of the State and the death of its leader.»[5] In the following days, the media debate focused mainly on the question of what the BR wanted to achieve with the so-called «people's trial». One of the founders of the organization, Renato Curcio, in the courtroom of the Torino trial said that «the trial will be held, and very seriously, somewhere else. […] We will try the entire DC. Moro is in the hands of the proletariat.»[6] Curcio summarized what the members of the strategic direction of the BR wrote in the first communiqué: since the bourgeois state was illegitimate, the Torino trial was a farce; the real trial would be held in the «people's prison». The response of political parties and of the established media was to immediately discredit this trial as a farce too. Almost all newspapers printed the word «trial» in quotation marks every time they referred to the trial in the «people's prison». As Wagner-Pacifici notes, «the Torino trial and Moro's ‹people's prison› trial confronted each other as mirror images. […] By reciprocally denying reality to each other, these protagonists were asserting their claim to be the only legitimate authority. […] The simultaneity of these two major trials was noted and ex-

3 See Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 132–133; Giovagnoli 2009, 87–88.

4 Brigate Rosse 1978a, 34–35; it.: «[…] unificare il movimento rivoluzionario […]. […] il padrino politico e l'esecutore più fedele delle direttive impartite dalle centrali imperialiste.»

5 Piazzesi, Gianfranco, «Stoica dignità», *Corriere della Sera*, 19.3.1978. 1; it.: «[…] i notabili democristiani non saranno sottoposti al duro dilemma fra la tutela della dignità dello Stato e la morte del proprio *leader*.»

6 Quoted in Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 242.

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ploited by the press as the constant comparative assessments bolstered the no-negotiators case».[7]

The problem of the exchange of prisoners and with it of the declared incompatibility of the «reason of state» with the possibility of negotiating for the salvation of Aldo Moro began to be discussed again in the media in the final days of March, when the BR began to deliver letters written by Aldo Moro. During his kidnapping, Moro wrote at least 97 messages in letters, last wills and notes. As reconstructed by historian Miguel Gotor, these texts became public at three different moments, within 12 years. The first part of the letters became public during his 55 days of imprisonment;[8] a second part was discovered in a BR hideout on October 1, 1978, in via Monte Nevoso in Milan by the special antiterrorist nucleus led by General Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa; finally a third part was casually discovered on October 9, 1990, behind a panel of chalk by a worker during some of the renovations of the house in the same apartment where the previous finding had taken place.[9] In the hideout in via Monte Nevoso, a set of texts and notes written by Moro containing the answers to the interrogation to which he was subjected by the kidnappers, as well as a series of reflections on the last thirty years of Italian history was also found. Researchers and journalists refer to such writings with the programmatic name «Memorial». Several studies have been carried out on the texts written by Moro during his imprisonment, and many perplexities have been expressed, though

7 Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 240.

8 Twenty-six letters were definitely delivered by the BR during Moro's 55 days of imprisonment. Sixteen were addressed to political and institutional personalities. One letter was addressed collectively to the DC. The Democratic Christian politician also wrote a letter to Paul VI, which was delivered to the Vatican on April 20, 1978, and made public by Giulio Andreotti on May 23, 1980. Aldo Moro also sent eight letters to his wife Eleonora, which were published for the first time in 1979 in the book *L'intelligenza e gli avvenimenti* by the Aldo Moro Foundation, and one to Nicola Rana, Moro's university assistant and collaborator from 1955 on. According to Gotor, two other letters, of which the originals are still missing, were certainly delivered because Moro's wife recalls having them in her hands: these are the letters to Luigi Cottafavi, head of the UN's representation for Europe in Geneva and UN Deputy Secretary-General, and that to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim. Thus, according to Miguel Gotor, the letters delivered by the brigades rise to twenty-eight. There are also at least eight letters, which Gotor believes were successfully delivered, despite the fact that recipients have always denied it. See Gotor 2008b, 223–235.

9 See Gotor 2008a, xix-xx.

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not yet fully clarified, on the circumstances in which they were discovered.[10] In this study, I do not treat the issue of the discovery of the letters and the so-called «Memorial»; instead, I focus specifically on the eight letters published during Moro's imprisonment.[11]

The first of Moro's letters, addressed to Interior Minister Cossiga, became public on March 30, 14 days after the attack in via Fani. The letter was accompanied by the third communiqué, in which the BR wrote that «the practice of revolutionary violence is the only policy that has the real chance to challenge and resolve the antagonistic contradiction that oppos-

10 See Arlati/Magosso 2003; Barbagallo 2008; Bocca 1978; Flamigni 1997; Gotor 2008b; Gotor 2011; Di Sivo 2013.

11 The letters published during the 55 days of Moro's sequestration are the following. The first letter was delivered to the addressee Francesco Cossiga, Interior Minister, on March 29 and published on March 30. The BR submitted the photocopy of the manuscript to the following newspapers: *Il Messaggiero, Radio Onda Rossa, Corriere della Sera, Secolo XIX,* and *Gazzetta del Popolo.* The second letter, addressed to Benigno Zaccagnini, Secretary of the DC, was delivered to Nicola Rana (a colleague of Aldo Moro) on April 4 and published on April 5. The BR submitted the photocopy of the manuscript, along with their fourth communiqué and the «Risoluzione della Direzione Strategica delle Brigate Rosse», to the Italian news Agency ANSA and to the newspapers *La Repubblica, Secolo XIX, Il Lavoro, Il Messaggero, La Stampa* and *Gazzetta del Popolo.* The third letter was delivered on April 10 and published on April 11. It addressed Paolo Emilio Taviani; however, the Christian Democrat Senator was not really the recipient of the letter but the person to whom the considerations made by Moro in the interrogation are addressed. This is a sort of report given by the prisoner during the interrogations, the only part of the so-called «Memorial» that the BR divulged during and after the capture of Moro. The terrorists provided a photocopy of the manuscript attached to their fifth communiqué to the newspapers *La Repubblica*, *Il Messagero* and *La Stampa*. The fourth letter was delivered to the addressee Benigno Zaccagnini on April 19 and published April 22 in *La Repubblica*. The fifth letter was found, following an anonymous call, by the editor of the afternoon newspaper *Vita sera*, together with a copy of the eighth communiqué, on April 24 and published on April 25. The sixth letter was delivered in April to Corrado Guerzoni and Nicola Rana, who handed over a photocopy of the manuscript to Fabio Isman, a journalist from *Il Messaggero*, who published it on April 29. This letter does not address a specific recipient, but the DC as a whole. The seventh letter was delivered to the addressee Bettino Craxi, Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party, on April 29 and published in the *Corriere della Sera* by the will of the recipient on May 1. The eighth and last letter that was published during Moro's captivity was delivered to the President of the Italian Republic Giovanni Leone on April 29 and published on May 4 in the main Italian newspapers. See Moro 2008a; Bocca 1978.

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es the metropolitan proletariat and the imperialist bourgeoisie.»[12] The BR showed little interest in establishing a relationship with the institutions or parties and argued that «the interrogation […] continues with the full cooperation of the prisoner». Although, as they themselves wrote, the prisoner had asked them if he could «write a secret letter», and they decided to publish it, «since nothing is hidden from the people».[13] Already in this letter, Moro harshly criticized the line of firmness adopted by the ruling parties, particularly by the DC, and proposed an alternative interpretation—compared to what the newspapers wrote and what the BR probably allowed him to read—of the «reason of state»:

> It is out of the question—I was told with great clarity—that I am considered a political prisoner, subjected, as President of the Christian Democracy, to a trial to ascertain my thirty-year responsibility […]. I have to think that the serious charge that is being made against me is addressed to me as a qualified exponent of Christian Democracy as a whole, in the management of its political line. All of us in the leading group are involved in this and it is our collective action that is under charge and for which I have to answer. In the circumstances described above, beyond any humanitarian considerations, which also cannot be ignored, the reason of State comes into play. Above all, this reason of State in my case means […] that I am under a full and uncontrolled domain, subjected to a popular trial […], that I am in this position having all the knowledge and sensibilities that derive from long experience, with the risk of being called or induced to speak in a way that may be unpleasant and dangerous in certain situations. Furthermore, the doctrine that kidnapping must not profit [the kidnappers], […] does not stand up in the political circumstances, where it causes incalculable and certain damage not only to the person but to the State. The sacrifice of innocents in the name of an abstract principle of legality, while an undeniable state of necessity mandates saving them, is unacceptable. […] Let God enlighten you for the better, avoiding you get-

12 Brigate Rosse 1978b, 43; it.: «[…] la pratica della violenza rivoluzionaria è l'unica politica che abbia la possibilità reale di affrontare e risolvere la contraddizione antagonistica che oppone proletariato metropolitano e borghesia imperialista.»

13 Brigate Rosse 1978b, 42–43; it.: «[…] l'interrogatorio […] prosegue con la completa collaborazione del prigioniero. […] [Il prigioniero] ha chiesto di scrivere una lettera segreta […]. Gli è stato concesso, ma siccome niente deve essere nascosto al popolo ed è questo il nostro costume, la rendiamo pubblica.»

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ting bogged down in a painful episode, upon which many things could depend.[14]

Moro's message to Interior Minister Cossiga and to the government in general is clear: if you do not work for my release, I may be forced to say things, which could be dangerous for the state and its institutions.[15] The politician stressed that the trial did not concern his person in particular, but the DC in general. Since the trial was about thirty years of government with his own party in power, the «reason of state» came into play. According to Moro, it was in the interest of the state to work for his release, re-

14 Moro 2008b, 7-8; it.: «È fuori discussione – mi è stato detto con tutta chiarezza – che sono considerato un prigioniero politico, sottoposto, come Presidente della D.C., ad un processo diretto ad accertare le mie trentennali responsabilità […]. Devo pensare che il grave addebito che mi viene fatto, si rivolge a me in quanto esponente qualificato della D.C. nel suo insieme nella gestione della sua linea politica. In verità siamo tutti noi del gruppo dirigente che siamo chiamati in causa ed è il nostro operato collettivo che è sotto accusa e di cui devo rispondere. Nelle circostanze sopra descritte entra in gioco, al di là di ogni considerazione umanitaria che pure non si può ignorare, la ragione di Stato. Soprattutto questa ragione di Stato nel caso mio significa […] che io mi trovo sotto un dominio pieno ed incontrollato, sottoposto ad un processo popolare […], che sono in questo stato avendo tutte le conoscenze e sensibilità che derivano dalla lunga esperienza, con il rischio di essere chiamato o indotto a parlare in maniera che potrebbe essere sgradevole e pericolosa in determinate situazioni. Inoltre la dottrina per la quale il rapimento non deve recare vantaggi, discutibile già nei casi comuni, dove il danno del rapito è estremamente probabile, non regge in circostanze politiche, dove si provocano danni sicuri e incalcolabili non solo alla persona, ma allo Stato. Il sacrificio degli innocenti in nome di un astratto principio di legalità, mentre un indiscutibile stato di necessità dovrebbe indurre a salvarli, è inammissibile. […] Che Iddio vi illumini per il meglio, evitando che siate impantanati in un doloroso episodio, dal quale potrebbero dipendere molte cose.».

15 There was much discussion about what Moro could have revealed to his prisoners, especially concerning NATO-related secrets, and it has been hypothesized that the interrogation of the prisoner aroused many concerns in the political class about the military «secrets» that Moro could reveal. In fact, in the so-called «Memorial» found in via Monte Nevoso, there is a note that could refer to Gladio, the Stay-behind NATO operation in Italy, which in 1978 was still secret and whose existence became public only in 1990, when, just a few weeks after, the second discovery of parts of the «Memorial» was revealed by Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti (see Moro, 1997e). The BR, however, did not use Moro's revelations and said, posteriorly, that they were not able to appreciate the reference to this topic. (see Moretti 2000, 159; Braghetti/Tavella 1998, 109). Their interests, however, were different and the main purpose of the interrogation seemed to be to confirm the relationship between the so-called «Imperialist State of the Multinationals» and the DC (see Giovagnoli 2009, 115–116).

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gardless of humanitarian considerations, that is, regardless of the value of its personal life, because what he might say to the BR would seriously jeopardize the DC and the Italian State. Here Moro's argumentative strategy is totally in line with his speech held in March 1977 in defense of Gui and Tannassi: He appealed to interior minister Cossiga and other party representatives to prevent his trial going ahead before the so-called *people's court*, in the same way as he had firmly opposed the *trial in the squares* of the two former ministers. The Moro who wrote this letter was still the party's and state's man, for which the trial of his person was equivalent to a trial of his own party, which in turn was equivalent to a trial of the state. It is significant that Moro, as he had said that Gui did not have to be a *victim* to immolate himself for the welfare of the party, warned the government and his party not to *sacrifice* him *in the name of an abstract principle of legality*.[16] In other words, Moro drew attention to the scapegoat mechanism—the sacrifice of a single victim acting as a substitute for the (alleged) guilt of a collective—and pointed to two reasons, one politico-juridical, the other politico-ethical, for not allowing the mechanism to be realized: first, because the reason of state required negotiations for the liberation of the prisoner, since his revelations in an interrogation could have had negative consequences for the party and the state and, secondly, because the state would fail to fulfill its mandate to guarantee the life and wellbeing of a citizen, especially if it was an innocent citizen. In this first letter, negotiations for

16 Legal arguments against the possibility of the exchange of prisoners had triggered the debate on the question of firmness and negotiations since the first day of the kidnapping. As early as on March 16, Interior Minister Francesco Cossiga and Minister of Justice Francesco Paolo Bonifacio immediately excluded the possibility of an exchange. The press stressed that the existing legislative system did not leave any discretion to the executive in granting bail to prisoners awaiting trial, such as Curcio and other members of the BR under trial in Turin (see Conso, Giovanni, «Scambio Moro-BR nonsenso giuridico», *La Stampa*, 20.3.1978, 2). In addition, the judgment of the Court of Cassation in relation to the Sossi case (the magistrate Mario Sossi was kidnapped and then released by the BR in 1974; on this occasion, the terrorists had requested, without success, the exchange of prisoners) and the *Legge reale* of 1975 also precluded the judiciary from granting provisional freedom in cases of serious crimes. The Minister of Justice had the power to suspend the execution of the sentence, but only if the sentence was already definitive and only under precise conditions provided for by law. In short, it was almost impossible to legally accept an exchange request without a specific legislative intervention to change standards. It is likely that Aldo Moro came to know or imagined that this kind of argument would have been brought in favor of the line of firmness, and for this reason he warned Cossiga not to insist on «abstract principles of legality» (see Giovagnoli 2009, 88).

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Moro's liberation are described as the only way to guarantee the wellbeing of both the collective *and* the individual.

The argumentative strategy remained largely the same in the second letter that became public, on April 5, which was addressed to Benigno Zaccagnini. Here Moro warned the Secretary of the DC to «assume the responsibilities that are both individual and collective», reinforced his status as a «political prisoner» and urged the party not to discuss in terms of «abstract law (though there are norms about the state of necessity) but on a level of human and political openness, if it is not possible with realism to give the only possible positive solution to my situation, proposing the liberation of prisoners on both sides, attenuating to the attention in the context of a political phenomenon.»[17] Otherwise, he added, «the inevitable consequences will fall on the Party and the people.»[18] The prisoner stressed once more that he was being charged for responsibilities that should be shared collectively by the whole party. He again emphasized the necessity of a *human and political* solution and drew attention to the state of necessity, provided for by the Italian criminal code Art. 54, according to which a person should not be held liable for his or her actions, in relation to a crime that was committed to save himself or herself or others from actual danger of serious injury.[19]

The first two letters undoubtedly had some content written on the indications of the terrorists, and revealed a situation of partial and distorted information about what was happening outside the prison, a situation in which Moro depended on how much the BR wanted to communicate with him. They cannot be considered devoid of his specific intentions. As the historian Guido Formigoni writes, Moro was convinced that «his abduction had drastically crushed the state's order and that only his release could have healed the wound, while a rigid refusal of contacts would simply rep-

17 Moro 2008c, 13-14; it.: «[…] assumere le responsabilità che sono ad un tempo individuali e collettive […]. Sono un prigioniero politico. […] Si discute qui, non in astratto diritto (benché vi siano le norme sullo stato di necessità), ma sul piano dell'opportunità umana e politica, se non sia possibile dare con realismo alla mia questione l'unica soluzione positiva possibile, prospettando la liberazione di prigionieri di ambo le parti attenuando l'attenzione nel contesto proprio di un fenomeno politico.»

18 Moro 2008c, 14; it.: «[…] le inevitabili conseguenze ricadranno sul Partito e sulle persone.»

19 Article 54 of the Italian Criminal Code states: «Non è punibile chi ha commesso il fatto per esservi stato costretto dalla necessità di salvare sé o altri dal pericolo attuale di un danno grave alla persona, pericolo da lui non volontariamente causato, né altrimenti evitabile, sempre che il fatto sia proporzionato al pericolo.»

