

## An East-West deal over Agca trial?

by Umberto Pascali

"The CIA is a serious organization. That's why they did not want to go for this story of the Bulgarian connection." The Bulgarian journalist is smiling politely while explaining to me what the trial of Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish terrorist who tried to kill the Pope in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981 is really all about.

We are talking in the big room in the Foro Italico, where the trial is being conducted, during a pause in the proceedings. The Bulgarian Antonov, accused by Agca of being his immediate accomplice in the assassination attempt, sits downfaced behind bars. Some say that the Bulgarians are very worried that he is on the verge of psychologically breaking and revealing everything.

Clearly, Sedar Celebi, another Bulgarian, looks much more alive, and smiles continuously at photographers.

Some say that Antonov feels the pressure of one who may never get out of jail, but fears also what his masters may do if he becomes too dangerous. *Izvestia* correspondent Paklin moves continuously, from a journalist to Public Prosecutor Antonio Marini, to the lawyers for the accused.

The statement of the Bulgarian journalist is surprising. I ask for further explanation. "The KGB is also very serious. And now, you know, there is a new atmosphere, Gorbachov will meet Reagan, and if I am not mistaken, he will also come to Italy to meet Prime Minister Bettino Craxi. . . . Yes, one could say that the CIA is realistic."

As my Bulgarian interlocutor indicated, the big problem in this trial, already labeled the "trial of the century," is that its outcome is being decided not so much in the big room at Foro Italico in Rome, but in confidential discussions between Moscow, Washington, Vatican City, Rome, and certain top oligarchical circles, first of all, the Thurn und Taxis family. "There are very strong pressures being applied against the Italian government," a high-level insider told me. "The Bulgarian track is absolutely true, everything Agca said on that is true, and even worse, but the strategic conditions to draw the obvious conclusions do not exist."

Another source, who knows much more than appears in the press, said, "Agca is sending signals. Sometimes he invents things or purposely denies what he has previously confessed to confuse the picture. This is why he has been promised a deal; he could be freed in some years, so he never

touches the Italian or Turkish side of the plot."

On July 9, when pushed by the public prosecutor, Agca blurted out: "Until now I said the truth. The rest does not depend on me. Certain conditions are necessary." On another occasion, the terrorist declared: "I did not believe that we could have arrived at this point. This was not supposed to happen." Agca also says that he has been threatened by the Soviets, and he wants certain assurances if he is to talk more.

### The role of the media

I had the clear impression that the Soviet and Bulgarian strategy is not at all what one observes in the behavior of their lawyers, but in the secret strategic negotiations and the atmosphere of pessimism created by the Western media. Only 30 court sessions have taken place to date—practically nothing considering the importance and the scope of the facts raised during the trial—but the media are generally spreading the idea that the thing is already over: Agca is crazy, he invented everything, and nothing will be discovered.

Aleksander Dospevsky, the most important Bulgarian lawyer who is a counsel to Antonov, told me: "Nobody believes in Agca anymore. Juridically the trial will go on, but it is already clear that the involvement of Bulgaria is completely invented. You will see."

True, Agca proclaimed a couple of times: "I am Jesus Christ." But the media did not report what else he said in his mystical mutterings. On July 15, I was quite struck at the way Agca, pushed by the judge to reveal what he knows of his accomplices in Munich, quite evidently felt that there was something he could not say. Munich is important, because it leads to the famous 3 million deutschemarks payed to Agca by, he says, a Soviet official. But a very nervous Agca said that he does not want to say more. "If I did spill innocent blood, I am condemned now. Of course I pay. I said I wanted to hit Christianity and Western civilization in the name of God. I did hit it. I always said I was a glorious Muslim, but also Jesus Christ. These are not contradictions, but facts that nobody understands. They will understand when we break world peace and hundreds of millions of innocent people die because the Vatican, the White House, and the United Nations did not listen to my words. . . ."

These are not just the words of a crazy man, but the deep "Prophecy of Fatima" belief-structure of a killer conditioned by the Gnostic-cult specialists at the top of Bulgarian and Soviet intelligence. *They* want to "hit Western civilization." Nor was Agca crazy when on an earlier occasion, he refused to answer questions, because, he said, at that very moment, the Vatican Secretary of State, Agostino Cardinal Casaroli, was in Czechoslovakia for the celebrations of Saints Cyril and Methodius, and in this context, was making a deal with the Soviets.

Nor did he seem to me to be very crazy when he said that he understood that there was a deal after reading the latest Papal encyclical on ecumenicism between the Orthodox and Catholic churches.