
Book Review

The Sphinx and the Gladiators: How Neo-Fascists Steered the Red Brigades

by Claudio Celani

La Sfinge delle Brigate Rosse (The Sphinx of the Red Brigades)

by Sergio Flamigni

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Former Senator and anti-terrorist expert Sergio Flamigni's latest book reveals new evidence that the Red Brigades terrorist group, which was responsible for assassination of Christian Democratic leader Aldo Moro in 1978, and other murderous acts, was directly steered by Gladio-NATO circles. These circles were headed by the late Edgardo Sogno, an agent of the Anglo-American intelligence and special operations network, which was put together in Europe after World War II, by Allen Dulles, director of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) and the CIA.

Sogno (Count Edgardo Sogno Rata del Vallino) was an aristocrat from Piedmont, a member of the P2 secret Masonic lodge who, like P2 Grandmaster Licio Gelli, fought in the Spanish Civil War on the side of fascist dictator Francisco Franco. In 1943, shortly before Mussolini's fall, Sogno went over to British Special Operations Executive head McCaffery, under whose supervision he built a Stay Behind (resistance) organization called the "Franchi Brigade." McCaffery introduced him to OSS head Allen Dulles, who, when Sogno was captured by the Wehrmacht, intervened personally with SS General Karl Wolff to have Sogno released. This occurred in the context of the Dulles-Wolff negotiations, which gave birth to the famous "Ratline" rescue of former Nazi SS members, and their recruitment into post-war NATO intelligence and special operation forces.

In the postwar period, Sogno had a diplomatic career as attaché and ambassador in several countries, including Argentina, France, and the United States. He was a close friend of NATO Secretary General Manlio Brosio. In 1950, Sogno began to build a paramilitary anti-communist organization called "Atlantici d'Italia," under the mandate of Interior Minister Mario Scelba, which is considered to have been an em-

bryo of the future Gladio. In 1953, after attending a program on psychological warfare at the NATO Defense College in Paris, Sogno built a public anti-communist organization called "Pace e Libertà," on the model of the French "Paix et Liberté," founded by former collaborationists in Paris, with the support of the French government.

In 1970, the year of the birth of the Red Brigades, Sogno founded another organization, called "Comitati di Resistenza Democratica" (CRD). Members of CRD and the NATO Stay Behind organization, Gladio, overlap. As Sogno himself revealed in a later interview, CRD members took an oath that they would physically eliminate political leaders who compromised with the Italian Communist Party.

In 1974, Sogno attempted a coup d'état, which was discovered and prevented by then Defense Minister Giulio Andreotti, who removed several military commanders. Eventually, Sogno was prosecuted and acquitted. He died in 2000. In his autobiography, published after his death, he confessed that the coup attempt was a real one.

Sogno's Enemy, Aldo Moro

Sergio Flamigni has written seven books on the Moro case. In his capacity as former Senator and member of several Parliamentary investigating committees, he has access to classified material and police sources. Additionally, he has personally interviewed several former terrorists and witnesses. Flamigni, who during the 1978 events was a member of the secretariat of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) under Enrico Berlinguer, Moro's main partner in the policy of "national solidarity," has made it his life's mission to search for the truth of the Moro case.

In his previous books, Flamigni reconstructed the history of how Moro's policy was opposed by an Anglo-American faction represented by then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and how a NATO-controlled secret organization, the P2 freemasonic lodge, controlled all the police and intelligence structures which were in charge of finding Moro's kidnappers and the location of his prison. He has insisted that the so-called "Red Brigades" were in reality a front for such Anglo-American circles, which found allies in a strong Italian network that was centered on the oligarchical and financial cir-



Former Senator Flamigni's book documents how Red Brigades head Mario Moretti, whom he calls the "sphinx" for his silence on the matter, was an agent of the fascist Gladio-NATO circles.

cles which had promoted and supported Mussolini's fascist regime.

In his 1999 book, *Il Covo di Stato*, Flamigni recognized what the LaRouche organization had already, in September 1978, singled out: an oligarchical connection around the Caetani family, a fact that investigators picked up only 20 years later. Aldo Moro was kidnapped on Feb. 16, 1978, the day when the fruit of his political work, a government of "national solidarity," with the active support of the PCI, was supposed to be voted in Parliament. Moro's strategy was to help the PCI break off completely with Moscow and recognize the Atlantic Alliance (actually what the PCI did). In this way, Italy would gain full sovereignty over its political system, free from blackmail attempts alleging that any reform policies were "pro-communist." The Red Brigades commando that kidnapped Moro, led by Mario Moretti, kept him a prisoner for 55 days, and ultimately killed him on May 9, 1978.