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resent a formal defense of a fake order already failed. […] Certainly, the idea that he ‹yielded› to the jailers in a human and anti-heroic attempt to save his own life must be discarded […]. Simply, once again he […] tried to conduct politics in the name of his ideals and his vision of things.»[20] When Moro wrote these letters, he could not have known that the BR would have made them public and certainly could not have imagined with how much monotony, unity and repetition most parts of the media, political parties and various public personalities would react to his letters. From March 30 onwards, the process of depoliticizing Aldo Moro—the operation «Moro is not Moro»—began.

On April 10, the BR published the fifth communiqué and the third «letter» by Moro, which is actually to be considered a part of the «Memorial», in which the prisoner harshly criticized the Christian Democrat politician and Senator Paolo Emilio Taviani. In fact, he had written a very angry passage about the former minister, who a few days earlier had publicly denied that Moro himself, at the time of the kidnapping of the magistrate Mario Sossi, had spoken against the refusal to engage in negotiations (in the letter to Zaccagnini published on April 5, Moro had written that he had always been in favor of negotiations and that he had said this to Taviani and Gui during Sossi's captivity). We thus know that, from a given moment on, Moro was aware that some of his letters had become public. The BR wanted to demonstrate that the interrogation was proceeding and that the prisoner was making revelations and expressing judgments that could put the government and the DC in serious difficulty.[21] From this moment on, the general perception was that Moro's writings (the writings of the prisoner during the trial and perhaps even any documents he had kept in the bags which he had with him on the day of the kidnapping) could play an important role. These materials had become part of a complex form of management of the hostage: Moro and his writings became a «double hostage».[22] In the passage on Taviani, Moro again referred to both political

20 Formigoni 2016, 354.

21 See Formigoni 2016, 356.

22 According to Senator Giovanni Pellegrino, Chairman of the *Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul terrorismo in Italia e sulle cause della mancata individuazione dei responsabili delle stragi* from 1996 to 2001, after the publication of the text on Taviani «the institutional apparatuses, not only Italian, but also [of other] western and eastern [countries], began to perceive that Moro was saying or could say things of great interest to the BR. That is to say, when they understood that the Red Brigades had a ‹double hostage› in their hands: Moro and the secrets he knew» (Fasanella/Sestieri/Pellegrino 2000, 165; see also Gotor 2008b, 272).

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and humanitarian reasons for negotiations, and recalled that other countries had shown more «reasonable flexibility» in managing similar situations. Moro was questioning the reasons for Taviani's denial and for such inflexibility on the part of the government and the political parties, and wondered if there was maybe foreign «influence»: «Is there an American and German influence, perhaps, in keeping firm against me?»[23]

On April 15, the BR announced that the trial was over and that the prisoner had been sentenced to death. In the sixth communiqué, they declared that Moro had said nothing that the «proletarians» did not already know. This statement was probably only formal and aimed at causing a reaction in the parties and among public opinion. However, the decision was probably communicated to the prisoner. During this time, he wrote a series of letters, which were not published during his imprisonment, that were very affectionate and addressed to family and friends. He instructed his wife, Eleonora, to freely decide on the funeral honors and added: «Take care of yourself and try to be as calm as you can. We will meet again. We will be together again. We will be together in love again.»[24]

On April 17, Amnesty International issued a press release, reporting that people close to Aldo Moro and his family had contacted the organization and that it was willing to try to get in touch with the kidnappers to pave the way for negotiations. Amnesty International reinforced its opposition to the death penalty, arguing that executions for political coercion, both by governments and by anyone else, are equally unacceptable.[25] The Secretariat of the DC defined Amnesty International's position very positively, stating that it had responded to the wish expressed by the party in the days before. Caritas Internationalis also took a similar position, saying it was available to intervene with its own humanitarian methods.

On April 18, a false communiqué announced the death of the DC leader by «suicide», indicating the *Lago della Duchessa* (the Duchess Lake), in the mountains of the province of Rieti, as the place where the body of Moro could be found. Security forces made this false communiqué with the help of a forger; it was a *mise-en-scène* constructed, according to some, to force the BR to prove that the hostage was alive and, according to others, to test

23 Moro 2008e, 43; it.: «Vi è forse, nel tenere duro contro di me, un'indicazione americana e tedesca?»

24 Moro 2008g, 63; it.: «Tu curati e cerca di essere più tranquilla che puoi. Ci rivedremo. Ci ritroveremo. Ci riameremo.»

25 See Imperi 2016, 92.

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the reactions that Moro's death would produce among the public.[26] Moro himself, in a note in the «Memorial», described the fake communiqué and the reaction of the media as a «big macabre edition on my execution.»[27] On April 20, the BR published the seventh, and real, communiqué, in which they accused «Andreotti and his accomplices» of the «macabre *mise-en-scène.*»[28] The communiqué was accompanied by the second Polaroid photo, where Moro was pictured with a copy of the April 19 edition of *La Repubblica* (see figure 4). In this communiqué, the kidnappers openly took positions for the «liberation of Communist prisoners» for the first time, presenting it as the only chance for Moro's salvation, while also calling an ultimatum of 48 hours.[29]

26 See Lofoco 2015, 99–102; Flamigni 1997, 38, 335; Manca 2008, 117; Biscione 2012, 59–60.

27 Moro 1997b, 319; it.: «[…] macabra grande edizione della mia esecuzione.» It is interesting to note that in this brief text Moro criticized the Italian press and journalism in general, observing that the country was dominated by five or six newspapers, which in the days of his captivity again demonstrated «how easy it is to monopolize the market of opinions» [it: «[…] come sia facile chiudere il mercato delle opinoni»].

28 Brigate Rosse 1978c, 126; it.: «[…] Andreotti e i suoi complici […] macabra messa in scena.»

29 Brigate Rosse 1978c; it.: «[…] liberazione di prigionieri comunisti.»

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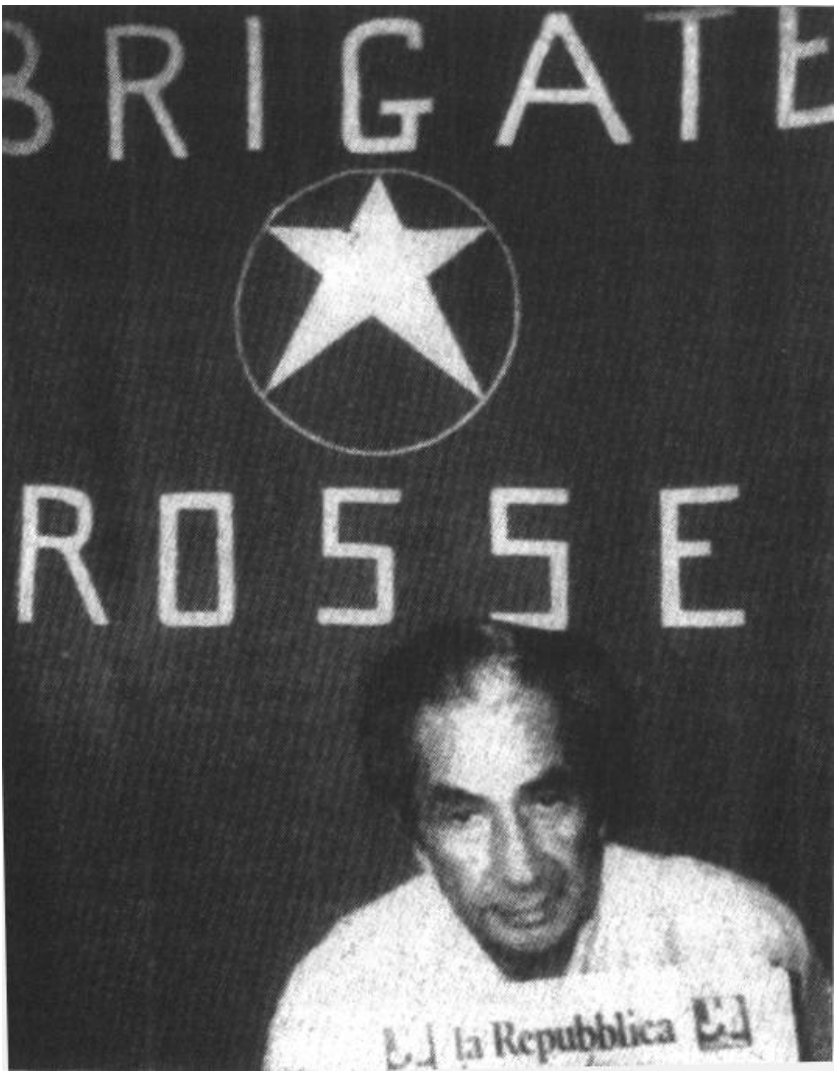

PICTURE 4: The Polaroid attached to the seventh communiqué of the Red Brigades showing Aldo Moro with a copy of the newspaper La Repubblica of April 19, 1978.

After the diffusion of the seventh communiqué, the debate on firmness vs. negotiation flared up again, and a minority «party for negotiation» began to oppose the «party of firmness». As early as on April 19, a group of peo-

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ple «close to the family» had written an appeal published in *Lotta Continua*, claiming that «every man has the right to life» and asking «a non-fideist and fetishist defense of the […] prerogatives and functions» of the state.[30] Among the many signatories there were leaders of *Azione Cattolica*, the *Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani* (ACLI) and the *Federazione Universitaria Cattolica Italiana* (FUCI), unionists, priests, some bishops, some leftists, Italian intellectuals such as Norberto Bobbio, foreign intellectuals such as Heinrich Böll and Pauolo Freire, and theologians such as Marie-Dominique Chenu and Jürgen Moltmann.[31] On April 20, the Secretary of the PSI spoke in favor of the negotiations. Moro himself considered the position very important and wrote to Craxi and several other people in the following days.[32] He also wrote a second letter to the Pope (the first one was written around April 8; though scholars believe it was delivered, it was not disclosed during Moro's captivity), asking him again to adopt a position in favor of negotiations. This letter was not made public during Moro's captivity.[33]

During those days, there were at least two attempts, which were however destined to fail, to open negotiations with the BR. Paul VI initiated the first attempt and, through his secretary Monsignor Pasquale Macchi, mobilized all of the responsible prison chaplains to try and enter into contact with the BR. The hypothesis was to offer a large sum of money, maybe 10 billion lire.[34] Apparently, the government tolerated the initiative, since all party leaders gave the green light to Andreotti.[35] At some point, linking this agreement with the possibility of exile for a member of the BR not yet imprisoned was even hypothesized. However, the initiative failed because of internal divisions in the Roman Curia and above all the inability to build an effective channel of communication with the kidnappers.[36] On the morning of April 22, *Radio Vaticana* interrupted the programs to read Paul VI's appeal to the «men of the BR». A special edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* published the passage of the appeal, in which the Pope asked the BR to release Moro «simply, without conditions».[37] According to some in-

30 *Lotta Continua*, «Un appello», 19.4.1978, 1; it.: «[…] per ogni uomo il diritto alla vita […] una difesa non fideistica e feticista delle […] prerogative e funzioni.»
31 See *Lotta Continua*, «Le adesioni all'appello», 20.4.1978, 1.
32 See Formigoni 2016, 364–365.
33 See Moro 2008h, 68–69.
34 See Formigoni 2016, 364–365.
35 See Giovagnoli 2009, 137.
36 Forlani 2014.
37 Quoted in Imperi 2016, 108.

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terpretations, this formulation was added to the message, which the Pope wrote straight off during the night, on the advice of the government and especially of Andreotti. That Moro was aware of the Pope's message is demonstrated by a letter to his wife, delivered on May 5, in which he wrote, in the certainty that he would soon die: «The Pope did ever so little; perhaps he will feel guilty.»[38] The second attempt to open negotiations was initiated by some exponents of the Socialist Party along with the leaders of *Autonomia Operaia*. The hypothesis was to make a «humanitarian act» of state clemency for a detainee to pressurize the kidnappers into liberating Moro. But this initiative was severely criticized by the press and representatives of both the PCI and the DC.[39]

On the same day as the BR published their seventh communiqué, they delivered three of Moro's letters to Moro's wife: one, already mentioned, was adressed to the Pope, one to his wife and one to Zaccagnini. In the latter, which was published in the newspaper *La Repubblica* on April 22 as requested by Moro, the prisoner radicalized his appeal:

> Is it possible that you all agree on wanting my death for an alleged reason of State as some lividly suggest, almost as a solution to all the problems of the country? […] If this crime would come to pass, it would open up a terrible spiral that you could not face. You would be overwhelmed. It would open a rift with the humanitarian forces that still exist in this Country. It would open, unmistakably, despite first appearances, a fracture in the party that you could not contain. […] I tell you clearly: for my part, I will not absolve and I will not justify anyone. […] I remind you, and I remind all the political forces, that the Republican Constitution, as the first sign of novelty, has abolished the death penalty. With your own inertia, insensitivity and blind respect for the reason of State, by doing nothing to prevent [the death penalty], you would reintroduce it, as a matter of fact, into our legislative system. Here, in the democratic Italy of 1978, in Beccaria's Italy, as in past centuries, I am condemned to death. That the sentence is executed depends on you. […] If you do not do something, it will be written as a dreadful page in the history of Italy. My blood would fall on you, on the party, the Country. […] May God enlighten you, dear Zaccagnini, and enlighten the friends to whom I address a message of despair. Do not think of the few cases in which it [the State] has done right [fol-

38 Moro 2008m, 178; it.: «Il Papa ha fatto pochino. Forse ne avrà scrupolo.»
39 See Formigoni 2016, 365; Silj 1978, 129–158.

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> lowing the rules of law], but of the many resolved according to the rules of humanity […]. If pity prevails, the Country is not finished.[40]

The crucial point in these statements is not so much the explicit and radical rejection of the line of firmness, but rather the fact that Moro himself used an anti-sacrificial rhetoric, which was a sort of counterpart to the one that emerged after his death. In his representation of the event—moreover, of an event that had yet to happen!—the state was identified as the agent of the sacrificial action. Moro here took the roles of a judge and of an accuser. This line of conduct by the government and the ruling parties was judged incompatible with the rules of humanity. The core of these values was, for Moro, piety. Thus, in his letters a distinction and a rupture emerged between the legal, abstract principles of the state and another kind of higher values. Only if the state gave up the former and accepted the latter would the country be safe. According to the Christian Democrat politician, the law could not be the foundation of the legitimacy of the Italian State, but only the extra-legal, universal value of the *sanctity of human life*. Using the formula «my blood shall be upon you», an evident allusion to the Bible—Leviticus 20—Moro cursed all those who continued to support the line of firmness. The sacrifice wanted by the government here becomes sacrilege, an act that desacralizes and delegitimizes its political authority.

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40 Moro 2008i, 72; it.: «È possibile che siate tutti d'accordo nel volere la mia morte per una presunta ragion di Stato che qualcuno lividamente vi suggerisce, quasi a soluzione di tutti i problemi del paese? […] Se questo crimine fosse perpetrato, si aprirebbe una spirale terribile che voi non potreste fronteggiare. Ne sareste travolti. Si aprirebbe una spaccatura con le forze umanitarie che ancora esistono in questo Paese. Si aprirebbe, insanabile, malgrado le prime apparenze, una frattura nel partito che non potreste dominare. […] Io lo dico chiaro: per parte mia non assolverò e non giustificherò nessuno. […] Ricordate, e lo ricordino tutte le forze politiche, che la Costituzione Repubblicana, come primo segno di novità, ha cancellato la pena di morte. Così, cari amici, la si verrebbe a reintrodurre, non facendo nulla per impedirla, facendo con la propria inerzia, insensibilità e rispetto cieco della ragion di Stato che essa sia di nuovo, di fatto, nel nostro ordinamento. Ecco, nell'Italia democratica del 1978, nell'Italia del Beccaria, come in secoli passati, io sono condannato a morte. Che la condanna sia eseguita, dipende da voi. […] Se voi non intervenite, sarebbe scritta una pagina agghiacciante nella storia d'Italia. Il mio sangue ricadrebbe su voi, sul partito, sul Paese. […] Che Dio ti illumini, caro Zaccagnini, ed illumini gli amici ai quali rivolgo un disperato messaggio. Non pensare ai pochi casi nei quali si è andati avanti diritti, ma ai molti risolti secondo le regole dell'umanità e perciò, pur nelle difficoltà della situazione, in modo costruttivo. Se la pietà prevale, il Paese non è finito.»

