

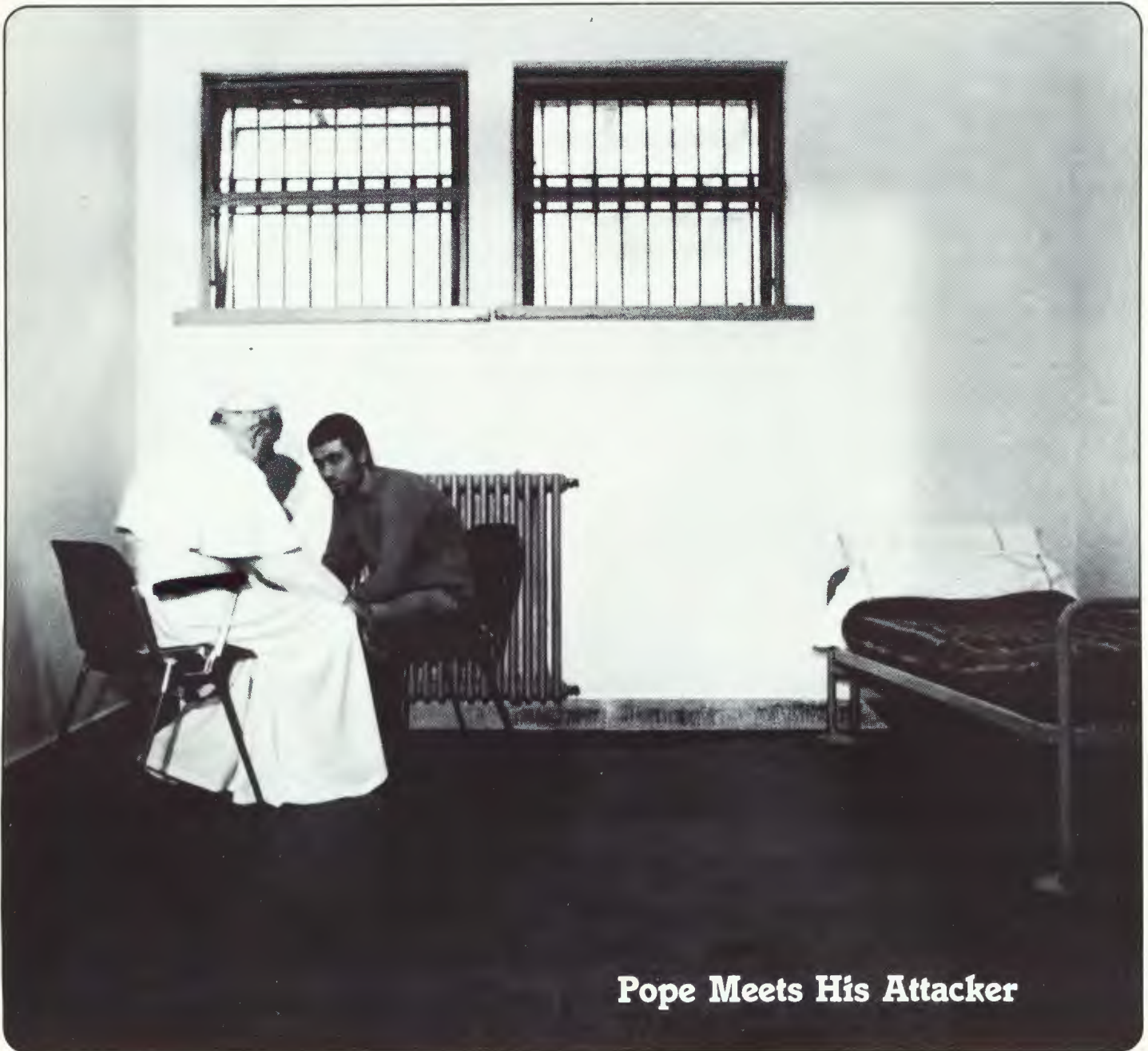
Covert Action

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Number 23

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Disconnecting the "Bulgarian Connection"



Pope Meets His Attacker

Editorial

For the first time *CAIB* devotes an entire edition of the magazine to one issue. "The Bulgarian Connection Revisited" is the compelling analysis of a massive western disinformation campaign by rightwing government and intelligence officials and their propagandists, in this country and in Italy. It is a campaign which attempts the transsubstantiation of the Turkish fascist who shot Pope Paul II into an agent of Bulgaria, and by extension the Soviet Union. The truth being inconvenient for these corrupt ideologues, they began, with the would-be assassin imprisoned and under their control, to fabricate a case against Bulgaria. For the past three years they have stood the facts on their head, appealing to religious emotions by manipulating the world's anger about the act against the Soviet Union, easily convincing the supine western media that the incident was not what it clearly appeared to be, but the very opposite. More recently, however, this fiction has begun to crumble, and all but the ideologically fossilized realize they have been duped.

The ups and downs of the "Bulgarian Connection" present a case study in disinformation under the Reagan administration as the authors of this article unravel every strand of the fabric of lies woven by the likes of Claire Sterling, Michael Ledeen, and Paul Henze. These hacks we accuse of deliberate lies, misstatements, and distortions, designed not to elicit the truth but to pervert it. That they have become the "experts," writing "authoritative" books on the subject, parading their wares before congressional committees, fabricating front-page byline stories in establishment papers like the *New York Times*, and frequently starring in late-night talk shows, bespeaks the sad state of the media in the West today. We believe the information presented here will help to expose the Bulgarian Connection boosters for what they are—paranoid, dishonest demagogues, steeped in intelligence connections, pretending to be impartial journalists and commentators.

We hope in addition this article will serve to illuminate public opinion about the Italian judiciary and police—the sole cus-

tomdians of the sly and conniving Mehmet Ali Agca. For they too have perverted the truth; engaged as they have been for nearly four years in suppressing evidence which confirms the fascist origins of the assassination attempt and fabricating the tissue of lies which passes for the Bulgarian Connection. Judge Ilario Martella, the presiding magistrate, is shown to be as partial as the rest of the disinformationists, and we accuse him of witting participation in this shabby conspiracy to defraud the world.

By devoting this issue to a single subject—a case which is scheduled to come to trial this spring—we do not mean to ignore the dangerous situation in Central America. The Reagan administration is hell bent on violating every standard of international law and decency in its frustrated desire to make the government of Nicaragua say "uncle," and in its contemptuous refusals to discuss better relations with Cuba and other socialist countries, or to abide by the rulings of the World Court.

In the next issue of *CAIB* we will return to these concerns; in addition we will be publishing a series of articles on infiltration of the left by government provocateurs, and on torture as a growing means of bolstering U.S.-supported dictatorships, both tactics of the CIA and their surrogates which are on the increase around the world in startling proportions. ●

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Darkness in Rome:

The "Bulgarian Connection" Revisited

By Frank Brodhead, Howard Friel, and Edward S. Herman*

Part I: Background and Evolution of the Case

1.1 Introduction

On May 13, 1981 a young Turkish gunman, Mehmet Ali Agca, fired shots at Pope John Paul II as the Pope's vehicle circled slowly through the crowd in St. Peter's Square. Immediately arrested, Agca's movements prior to the shooting were soon reconstructed by the Italian police, who sought to determine his motives and accomplices. Yet when Agca was brought to trial in July 1981, little of this information was produced in court; his aims were still unclear and no co-conspirators were named.**

Agca's crime was committed in the first months of the Reagan administration. From the outset, administration officials and supporters sought to link the assassination attempt to the Soviet Union and its allies, in accordance with the principles of Secretary of State Alexander Haig's war on "terrorism." This effort did not bear fruit, however, until the publication of an article by Claire Sterling in the September 1982 issue of the *Reader's Digest*. Sterling maintained that the attempted assassination, previously thought to have been the work of a lone, rightwing gunman, was in fact instigated by the Bulgarian secret services, and behind them the KGB. The allegation of a "Bulgarian Connection" received apparent confirmation in November 1982, when Agca declared that several Bulgarian officials living in Rome had assisted him in his crime, and that the plan had been originally laid while he was passing through Bulgaria in the summer of 1980.

With the heightening of Cold War tensions, the allegation of

a Bulgarian Connection in the attempted assassination of the Pope found a welcome and uncritical reception in the western media. While no independent evidence linking Agca to the Bulgarians, or the Bulgarians to the crime, has ever been produced, leaks of Agca's evolving claims kept the Connection continuously before the public. The Bulgarian official, Sergei Antonov, arrested after Agca's new allegations were made, was all but convicted in the western press. On October 25, 1984, Judge Ilario Martella issued his final report officially indicting Antonov, other Bulgarians, and several Turks as members of a conspiracy to assassinate the Pope. A trial is expected to begin in April 1985.

It is our judgment that the media's uncritical, even enthusiastic, embrace of the Italians' case is not merely wrong, it is also indicative of the more general propaganda role played by the press. As we will show below, the credibility of Agca, the primary (in fact, *sole*) witness—based on his character, history, interest, circumstances of imprisonment, and shifts and contradictions in testimony—is close to zero. Furthermore, the logic of the case as developed by its main proponents is completely unconvincing and rests ultimately on Cold War ideological premises. We believe that similar evidence and arguments put forward in a case not helpful to western political interests would have been objects of derision and quickly rejected and buried.

Where the creators of the Bulgarian Connection see one conspiracy, we see two. The first conspiracy, based in a Turkish neofascist organization called the Gray Wolves, assisted Agca in escaping from a Turkish prison in November 1979 and aided, financed, and sheltered him during the 18 months prior to the assassination attempt. All investigations into Agca's background and associations in Turkey have placed him at the center of an intricate web of political rightists, drug dealers, and gun runners. We develop these links, and the possible underlying motivations which would have led Agca and his associates to kill the Pope, in Part II below.

Our main focus, however, is on the political basis of the case as it has developed in the Italian and New Cold War context (Part III). We are entirely persuaded that this is the source of a plan and decision to pin the assassination attempt on the Bulgarians. This is a second conspiracy, which involved the Ital-

* Howard Friel is writing *On Capitalist Realism: How to Read Time and Newsweek*, to be completed this fall. Frank Brodhead, a historian and journalist, is the former editor of *Resist* and co-author (with Edward S. Herman) of *Demonstration Elections: U.S.-Staged Elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador*. Edward S. Herman is Professor of Finance, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, co-author (with Noam Chomsky) of *The Washington Connection*, and author of *The Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda*.

** Not wanting to burden readers with citations for each fact or opinion, we have been selective in footnoting. A general bibliographic footnote is provided at the end of the text.

ian secret services, their friends in the CIA and Reagan administration, and other elements within the Italian government and bureaucracy. We describe the domestic and international forces at work in 1981 and 1982 causing the Italian authorities to press Agca to play a cooperative role, the extensive penetration of the Italian security services by the rightwing conspiracy *Propaganda Due* (P-2), and the evidence of preparatory contacts of security agents and other outsiders with Agca prior to his new declarations. We show that Judge Ilario Martella was an ideal choice to pursue this case, quietly dignified but dedicated to proving an *a priori* truth (see 3.4 and 3.5).

If the media are playing a supportive political role, they will not only stress news damaging to the enemy (suggestive of Bulgarian guilt), they will also ignore information that would arouse suspicions concerning the quality of the Italian establishment and judiciary (the supporting cast). We stress the importance of understanding the Italian political context in order to grasp the basis of the Bulgarian Connection. This essential background, however, has barely been mentioned by the *New York Times* or other major media sources in the West. In fact, while featuring prominently the reports of Prosecutor Albano and Judge Martella and the upcoming trial of the jailed Bulgarian and Turks, the *Times* and its mass media associates have completely suppressed the recent major report by the Italian Parliament on the P-2 conspiracy (see 3.2 below). The



Judge Ilario Martella.

Credit: Editions du Sorbier



Credit: Editions du Sorbier

Sergei Antonov.

reasons for this dichotomous treatment seem clear. Thus Suzanne Garment of the *Wall Street Journal* can endorse the Bulgarian Connection (June 15, 1984) on the basis of the integrity and even superior wisdom of the Italians: "Mind you, this is the Italians—no American hawk paranoids but instead people who live with a new government every thirty days. You simply cannot doubt their word." If we *are* to take their word, it is important that we be kept in the dark about reports and scandals that call these claims into question.

While the media have suppressed the Italian context, their treatment of the U.S. involvement in the Bulgarian Connection has attained an even higher level of propaganda service. Here the very individuals actively manufacturing the conspiracy become the prime sources of media information. The main investigative work—or, we would say, creative writing—in establishing the hypothesis of the Bulgarian Connection has been done by Claire Sterling, Paul Henze, and Michael Ledeen. Their writings in the *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Reader's Digest*, and other publications, and their frequent appearances on the McNeil-Lehrer News Hour and the Sunday television news programs, and in well-reported appearances before Senator Denton's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, show them to be the media's commentators of choice on terrorism in general and the Bulgarian Connection in particular. These individuals have long records of CIA and other intelligence agency connections and disinformation service, re-

cords which have not been disclosed to the American public.¹

In every Red Scare era, such as the period of the Palmer Raids (1919-1920), or during the time of the Sacco and Vanzetti trial, hysteria and bias overwhelm any sense of fair play—and justice. A wave of passion and propaganda establishes guilt beforehand and makes doubts seem subversive. These Red Scares are often cultivated and stoked by the prospective beneficiaries and their agents.² The Bulgarian Connection met a pressing demand in a suitably prepared moral environment (see 3.2). We believe that it was created, stoked, and even partially organized³ by Sterling, Henze, Ledeen, and their governmental and media allies (see 3.3 and 3.6). It was made into an accepted truth by insistent and indignant attention, and came into being as a legal proceeding as a result of pressure and intense publicity. The Bulgarian Connection thus provides a scenario worthy of a plot by Pirandello: Influential disinformation specialists linked to the Italian secret services and the Reagan administration create a useful scenario, sell it to the slow-moving Italians, who then implement it—with the final touch being that the *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, the McNeil-Lehrer News Hour, and NBC News then rely on Henze, Sterling, and Ledeen to elucidate the real story on what the nefarious KGB has been up to!

1.2 The Evolving Case: A Conclusion in Search of Plausible Evidence

In the early period of development of the Bulgarian Connection, as expounded by Claire Sterling and NBC-TV before Agca named his alleged Bulgarian co-conspirators, the case for the Connection rested on one small Fact, plus a set of speculative Cold War inferences. The Fact was that, following his escape from a Turkish prison, Agca visited Sofia, Bulgaria. This was the only fact supporting the hypothesis of the Bulgarian Connection in its first phase. Related but inconvenient facts, such as that Agca visited approximately a dozen other countries from the time he left Turkey until he shot the Pope, did not fit preconceived models and have not been given much attention.

The Cold War inferences woven around the Fact were as follows: because Bulgaria is a Communist police state, the Bulgarian police know everything. Although Agca was traveling under an assumed name and with a false passport good enough to fool border officials in 12 other countries, the early and widely accepted western hypothesis was that the Bulgarians knowingly sheltered Agca. By further inference, if the Bulgarians protected Agca they must have had something in mind for him to do, like assassinating the Pope. By extension, because the Bulgarians never do anything without Soviet permission, the Soviets must have been involved in this enterprise and can

reasonably be assessed responsibility for its surrogate's hiring of Agca and the shooting itself.

This analysis suffers first and foremost from its purely speculative character. There is no supportive evidence that the Bulgarians knew of Agca's presence or had any dealings with him. There is an assumption that the police in the Communist world are omniscient and omnipotent, but this is a premise rooted in ideology, not fact. This assumption is also quietly set aside when it flies in the face of other lines of argument, as in explaining the gross mishandling of the assassination attempt in St. Peter's Square, which is hard to reconcile with an omniscient and omnipotent Communist secret police. Several million Turks pass through Bulgaria every year on their way to Western Europe, and there is no reason to suppose that the Bulgarians know the identity of most of them. The West German, Swiss, and Italian police were all warned by Turkey that Agca had been spotted in their countries and should be immediately apprehended, and they failed to do so; but Cold War ideology permits acceptance of the claim that only the Bulgarians, and not our West European allies, protected and used Agca.

In Claire Sterling's version of the story, based on early Agca statements subsequently repudiated in whole or in part, Agca stayed at the Vitosha Hotel in Sofia for 50 days in the summer of 1980. During this period he was visited by various individuals who gave him a forged passport, fixed the assassination



Hotel Vitosha, Sofia.

Credit: Editions du Sorbier

contract, and provided him with the nine millimeter Browning gun with which he shot the Pope. According to Agca, he entered Bulgaria using a passport under the forged name of Yoginder Singh. This passport has never been found, and even Paul Henze questions whether Agca could have passed through Bulgarian customs as an Indian, given his physical characteristics and minimal knowledge of English. The passport found in Agca's possession upon his apprehension in Rome was made out in the name of Faruk Ozgun. It showed him entering Bulgaria from Turkey on August 30 and leaving Bulgaria for Yugoslavia the next day, August 31.⁴ Claire Sterling asserts that this exit stamp is a forgery, but she offers no evidence for this claim. (Sterling generally asserts that any inconvenient

1. The U.S. media have conveniently overlooked the slander suits against Sterling in Paris, the long career of Henze as a CIA official and propaganda specialist, and the accusations against Michael Ledeen made by the head of the Italian secret service, who castigated him before the Italian Parliament as an "intriguer" and suggested that he was persona non grata in Italy! See Maurizio De Luca, "Fuori l'intrigante: esclusivo/scandalo nei rapporti Italia-USA," *L'Espresso*, August 5, 1984. See further, 3.3 and 3.6 below. See also, "Italian Officials Finger Ledeen, CIA," in *CAIB*, Number 22 (Fall 1982), p. 41; the discussion of Claire Sterling in *CAIB*, Number 19 (Spring-Summer 1983), pp. 18-19; and the biography of Paul Henze in Ellen Ray, et al., eds., *Dirty Work 2: The CIA in Africa* (Lyle Stuart, Secaucus:1979), pp. 382-383.

2. See Robert Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis:1955).

3. See 3.3 below: "The U.S.-Italian Connection: From Ledeen to Piazienza to SISMI."

4. Christian Roulette, *La Filière: Jean-Paul II-Antonov-Agca* (Editions du Sorbier, Paris:1984), p. 239.

piece of evidence is a forgery. She is fortunate that the western media never require that she prove anything.) If it is argued that the passport found on Agca was kept in order to deceive, why deceive with one that shows him to have visited Bulgaria at all?

A further problem is that the Vitosha Hotel, which is Japanese-owned and run on a very business-like basis, requires all guests to produce passports and to sign in. No sign-in or passport is recorded in the hotel records under any of the names on passports, real or alleged, used by Agca.⁵ This suggests that the stay in the Vitosha Hotel may never have occurred. Of the main contacts claimed by Agca and Sterling to have done business with him in Sofia, Bekir Celenk denies having been in Sofia during the time of Agca's alleged stay and claims never to have met Agca at any time. Celenk is a Turkish businessman who has been charged with smuggling in both Italy and Turkey. The second alleged principal contact, Omer Mersan, acknowledges meeting Agca in Sofia, but denies having provided him with a passport (as claimed by Agca). Mersan is a Turkish drug smuggler and has done business with the Gray Wolves, Agca's primary institutional affiliation, heavily involved in the Turkish-Bulgarian-Western European drug trade. That Mersan would have been serving as an intermediary for the Bulgarian police is entirely unproven, and has been consistently denied by West German and Italian authorities. The provision of the gun to Agca in the Vitosha Hotel, asserted by Sterling, has been repudiated by Agca himself, and more critically by a police interception of an Agca phone conversation discussing the problem of getting a gun, which occurred long after Agca's stay in Sofia. The evidence on Mersan and Celenk is clearly indecisive, but major elements of the original Sterling version of the Sofia connection have disintegrated, replaced by other Agca formulations.

Once Agca had named his Bulgarian accomplices, his further confessions opened up other possibilities for connecting the Bulgarians with the assassination attempt. The most important of the new linkages were other Turks, also allegedly protected by the Bulgarians in Sofia, who Agca claimed were intermediaries between himself and the Bulgarian secret police. Most of these Turks were part of a massive smuggling operation that connected eastern Turkey with Western Europe. The fact that these Turks were without exception enlisted in the neo-Nazi rightwing of Turkish politics was buried under an avalanche of information on the background of the Turkish smuggling trade and the alleged Bulgarian complicity in it, all of which is relevant only if Agca and his confessions are believable. As we describe in the next section, the Turkish Connection is fundamental in explaining the motives of Agca and his comrades, but the smuggling trade and the Bulgarian involvement in it are not.

While great mileage has been extracted from the general belief in a Soviet propensity to evil, the Bulgarian Connection has still always required a motive to sustain the assassination attempt. In all versions of the case, Bulgarian Connection enthusiasts have depended on the situation in Poland following the election of Cardinal Wojtyla as Pope in 1979, culminating in the proclamation of Solidarity in late August 1980. It was the Pope's declaration of support for Solidarity which is held to be the key to the Soviet desire to want him out of the way, and at one point it was even claimed that he had declared his intention to lay down the papal crown and return to Poland in the event of a Soviet invasion. This claim has never been authenticated.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 245-252.

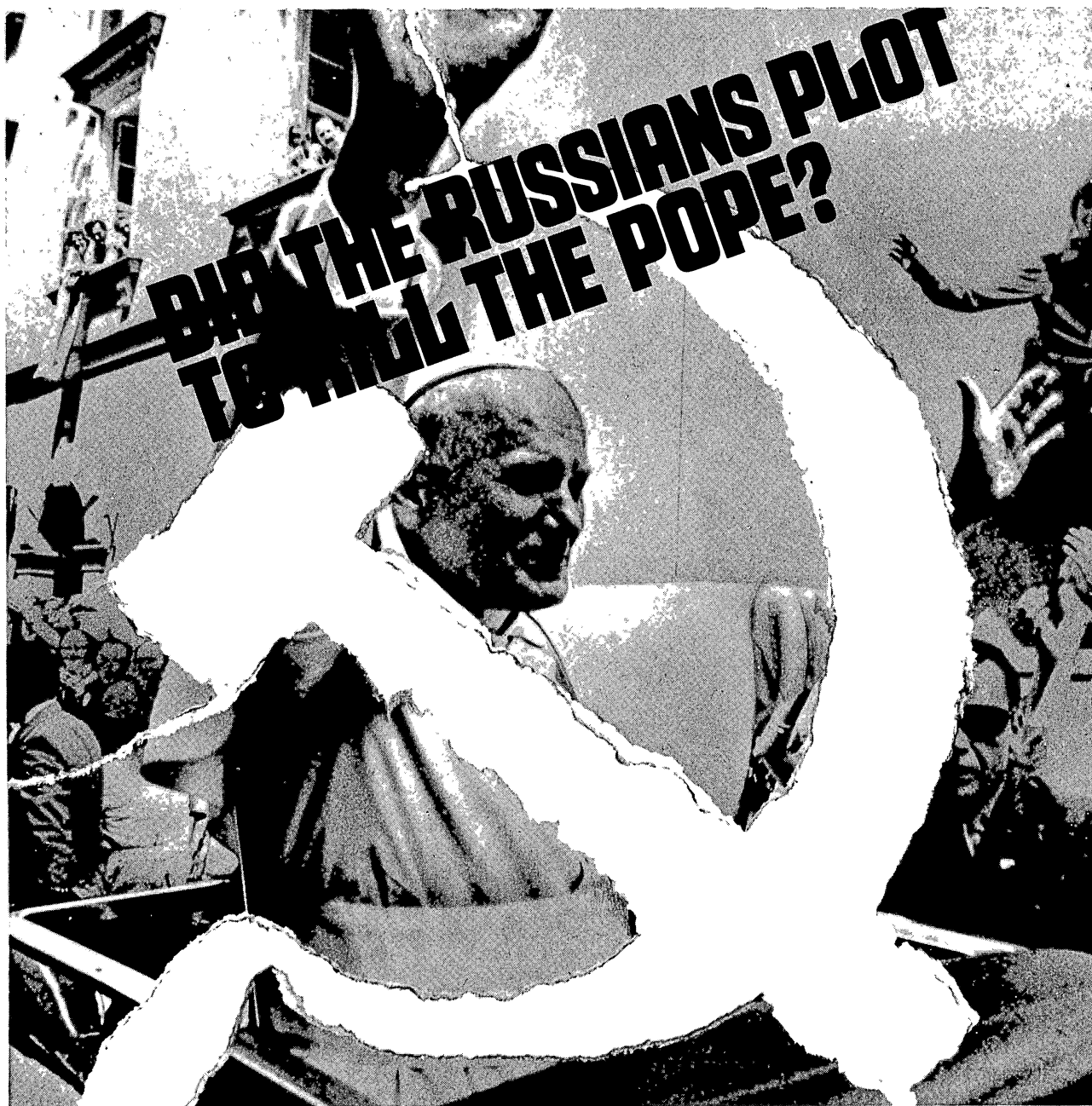
There are several very serious difficulties with this imputed rationale. First, Agca had already threatened to kill the Pope in 1979 during the Pope's visit to Turkey, long before Solidarity existed or Poland was in turmoil. This suggests the likelihood that the real explanation for the assassination attempt in St. Peter's Square is to be found in the Turkish environment in which Agca lived. Second, the timing of Agca's alleged conspiracy with the Bulgarians presents problems, as Solidarity was formed in late August 1980, while, according to Sterling, Agca's dealings in Sofia were completed in early July of that year. Third, the Pope did not constitute a threat to the Soviet Union serious enough to justify the costs and risks of either a successful or bungled assassination plot. The magnitude of the potential damage from such an effort has been demonstrated by the events which have unfolded since May 1981, as the attempted assassination was quickly pinned on the Soviets on the basis of mere suspicion. Nowhere is the belief in Soviet complicity stronger than in Poland, and it is hard to imagine how any Soviet official could anticipate that unrest in Poland could be quelled by a successful assassination attempt. Furthermore, if successfully pinned on the Soviet Union the plot would have had a devastating effect on the Soviet effort to oppose the new missiles planned for Europe and to advance the gas pipeline project.