Sogno and the Red Brigades

In his latest book, Flamigni reconstructs how the "hard-liner" faction which took control of the "leftist" Red Brigades in 1974, was, in reality, steered by the NATO-controlled Sogno organization. In particular, Mario Moretti, the man who organized and led the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro, was part of a group, headed by one Corrado Simioni, which was under control of the Sogno-NATO organization. As early as 1970, when the Red Brigades were founded, this group pushed for immediate murderous actions. The Moretti-Simioni group was initially defeated by the faction led by Renato Curcio and Alberto Franceschini, who rejected murderous actions. Eventually, Simioni and others split the Curcio-led Red Brigades and founded their own clandestine organization, "Superclan" (an abbreviation of "Super-clan-

destine"), which was conceived to take over the Red Brigades from the outside, leaving Moretti as their puppet in the Red Brigades.

In 1974, the entire leadership of the Red Brigades was arrested—except Moretti. Moretti was supposed to be at the Red Brigades meeting place, but apparently someone informed him of the police operation. From that moment on, Moretti became the head of the Red Brigades, and started to plan the Moro operation, under strict Superclan-NATO directions.

Moretti was arrested in 1981, apparently by accident. The police official who conducted the operation has been persecuted. Moretti got six life sentences for murder, and never cooperated with investigators, but was paroled after less than 15 years. Former State President Francesco Cossiga, among others, has pushed for a pardon. Today, Moretti is a free man and has a job in a firm owned by the Lombardy region.

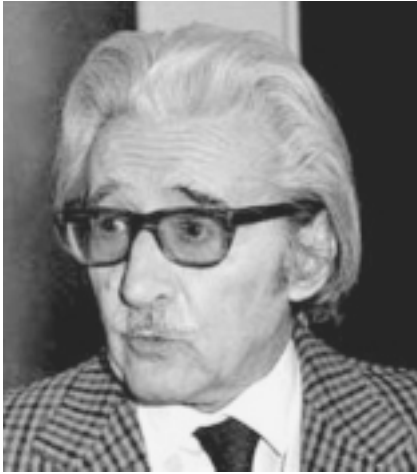
The Superclan and the Sogno Organization

In 1974, shortly before the Red Brigades leaders (minus Moretti) were arrested, somebody inside the group had discovered the connection between Simioni and the Sogno organization. On May 2 of that year, a Red Brigades commando broke into Sogno's CRD offices in Milan, and seized files and important documents. By looking through those papers, Renato Curcio's wife, Mara Cagol, and Franceschini found a reference to one Roberto Dotti, a founding member of the CRD who had died in 1971. At that point, Cagol remembered that in the early phase of the Red Brigades, Simioni had introduced her to a person with the same name, and was told that this man should keep files on all members of the newborn "revolutionary" organization. It then became vital for Cagol and Franceschini, who already suspected that some agency had infiltrated the Red Brigades, to cross-check that information.

Franceschini decided to look for a photo of Dotti, in order to establish whether the man whom Simioni introduced to Cagol was the same as the member of Sogno's CRD anti-communist brigades. Franceschini stole the funerary photograph on the grave of Roberto Dotti and showed it to Cagol, who had no doubts: It was one and the same person.

Since Cagol is dead, Franceschini is the only source for such a report today. As a bona fide witness, Franceschini is credible, contrary to Moretti and other Red Brigades members who still hide the truth about their terrorist past. Also, the fact that investigators found Dotti's grave photo in a Red Brigades hideout confirms part of his report. Nevertheless, an independent and conclusive confirmation of his report was needed.

It was Edgardo Sogno himself who came to help—from the afterworld! In the year 2000, soon after Sogno's death, an autobiographical interview was published, entitled "Biography of an Anti-communist," in which Sogno speaks about Roberto Dotti as co-founder of the CRD organization. Sogno then adds a detail, which had been independently supplied to Franceschini by Mara Cagol: Dotti was working as manager



Count Edgardo Sogno Rata del Vallino ran the political operation that kidnapped and killed his enemy, Christian Democratic leader Aldo Moro.

of a restaurant in Milan, called Terrazza Martini. It was in the Terrazza Martini, Franceschini had reported, that Cagol was introduced to Dotti by Simioni. Simioni introduced Dotti as the manager of the restaurant and as “a former communist partisan.” From Sogno, and from police reports produced by Flamigni, we know that Dotti had been, indeed, a member of the Resistance in the Communist Party in Turin, but had left the party in 1952.