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Moro was not the only one to refer to the sanctity of human life. In fact, this «root paradigm» was also handpicked by the Socialist Party and the various groups on the Italian radical left.[41] Communists and Christian Democrats also alluded to this value, when they gave their verbal approval to actions they ambiguously referred to as «humanitarian initiatives» taken to save Moro. But this approval was always followed by the specification that nothing, not even the intrinsic value of Moro's life, could cause the government to give in to the request for negotiations. On the contrary, the advocates of negotiations emphasized the relevance of the sanctity of human life by claiming that they were against any form of the death penalty. Two days after the publication of the appeal for the liberation of Moro, *Lotta Continua* reaffirmed its opposition to the line of firmness arguing that

> the killing of Aldo Moro is against all the reasons for the struggle in which we are engaged. Because we are opposed to the death penalty, wherever it is applied and however it is justified […]. Because we are radically and irreducibly averse to this state, which in death, in war and in fear seeks to force what it does not have, the authority it does not have, the legitimacy that it does not have. […] Why has no newspaper published the text of the appeal […]? […] Here is the paradox of a state that, while delegating humanitarianism to the ‹operating institutions› such as the Red Cross or Amnesty International, has no other concern than that […] to hold the family of Aldo Moro hostage, to impose on individual exponents the role of Abraham sacrificing Isaac.[42]

Like Moro, *Lotta Continua* described the line of firmness as a death sentence, which transforms the people involved into sacrificers. The comparison with the sacrifice of Isaac has the function of highlighting the sacrilegious nature of the line of firmness. The state and the parliamentary par-

41 See Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 182.

42 Manetti, Clemente, «Scandalo e silenzi», *Lotta Continua*, 20.4.1978, 1; it.: «L'uccisione di Aldo Moro è contro tutte le ragioni della lotta in cui siamo impegnati. Perché siamo contro la pena di morte. Dovunque sia applicata e comunque venga giustificata. […] Perché siamo radicalmente e irriducibilmente e avversi a questo stato, che nella morte, nella guerra e nella paura cerca la forza che non ha, l'autorità che non ha, la legittimazione che non ha. […] Perché nessun giornale, nessuno, ha pubblicato il testo dell'appello […]? […] Qui sta il paradosso di uno stato che, mentre delega l'umanitarismo alle ‹istituzioni addette› come la Croce Rossa o Amnesty International, altra preoccupazione non ha se non quella […] di tenere in ostaggio la famiglia di Aldo Moro, di imporre ai singoli esponenti il ruolo di Abramo che sacrifica Isacco.»

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ties are considered illegitimate, because they did not act according to the moral imperative that no life should be spent. The state, unlike God, is willing to sacrifice one of its own children. Interestingly, one of the journalists from *Lotta Continua* demonstrated that he had perfectly understood the mechanism of martyrological representation when he wrote that «in Christian Democracy, a corpse is being sought to be martyred—the first martyr of the party», adding further: «The BR […] should realize that [if they kill Moro] they would only repeat an April 18, 1948.»[43] The journalist referred here to the elections of April 1948, when the DC gained extraordinary electoral success. In other words, the journalist predicted that the possible killing of Moro would have had the effect of reinforcing the DC—what actually happened in the administrative elections of May 14 and 15, 1978, less than a week after Moro's death (by the way, we are again facing a prefiguration, which in this case is twofold: on the one hand, there is the analogy between Moro and Isaac and, on the other hand, between the political situation of April 18, 1948 and that of April 18, 1978). However, the lucid analysis by the *Lotta Continua* journalist did not prevent Lucio Lombardo Radice from declaring in *L'Unità* just three days later that since

> Christian martyrs refused to save their lives by [refusing] to burn incense in offering to divinized emperors; [similarly], citizens of the Free Italian Republic […] cannot recognize the dignity and equality of interlocutors to the enemies of their democratic institutions, in order to avoid the Republic's ruin.[44]

There is something bitterly ironic about a Communist declaring in a Communist newspaper that the citizens of the Republic have to act similarly to Christian martyrs, in order to defend the Republic. Especially when one considers that Moro was transformed into a martyr of both the DC and the Italian State and, above all, given that the one who was about to die, refused to assume the role of a martyr. It is total confusion of languages.

On April 24 the BR issued their eighth communiqué in which they demanded the release of 13 detainees, including members of the terrorist

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43 *Lotta Continua*, «In cerca di un martire», 18.4.1978, 1; it.: «Nella DC si cerca un cadavere da rendere martire – il primo martire del partito», «Le BR […] si rendano conto che non farebbero altro che ripetere un 18 aprile 1948.»

44 *L'Unità*, «Una dichiarazione di Lucio Lombardo Radice», 21.4.1978, 3; it.: «I martiri cristiani rifiutavano di salvare la loro vita bruciando incensi agli imperatori divinizzati; I cittadini della libera Repubblica italiana […] non possono riconoscere dignità e parità di interlocutori ai nemici delle loro istituzioni democratiche, proprio per non pagare il prezzo della rovina della Repubblica.»

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group *XXII Ottobre*, the founders of the BR and other members of the organization recently arrested and on trial in Turin. The communiqué clearly stated that only the exchange of «political prisoners», «only an immediate and positive response by the DC and its government, unequivocally given and concretely implemented, will allow the release of Aldo Moro». It also stressed that «humanitarian appeals» as well as the government's attempt to involve Caritas in possible mediation were useless.[45] In short, what they wanted was not money, not secret negotiations: what they sought most of all was official recognition as a political organization with a legitimate cause, and they understood the exchange of prisoners as a way of obtaining this recognition: «the paradoxical situation of the BR was precisely what they were depending upon, they were rejecting the illegitimate to bring about their own legitimation.»[46] When captured by the police, the BR members always declared themselves political prisoners, as if they expected that the relevant Geneva Conventions would apply to their cases. They knew that in cases of a state negotiating with enemies the contending parties usually appealed to the generally recognized laws of war, as provided by the combined declarations of the various Geneva Conventions.[47] The paradox of the BR's strategy thus resided in the fact that they wanted to gain political recognition on the basis of international conventions signed by states, which they considered illegitimate. They wanted the state to recognize the state of war and to treat the detained members of their organization as prisoners of war.

Along with the eighth communiqué, the BR issued a letter by Moro, again addressed to Zaccagnini, which was published in many newspapers on April 25. In this letter, Moro wrote that initiatives of «generic humanitarian character» served no purpose and that «politically the theme is not that of human piety, but of the exchange of some prisoners of war (war or guerrilla warfare, as you want), […] as highly civilized countries (almost universally) do, where exchange is practiced not only for objective humanitarian reasons, but for the salvation of innocent human life.»[48] For Moro, therefore, the salvation of the individual was not a humanitarian issue

45 Brigate Rosse 1978d, 132; it.: «[…] prigionieri politici […] solo una risposta immediata e positiva della DC e del suo Governo, andata senza equivoci, e concretamente attuata potrà consentire il rilascio di Aldo Moro.»

46 Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 154.

47 See Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 155–175.

48 Moro 2008j, 99; it.: «[…] generico carattere umanitario […] politicamente il tema non è quello della pietà umana, pur così suggestiva, ma dello scambio di alcuni prigionieri di guerra (guerra o guerriglia come si vuole), come si pratica in paesi

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(therefore, purely moral), but a political choice. The move touched on a topic of important political philosophy, as he argued, the state had the task of safeguarding an individual's life. He thus tried to re-politicize his own «bare life», to reintroduce it into the profane sphere of politics. We will come back to this point later. As in the previous letter, Moro again assumed the role of the judge, especially accusing, not to say cursing, the DC:

> I repeat: I will not absolve nor justify anyone. No political or moral reason can push me to do so. […] Christian Democracy should not believe that its problem finishes with the elimination of Moro. I will still be here as an irreducible point of contention and alternative, to prevent others doing with Christian Democracy what is being done today. For this reason, for an obvious incompatibility, I ask that neither State authority nor party men participate in my funeral.[49]

These are the words of a man who had already come to know he would be dead soon. Saying «I will still be here», Moro presented himself as a political and moral authority who would survive his own death, an authority that would be the reference point for generations to come. But it is not the authority of a martyr who wants to be imitated; on the contrary, it is the authority of someone who opposed a certain kind of hegemonic discourse, of someone who has attempted to subvert a certain kind of representation of the event and tried to offer an alternative kind of representation.

On April 29, *Il Messaggero* exclusively published a letter from Moro, this time addressed to the DC as a whole. Here Moro seems to have already accepted that he will die. The text has the character of a testament:

> […] even with my many faults, I think I have lived with hidden generosity and fragile intentions. I die, if my party decides so, in the fullness of my Christian faith and in the immense love for an exemplary family that I love and hope to watch from heaven. […] But this bloodbath will not be good for Zaccagnini, nor for Andreotti, neither for

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altamente civili (quasi la universalità), dove si scambia non solo per obbiettive ragioni umanitarie, ma per la salvezza della vita umana innocente.»

49 Moro 2008j, 100; it.: «Ripeto: non assolverò e non giustificherò nessuno. Nessuna ragione politica e morale mi potranno spingere a farlo. […] Non creda la D.C. di avere chiuso il suo problema, liquidando Moro. Io ci sarò ancora come un punto irriducibile di contestazione e di alternativa, per impedire che della D.C. si faccia quello che se ne fa oggi. Per questa ragione, per una evidente incompatibilità, chiedo che ai miei funerali né autorità di Stato né uomini di partito.»

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> the DC nor for the Country: each one will bear their own responsibility. I do not want around me, I repeat, the men of power. I want close to me those who really loved me and will continue to love me and pray for me. If all this is decided, God's will will be done. But no one responsible can hide behind the fulfillment of an alleged duty. Things will be clear, will all be clear soon.[50]

Here it is no longer the politician Aldo Moro who speaks, but the man and the Christian Aldo Moro. He expresses his hope of getting to heaven and repeats his last will with regard to his funeral. Power and love are the two opposing metaphysical forces the prisoner seems to see at work in the world: only one of them, he declares, has the right to participate in the rite he hopes will lead him to the other world. In a letter that was not published and was found only as a copy of a manuscript in October 1990, Moro wrote to his wife:

> Dearest, I would like to have the faith that you and Grandma have, to imagine the choirs of angels that will lead me from earth to heaven. But I'm a lot cruder. I have only understood in these recent days what it means to add our own suffering to the suffering of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world. And now, my sweetest bride, I embrace you with all my heart and hold on to you with our beloved sons and daughters, hoping to stay with you forever. A tender kiss, Aldo.[51]

This is the only explicit reference to the Passion of Christ that we can find in the letters by Moro though, in another letter to his wife, Aldo Moro had

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50 Moro 2008k, 143–144; it.: «[…] pur con le mie tante colpe, credo di avere vissuto con generosità nascoste e delicate intenzioni. Muoio, se cosi decide il mio partito, nella pienezza della mia fede cristiana e dell'amore immenso per una famiglia esemplare che io adoro e spero di vigilare dall'alto dei cieli. Ma questo bagno di sangue non andrà bene né per Zaccagnini, né per Andreotti, né per la DC, né per il Paese: ciascuno porterà la sua responsabilità. Io non desidero intorno a me, lo ripeto, gli uomini del potere. Voglio vicino a me coloro che mi hanno amato davvero e continueranno ad amarmi e pregare per me. Se tutto questo è deciso, sia fatta la volontà di Dio. Ma nessun responsabile si nascondi dietro l'adempimento di un presunto dovere. Le cose saranno chiare, saranno chiare presto.»

51 Moro 2008f, 60; it.: «Carissima, vorrei avere la fede che avete tu e la Nonna, per immaginare i cori degli angeli che mi conducano dalla terra al cielo. Ma io sono molto più rozzo. Ho solo capito in questi giorni che vuol dire che bisogna aggiungere la propria sofferenza alla sofferenza di Gesù Cristo per la salvezza del mondo. […] Ed ora dolcissima sposa, ti abbraccio forte con tutto il cuore e stringo con te i nostri figli e i nipoti amatissimi, sperando di restare con voi cosi per sempre. Un tenerissimo bacio, Aldo.»

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already used the term «Calvary».[52] Faced with an awareness of death, Aldo Moro tried to make sense of the events through the prefiguration of the Passion. Thus, even Moro was convinced, at some point, that *it is necessary to add our own suffering to the suffering of Jesus Christ.* Does this imply that in the end Aldo Moro agreed to assume the role of a martyr? Only if we could ask him, could we give a definitive answer to that question. But one thing is certain: if this is really a case of acceptance of martyrdom, it is certainly not martyrdom for the state. In fact, Moro did not write that it is necessary to suffer for the salvation of the Italian State, or of the Italian Republic, but *for the salvation of the world*. If the concept of martyrdom here plays some role then it is a concept that rejects any kind of theological–political instrumentalization.

6.2 Reduction to Bare Life

We have so far seen that Aldo Moro refused to adopt the role of state martyr. The Italian public became aware of that on March 30, when Moro's first letter was published, though he did not know it. As Wagner-Pacifici notes, «many of the protagonists, including the Communists, the Christian Democrats, the established mass media, and the Catholic church hierarchy, would have preferred an eventual self-sacrifice on the part of Aldo Moro. In this version, Moro would have recognized his symbolic destiny and willingly have donned the martyr's mantle.»[53] This is exactly what many social players wrote and hoped for before the publication of the first letter. But from March 30 onwards, Moro's voice from the «people's prison» hindered the martyrological representation and narrative, which until then had been forming and consolidating itself smoothly. As we have seen, Moro had already been discursively excluded from the profane sphere of political life, and his transition to the community of saints was considered only a matter of time. Moro had already been consecrated, had already become *homo sacer*, and as such he could not return to life in the profane sphere of public and political life. But the voice that rose from the «people's prison» contrasted with this kind of representation, showing that Moro was not only alive but still intent on participating in political life. At this point, it became necessary to develop strategies that could undo that voice. Thus be-

52 Moro 2008d, 31.
53 Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 218.

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gan the process of removing the public and political character of Aldo Moro.

On March 30, the newspapers seemed to all agree: the letter to Cossiga was written under conditions of torture, under the effect of drugs, or both. *L'Unità* wrote that the letter «comes from the bottom of a den, from the darkness of a cell where a man with no chance of defense, isolated from any contact that is not that of the kidnappers, in their complete mercy, has been suffering a physical and psychological inhumane siege for days.»[54] The following day, in the editorial of the same newspaper one could read that

> No one had any doubts. The letter by Moro […] was written in a state of moral and physical constraint that removes any authenticity and hence every meaning and value to things that are said [inside]. And that is not the case only for yesterday's correspondence […], it is also true for other documents compiled with the same calligraphy that, unfortunately, we still have to expect from the kidnappers.[55]

The editorial of the *Corriere della Sera* argued similarly, asking rhetorically:

> Who wrote this letter? Did Aldo Moro, president of the Christian Democracy, statesman, the largest mediator and inspiration for Italian politics, cautious strategist, write it? Or did Aldo Moro write it, but was reduced to impotence by cruel imprisonment, isolated, perhaps stunned in his own psychic control by drugs or something else?[56]

Newspapers began to distinguish between Moro the politician and Moro the prisoner, as if they were not the same person. The Moro that wrote this

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54 Gambescia, Paolo, «Una tragica lettera di Moro», *L'Unità*, 30.3.1978, 1; it.: «[…] arriva dal fondo di un covo, dal buio di una cella dove un uomo senza possibilità di difesa, isolato da qualsiasi contatto che non sia dei rapitori, in loro completa balia, subisce ormai da giorni un assedio fisico e psicologico inumano.».

55 *L'Unità*, «Fermezza», 31.3.1978, 1; it.: «Nessuno ha avuto dubbi. La lettera di Moro […] è stata scritta in uno stato di costrizione morale e fisica tale da togliere ogni autenticità e quindi ogni significato e valore alle cose che vi si dicono all'interno. E ciò non vale solo per il messaggio di ieri […], vale anche per altri documenti compilati con la stessa calligrafia che, purtroppo, dobbiamo ancora aspettarci dai rapitori.»

56 *Corriere della Sera*, «Ma la Repubblica non sarà mai loro prigioniera», 30.3.1978, 1; it.: «Chi a scritto questa lettera? L'ha scritta Aldo Moro, presidente della DC, statista, massimo mediatore e ispiratore della politica italiana, cauto stratega? O l'ha scritta ancora Aldo Moro, ma ridotto all'impotenza da una crudele prigionia, isolato, forse stordito da droghe o altro nel suo stesso controllo psichico?»