Further serious difficulties with the Bulgarian Connection hypothesis relate to the ineptness of the alleged plot. In the version of the Connection developed in the second half of 1982 by Sterling in the *Reader's Digest* and by Marvin Kalb on NBC-TV, these difficulties centered in the implausibility of bringing Agca to a prominent hotel in Sofia to be recruited and/or to get his instructions. This action violates the cardinal rule of sustaining plausible deniability. Moreover, if contact between Agca and Bulgarian officials were observed by western agents in Sofia, certainly a reasonable possibility, it would blow the Plot out of the water before it got started. Thus the presence of Agca in Sofia, rather than supporting the Bulgarian Connection, tends to undermine it. In fact, it more readily supports two alternative views. One is that someone wanted Agca to be linked to Bulgaria before he got on with his assassination attempt, after which he could be worked over at leisure until he



Agca at Rome police headquarters for questioning.

Credit: AP



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“confessed.” The second is that because Agca had stayed in Sofia briefly, Italian and other western intelligence services and propagandists seized the opportunity to build a case which, with an induced confession, would be salable in the well-conditioned West.

A closely related operational difficulty is the unlikelihood that the Bulgarians and/or Soviets would hire Agca at all. He was a rightwing fanatic, strongly anticommunist, and mentally unbalanced, someone who might readily give the game away upon apprehension. The fact that he failed to confess quickly has never been adequately explained, but can be easily understood if the confession was a fabrication and Agca had to be induced to cooperate in creating a fairy tale. The long (ten month) time lag between the contractual arrangement in Sofia in July 1980 and the assassination attempt in May 1981 has also never been explained. Furthermore, Agca was a poor choice as a hired gun because, as Turkey’s most notorious terrorist, he was too well known. The Turkish government and Interpol had issued bulletins about his escape from Turkey, and several Turkish nationals recognized him during his months of travel and reported his presence to various authorities.

Another major operational difficulty with the hypothesis of the Bulgarian Connection is the gross ineptitude of the plan for the assassination and its implementation. In explaining the lack of any direct evidence for Bulgarian or Soviet involvement, Sterling and her associates have always retreated to the notion that the Soviet KGB is a very professional body that does things well, covers its tracks, and operates from a base of plausible deniability. Thus the very lack of evidence, according to the Sterling school, points to a Soviet hand in the plot. Yet it is hard to imagine a more incompetent plan of attack than the one put into use. Agca not only failed to kill the Pope, but he himself was neither killed nor rescued. Other evidence also points to serious incompetence: on the afternoon of the assassination attempt, for example, Agca apparently asked a priest through which door the Pope would enter St. Peter’s Square. Writings and other items supposedly found in his room after he was arrested would have helped incriminate and identify him if he had escaped or been killed. On the whole there is nothing in Agca’s operation that even hints at professionalism.

The operational weaknesses of the Plot were greatly intensified after Agca had declared that Bulgarian state officials met



Credit: UPI

with him and guided his movements in Rome. Proponents of the case would have us believe that the Bulgarian secret service involved its agents in direct contact, planning, and tactical maneuvers with Agca up to the day of the assassination attempt itself. Agca and three Bulgarians allegedly visited St. Peter's Square on each of the two days preceding the assassination attempt in order to make the final plans. Not one but two of the Bulgarians would allegedly drive Agca to the scene of the crime, and one Bulgarian official would use smoke bombs to divert the crowd's attention so that Agca could get a good shot and/or make a getaway. In his original declaration implicating the Bulgarians, Agca even claimed that he visited their homes in the Embassy compound, and that in one instance, just days before the assassination attempt, he met the Bulgarian Antonov's wife and young daughter. This latter statement has since been withdrawn, but this was not done on the basis of scrutiny or ridicule on the part of the western press, nor doubts and investigative efforts by Martella. The accumulated contradictions and exposed lies had become too topheavy to sustain.

Following Agca's admission of major falsifications in June 1983, the problem has been to keep the Plot viable in the face of the disintegration of Agca's credibility (although he will presumably retain it with Claire Sterling and the *New York Times* even past the point where he admits to having been coached). Under the guidance of the credulous Martella, Agca's fancies took wider flight: He now remembered that he was sent by his Bulgarian "control officer" to Tunisia and Malta to inspect the possibilities of murdering their heads of state. He had participated in a plot to kill Lech Walesa. We will review some of the specifics of Agca's shifts in testimony, withdrawals, and evidence of coaching later. At this point we want to note how well these were covered over in Prosecutor Albano's report, and even more so in Claire Sterling's highly selective rendition of that report in the *Times*, by the emergence of a new Fact: the Truck. According to the prosecutor's report, Agca eventually declared that a getaway was planned by the Bulgarians for himself and his alleged companion Oral Celik. In this version, Agca claims that he and Celik were to be driven from St. Peter's Square to the Bulgarian Embassy, where they were to be loaded onto a Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR) truck which would then be sealed by customs officials and driven across several national frontiers to Bulgaria. (Such trucks, once sealed, need not have their contents examined at each international border.) The prosecutor's report says that such a truck was in fact sealed at the Bulgarian Embassy on the very afternoon of the assassination attempt. Moreover, the report claims that the truck was sealed on the Embassy grounds, rather than in front of the Embassy as was invariably the practice, and that this unusual deviation from standard practice supports the claim that the truck was used to help Celik escape.

The Truck Ploy, which attempts to establish the Bulgarian Connection on grounds firmer than Agca's word, does little to meet this end. For one thing, the truck as an escape route runs counter to the information in a note found in Agca's possession on the day of the assassination attempt, which indicates that he was planning a train trip to Naples (see Sidebar). Furthermore, the presence of the truck at the Embassy was brought into the case by the Bulgarians themselves, who introduced it to contest Agca's claim that the Bulgarian official Aivazov had accompanied him to St. Peter's Square. To establish his alibi the Bulgarians introduced evidence from Italian customs officials that Aivazov had been with them at the very time when Agca

claimed Aivazov was preparing to divert the crowd in St. Peter's Square with smoke bombs. And in response to the prosecutor's report, Antonov's counsel has found credible witnesses who will testify that the truck never entered the Bulgarian compound, but was parked, loaded, and sealed on a busy public street. He also maintains that Italian customs officials will swear that the truck did not conceal a man at the time of its sealing, and that it was not unusual to seal trucks at the Embassy compound.

While the next step of Sterling, Martella, and company may be to claim that the seals on the truck were broken at some later point, at which time Celik was stuffed aboard and the truck resealed, this will not save the new Fact from depending once again on the word of Agca. We should note again that the truck story emerged out of a disproof of Agca's claim regarding a Bulgarian official's presence at St. Peter's Square, that it was provided by the Bulgarians, and that it could easily have been fed back to Agca for further embroidery. We wonder also whether the Bulgarian Embassy in Rome is not under surveillance by the Italian and U.S. intelligence services, and whether the Bulgarians do not assume that this is so. This suggests that the use of the truck as an escape vehicle would have been irrational behavior on the part of the Bulgarians. Another question arises from the fact that Celik has been sighted several times since May 13, 1981 in Western Europe. If the Bulgarian secret service had taken him to Bulgaria by truck, would they have released him to resume his wanderings—and possibly be apprehended?

The Truck and the Trip to Naples

As we point out in the text, the Albano report as featured by Claire Sterling in the *New York Times* of June 10, 1984 made much of Agca's claim that a truck at the Bulgarian Embassy was the planned escape route following the assassination attempt. If we look back at Claire Sterling's *Reader's Digest* article of September 1982, however, we find a contradictory line of evidence that Sterling has never reconciled with the truck, nor even addressed. Sterling says that when captured on May 13, 1981 Agca had in his possession a note with detailed instructions on what he was to do. She states authoritatively that "'a control' must have given him" these instructions at the last minute. Among the details is a reference to a "trip to Naples," for which Agca is instructed: "Check if train ticket valid." If Agca had been fixed up already with a ride in a Bulgarian truck, why would he be going to Naples or checking out the validity of a ticket to that destination? In fact, the note in general is incompatible with the Bulgarian Connection. It lists a series of dates for the Pope's appearance in St. Peter's Square, which suggests that there was no fixed timing for the plot; it never hints at any Bulgarian involvement; and its looseness runs counter to the detailed and carefully planned scenario which Agca spelled out in connection with the Bulgarians. This note is mentioned in Sterling's *Time of the Assassins*, but she carefully avoids discussing either the trip to Naples or the compatibility of the other details of the note with Bulgarian involvement. It is fortunate for Claire Sterling that she never has to face serious questions on her shifting authoritative pronouncements. ●

Part II: The First Conspiracy: Agca and the Gray Wolves

2.1 The Turkish Background

While it is possible that the Pope's would-be assassin was manipulated by some outside party, in our view Agca's motivation must be sought in his Turkish roots.

The picture of Mehmet Ali Agca that emerged in the first weeks after his assassination attempt was one of a young man deeply involved in Turkey's neofascist right. Coincidentally, his assassination attempt occurred at the same time that Turkey's new military government handed down a 945-page indictment against the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), the neofascist organization within whose political milieu Agca functioned. Thus the western media had ready access to vast amounts of information about the extensive political network that had sheltered and perhaps guided Agca in his attempt. Agca, moreover, had been arrested, tried, and convicted for the 1979 assassination of one of Turkey's most prominent newspaper editors, Abdi Ipecki; and information disclosed at this trial was also available to the western media. This information was originally tapped by the media, albeit gingerly, but was then dropped entirely when the Bulgarian Connection began to assume prominence.

Born in the eastern, more underdeveloped part of Turkey, Agca came of age during the time that the growing ranks of the NAP and its youth affiliate, the Gray Wolves, were destabilizing Turkish society and politics. They were particularly active in high schools and universities. A member of the NAP served as Minister of Education in a coalition government in the mid-1970s, while Gray Wolves terrorists beat and murdered opponents to gain hegemony in the schools. Agca's high school was one of those taken over by Gray Wolves militants; and his teachers, courses, and high school chums shared the rightwing views of the NAP.

The importance of Agca's immersion in the world of Turkey's ultra-right cannot be underestimated. Yet it is quickly passed over by the "terrorist experts" of the western media who, claiming to see no reason why a Turk would want to kill the Pope, cast their gaze to the East. An elementary acquaintance with the history and ideology of the NAP, however, quickly reveals a worldview that adequately supports—if it does not "rationally" explain—an attempt on the Pope's life. Agca's younger brother Adnan, for example, told a reporter for *Newsweek* that Agca wanted to kill the Pope "because of his conviction that the Christians have imperialist designs against the Muslim world and are doing injustices to the Islamic countries."⁶

The Nationalist Action Party was formed in the mid-1960s when Col. Alpaslan Türkeş and some other former army officers took over a largely moribund party of the traditional right and infused it with Pan-Turkish ideology and cadres. Türkeş and the NAP were heirs to three-quarters of a century of Pan-Turkish aspirations and politics. At first the Pan-Turks had hoped to reunite all Turkish peoples in a single nation stretching from western China to parts of Spain. At the end of World War I, with the Russian Revolution, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of the modern Turkish state, Pan-Turks focused their agitation on the plight of the "Outer Turks," those people of Turkish descent who had been left

outside Turkey's national boundaries and who constituted a majority of all Turkic peoples.

It was of great significance to the future development of Pan-Turkism that a majority of Outer Turks were now "Captives of Turks" within the Soviet Empire. Not surprisingly, the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 was greeted eagerly by Pan-Turkish organizations, as it provided an opportunity to dissolve the Soviet Empire and to unite with the Turkish motherland the Turkish peoples "held captive." More than a hundred thousand Soviet Turks were recruited out of POW camps by the Nazis and enrolled in army units that fought alongside the Germans. With the defeat of Germany, and thus



Cover of *Bozkurt*, a Pan-Turkish journal published between 1939 and 1942.

Pan-Turkish hopes, most Turkish people were still outside of Turkey proper. Pan-Turkish organizations were henceforth characterized by a strongly anticommunist, and especially anti-Soviet, ideology.⁷

This was the inheritance that Türkeş and his colleagues brought to the NAP in the mid-1960s. The party's structure served in turn as a vehicle to disseminate a Pan-Turkish worldview, and it soon emerged as a force to be reckoned with in modern Turkish politics. In his writings and speeches Türkeş combined a vision of a science-based, state-planned economy which was to bring Turkey into the Atomic Age with

6. *Newsweek*, May 25, 1981.

7. Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey: A Study in Irredentism*, Archon Books, 1981, *passim*.

the legends of the gray wolf who led the Turkic peoples out of Asia to their homeland. As with European fascism, Türkes's Pan-Turkism sought to appeal to the "little man" crushed between capitalist monopolies and a strong labor movement. It was also addressed to "patriots" who believed their nation was being humiliated by its weakness in relation to the Soviet Union and the capitalist powers of the West.

Agca became involved with the NAP's youth affiliate, the Gray Wolves, at the height of its terrorist phase. At that time the Gray Wolves were training thousands of young recruits in camps throughout Turkey.⁸ The NAP developed a powerful base in Turkey, and in 1975 it elected four members to parliament and served as a junior partner in the National Front government organized by the rightwing Justice Party. By the time of the military coup in September 1980, there were 1,700 Gray Wolves organizations in Turkey with 200,000 registered members and about a million sympathizers. In its indictment of the NAP in May 1981, the Turkish military government charged 220 members of the party and its affiliates with responsibility for 694 murders.

2.2 Agca as Terrorist: The Gray Wolves Nexus

Although Agca's immersion in the world of the Gray Wolves is inconvenient for supporters of the Bulgarian Connection, the evidence connecting Agca to Turkey's neofascist right is overwhelming. What is more, these connections never tapered off and may be traced to the very day of the assassination attempt. There are, nevertheless, *two* models of linkages that try to explain the nature of the conspiracy supporting Agca's attempt. One model, the Gray Wolves Connection, is supported by the testimony of investigators in several different countries and contains a large volume of hard evidence. The other model—that of Sterling, Henze, and Martella—is based on Agca's shifting claims made after a long stay in Italian prisons. Hard evidence for this model is nonexistent.

The Gray Wolves Connection began when Agca was in high school. According to Rasit Kisacik, a Turkish journalist who has studied Agca's early years, he was often seen with Gray Wolves leaders while in school; and when the police later raided Agca's home they found pictures showing the young Agca in the company of leaders of the Gray Wolves.⁹ Moreover, the people Agca came to know among his home town Gray Wolves activists aided him in many of his later terrorist activities, including his attempt on the Pope.



Agca in a high school yearbook photo.

8. *Boston Globe*, June 7, 1981.

9. *New York Times*, May 23, 1981.

On paper the Gray Wolves were directed by the Nationalist Action Party. "In fact," notes Michael Dobbs in the *Washington Post*, "the command structure seems to have been a loose one, allowing plenty of room for semiautonomous factions and groups that did not necessarily take their orders from the top."¹⁰ The loose network of Gray Wolves from Agca's home base, the Malatya region of eastern Turkey, seems to have functioned as one such semiautonomous group. Led by Oral Celik—apparently involved in the murder of Ipecki and the operation that broke Agca out of prison in 1979, and who has been identified as the second gunman in St. Peter's



Oral Celik (Turkish police photo).

Square—the Malatya gang supported itself by smuggling operations and robberies. We find their presence at each of the milestones on Agca's path from high school to St. Peter's Square.

In 1978 Agca enrolled in Istanbul University. He apparently spent little time in classes. Instead he hung out in rightwing cafes like the Marmara, which "advertised the politics of those who frequented it with a large mural of a gray wolf on one of its walls."¹¹ According to historian Feroz Ahmad, "students in the hostel where he lived remembered him as a well known 'militant' who was allegedly seen shooting two students in the legs during an attack on a leftist hostel. His notoriety in terrorist circles was such that leftists tried to kill him on a number of occasions."¹²

On February 1, 1979, the Malatya gang assassinated Abdi Ipecki, perhaps Turkey's most prominent newspaper editor. Agca was arrested a few months later; and, although there now seems to be serious doubt whether Agca was indeed the gun-

10. *Washington Post*, October 14, 1984.

11. *New York Times*, May 25, 1981.

12. *Boston Globe*, June 7, 1981.

man, he quickly confessed to the crime. At his trial the following October Agca steadfastly denied any connection with the NAP or the Gray Wolves, claiming instead to "represent a new form of terror on my own." After several sessions of his trial, Agca threatened in court to name "the truly responsible parties" when the trial next convened. This was clearly a signal that someone had better get him out, and a few days later some Gray Wolves led by Celik smuggled Agca, disguised as a soldier, through eight checkpoints and out of prison.

Agca's first act upon escaping from prison was to send a letter to *Milliyet*, Ipecki's newspaper, threatening to kill the Pope, who was about to visit Turkey. Once again we stumble upon an event which presents inconvenient facts for Sterling and company. For on its face Agca's act supports the probability that he (and the Malatya gang) needed no KGB hand to guide them toward a papal assassination. In his letter to *Milliyet* Agca stated:

Fearing the creation of a new political and military power in the Middle East by Turkey along with its brother Arab states, western imperialism has . . . dispatched to Turkey in the guise of religious leader the crusade commander John Paul. Unless this untimely and meaningless visit is postponed, I shall certainly shoot the Pope.

MILLİYET GAZETESİNE

Türkiyenin kardes islam ülkeleri ile
Ortadoğuda yeni bir siyasi, Askeri ve Ekonomik
Güc. Olusturmasindan korkan batili imperiyalist
130 hassas bir denemede dinin lider maskeli
Hakli komandanı John Paul'u acele
Türkiyeye gönderiyorlar. bu zömanisiz ve
anlansız ziyaret iptal edilmezse papayı
kesinlikle vuracağım. cennetinden kasmaman
fıkri nedeni budur. Ayrıca ABD ve İsrail
kaynaklı mektek baskımını hesaba sokulacaktır.
Ayrıca karsız, sessiz ve basit bir kaciş
Olupunu rica ederim büyütmeyin.
Saygılarımla.

Mehmet Ali Ağca



Agca's 1979 letter threatening the Pope on his visit to Turkey.

Was this letter written at the direction of Agca's controller, as Sterling maintains, as a devilishly clever cover for Agca's KGB links? Or was it written, as Agca maintains, as a diversion to throw his pursuers off the scent? While we cannot say with certainty, the fact that the contents of the letter accord perfectly with the ideological views of the Gray Wolves strongly suggests that the letter simply speaks for itself; and while for whatever reason Agca and the Malatya gang chose not to, or were unable to, carry out their threat to kill the heavily guarded Pope during his visit to Turkey, such an act was on their agenda.

At this point Agca's life as a fugitive began. Wanted by Turkish authorities and Interpol, Agca nevertheless moved with apparent ease through some dozen countries in the 18 months

separating his prison escape from his assignation with the Pope in May 1981. Throughout this time Agca was rarely outside the Gray Wolves' network, and was frequently in contact with the Malatya gang. After murdering the informer who had tipped off police to his whereabouts, Agca was taken by the Gray Wolves to Iran to hide out. Some months later he returned to Turkey and, aided by a false passport provided him by Gray Wolves members, he was smuggled into Bulgaria and through that country to Western Europe. Arriving there in the fall of 1980, Agca narrowly escaped the military coup which took place in Turkey in September and which forced many Gray Wolves underground or into exile abroad. Thus the Malatya gang soon followed Agca to Western Europe, where they sought shelter among the Gray Wolves network in the large Turkish immigrant communities of Switzerland and West Germany.

In fleeing from Turkey Agca was not abandoning the Gray Wolves network so much as seeking the shelter of its exterior branches. The Nationalist Action Party and the Gray Wolves had recruited for many years among the millions of Turkish men who left their country to work in Switzerland, West Germany, or other European countries for a year or a few years before returning home. When a 1976 Turkish court decision made it illegal for the Gray Wolves and the NAP to maintain foreign affiliates, they were reorganized into the Federation of Turkish Idealist Associations, secretly maintaining their ties to the NAP. The Federation claimed 50,000 members in Europe, and at the time of the military coup in September 1980 the Federation boasted 129 chapters in Western Europe, including 87 in West Germany. The West German police estimated that at least 26,000 Turkish workers in West Germany were members of neofascist organizations. Another report estimated that there were 200 conservative Islamic centers in West Germany; and the *New York Times* cited "recent documentation by West Germany's labor federation [which] pointed out strong anti-Western, anti-Semitic, and anti-Christian currents in the Islamic centers' publications."¹³

This network of rightwing Turkish organizations sheltered Agca between the time he left Turkey and the day he shot the Pope. Musa Cerdar Celebi, the head of the powerful Frankfurt branch of the Federation and a leader of the Federation's activities in Western Europe, has been indicted for aiding Agca and arranging to pay him money. Omer Bagci, a Gray Wolves militant in Switzerland, has been indicted for delivering a gun to Agca in Milan; and the gun was obtained from Horst Grillmaier, a rightwing gun dealer based in Austria. In short, Agca was a Gray Wolves militant, and up to May 13, 1981 all his contacts for which there is independent evidence lead straight to the Gray Wolves.

2.3 Agca as an "International Terrorist"

The overwhelming evidence connecting Agca to the Gray Wolves is minimized by Sterling, Henze, and Martella. Seeking to portray Agca either as a longtime recruit of the KGB who had infiltrated the right or as someone whose ties to the right were marginal, they attempt to force Agca into the mold of a "pure terrorist," rising above mere political loyalties of the left or the right. They must therefore struggle to evade the main facts of Agca's life—that all his close friends were Gray Wolves and that many Gray Wolves were involved in every phase of his movements from his Turkish jail escape to the assassination attempt.

The "proofs" that Agca was an apolitical international ter-
13. *New York Times*, May 21, 1981.

rorist illuminate the quality of terrorism pseudoscience. They include:

- *Gray Wolves affiliation as "cover."*

The Sterling-Henze-NBC school has suggested that perhaps the Soviets and the Bulgarians recruited Agca early and had him serve in the Gray Wolves as a "cover." The same reasoning is applied to his threat to kill the Pope in 1979: that he was supplying a rightwing cover for what was actually a leftwing terrorist act.

One problem with this line of argument is the absence of the faintest trace of supporting evidence. Another is that many of Agca's Gray Wolves comrades would have had to be similarly manipulated. A third problem is that the alleged Soviet motive to kill the Pope—the threat of Poland's Solidarity—did not exist in earlier years, nor at the time when Agca made the threat in 1979. *Anything* can be proved by this form of pseudoscience reasoning.

- *Agca was not a card-carrying member of the Gray Wolves.*

Sterling and Henze place great emphasis on the fact that Agca never appears to have obtained an official Gray Wolves membership card.

Note that this line of proof is diametrically opposed to that made in the previous point. If Agca were a KGB recruit and they wanted to tar him with the brush of Turkish fascism to cover up a later terrorist act, the KGB would make sure that Agca did the necessary paperwork. Indeed, the absence of a membership card undermines the argument that Agca was controlled by the KGB while a Gray Wolves activist. Apart from this contradiction, however, the record of durable linkages and a long-standing political commitment, barring credible alternative evidence, must be persuasive to nonpseudoscientists.

- *The Sofia visit as the dominant fact.*

The main alternative evidence for the Sterling-Henze school, apart from Agca's "confessions," is indicated by Claire Sterling's account of her interview with Orsan Oymen, Bonn correspondent for the *Milliyet* and a consultant for the NBC-TV program on the Bulgarian Connection. Oymen had, according to Sterling, "what is probably the most complete file on Agca in existence . . . , crammed with unavailable documents from five or six countries." According to Sterling, "Orsan felt that the Gray Wolves had to be the prime movers, since we kept tripping over them at every turn. . . . But that was too simple, I thought," says Sterling; "I could not see how to reconcile that with Agca's summer in Bulgaria."¹⁴

This is terrorism pseudoscience in its mature form. One convenient but contested assertion by Agca—that he spent several weeks in Bulgaria—outweighs and overpowers a mass of serious evidence showing Agca's deep and continuous involvement in the Gray Wolves network. Furthermore, there is nothing to be "reconciled" as Agca's stay in Bulgaria under a false passport proves no more about a Bulgarian involvement in the assassination attempt than his visits to twelve other countries prove about those governments' involvement. His false passport, found in Rome, shows him entering Bulgaria on August 30, 1980, and leaving on August 31 (not spending "a summer" in Bulgaria). Finally, it is also obvious that if Agca actually stayed in Sofia for any reason at all, this might easily provide the pretext for the western terrorism-pseudoscientists and Italy's secret services to "set up" a phony Bulgarian conspiracy. In our view this possibility, ruled out by Sterling and company out of patriotic bias and assumption, is precisely what happened.

- *The motives behind Agca's confessions.*

The main proof of the Bulgarian plot is derived from Agca's own confessions. Apart from their unwillingness to give proper weight to Agca's Gray Wolves connections, Sterling and company ignore three motivations for Agca's confessions that render them worthless as serious evidence:

Loyalty: By claiming he was an "international terrorist" Agca took the blame and kept the heat off his Gray Wolves comrades. He had done the same thing in Turkey by "confessing" to the Ipecki murder in 1979. In the case of the Bulgarian Connection, Agca should certainly have little objection to channeling ultimate guilt from his best friends to the Communists, a long-standing Gray Wolves foe.

Self-preservation: By accommodating his captors he made life much easier for himself. We describe elsewhere in this article the probable "deal" struck, and the inducements and threats that would make it worth his while to finger the Evil Empire.

Publicity: Agca had a passion for fame and recognition. According to Turkish journalist Ismail Kovaci, "Agca suffers both from jealousy and delusions of self-grandeur. For him, terrorism represented his way of leaving his mark on the world." "Many people," says Michael Dobbs, "who encountered Agca both in Turkey and in Italy, have spoken of his 'Carlos Complex'—his image of himself as a top-flight international terrorist with the whole world hanging breathlessly on his every word. His desire for personal publicity seems unquenchable. At one point in the Italian investigation, he abruptly clammed up when the magistrates refused his demand that journalists be present as he 'confessed.'" ¹⁵ Having exhausted his ability to derive eminence from the shooting of the Pope, Agca's deal to implicate the Bulgarians has opened up new avenues once again to attain star status and TV recognition.