In light of such a reconstruction, a series of other “coincidences” acquire a dramatic significance: In 1970, Moretti moved out of the commune where he lived in Milan, and rented a flat in the same street where Roberto Dotti lived. His immediate neighbor was the head of Milan’s political police, Antonino Allegra, a member of the P2. His wife’s parents lived around the corner, in a building where another leading member of the CRD, Luigi Cavallo, ran the CRD political activities.

When Moretti moved to Rome in 1975, to plan the Moro operation, he rented a flat at 96 Via Gradoli, a building where half of the flats were owned by the secret service. His immediate neighbor was a police informant; and right in front of the building lived a police officer, who not only was a member of the military intelligence services, but came from the same birthplace as Moretti, the small central Italian town of Porto San Giorgio, where everybody knows everybody else. During the Moro kidnapping, despite the fact that Moretti’s identity as a terrorist was known to the police, he succeeded in escaping the attention of this density of police and intelligence structures. Two times, investigators knocked at the door of his flat, but, strangely enough, they did not break in.

Finally, police broke into Moretti’s hideout in Via Gradoli—but someone had taken care that the break-in was adequately broadcast in the media, in order to warn Moretti, and he was not there.

Ultimately, Moretti has cleverly protected the real truth of the Moro operation. Since his arrest in 1981, he has refused to take the stand in six trials; in 1994, he supplied a fake

version of the events in an interview, which was part of a strategy for granting him parole.

Moretti the Neo-Fascist

Was Moretti an intelligence operative from the beginning? This question, originally raised by “older generation” Red Brigades leader Franceschini, is answered with the astonishing evidence presented in Flamigni’s book. Investigating Moretti’s early life, Flamigni has discovered that the future “communist revolutionary” was, in his youth, a militant neofascist! Former school comrades, as well as Moretti’s teachers, have independently confirmed that Moretti was such a fanatic neofascist that he would wear the fascist hat, the Fez, during schooltime.

Digging more into Moretti’s past, Flamigni has discovered a key connection to an important aristocratic family, the Casati Stampa, which was part of Sogno’s political faction. It was the Marchesa Annamaria Casati Stampa who paid for Moretti’s high school education in a boarding school in Fermo, near Moretti’s home town, Porto San Giorgio, and who recommended Moretti for a job in a Milan firm, Sit Siemens. The reason for the Marchesa’s interest in Moretti is probably explained by the Marchesa’s perverse sexual habits: She used to hire young boys, usually from the neo-fascist milieu, to satisfy her sexual appetites in the presence of her husband. The story had a brutal end on Aug. 30, 1970, when Marquis Camillo, in a rapture, shot both his wife and her last sex toy, the young neofascist Massimo Minorenti, and then shot himself.

It is to be presumed that Moretti had been part of the Marchesa’s sex toy box, the first step in his initiation to become a hit man.

The Casati Stampa family is a typical representative of the “slime mold,” the oligarchical power system where, as Lyndon LaRouche says, you can be a liberal on Sunday and a fascist on Monday. Marquis Camillo’s uncle, Alessandro, had been Education Minister in the first Mussolini government, in 1924, a coalition government in which Casati represented the Liberal Party. In 1943, Alessandro Casati was part of the Comitati di Liberazione Nazionale, the leadership body of the armed Resistance; and in 1944, he was War Minister in the Bonomi cabinet, the first non-military government under the Monarchy and after the ousting of Mussolini. Historically, the Casati Stampa family is part of the Milanese liberal aristocracy, but in Rome, they are associated with the so-called “Black Nobility,” the reactionary element in the Vatican.

The closest friend of the Casati Stampa family, the man who became tutor of the young Marchesina Anna after the dramatic death of her parents, was one Giorgio Bergamasco, a Liberal Party Senator who was among the founders of Sogno’s Comitati di Resistenza Democratica. Bergamasco performed his tutor obligations in a singular way: Together with the family lawyer, Cesare Previti, he organized the sale of the

family residence, the Villa San Martino in Arcore (Milan), for a fraction of its market price, to another client of Previti, media magnate and future Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi. Previti would become Defense Minister in Berlusconi's first cabinet in 1994. In 2004 he was sentenced to 11 years for bribery. In 1970, when Sogno founded the CRD organization, together with Casati Stampa's tutor, Senator Bergamasco, Casati Stampa's protégé Moretti became a leftist and attended the founding meetings of the Red Brigades.