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letter could not have been the one that they all knew and, above all, he could not be the political figure that in the days before most newspapers had praised as the best or the most important Italian statesman. Moro's letter was even compared to political suicide: «In short, Moro, in exchange for his physical salvation, would subscribe, with an unacceptable distinction between people kidnapped by common criminals and people kidnapped by political criminals, his political suicide. And that is exactly what prevents us from accepting or even believing [what is written in the letters].»[57]

Also, the issue of calligraphy—friends, family, and acquaintances as well as experts had confirmed immediately that it was actually that of Moro—was debated over and over in articles. The most interesting thing for this study (and which seems to come from a grotesque novel) is an article on the front page of the *Corriere*, in which an «expert graphologist» interprets the letter to Cossiga as follows: «In writing the word ‹legality›, Moro flipped the pen up as if the term had been imposed on him. So I deduce that, instead, he intends to sacrifice himself and that he rejects the exchange.»[58] While the front page assumed that Moro was sending encrypted messages and that he was still psychologically unbroken, the third page already reported Moro's annihilation with the headline «Isolation, Drugs, Extended Wake. This Is How Personality Is Annihilated.»[59] The thesis that Moro wrote under torture or under the influence of drugs was also backed up in articles published in *La Repubblica*, *La Stampa*, *Avanti!* and *L'Unità*.[60] *La Repubblica* published an interview with magistrate Mario Sossi titled:

57 *La Repubblica*, «Quelle parole non sono le sue», 30.3.1978, 1; it.: «Moro, insomma, in cambio della sua salvezza fisica, sottoscriverebbe, con una inaccettabile distinzione tra rapiti della criminalità comune e rapiti della criminalità politica, il proprio suicidio politico e di statista. Ed è proprio questo che ci ripugna di accettare o anche solo ritenere verosimile.»

58 Munzi, Ulderico, «Nascosti due messaggi fra le righe delle pagine scritte dal prigioniero», *Corriere della Sera*, 31.3.1978, 1; it.: «Nello scrivere la parola ‹legalità› Moro ha fatto volare la penna verso l'alto come se il termine gli fosse stato imposto. Quindi io deduco che, invece, intende sacrificarsi e che nel suo intimo rifiuta lo scambio.»

59 Chierici, Maurizio, «Isolamento, droga, veglia prolungata. Ecco come si annienta la personalità, *Corriere della Sera*, 31.3.1978, 3.

60 See De Luca, Fausto, «Parole scritte sotto tortura», *La Repubblica*, 30.3.1978, 1; Pace, Giovanni Maria, «Tortura dura e raffinata ma senza l'uso di droga», *La Repubblica*, 31.3.1978, 5; *Avanti!*, «Forse Moro è stato drogato», 31.3.1978, 14; Rizzo, Aldo, «Una linea ferma», *La Stampa*, 31.3.1978, 1; *La Stampa*, «Quali farmaci possono usare le BR su Moro», 31.3.1978, 2; *L'Unità*, «Moro poteva essere sotto l'effetto di un ipnotico», 31.3.1978, 2.

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«In the People's Prison Psychological Violence Causes Death to Be Desired.»[61] The only ones who, in the two days of March 30 and 31, are unwilling to make the assumption that Moro is plagued or delusional is that of the Socialists, which is interesting because it was the only parliamentary party that in the coming days officially argued for negotiations. Interviewed at the party congress in Turin, the Socialist deputy Enrico Manca expressed, like so many others, doubt that Moro's letter was entirely spontaneous, but added: «However, it seems to me that the questions that he poses, the choices he asks for are real. And they have to be evaluated with a lot of political sensibility.»[62]

Except for a few very rare voices, the reaction of the media and of the political parties to the first letter was to represent Moro as plagued by the BR, which is why the arguments for negotiations were not taken seriously. One of these rare voices was that of journalist Carmine Pecorelli, founder and director of the press agency and magazine *Osservatore Politico*, who was killed in Rome a year after Moro's kidnapping. Pecorelli was one of the first to explicitly claim that Moro's kidnapping had been organized by a «lucid superpower» with «the primary goal […] of moving the Communist Party out of the area of power […] since it is the common interest of the two world superpowers to mortify the rise of the PCI, that is, of the leader of Eurocommunism, of Communism aspiring to become democratic and democratically guide an industrial country.»[63] In an article of April 4, 1978, Pecorelli criticized the line of firmness and described it as dictated by those who wanted to «sacrifice» Moro:

> Aldo Moro will be sacrificed on the altar of the reason of State. Of which State? Unable to administer justice, unable to defend its citizens,

61 Saba, Antonio, «Nel carcere del popolo la violenza psicologica fa desiderare la morte», *La Repubblica*, 31.3.1978, 4.

62 Bocca, Giorgio, «Al centro del dibattito c'è quel ‹prigioniero›», *La Repubblica*, 31.3.1978, 2; it.: «Mi pare però che le domande che pone, le scelte che chiede siano reali. E andranno valutate con molta ponderatezza politica.»

63 Pecorelli, Carmine, «Il Paese si può e si deve salvare», *Osservatore Politico*, 2.5.1978, reprinted in: Flamigni 2006, 290-291; it.: «L'agguato di via Fani porta il segno di un lucido superpotere. La cattura di Moro rappresenta una delle più grosse operazioni politiche compiute negli ultimi decenni in un Paese industriale, integrato nel sistema occidentale. L'obiettivo primario è senz'altro quello di allontanare il Partito comunista dall'area del potere nel momento in cui si accinge, all'ultimo balzo, alla diretta partecipazione al governo del Paese. È un fatto che si vuole che ciò non accada. Perché è comune interesse delle due superpotenze mondiali mortificare l'ascesa del Pci, cioè del leader dell'eurocomunismo, del comunismo che aspira a diventare democratico e democraticamente guidare un Paese industriale.»

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> incapable of punishing the dishonest and speculative, unable to offer prospects to the Country, lacking command and moral authority, this State is only standing today by renewing the macabre ritual of human sacrifice. The very ones who today have refused to save Moro's life are the same ones that yesterday denigrated Germany and Israel for refusing to engage in negotiations with Palestinian terrorists; they are the same ones who applauded the German CDU, who were willing to negotiate for [the liberation of] Lorenz. So why not negotiate for [the liberation of] Moro? Who benefits from [the line of] no negotiation?[64]

Pecorelli, who took Moro's first letter seriously because he believed the politician was warning his party and the government that he could reveal information about secret international operations against the Communist threat, thus represented Moro as a scapegoat, chosen to renew the state.

When the second letter became public, the strategy adopted by the established media to depoliticize Moro, went a step further. In an intervention at the Chamber of Deputies, Prime Minster Andreotti said that Moro's letter «was materially written by Aldo Moro but is not morally accountable to him.»[65] The speech was reproduced in full by *Il Popolo* and quoted widely by *L'Unità.* The editorial in *La Repubblica* described Moro as a puppet, pointing out that «it is not through having a puppet that [the BR] can talk to a nation.»[66] In the same newspaper, journalist Sandro Viola wrote that «in the gloomy atmosphere of the people's prison, the statesman, the political leader, no longer exists. […] That impression of mastery —of the self and of the situation—still emerging in the letter to Cossiga a

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64 Pecorelli, Carmine, «Alla riscoperta dello Stato», *Osservatore Politico*, 4.4.1978, reprinted in: Flamigni, 2006, 265; it.: «Aldo Moro sarà sacrificato sull'altare della ragion di Stato. Di quale Stato? Incapace di amministrare la giustizia, incapace di difendere i cittadini, incapace di punire disonesti e speculatori, incapace di offrire prospettive al Paese, privo di autorità di ordine e di morale, questo Stato oggi si tiene in piedi solo rinnovando il macabro rituale del sacrificio umano. Quelli stessi che oggi hanno rifiutato di salvare la vita a Moro, sono gli stessi che ieri inveivano contro la Germania e contro Israele rei di non voler trattare con i terroristi palestinesi; sono gli stessi che hanno plaudito alla DC tedesca disposta a trattare per Lorenz. Perché allora non trattare per Moro? A chi giova non trattare?»

65 Manfalotto, Rosario, «Andreotti alla Camera: ‹Non si può patteggiare con gente che ha le mani grondanti di sangue›», *Corriere della Sera*, 5.3.1978, 2; «La lettera a Cossiga è stata materialmente scritta da Aldo Moro ma non è moralmente a lui ascrivibile.»

66 *La Repubblica*, «quelle parole non sono credibili», 5.4.1978, 1; it.: «Non è attraverso ha un fantoccio che [le Brigate Rosse] possono parlare con una nazione.»

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week ago, has disappeared»; the title of the article did not leave room for interpretations: «In 20 Days They Killed a Leader».[67]

The day that the note from the «Memorial» in which Moro criticized Paolo Emilio Taviani was published, the reaction of the press was practically unanimous. In *La Repubblica* Sandro Viola, in an article titled «A Distorted Voice from the ‹People's Prison›», wrote that «what stands out […] is the fall of Moro, the weakening of his every capacity to maintain the role that the long political career, the many duties of the State had been conferred upon him in those decades.»[68] Along the same lines, *La Stampa* described Moro as «a man who is psychologically destroyed, abandoned, available to compromises dictated by isolation and fear, […] a prostrate person, fallen into a state of psycho-physical dissipation.»[69] Another article in the same newspaper argued that Moro had been «reduced to an object.»[70] The *Corriere della Sera*, in turn, wrote that Moro's words «sound like a denial of the best part of his political personality» and on the second page a headline declared: «Here Is the Text of the Note on Taviani. Friends: An Unrecognizable Moro».[71]

In *Corriere della Sera*, Gianfranco Piazzesi adopted another kind of representation, which could be described as an attempt to «infantilize» the hostage.[72] He quoted a study by the US think tank Rand Corporation and compared Moro's situation with that of a helpless child (after first comparing it with the situation of partisans during the Resistance against Fascism):

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67 Viola, Sandro, «In 20 giorni hanno ucciso un leader», *La Repubblica*, 5.4.1978, 1; it.: «Nella cupa atmosfera del carcere del popolo, lo statista, il leader politico non esistono quasi più. […] Quell'impressione di padronanza – die sé e della situazione – che ancora emergeva nella lettera a Cossiga d'una settimana fa, è scomparsa.»

68 Viola, Sandro, «Una voce stravolta dal carcere», *La Repubblica*, 11.4.1978, 1; it.: «Quel che risalta […] è la caduta dell'uomo Moro, l'indebolimento di ogni capacità di mantenere il ruolo che la lunga carriera politica, le tante cariche dello Stato gli avevano conferito in quei decenni.»

69 Carbone, Fabrizio/Mazzocchi, Silvana, «Doppio ricatto, contro lo Stato e la famiglia», *La Stampa*, 11.4.1978, 1; it.: «[…] un uomo psicologicamente distrutto, abbandonato, disponibile a compromessi dettati dall'isolamento e dalla paura, […] una persona prostrata, caduta in uno stato di sfacelo psico-fisico.»

70 *La Stampa,* «Una cieca violenza», 11.4.1978, 1; it.: «[…] ridotto a oggetto.»

71 Valiani, Leo, «Noi, nelle carceri del fascismo», *Corriere della Sera*, 11.4.1978, 1; it.: «[…] suonano come una la negazione della parte migliore della sua personalità politica»; *Corriere della Sera,* «Ecco il testo dello scritto su Taviani. Gli amici: ‹Un Moro irriconoscibile›», 11.4.1978, 2.

72 See Silj 1978, 171.

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> During the Resistance, many Italians subjected to psychological stress at least equal [to that of Moro], and even to physical torture, were able to cope without fear of their abusers. […] The total physical dependence of the hostage on the kidnappers often brings him to a state of total psychological introjection. In other words, he finds himself in the same situation as that of a baby who needs help and who, given this fact, identifies with his parents. Like a baby, the hostage ends up identifying with his kidnappers.[73]

Alessandro Silj rightly noted that this infantilization of the hostage was the logical counterpart of the bestialization of the BR: «Animals and babies, as is known, don't engage in politics. Rather they are only capable of inspiring horror or pity.»[74] With regard to the first part of the quoted article, it is important to notice that the comparison with Resistance partisans was often used during the 55 days of Moro's captivity: before the publication of the first letter, in positive terms to make Moro look like a sort of modern partisan, and after, in negative terms to basically represent him as a coward. Through the comparison between the letters by Moro and those of a man of the Resistance who was condemned to death, the Catholic Moro was accused «of not having accepted dying, of having failed to perform a ‹beautiful death›, of not being able to drink the Socratic-partisan hemlock, of not having accepted martyrdom.»[75]

A few days after, Piazzesi—who on March 13, a few days before Moro's abduction, still described Moro as «our most authoritative and profound statesman» and the «supreme mediator of all Italian parties»[76]—continued his own campaign of delegitimizing the politician by writing that:

> In no case, however, will he [Moro] still be the Christian Democrat leader of greater authority and prestige, nor the sure point of reference for all other parties, starting with the Italian Communist Party. […]

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73 Piazzesi, Gianfranco, «La forza della dignità», *Corriere della Sera*, 7.4.1978, 1; it.: «Durante la Resistenza molti italiani sottoposti a uno *stress* psicologico almeno pari [a quello di Moro], e anche a torture fisiche, seppero fronteggiare in maniera impavida il loro aguzzini.» The day before, also in *La Repubblica* Moro's writing was described as «infantile, elementary», see Carraciolo, Lucio, «Il giorno più lungo», *La Repubblica*, 6.4.1978, 2.

74 Silj 1978, 162.

75 Gotor 2008b, 191.

76 Piazzesi, Gianfranco, «Aldo Moro: il suo ritratto è nei promessi sposi», *Corriere della Sera*, 13.3.1978, 3; it.: «[…] il nostro più autorevole e profondo statista. […] il supremo mediatore di tutti i partiti italiani.».

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> Saying this, we do not intend to make any judgment on the way the president of the Christian Democracy is enduring the trial to which he has been subjected. We only find, with realism equal to bitterness, that certain wounds inflicted by the kidnappers and the prisoners will never be completely remedied.[77]

Fortebraccio expressed his disappointment with Piazzesi's article in *L'Unità*, defining it as «absolute foolishness and ruthless cruelty» and asserting that the journalist from the *Corriere* wanted to «anticipate […] a sentence that the jailers themselves have not yet pronounced.»[78] But confronted with Moro's letter to Zaccagnini, published on April 22, Fortebraccio also changed his mind and described the prisoner as «a man morally and psychologically destroyed, […] a Moro diametrically opposite to what we have always known.»[79] Even more explicit was Indro Montanelli, who in the April 12 edition of *Il Giornale* wrote that Moro, «as a political man, disappeared on March 16.»[80]

The process of de-politicizing Moro continued after the publication of two letters addressed to Zaccagnini on April 22 and 25. The leader of the Republican Party Giovanni Spadolini, who, in an article titled «I Defend the Image of Moro», argued that

> it was necessary to oppose from the beginning and with firmness the attempt to ‹interpret› in any sense the letters extorted to Moro in the hell of the prison. […] [For the BR] the moral demolition of Moro's character […] is even more important than his physical elimination.[81]

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77 Piazzesi, Gianfranco, «La tregua», *Corriere della Sera*, 14.4.1978, 1; it.: «In nessun caso, però, egli sarà ancora il leader democristiano di maggiore autorità e prestigio, né tantomeno un sicuro punto di riferimento per tutti gli altri partiti, a cominciare dal PCI […] dicendo questo non intendiamo avanzare un giudizio qualsiasi sul modo in cui il presidente della Dc sta superando la prova a cui è stato sottoposto. Ci limitiamo a constatare, con un realismo uguale soltanto all'amarezza, che certe ferite inflitte dai rapitori e dai carcerieri non potranno mai essere del tutto rimarginate.»

78 Fortebraccio, «Ci vada piano», *L'Unità*, 15.4.1978, 1; it.: «[…] una assoluta insensatezza e di una spietata crudeltà»; «[…] anticipare […] una sentenza che i carcerieri stessi non hanno ancora pronunciato.»

79 Fortebraccio, «Quello vero», *L'Unità*, 23.4.1978, 1; it.: «[…] un uomo moralmente e psicologicamente distrutto, […] un Moro diametralmente opposto a quello che abbiamo sempre conosciuto.»