- *Agca says just what Claire Sterling says an international terrorist ought to say.*

Agca has played the international terrorist card aggressively since deciding to cooperate with the Italian authorities. Perhaps too aggressively. Although he only claims to have had contact with low-level Bulgarian functionaries, he keeps saying with great decisiveness that the KGB is involved. He could not know this from any direct experience, but he has learned the "model" into which his mentors and captors want him to fit, and he keeps helping them out. His caricature of the Sterling vision of the terrorist-for-hire (by the KGB) is so close to the original that the Italian magistrates are impressed by the excellent fit!¹⁶

In the real world, coached witnesses say what their coaches want them to say. In a world of disinformation and internalized propaganda, the courts and press marvel at the conformity of the "confession" to the forecast of the coaches!

2.4 The Smuggling Connection

Money was the lifeblood of the NAP and the Gray Wolves networks: money for guns, money for bribes, and money to maintain the party's organizational apparatus. One former Gray Wolves member, later used by NBC as a source for its TV special on the Bulgarian Connection, has testified that the West European network of the Gray Wolves

sends large quantities of money back to Turkey. Not only money, but weapons and equipment. Guns from France, West Germany, Belgium, and Bulgaria are smuggled by sea

15. *Washington Post*, October 14, 1984.

16. See the comments of Magistrate Rosario Priore in 3.4 below.

14. *The Time of the Assassins*, p. 58.

into Turkey. . . . One of the Nationalist Action Party's greatest sources of funds is drug smuggling. Heroin and hashish are smuggled out of Turkey and into Europe, and the NAP even markets much of the drugs in Europe itself. The profits go to buying guns in Turkey.¹⁷

A British survey of the NAP's participation in drug smuggling says that the first indications of their involvement came in 1973 when Kudret Bayhan, a NAP member of the Turkish senate, was detained in France with a consignment of heroin. Also arrested with Bayhan were two other members of the NAP's executive committee. In 1976 another NAP senator with a car [trunk] loaded with the drug was arrested on the border between Italy and Yugoslavia. Three years later Italian police at Trieste arrested nineteen Turkish right wingers transporting a total of £2m [c. \$5m then] worth of heroin. Some of them admitted to police investigators that the heroin was destined for the United States where it was to be traded for arms with underworld contacts.¹⁸

While it is dangerous to place much confidence in any of Agca's declarations, Turkish military prosecutors who have reopened the Ipecki murder case have accepted as plausible Agca's assertion that while in Istanbul he supported himself through a blackmarket smuggling operation organized by the Malatya gang.

Although much of the smuggling to and from Turkey was carried out by sea, much of it also crossed the Bulgarian land bridge separating Turkey from Western Europe. Given the vast flow of Turks traversing Bulgaria on their way to and from Western Europe in the 1970s, it was virtually impossible for Bulgaria to control its borders against smuggling. It is also possible that at least some Bulgarian officials saw the opportunity to enrich themselves by taking pay-offs; and investigators in both Turkey and Italy have claimed that Bulgaria supported smuggling as a matter of state policy to earn hard currency.

It is worth asking, of course, to what extent the existence of smuggling across Bulgaria or the participation of certain Bulgarian officials in the smuggling trade establishes smuggling as Bulgarian *state policy*; and whether Bulgarian involvement is equal to or greater than drug smuggling by Mexico, Colombia, Jamaica, Italy, or even the United States. Indeed, we now know that the Turkey-Bulgaria-Italy smuggling route was run at least in part by officials from Italy's military intelligence agency (SISMI);¹⁹ and NBC News reported on March 23, 1983 that the three top CIA officials in Rome were in "deep trouble," one source of their problems being "that they might have been using a guns and drug smuggling route between Sofia, Bulgaria and Milan, Italy to run their own agents into Eastern Europe. . . ." In short, it would appear that, as with drug smuggling and other lucrative but illegal trades throughout the world, the smugglers' highway between Turkey and Western Europe was both lined with money and broad enough to accommodate the intelligence services of several nations.

Sterling, Henze, and Martella believe that the root of the "Bulgarian Connection" lies in the drug and arms smuggling activities of what they call the "Turkish mafia," and the links between the Turkish mafia and those Bulgarian state officials who tolerated, protected, and/or helped organize the smuggling. They maintain that Agca was a relatively low-level em-

ployee of this mafia, and that while in Bulgaria he was on the payroll of Abuzer Ugurlu, the "Godfather" of the Turkish mafia. Ugurlu, in turn, worked with or for another Godfather, Turkish businessman Bekir Celenk. According to Sterling, Henze, and Martella it was through Celenk and Ugurlu that the Bulgarians directed the Turkish smuggling operations and through them that the smugglers received Bulgarian protection. And according to Agca (and now Martella), it was Celenk who offered to pay Agca more than a million dollars to kill the Pope.

Much of this story rests on the credibility of Agca, the sole source of many crucial details. We show throughout this article that Agca is completely unreliable. Here we can address the claims about the relation between Bulgarian officials, the Turkish mafia, and the NAP. Who was working for whom? For Sterling, Henze, and Martella the Bulgarian state officials and the Turkish mafia are engaged in mutually profitable activities and the NAP is essentially irrelevant.²⁰

To others with less of an axe to grind, the power of the NAP and the Gray Wolves seems formidable. Michael Dobbs of the *Washington Post*, for example, presents evidence and testimony that Ugurlu was dependent on the NAP for protection, rather than the other way around. Dobbs notes that "to carry out this large-scale smuggling operation, Ugurlu . . . needed agents in the Turkish customs ministry," and points out that "it is now known that key customs posts were infiltrated by supporters of the [NAP] . . . during the late 1970s."²¹ Particularly between 1975 and 1978, when they participated in the National Front government, the NAP placed many of their supporters in key positions in the customs ministry and at border crossing points. Needing funds to carry out party activities, the NAP was in a position to deal profitably with the smugglers and increasingly able to take over the business themselves. As Orsay Oymen, chief investigative reporter for *Milliyet*, told Michael Dobbs, "My opinion is that . . . it was the Gray Wolves who were in a position to ask favors from the mafia. They were the ones with the political influence at the time, because of their control over the customs ministry."²²

2.5 Conclusion

Thus the established *facts* show Agca to have been a Turkish fascist, linked closely to the Gray Wolves and working with them every step on the way to Rome. When Agca passed into Bulgaria through a border customs station controlled by the Gray Wolves, or when he procured a passport issued to the NAP militant Farok Ozgun through the efforts of a police official who was also a member of the Gray Wolves, there is no reason not to take these events at face value. One of Turkey's most notorious terrorists had boarded the "underground railroad" long used by the Gray Wolves to get their drugs, guns, money, and militants back and forth between Turkey and Western Europe. Apart from a stay in Sofia of uncertain duration, all Bulgarian links rest on Agca's claims, which were made after he had spent 18 months in an Italian prison.

20. Thus, in his study of the Pope Plot, Paul Henze, allegedly an expert on Turkey, minimizes through omission the power of the NAP in Turkish politics and the importance of finding Agca's roots in the party's milieu, including the Gray Wolves. (See *The Plot to Kill the Pope*, New York:1983.) Having no political roots or bearing of their own, Agca and the Malatya gang are simply loaned to the Bulgarians by Ugurlu. (See *The Time of the Assassins*, p. 146.)

21. *Washington Post*, October 14, 1984. Dobbs also notes that Turkish journalist Mumcu, the foremost investigator of Turkish smuggling, believes that Ugurlu also worked for Turkey's intelligence agency, MIT. (*Washington Post*, October 15, 1984.)

22. *Washington Post*, October 14, 1984.

17. *Die Tageszeitung* [a West German daily], September 4, 1980.

18. *Searchlight*, No. 65 (November 1980), p. 7. See also *Boston Globe*, June 7, 1981.

19. *Le Monde du Renseignement*, Oct.-Dec. 1980.

The CIA and the Gray Wolves

The "Captive Turks" provided a target of opportunity for U.S. intelligence in the post-World War II years similar to the Byelorussians, Ukrainians, and others who joined forces with the Nazis against the Soviet Union and later enlisted in the shadowy East European networks of the CIA. That is, there is no reason to suppose that the U.S. motivations and practices toward pro-Nazi East Europeans that have recently been exposed by John Loftus in *The Belarus Secret* were not also operative in the U.S. approach to the tattered remnants of those units of Soviet Turks which had fought alongside the Germans against the Soviet Union.

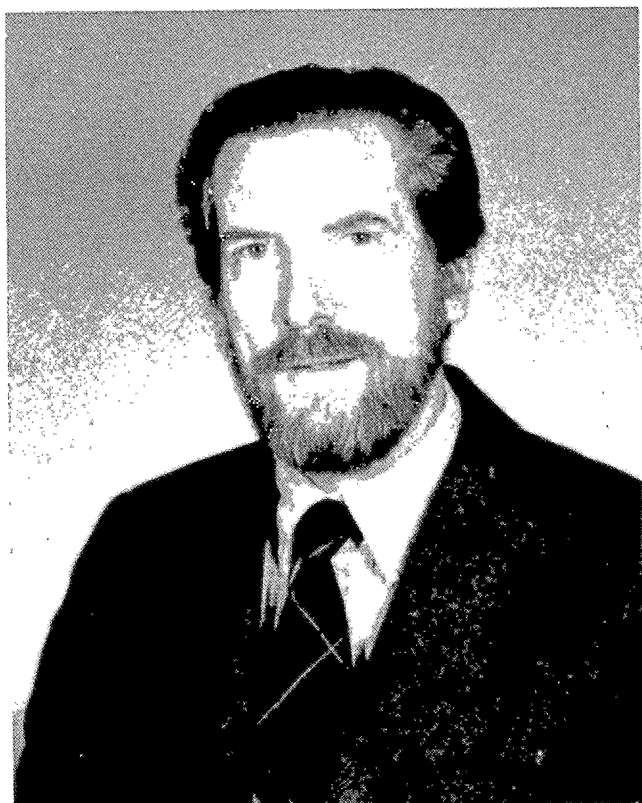
A tantalizing link has been discovered by Turkish journalist Ugur Mumcu, who has exposed the CIA ties of Ruzi Nazar, a Turcoman who was born near Tashkent in the Soviet Union and deserted the Red Army to join the Nazis during World War II. After the war Nazar was recruited by the CIA; and, according to Mumcu, he "was successful in penetrating Turkish fascist circles in the days when Agca worked as a hired gun" for the NAP. In the 1950s Nazar was a part-time contributor to the Voice of America, and it was perhaps through this work that he met Paul Henze, who was then working for Radio Free Europe. Nazar apparently joined Henze when the latter was sent by the CIA to the U.S. Embassy in Turkey in 1959. But by the time that Henze had become Chief of Station in 1974, Nazar's cover had been blown and his usefulness in Turkey had come to an end. Nazar was then transferred to the U.S. Embassy in Bonn where, according to Mumcu, his assignment was to

penetrate Gray Wolves organizations for the CIA, while maintaining his close ties to Col. Türkes.¹

Whether the CIA had extensive ties with the Gray Wolves is an open question. The most likely avenue linking the CIA to the Turkish right runs through Turkey's Counter-Guerrilla organization, a branch of the Turkish General Staff's Department of Special Warfare created sometime in the 1960s. According to former Turkish military prosecutor and Supreme court Justice Emin Deger, there was a close, working collaboration between the NAP armed commandos, or *Bozkurts*, and the Counter-Guerrilla units. There was also a close tie between the Counter-Guerrilla and the CIA. In his book, *CIA, Counter-Guerrilla, and Turkey*, Deger further charged that the CIA, acting through the Turkish intelligence agency (MIT) and the Counter-Guerrilla, promoted rightwing terrorist actions to destabilize the Turkish government and prepare the way for the military coup of 1971.²

Another study of Turkey's Counter-Guerrilla notes that it was headquartered in the same Ankara building that housed the U.S. military mission, and that the training of officers assigned to this unit "begins in the U.S. and then continues inside Turkey under the direction of CIA officers and military 'advisers.'" During the 1960s, according to the same study, the CIA assisted the MIT in drawing up plans for the mass arrest of opposition figures; and the study claims that this plan was put into operation following the 1971 coup.³

We have noted the contradiction between the Soviet Union's alleged motive for assassinating the Pope and the highly negative effect of the actual assassination attempt on Soviet interests. Turkish "destabilization" presents another curious contradiction between motives and actions, on the one hand, and the results and the distribution of benefits on the other. Thus it is an act of faith of the Sterling-Henze school that the Soviet Union was trying to destabilize Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s. But once again the actual results of destabilization have turned out to be detrimental to Soviet interests and favorable to those of the United States. Given the weakness of the left in Turkey, the actual outcome would seem obvious and should have been seen as obvious to the Soviet leadership. One possibility is that Soviet leaders are completely incompetent and fail to see the obvious. The other possibility is that the claim of Soviet efforts to destabilize Turkey is a big lie, perpetrated by disinformation specialists of the West to discredit the enemy and possibly to cover over the destabilization efforts of the United States and its friends. ●



Credit: Scribner's

Paul Henze.

1. Mumcu was interviewed and some of his work summarized in the *Atlanta Constitution*, January 30, 1983. Mumcu claims to have seen a letter from a leader of the NAP in West Germany to Türkes about Nazar's influence in rightwing Turkish student groups there, and Mumcu also claims to have received information about Nazar's CIA links from a Turkish general who maintained close ties with Nazar.

2. Cited in S. Benhabib, "Right-Wing Groups Behind Political Violence in Turkey," *MERIP Reports*, No. 77 (May 1979), p. 17.

3. Jurgen Roth and Kamil Taylan, *Die Türkei—Republik Unter Wolfen* [Turkey: A Republic Ruled by Wolves], (Bornheim, West Germany, 1981). Excerpts from this study were translated in *CounterSpy*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (February-April 1982), pp. 23 and 25.

Part III: The Second Conspiracy: The Rome-Washington Connection

3.1 The New Cold War

The creation and institutionalization of the Bulgarian Connection must be situated in the political environment of the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the late seventies, anti-detente forces within the United States were waging a furious battle against SALT II and any further pursuit of understandings and rapprochement between the great powers. Aided by the Iranian hostage crisis, they were sufficiently powerful and well mobilized to be able to defeat President Carter, kill SALT II, and help usher in the New Cold War.

In the United States the forces opposing detente have had an important institutional representative in the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) and its follow-on Coalition for a Democratic Majority. The CPD has had high level²³ representation in both political parties. Among the intellectual weapons used by the CPD and its allies, "terrorism" and the "Soviet Threat" have ranked supreme. The so-called "Vietnam Syndrome" had weakened the force of traditional anticommunist appeals in rallying support for U.S. intervention abroad. Terrorist and Soviet threats are well designed to reinvigorate that traditional appeal, and they have been used regularly by the CPD to justify a more aggressive stance toward the Soviet Union (and all of its alleged proxies and sympathizers). A major problem for the CPD faction has been: what can the media and public be induced to accept in the way of evidence? In the late 1970s the claim of Soviet military superiority and U.S. voluntary disarmament made substantial headway, and a further turn to the right yielded a further enhancement of media and public gullibility. A continuing problem, however, was that, aside from remote Afghanistan, the failure of the Soviet Union to send troops beyond its borders made the Soviet threat too abstract for some Americans and many Europeans. Something closer to home was needed.

An important contributor to the ideology of the New Cold War was the leadership of the state of Israel. Israel was under international attack in the late seventies for its policies of forcible displacement of Arabs and installation of Jewish settlers on the West Bank, its violations of the civil rights of non-Jews, and its refusal to negotiate with the PLO or recognize any Palestinian right of self-determination. In 1979 even the Carter administration assailed Israel for its violations of Arab rights in its annual State Department report on the state of human rights, and 59 well-known U.S. Jews petitioned then Prime Minister Menachem Begin to reconsider his policy of expropriation and resettlement.

The Israeli solution to this problem was to step up the propaganda war. This had two features. One was to identify the Palestinians repeatedly as "terrorists," which would, if effective, dehumanize them and make it possible to deal with them as "two-legged animals" (Begin), which is to say, on the basis of force alone. The second theme of the new propaganda campaign was to make the PLO a tool of the Soviet Union, with the latter engaged in a worldwide campaign to destabilize the

democracies. This second theme was well designed to appeal to U.S. conservatives and to fit in with the Reagan presidential campaign and programs. Israel would be a front-line defender of democracy against "Soviet-sponsored terrorism." The settlement of the West Bank and the refusal to deal with Palestinians would be part of the unified struggle against "international terrorism" rather than a denial of basic human rights.

An important focal point of the new, two-tiered propaganda campaign was the first meeting of the Jonathan Institute, held under Israeli auspices in Jerusalem from July 2-5, 1979. The Jonathan Institute is a virtual arm of the Israeli government,²⁴ and representation at the July 1979 Conference included a large contingent from the Israeli state, especially from the defense and intelligence establishments.²⁵ (Four former chiefs of Israeli military intelligence participated in the Conference.) The U.S. contingent was virtually a Who's Who of the CPD and CDM, including: Richard Pipes, Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, Senator Henry Jackson, Ben Wattenberg, George Will, and Bayard Rustin, among others. Also present from the United States were Claire Sterling and George Bush. CIA and other U.S. intelligence representation was substantial: Bush, former head of the CIA; Ray Cline, former deputy director for intelligence of the CIA; and Major-General George Keegan, Jr., former chief of Air Force intelligence. Present from the United Kingdom were Brian Crozier and Robert Moss, both long-time assets of the CIA, MI-6 (British intelligence), and other military intelligence agencies.

The conference proceedings were opened with an address by Prime Minister Begin, who urged the conference members to get out and disseminate the "Soviet terrorism" message. While the conference was still in session, Ian Black of the *Jerusalem Post* noted that "the Conference organizers expect the event to initiate a major anti-terrorist offensive."²⁶ The participants were well situated to implement this offensive. Many were important politicians, and a large contingent were media pundits with direct access to a mass audience. Throughout the West the Conference propaganda theme resounded, immediately and repetitively. In France, Jacques Soustelle, former leader of the OAS secret army (pardoned in 1968 for his treasonous activity during the Algerian War), a Conference participant and newspaper correspondent, summed it all up in *L'Aurore*: "the Conference had 'confirmed' that the Soviets 'pull all the strings' behind 'international terrorism.' " "Toujours le KGB," was the paper's caption. The same point was made by Will, Wattenberg, Sterling, Crozier, and Moss to a receptive western press. On November 2, 1980, the last Sunday before the U.S. presidential election that brought Reagan into power, the *New York Times Magazine* carried an article by Robert Moss entitled "Terror: A Soviet Export." (This is the same Robert Moss who had previously been exposed as the author of a CIA-funded attack on Allende, 10,000 copies of which were bought by the Pinochet government.) This article,

24. For a brief account of the Institute, see *CovertAction Information Bulletin*, Number 22 (Fall 1984), p. 5.

25. This account draws on the excellent M.A. Thesis in International Relations by Philip Paull, *International Terrorism: The Propaganda War*, San Francisco State University, June 1982.

26. Quoted in *ibid.*, p.19.

23. Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was a member of the CPD. Brzezinski's chief of propaganda was Paul Henze, a long-time CIA officer and one of the leading exponents of the Bulgarian Connection. See 3.6 below.

so strategically placed and timed, symbolizes the power of the rightwing syndicate that met in July 1979, and the alliance between that syndicate and the mass media. It also served to usher in the Reagan-Haig propaganda campaign and its focus on "international terrorism."

Credit: Editions du Sorbier



First Jonathan Institute meeting in Jerusalem (Brian Crozier in foreground).

Reagan, Haig, Weinberger, and company faced a problem similar to that of Begin. They came into office determined to reestablish definitive U.S. military superiority over the Soviet Union. As spelled out in the Pentagon's Five Year Plan, the objective was to allow the United States to operate without constraint over the entire globe—even to destabilize and roll back the Soviet empire.²⁷ An arms race would also be useful in impoverishing the Soviet Union, as the poorer country would have to spend to painful excess to keep only modestly behind the wealthier and more technologically advanced one. While this strategy is clear, the cooperative western media have not allowed this reality to interfere with official claims of Soviet prowess, bargaining chip strategies, and the genuine interest of the Reagan administration in arms control and in reducing nuclear arms to zero.²⁸

Nevertheless, the contradiction between the Reagan arms buildup and the assertions of benign purposes is so immense that a larger infusion of propaganda has been required. In fact, it has been necessary to stir up a serious quantum of fear and irrationality to bridge the Reagan credibility gap. The public has had to be convinced that they are dealing with real challenges to their national pride and well-being, and that the Reagan policies are designed to contend with something truly evil. The theme of Soviet sponsorship of international terrorism serves this need effectively. The way in which the Reagan administration took advantage of the Soviet downing of the Korean 007 airliner, using it as a propaganda instrument to dehumanize the enemy, is an object lesson in both the uses of propaganda and the perceived importance of placing the Soviets in a bad light. To be able to pin the attempted assassination of the Pope on the Soviet Union would be an even more important propaganda coup. Accomplishing this useful end

was a challenge to western intelligence, media, and political institutions, but one which they have met with remarkable efficiency up to this point.

3.2. The Italian Context: The Fascist Tradition, P-2, and Craxi-Lagorio

In discussing the Bulgarian Connection case as it has been developing in Italy, western commentators typically assume without question that Italy carries out the case reluctantly, embarrassed by its international implications, and pursues it with the integrity and fair play characteristic of the Free World. That it might possibly be *explained* by conservative vested interests, political infighting, and Cold War politics in Italy is a point that never arises in the western media. This reflects a potent propaganda system at work.

It is also slightly comical, as Italy has been torn by periodic major political scandals ever since the country's defeat during the Second World War. An important feature of post-Mussolini Italy was the continued and virtually unimpaired power of the industrial, financial, military, and intelligence elite that had worked for Mussolini. In the wake of the collapse of fascist resistance, the prime aim of the occupying U.S. authorities was the containment and defeat of the leftwing forces that had achieved great strength as antifascist partisans. The result was the rapid rehabilitation of the fascist cadres, thus assuring an antidemocratic underpinning to the superimposed democratic framework.

This fascist undergirding of Italian democracy was strengthened by the Cold War. Fascist forces gained greater confidence as they came to understand their acceptability as important protectors of the Free World. They organized themselves and periodically attempted to install a full-fledged authoritarian system in various abortive coup efforts in the 1960s and 1970s. From their dominant position in the police and intelligence agencies, these fascist elements penetrated and frequently controlled terrorists of the right and left. Former military counterintelligence (SID) agent Roberto Cavallaro told the Italian weekly *Europeo* in November 1984 that "The security services make special alliances both with organized crime and with terrorism. . . . The secret services exercised a strict control over the terrorist groups," both left and right.²⁹ In most of the great terrorist massacres in Italy in the 1960s and 1970s, virtually all of them rightwing in origin,³⁰ the security services played some sort of role: sometimes as instigator, sometimes protecting the killers from apprehension, often deliberately diverting suspicion onto convenient (leftwing) scapegoats.

The most notable institutional expression of the prominence of the old fascist network, and the corruption of Italian civil society, was P-2. The P-2 scandal broke in 1981, shortly after the attempted assassination of the Pope. The scandal had immediate effects, including the resignation of cabinet ministers and the fall of the Forlani government, but it was not until July 12, 1984 that the extensive investigation of P-2 by the Italian Parliament was completed and its 170 page final report was issued. We have obtained a copy of this *Report of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on the Masonic Lodge P-2*, and its findings are summarized below.

27. A summary of this five-year plan was provided by Richard Halloran, "Pentagon Draws Up First Strategy For Fighting a Long Nuclear War," *New York Times*, May 30, 1982.

28. *The New York Times*, having published the excellent summary by Halloran cited in the previous note, then proceeded to ignore its contents in editorials over the next several years.

29. Quoted by Diana Johnstone in "Latest scandal leads to Reagan administration," *In These Times*, December 5-11, 1984.

30. See Joanne Barkan, *Visions of Emancipation*, Praeger, New York:1984; Stuart Christie, *Stefano Delle Chiaie, Portrait of a Black Terrorist*, Refract Publications, London:1984; Frederic Laurent, *L'Orchestre Noir*, Editions Stock, Paris:1978.

The Report describes one of the most comprehensive attempts to undermine, and then control, a western democracy since World War II. This destabilization campaign came, not from the Soviet bloc, but from rightwing forces active within Italy, and involved corruption, blackmail, and espionage among the most prestigious and important institutions in Italy. The partially accomplished goal of the campaign was "the surreptitious and anonymous control" of the Italian state by the Masonic Lodge "Propaganda Due," or P-2.

P-2 was one of hundreds of masonic lodges in Italy, with lodge memberships running into the tens of thousands. P-2, however, was a secret lodge, illegal in Italy, and the discovery of its membership list during a police raid on the residence of Italian fascist Licio Gelli, proved to be so scandalous that it forced the reorganization of the Italian secret services and the Italian government itself.

Licio Gelli and P-2. Licio Gelli was the head of P-2. He was not even 20 years old when he went off to Spain to fight for Franco in the Spanish Civil War. In World War II he fought for Mussolini as the Allies advanced in Italy. But after having fought for fascism in both Spain and Italy, he switched sides at the last moment to help Communist partisans defeat Mussolini's forces near Gelli's hometown of Florence. Soon after the war, however, following disclosures that he had been involved in the torture and murder of Italian partisans, Gelli fled Italy for Argentina. In Argentina, Gelli became intimately involved with fascists, including the founder of the AAA Anticomunist League José Lopez Rega, and he remained in Argentina for 20 years before returning to Italy as an Argentinian consul.