NATO and Terrorism

As stated at the outset, the Italian "slime mold" oligarchy is integral to an international pro-fascist network, which was activated in a new form as part of the Cold War "anti-communist" apparatus, under the direction of the Dulles faction of Anglo-American power circles, through NATO structures. Sogno himself reports how in 1953, after attending a program on psychological warfare at the NATO Defense College in Paris, he founded the organization "Pace e Libertà" on the model of the French one, which was led by Jean Paul David and fascist collaborationist Georges Albertini. Sogno then picks up his old contact with Allen Dulles, as he describes it:

"He [Dulles] had been introduced to me by McCaffery during the war, in Lausanne. Dulles was then head of OSS, Office of Strategic Studies, responsible for U.S. intelligence in Europe. . . . I then send the message to the CIA, and inform [Manlio] Brosio, who was Italian Ambassador in Washington. Dulles calls Brosio: 'What does Sogno want?' 'He did not say, but I believe he wants money.' 'Send him to me.' Thus, I go to Dulles. . . . Fifteen days later, Pizzoni, head of the Credito Italiano bank, calls me up and tells me: 'There is an envelope for you' . . . five or six millions, which then became ten per month and kept coming until 1958, when Pace e Libertà was terminated."

Manlio Brosio, the Ambassador to Washington, became NATO Secretary General in 1964. During his mandate at NATO, one of his secretaries participated with Simioni at the founding meeting of the Red Brigades. As Franceschini reports, "Among those who came to the meeting with him [Simioni], was one Sabina Longhi, whom Simioni introduced as his secretary, adding that she was a collaborator of NATO Secretary General Manlio Brosio, as if to say, we have our infiltrators too. The thing made me suspicious, but I calmed down thinking that it was a joke. Instead, it was true." In fact, many years later, prosecutors found out that Longhi had indeed been an aide to Brosio and had a NATO security pass.

One of the most striking aspects of the Moro case is that Aldo Moro, during his 55-day captivity, was interrogated by his kidnappers, and he revealed the existence of Gladio, the Nato "Stay-Behind" network. However, those revelations, which were a political bombshell in the hands of a self-professed "revolutionary" organization, were jealously kept secret by Moretti and company! Moro's writings on Gladio were discovered much later, in September 1990, one week

after Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti had revealed the existence of Gladio. Moretti's explanation ("We did not have the key to interpret those revelations") is ridiculous.

Investigators like Giovanni Pellegrino, chairman of the Parliamentary Investigating Committee on Terrorist Massacres from 1994 to 2000, are convinced that those Moro revelations were fatal, and tilted the balance in favor of the decision to kill him.

However, the death sentence against Moro had already been pronounced years in advance. In a 1990 interview with a journalist from the weekly magazine *Panorama*, Edgardo Sogno explains the oath taken in 1971 by the CRD organization: "We had taken the commitment of hitting those Italian traitors who would make a government with the communists. . . . we took the commitment to shoot against those who would make the government with the communists." The journalist asks, "Did you say shoot, Ambassador, shoot?" Sogno's answer, "Yes, shoot." End of the interview.

And in 1976, during a visit to Washington, Moro was personally threatened by Kissinger, who warned him that if he did not drop his "national solidarity" policy, he would come to a bad end.

One Matrix: Gladio and Sogno's Organization

Was the Moro operation run by Gladio? Was Moretti a member of Gladio? Was Gladio the same thing as the old Sogno organization?

Flamigni has little doubt on this issue. "Gladio and Sogno's organization have the same matrix," he told this author, pointing to the overlapping of membership of the two organizations and its nature. For instance, among the CRD members who signed the famous obituary for Roberto Dotti published in 1971, there is one Francesco Girona, who is today the official spokesman of the Association of former Gladio members. Like Sogno and most Gladio members, Girona has been trained in psychological warfare.

And then, Flamigni continued, "a very strange thing": "Since the beginning of his political activities, Sogno has always kept a high profile. He has been very frequently in the media, made public statements, and so on. But during the 55 days of Moro's captivity, he did not utter one word. In that period, everyone, not just institutional or party leaders, released statements, gave interviews, said something, but Sogno kept silent. . . . I have studied the figure in depth. I read classified papers, still in the archives of the Parliament Committees. I have read intelligence and police reports on him. Among the CRD people there was somebody who reported everything to police agencies. He is a real 'golpista,' a reactionary. Maybe that is the reason why he ultimately wanted to tell the truth, in his biography, and confessed that his 1974 coup attempt was a real one."

In 2000, when he died, Sogno was buried with a state ceremony, decided by a center-left government run by Giuliano Amato.