80 Quoted in Silj 1978, 179; it.: «[…] come uomo politico, è scomparso il 16 marzo.»

81 Spadolini, Giovanni, «Difendo l'immagine di Moro», *La Stampa*, 27.04,1978, 1; it.: «Bisognava opporsi fin dall'inizio, e con decisione, al tentativo di «interpretare» in qualunque senso le lettere estorte a Moro nell'inferno del carcere. […]

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The image Spadolini claimed to defend was that of Moro as a political figure, that is, before he was abducted on March 16. According to the Republican politician, it was wrong to even try to understand the Moro of the letters, because he was no longer the same person. As reported by *La Repubblica*, the DC was of the same opinion; in fact, within the party it became normal to distinguish between

> a Moro-Dr. Jeckill, that is, the leader that we all know, and Mr. Hyde, that is, the man who has fallen ‹under the full and uncontrolled domination› of his jailors, a different and opposite human being, a man of revenge and death in contrast to the demiurge capable of broader and bold political openings, in the most difficult of situations.[82]

To explain Moro's dual nature, on the same day, the *Corriere della Sera* interviewed a psychologist who explained that «social deprivation, that is, isolation from one's own kind, can cause a personality split.»[83] On April 25, the day on which Italy celebrates its liberation from Fascism, a document was signed by more or less fifty personalities from within the Catholic world, claiming that the letters were not authentic. *Il Popolo* published this document the following day, indicating that it had been signed by «old friends of Aldo Moro», which affirmed that

1) The Aldo Moro we know, who with his spiritual, political, and juridical vision contributed to the drafting of the Republican Constitution, is not present in the letters addressed to Zaccagnini, which were published as [if they were] his: they constitute an attempt to destroy Moro's physiognomy […].
2) The irreparable guilt for an eventual, absurd murder falls only on the perpetrators of the murder: the BR cannot pretend to blame

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La demolizione morale del personaggio Moro […] è perfino più importante della sua eliminazione fisica.»

82 De Luca, Fausto, «Ma chi scrive quelle lettere?», *La Repubblica*, 26.4.1978, 1–2; it.: «[…] un Moro-dottor Jeckill, insomma il leader da tutti conosciuto, e mister Hyde, cioè l'uomo caduto ‹sotto il pieno e incontrollato dominio› dei suoi carcerieri, umo diverso e opposto, uomo della vendetta e della morte contrapposto al demiurgo capace delle più ampie e audaci aperture politiche, nelle situazioni più difficili.»

83 Medail, Cesare, «Non scrive così per paura», *Corriere della Sera*, 26.4.1978, 1; it.: «[…] è la deprivazione sociale, cioè l'isolamento dai propri simili, che può determinare uno sdoppiamento di personalità.»

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> others for the death sentence, which the Italian State does not recognize as applicable in any case, on others.[84]

In the already quoted letter addressed to the DC, published on March 29, Moro expressed his disappointment at this document, as drawn up by his self-declared «friends»:

> It is true: I am a prisoner and I am not in a happy state of mind. But I have not undergone any coercion nor am I drugged, I write in my own style, I have my usual handwriting. But I am, they say, someone else and I do not deserve to be taken seriously. Therefore, in response to my arguments they do not even answer. […] And I must say that I was deeply saddened (I would not have believed it possible) by the fact that some friends, such as Bishop Zama, the lawyer Veronese, G.B. Scaglia and others, without knowing or imagining my suffering, which is not disconnected from lucidity and freedom of spirit, have doubted the authenticity of what I was upholding, as if I were writing under the duress of the BR. How can one explain this endorsement of the claim of my non-authenticity?[85]

It may be that Moro posed the right question because, in the reactions to the latter letter, the conviction that the letters by Moro were not authentic

84 *Il Popolo*, «Vogliono distruggere la figura di Moro», 26.4.1978, 3; it.: «1) L'Aldo Moro che conosciamo, con la sua visione spirituale, politica e giuridica che ne ha ispirato il contributo alla stesura della stessa Costituzione repubblicana, non è presente nelle lettere dirette a Zaccagnini, pubblicate come sue: esse costituiscono un tentativo di distruggere la fisionomia di Moro […]. 2) L'irrimediabile colpa per un eventuale, assurdo omicidio ricade soltanto sugli esecutori materiali e gli organizzatori dello stesso: le Brigate Rosse non possono illudersi di scaricare su altri il peso della condanna a morte che lo Stato italiano non riconosce applicabile in nessun caso.»

85 Moro 2008l, 140–141; it.: «È vero: io sono prigioniero e non sono in uno stato d'animo lieto. Ma non ho subito nessuna coercizione, non sono drogato, scrivo con il mio stile per brutto che sia, ho la mia solita calligrafia. Ma sono, si dice, un altro e non merito di essere preso sul serio. Allora ai miei argomenti neppure si risponde. […] E devo dire che mi ha profondamente rattristato (non lo avrei creduto possibile), il fatto che alcuni amici, da Mons. Zama, all'avv. Veronese, a G. B. Scaglia ed altri, senza né conoscere né immaginare la mia sofferenza, non disgiunta da lucidità e libertà cli spirito, abbiano dubitato dell'autenticità di quello che andavo sostenendo, come se io scrivessi su dettatura delle Brigate Rosse. Perché questo avallo alla pretesa mia non autenticità?»

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began to waver, though the support for the line of firmness remained practically unanimous. The *Corriere della Sera* argued that

> It is pointless to try to determine if Moro really wants the things he writes. The important thing is that the BR want them, otherwise they would not deliver their letters. […] [I]t is undeniable that the messages signed by Aldo Moro contradict all the values for which he had fought until March 16: How can the jealous guardian of Christian Democracy's pride […] rage at his party to the point of endangering his survival? […] There is, on the one side, a man who desperately and humanly invokes salvation, while out there are men who must seek the salvation of a whole national community.[86]

La Stampa said practically the same thing, arguing that

> Whatever the genesis of the writings may be—free, forced, drugged, negotiated between those who dictate and who write—[…] they are certainly responsive and functional to the strategy and tactics of the BR. If Moro is the author, the BR are the *de facto* editors.[87]

L'Unità, on the other hand, did not change its strategy of representation, continuing to argue that the person who wrote the letters was no longer Aldo Moro:

> We are facing another testimony of depersonalization of a man by his captors. […]. That's why this letter does not come from Moro, but from its perpetrators. […] [It] would be really too offensive to judge a man who is no longer master of himself. […] What is, in fact, the essence of the request formulated in the letter? […] It is the recogni-

86 Scardocchia, Gaetano, «Si intravvede fra le righe un'inquietante domanda», *Corriere della Sera*, 30.4.1978, 2; it.: «È inutile cercare di stabilire se Moro vuole davvero le cose che scrive. L'importante è che le vogliano le BR, altrimenti non recapiterebbero le sue lettere. […] [È] innegabile che i messaggi firmati da Aldo Moro contraddicono tutti i valori per i quali egli si era battuto fino al 16 marzo: […] Come può il geloso tutore dell'orgoglio DC […] infierire sul suo partito fino al punto da metterne a repentaglio la stessa sopravvivenza? […] C'è da una parte un uomo che disperatamente e umanamente invoca la salvezza, mentre fuori ci sono uomini che devono cercare anche la salvezza di tutta una comunità nazionale.»

87 Zucconi, Vittorio, «Le lettere: Strategia BR e resistenze di Moro», *La Stampa*, 30.4.1978, 2; it.: «Quale che sia la genesi degli scritti – libera, coatta, drogata, negoziata fra chi detta e chi scrive – […] essi sono certamente rispondenti e funzionali alla strategia e alla tattica delle brigate rosse. Se Moro ne è l'autore, comunque le BR ne sono gli editori.»

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> tion of their status as combatants, it is the capitulation of the democratic State, the leak, through which all the disruptive drives can come out, until reaching chaos.[88]

In short, after a long process in which Moro was represented as tortured, drugged, freakish, infantile, depersonalized, weak, morally and psychologically dead, with a double personality and much more, on April 30, what had so far been submerged under a tide of rhetoric, finally began to become explicit: regardless of the authenticity or inauthenticity of the letters by Moro, he had to be sacrificed for the salvation of the democratic state, the Italian Republic and national unity. As we have seen, almost all parliamentary parties, with the participation of almost all of the media, had already decided from the beginning that there would be no negotiations to save Moro. From this point of view, Moro's letters were only obstacles to overcome. Despite the use of different rhetorical and representative strategies, they all sought to ban and remove Moro, the Moro of the letters, from the public and political space.

The obstacles were overcome through the distinction between a public Moro, a symbol of both the party and the Italian State, and a private Moro, the person kidnapped by the BR and robbed of the ability to communicate and to act in the public space. Evidently, the BR were primarily responsible for the annihilation of Moro's right to act and to express himself. It would be very naive to think that Moro, inside the «people's prison», could have said and written what he wanted. There are also factual findings which prove that the BR censored him, deciding which letters to publish and which to not, probably also forcing Moro to rewrite and reformulate determinative sentences and passages.[89] We also know that, at least initially, they made him believe that his letters would not become public and thus he could write confidentially to politicians, friends and family. But parliamentary political parties, primarily the DC and the PCI, and most of the established media were equally responsible for having delegitimized and de-

88 *L'Unità*, «Il Loro disegno», 30.4.1978, 1; it.: «Siamo di fronte a un'altra testimonianza di spersonalizzazione di un uomo da parte dei suoi carcerieri. […] Ecco perché questa lettera non viene da Moro, ma dai suoi aguzzini. […] sarebbe veramente troppo offensivo voler far carico di certi giudizi a un uomo non più padrone di sé, e pensare di fare dei suoi scritti un qualsiasi uso politico. […] Qual è, infatti, in sostanza, la richiesta che si formula nella lettera? […] È il riconoscimento ad essi dello status di combattenti, è la resa, quindi, dello Stato democratico, la falla attraverso la quale possano rovesciarsi tutte le spinte disgreganti, fino al caos.»

89 See Gotor 2008b, 185–389.

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politicized first the letters, declaring them as inauthentic, and then the prisoner himself, representing him as a weak man, interested only in his own salvation.

Resuming Giorgio Agamben's reflections on the concept of «bare life», we can define the reduction of Moro to a purely private character, with no longer any right to speak, such as the annihilation of the faculty of having «the *logos* by conserving [the living being's] own voice in [the *polis*]». If the «politicization of bare life» is «the metaphysical task *par excellence*» by which «the humanity of living man is decided», then we can define the rhetorical, narrative and discursive strategy adopted by the media and political parties during the Moro case as the de-politicization of bare life, by which the humanity of the living is denied.[90] Agamen's *homo sacer* theory allows us to shed light on the rhetorical, narrative and discursive process through which Aldo Moro was excluded from the political community. This theory predisposes the conceptual apparatus through which it is possible to understand and to explain the functioning, the performativity and effectiveness of the discursive practices, the representative forms by which the Moro case was framed during and after the 55 days of his imprisonment. Aldo Moro was consecrated to the sacred sphere as early as his abduction, when the government decided not to undertake the path of negotiation. As we have seen, in the first two weeks of his imprisonment, that is, before the first letter was published, Aldo Moro had already been raised to the status of a mythical figure, a paladin of democracy and a collective symbol of national unity. On Easter Sunday, through the employment of the rhetorical tool of prefiguration, his sacrifice for the state was placed in relation to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, thus constructing a meaningful analogy between the salvation of the state and the salvation of the world. Conversely, the BR were represented as a demonic force devoted only to the achievement of chaos and the destruction of society. The BR thus took on the role, in what actually appears to be a Schmittian theological–political narrative, of the Behemoth-beast that the Leviathan-state must stop at all costs, while Aldo Moro became the voluntary martyr willing to die for the salvation of the state. Another thesis by Agamben seems to find confirmation here, namely that «what are secularized, today, are essentially eschatological concepts.»[91]

Moro thus already belonged to the sacred sphere, and the only thing left of him in the profane world was a mere body without a voice, flesh that

90 Agamben 1998, 8.
91 Agamben 2015a, 67.

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simply had to cease to live. But then something unexpected happened: Moro made use of his voice in an attempt to re-politicize himself, to return to the public and political sphere. And it is here that what Alessandro Silj has defined «a massive operation of institutionalized falsification», whose only function was to silence Aldo Moro, becomes operative.[92] It is important to be accurate: Agamben defines *homo sacer* as one who can be killed but not sacrificed. If, at first glance, this definition does not seem to match the Moro case, a closer look reveals the heuristic value of the *homo sacer* theory. In fact, what was the «line of firmness» adopted by the government and the political parties within it, as well as by the larger part of the media, if not a *nihil opstat*, a declaration that nothing hindered the killing of Moro, namely its exclusion from the sphere of the law? Article 2 of the Italian Constitution, where it is written that *La Repubblica riconosce e garantisce i diritti inviolabili dell'uomo*, was declared invalid for Moro, the prisoner of the BR. What is at stake is obviously not the impunity of the BR, the perpetrators of the homicide, but of those who allowed, or at least who did nothing, to prevent the murder. If it is thus correct to say that the state of exception was not actually declared *de jure*—basically with the argument that this would have meant recognizing a war and the BR as a political foe—it was actually applied *de facto*. Although it was only for a single person, the rights guaranteed by the Italian Constitution were suspended.

As Paolo Heywood argues, the political strategy adopted during the Moro case proves that two apparently incompatible paradigms of governance, sovereignty and governmentality, can coexist.[93] Governmentality involves those kinds of practices whose goal is the preservation of law through regularized and rational techniques of government, such as courts, prisons, and social services, whilst sovereignty involves practices, such as torture and capital punishment, which are always implemented for the preservation of the sovereign power itself, not of law. This distinction calls to mind the distinction made by Walter Benjamin between violence which is lawmaking and violence which is law-preserving.[94] The lawmaking violence is that exercised, for example, during revolutions, through which a new form of political order and with it a new legislative system is established. But it is also the violence exercised to counter a revolution in order to preserve the state. This is the violence exercised by the sovereign in the state of exception, which «neither preserves nor simply posits law, but rather conserves it in

92 Silj 1978, 184.
93 See Heywood 2009.
94 See Benjamin 1995.

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suspending it and posits it in exempting itself from it.»[95] Or, in Foucault's terms, it is the illegal violence that is legitimized with reference to the «reason of state»:

> There will be times when *raison d'Était* will no longer make use of […] laws due to a pressing and urgent event and must out of necessity free itself from them. In the name of what? In the name of the State's salvation.[96]

The particularity, the exemplarity of Moro's case lies in the fact that the state allowed others to kill Moro, thus allowing a group to exercise sovereign violence, a group that was convinced instead of exercising revolutionary violence to destroy the old political order and establish a new one. From this point of view, we can say that in this case, sovereignty resided in the hands of a non-state group, permitting those statesmen with the responsibility for the less problematic (as they are legal) techniques of discipline and law-preserving violence to «conceal [their] savage and sovereign violence» by projecting «themselves as mere maintainers of the law, as if the very invocation of legality, however perverted, can make them appear legitimate and respectable.»[97]

But how can one explain the second part of the definition, according to which the *homo sacer* cannot be sacrificed? Did the Italian press not repeatedly claim that Moro had to be sacrificed for the salvation of the Italian State? This is where the enormous potential for the ideological construction of the state martyr figure lies: the state cannot be the agent of the sacrifice, because by it being so, the dark bond between biopolitics and thanatopolitics, «the capacity [of supreme power] to constitute oneself and others as life that may be killed but not sacrificed» would become manifest.[98] Here, the function of martyrological rhetoric is precisely to hide this dark bond, transforming the victim of violence into the voluntary agent of his or her own sacrifice. Since the sovereign power cannot sacrifice «bare life», the construction of the figure of the martyr becomes very useful. This kind of martyrology is none other than a state mythology, whose purpose is the concealment of sovereign power over «bare life». At this point, we can describe the practical and representational strategies adopted by the government, by major parliamentary parties and by the established press as

95 Agamben 1998, 64.
96 Foucault 2009, 262.
97 Hansen 2006, 282.
98 Agamben 1998, 101.

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a strategy of *double concealment*. Both the externalization of sovereign power and the sacralization of Aldo Moro are ways of concealing the power over «bare life». From this point of view, the figure of the martyr appears to be an indispensable tool, or at least a very useful one, for the legitimization of dominant power structures. In fact, as noted by Michel Foucault,

> power is tolerable only on the condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. Would power be accepted if it were entirely cynical? For it, secrecy is not in the nature of an abuse; it is indispensable to its operation.[99]

The *homo sacer* theory allows us to further put into perspective a fundamental paradox within modern law and politics, a paradox that determined the political management and influenced the media representation of the Moro case. This paradox concerns the relation between the two dogmas of the «sanctity of human life» and the «reason of state». As we have seen, on April 19 *Lotta Continua* published an appeal for the release of Moro, which claimed the primacy of the right to life of every single individual. Indeed, practically all social actors publicly acknowledged the presence of this paradigm. In fact, the advocates of the line of firmness «generally introduced their positions by first rhetorically asking: what is more sacred than human life?»[100] One has only to read the editorials of the newspaper editions of April 21 to become aware of the rhetorical and argumentative monotony with which the line of firmness was defended without abandoning the proclamation of the right to life. The *Corriere della Sera* wrote that «every chance of saving a human life should be […] explored rigorously» but at the same time that «one cannot give in to blackmail, this was and remains obvious to everyone.»[101] *La Repubblica* posed the problem as a dilemma in which, however, the choice was clear: «It is about sacrificing a man's life or losing the Republic. Unfortunately, for democrats the choice does not allow any doubt.»[102] Similarly, *L'Unità* asked rhetorically: «Who […] can be so inhumane as to not want with all his or her strength, the life

99 Foucault 1978, 86.

100 Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 186.