Back in Italy, Gelli was initiated into masonry in 1965. His sponsor recommended him as "someone in a position to make a notable contribution to the order in terms of recruitment of qualified persons." In 1971 Gelli was made organizing secretary of Loggia Propaganda, which henceforth was known as "the Gelli-P-2 Group." In his new role Gelli was permitted to initiate new members—a privilege previously permitted only to current and former Venerable Grand Masters—and immediately began to recruit generals and colonels in the Italian military as members of P-2. At the same time, going against longstanding tradition within Italian masonry that excluded discussions of politics in lodge meetings, Gelli began to politicize P-2 membership gatherings. According to an agenda in the possession of the Parliamentary Commission, one meeting considered "the political and economic situation in Italy, the threat of the Communist Party now in accord with clericalism aiming at the conquest of power," and "our position in the event of a coming to power of the clerico-communists." The anticommunism of the Gelli-P-2 group and its influence in the Italian military, provides the background for understanding much of the political upheaval and terrorism that took place in Italy during the 1970s, and which continues into the present.

P-2 penetration of the Italian military. By 1974 Gelli had recruited a total of 195 Italian military officers, of which 92 held the rank of general or colonel, including:

- 56 Carabinieri officers (12 generals and 8 colonels),
- 8 admirals in the Italian navy,
- 22 army generals,
- 5 generals of the treasury service (Guardia di Finanza), and
- 4 air force generals.

The parliamentary report notes that the Italian military personnel recruited by Gelli constituted a "map of military power at the highest level. . . ." The report also notes that Gelli was able to manipulate the P-2 military membership to serve "the

political objectives of Gelli and P-2, objectives hardly compatible with services on behalf of democratic institutions since they responded to directives from centers of power extraneous, if not hostile, to such institutions." Gelli also "played a direct role in promotions in the military service. . . . The penetration of P-2 into circles at the top of the military hierarchy ended in creating a situation in which entrance into the lodge (P-2) constituted a sort of obligatory passage in order to rise to higher levels of responsibility." High officers also applied pressure on their subordinates to join P-2 if they wanted to make higher rank or achieve their preferred posts in their respective organizations.

P-2 and Italian intelligence. The Parliamentary report flatly states that Gelli was a member of the Italian secret services. In fact, the heads of all three secret services in Italy—General Grassini of SISDE, General Santovito of SISME, and Prefect Peolosi of CESIS—were members of P-2.

Gelli's influence in the highest circles of Italian intelligence was similar to the role he played with the Italian military: these intelligence organizations and their leaders, often acting at the behest of Licio Gelli, were "involved with subversive groups and organizations, inciting and aiding them in their criminal projects" in support of Gelli's political objectives.

The strategy of tension. What were these "criminal projects" and what were Gelli's political objectives? In the early 1970s, Gelli's goal in Italy was to destabilize the political system in such a way that the right wing, already under his direct control or influence, would acquire power with popular support. To bring this situation about, Gelli, in concert with other shady rightwing characters, organized the "Strategy of Tension." Terrorist acts, such as the bombing of the Rome-Munich express train in 1974, and the Bologne railway station bombing in 1980, were organized and carried out by the rightwing groups. The bombings were investigated by the intelligence agencies under Gelli's control, which placed responsibility for the bombings on leftwing terrorists.

The strategy of tension envisioned that numerous "leftwing" bombings and acts of terrorism would build popular support for extreme antiterrorist legislation in the name of national security. Antiterrorism laws would then allow Gelli's supporters in the military and intelligence agencies to target leftwing groups with few legal restrictions. (Sergei Antonov is now in an Italian jail under the authority of an Italian antiterrorist law which permits the imprisonment of suspected subversives and terrorists for up to five years without a trial.) The Parliamentary report comments: "P-2 contributed to the so-called strategy of tension, that was pursued by rightwing extremist groups in Italy during those years when the purpose was to destabilize Italian politics, creating a situation that such groups might be able to exploit in their own interest to bring about an authoritarian solution to Italy's problems . . . to condition political and public opinion that changes were demanded and radical solutions possible . . . with the overthrow of the democratic republic a real alternative among various possible outcomes."

The decisive shift to the left marked by the elections in 1975 and 1976, which suggested the real possibility of an eventual accession to power of the Communist Party, produced a fundamental shift in Gelli's P-2 strategy. Where he had sought control through destabilization by terrorism and subversion, he now aimed at political *stabilization*. This would be achieved through massive penetration into the highest reaches of Italian life, not only the military and intelligence agencies. Gelli's new objective was to obtain a position of outright control—behind the scenes—so that even if the Italian Communists came

to power it would make no real difference in the basic structures of Italian political life. The Parliamentary report notes that Gelli's "new members came from the most sensitive quarters and highest levels of national life, . . . amounting to an extended, authoritative, and capillary apparatus of persons which Gelli, in his capacity as Venerable Master of P-2, could dispose at will."

P-2 and the state apparatus. With his new strategy, Gelli successfully "penetrated into the most important sectors of the institutions of the State." By 1979, P-2 membership had grown to at least 953, representing "a presence of men in P-2 in practically all sectors of public administration."

P-2 membership rolls included three cabinet ministers, 36 members of parliament, the police chiefs of Italy's four main cities, the mayors of two other cities, and members of numerous agencies of the state.

A partial list of P-2 membership in the Italian state sector is as follows:

- Interior Ministry: 19 members,
- Foreign Affairs: 4 members,
- Ministry of Public Works: 4 members,
- Public Instruction: 32 members,
- Ministry of State: 21 members,
- Treasury: 67 members,
- Ministry of Health: 3 members,
- Industry and Commerce: 13 members,
- Finance Ministry: 52 members,
- Justice, including Magistratura: 21 members,
- Ministry of Cultural Affairs: 4 members,
- Scientific and Technological Research: 3 members, and
- Ministry of Transportation: 2 members.

The number of P-2 members in the Italian state administration totalled 422. Especially important in the view of the Parliamentary Commission was P-2 infiltration into the Italian Treasury and in those institutions involved in trade abroad, as well as P-2 penetration into the prestigious Bank of Italy, an institution with important overseas connections. Other major banks targeted for the establishment of strategic P-2 contacts in the international banking and business community were the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, the Monte dei Paschi di Siena, the Banca Toscana, the Istituto Centrale delle casse rurali ed artigiani, the Interbanca, the Banca di Roma, and the Banco Ambrosiano.

P-2 and the mass media. One of the most important projects of P-2 and Gelli during these years was the successful move to acquire the Rizzoli publishing group. Rizzoli controlled the leading Italian newspaper, *Corriere della Sera* of Milan. At its zenith, the Rizzoli publishing group was printing one in four of all the newspapers read daily in the country. The daily sales of *Corriere*, 500,000, were the highest in all Italy.

During an examination of the financial records of Rizzoli Publishing, it was discovered that Roberto Calvi, the President of the P-2-controlled Banco Ambrosiano, controlled 100 percent of *Corriere* itself. Upon P-2's acquisition of *Corriere*, its editor, Piero Ottone, a thorn in the side of the Christian Democratic Party in Italy for many years, was replaced by his deputy, Franco DiBella. When the P-2 house of cards fell in 1981, the records showed that DiBella had been a member of the P-2 lodge since October 10, 1978.

The Gelli-P-2 group also acquired control or important influence over many local newspapers throughout Italy.³¹ Gelli and

P-2 used this influence within the media for the "coordination of the entire provincial and local press, so as to control public opinion throughout the country."

Gelli's acquisition of *Corriere della Sera* and other newspapers, his intimate ties with the Italian secret services, and his influence in almost every major Italian institution, reveal "the general line of an alarming, comprehensive plan for the penetration and conditioning of national life." One Commission member described the activities of the Gelli/P-2 group as "a permanent plot" against the democratic republic that "develops and changes its strategies according to the evolution of the official political situation, even as it influences that evolution."

Would the members of the anticommunist brotherhood of P-2 be capable of concocting a case against the arch-enemy that would involve falsifying evidence? Were they in a position to do this by their reach into the police, secret services, the press, the judiciary, and political parties and administration? These questions are not explored in the western media; the quality of the Italian police-security establishment, with its deep roots in Italian fascist history, is off the western agenda.

Also off the agenda is the politicization of the case in Italy. There is intense hostility and conflict between the Communist Party and the Socialists and Christian Democrats, as well as sharp class conflict in Italy. It is obvious that a successful linking of the Bulgarians and Soviet Union to the assassination attempt against the Pope would be a severe blow to the Communist Party and to the left. Thus the conservative press has played up the story without restraint. Minister of Defense Lagorio was quoted in the western press as asserting to the Italian Parliament that the assassination attempt by Bulgarians was a "declaration of war." And the press has produced a steady outpouring of the Sterling-Jonathan Institute line that the Soviet Union is the base of all terrorism. The western media have not commented on the fact that Lagorio's statement about a declaration of war was based on a belated confession by a long imprisoned murderer, and that this assertion of guilt was made before any court had come to such a conclusion. Coming from a high official of the government, the statement shows both the high political stakes involved and the dubiousness of the Italian political scene for a fair trial.

The government of Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi has, in fact, built its political strategy to a large extent on anti-Soviet rhetoric and associated service to the Reagan administration, and Craxi has a large vested interest in the pursuit and successful outcome of the case against the Bulgarians. P-2 and other reactionary elements in the police and security forces have a parallel interest. Thus the political elements with a stake



Bettino Craxi.

31. *Il Mattino*, *Sport Sud*, *Il Piccolo*, *Eco di Padova*, *Il Giornale di Sicilia*, *Alto Adige*, and *Il Lavoro*.

in bringing and winning the case are formidable and command powerful business, financial, and press support. They also derive strong support from the Reagan administration, which has already achieved enormous benefits from the Connection.

3.3 The U.S.-Italian Connection: From Ledeen to Pазienza to SISMI

Italy was occupied by the military forces of the United States and its allies during World War II. Subsequently the United States was not only the major force reshaping the Italian political economy, it established a patron-client relationship that persists up to the present time. Great emphasis was placed by the U.S. authorities on maintaining close relationships with the military-intelligence elites of Italy. This was facilitated by U.S. subventions, by a secret clause in the peace treaty between the two countries that provided for U.S. access to Italian intelligence sources, and by the organization of NATO and other instrumentalities of Free World military and intelligence integration under U.S. command.

The power of the United States vis-a-vis "independent" Italy was displayed by the CIA in its very first covert action—the crude interventionism of the late 1940s in which millions of dollars were poured into the support of conservative Italian politicians, both directly and by the purchase of Italian media. This process was repeated in the 1976 elections, in which the power of the Communist Party induced another large U.S. input—money, organized efforts to get Italian-Americans to solicit relatives, and open and covert propaganda. The most interesting aspects of this interventionism from the standpoint of the Bulgarian Connection was the energetic role played by Claire Sterling and Michael Ledeen in 1976. The two collaborated on several articles placed in the Italian media on the Red Menace and alleged Soviet aid to the Italian left (both Ledeen and Sterling have long specialized in leveling accusations against the enemy which were directly applicable to the side for which they were dispensing propaganda). Michael Ledeen was a journalist working for *Il Giornale*, a rightwing Milan newspaper that regularly followed the U.S. political line. Worried about the 1976 election outcome—Italian TV was state-owned and not accessible—U.S. officials bought up huge blocks of time on Monte Carlo TV, which could reach Italy. Anticomunist news and documentary materials provided by the editorial staff of *Il Giornale*, with Michael Ledeen an active participant,³² were then fed into Italy via Monte Carlo.

In the 1970s and early 1980s Michael Ledeen was a friend of and collaborator with Francesco Pazienza, an Italian businessman with links to the mafia and close ties to key members of P-2 and the Italian military intelligence service SISMI. Pazienza was a close friend of Licio Gelli and provided his private yacht to help Gelli escape from prison. Michael Ledeen also apparently knew Licio Gelli. The Italian weekly *Panorama* reported on March 29, 1982 that investigators had intercepted a phone message between Gelli and Florence lawyer Federico Federici in the course of which Gelli informed Federici that he had written a book that could be given to Michael Ledeen. Both Ledeen and Pazienza were friends of Alexander Haig, U.S. Secretary of State in 1981.³³ Pazienza was also an associate of Roberto Calvi, the murdered head of Banco Ambrosiano. Before his death Calvi had swindled more than a billion dollars through a complex chain of bank



Michael Ledeen.

Credit: Wash. Star Coln. D.C. Public Library

transactions that deeply involved P-2 and the Vatican bank. Pazienza helped Calvi take refuge as the Banco Ambrosiano crisis reached its peak, and he introduced Calvi to Flavio Carboni, the last man known to have seen Calvi alive. At the time of Agca's assassination attempt, SISMI was headed by General Giuseppe Santovito, a P-2 member and protector of Pazienza. During Santovito's tenure, in fact, Pazienza had extraordinary powers, and was the dominant individual in a small group of secret service "plumbers" ("Super S"), made up of P-2 members, using the resources of SISMI and answerable only to Santovito.³⁴

Italian investigators have shown that SISMI, Pazienza, and Michael Ledeen, perhaps working through Super S, together lured President Jimmy Carter's brother Billy into a compromising relationship with Col. Qaddafi during the 1980 Reagan presidential campaign. According to the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*:

This scandalous material was gathered mostly by Pazienza and by his American friend Michael Ledeen. . . . Pazienza availed himself of SISMI both for the use of some secret agents and for the expenses of organizing the scandalous plan. It seems that the organizers got a huge payoff for "Billygate." Moreover, Santovito and Pazienza got great advantages in return from American officials, in fact may have been helped in other obscure affairs. The "Billygate" operation did not come under SISMI's institutionally mandated task, and for that reason Judge Sica brought charges of pursuing private interest through official activities.³⁵

Ledeen, Pazienza, and SISMI working together in the service of the Reagan administration, and manipulating the Italian political and media environment with money and the special

32. Philip Paull, *op. cit.*, n. 25, p. 72.

33. Diana Johnstone, "The Ledeen Connection," *In These Times*, September 8-14, 1982.

34. Sandro Acciari and Pietro Calderoni, "C'ero io, c'era Pazienza, c'era..." *L'Espresso*, November 11, 1984; Diana Johnstone, *op. cit.*, n. 29.

35. Quoted in Johnstone, *ibid.*

resources of an important intelligence agency, is suggestive. After Reagan's election Ledeon was more powerful than previously (he is at present working under contract to the Pentagon and the State Department³⁶), and it takes little imagination to contemplate the possibility that he and his friends might work out a way to take advantage of Agca's presence in jail and his alleged visit to Bulgaria. "Billygate" was a model of what can be done in the way of setting somebody up for a media coup, using the power available to U.S. agents and their Italian allies. Agca was visited by Major Petrocelli of SISMI in his Ascoli Piceno prison cell on December 29, 1981. Lieutenant Colonel Giuseppe Belmonte of SISMI (subsequently arrested) and Francesco Pazienza himself also reportedly visited Ascoli Piceno prison on several occasions during the period when Agca was gathering his thoughts in preparation for implicating the Bulgarians.³⁷ No doubt magistrate Martella will clarify the purpose of those visits in his 1200-page document submitted to the court in asking for an indictment of the Bulgarians.

3.4 Martella, Priore, and Italy's Unfunny Judicial Farce

Just as the American press has not seen fit to examine the Italian political environment, so also it does not analyze closely Magistrate Ilario Martella and his handling of the Bulgarian Connection. Martella is often given laudatory and entirely uncritical accolades emphasizing his determination, conscientiousness, and integrity; but his background and performance are never considered in any depth or with the slightest critical perspective. This allows the press to proceed on the as-

36. See *CovertAction Information Bulletin*, Number 22, p. 41.

37. *La Repubblica*, October 23, 1984, as quoted in Johnstone, *op. cit.*, n. 29.

sumption that we are witnessing in Italy a thoroughly honest judicial process, and it permits the steady stream of fresh allegations and leaks to be given full propaganda value.

With an unbiased media, by contrast, we believe that the fraudulent character of the Italian proceeding would have been quickly made evident. The preceding two sections describe a political environment incompatible with a fair judicial process, and in fact the terrorism law under which the case is being brought suspends many of the traditional rules that distinguish democratic from nondemocratic societies. The mass media of the West barely mention and never complain about this legal process. The passionate public statements by political leaders in Italy and the United States that clearly prejudice the case, the enormous media barrage that has done the same, and the huge stake of Italian and U.S. conservatives in the outcome have made this a political and politicized case from the very beginning. Would this not affect the judicial system, the choice of judges in Italy, and their ability and willingness to look for the truth? The question does not arise in the West.

The P-2 conspiracy penetrated the Italian judiciary, and the 1984 Parliamentary Report states that Dr. Carmelo Spagnulo, chief prosecutor of the Rome Court of Appeals was in attendance at a key meeting held in Gelli's home in 1973. In their general enumeration of P-2 penetration into public administration, which counted 422 P-2-linked officials, 16 active and three retired magistrates were included. Whatever the affiliations of particular judges, this is symptomatic of an unhealthy judicial environment, a sickness displayed in both the antiterrorism laws and in the judicial performance of Martella and his associates in dealing with the Bulgarian Connection.

By the late 1970s the Italian judiciary was saturated with a

Agca Admits U.S. Guidance, Denies Bulgarian Connection!

The Free World enthusiasm for Agca's confessions suffered a jolt in January 1985 when it was revealed that he had written a letter to a U.S. military attaché stationed in Rome implying that he had made his "confessions" at the direction of U.S. personnel.

The letter, written in Turkish and mailed to the U.S. Embassy in August 1983, has been verified as "authentic" by both Martella and an embassy official. It was received by Capt. Ernest Till, turned over to Italian authorities, and printed in Martella's official indictment. A translation was printed in the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* on January 18, 1985.

According to the *Washington Post* the letter begins by implying that a long-standing relationship existed between Till and Agca. It then continues: "For two years you have done everything necessary in view of our mutual friendship and interest." The letter then complains about the skepticism expressed by some U.S. news organizations over Agca's shifting claims. "What crime have I committed?" Agca asks. "You told me, 'begin,' and I began to speak."

The letter also contained suggestions on the U.S. anti-Soviet media campaign, and urged that a former Soviet diplomat who had been stationed in Iran and later defected to the United Kingdom be questioned to confirm Agca's claims that he had plotted to kill Walesa, Ayatollah Khomeini, and the U.S. hostages in Iran. Agca also claimed that

the diplomat could confirm the fact that the Soviet Union trained Middle Eastern terrorists in the 1970s with the assistance of Bulgaria, Syria, and East Germany.

Martella's report says, according to the *Post*, that Agca retracted his story about contacts with the Soviet diplomat in January 1984.

Agca engaged in another change of heart in an interview taped in Rome by the Italian state-run network RAI. As reported in an AP dispatch from Rome:

ABC News said it had been told by informed sources that Mr. Agca, in the censored portion, denied that Bulgarian agents had sent him to kill the Pope and asserted he had acted alone.

"I did not shoot the Pope on anyone else's behalf," said Mr. Agca, according to the sources, whom ABC News did not identify. But the sources said Mr. Agca had asserted that he had been trained by Bulgarian agents in Syria.

This was reported in a small, back-page item in the *New York Times* (February 5, 1985) under the heading, "Agca Recalls Prison Visit By Pope"! Agca also asserted in this interview that he condemned terrorism and had not ever killed any human being. ●

Sources: *Washington Post*, January 19, 1985; *New York Times*, January 19, 1985 and February 5, 1985.

perspective on terrorism straight from the Sterling-Jonathan Institute school of thought. This framework was immediately applied to the Plot against the Pope. For example, Martella's colleague Rosario Priore, Judge of the Court of Appeals and serving as Investigating Judge at the Rome Tribunal, published a report, "The cases Moro, Dozier and the attack on the Pope,"³⁸ which is vintage Sterling. After describing Agca's account of his stay in Sofia, and presenting a number of alleged facts about the Bulgarians named by Agca,³⁹ Priore says that, while this "network" needs to be evaluated further, "still, it does at least show the interweaving of a number of international interests and the existence of centers that manipulate terrorism, which are located in other countries and in their intelligence services . . ." (p.24).

After quoting Agca on his own role—"I am an international terrorist, ready to help the terrorists of any nation"—Priore concludes that the manipulators of international terrorism "aim at destabilizing the western democracies" (pp. 25-26), although he does not point to any evidence that would support this claim. This is of course a major theme of Claire Sterling's *The Terror Network*, which she could not sell to western intelligence agencies, but which has found a happy home in the Italian judicial system.⁴⁰ Priore infers a "network" from an alleged Bulgarian Connection alone, and "international centers" of terrorism (plural) from the same evidence. He shows not the slightest skepticism concerning Agca's testimony, despite its continually shifting character and other deficiencies. He refers to Agca's statement "I am an international terrorist" etc. as "highly significant," not as a statement that would be significant if true. The extremely rote quality of Agca's remarks on international terrorism that conform so precisely to—even caricature—the Sterling model of a modern terrorist does not elicit doubts from these Italian judges, and Italy-based coaching is not entertained as a possibility. The hypothesis that the Bulgarians and Soviets might have been set up by some other "centers of terrorism" (if any exist for these loyal sons of the West) is never addressed. In brief, Priore's document is a rightwing ideological tract under the guise of a judicial statement.

Judge Ilario Martella was put in charge of the case in October 1981. His claim to fame, and the main basis for western accounts of his doggedness and integrity, rests on the fact that he was the magistrate in charge of the investigation of the bribery of Italian officials by the Lockheed Corporation in the mid-1970s; and he eventually charged the President of the Italian Republic, Giovanni Leone, with accepting bribes. There are two different accounts of Martella's role in that process. One is the semi-official western account, which stresses the fact that the dogged investigator eventually brought Leone to book. The other, which we believe to be closer to the truth, is that Martella was chosen for the role by the ruling conservative Christian Democratic Party precisely because they knew that if there

was any hope for delay and coverup, Martella would find it. In this instance a coverup was not possible, as the pressure from the media based on inescapable evidence eventually forced Martella's hand. From his first access to the Lockheed files, Martella should have known (and probably did know) that "Antelope Cobbler" was the code name for Leone. Under pressure and with long delay this dogged man finally did acknowledge the identity. Thus was created the image of the determined seeker after truth, useful for another day.

Like Priore, Martella starts out with a prior assumption that the charges which he is supposed to be investigating are essentially true. The most remarkable illustration of this is his reaction to Agca's numerous lies and retractions. In a normal judicial or scientific process, lies and retractions that destroy part of the claims of a witness weaken the credibility of those parts that cannot be positively disproved. Disbelief is directly related to the number of lies and retractions. This is not true in the Martella investigation. Martella postulates that, having decided to tell the truth, Agca is always struggling to make that core truth more credible. He lies, according to Martella, in order to "give more credibility to his statement."⁴¹ This is, of course, merely Martella's gratuitous assumption, for which he gives no rationale. This assumption flies in the face of normal reasoning—which does not rationalize lies by *a priori* assumptions about the liar's intent. What is more, this assumption happens to coincide with Martella's political preferences, which tend toward finding Agca's claims valid. Martella's investigation was therefore hopelessly biased at the outset.

When Agca retracts evidence, for Martella this is to Agca's credit, as he is cleansing himself of excesses in his search for the truth ("we cannot ignore the particular importance in the search for truth of the 'retraction' made by the same Agca during the course of the judicial inquiry"). The alternative possibility, which Martella never addresses, is that Agca retracts claims because his lies have run into so many contradictions that they are no longer sustainable. For example, Agca ultimately withdrew his claim that the Bulgarian official Aivazov was the man fleeing the Square on May 13 (whose back was shown on so many photos), admitting instead that it was his friend Oral Celik. Martella quotes Agca to the effect that the reason for this recantation is that he is now determined "to tell

38. This document was circulated in the United States by the Italian Embassy.

39. Two of them were in Bulgaria at the same time as Agca, and two "were in service in Rome at the same time the structure discussed above was in operation—aquiring information on the Italian trade unions. . . ." Rosario Priore, *The cases Moro, Dozier and the attack on the Pope*, p. 25.

40. The judge presiding over Agca's initial trial for the attempted assassination of the Pope, Severino Santiapichi, stated at the conclusion of that trial that Agca was merely the surface representation of a "deep conspiracy . . . orchestrated by secret forces, carefully planned and directed down to the smallest detail." This reference to "secret forces" has a Sterling-like ring, and as we discuss elsewhere in this article, the planning of the assassination attempt was remarkably mismanaged. Quoted by Michael Dobbs in "Agca, Naming Three, Finally Makes the 'Bulgarian Connection' Official," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1984.



Todor Aivazov, left, at press conference in Sofia.

41. The quotes from Martella given here are taken from the *New York Times* translations of key sections of Martella's final report, November 1, 1984.

Agca Identifies Antonov Under Martella's Watchful Eye

The great innovation of the Italian judicial process is allowing the witness supporting the *a priori* Free World truth about the assassination attempt to adjust his testimony by a trial and error process, with no penalty for error. As Michael Dobbs points out, "The overall effect of these changes was to bring his evidence into line with events occurring outside the top-security prison where he was being held as well as with revelations about the case in the mass media." Although Agca made errors on key points and radically contradicted himself time and again, this was never fatal.

Agca's identification of Antonov and his claim to have done business with him are strategic to the case. Consider, then, how Agca identified Antonov:¹

(1) It took him six months after agreeing to cooperate with the Italian authorities even to mention Antonov's existence. (2) In his first reference to Antonov made at the end of October 1982, Agca was brief: he said only that while talking with his Bulgarian "control officer" Kolev on May 12, 1981, Antonov was pointed out to him by Kolev as the man who would drive him on the next day (the assassination rendezvous). Antonov wore a blondish beard. (3) On November 8, 1982 Antonov was recognized by Agca in the photo album. He now had a black beard, which Agca remembered he had seen on two or three previous occasions (whereas a week or two earlier he stated that he had seen

Antonov only on May 12 and that he had had a blond beard). (4) On November 19, 11 days after being shown the photo, Agca's recollections bloomed and finer details were forthcoming—he remembered now that Antonov had a broad forehead and a big nose, and that he had been introduced to Agca not by control officer Kolev but at the Hotel Archemides back in December 1980. At that time they discussed plans to assassinate Walesa! (5) On November 27, 1982 Agca now claimed to have first met Antonov in the apartment of his control officer Kolev at Via Galiani 36. (6) By late December, Agca had moved on to the version of greater complexity and intimacy in which he met Antonov and his wife in their own apartment several days before the assassination attempt—a version Agca retracted on June 28, 1983.

We note in the text that Antonov's lawyers will be able to show that Antonov did not have a beard until after May 13, 1981. This calls into serious question the integrity of the photo identification, and it should have cast serious doubt on Agca's story from the very start. But the most notable feature of the Bulgarian caper is that Agca's continuous stream of contradictions, lies, and outlandish claims failed to discredit him as a witness. Without bias, a judge would have regarded the entire Keystone Kops plot in Rome as *a priori* implausible. The series of lies and contradictions would have led quickly to a termination of further use of the witness. Martella, however, kept taking each piece of nonsense seriously. He has been a superb instrument of the Second Conspiracy.

1. The facts in this account are taken from the chronology given by Michael Dobbs in his "A Communist Plot to Kill the Pope—Or a Liar's Fantasy," *Washington Post*, Nov. 18, 1984.

the truth to the end even at the risk of harming a friend who like Celik is dearer to me than a brother but in the knowledge that I am telling the absolute truth." Martella cites this approvingly, although it is an assertion of a man who had lied incessantly up to that very moment; Martella apparently believes that this statement has substantial evidential value, as it is included in his final report summary. The Agca retraction followed shortly after a press conference in Sofia at which photographs of Aivazov had made it clearly evident to the assembled press that it could not have been he in the Square. When the Bulgarians suggested that this might have had something to do with Agca's recantation, rather than a sudden burst of sincerity, Martella refused to accept such a cynical view!

Because for Martella Agca is a truth-seeker, he may adjust his evidence by a system of successive approximations (see Sidebar). It turns out, for example, that so many people saw Antonov at the Balkanair office on May 13, 1981 at 1700, the time at which Agca claimed that Antonov was with him, that Agca's evidence was not sustainable. Well, Agca could then recall that he had in fact met Antonov somewhat earlier. This was perfectly understandable to Martella. Eventually Agca's claims will fit times for which the Bulgarians have no ironclad alibis. This eventual vindication of Agca's claims is greatly helped by the fact that Martella disbelieves Bulgarians as strongly as he believes Agca (and anybody who supports his

claims). Bulgarians are not seekers after the truth. Their failures to remember all of the details of the events during a day two years ago quickly arouses Martella's suspicions. Numerous Bulgarian and Italian witnesses brought forward by the defense have been dismissed for lack of precision and contradictions in their recollections. When Agca was caught unable to state on what floor Antonov's apartment was located (he allegedly visited it a number of times), Martella says "it would have been much more surprising had Agca been not mistaken."

The Martella process is completed by the further dichotomous treatment of possible coaching. Martella was extremely alert to the possibility that the Bulgarians might connive among themselves to create an alibi or line, and he was quick to dismiss new claims that corrected earlier inconsistencies as clearly based on collusion. As regards Agca being primed from the beginning, or step by step, one can observe a completely different Martella—more understanding of Agca's problems in searching for the truth, and remarkably naive and vague about the possibilities of connivance and collusion.

Here again is a double standard that protects the "case" which so well serves western political interests. What makes Martella's pretended naiveté about the possibility that Agca was coached especially ludicrous is that he has maintained no authority and control over the imprisoned Agca's visitors or ac-

tivities, whether by lack of power or because he delegated it to the intelligence services and prison authorities. For example, Defense Minister Lagorio stated before the Italian Parliament that two members of SISMI and SISDE, Italian intelligence services, visited Agca in prison on December 29, 1981, *without Martella's knowledge*. There were many other visitors to Agca in prison. Martella has been vague about this, but essentially denies his own responsibility. Martella himself visited Agca only after a long delay, and shortly after the intelligence service visit (and numerous others). This suggests the possibility of a "two track" system, in which the intelligence services and prison authorities would arrange for Agca to be primed, and Martella would then accept the new insights and seek to confirm them independently. This division of labor would allow SISMI to do the dirty work of getting Agca to see the light and feeding him the requisite information, while Martella would appear to be an innocent if perhaps naive judge playing dumb about the SISMI preparations as he doggedly searches for the truth.

With these enormous biases built in to Martella's investigation, it was inevitable that Agca would be found to be telling the truth at the core. This was presumed in advance, and was necessarily demonstrable by the principles of evidence employed. Martella tells us in his report, as illustrative of Agca's evidence that had been "confirmed," that Agca stated that Antonov "had a pair of eyeglasses which at times he kept in the pocket of his jacket," and that "Sotir Petrov was at the Bulgarian Embassy in Rome 'probably' in the office of the military attaché." These points may be true, and if we postulate that Agca could not have been fed them, but had to know them as a co-plotter, and assume that the probability of some form of coaching is not vastly greater than the likely truth of the endless absurdities of the Bulgarian Connection, the plot is validated. Michael Dobbs raises the question of how Agca could know that "Sotir Petrov" was "probably" in the office of the military attaché without coaching, but these kinds of questions (which run into the hundreds) did not stop Martella. His methods are those of a prosecutor, and a highly political prosecutor at that; they are surely not the methods of a judge seeking the truth.

Martella's political bias is evident in every aspect of his conduct of the case and in the published part of his final report. In that report he speaks of the plot as "a real act of war"—language close to that demagogically used by Defense Minister Lagorio on the floor of the Italian Parliament, but an especially flamboyant and politically loaded phrase in a legal case resting strictly on Agca's claims and still untested in a jury trial. After noting that Agca had been provided with a perfectly forged passport and that he had received financial support and protection during his travels up to May 13, Martella concludes that "Ali Agca was only a pawn in a vast plot. . . ." The facts cited by Martella, however, were perfectly compatible with a "tiny plot" involving the Malatya branch of the Gray Wolves. The "vast" plot is political rhetoric not grounded in evidence.

Martella's political bias is also reflected in his affinity for U.S. disinformation experts. Just prior to arresting Antonov, Martella visited the United States to consult, among others, Arnaud deBorchgrave, a Red Scare novelist and major disinformation source. From deBorchgrave Martella got the alleged information that the head of the French secret services had learned about an "Eastern" plot against the Pope in advance, and had actually warned the Vatican. This piece of "information" has never been confirmed either by French or Vatican sources, but it eventually showed up in Agca's testimony.

Agca claimed that the Bulgarians urged speed in execution of the plot as the French and Romanian secret services were aware of the plot and the papal authorities might take countermeasures. Martella cites these claims in his final summary report, apparently taking them seriously. He never seems to have noted the contradiction between this anticipated prior knowledge of the plot by the authorities and the incredibly loose behavior of the Bulgarians in entertaining Agca and openly parading around with him for several days preceding the assassination attempt. We believe that this Borchgravian information offered by Agca was surely fed to him by one of his interrogators, to be regurgitated for the delectation of the investigating magistrate.

Claire Sterling also appears to have a close relationship with Martella. She states in her *Time of the Assassins* that she "dropped in on Martella" to check up on his agenda (p. 64), and apparently did so more than once (pp. 109, 194), although she notes elsewhere that he "was free to discuss the case only with competent judicial authorities" (p. 144). It would appear to be no coincidence that the first journalist to obtain the Albano report was Claire Sterling.

Under Martella's management the case has been notable for leaks and delays (notable also in the Lockheed/Leone case). Martella has always reluctantly produced just enough copy to keep the pot boiling at the right times. In the first period after Agca was persuaded to implicate the Bulgarians in November 1982, Martella busily visited Antonov's apartment and otherwise displayed to the press that energy in pursuing Agca's claims that is one of his most distinctive attributes. On July 8, 1983 Agca was brought out of jail to be interrogated concerning another case (the kidnapping of a Vatican official's daughter). The press was informed of the occasion and Agca, a convicted multiple murderer, was allowed to speak before Italian TV cameras, to whom he presented a full litany of Sterling clichés, as a spokesman for law and order: "I was trained in Bulgaria and Syria . . . the Bulgarian services . . . Yes, by the KGB." Martella disclaimed responsibility for allowing this organized press conference for Agca, but if this is true it indicates a serious lack of judicial control over judicial processes. In December 1984 Agca was again allowed to be interviewed by an Italian journalist, although he was presumably scheduled for trial for conspiracy to murder. The leak of the Albano report to Claire Sterling fits the same pattern.

Martella has shown no interest in any other possible locus of a plot than Bulgaria. For example, Agca spent a great deal of time in West Germany, which is a major Gray Wolves center, and the Gray Wolves seem to have provided Agca with money and guns throughout his travels in Europe. A number of Gray Wolves—most notably Musa Cedar Celebi, Omer Ay, and Oral Celik—were involved in the logistical support and assassination attempt itself. It is important, too, that the details showing extensive Gray Wolves involvement are independent of the testimony of Agca. Although Celebi, the direct paymaster of Agca, lived in Frankfurt, Martella failed to go there and seek evidence of the possible existence of a Gray Wolves conspiracy.

Martella has also been extremely unenterprising in seeking evidence that *contradicts* Agca's claims, and when he is confronted with it, he tends to look the other way. In Bulgaria, Martella visited the Vitosha Hotel, an important place where Agca claimed to have stayed and met his accomplices in Room 911. The Vitosha keeps extensive records—customer sign-ins, passport data, and details on the occupants of each room. During the period of Agca's alleged stay and meeting, neither his

name nor passport aliases appear on the hotel records. According to Bulgarian authorities, Martella did not even bother to make a court-usable copy of these records, nor did he show any interest in checking out and verifying the complete record of all of the room's occupants during the relevant period.⁴² This is unaccountable, given the strategic importance of Agca's stay in Sofia in the summer of 1980, unless we assume a bias so overwhelming that counter-evidence inconvenient to the preferred truth will simply be ignored.

Another important illustration concerns Agca's claim to have met Mrs. Antonov on several occasions and to have visited Antonov, his wife, and daughter in their apartment. Even though these Agca claims were extremely implausible, Martella believed them, and failed to show any initiative in proving Agca wrong. The defense had to dig up the evidence that Mrs. Antonov had driven with friends to Yugoslavia. The defense—not the dogged investigator—got copies of hotel registers and affidavits of identification at hotels and border crossings. At the time Agca allegedly met Mrs. Antonov at the Picadilly restaurant, she was in Sofia. The defense was obliged to seek out and produce compelling data showing this. Martella had never even bothered to check out Mrs. Antonov's movements through the Rome airport. The Bulgarians claim that when Martella finally interrogated Mrs. Antonov, his questioning was lengthy and hostile. Subsequently, Agca admitted that he had never met Mrs. Antonov.

Why was Martella taken in? Where was the press to laugh at his gullibility, point to his limited investigative vision, and moralize on his unjustified behavior toward Mrs. Antonov? More importantly, as the evidence on this point collapsed, based on defense investigations, Agca was allowed to amend his claims and the case went forward without derailment.

Martella is clearly a team player—the team being the Italian political-intelligence elite and their allies in Washington, D.C. His duty has been to push the Bulgarian Connection as far as it can be pushed, to deflect criticisms as best he can, to keep the ball in the air as long as public relations points can be extracted from it. To outsiders looking at his antics closely, he is, in a sense, a comic figure—rushing around trying to confirm Agca's latest and maddest claims, pretending that Agca has not been coached, finding “independent confirmation” of claims that a child would see could have been fed to him by SISMI and company, and trying to convey the impression of an objective seeker after truth. But whatever his comic attributes, Martella is making a notable contribution to New Cold War ideology building. So also are the western media, which take him very seriously indeed. The consensus is so complete and powerful that even Michael Dobbs can only refer to Martella as hardworking and conscientious. So probably was the Soviet judge in *Darkness at Noon*.

3.5 Darkness in Rome: The Western System of Induced “Confession”

In his *Darkness at Noon*, Arthur Koestler imagines the way in which confessions were induced in the staged trials of Stalin's Soviet Union of the 1930s. Isolation, persuading the prisoner of the hopelessness of his position, and convincing the victims that they could best contribute to their own and the national welfare by a properly directed confession yielded the desired results. With the incarceration, isolation, visits, and requests for cooperation, and with subsequent confessions channeled to mutual advantage, the West has produced an analog-

ous result in Rome. Agca was subjected to no physical violence. He was kept isolated for a while, but was eventually provided with a comfortable cell with TV, radio and private bath. He was also instructed that cooperation would be positively beneficial to him, not only assuring his safety and comfort but very possibly shortening his prison sentence under the Italian “Penitent's Law;” whereas non-cooperation would result in his being released into the general prison population, very dangerous indeed for a foreign assailant of the Pope.

We feel confident that Agca was carefully guided to the desired line of confession. This would be easily done by constant questions and suppositions about Bulgarian links, so that Agca would quickly see what was wanted of him. As a rightwinger and anticommunist it should not have been too difficult to persuade him that he was contributing to a useful crusade against a common enemy. Virtually all Agca observers agree that Agca will tell his interrogators what they want to hear, as long as this does not violate his basic principles. The most important of these is not implicating his Gray Wolves comrades. The confession naming the Bulgarians actually served his comrades by directing attention away from their role in the assassination attempt.

Agca would also be amenable to fingering the Bulgarians because this provided him with an opportunity to make a mark on the world. This is apparently one of his driving emotional needs (and one contributing to the real plot against the Pope). Agca was referred to half-affectionately by some of his Gray Wolves colleagues as the “Emperor.” The Emperor likes to be in the limelight, and he enjoys the notoriety of shooting the Pope. Moving once again to center stage by his confession, Agca has been pleased with the renewal of attention and eager to provide his new collaborators with what they want. He has been playing a role, repeating in rote fashion and like a bad actor all the formulas of the Sterling school of “international terrorism.”

In our conception of what actually took place in Italy, Agca would not have required much direct coaching. Having been shown his options, and the usefulness and personal advantage of cooperation, he would understand, perhaps even without explicit mention, that his captors were deeply interested in providing a Bulgarian involvement in the assassination attempt. By means of judicious questioning he would be provided with enough detail to be able to make a plausible first approximation case. Very likely he would be shown pictures of individuals and apartments, with identification sufficient to allow him to provide “surprising details.” Then, with enough access to the news reports on the case, and by the intelligent use of further questions by a friendly secret service and magistrates, Agca could provide new claims and new “surprising details” without any explicit further coaching.

A curiosity in the case strongly supportive of the coaching hypothesis is the belatedness of Agca's naming of Bulgarians. Arrested in May 1981, Agca began talking to Martella only in May 1982. And he did not begin to name his Bulgarian accomplices until October and November of 1982, a lapse of 17-18 months. He did not provide any Bulgarian names until some six months after he had agreed to cooperate with the Italian authorities. Why did he wait so long? The standard explanation of Sterling and company, eventually repeated by Agca to Martella, is that he had expected to be broken out of prison or bartered for by the Bulgarians, and ultimately felt betrayed by them. This is completely unconvincing. In his very first confession, immediately following the murder attempt, Agca men-

42. Christian Roulette, *op. cit.*, n. 4, pp. 245-252.

tioned the Bulgarians among many others. Thus, he was prepared to bring them into the picture and was not “protecting” them from the very beginning. At no time, by contrast, did Agca ever admit to a Turkish fascist connection, the true locus of his commitment—and the plot. Furthermore, the idea that Agca would have had any serious expectation of escape by action of the Bulgarians is entirely implausible. Getting him out of an Italian prison would have been difficult—in contrast with a Turkish prison, where his Gray Wolves friends were omnipresent—and both an escape attempt or an effort to bargain for his release by the Bulgarians would have acknowledged an involvement that the Bulgarians would not easily have been willing to make. Even Agca would understand this. Thus there has been no rational explanation yet provided by the Italian authorities or Sterling as to why Agca refused for so long to implicate the Bulgarians. Our conclusion is that he didn’t confess earlier about Bulgarian participation because he had nothing to confess. He had to be softened up in prison and then induced to say the right things.

Coaching. There are numerous other reasons for believing that Agca was coached:

- We have seen that all of the Italian intelligence services were headed by P-2 members and were broadly infiltrated by P-2. Michael Ledeen and Francesco Pazienza were very close to and exercised important influence over SISMI. All through the period immediately preceding Agca’s naming of Bulgarians, the Reagan administration and the powerful right wing of Italy were striving to put into effect the message of the Jonathan Institute Conference of July 1979: tie the Soviet Union to “international terrorism.” The Agca “confessions” and Martella’s mindless pursuit of the case have served the Reagan-Jonathan Institute objectives to perfection (in perfect symmetry with the fact that the alleged Soviet motive failed entirely to yield a result compatible with Soviet objectives).

- As we noted earlier, officials of the Italian intelligence services visited Agca after he had been imprisoned for six months. The Italian press claims that Agca was also seen later by other officials, including the recently arrested Lieutenant Colonel Giuseppe Belmonte, and by Francesco Pazienza himself. Agca was also visited by U.S. and Turkish intelligence officials, by a Turkish journalist, and by others. Following his December 29, 1981 meeting with the intelligence officials, Agca informed his lawyer that he had been offered a deal for talking.

- The Italian press has also reported that Agca, while allegedly in solitary confinement, was often visited by a reformed member of the Red Brigades who was teaching him Italian. He was also frequently attended to by Father Santini, a prison chaplain who was later jailed for serving as a prison emissary of the mafia.

- According to Prosecutor Albano’s report, when in June 1983 Agca withdrew his assertion that he had ever visited Antonov’s apartment or met his wife and daughter, he stated that he had obtained his description of Antonov’s apartment—its layout, furnishings, etc.—from newspapers. The prosecutor also conceded that Agca’s feat in producing the telephone numbers of various Bulgarians had been accomplished by his looking them up in a telephone book “inadvertently” provided to him.

While these admissions concede the breakdown of solitary confinement, they do not prove coaching. The Bulgarians claim, however, that a thoroughgoing search of press coverage shows that at the time of his interrogation in which he provided

the details on Antonov’s apartment, *no Italian or Turkish newspaper had yet produced a single word about Antonov’s flat in Rome*. Such descriptions followed both his confession and the first investigative visit to Antonov’s flat on June 11, 1983.⁴³

- Former Minister of Defense Lagorio stated before the Italian Parliament that Agca was shown a photo album that had been prepared by the secret services, and identified his Bulgarian accomplices, in September, 1982. Albano’s report placed the photo identification on November 8, and Martella also states that on November 8 Agca picked out the Bulgarians “without being informed in any way of the names or positions of the people involved.”⁴⁴ Martella’s statement reflects the dichotomy mentioned earlier—with the Bulgarians, acute attention and focus on the possibility of coaching and conspiracy; with his own preferred hypothesis and supportive witnesses, disarming naiveté and acceptance of something as true which he could not possibly know from personal knowledge. The contradiction between Lagorio and Albano-Martella has not been explained, and would seem to show a slip-up among the players in the judicial comedy.

- Initially Agca identified the Bulgarian Antonov as having a beard. While Antonov had a beard at the time of his arrest, his counsel was able to prove that he did not have a beard at a time when Agca claims they met. Agca identified Antonov on the basis of a later photograph, making the kind of mistake in timing that occurs with coaching, when the beard appearing later is carelessly assumed to have been worn earlier. How did Agca even *recognize* the bearded Antonov who he had never seen in the bearded state? On the supposition that he might still have recognized him, would he not be likely to note his former nonbearded state? Agca has subsequently suggested that Antonov probably wore a false beard. Why would Antonov wear a false beard in dealing with Agca, who allegedly visited his apartment and phoned him at the Bulgarian Embassy? Who would Antonov be trying to fool? Apparently the beards also changed color at each meeting. (See Sidebar on p. 23.)

- Agca has been shown to have lied literally hundreds of times. He was nevertheless able to remain the witness because Martella has allowed him to reach the truth by the method of successive approximations. Errors can be gradually corrected as Agca obtains new data from the press, police, or the magistrates themselves, which allows for continuous readaptation until finally something may be “confirmed” by “independent evidence.” For example, Agca can be told that there was a truck at the Bulgarian Embassy on May 13, 1981, and asked whether perhaps that wasn’t an escape vehicle? He first denies this, then finally admits that that was indeed the plan. Martella is then told about this spectacular confession, and that the police have been able to “confirm” that there was a truck at the compound. Agca spoils things a bit by suggesting that the truck was to be parked on a street near St. Peter’s Square. When it becomes obvious that there will be no independent confirmation of a truck so conspicuously placed, and the absurdity of the operation becomes clearer (the truck couldn’t move through the crowd), the confession can be revamped without penalty.

- After Agca retracted his claim that he had been on reconnaissance missions planning to murder Walesa, he was asked to explain how he knew so much about Walesa’s hotel if he had

43. Boyan Traikov, *Mystification, Dr. Martella*, Sofia Press, 1984, p. 28.

44. Quoted in Michael Dobbs, “A Communist Plot to Kill the Pope—Or a Liar’s Fantasy,” *Washington Post*, November 18, 1984.

never been there. According to Michael Dobbs, "Agca claimed that he learned the details from magistrates who had interrogated him in connection with a parallel investigation into an alleged Bulgarian spy ring in Italy"! This admission displays a broken-down judicial process, but the Bulgarians claim that Agca's assertion is not valid—that the interrogations of Luigi Scriccolo read to Agca, which he named as the source of his information, do not contain any descriptions of the building in question.⁴⁵ Agca also named a Bulgarian diplomat, Ivan Donchev, as a partner in the Walesa murder plot, and he identified Donchev from a photo album. Subsequently Agca admitted that he had never seen Donchev in his life. How did he identify Donchev's picture without coaching?

● Finally, the coaching hypothesis is supported by the fact that the Bulgarians reported a series of break-ins into their Embassy compound in the fall of 1982, just prior to the confession of Agca that accused the Bulgarian officials. Nothing was taken during these break-ins, suggesting that someone might have searched for papers and photographed the inside of apartments, items that would later serve to jog Agca's memory.

3.6 The Media and the Plot to Kill the Pope

As we have stressed, the Bulgarian Connection has been exceedingly functional and has met an urgent need. The Reagan administration's plan to build 17,000 new nuclear warheads and to deploy space-based battle stations is much more salable to the public and Congress when news headlines read: "Soviets Plot to Kill Pope." The system has accommodated this need. Important initiatives were taken in the United States by former CIA propaganda officer Paul Henze, Claire Sterling, and powerful media entities such as the *Reader's Digest*, NBC-TV, and the *New York Times*. These efforts gradually built up the mass of publicity which established the "truth" of the Bulgarian Connection.

We believe that this publicity also had a profound effect on the development of the case in Italy. Based on the strength of the publicists and their allies, their media access, and their sophistication as media managers, this campaign forced events in Italy toward the desired outcome. "Links" and allegations produced on one side of the Atlantic led to further revelations and publicity across the sea, and the interaction between media claims and leaks of new developments gave the case continuing vitality.

In an earlier article based on a quantitative analysis of the themes and biases of the media treatment of the Bulgarian Connection, two of the present writers showed how this conformed to the characteristics of a propaganda campaign: notably, the volume of coverage, its lack of substance, the abandonment of critical standards in evaluating evidence, and the exclusion of dissenting views.⁴⁶ In our discussion below we focus instead on the *quality* of media sources on the Bulgarian Connection. As we mention above (see 1.1), a unique aspect of media coverage has been its heavy reliance on individuals who played a major role in the manufacture of the Plot. Among these Paul Henze and Claire Sterling dominate the field.⁴⁷

Paul Henze: "Specialist on U.S. Propaganda." In early May 1980 four senior members of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee—Frank Church of Idaho, Jacob Javits of New York, Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, and Charles Percy of Illinois—wrote a letter of protest to President Jimmy Carter concerning certain proposed appointments to the Board for International Broadcasting (BIB). The BIB was created in 1973 by Congress to oversee the operations of the U.S. radio stations based in Munich, Germany: Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. BIB had been organized following disclosures that the CIA was behind the two stations. In 1980 the Senators protested "that former intelligence officials are trying to redirect the board away from its oversight role to one more compatible with the two stations' old role as a tool for propaganda."

The former CIA official within the Carter administration "trying to redirect" the BIB was Paul Henze, described by the *New York Times* as "the National Security Council specialist on United States propaganda." Henze had been the policy adviser at RFE when it was controlled by the CIA, and he was later to serve as CIA station chief in Turkey. The BIB controversy centered around two Henze-selected nominees to fill vacancies on the board, an effort, according to the Senators, "to make the board more responsible to the National Security Council," *i.e.*, to Henze. One of Henze's proposed appointees, Leo Cherne, had admittedly received CIA money in the 1960s. The Senators commented in their letter:

We believe that the work of a decade in assuring the professional integrity of RFE/RL would be undone if any of the present members were to be replaced by persons who could even be remotely identified as presently or formerly associated with the CIA or intelligence activities in any capacity.⁴⁸

Henze was the first prominent American to accuse the Soviets in print of conspiring to shoot Pope John Paul II. His November 1981 article in *Atlantic Community* in which he made this charge provided no evidence to show the Soviets had anything to do with the shooting. For Henze, however, the question of evidence was an unpatriotic consideration in discussions of hypothetical Soviet crimes.:

The extent to which the Soviet Union has encouraged, underwritten, and instigated political destabilization is a complex and widely debated question. I believe we are past the point where it serves the interests of any party except the Soviets to adopt the minimalist, legalistic approach which argues that if there is no "documentary evidence" or some other form of incontrovertible proof that the Government of the U.S.S.R. is behind something, we must assume that it is not."⁴⁹

Although the *Atlantic Community* article itself played an insignificant role in U.S. media coverage of the investigation into the shooting, it is important because it openly denies the relevance of evidence in a case where Henze was shortly to become a leading source of evidence for the western media.