101 *Corriere della Sera*, «La Repubblica non si baratta», 21.4.1978, 1: it.: « […] ogni possibilità di salvare una vita umana va […] esplorata fino in fondo […]. Non si può cedere al ricatto, questo era e resta ovvio per tutti.»

102 *La Repubblica*, «Sacrificare un uomo o perdere lo Stato», 21.4.1978, 1; it.: «Si tratta di sacrificare la vita di un uomo o di perdere la Repubblica. Purtroppo, per i democratici la scelta non consente dubbi.»

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of the president of the DC to be saved? […] Let us reflect well, […] while maintaining the most intransigent rejection, what is defended is the very basis of freedom and democracy.»[103] Even more explicit was *La Stampa*, which claimed that «nothing is more sacred than human life» but that «we are not so foolish as to ignore that the very strict defense of the law, which is decisive to its violation in any way, is the only true and valid defense of the life of all citizens.»[104] The motivations given by the various editorialists were essentially all based on the same premise, namely that negotiations would affect national security: the state cannot negotiate with an organization that is not political, but criminal (*Corriere della Sera*); the notion of a «state of war» cannot be accepted because, among other things, it would simply give the state's repressive apparatuses the right to suspend constitutional guarantees against the BR (*La Repubblica*); if we accept negotiating today, we will be forced to make deals in future as well (*L'Unità*); if we surrender this time, we will open the way for new blackmail (*La Stampa*).

In the last days of April, the media also discussed the initiative of the Socialist Party a lot—which from the beginning was presented as «humanitarian»—and the appeals of the Secretary General of the United Nations, the Pope, and the Caritas; practically all agreed that a «humanitarian» attempt to save Moro was acceptable, but «political» negotiations were not.[105] Everyone knew, however, that the BR would not free Moro because of a few so-called «humanitarian appeals», as they explicitly wrote in the seventh communiqué. The distinction between humanitarianism and politics had no other function than to conceal the structure of the sovereign exception, namely that exactly because Moro's life was «sacred», it was excluded from the political sphere and it was no longer the task of the state to defend it.[106] According to Agamben,

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103 *L'Unità*, «Il prezzo vero», 21.4.1978, 1; it.: «Chi […] può essere così disumano da non volere con tutte le sue forze che la vita del presidente della DC venga salvata? […] Riflettiamoci bene, […] mantenendo il più intransigente rifiuto, ciò che si difende sono le basi stesse della libertà e della democrazia.»

104 *La Stampa*, «Perché lo Stato non può piegarsi a degli assassini», 21.4.1978, 1; it.: «[…] nulla è più sacro della vita umana. […] non siamo tanto sprovveduti da ignorare che appunto la difesa rigida della legge, un no deciso di violarla in alcun modo, rappresentano la sola difesa vera e valida della vita di tutti i cittadini.»

105 Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 186.

106 Very significant in this regard is the editorial, titled «God Forgives but Caesar Punishes», written by the editor and co-founder of *La Repubblica* Eugenio Scalfari after the above-mentioned appeal by the Pope. Here Scalfari said more or less explicitly that Moro's life was now in the hands of God because «Caesar

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> the separation between humanitarianism and politics that we are experiencing today is the extreme phase of the separation of the right of man from the rights of the citizen. In the final analysis […] humanitarian organizations […] can only grasp human life in the figure of bare or sacred life, and therefore, despite themselves, maintain a secret solidarity with the very powers they ought to fight.[107]

The fundamental paradox of modern politics, and which is at the core of the distinction between humanitarianism and politics made during the Moro case, is that of a state that guarantees constitutionally-based human rights but at the same time acts as a sovereign nation-state with the declared task of guaranteeing national security. From this point of view, the dogma of the sacredness of life manifests itself in all its ambiguity. What in the contemporary world is declared «sacred» is the «bare life» excluded from the political sphere. As Walter Benjamin already wrote almost a century ago:

> However sacred man is (or that life in him that is identically present in earthly life, death, and afterlife), there is no sacredness in his condition, in his bodily life vulnerable to injury by his fellow men. What, then, distinguishes it essentially from the life of animals and plants? […] Finally, this idea of man's sacredness gives grounds for reflection that what is here pronounced sacred was according to ancient mythical thought the marked bearer of guilt: life itself.[108]

Moro's guilt was to still be alive and, while he had already been declared sacred, to have tried to return to the political sphere, to have said «no, I would prefer not to» to the demand of dying for the state.

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must administer the law and God knows how to command with prayer. Neither Caesar nor God deal with sinners, because the first punishes them, the second forgives them and—if he can—saves them.» See Scalfari, Eugenio, «Dio perdona ma Cesare castiga», *La Repubblica*, 23.4.1978, 1-2; it.: «Cesare deve amministrare con la legge e Dio sa comandare con la preghiera. Né Cesare né Dio trattano con i peccatori, perché il primo li castiga, il secondo li perdona e—se può—li salva.»

107 Agamben 1998, 133.

108 Benjamin 1995, 299.

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PICTURE 5: The finding of Aldo Moro's body in the trunk of a Renault 4 in via Catani, Rome, May 9, 1978.

6.3 Grand Finale: Consolidation of the State Martyr

On May 9, 1978, Aldo Moro was killed by the BR and abandoned in the hood of a car in via Caetani, in the center of Rome (see figure 5). As one of the members of the BR commando said, the choice to leave the corpse in via Caetani, halfway between the headquarters of the PCI and the DC, had a clear symbolic meaning: «the revolutionary front says no to the DC–PCI agreement.»[109] Four days earlier, they had spread their ninth and final communiqué, announcing the execution of the judgment:

> Craxi's so-called ‹humanitarian proposals›, whatever they are, since they exclude the release of the thirteen seized comrades, are only maneuvers for throwing dust into people's eyes, and are part of those power games, party or electoral interests, which do not concern us. The only clear thing is that, on the exchange of prisoners, the position

109 Bocca 1985, 230; it.: «[…] il fronte rivoluzionario dice no all'accordo DC e PCI.»

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> of the PSI is the same, full rejection, of the DC and its government, and that is enough for us. […] Thus, we conclude the battle that began on March 16, by executing the sentence to which Aldo Moro was condemned.[110]

At 12.13 p.m. on May 9, a member of the BR telephoned Franco Tritto, one of Moro's assistants at the University in Rome, indicating the location where the police would find the body. RAI was not the first to arrive in via Caetani; it was a small private television broadcaster, the GBR, the only one filming the scene. The images taken by operator Valerio Leccese, as well as Gianni Giansanti's photo, showing the corpse lying in the Renault 4 trunk from above, are the only existing visual proof of the finding of Moro's body.[111] The symbolic power of the image was immediately perceivable: it displayed Moro as the dead «body of the state», naked life surrounded by policemen and the Carabinieri, symbolically representing state apparatuses, and journalists, representing the media dispositive that shaped and framed the event. Those images «returned» Moro's body to the public space, the body that had been absent for 55 days. The public had only seen Moro in the two Polaroid photos distributed to the media by the BR, but both were used in order to perform an operation of degradation and delegitimization conducted on two fronts: on the one hand, the BR wanted to humiliate the politician as the symbol of the DC's power, while on the other hand, the government, major parties and established media used the photos to deprive Moro of his public image. The images of via Caetani have a different quality, because they no longer show bare life in its *killability*, but simply and brutally the dead body of a person. Artist Marco Baliani describes the impression he had when he saw the images of via Caetani as follows: «They fired machine guns, a burst as he stood there in pajamas and undershirt looking like he'd just woken up, like some old Roman retiree.»[112] Baliani's words highlight the bizarre transformation that the politician's image underwent in the 55 days of his imprisonment: Mo-

110 Brigate Rosse 1978e, 144; it.: «Le cosiddette ‹proposte umanitarie› di Craxi, qualunque esse siano, dal momento che escludono la liberazione dei tredici compagni sequestrati, si qualificano come manovre per gettare fumo negli occhi, e che rientrano nei giochi di potere, negli interessi di partito od elettorali, che non ci riguardano. L'unica cosa chiara è che sullo scambio dei prigionieri la posizione del PSI è la stessa, di ottuso rifiuto, della DC e del suo governo, e questo ci basta. […] Concludiamo quindi la battaglia iniziata il 16 marzo, eseguendo la sentenza a cui Aldo Moro è stato condannato.»

111 See Imperi 2016, 155.

112 Baliani 2011, 24.

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ro was kidnapped as a symbol, as a simulacrum of power, and was killed as a man, like any ordinary sixty-two-year-old man. On March 16, the BR kidnapped a man with a strong public image, a man considered by public opinion and by the BR themselves to be one of the highest representatives not only of the DC but of sovereign power. However, they involuntarily helped the government, established media and government parties to deprive Moro of his symbolic power and to reduce him to bare life. They did not realize that Moro's absence would not put the balance of power in trouble, but that on the contrary it favored Moro's political opponents, and that the same icon of power would be stripped of any authority, abandoned by the party, the government, and left at the mercy of terrorists, who, misjudging the successive evolutions of the struggle, killed a man who had become uncomfortable for the men of power. The BR's choice to leave the body inside a car trunk in the middle of Rome was not a casual one: they wanted to show that they were capable of striking at the «heart of the state». They thought that by killing Moro they could show that power can be defeated. They thought of killing the symbol, but paradoxically, by killing a man, they created a symbol. When they killed him, they unintentionally paved the way for the definitive establishment of Moro as a state martyr, the symbolic body of the nation. As Valeria Verdolini pointedly observes, «the symbol surpassed the body, the body assumed value and dignity only in the moment it moved toward the symbol.»[113]

Shortly before 6 p.m., Moro's family published a statement:

> The family wants the precise will of Aldo Moro to be fully respected by state and party authorities. This means: no public event or ceremony or speech; no national mourning. Nor state funeral or memory medal. The family closes in silence and asks for silence. History will judge the life and death of Aldo Moro.[114]

Moro's last will was not respected. For more than a month Moro had been declared a coward, a weakling, a man reduced to an object, a man unworthy of the heritage of the Resistance, and now that Moro was finally dead, everything that had been written and said seemed to be erased from mem-

113 Verdolini 2006, 68.

114 Quoted in Imperi 2016, 145; it.: «La famiglia desidera che sia pienamente rispettata dalle autorità di stato e di partito la precisa volontà di Aldo Moro. Ciò vuol dire: nessuna manifestazione pubblica o cerimonia o discorso; nessun lutto nazionale. né funerali di stato o medaglia alla memoria. La famiglia si chiude nel silenzio e chiede silenzio. Sulla vita e sulla morte di Aldo Moro giudicherà la storia.»

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ory. In a moment, Moro assumed the state martyr role that the media and most parliamentary political parties had decided he had to assume from the beginning: «The beatification process, which began on March 16, declared invalid the doubts and reservations expressed in the previous few weeks and came, shortly after May 9, to its inevitable conclusion.»[115] The first aspect of this beatification process to point out is the rhetoric of unification. As had already happened on March 17, all the newspapers praised the unity of the people. Here are the main headlines of the newspapers:

> *L'Unità*: The Fierce Crime of the BR Wounds the Civil Consciousness of All Italians [subheadline]. The Assassination of Moro—Italy Has Stopped Suddenly Like on March 16—Millions of Men Mobilized Against Eversion [title].[116]
> *Il Popolo*: Pain and Anger Unify Italy [subheadline]. Aldo Moro Assassinated [title].[117]
> *L'Avanti*: The Italian People [Have to] React Firmly to the Brutal Assassination of Aldo Moro [subheadline]. Democrats All Unified—We Defend the Republic [title].[118]
> *La Stampa*: The BR Have Ended the Crime, Which Started in Via Fani With Barbaric Ferocity [subheadline]. Moro Murdered—Millions of Italians Take to the Streets [title].[119]
> *La Repubblica*: The Corpse Found in a Car a Few Meters From the DC and PCI Headquarters [subheadline]. The Assassination of Moro—The Country Reacts to the BR's Challenge [title].[120]

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115 Silj 1978, 185.

116 *L'Unità*, 10.5.1978, 1; it.: «L'efferato crimine delle BR ferisce la coscienza civile di tutti gli italiani [subheadline]. L'assassinio di Moro – L'Italia si è fermata di colpo come il 16 marzo – Milioni di uomini mobilitati contro l'eversione» [title].»

117 *Il Popolo*, 10.5.1978, 1; it.: «Dolore e sdegno uniscono l'Italia» [subheadline]. Aldo Moro assassinato [title].»

118 *Avanti!*, 10.5.1978, 1; it.: «Il popolo italiano reagisca con fermezza al brutale assassinio di Aldo Moro [subheadline]. Uniti tutti i democratici – Difendiamo la Repubblica [title].»

119 *La Stampa*, 10.5.1978, 1; it.: «Le BR hanno concluso con barbara ferocia il crimine iniziato in via Fani [subheadline]. Moro assassinato. Milioni di italiani scendono in piazza [title].»

120 *La Repubblica*, 10.5.1978, 1; it.: «Il cadavere ritrovato in un'auto a pochi metri dalle sedi della Dc e del Pci [subheadline]. L'assassinio di Moro – Il paese reagisce compatto alla sfida BR [title].»

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> *Corriere della Sera*: Assassinated by the BR and Left in a Car in the Center of Rome [subheadline]. The Killing of Moro [title].[121]

The *Corriere della Sera* was, therefore, the only newspaper to not place an emphasis on the unitarian response of the people in its main headline (see figure 6). This is probably because the newspaper was interested in putting all the focus on Aldo Moro's sacrifice as an appeal for the Italian Republic's rebirth, a sort of second *Risorgimento*. In the editorial entitled «He Died so That the Republic Lives», editor Franco Di Bella argued that:

> For this Italian State, which has not succumbed to the blackmail of the negotiations, Moro sacrificed his life. Now the State, which has defended itself by not giving in, has a commitment to honor: to the martyr, to Italians and to itself. […] The Republic must regain its strength and must restore, without emotional reactions, but with the firmness of the dark hours, the law of a civil society that mourns its own martyrs but also knows, dry-eyed, not to forgive: on behalf of those who for thirty years continued to work and sacrifice for a worthy and civilized country.[122]

121 *Corriere della Sera*, 10.5.1978, 1; it.: «Assassinato dalle Brigate Rosse e lasciato su un'auto nel centro di Roma [subheadline]. Il delitto Moro [title].»

122 Di Bella, Franco, «È morto perché questa Repubblica viva», *Corriere della Sera*, 10.5.1978, 1; it.: «Per questo Stato italiano, che non ha ceduto al ricatto delle trattative, Moro ha sacrificato la sua vita. Ora lo Stato che si è difeso non cedendo, ha un impegno da onorare: verso il martire, verso gli italiani e verso se stesso. […] La Repubblica deve ritrovare la sua forza e deve ripristinare, senza reazioni emotive, ma con la fermezza delle ore buie, la legge di una società civile che piange i suoi martiri ma poi sa anche, a ciglio asciutto, non perdonare: in nome di chi per trent'anni ha continuato a lavorare e a sacrificarsi per un paese degno e civile.»

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CORRIERE DELLA SERA

ASSASSINATO DALLE BRIGATE ROSSE E LASCIATO SU UN'AUTO NEL CENTRO DI ROMA

Il delitto Moro

Il cadavere ritrovato alle 13.30 di ieri nel bagagliaio di una Renault amaranto parcheggiata in via Caetani, a metà strada tra la sede del PCI e quella della DC - Dove e quando è stato ucciso? - Nel corpo, accuratamente rivestito, undici colpi di arma da fuoco - Sabbia nel risvolto dei pantaloni e spighe d'erba sui calzini: un accorgimento per depistare le indagini? - Perché cinque bossoli nella vettura? - Chi ha telefonato, intercettato dalla polizia, al segretario dello statista per annunciare l'omicidio? - Ferma reazione in tutto il Paese con composte e commosse manifestazioni di popolo - Uno sciopero generale decretato dai sindacati - La famiglia non vuole funerali di Stato né medaglie alla memoria

È MORTO PERCHÉ QUESTA REPUBBLICA VIVA

Franco Di Bella

ROMA. — Così è stato trovato, avvolto in una coperta, il corpo di Aldo Moro nell'auto abbandonata in via Caetani. (Telefoto ANSA)

La volontà popolare: «Prendeteli»

L'hanno trucidato con una raffica al cuore
Ora scatta un nuovo piano antiterrorismo

L'epilogo in una strada della vecchia Roma

PICTURE 6: Front page of the Corriere della Sera of May 10, 1978.