Henze's central role in the development of media coverage of this subject was noted in a *New York Times* article by Philip Taubman and Leslie Gelb on the attempted papal assassination published shortly after the arrest of Antonov:

Several former government officials, including Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State in the Nixon and Ford administrations, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser to President Carter, have said that they believe that Bulgaria

48. A. O. Sulzberger, Jr., "U.S. Overseas Radio Stirs Dispute Again," *New York Times*, May 15, 1980.

49. Paul Henze, "The Long Effort to Destabilize Turkey," *Atlantic Community*, Winter 1981-1982, p. 468.

45. Traikov, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

46. Frank Brodhead and Edward S. Herman, "The KGB Plot to Assassinate the Pope: A Case Study in Free World Disinformation," *CovertAction Information Bulletin*, Number 19 (Spring-Summer 1983), p. 13.

47. Michael Ledeen has also been an important participant in the genesis of the Plot. His role in Italy has been discussed already in the text (see 3.3).

and the Soviet Union were involved in the assassination attempt.

Support for this theory has come from Paul Henze, a former CIA station chief in Turkey and an aide to Mr. Brzezinski. Mr. Henze, now a consultant to the Rand Corporation, was hired by the *Reader's Digest* after the shooting of the Pope to investigate Mr. Agca's background.

Mr. Henze's findings, which included information about links between Mr. Agca and Bulgaria as well as the Soviet Union's use of Bulgaria as a surrogate to spread unrest in Turkey, were incorporated in a *Reader's Digest* article on the shooting of the Pope that was written by Claire Sterling and published last September.

Mr. Henze said that he later sold his reports to *NBC-News* and *Newsweek*, which have explored possible Bulgarian and Soviet involvement. Mr. Henze made his research material available to the *New York Times* for a fee.⁵⁰

50. *New York Times*, January 27, 1983.

In short, Henze's research was incorporated into all of the major media pieces which introduced the Bulgarian Connection. Furthermore, having helped *generate* the Connection, Henze was then used by the media to confirm the truth of the Plot. This long-time CIA officer and specialist in propaganda, who has denied the need for hard evidence in accusations against the Soviets, was thus probably the single most important individual source of information in the U.S. media's coverage of the alleged Soviet bloc conspiracy. While he was acting the role of expert and reporter, the U.S. media almost never mentioned his former CIA connection (see Sidebar).

Claire Sterling: Terrorism Pseudoscientist. In *The Terror Network*, Claire Sterling indignantly calls attention to the fact that major intelligence agencies of the West had denied her claims about international terrorism, telling her "lies," and referring to her theories as "bunk" (p. 10). She does not spell out the lies and precise denials, but it is clear that these agencies failed to accept her claim of an all-pervasive Soviet-spon-

Paul Henze on Human Rights

When a labor union official is imprisoned in Turkey, the event is never news in the United States. When Lech Walesa is arrested in Poland, this is front page news for several months. (How many U.S. citizens can name a single labor union, or union organizer in Turkey, or in Latin America?) The reason for this dichotomy would appear to be that Walesa and Solidarity threaten *Soviet* control and strategic interests. A vital Turkish labor movement threatens our own military client and thus *our* strategic and economic interests. The media adapt to this interest pattern. Thus one would have to be a committed media observer to learn of the following conditions in Turkey:

- Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch estimate that there are from 18,000 to 30,000 political prisoners in Turkey. The government admits to 13,000. According to the Turkish newspaper *Milliyet*, over 122,000 people were arrested during the 1980 rightwing military coup.

- Amnesty reports that most political prisoners in Turkey are tortured, that "torture is widespread and used as an administrative practice," and, according to the report, *Torture in the Eighties*, that torture is on the increase. Methods include "electric shock, falaka (beating of the soles of the feet), burning with cigarettes, hanging from the ceiling by hands or feet for prolonged periods, and beating and assaults on all parts of the body, including the sexual organs."

- Prisoners of conscience (political prisoners who have not committed any act of violence) include trade union members, members of the Turkish Peace Association, leftwing activists, writers, professors, and students.

- Since the coup (1981-1984) the Reagan administration has quadrupled military and economic aid to Turkey, which is now the third largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance (about \$700 million in 1983). Only Israel and Egypt receive more.

- The Reagan administration justifies increased aid to Turkey on the basis of its transition to democracy from military rule, a transition founded on the alleged legitimacy of

the 1983 elections. These elections took place only after the military drafted a new constitution which legalized the continuation of martial law, and after 12 of the 15 parties which sought to participate in the elections were outlawed. Moreover, the head of the military regime, General Kenan Evren, is guaranteed a seven-year term as president with veto power over legislation by the newly elected parliament.

Given the pattern of interests at stake, it should not surprise us that Paul Henze, who created a Bulgarian Connection without evidence, denies the truth of the extensive evidence of state terrorism in Turkey. We juxtapose here two letters to the Editor of the *New York Times*, one criticizing the Turkish human rights record, the other, Henze's reply.

Note that Henze replies with his standard line, that anyone who disagrees with him is a Soviet stooge:

The judgements about the current situation in Turkey which the five professors in the social sciences express in their letter are almost identical to those which Pravda prints. The two Soviet-sponsored clandestine radio stations which broadcast to Turkey are, interestingly enough, more circumspect about describing the situation, for they know they must make some effort to appear credible to the small listenership they have.

Of all people, Henze should know about the operations of clandestine radio stations. He even implies that human rights violations in Turkey do not exist:

It is hard to avoid the impression that European socialist criticism of Turkish military leadership is motivated more by Turkey's firm turn toward an open, free-market economy than by evidence of political oppression, which is hard to find in Turkey.

His claim that 800,000 weapons and hundreds of millions of dollars came from the Soviet Union is not only difficult to document, but also ignores the dominant role played by the well-funded, well-armed, fascist Nationalist Action Party. (There have been reports that Frank Terpil, the CIA agent and international arms dealer, had supplied the NAP and the

sored network. Sterling's explanation of this rejection is that they are all afraid of "angering" Qaddafi or the Soviet Union. In her *The Time of the Assassins*, she makes the point even more clearly, arguing that western governments are suppressing evidence of Soviet guilt and refusing to cooperate with the Italian investigators. The Reagan administration and CIA are spinelessly playing the same game, for fear of upsetting arms control efforts and international equilibrium.

As the Reagan administration was doing everything it could to avoid arms control during the years 1981-1984, Sterling's analysis of U.S. policy is as unrealistic as her understanding of Soviet actions and motives. Whether she really believes that Reagan and the CIA have been dragging their feet in pressing the Bulgarian Connection is an interesting question. It is extremely convenient to Reagan and the CIA to be portrayed as moderates and skeptics. This gives them credibility, so that Sterling and the media can say that "even the CIA" now believes that maybe the Bulgarians are involved. It is also helpful

for the administration to have a fall-back position in the event the case collapses.

Sterling has displayed the full gamut of characteristics of the terrorism pseudoscientist:

(1) *All disagreements with her views are enemy propaganda and often traceable to the Kremlin.* In criticizing Michael Dobbs of the *Washington Post*, for example, Sterling asserts that Dobbs's statements lend "considerable credence to the Bulgarian argument." This implies as a matter of course that the Bulgarian defense was incorrect; otherwise the simple truth would vindicate their position. In a speech on disinformation given in Paris on December 5, 1984,⁵¹ Sterling attacked the ef-

51. This speech was given at a conference on disinformation, sponsored by Internationale de la Resistance, a coalition of rightwing resistance "liberation" organizations and related support network groupings from Europe and the United States. John Barron of *Reader's Digest* and Arnaud deBorchgrave, an "Adjunct Fellow of the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies," were also in attendance from the United States.

Gray Wolves with weapons and explosives in the mid-1970s. If so, these transactions would have occurred during Henze's tenure as Chief of Station in Turkey.)

Henze's opening assertion that the professors to whom he is responding should "judge situations on the basis of observation and facts," is one he fails to follow in his own obfuscating letter. It also contradicts his argument in the *Atlantic Community* piece cited in the main article (see 3.6) against the "minimalist, legalistic approach" which demands evidence to support conclusions.

Finally, Henze's reply not only ignores the well-documented criticisms of human rights in Turkey; it appears to describe another country altogether. He states that in his travels throughout Turkey he has not found a *single* Turk who felt that human rights had deteriorated; "to a man," he says, Turks are "enthusiastic" about economic developments in their country. These are impressive statistics; on the other hand, if you were a Turk, dissatisfied with conditions under this military dictatorship, would you tell all to the former CIA Chief of Station in Ankara?

A Martial-Law Regime Deemed Fit for U.S. Aid

To the Editor:

NYT 2/10/82

While we are inclined to agree with James Reston's assertion that Secretary Haig's press conference tirades when he failed to consolidate concrete support from Western Europe against Soviet influence in the Polish crackdown were mostly for show ("Haig's Verbal Success," column Jan. 13), we wonder how successful his verbal excesses were outside the domestic American market.

In particular, we fear that many Europeans cringed with us at Haig's lashing out against the British journalist who challenged him on the double standard of condemning Polish martial law while at the same time aiding the Turkish military (news story Jan. 13). To be kind, his answer was less than convincing.

The issue, however, is very real, and considerably more important than the "silly analogy" which Reston makes it out to be. Turkey has been under martial law for the last three years, and it has been more than a year since the army physically took over.

The suggestion that the Sept. 12, 1980, coup was justified in view of the political disorder then reigning in Turkey is not qualitatively very different from the Soviet apologists' view that the military takeover in Poland was unavoidable in view of the actions of the "extremists" in Solidarity.

The fact of the matter is, nevertheless, that Turkish political and human rights have been brutally trampled by General Evren's junta, whose recent limp promise of a return to democracy is in sharp contrast to the harsh measures passed by it over the last months.

The pashas in Ankara do not sound

for "the precious freedoms and values" which Secretary Haig claims to uphold. Turkey's liberal constitution is being replaced by a cut-to-order code of repression, political parties have been dissolved, the autonomy of universities suspended and union activities banned. Female students have been forbidden to wear scarves, in spite of their religious beliefs, the persecution of homosexuals has reached unprecedented levels, while torture of political prisoners is rampant.

Yet, while the United States posits the resumption of union activity as a prerequisite of aid to Poland, it turns a deaf ear to the 52 death sentences requested by the military prosecutor in a trial of labor leaders in Turkey. Instead, Washington is increasing U.S. aid from \$547 million to \$703 million.

Unfortunately for the makers of foreign policy in Washington, West Europeans are aware of the brutal repression in Turkey. Hence, instead of consolidating behind Secretary Haig, his "eruption" may well reinforce their reaction to the "demonstration bomb" incident.

ADAMANTIA POLLIS, STUART SCRAAR
SONIA KRUUS, STANLEY DIAMOND
New York, Jan. 28, 1982

The writers are professors in the social sciences.

What the Turks Think of Their Government

To the Editor:

NYT 2-24-82

Professors in the social sciences should feel some obligation to judge situations on the basis of observation and facts. If any of the five individuals who signed the Feb. 10 letter attacking the Turkish Government and Secretary Haig for defending it have been in Turkey in the past two years, they have seen a very different country from the one I have experienced.

Of the past eight months, I have spent more than two in Turkey, traveling thousands of miles throughout the country and talking to hundreds of Turks (in their own language) at all levels of society. I have not found one who did not feel that the most basic of all human rights — the right to life itself — had not been advanced by military assumption of leadership in September 1980. Terrorism, abetted by over 800,000 weapons and hundreds of millions of dollars, whose ultimate origin was likely to have been the Soviet Union, had been undermining the very bases of civilized life.

To a man, I have found Turks enthusiastic about the economic improvements that have taken place during the past two years. I have encountered no one bemoaning the revision of the 1961 Constitution, which had come to be universally recognized as unworkable. The process of devising a more viable democratic system, which is now under way, has the support of the overwhelming majority of the people.

There is widespread feeling that all the country's former politicians failed it. Turgut Ozal, the architect of Turkey's decisive and successful economic reform program, is several times as popular as any former politi-

cal figure. The same can be said of Gen. Kenan Evren. Bulent Ecevit's most enthusiastic supporters are now found among European socialists, not among the Turkish masses. While his jailing was regrettable, it was prompted by his violation of temporary rules which other former politicians, including Suleyman Demirel, are observing, and due process was observed.

It is hard to avoid the impression that European socialist criticism of Turkish military leadership is motivated more by resentment of Turkey's firm turn toward an open, free-market economy than by evidence of political oppression, which is hard to find in Turkey. Secretary Haig is correct in rejecting any parallel between Poland and Turkey. Turkey's military leaders, acting entirely on their own, took power to preserve democracy. The Polish military, functioning as agents of Moscow, are trying to stifle it.

The judgments about the current situation in Turkey which the five professors in the social sciences express in their letter are almost identical to those which Pravda prints. The two Soviet-sponsored clandestine radio stations which broadcast to Turkey are, interestingly enough, more circumspect about describing the situation, for they know they must make some effort to appear credible to the small listenership they have.

It is difficult to convince Turks in Turkey that they are suffering misery and oppression.

PAUL B. HENZE
Washington, Feb. 11, 1982

The writer, a Wilson Fellow at the Smithsonian Institution, was a National Security Council staff member from 1977 to 1980.

fort of Italian newspapers to link what we have called the “second conspiracy” to Ledeen, Pazienza, and the U.S. and Italian secret services. She does this, not by offering evidence, but by tracing the sources to a Communist paper in Italy and a Communist disinformation campaign. She does not give any *evidence* that these were the sources, or that the disinformation campaign, if any, had any success, but she uses these assertions—essentially smears by association—to discredit an alternative line of thought. Henze works the same way. In an article in *Survey, a Journal of East and West Studies* (Autumn-Winter 1983), he dismisses two of the present writers as Soviet apologists, based on their earlier article on the Bulgarian Connection. No evidence was given of reliance on Soviet sources or arguments, or of any ties to the Soviets. It is enough for Henze that the article contested the Connection.

(2) *Uncritical handling of questionable sources.* Just as Sterling dismisses alternative views as invariably traceable to Moscow, so she treats sources that are friendly to her views without the slightest critical scrutiny. In her Paris speech on disinformation, she claims with disdain that a Soviet author on the Bulgarian Connection, Iona Andronov, “is a colonel of the KGB attached for the duration of the papal plot to the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. . . .” Whatever the truth of her contention, it is noteworthy that Paul Henze is not contaminated in her eyes by *his* intelligence connection. In the Manichean world of Sterling and her associates the intelligence agencies on our side do not lie, forge documents, or engage in disinformation strategies; only those on the enemy side do these things.

There are numerous illustrations of the gullibility with which Sterling accepts convenient disinformation handouts of Free

time of this remarkable discovery. For Sterling, Argentina’s military government was part of the Free World (like Chile and South Africa), and she therefore *presumes* that it provides truth and information, not forgeries and disinformation.

Sterling’s gullibility on the plot against the Pope is in the same mold. Because she is committed to it, Agca is believable. No accumulation of lies can call into question the favored claim of Bulgarian involvement. There will always be some fact “independently confirmed” (*i.e.*, not yet conclusively disproved) that vindicates the core of truth. As one fact slips away, another can be inserted in its place. Coaching is ruled out by assumption.

(3) *The manipulation of evidence.* Sterling’s misuse of evidence assumes many forms. One is the twisting of words to alter meanings. In *The Terror Network*, for example, Sterling purports to quote directly from a CIA report (p. 341):

“Warsaw Pact members’ assistance to terrorists originates in Pankow (East Germany) and Prague,” said the CIA in “International and Transnational Terrorism,” April 1976, p. 21 of the CIA’s Annual Report.

What the CIA report actually says is:

In any event, the only hard evidence of Warsaw Pact member assistance to individuals associated with the Baader-Meinhof Gang points to Pankow and Prague.

As we can see, Sterling’s use of quotes distorts the meaning of the original material. The CIA report speaks of “the only hard evidence” of assistance of individuals “associated with” a specific group (as opposed to the more generic and broader-based usage of the word “terrorists”). The original does not say that Warsaw Pact assistance “originates” in Pankow and Prague, as Sterling writes, but “points to” Pankow and Prague, a looser connection. If this is what happens to verifiable quotes in Sterling’s work, what happens to those quotes which are not verifiable? The issue of Sterling’s integrity is a key one, as she relies heavily on anonymous intelligence sources to support her accusations of Soviet conspiracies.

Another form of manipulation of evidence is her selectivity, suppression, and simple refusal to discuss conflicting facts. In her *Reader’s Digest* article on the Plot Sterling traced Agca’s gun to Horst Grillmaier, an Austrian gun merchant who, according to Sterling, had fled behind the Iron Curtain after May 13, 1981 to avoid questioning in the West. It turned out later that Grillmaier was a former Nazi who specialized in supplying rightwing gun buyers; that he had not disappeared behind the Iron Curtain at all; and that the gun had gone through a number of intermediaries before finally being passed to Agca by a Gray Wolves friend. In the latest version of Agca’s story, the Bulgarians gave him a package, including the gun, on May 13. Why would Agca have given up his gun to the Bulgarians, to have them return it to him on May 13? Why would the Bulgarians have had to go through all the transactions with Grillmaier and others to provide Agca with a gun, given their extensive facilities in Rome?

The main point is that with the disappearance of the Grillmaier line, Sterling quietly moves on to new facts and claims. She simply ignores the other problems mentioned here. Like Agca himself, Sterling presents a moving set of facts and scenarios, which are abandoned serially and without explanation (see Sidebars on pp. 31 and 34), and without her suffering any serious loss of credibility.

(4) *The press is being overwhelmed by KGB propaganda.* A favorite theme of Sterling and her colleagues is that the press regularly plays into the hands of the enemy. In her Paris Con-



Claire Sterling.

World sources. One of the most telling is surely her acceptance of the Tucuman Plan in *The Terror Network*. According to Sterling, this was a plot organized by the KGB in Tucuman province of Argentina in 1975, in which 1,500 terrorists in Latin America were to be rounded up and transported to Western Europe to destabilize western democracies. Sterling was never struck with the idiocy of the plan, nor its convenience as a propaganda ploy to an Argentine military government that was under attack for its policies of torture and murder at the

Credit: Newsweek

ference speech, Sterling notes that the Soviets sent the 40-page book on the Plot written by the "KGB colonel" Andronov to "every important or unimportant journalist, columnist, newspaper commentator, television commentator, editor of every western newspaper that I know of, in Europe and in the United States." She does not discuss whether these recipients ever accepted or even mentioned any of Andronov's claims, but she implies that this operation had great effect. She explains that somehow disbelief in the Connection has become entrenched because "it is the accepted position, the socially indispensable position. . . ." She then traces this disbelief to its sinister source in Communist propaganda organs in Italy and the Soviet propaganda barrage centered in Andronov's book.

In the Sterling vision of the media, there are no propagandists and disinformation sources in the West. Thus the truth about the Bulgarian Connection must struggle against the power of KGB propaganda and the tendency in the West to disbelieve the extent of enemy evil. This, of course, stands the truth on its head. Western propaganda sources are vastly more powerful and believable in the West than Soviet sources, as exemplified by Henze's role and authority and Andronov's effective nonexistence. Sterling and Henze are propaganda sources, or operate in close collusion with them, and they have full access to the mass media. Furthermore, there is a will-to-believe in the villainy of the enemy in every country. In the case of the Bulgarian Connection this has helped to overcome doubts that might arise from the absence of evidence and the shifting implausible scenarios dispensed by Agca. It is in such a world that a Claire Sterling can thrive.

Sterling and the mass media. There is a dichotomy in the evaluation of Claire Sterling's work. On the one side, most serious reviewers without governmental ties and other axes to grind have found her writings unreliable and unconvincing at best. A notable illustration is provided in Conor Cruise O'Brien's review of *The Terror Network* in the *New Republic* of July 25, 1981. The review has great credibility as it focuses on Sterling's treatment of the Provisional IRA, a subject about which O'Brien has great knowledge and little sympathy. According to O'Brien:

In short, as far as the Provisionals are concerned, Claire Sterling has got it all wrong. She could only fit the Provisionals into her pattern by misunderstanding them, and she has misunderstood them, comprehensively. Instead of trying to understand the phenomenon first—in its own peculiar historical and local context—and then seeing how it may relate to the rest of her subject matter, what she has done is to jump at quotations and other bits that seem to fit her thesis, and then assume that these handy bits constitute the key to understanding the phenomenon as a whole. Sometimes she bends a particular bit to fit another bit.

In contrast with the tier of critics and analysts that includes O'Brien, which gives substantial weight to logic and veracity, is what we may call the *power tier*. This tier consists of elements of the establishment who dominate the government and corporate media. It encompasses an important set of conservative journalists and academic intellectuals who have close relations with the government. We noted earlier the importance of the Jonathan Institute Conference of 1979 in spelling out the

Being an Expert Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry

In her *Reader's Digest* article, "The Plot to Murder the Pope," Claire Sterling attempted to fit Mehmet Ali Agca into the framework she had developed in *The Terror Network*: that rightwing terrorism is actually directed and controlled by the Soviet KGB.

A key element in her argument that the Pope plot was controlled by the Soviet Union was her description of the events surrounding Agca's escape from a Turkish prison in November 1979. As Sterling puts it, "He could not have done it without high-level help." And indeed he could not and did not. About a dozen members of the Gray Wolves, three of them soldiers, dressed Agca in a military uniform and conducted him through eight security checkpoints to a waiting car. There is no doubt that this was a Gray Wolves operation; and in February 1982 three Gray Wolves conspirators were sentenced to prison by a Turkish martial law court for helping Agca escape. (*New York Times*, February 13, 1982).

But this is not what Sterling meant by "high-level help." In her *Reader's Digest* article she implies that the Turkish Minister of the Interior, Hasan Fehmi Gunes, was complicit in Agca's escape. She notes that Gunes "was a radical well to the left of Prime Minister Ecevit." At his trial, says Sterling, Agca "waited in what appeared to be the expectation of getting sprung," and in mid-October he told the court that he had been offered a deal by Gunes: to admit membership in the Nationalist Action Party and get off. Two weeks

later, says Sterling, Agca told the court that "I did not kill Ipecki, but I know who did." He added "that he would reveal the true assassin's name at the court's next sitting. It was an explicit warning to his patrons to get him out," says Sterling, "and that is what they did."

It is impossible to read these passages without believing that Sterling is implicating Gunes, "a radical well to the left of Ecevit," in Agca's escape. She suppresses the vital information that Agca made his courtroom speeches during the time when a conservative government was being formed, after Ecevit's more liberal government had lost its parliamentary majority in mid-October. An elementary reading of Agca's threats in court is that he was serving notice to his Gray Wolves comrades that he would not tolerate any delay once the right had regained control of the Interior Ministry. And in fact Agca's escape was carried out within two weeks after the installation of the new, conservative government.

Thus by omission and distortion of elementary facts Sterling implies that Gunes, who had responsibility for Agca's safekeeping, was linked to Agca's "patrons" who engineered his escape. Nor was this story corrected in her *Time of the Assassins*, where the escape was aided by those in "high quarters," without any acknowledgement that she was talking about the conservative party which had been the long-time ally of the Gray Wolves and the Nationalist Action Party. ●

high priority given by western leaders, including both Begin and Reagan, to pinning the terrorism label on the Soviet Union. Sterling was a member of that group, along with numerous influential rightwing journalists. The direct academic link was lacking at the 1979 Conference, but the gap has been filled by the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which has close connections with

both the Jonathan Institute and the U.S. government. CSIS has provided a good supply of Sterlingesque terrorism experts with academic credentials (see Sidebar).

For the power tier the Bulgarian Connection is good and deserves encouragement; and by the same token Sterling and company are worthy and must be treated with respect (as was Joe McCarthy in the several years when he was performing useful

Brzezinski, deBorchgrave, and the CIA "Tell All" on the Plot Against the Pope

The papal assassination attempt has provided a cornucopia of propaganda opportunities for hardliners both in government and out. The recently issued report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University entitled "The Papal Assassination Attempt: A Case of State-Sponsored Terrorism," takes full advantage of these opportunities to score political points. While the title of the document suggests that readers may expect a serious discussion of the substance of the case, Bulgarian and Soviet guilt are assumed beforehand as a working premise, and the question raised is: What should U.S. responses be *if* the Soviets are shown to be behind the papal shooting? The document thus has the built-in objectivity of a report on an individual entitled: "How should we deal with John Doe if it is established that he beats his wife?"

The report frames the Plot in a Sterling setting in which international terrorism is sponsored by states that aim to "undermine world order." The guilty state is of course the Soviet Union, and the point of the report is to stress that "the papal case can be used as a symbol" in a useful propaganda campaign to dramatize the Soviets as the center of terrorism.

There are several problems that the report itself mentions, however.

- First, there is the issue of whether the U.S. has clean hands. Are South Africa and Israel terrorist states? Are they U.S. surrogates? Are the *contras* U.S. instruments of terror? Are Chile, El Salvador, and Guatemala engaged in terrorist attacks on their own citizens? Can the Soviets match the CIA's record in its numerous attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro? This issue is mentioned fleetingly in the report and passed over without serious discussion.

- A second problem is that the truth of the Bulgarian Connection is still at issue and has not yet been decided in the Italian courts. As noted, the conferees assume Soviet involvement without evidence. Co-chairman Robert Kupperman asserts smoothly in his Overview that "most thoughtful observers" believe in the Connection, but he does not name any such observers or provide any citations. Henze's "print" can be detected in the claim that doubts about Soviet guilt represent a "legalistic and narrow-minded" attitude that "is not politically sound."

- Finally the report acknowledges that aggressive U.S. government accusations of Bulgarian and Soviet guilt might be regarded as questionable interference with Italian judicial processes. This did not deter the conferees' from concluding that there should be an "organized effort on the part of the government to develop as much credibility and access to

information about the case as is needed to generate a political attitude."