Here Moro is explicitly represented as the agent of his own sacrifice and, therefore, as a voluntary martyr. The martyrdom of Moro assumes the connotation of a testimony and an appeal to future generations: you must be willing to die for the defense of the state. Like all of the other newspapers,

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the *Corriere della Sera* also recorded the reactions of the DC politicians, especially of Secretary Benigno Zaccagnini, who said: «I think of what Aldo Moro was for all of us, for Christian Democracy, his faith in freedom, illuminated by his extreme sacrifice.»[123] Sacrifice for the state and sacrifice for the DC coincide with each other. Here the polyvalence and openness to resignification of the concept of sacrifice becomes manifest, inasmuch as it was used to indicate both Moro's sacrifice for the Republic and his sacrifice for the party on the same day and in the same newspaper. Furthermore, the newspaper reported different reactions coming from the Vatican media, for example that of *Radio Vaticana*, which asserted that it could not find the proper words to describe Moro's assassination, but that the wickedness of the criminals conferred an «almost sacrificial value» to the crime.[124] The newspaper even reported the reaction of Swiss Confederation President Willi Ritschard, who said that «President Moro […] has fallen [as a] martyr of democracy»[125] and in an article with the headline «Today's History Has Roots in Far-off Crimes. That Day We Remembered How the Mateotti Martyrdom Began», the rhetorical instrument of prefiguration is once again used to include Moro's death in a sort mythical understanding of history as a universal struggle between good and evil forces, where violence happens in cyclical rhythms.[126] The journalist Walter Tobagi reused the prefiguration the following day in an article called «From Matteotti to Moro: Two Crimes Against Democracy. A Martyr That Failed to Stop the Plots of Fascism».[127]

On page three, *La Stampa* published the reactions of several intellectuals and public personalities, including Cardinal Michele Pellegrino, Luigi Firpo, Arturo Carlo Jemolo, Norberto Bobbio, and Giovanni Conso. The

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123 Padellaro, Antonio, «14,30: la disperazione entra nel palazzo di piazza del Gesù», *Corriere della Sera*, 10.5.1978, 4; it.: «Penso a quello che Aldo Moro è stato per tutti noi, per la democrazia cristiana, la sua fede nella libertà, illuminata dal suo estremo sacrificio.»

124 De Santis, Fabrizio, «Il dolore di Paolo VI dopo l'inutile appello – Il giornale vaticano: Dall'orrore alla speranza», *Corriere della Sera*, 10.5.1978, 5; it.: «un valore quasi sacrificale»

125 Barino, Mario, «Berna – Le BR hanno sbagliato i loro calcoli», *Corriere della Sera*, 10.5.1978, 10; it.: «Il presidente Moro […] è caduto martire della democrazia.»

126 Tobagi, Walter, «Storia di oggi che ha radici in delitti lontani. Quel giorno ricordammo come ebbe inizio il martirio di Matteotti», *Corriere della Sera*, 10.5.1978, 8.

127 Tobagi, Walter, «Da Matteotti a Moro: due delitti contro la democrazia – Un martirio che non riuscì a fermare le trame del fascismo», *Corriere della Sera*, 10.5.1978, 6.

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main headline on the page is «The Sacrifice That No One Will Forget». Cardinal Pellegrino—one of the signatories of the document who denied the authenticity of Moro's letters—wrote an article titled «The Death of the Innocent Mysterious Plan of God», saying that

> Aldo Moro has disappeared before our eyes, but lives on in the grateful memory of the true Italians, of those who seek justice, freedom, and solidarity inspired by love. Aldo Moro taught us by word and example, to live and fight for these ideals, he teaches us, through his sacrifice, to remain steadfast in our faith, to hope against hope, even at this moment, one of the darkest and saddest, not only for his family and for his friends, but for Italy, for the big family of mankind. […] God is our father and does not abandon us. It seemed that on the cross he had abandoned his Son, the innocent who expiated the sins of us all. But the sacrifice of Christ was our salvation. The sacrifice of those who suffer with Christ is, in the mysterious design of God, fruitful for our brothers.[128]

The sacrifice for the salvation of the world is here, once again, compared to the sacrifice for the salvation of the Italian collective. Moro is represented as a martyr that imitates Christ in his Passion, a Passion that must serve as an example for other martyrs to come. The Republican Luigi Firpo also represented Moro's death through recurring biblical images, referring to an Old Testament narrative:

> Moro is ideally connected, with this heartbreaking outcome, to those, like him innocent, who fell at his side. […] We have to proclaim loudly and clearly that their blood was not shed in vain. It cries revenge in the presence of God, awakens the dormant consciences, nourishes the firm

128 Pellegrino, Michele, «La morte dell'innocente disegno misterioso di Dio», *La Stampa*, 10.5.1978, 3: it.: «Aldo Moro è scomparso ai nostri occhi, ma vive nella memoria riconoscente dei veri italiani, di quanti cercano la giustizia, la libertà, la solidarietà animata dall'amore. Aldo Moro, che ci ha insegnato con la parola e con l'esempio, a vivere e a lottare per questo ideali, ci insegna, con il suo sacrificio, a mantenerci saldi nella fede, a sperare contro ogni speranza, anche in questo momento, uno dei più bui e più tristi, non solo per la sua famiglia e per i suoi amici, ma per l'Italia, per la grande famiglia degli uomini. […] Dio è padre e non ci abbandona. Sembrava che sulla croce avesse abbandonato il suo Figlio, l'innocente che espiava per noi tutti colpevoli. Ma il sacrificio di Cristo fu la nostra salvezza. Il sacrificio di chi soffre con Cristo è, nel misterioso disegno di Dio, fecondo di bene per i nostri fratelli.»

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> intentions, and marks both perpetrators and instigators with the mark of Cain.[129]

The rhetoric of blood and revenge, the mark of Cain: the conflict BR versus Italian State takes on a mythical connotation where the blood of innocents legitimizes the violence of the avenging and uncompromising state needed to defeat the wicked. In his article, Arturo Carlo Jemolo also recurred to the biblical archetype of the brother enemy, but in a slightly different way. He wrote that «there is nothing to be ashamed of […]; I do not know of any people in history that were purely heroic […]. In the face of such a perfect organization, I also think that special laws are useless; or they should be such […] that my conscience says: no. It would be a *propter in vitam, vivendim perdere causam*. I prefer to die like Abel than live like Cain.»[130] This passage is quite twisted because it begins by implicitly justifying Moro's letters, saying that not everyone can be brave, then continues by arguing that no special laws (the author means laws that are probably not in accordance with certain constitutional articles) should be made to facilitate the capture of the BR, because this would be inconsistent with democratic consciousness, and finally declares that it is better to die for a cause than to live as a traitor. In a few lines, the author thus succeeds in justifying the line of firmness and in representing Moro as a coward, who did not die with dignity for the cause of the state but who, through a violent death, turns into Abel, the innocent victim.

The philosopher, jurist and historian Norberto Bobbio, who had signed the appeal published in *Lotta Continua*, saw the assassination of the politician as an event in the face of which all citizens had the duty to identify with the Republic:

> Now the dilemma ‹either with the BR or with the State›, which puts on the same level a gang of criminals and millions and millions of Ital-

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129 Firpo, Luigi, «Feroci e senza un futuro», *La Stampa*, 10.5.1978, 3: it.: «Moro si ricongiunge idealmente, con questo esito straziante, a quelli, come lui innocenti, che caddero al suo fianco. […] Si proclami alto e forte che il loro sangue non è versato invano. Esso grida vendetta al cospetto di Dio, risveglia le coscienze assopite, alimenta i fermi propositi, segna gli esecutori e i mandanti con il marchio di Caino.».

130 Jemolo, Arturo Carlo, «Adesso è indispensabile essere un popolo unito», *La Stampa*, 10.5.1978, 3: it.: «Non c'è […] da vergognarsi […]; non conosco nella storia alcun popolo composto tutto di eroi. […] Di fronte a una organizzazione così perfetta penso io pure che leggi speciali siano inutili; o dovrebbero essere tali […] che la mia coscienza dice: no. Sarebbe un propter vitam, vivendi perdere causam; preferisco Morire come Abele che vivere come Caino.».

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> ians who recognize themselves, despite everything, in the State, is no longer tolerable […]. Today, more than ever, we feel the need to be united around our Republic.[131]

The jurist and future minister Giovanni Conso wrote an article in which, by quoting and decontextualizing some passages of one of Moro's monographs on criminal law, tried to prove that Moro, at least the Moro before March 16, had always held the view that «The Interests of the State Must Always Have Priority Over Individual Ones»:

> *To disregard the subjective profiles of law means transforming human life into strange and tough social mechanics of actions and reactions where every light of humanity is gone, dazzled.* The law and the State must ensure that, in the conflict of motives that pushes someone to act, every citizen gives prevalence to the motif corresponding to the objective voice of ethics, having social needs as a measure. All this does not detract from the fact that the interest protected by criminal laws always refers to the State, the sole and true passive subject of the crime. From this perspective, private individual interest remains devoid of direct protection. *There is therefore no subjectification of the criminal form in favor of the individual, but a sublimation of the individual interest in the sphere of public interest*. A sublimation that can lead to sacrifice.[132]

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131 Bobbio, Norberto, «Per lo Stato democratico», *La Stampa*, 10.5.1978, 3: it.: «Ora non è più tollerabile il dilemma né con le Brigate rosse né con lo Stato, che pone sullo stesso piano una banda di criminali e milioni e milioni di italiani che si riconoscono nonostante tutto nello Stato […]. Mai come oggi sentiamo il dovere di stringerci attorno alla nostra Repubblica.»

132 Conso, Giovanni, «Il giurista Aldo Moro: ‹Gli interessi dello Stato devono essere prioritari su quelli individuali›», *La Stampa*, 10.5.1978, 3: it.: «*Prescindere dai profili soggettivi del diritto significa trasformare la vita umana in una strana e dura meccanica sociale di azioni e di reazioni, dove ogni luce di umanità è spenta, abbagliata.* Diritto e Stato debbono far si che, nel conflitto dei motivi che spingono ad agire, ogni cittadino dia prevalenza al motivo corrispondente alla voce oggettiva della eticità avendo come metro le esigenze sociali. Tutto ciò non toglie che l'interesse tutelato dalle leggi penali faccia sempre capo allo Stato, unico e vero soggetto passivo del reato. In questa prospettiva l'interesse privato individuale resta privo di una tutela diretta. *Non esiste, quindi, una soggettivazione della forma penale a favore del singolo, ma una sublimazione dell'interesse individuale nella sfera degli interessi pubblici.* Una sublimazione che può portare fino al sacrificio.» [The passages in italics are quotations from Moro's book *L'antigiuridicità penale* (Palermo: Priulla, 1947)].

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Conso thus distorted Moro's juridical studies to construct the jurist and politician as a voluntary martyr. Moro would never have said that the «objective voice of ethics», which for him was natural law understood from a Christian point of view, is equal to the positive law of the state. The second quotation is completely distorted, since Conso insinuated that Moro considered the interests of the state to be equivalent to public interest, which is simply not true. In fact, Moro had always had a pluralistic view of civil society and was convinced that «man is not only a singularity, not only an individual, but he or she is society in its various forms, a society that is not fulfilled by the state.»[133] He was firmly convinced that «the problem of law's sociality has to be resolved in a positive sense, and the rediscovered legal ethical essence of every ordinance, including that of the state, poses […] delicate problems regarding the relationship between the various ordinances, which all implement, for the part that concerns them, all human ends in the light of one supreme ethical law.»[134] Aldo Moro, in other words, supported the primacy of the *dignity of the person* as a social being, and placed emphasis on the irreducibility of the person to the political body.[135] So Conso, by placing social interests and the interests of the state on the same level, not only distorted and overwhelmed Moro's juridical–ethical thought, but also strategically avoided answering the simple question: how exactly would the exchange of prisoners endanger the social sphere? What he could not or did not want to say was that the power interests of parties, primarily of the DC, were in danger.

Meanwhile, Eugenio Scalfari replied to Socialist Giuseppe Saragat, who the previous day had said that «beside [Moro's] corpse there is the corpse of the First Republic, which has not been able to defend the life of the most generous political man in the country». The director of *La Repubblica* criticized this formulation by writing that the words of Saragat would «become

133 Moro said this during the session of the Commission for the Constitution (*Commissione per la Costituzione*) of March 24, 1947, which was in charge of elaborating and proposing the draft of the Constitution of the Italian Republic; quoted in Bobbio 1980, 25; it.: «L'uomo […] non è soltanto singolo, non è soltanto individuo, ma è società nelle sue varie forme, società che non si esaurisce nello stato.»

134 Moro 2006, 149; it.: «Il problema della socialità del diritto ha da essere risoluto in senso positivo e la ritrovata essenza etico giuridica di ogni ordinamento ivi compreso quello statuale, mentre fa vedere in più concreta luce la società umana, pone […] delicati problemi di rapporto fra i diversi ordinamenti, che attuano tutti, ciascuno per la parte che ad esso competa, tutti i fini umani nella luce di una sola suprema legge etica.»

135 See Bobbio 1980, 7–26.

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reality only if we all fail to face the work of re-establishing the first [Republic], the one that was born of anti-fascism, resistance and the union of democratic forces.»[136] Here Moro's body becomes a metaphor of the political body, which according to Saragat died with Moro, but in Scafari's text it assumes the meaning of a starting point for a new beginning: the death of the individual, the resurrection of the political body. The newspaper also published the message of President of the Republic Giovanni Leone, who again explained to the public who the BR really were: «the beasts […] did not even hear the cry that the whole of humanity called out, asking for the liberation of this man.»[137] Like other newspapers, *La Repubblica* published some articles dedicated to the biography and personality of the assassinated politician. Reading the article by Corrado Augias, one almost has the impression it is a text of Christian hagiography:

> The thinness exhausted physically, the difficulties of an almost indecipherable syntax, and the imprint on the face of mysterious suffering are the external data that […] had made of him an almost oracular stature. […] His physiognomy, which in the past had characteristics of southern and small-bourgeois bonariety, was marked by age, with almost hieratic traits. He walked slowly, reclining his head slightly, talking without raising his voice, almost reluctantly.[138]

L'Unità, besides focusing on the united reaction of «the people», emphasized the bestiality and inhumanity of the BR, which, «by using coercive

136 Scalfari, Eugenio, «Contro il terrore le leggi della Repubblica», *La Repubblica*, 10.5.1978, 1-2; it.: «‹Accanto al suo cadavere c'è anche il cadavere della prima Repubblica che non ha saputo difendere la vita del più generoso uomo politico del paese.› […] Quello che Saragat teme e che taluno forse si augura, che cioè il 9 maggio le BR ci abbiano consegnato il cadavere della prima Repubblica, può diventare realtà solo se tutti insieme non affronteremo l'opera di rifondare la prima, quella nata dall'antifascismo, dalla Resistenza e dall'unione delle forze democratiche.»

137 *La Repubblica*, «Messaggio di Leone al paese», 10.5.1978, 2; it.: «Le belve […] non hanno ascoltato neppure il grido che l'umanità intera ha lanciato perché quest'uomo fosse liberato.»

138 Augias, Corrado, «Quell'apparente paradosso della sua azione politica», *La Repubblica*, 10.5.1978, 11-12; it.: «La magrezza estenuata del fisico, le difficoltà di una sintassi quasi indecifrabile, l'impronta sul volto di una sofferenza misteriosa, cono dati esteriori che […] avevano fatto raggiungere alla sua figura una statura quasi oracolare. […] La sua fisionomia, che ebbe in anni lontani caratteristiche di bonarietà meridionale e piccolo-borghese, s'era andata segnano, con l'età, di tratti quasi ieratici. Camminava con lentezza, il capo leggermente reclino, parlava senza mai alzare la voce, quasi con riluttanza.»