This perceived need for a more aggressive government propaganda effort is based on an alleged widespread disbelief in the Plot, which is in turn attributed to a "prodigious" Soviet disinformation campaign. The conferees agreed that the western media, lacking awareness "about how disinformation functions," have been penetrated and that Soviet propaganda has "had an effect." The conferees did not consider U.S. disinformation, which may not exist for them. This stress on Soviet disinformation and western media vulnerability is a long-standing focus of the Henze-Sterling-deBorchgrave school, which tries to make all dissenting opinion a product of Red influence rather than disagreement about the facts. This leads naturally to the conclusion that we should bring Big Brother into play to deal with this menace. The U.S. government should use "informal connections" to "discourage the internal process of imposing more and more skepticism on the Bulgarian (and possibly Soviet) involvement." (Translation: The U.S. government should intervene to discourage dissenting views on the Plot.)

The composition of the working group that produced the report enables us to understand its content. It includes Paul Henze, former CIA propaganda officer; Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser to President Carter and member of the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD); Max Kampelman, CPD member and Reagan's choice for Geneva arms control negotiator; Ray Cline, former deputy director for intelligence of the CIA; Robert Kupperman, the terrorism specialist of CSIS; Marvin Kalb, author of the extremely biased NBC-TV program on the Plot; and Arnaud deBorchgrave, Red Scare novelist and journalist. That deBorchgrave is an Adjunct Fellow of CSIS tells us a great deal about that organization. So does this report in general.

The publication of the CSIS report suggests that the trial of Antonov will provide U.S. disinformation specialists with an extended opportunity to reiterate the theme that the U.S.S.R. is the root of terrorism. It also indicates a dissatisfaction within the Reagan team and among its allies with the administration's failure to take an active, public role in blaming the Bulgarians and Soviets for the assassination attempt. Finally, it serves notice to critics and skeptics that they will be targets of smears until a patriotic homogeneity of opinion has been engineered by these spokespersons for the Free World.

service).⁵² Thus, following Sterling's *Reader's Digest* article of September 1982, and especially after Agca's photo identification of Bulgarians in November 1982, the mass media got on a publicity bandwagon and pushed the Bulgarian Connection without let-up and without any effort at the application of critical intelligence or investigative research. Sterling has been a prime source in mass media processes, with virtually unlimited access and freedom from penetrating questions and close inspection for accuracy, consistency, and adherence to scientific rules of evidence.

The Sterling-New York Times Axis. The *New York Times* has been on the Soviet terrorism bandwagon for a long time. We noted above their publication on the Sunday prior to the 1980 presidential election of an article on "Terrorism: A Soviet Export" by Robert Moss, a participant in the Jonathan Institute Conference of 1979 and a member of the Sterling school of disinformation. During the Bulgarian Connection publicity surge of December 1982 to May 1983, the *Times* carried almost daily articles on the Connection, very few with any news substance.⁵³

It was nevertheless a step down for the *Times* when, on July 10, 1984, it carried a front page article under Claire Sterling's byline. The article featured the Albano report, still unreleased, but fortuitously in Sterling's possession. Sterling had the

"scoop;" but of course the news was worthy of front page coverage only if a prosecutor's report on this particular subject was important. The *Times* likes the Bulgarian Connection, and the decision to feature the Albano report and Sterling was thus a highly political decision. It represented the same political choice as featuring Robert Moss on Soviet terrorism at election time in 1980. It was consistent with the political choice made by the *Times* one month after the Sterling article to ignore the Italian Parliament's report on P-2, released on July 12, 1984.

But another problem is that Sterling is a partisan and a terrorism pseudoscientist who will inevitably distort news as a result of her commitment and methodology. This difficulty was overridden for the *Times* by the political serviceability of the Plot. The cost, however, was an article that not only presented a prosecutor's report uncritically and enthusiastically, but also distorted the report and suppressed important qualifications by the prosecutor himself. The most important piece of new information in the report—that on June 28, 1983 Agca had retracted a substantial segment of his evidence against the Bulgarians—was omitted from Sterling's story. Concerning another of his "retractions"—that Agca plotted with the Bulgarians to kill Poland's Lech Walesa—Sterling says:

Despite widespread press reports, Mr. Agca will probably not have to face the curious charge of "self-slander and slander" that arose from his brief retraction of some testimony that had already been corroborated. Judge Martella sent him a communication that he was under investigation for such

52. See Charles J. V. Murphy, "McCarthy and the Businessmen," *Fortune*, April 1954.

53. See Brodhead and Herman, *op. cit.*, n. 46.

Boris Henzoff: KGB Propaganda Specialist

While a patriotic or nationalistic bias affects almost all analyses of contemporary events, truth seeking requires that this bias be minimized and if possible eliminated. This is often facilitated by a simple experiment which reverses the context or role in question from one Cold War antagonist to the other.

For example, in the case of the Bulgarian Connection, imagine that there was a Soviet KGB officer with the following characteristics:

- He had been the KGB station chief in the country from which the would-be papal assassin came, one where the Soviet-backed regime routinely tortured its own citizens;
- He had at one time been the policy adviser for a European radio station that the Soviets now admit was a KGB operation to spread the Soviet version of the news throughout Western Europe;
- He had recently nominated known intelligence experts and suspected KGB agents to oversee this same radio station; and
- His most recent assignment within the Soviet apparatus was the post of propaganda specialist in the Kremlin.

Let us now imagine that this same KGB officer undertakes a task, allegedly "on his own," at the precise moment that the Soviet Union is about to deploy an increased number of nuclear missiles on European soil. The new missiles are opposed by many Europeans, including substantial numbers of citizens in countries allied with the Soviet Union. The ("former") KGB officer's endeavor—as the Kremlin is dramatizing the U.S. threat to the Soviet Union and manipulating information about the military balance in Europe—is to orchestrate a behind-the-scenes media cam-

paign to persuade international opinion that the highest leaders of the United States government have conspired to shoot the Pope.

While the KGB officer's campaign finds a ready acceptance in the Soviet press and in communist party publications throughout the world, it must be admitted that his story raises doubts in other quarters. But even though he can provide no real evidence—no "smoking gun" or eyewitness testimony—that demonstrates that the papal assassination attempt was a U.S. plot, he argues that a "minimalist, legalistic approach" to the U.S. conspiracy "would only serve the interests of the Americans." This reminder about patriotic duty apparently convinces *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, which print the front-page news that the United States has conspired to shoot the Pope.

As the story gains in credibility with each retelling, new confessions by the would-be assassin issue from his Bulgarian prison. These are confirmed by the Bulgarian investigators. The KGB officer is called upon by the "quality" Soviet media to comment on these startling revelations. In fact, the KGB officer becomes a prime source for the communist media throughout the world. The communist media pay no attention to protests from the West about the credibility of their source, for they quickly trace these protests and alleged contrary evidence to the CIA. And why should they take the western allegations of fraud seriously? For the KGB man is an intelligence officer of their own country; and, as for each country in the world, it is an article of faith that only intelligence officers of somebody else's state tell lies. ●



House in which Antonov family lived (third floor).

charge last September in regard to certain confusing allegations of his in the Lech Walesa plot.

The gross dishonesty in these sentences may be seen from the following:

(1) What Sterling calls "confusing allegations" was Agca's admission that he had lied about having anything to do with a

Claire Sterling: Terrorism Expert

Immediately after Agca shot the Pope, the western media sought out the opinions of Claire Sterling, "terrorism expert."

"Are you convinced there was no broad conspiracy against the Pope?" asked *People Magazine* (June 1, 1981).

"Some people are saying that the Russians plotted this because of the Pope's role in Poland," replied Sterling, "but I think that's crazy. If it was an organized plot by a serious group," she continued, "I suspect there would have been a better getaway plan. Maybe this was a sort of kamikaze mission, but usually these people are skillful at escapes. There would have been some distraction in the crowd, some escape route. I could envision a small splinter group of Moslem fanatics with Agca among them vowing to get the Pope. But more likely he made the final decision alone."

Apparently not yet cued in on the appropriate explanation for Agca's assassination attempt, Sterling is surprisingly lucid. She notes that "the Pope isn't perceived as just the head of the Roman Catholic Church, but as the supreme symbol of the intrusion of western civilization" into the Moslem world. She notes Agca's threat to kill the Pope in 1979, and places it in the context of the Iranian revolution and the attack on the Grand Mosque in Mecca. She calls the Pope's trip to Turkey in November 1979 "a terrible mistake." She also connects Agca directly with the Gray Wolves, "the paramilitary wing of the neo-Nazi National [sic] Action Party," and she states as a matter of fact that his escape from prison was engineered by the Gray Wolves.

plot to murder Walesa! He admitted that, although he had described Walesa's hotel in detail, he had never seen it, and that the Bulgarian diplomat whom he had identified from a photo as a plot partner, he had never met. There is nothing "confusing" in these allegations. But readers of the *New York Times* have been confused and misled by Sterling's report.

(2) Sterling states that Agca only retracted testimony that "had already been corroborated." This is an absolute fabrication, and it is also misleading in other respects. Nobody has corroborated the Agca-identified Bulgarian diplomat as a participant in any plot, and the Walesa plot itself has fallen apart. On June 28, 1983, Agca withdrew his claims that he had ever met Mrs. Antonov and her daughter or visited Antonov's apartment. Agca's ability to recall precise details of the apartment had been advanced previously by the Sterling school as proof of his claims. His having met Mrs. Antonov had never been "corroborated." The dishonesty of asserting universal corroboration when Agca admitted lying about "corroborated evidence" is extraordinary. Even the prosecutor admitted the serious effect of these retractions on Agca's credibility, but Sterling suppressed both Agca's retractions and Albano's statement on the meaning of those retractions in her purported news article.

The Lonely Michael Dobbs. Readers of the *New York Times* would have had to read the *Washington Post* to be aware of the scale of Sterling's fabrications. In a series of articles beginning on June 18, 1984—eight days after the *Times* carried Sterling's rendition of Albano's report—Michael Dobbs, the *Post*'s Rome correspondent, gave U.S. readers a second opinion. While featuring Albano's conclusion that the Bulgarians were behind the plot, Dobbs also noted in the lead paragraph that the evidence was "largely circumstantial," and in the fifth paragraph he said that "much of the circumstantial evidence . . . could undermine rather than confirm the conspiracy theory. . . ." The remainder of Dobbs's lengthy article questioned Agca's reliability, noted Agca's June 28, 1983 retraction of most of his previous declarations, and presented evidence that appeared to undermine fatally the Truck Ploy.⁵⁴

A month later (July 22, 1984), Dobbs returned to the attack, noting in an article headlined "Probers Divided Over Evidence in Pope Attack" that there were many loose ends in the case and that Agca lacked credibility.

This was too much for Claire Sterling. In an Op-Ed column in the *Washington Post* ("Taking Exception," August 7, 1984), Sterling accused Dobbs of "numerous omissions or misstatements." She alleged "a curious ignorance of how this investigation developed," and maintained that "while Dobbs dwells on [Agca's] retraction," he failed to note that "practically everything Agca tried to take back had been substantiated already, and not a single point in the retraction changed the basic lines of Agca's story."

In a reply in the *Post* a few days later (August 10, 1984), Dobbs noted Sterling's "tendency to conclude that anybody who questions her thesis that the assassination attempt has already been shown to be a Soviet bloc conspiracy is accepting 'Bulgarian arguments.'" But he dwelled primarily on Ster-

54. Albano's admission that Agca had "withdrawn" the accusations on which the Case had largely rested for nearly 20 months, and that the declarations had been admitted to be lies one year earlier without this information receiving any mention in the U.S. press, was not considered newsworthy. Nor did it inhibit the *Times*, which five days later (June 21, 1984) editorialized on the "Trail to Bulgaria," stating that "Bulgaria's vehement denials of links with Mr. Agca do not square with his detailed accounts of meetings with Bulgarian agents in Sofia and Rome."

ling's essential dishonesty in failing to include in her story that Albano's report had raised the issue of Agca's "retractions" of June 28, 1983; and, in a separate document, he accused Sterling of omitting sections of the report "that call into question Agca's credibility."⁵⁵ In the same document Dobbs lists a further dozen errors that Sterling made in her statement in the *Post* about Dobbs's reporting on the case, including clear misstatements of what Albano's report actually says. Later, in a four-part series in the *Washington Post* in mid-October 1984, Dobbs relocated the root of the assassination attempt in the Turkish right wing, raised severe doubts about Agca's credibility and his allegations of working for the Bulgarians, and traced the evolving "confessions" to show that they were merely embellishments on a first-approximation tale that was corrected by information learned from the media and perhaps from the questions asked him by his interrogators.

Much of Dobbs's writing on the Plot has given U.S. readers a nearly unique channel of information, providing a well-reasoned alternative to the near tidal wave of pro-Plot outpourings from the publishers of Sterling, Henze, and their allies. While we salute Dobbs's genuine (and, in the circumstances, brave) contribution to getting at the truth of the Pope Plot, we must take issue with his refusal to raise serious questions about the possibility of a second conspiracy to use Agca to set up the Bulgarians and Soviets. While Dobbs claims in his defense to be reporting "both sides, in contrast to Sterling,"⁵⁶ he explicitly rejects "the principal Bulgarian argument . . . that Agca was fed information by the Italian and U.S. Secret Service." Indeed, one of Dobbs's chief contributions has been to trace a large portion of Agca's claims to the Italian media, and to demonstrate the extensive access that Agca had to outside information which would have helped him to develop his claims and declarations. But even Dobbs admits that some of Agca's claims cannot be traced to the media, leaving open the avenue of coaching.⁵⁷

55. In Dobbs's article of August 10, 1984, he promised to make available to interested readers a list of Sterling's errors. This quotation is from that statement, dated August 11, 1984.

56. *Ibid.*

57. See 3.4, above. While we have not had the opportunity to check the materials supporting "the Bulgarian argument" that Agca was fed information, they claim that their "argument" is based on an examination of all the Italian press and other media reports on the Plot, and court materials, from which Agca allegedly derived his information. They have found significant details in

The coaching hypothesis however, rests on other considerations that Dobbs fails to explore and link together. For example, what kind of legal system is it that allows the prisoner regular access to opportunities to rearrange his evidence by consulting the press and telephone directories—and to derive information by being read evidence or testimony of another witness, which is then regarded as "surprising" and valuable corroboration of his claims? If the case is as flimsy as Dobbs's own stories have indicated, what has sustained it through hundreds of lies, retractions, and wildly improbable scenarios? If Martella is as "wise" and "judicious" as Dobbs suggests, why has he been taken in by a charlatan like Agca? Might the intense anticommunism and pro-Reaganism of the Craxi administration in Italy have any bearing on the apparent ability of the Italians to keep the case cooking without actually presenting any evidence that cannot be demolished by a U.S. correspondent in Rome?

In his exchange with Sterling, Dobbs was on the defensive, and in the end this lone mass media reporter who built up a very impressive case against the Plot was unable to state a firm conclusion. Sterling, Henze, and their allies suffer from no such encumbrances. They are free to assert Bulgarian and Soviet guilt, and even to denounce doubters as victims of Soviet disinformation. The contrast tells us a great deal about the power of the political forces that originated and sustain the case.

A final note. In sum, the Bulgarian Connection fits classic Red Scare scenarios. It was needed by very important power groups in the West, and it was produced in response to those demands. The mass media played a strategic role in this process, preparing the initial groundwork of fear and suspicion, and accepting and disseminating the claims of a Red Plot with the requisite suspension of standards of evidence. What is unique in the present case is not only that strategically placed individuals were capable of manufacturing the case and getting the cooperative western media to give it massive publicity, but also that their imaginative creation then took on the character of self-fulfilling prophecy, transformed into a reality in the crucible of Italian politics.

Agca's stories which have no apparent prior source in the press or court records. If Dobbs has such a source to show that Agca got the disputed details from the media, let him publish this information. Otherwise his usage is distressingly similar to that of Sterling's and about which he justifiably complains: to label dissenting views as "Bulgarian arguments."

Part IV: Antonov: A Political Prisoner

After a long stay in an Italian prison, Agca "talked," saying exactly what his captors had a strong political interest in his saying. No credible reason has ever been offered to explain why he took so long to implicate the Bulgarians, if indeed they had hired him as their gunman. It is now well established that while in "solitary confinement" he had visits from SISMI, a Red Brigade prisoner who had rallied to the government, a mafia-linked chaplain, U.S. and Turkish intelligence personnel, and others. He was threatened with release into the general prison population if he failed to cooperate, and he was offered the carrot of the "Penitent's Law" (and possible early release) if he played the game. His confession promised him further notoriety, and it also helped exonerate his Gray Wolves com-



Martella with Agca (interpreter between them).

Credit: ANSA

rades from blame. With such a mass of compromising features, Agca's confession should have been greeted in the West with the utmost skepticism. This is what would have happened if the same scenario had been set in the East.

We believe that the actual plot to kill the Pope arose from indigenous Turkish sources. No other scenario yet advanced has comparable plausibility, let alone such solid empirical support (see Part III), as one based on Agca's link to the Gray Wolves. The successful introduction of the Bulgarians into the plot, the *second conspiracy*, rested ultimately on the usefulness of the Bulgarian Connection to important western political interests. It was facilitated by western control over Agca in an Italian prison, and the ease with which the western mass media will accept and sell a politically convenient hoax. For example, it is possible that Agca did in fact visit Sofia, Bulgaria in 1980. In the Sterling-Henze analyses, this is a key fact showing Bulgarian guilt. But elsewhere in the Sterling-Henze litany, the KGB is smart and covers its tracks, to assure itself the ability to "plausibly deny" involvement. Concern over plausible deniability, however, should cause them to go to great pains to keep Agca away from Bulgaria. Thus Agca's visit to Bulgaria provides Sterling-Henze and company with the raw material for creating a Bulgarian Connection only because a propaganda system allows its principals to contradict themselves and one another virtually without challenge.

The cooperation of the mass media has allowed the case to survive the exposure of a number of fatal flaws. We enumerate and recall only several here:

- The alleged Soviet "motive"—fear of the Pope's aid to Solidarity—lacked plausibility from the beginning (see 1.2). It also has never been reconciled with the fact that both Agca's threat in 1979 to murder the Pope and the "deal" he allegedly struck with the Bulgarians in Sofia in the summer of 1980 took place before Solidarity even existed.

- The "paradox" of Soviet involvement has never been satisfactorily resolved. That is, while the alleged plot was intended to strengthen the Soviets' hand in dealing with Poland, as it worked out in the real world the plot caused the Soviet Union severe propaganda damage (even though the Pope was not killed and evidence of Soviet involvement has not been produced). On the other hand, the Reagan administration and western hard-liners have benefited greatly from the plot. On the Sterling-Henze model, the Soviets must be incredibly stupid. On our model, in which the Bulgarian Connection was manufactured by Sterling-Henze and U.S. and Italian officials, the source of the plot and the resultant flow of benefits make sense.

- According to Sterling, Henze, Marvin Kalb, and the Italian magistrates, the Soviet and Bulgarian secret police are highly efficient and try to maintain plausible deniability. This is incompatible with hiring an unstable rightwing Turk, with bringing him to Sofia for an extended stay, and especially with arranging to have him supervised in detail by Bulgarian officials in Rome. The Keystone Kops arrangements outlined by Agca involving Bulgarian officials would have been laughed off the stage on NBC or in the *New York Times*—if it had been put on in Moscow.

- As pointed out by Michael Dobbs, "Agca can be shown to have lied literally hundreds of times to judges both in his native Turkey and in Italy."⁵⁸ Agca has withdrawn significant parts of

"confessions" which he admits were based on outside assistance or produced out of thin air. As he is for all practical purposes the sole witness in the case, Martella's decision to continue the case in the face of the self-destruction of credibility reflects a broken-down judicial process.

- The Sterling-Henze-Martella school refers frequently to Agca's testimony as having been "independently confirmed." This postulates complete integrity of the judicial process, which is entirely inappropriate in the present case. Martella himself has conceded a lack of control over or knowledge of Agca's visitors in prison, and we have noted that Agca's outside contacts were extensive. The remarkable eagerness of the magistrates to find Agca's allegations correct has injected a further element of corruption into confirming claims. Agca has acknowledged having gotten "surprising details" from the interrogations of magistrates. Given the further possibilities of his having been "fed" information by the numerous anticommunists in SISMI and elsewhere in the Italian prison-intelligence-political-judicial network, "independent confirmation" has to be taken with a grain of salt.

- If Antonov was a major conspirator with whom Agca dealt at length, a fact not yet resolved is that Antonov speaks only Bulgarian and very halting Italian; whereas in May 1981 Agca spoke only Turkish and a few words of English. In what language did the conspirators conspire?

- Not a single witness has been produced to support any Agca claim of a contact with Bulgarians, in Rome or anywhere else, although his supposed meetings and travels with them were frequent and in conspicuous places.

- With one exception, every proven transaction by Agca, from his escape from a Turkish prison in 1979 to May 13, 1981, including all transfers of money or a gun, was with a member of the Gray Wolves.⁵⁹

- The photographic evidence of May 13, 1981, on the partial basis of which Martella arrested Antonov, collapsed long ago (although the media's attention to the collapse hardly matched its handling of the original claims). Martella now says that the photograph allegedly showing Antonov on the scene was actually a tourist, not Antonov.⁶⁰ The individual fleeing from the scene, originally identified by Agca as a Bulgarian, has now been identified as Agca's Gray Wolves friend Oral Celik.

- The formal photo identification of Bulgarians by Agca on November 8, 1982, put forward by Martella and the media as spectacular evidence of Bulgarian involvement, was rendered meaningless by the statement of Minister of Defense Lagorio that Agca had already identified the Bulgarian photos two months previously. The dramatic photo show was thus very likely a staged event. This evidence would be very suspect anyway, given Martella's loose controls over Agca's visitors

59. The exception was that he apparently received a small sum of money from Mersan, who was acting as a courier for Ugurlu. Given Ugurlu's ties with the Gray Wolves, and perhaps even Turkish intelligence, this single exception to the Gray Wolves pattern will not bear the weight given it by Sterling-Henze, who claim that it removes Agca's crime from a Gray Wolves context and points the finger of guilt at the Bulgarian-Turkish mafia. We argued earlier (see 2.4) that these links took place within the larger framework of the activities of the Nationalist Action Party and Gray Wolves.

60. It has been suggested that the famous photograph was doctored—that Antonov's face was inserted into the crowd by a computerized photo-editing machine similar to the Hell Chromacom. This move, to implicate Antonov further, backfired when Antonov's alibis proved ironclad, and the story of the look-alike "tourist" was then manufactured. See "The Antonov Photo and the Bulgarian Connection," *CovertAction Information Bulletin*, Number 21 (Spring 1984), pp. 20-21.

58. "A Communist Plot to Kill the Pope—Or a Liar's Fantasy," *Washington Post*, November 18, 1984.

and the long record of secret service corruption in Italy.

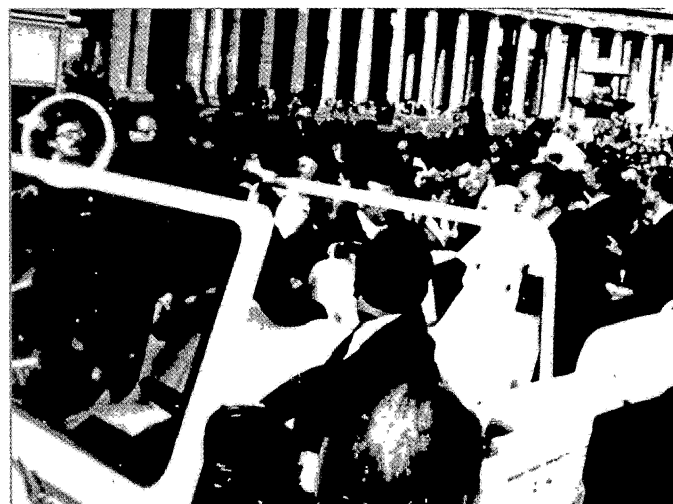
Conclusion.

The case against the Bulgarians reflects western power and bias. The power is that of interests with a stake in the New Cold War, which was escalating sharply in 1981. That power was instrumental in instigating the case, in mobilizing public opinion, and in pressuring a weak and corrupt Italian state and administration to act. The action taken involved seizing the opportunity presented by control over the imprisoned Agca to create a fabricated plot that would discredit the enemy by implicating it in the assassination attempt.

We have demonstrated that the case is not only unsupported by evidence or logic, but that it is actually ludicrous in its shift-

ing Comic Book level scenarios and blatantly ideological underpinning. The biases and hidden premises of the western media and Italian courts have caused them to treat with respect a case that would have been laughable if it were not politically serviceable and supported by power. It is also sustainable because of the public's willingness to believe anything evil of the enemy.

Whatever the explanation, the lack of critical analysis in the press and the breakdown of the legal process in Italy have helped produce and maintain a case that, in our view, is based on a *non-Bulgarian* conspiracy. Sergei Antonov is a victim of this conspiracy and should be regarded by the world at large as a political prisoner. ●



Contrasting covers of *Paris Match* and *Oggi*. Note circling of different persons.

Bibliographic Note

This article is based on hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles from several countries, and we would like to thank those friends who sent us material and/or translated articles from Italian and Turkish. Most articles in the western media, however, repeat each other and provide at best a record of the ebbs and flows of official propaganda or the shifting claims of Agca, with an occasional important fact thrown in as if by chance.

For readers who want to check our argument or to form their own opinions, we provide here a listing of some of the major supporting sources.

The case for the Bulgarian Connection is made in two stages. Prior to the arrest of the Bulgarian official Antonov in late November 1982, the Bulgarian Connection argument was framed chiefly by Claire Sterling in the September 1982 *Reader's Digest*; Marvin Kalb in the NBC-TV program, "The Man Who Shot the Pope: A Study in Terrorism," broadcast on September 21, 1982; and *Pontiff*, by Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan-Witts (Doubleday, New York:1983).