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means that we are uninformed about, but which we can imagine, have martyred a man, devastated his mind, tried to use him cynically against his own ideas, against his dearest friends and the party.»[139] The newspaper of the DC was instead completely focused on praising the political and human figure of Aldo Moro, who

> is not dead and cannot die, because he has paid the highest price for his ideal of a democracy that is tolerant and open to novelty. […] Aldo Moro has paid with his life […] a huge tribute of pain and blood to a cause in which, today more than ever, all Italian people can and must recognize themselves. That is why we are certain that all Italian people will act […] to eradicate the mortal cancer of terrorism from its body.[140]

Even more explicit was Alfredo Vinciguerra, who described Moro as the «master and martyr of liberty», who «is alive in the people's conscience.»[141] Alongside Vinciguerra's article, was an article headlined «So the Pope Has Lived the ‹Passion› of Moro», which described the reactions of the Vatican.[142] On May 11 *Il Popolo*, like *La Stampa* had already done the previous day, published the reactions of intellectuals and public figures under the main headline «Lections of Martyrdom». The most explicit martyrological representation was probably the one given by historian Gabriele De Rosa, who wrote that the BR «have not returned to the Country the dead body of Aldo Moro, but the living body of a martyr, the greatest martyr of the

139 Reichlin, Alfredo, «Perché l'hanno ucciso», L'Unità, 10.5.1978, 1; it.: «Usando mezzi coercitivi che non conosciamo, ma che possiamo bene immaginare, hanno martoriato un uomo, ne hanno devastato la mente, hanno cercato di usarlo cinicamente contro le sue stesse idee, contro i suoi amici più cari e il partito.»

140 *Il Popolo*, «Il prezzo più alto», 10.5.1978, 1; it.: « […] non è morto e non può morire, proprio perché egli ha pagato il prezzo più alto a questo suo ideale di una democrazia insieme tollerante ed aperta fiduciosamente alle novità. […] Aldo Moro ha pagato con la sua vita […] un tributo enorme di dolore e di sangue ad una causa nella quale, mai come oggi tutto il popolo italiano può e deve riconoscersi. Per questo siamo certi che tutto il popolo italiano saprà reagire […] per estirpare dal proprio corpo il cancro mortale del terrorismo.»

141 Vinciguerra, Alfredo, «Un paese folgorato», *Il Popolo*, 10.5.1978, 3; it.: «Maestro e martire della libertà […] è vivo nella coscienza comune.»

142 Narducci, Mario, «Così il papa ha vissuto la passione di Moro», *Il Popolo*, 10.5.1978, 3.

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modern history of the Italian and European democracy.»[143] Here Aldo Moro assumed not only the role of a martyr of the Italian State, but of all the European states or, more precisely, of the European community itself. So wrote Sandro Caputo in an article headlined «The First Statesman Martyr of the Free European Community».[144]

We find this kind of representation in a speech given on the same day in Strasbourg by the President of the European Parliament, the Christian Democrat Emilio Colombo:

> Dear colleagues, we now want to commemorate Aldo Moro, who was barbarously sacrificed. […] The upper hand has retained an ice-cold, calculating, incomprehensible brutality, which has turned his captivity into sacrifice and martyrdom. […] Moro was sacrificed for the very ideals for which he fought as a lecturer, as a politician, and as a statesman during his long, laborious, often controversial, but certainly fruitful years. […] The Italian Constitution bears, especially in the section about the fundamental rights of man and of the citizen in a democratic society, the stamp of that Christian personalism, which influenced his conception of man, of society and of the state.[145]

Here, the victim is described as a defender of fundamental rights. Death itself takes on the meaning of a real witness to the moral truth of those rights. This death is the «price» that Moro (and with him the whole nation) «pays» for his commitment to fundamental rights. Moro is to some extent simultaneously a Christian martyr and a state martyr, inasmuch as the basic values of Christianity and those at the heart of the Italian Constitution are considered similar, if not identical. Moreover, there is another very significant aspect to highlight: in Colombo's speech, it is impossible to identify exactly who the intended agent of the sacrificial act is. There is a passage that, perhaps more than others, clarifies this lack of clarity. Colombo said that «incomprehensible brutality […] has turned the captivity into sacrifice and martyrdom.» This formulation clearly has a strategic function, since it allows the speaker to make use of the rhetoric of martyrdom and

143 De Rosa, Gabriele, «Il suo nome è impresso a caratteri indelebili nella coscienza civile di tutti i popoli amanti della libertà»», *Il Popolo*, 11.5.1978, 5; it.: «Le Brigate rosse non hanno restituito al Paese il corpo morto di Aldo Moro, ma il corpo vivo di un martire, del più grande martire della storia moderna della democrazia Italiana e europea.»

144 Caputo, Sandro, «Il primo statista martire della libera Comunità europea», *Il Popolo*, 10.5.1978, 7.

145 Colombo 1978, 5–6.

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sacrifice without explicitly naming an agent. The BR are obviously the only agents of such brutality; however, in Colombo's speech they are not really addressed as the sacrificers of Moro. It is brutality, violence itself, which here qualifies the event as martyrdom. Detached from the intentionality of the subjects, the event of violence itself acquires a metaphysical connotation. It becomes a metaphysical force that acts in history, conferring a transcendental meaning to what has happened. An almost Manichean conception of history seems to be operative here, according to which a cosmic force—evil—operates in the world and determines the fate of a whole nation.

On May 11 two topics dominated media headlines: the commemoration in parliament and the private funeral in Torrita Tiberina. The newspapers described how the family buried Moro «silently» and «secretly» and reported that representatives of the DC and of the Church had unsuccessfully tried to persuade the family to allow a public funeral.[146] Despite the family's statement, a public ceremony was held on May 13 in the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran in the absence of Moro's body. Zaccagnini, according to *La Repubblica*, justified the decision by saying that «the Moro family has to be understood. Moro, however, was one of the country's leaders, his public character belongs to the DC and the nation.»[147] Similarly, the Communists' argument was that the family had to respect the needs of the collective and popular sentiment, because Moro belonged to Italy.[148] As Wagner-Pacifici observes, «the representatives of the newly installed government, the major political parties, the established mass media, and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church enacted and attended public ceremonies of reconciliation. These ceremonies were to symbolize Italy's reunification, made possible by Moro's sacrifice.»[149] All of the most important political personalities, delegates of a hundred countries, and the Pope participated in the funeral. Compared with what the newspapers wrote in the days leading up to it, the Pope's prayer at the end of the rite was not full of martyro-

146 Pansa, Gianpaolo, «Moro sepolto in silenzio», *La Repubblica*, 11.5.1978, 4; *L'Unità*, «La famiglia l'ha sepolto in silenzio nel paesino dove amava rifugiarsi», 11.5.1978, 2; Fedi, Giuseppe, «D'improvviso la famiglia lo ha seppellito in segreto», *La Stampa*, 11.5.1978, 1.

147 Pansa, Gianpaolo, «Moro sepolto in silenzio», *La Repubblica*, 11.5.1978, 4; it.: «La famiglia Moro va compresa. Moro, tuttavia, è stato uno dei leader del paese, il suo personaggio pubblico appartiene alla DC e alla nazione.»

148 See Katz 1980, 147.

149 Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 208.

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logical rhetoric but above all concerned the endurance of pain caused by death and the hope of eternal life:

> Lord, listen to us! […] You have not heard our supplication for the safety of Aldo Moro, for this good, gentle, wise, innocent man and friend; but You, Lord, did not abandon his immortal spirit, marked by faith in Christ, which is resurrection and life. For him, for him, Lord, listen to us.[150]

For *La Stampa*, that prayer had not only a religious but, above all a political significance, inasmuch as

> for the men of the Italian government, rigid assertors of a democratic law that is the only defense for all citizens (even when the price is the life of a friend, brother, master), the comfort of the papal magisterium is extremely important, no less than the fraternal presence of the delegations of one hundred nations.[151]

Journalist Igor Man described the crowd and the flags outside of the Archbasilica in order to highlight, again, the people's and the parties' unity:

> Outside the basilica, in the square […] white, red, and green flags hoisted by young Republicans flutter in the wind. There are fifty thousand laymen and believers, mute and moved, standing or kneeling. There are some who are weeping but even some who are cursing the ‹executioners and assassins› […]. Fifty thousand people: policemen, Carabinieri, soldiers, villagers, workers and the unemployed, people of ancient wards, women and children, young and old people, all together gathered to reflect, to pray, to curse.[152]

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150 *La Stampa*, «Il discorso del Papa», 14.5.1978, 1; it.: «Signore, Ascoltaci! […] Tu non hai esaudito la nostra supplica per la incolumità di Aldo Moro, di questo uomo buono, mite, saggio, innocente ed amico; ma Tu, o signore, non hai abbandonato il suo spirito immortale, segnato dalla fede nel Cristo, che è la risurrezione e la vita. Per lui, per lui, Signore, ascoltaci.»

151 *La Stampa*, «Solidarietà umana e politica», 14.5.1978, 1; it.: «Per gli uomini del governo italiano, rigidi assertori di una legge democratica che è la sola difesa per tutti i cittadini (anche quando il prezzo sia la vita di un amico, fratello, maestro), il conforto del magistero papale è di altissima importanza, non meno della presenza fraterna delle delegazioni di cento nazioni.»

152 Man, Igor, «Paolo VI e i delegati di cento paesi al solenne rito funebre in Laterano, *La Stampa*, 14.5.1978, 1; it.: «Fuori dalla basilica, nella piazza […] garriscono il vento bandiere bianche bandiere rosse, e quelle verdi issate dai giovani repubblicani. Laici e credenti sono in cinquantamila, muti e commossi, che in piedi, chi in ginocchio. C'è chi piange man anche chi impreca contro i ‹boia assassini›

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In their commentary on the funeral, the editorialist of *Il Popolo* wanted to emphasize «which» Moro was commemorated on May 13: «In a recent speech, one of the last he made, Aldo Moro underlined the ‹extreme passion› with which he has lived out his political commitment, which is the DC's commitment. […] It is to this Moro that yesterday we said goodbye.»[153] People must therefore forget the Moro of the letters: only the man who with «extreme passion» devoted himself to politics is worthy of being remembered. In the *Corriere della Sera*, journalist Fabrizio de Santis argued that the ceremony in the Archbasilica «is not the funeral of Aldo Moro, because the funeral was celebrated in silence last Wednesday […], but the ceremonial tribute to the memory of a statesman who remained the victim of a national tragedy, the witness of faith overwhelmed by barbarism.»[154] From outside the Archbasilica, another journalist reported that «when the Pope defines Moro as a ‹good, wise, gentle› man, elderly ladies shout: ‹Holy, Holy!› Then they receive the blessing.»[155] The popular worshiping of Moro as a secular *and* religious martyr had definitely begun.

The state funeral for Aldo Moro seems to have the analogous function of the funeral *per imaginem* as described by Agamben, namely the rite in which a wax effigy or «colossus» takes the place of the missing corpse of the sovereign. Addressing the rite of the image in the Roman imperial apotheosis, Agamben argues that

> the death of the emperor (despite the presence of the corpse, whose remains are ritually burned) frees a supplement of sacred life, as in the case of the man who survived consecration, must be neutralized by means of a colossus. Thus, it is as if the emperor had in himself not

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[…]. Cinquantamila persone: poliziotti, carabinieri, soldati, borgatari, operai e disoccupati, popolino dei rioni antichi, donne e bambini, giovani e vecchi, tutti insieme raccolti a riflettere, a pregare, anche a maledire.»

153 *Il Popolo*, «L'ultimo addio per un ‹giusto›», 14.5.1978, 1; it.: «In un recente discorso, uno degli ultimi discorsi da lui pronunciati, Aldo Moro sottolineava l'‹estrema passione› con cui egli ha vissuto in ogni momento il suo impegno politico, che è l'impegno della DC. […] È a questo Moro che ieri abbiamo detto addio.»

154 De Santis, Fabrizio, «Attorno al Papa si è trovato unito tutto il mondo politico italiano», *Corriere della Sera*, 14.5.1978, 2; it.: «Non è il funerale di Aldo Moro, perché il funerale fu celebrato in silenzio mercoledì scorso […], ma il doveroso omaggio funebre alla memoria di un uomo di stato rimasto vittima di una tragedia nazionale, di un testimone della fede travolto dalla barbarie.»

155 *Corriere della Sera*, «Bandiere bianche, rosse, verdi», 14.5.1978, 1; it.: «Quando il pontefice definisce Moro come un uomo ‹buono, saggio, giusto›, le vecchiette gridano: ‹Santo! Santo!› Poi ricevono la benedizione.»

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> two bodies but rather two lives inside one single body: a natural and a sacred life. The latter, regardless of the regular funeral rite, survives the former and can only ascend to the heavens and be deified after the *funus imaginarium*. […] We find ourselves confronted with a bare life that has been separated from its context and that, so to speak surviving in death, is for this very reason incompatible with the human world. […] For the emperor, the double funeral makes it possible to fasten onto the sacred life, which must be gathered and divinized in the apotheosis. […] For the sovereign, death reveals the excess that seems to be as such inherent in supreme power, as if supreme power were, in the last analysis, nothing other than *the capacity to constitute oneself and others as life that may be killed but not sacrificed*.[156]

Despite Moro's body not being replaced by a colossus, the funeral in the absence of his mortal remains also had the function of neutralizing a supplement of sacred life. In fact, since Moro had previously been reduced to bare life by annihilating his public image, that is, his image as a sovereign statesman, it was necessary to reconsecrate him as the sovereign-martyr who had sacrificed his life for the salvation of the nation-state. Precisely because Moro was reduced to a bare life that can be killed but not sacrificed, it became necessary to perform a funeral that was a performance of consecration.[157] Only after this performance could Moro definitely be worshipped as a sovereign-martyr. The BR only killed Aldo Moro; the Italian State had to consecrate him in order to let him ascend to the heaven of state mythology. The representatives of the constituted power could not afford to allow Moro, after all that he had written, to become the paladin of criticism of the function of power. From the naked life to which he was reduced, the natural life that was buried two days earlier in Torrita Tiberina, Moro had to reassume the role of the sovereign. The media campaign during his imprisonment had progressively separated Moro from his context, his public life form, thus transforming him into a *homo sacer*, that is, this strange life that lives outside both the sacral and profane spheres. The double funeral of Moro—public and private—seems to fulfill the need to «fasten onto the sacred life, which must be gathered and divinized». The state ritual turned Moro the *homo sacer*, the liminal figure of the political–juridical system, into Moro the sovereign, the nation's political body. The public funeral basically had the function of hiding the symmetry between the

156 Agamben 1998, 100–101.
157 See Heywood 2009.

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body of the *homo sacer* and the body of the sovereign, which, as Agamben argues, is at the very heart of modern political order: every life is dispensable, also and above all the life of someone who, for a certain amount of time, represented sovereign power.

Major political parties, representatives of the government and most parts of the established media thus tried to take possession of Aldo Moro and to establish his memorialization as the sovereign-martyr who sacrificed his life for the state's and society's salvation. However, not everyone accepted the hegemonic and doxological representation of the funeral. Despite the main headline on the first page of *La Repubblica*—«Moro's Funeral Closes the Most Dramatic Chapter of the Republic»—expressing the will to break with the past and look to the future, Scalfari's editorial gave a very different and less optimistic interpretation of the funeral, arguing that:

> The country, in that immense and naked basilica, was not there. The people, with their passion and spontaneity, were absent, just as absent were the widow and the children of the deceased. The protagonist of that funeral was only the Institution, through its ancient and recent representatives, Catholics and secularists, Christian Democrats and Communists, who arrived together at this fatal destination. […] It is difficult to understand what has gone on in the minds of those presidents, of those ministers, of those chamberlains of Catholic Power […]. One thing is certain: between their past and their future there is a dead man, one of them, their guide. That dead man will weigh on everyone and it will not be easy to get rid of him.[158]

This article anticipated a sense of aversion to the ritual and discursive practices used to construct a state martyr figure, which would continue to persist and partly spread over the years to come. Scalfari's article represented Moro's death more as a sacrilege than a sacrifice, the funeral more as a profanation than a sacralization of the memory of the politician. In this ar-

158 Scalfari, Eugenio, «Lo sgomento dopo 30 anni di potere», *La Repubblica*, 14.5.1978, 1-2; it.: «Il paese, in quell'immensa e nuda basilica, non c'era. Il Popolo, con le sue passioni e la sua spontaneità, era assente, così come assenti erano la vedova e i figli dello scomparso. Protagonista di quella messa funebre era soltanto l'Istituzione, attraverso i suoi rappresentanti antichi e recenti, cattolici e laici, democristiani e comunisti, arrivati insieme a questo fatale appuntamento. […] È difficile capire che cosa si è passato nell'animo di quei presidenti, di quei ministri, di quei ciambellani del Potere cattolico […]. Una cosa è certa: tra il loro passato e il loro futuro c'è un morto, uno di loro, la loro guida. Quel morto pesa su tutti e non sarà facile liberarsene.»

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ticle, the impression of an unbridgeable distance between Moro's figure and the man of power begins to emerge. The Moro of the letters acts like a ghost that profanes the mechanism of the glorification of power, a voice that from the hereafter will continue to say: I do not belong to you.

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