Following Agca's "confessions" and the arrest of Antonov, the NBC-TV program on "The Man Who Shot the Pope" was rebroadcast on January 25, 1983. Changes in the program's text reflect the shift which Agca's new declarations allowed the

fabricators of the Bulgarian Connection, including the near-elimination of any Turkish roots to the case. The fullest statement of the post-confession case for the Bulgarian Connection is in Claire Sterling, *The Time of the Assassins* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York:1983), and Paul Henze, *The Plot to Kill the Pope* (Scribner's, New York:1983). Henze restates his views in "The Plot to Kill the Pope," *Survey: A Journal of East and West Studies* (Autumn-Winter 1983), pp. 2-11, wherein he notes that earlier writings of Herman and Brodhead on this subject are "remarkably similar to Soviet and Bulgarian protestations of innocence"!

To these sources must be added: Nicholas Gage, "The Attack on the Pope: New Link to Bulgarians," *New York Times*, March 21, 1983, which briefly introduced a "French Connection;" Sterling's analysis of Albano's report and excerpts from the report itself in the *New York Times*, June 10, 1984; and excerpts from Martella's indictment of the Turks and Bulgarians in the *New York Times*, November 1, 1984. An interesting survey of the lack of media interest in swallowing the story whole in its pre-confession stage is Michael Ledeen's *Commentary* article, "The Bulgarian Connection and the Media" (June 1983). This characteristically blames the liberal media's overriding interest in détente for its "suppression" of the Bulgarian Connection.

The case against the Bulgarian Connection has been developed largely in response to the evolving claims of Sterling, Henze, and associates. For example, *Pontiff* was reviewed by Frank Brodhead and Edward S. Herman in *The Nation*, July 2,

1983; and the same authors discussed at some length the NBC-TV special on "The Man Who Shot the Pope" in *CovertAction Information Bulletin*, Number 19 (Spring-Summer 1983). Useful and quite critical reviews of the books by Sterling and Henze are "Unlikely Conspiracy" by former CIA officer William Hood in *Problems of Communism* (March-April 1984); and "Did Agca Act Alone?" by Edward J. Epstein, *New York Times Book Review*, January 15, 1984. The possibility that actual fabrication of evidence has been used to push the Plot is argued by Howard Friel in "The Antonov Photo and the 'Bulgarian Connection,'" *CovertAction Information Bulletin*, Number 21 (Spring 1984), pp. 20-21.

The best all-around source for demonstrating the weakness of the Bulgarian Connection hypothesis is Christian Roulette's study, *La Filière: Jean Paul II-Antonov-Agca* (Editions du Sorbier, Paris:1984). The Bulgarians themselves have put out a massive amount of material, some of which is quite good. An excellent short study is "The Bulgarian Connection," by Diana Johnstone in *In These Times*, January 12-18, 1983.

One of the few exceptions to the pattern of uncritical acceptance of the Bulgarian Connection in the U.S. media has been Michael Dobbs of the *Washington Post*. We evaluate his contribution in section 3.6 above. Particularly important are the several articles he wrote in the *Post* in late June and early July 1984 that take issue with Claire Sterling's excerpting and interpretation of Prosecutor Albano's report; the exchange of views between Sterling and Dobbs in the *Post* in August 1984; Dobbs's four-part series on the Bulgarian Connection in the *Post* in mid-October 1984; and his review of his own growing skepticism about the Plot in "A Communist Plot to Kill the Pope—Or a Liar's Fantasy," *Washington Post*, November 18, 1984.

Understanding the Italian Connection must begin with establishing the power and reach of *Propaganda Due*, or P-2. *The Report of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on the Masonic Lodge P-2*, issued on July 12, 1984 by the Italian parliament is indispensable for this; but there is a good summary of the report by Donald Sassoon in *The New Statesman*, September 21, 1984. An excellent early analysis is "P-2 Revelations Are Startling Even By Italian Standards," by Diana Johnstone in *In These Times*, August 12-25, 1981. Good accounts of P-2 and its environment can also be found in recent popular studies of the Vatican banking scandals, such as *God's Banker*, by Rupert Cornwall (Dodd, Mead, New York:1984), and in David A. Yallop's investigation of the evidence indicating that Pope John Paul I was poisoned, *In God's Name* (Bantam, New York:1984). In 1981 and 1982 the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal* had substantial coverage of the P-2 scandal, but it was not followed up and has now ceased with the press of other business. We must now rely on the European press, and especially the Italian popular press (*L'Europeo*, *Panorama*, *L'Espresso*, etc.) to keep us up-to-date on the further uncovering of P-2's extensive ties to Italian and U.S. political leaders. Perhaps the sole exception to the general failure of the U.S. media to report on these unfolding scandals has been Diana Johnstone's valuable series of articles in *In These Times*, beginning with "The Ledeen Connection" (September 8, 1982) and, most recently, "Italy: Latest Scandal Leads to Reagan Administration," December 5, 1984. In investigating the links between P-2 and rightwing terrorism in the 1970s, Stuart Christie's *Stefano Delle Chiaie: Portrait of a Black Terrorist* (Refract Publications, London:1984) is an excellent summary of our present state of knowledge. Bruce

Hoffman's survey, "Right-Wing Terrorism in Europe," *Rand Note* Number N-1856-AF, places Italian rightwing terrorism in a larger context.

The Gray Wolves Connection is described in great detail in the early articles in the western media following the assassination attempt and the arrest of Agca. Particularly useful are the articles by R. W. Apple in the *New York Times*, May 25, 1981; by Feroz Ahmad in the *Boston Globe*, June 7, 1981; and the articles in *Newsweek* and *Time* in May and June 1981. Jonathan Randal's series on Turkey and the Bulgarian Connection in the *Washington Post* in May 1983 provides useful information on the Turkish smuggling background. We have also benefited from translations of articles by U. Mumcu originally published in the Turkish newspaper *Cumuriyet*; and translations of his studies on Agca and on Turkish smuggling are sorely needed. Jacob M. Landau has contributed two important studies on the background of the Turkish right wing: *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* (Leiden:1974); and *Pan-Turkism in Turkey: A Study in Irredentism* (Archon Books, Hamden:1981). Also valuable for understanding the Turkish context are two studies published in *New Left Review*: "The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy," by Caglar Keyder, No. 115 (1979); and "Tragedy of the Turkish Left," by Ahmet Samim, No. 126 (1981). Useful summaries of the Turkish press and martial law conditions in post-coup Turkey are carried in the bimonthly *News From Turkey*, published in Brooklyn, New York, and *Info-Turk*, published in Brussels, Belgium. ●



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Center for Research and Documentation of the Atlantic Coast (CIDCA), **Trabil Nani: Historical Background and Current Situation on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua**, Managua:1984. Miskito for "many troubles," the report documents a two-month investigation based on interviews of 170 persons from 30 Miskito and Sumu communities, with local pastors, bishops, and other representatives of the churches in the region, and with military personnel. The reader gains a good understanding of the actual historical context of present day Atlantic Coast developments, a subject not well covered by the media. Contact: CIDCA, Apt. A-189, Managua, Nicaragua, or The Riverside Church Disarmament Project, 490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027.

A new CIDCA publication is **Wani**, a quarterly magazine on the tradition, culture, language, problems, and aspirations of the peoples of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. The magazine includes articles in English, Spanish, Miskito, and Sumu, some in parallel translations. Write for subscription details to: Wani, Apt. A-189, Managua, Nicaragua.

Ana Maria Ezcurra, **Ideological Aggression Against the Sandinista Revolution: The Political Opposition Church in Nicaragua**, New York CIRCUS Publications, Inc. (P. O. Box 37, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108), \$6.95. The author, an Argentinian living in Mexico, examines the struggle for authority and impact upon larger issues being waged by the Catholic hierarchy and the Popular Church in the country, by the Reagan administration, and by its allies like the Institute for Religion and Democracy in Washington. Ms. Ezcurra also authored "The Neoconservative Offensive: U.S. Churches and the Ideological Struggle for Latin America," 1983.

National Action/Research on the Military Industrial Complex (NARMIC), **Up In Arms: U.S. Military Shipments to Central America—A Guide for Activists**, July 1984. A six-page, fact-filled analysis based on documentation obtained from industry sources, press articles, and Pentagon data released via the Freedom of Information Act. Single copy, \$.50; 100 copies/\$25, from NARMIC, American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102; phone (202) 241-7175.

The Film Institute of El Salvador, with others: **The Road of Liberty**, 1985, a 51-minute color documentary film of life in the zones of El Salvador controlled by the FMLN/FDR liberation movement. Showing the day-to-day life and death struggle of the people to survive and to create lasting social institutions in the face of constant aerial bombardments and ground attacks by U.S.-trained Salvadoran units. Rental: Spanish/\$65; English/\$95. Also, **In the Name of Democracy: Life, Death, and Elections in El Salvador**, 1984, a gripping 31-minute color documentary described in *CAIB* Number 21 which traces the events from the U.S.-sponsored Constituent Assembly electoral exercise up to the March 1984 electoral farce. Rental: Film (16mm)/\$50; video/\$35. Both from: Communications El Salvador, 325 W. 38th Street, New York, NY 10018; phone (212) 563-0413.

Latin American Working Group, **Central American**

Women Speak for Themselves, Toronto:1984. Through the first-person testimony of Salvadoran, Nicaraguan, and Guatemalan women, this informative booklet describes their endless labor, their bitter tragedy, their immense strengths. Includes a useful list of other resources on women in Latin America. \$8.40, from LAWG, P. O. Box 2207, Station P, Toronto, ON, Canada M5S 2T2.

Señal de Libertad/Signal of Freedom, the international publication of Radio Venceremos, the official voice of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. Firsthand information and interviews from the battlefield. Very important for understanding developments from the perspective of the FMLN/FDR. \$1.50 each; \$8/6 issues; \$16/12 issues. From: El Salvador Information Center, P. O. Box 28892, Oakland, CA 94604. Spanish edition from COMIN, A. P. 2363, Telcor Los Escobros, Managua, Nicaragua, or from Sistema Radio Venceremos, A. P. 7-907, Mexico, DF, Mexico; German edition from Kinderhilfe Lateinamerika, Teutoburgerstr. 38, 5000 Köln, Federal Republic of Germany.

Directory of Central America Organizations, Spring 1984 (to be updated soon). A comprehensive and valuable compilation of a mushrooming network of some 450 organizations active on Central America across the U.S. The list gives a profile of most groups, and a useful cross-referenced listing of broadly ranged activities: speakers; political organizing and lobbying; research; solidarity and public protests; church liaison; refugee material care/support/language training; refugee legal aid; refugee sanctuary; human rights monitoring; travel to the region; library and resource center; audio-visual media production and distribution, etc. \$8.00 (bulk rates available), from Central America Resource Center, P. O. Box 2327, Austin, TX 78768; phone (512) 476-9841.

Tools for Peace and Justice in America, a nationwide campaign by Oxfam America to raise funds for purchase of agricultural tools and equipment, medical necessities, and other materials for sending to Oxfam America projects in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Having publicly spoken out against U.S. intervention, the organization collected over \$700,000 worth of material in 1984 for Nicaragua. For information: Oxfam America, 115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116; phone: (617) 482-1211.

Bikes Not Bombs, a national campaign mobilizing bicyclists, environmentalists, and solidarity groups by collecting bicycles for Nicaragua. It has already sent 105 bicycles with extra tires and parts, worth \$10,000, to teachers, public health personnel, and production workers to improve their mobility as the *contras* target the country's economic infrastructure. The group's 1985 goals are to send 1,000 more bicycles with spare parts and tires, and to establish a mechanical cooperative there to help keep the bikes in high gear. For information: Bikes Not Bombs, P. O. Box 5595, Friendship Station, Washington, DC 20016; phone: (202) 965-2786.

Quixote Center, **Nicaragua: A Look at the Reality** and **Honduras: A Look at the Reality**. Two extremely useful publications in tabloid form that provide ample background and documentation about life in the two countries, the scale and context of U.S. intervention, and the peoples' resistance. The Nicaragua booklet is updated from the 1983 edition, and a

similar publication on El Salvador will be out in a few months. Both publications, \$1.50/copy; bulk orders encouraged, rates \$.50/25-50 copies ranging to \$.25/1000 copies. From: Quixote Center, P. O. Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782; phone: (301) 699-0042.

Central America Bulletin, a monthly news magazine covering North American, Latin American, and European media synopses, and original analyses relating to Central America and U.S. intervention. Recent issues have focused on revolution and counterrevolution in Nicaragua, the July 1984 electoral fraud in Guatemala, and the continuing crisis in El Salvador. Individual/\$15; institution/\$24; overseas/\$29; sustainers/\$30. From: Central America Resource Center, P. O. Box 4797, Berkeley, CA 94704; phone: (415) 843-5041.

Chile Newsletter, a periodical analyzing the continuing widespread repression and resistance in Chile today, with information and photographs from the Chilean media and from clandestine sources there. Individual/\$10; institution/\$18; overseas/\$22; supporter/\$30. From: Casa Chile, P. O. Box 3620, Berkeley, CA 94703.

Friends for Jamaica Newsletter, a publication watching developments in Jamaica and to some extent in the rest of the Caribbean. Contains Jamaican source material not seen in the U.S. media. From: Friends for Jamaica, P. O. Box 20392, Cathedral Finance Station, New York, NY 10025.

International Defense and Aid Fund (IDAF), **This is Apartheid: A Pictorial Introduction**, December 1984. Translates South Africa's evil system of institutionalized racism into everyday language, explaining how it works and what it means for the Black majority. Also describes South Africa's aggression against her neighbors. Thoroughly revised edition of the 1978 one that was printed in seven languages; 64 photographs and maps. \$1.70 or 50p. Also, **This is Namibia: A Pictorial Introduction**, December 1984. Describes South Africa's colonial and racist military occupation for the last century. Shows how SWAPO has earned the mass support of Namibians, and discusses the country's international status; 53 photos and maps. \$1.70/50p. Also, **Massacre at Maseru: South African Aggression Against Lesotho**, January 1985. Documents the December 1982 military aggression by South Africa, in which 40 people—South African exiles and Lesotho citizens—were killed by commandos in the dark of night. \$1.35/50p. Also, **Onyeka: Namibia Will Be Free**. An inspiring LP record (or cassette tape) of traditional and political songs performed by The Torch, the SWAPO cultural group. \$8.50/£5.50, plus postage. All from: IDAF U.S. Committee, P. O. Box 17, Cambridge, MA 02138 or IDAF Publications, Canon Collins House, 64 Essex Road, London N1 8LR, United Kingdom.

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, **Report on Police Conduct During Township Protests: August-November 1984**, December 1984. Compiled by lawyers and a journalist investigating sworn affidavits of what the report calls "the police's reckless and wanton violence," when more than 150 people, including many children, died. Many were killed when shot in the back. Relates the widespread fear among the injured of going to the hospital for treatment because of a perception that hospitals are an extension of the police presence. Photographs of police and military taking careful aim at resi-

dents, and of the rubber bullets shot at close range that caused many deaths. \$1.35/50p, plus postage. From: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 22 Coleman Fields, London N1 7AF, United Kingdom.

News and Notes, the publication of the South African Military Refugee Aid Fund, a political organization of South African military resisters, political exiles, and U.S. supporters which seeks to encourage resistance to apartheid service, resistance within the South African military, and assistance to war resisters who arrive in the U.S., particularly those desiring political asylum. \$10/year. From: SAMRAF, 29 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217; phone: (212) 638-0417.

South Africa Information Packet, a practical collection of seven fact and action sheets, a glossary, and a publications list. Good, informative background on apartheid. An ideal organizing resource. \$2.50; bulk rates for 50 or more; teacher discounts. From: Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund, 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002; phone: (202) 546-7961.

Southern Africa Hotline, a 3-minute tape hotline on all of southern Africa, updated weekly, with information and action suggestions for activists, background on pending legislation, human rights issues, etc. By Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund. Call: (202) 546-0408.

Sahara Report, a monthly publication about the latest developments in the under-reported war being waged by the U.S.-supported forces of Morocco against the Polisario Front in its independence struggle for the Western Sahara. A recent issue documented the 58 nations that have recognized the independence of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. From: Polisario Front Office to the United Nations and North America, 120 E. 34th Street, Suite 5A, New York, NY 10016.

Western Sahara: The War, U.S. Policy, and the People, a new periodical examining the all-important and largely secret role of Washington in support of King Hassan's vision of the Western Sahara as a part of "Greater Morocco." Official U.S. declarations of "neutrality" in the struggle are roundly belied by the pattern of ever-expanding military relations between the two governments. From: Western Sahara Working Group, P. O. Box 43602, Columbia Heights Station, Washington, DC 20010.

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Inside Asia, a new bi-monthly magazine on Asian affairs using many different information sources. Articles on political, economic and labor issues, minority rights, relations between Britain and Asia, literature, book reviews, Asian cuisine (including recipes), etc. U.S./\$24; inquire for other zones. From: Inside Asia, 50A Oakley Road, London N1 3LS, United Kingdom.

Our Right to Know, a quarterly magazine that translates its name into a wealth of information and analyses not seen elsewhere. Their recent issue contains an interview with Nobel Peace Prize and Lenin Peace Prize recipient Seán MacBride on how the U.S. and the U.K. have collaborated to attack and discredit UNESCO; on the New World Information Order vs. Cold War Communications; on the issue of combat coverage by the U.S. media; on the dealings between the American Civil Liberties Union and the CIA on the Reagan administration's drastic restrictions of the Freedom of Information Act; and other FOIA-related news. \$10/year. From: Fund for Open Information and Accountability, Inc. (F.O.I.A., Inc.), 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012; phone: (212) 477-3188.

Science for the People, an important bi-monthly magazine that sheds much light on some negative aspects of the impact of science on our lives. Their newest issue examines the burgeoning field of computer technology and its threat to privacy, as well as a disturbing exposé of the Pentagon's \$600 million Strategic Computing Initiative. Individual/\$12; institution/\$24. From: Science for the People, 897 Main Street, Cambridge, MA 02139; phone: (617) 547-0370.

Media Report to Women, a bi-monthly journal on women in many different areas of life, both domestically and internationally. \$20/year (\$15 if paid by check). Also, **1985 Index/Directory of Women's Media**, listing 1,047 women's print and electronic media, cultural groups, library collections, dis-

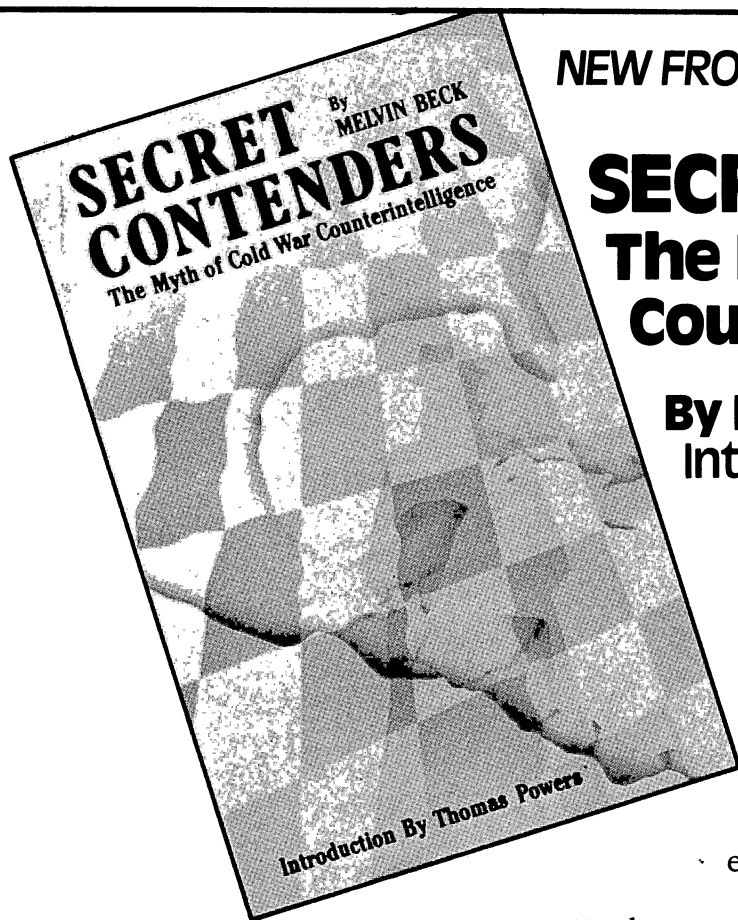
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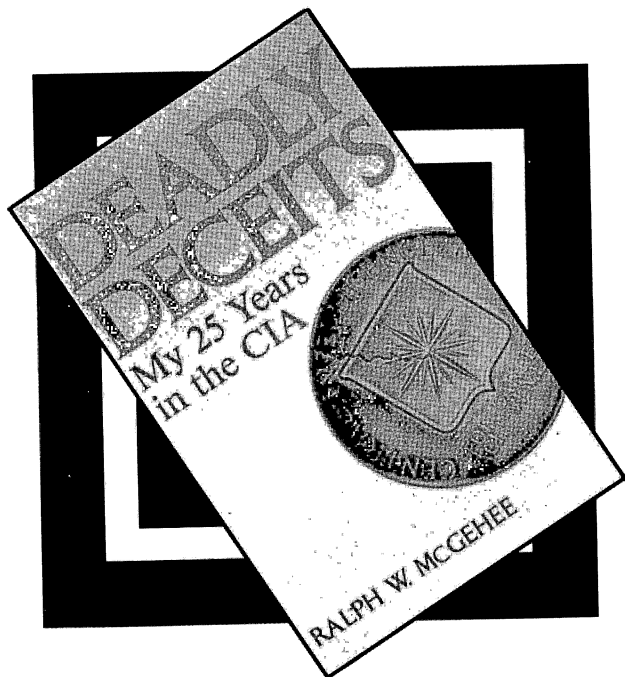


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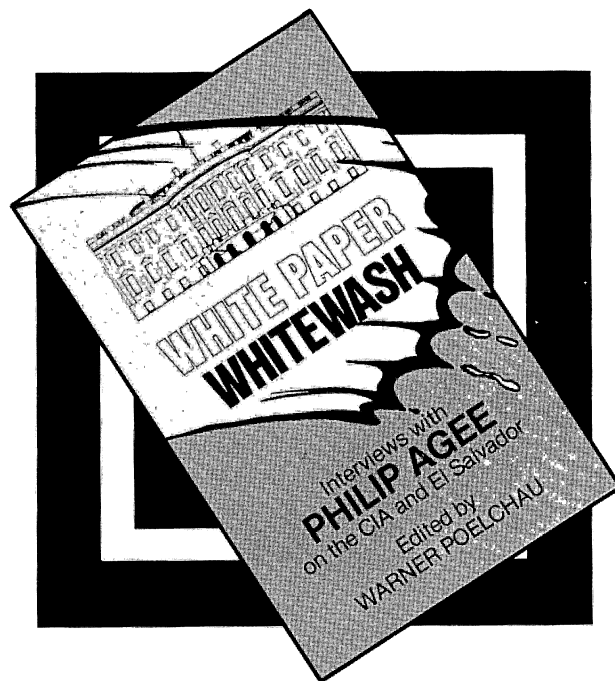
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Publications of Interest

Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, **British Intelligence and Covert Action: Africa, Middle East, and Europe Since 1945**, Brandon Book Publishers, Kerry, Ireland and Dover, New Hampshire:1983 and 1984, \$9.95. A penetrating and extremely well documented study of Her Majesty's dirty work. In his introduction, former CIA officer Philip Agee calls it "a tale of terror, murder, bribery, cheating, lying, and torture . . . practiced in varying combinations from Malaya in the 1950s to Ireland in the 1980s." The volume includes a precise biographical listing of 132 British civil servants, most of them members of the diplomatic service, who from many different sources are shown to have engaged in intelligence operations. A unique list is that of persons who have been deported by various foreign governments for "activities unbecoming a diplomat."

Richard Cummings, **The Pied Piper: Allard K. Lowenstein and the Liberal Dream**, Grove Press, New York:1985, \$17.95. An incisive, meticulous examination of the secret life of a rather mysterious figure in American neoliberal and civil rights politics, whose anticommunist fervor led him into close working relationships with the CIA, notably in Spain and South Africa. A former civil rights activist colleague of Lowenstein's, the author spent years conducting interviews and also obtained secret documents. While ambassador for special political affairs at the United Nations under President Carter, Lowenstein "was routinely briefed by the CIA people in New York. . . . He dealt with the CIA and the State Department as though they were interchangeable . . . they were often the same people."

Julie Frederikse, **None But Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe**, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth:1982 and Viking Penguin, New York:1984, \$16.95. By speaking at length with the combatants on both

sides of the propaganda war between the white former civilian and military leaders of then Rhodesia and the cadre of Black liberation movements, and through showing hundreds of dramatic photographs and military psychological warfare documents, the book is a breakthrough toward understanding the nuts and bolts of racist counterinsurgency warfare and victorious liberation struggle against a ruthless force.

Charles Clements, M.D., **Witness to War: An American Doctor in El Salvador**, Bantam Books, New York:1984. "Among the peasants in El Salvador today, it is said that the vulture should be made the national bird . . . because in the past four years of savage civil war, the best and the bravest among them have ended up in a vulture's gullet." So opens the Foreword to this remarkable book, offered by a former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Murat Williams. A profound testament to the suffering and the tenacity of the Salvadoran people, written by a courageous former C-130 pilot in Vietnam, now a doctor who worked for a year in the FMLN/FDR zones. This is must reading for the uninitiated or the activist.

Ana Carrigan, **Salvador Witness: The Life and Calling of Jean Donovan**, Simon & Schuster, New York:1984. The result of two years' painstaking research, part of which led to a film shown on public television in 1982, "Roses in December," this is the odyssey of a woman led from a conventional eastern Republican upbringing to join the Maryknoll Sisters as a lay worker in El Salvador. It was in the midst of her social work with Salvadoran peasants that she and her three fellow churchwomen were raped and murdered with premeditation by Salvadoran military men. The volume carefully traces the ensuing joint cover-up by both San Salvador and Washington. Includes letters from the women and photographs.

(continued on page 39)

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