
Interview: Fulvio Bellini

The Mattei killing: profile of a coverup

Fulvio Bellini is the author of a book, The Assassination of Mattei, published in 1971. His testimony was recently heard by the state prosecutor of Pavia, who has reopened the inquest into Mattei's death. He was interviewed on July 3 by Claudio Celani for EIR.

EIR: Dr. Bellini, were you the first to raise the assassination hypothesis, with your book?

Bellini: To tell the truth, I did it first in a series of articles which came out at the end of 1963, in a review which only published for a short time, called *Il Secolo XX*. The account of that affair came out in the very first issue. The book, a few years later, simply summarized the contents of the article, which came out in two installments. Then there was a coda of polemics, which recounted what has become a commonplace, that is, the clash between Mattei and the Seven Sisters; their attempt to neutralize Mattei, the reasons why at a certain point their viewpoint was imposed, i.e., eliminate him from the scene. These articles are now on the desk of the Pavia prosecutor.

EIR: What elements did the articles contain which are useful for the investigation?

Bellini: The article referred to a central figure in the inquest, the one who said before things cooled down, on the night of Oct. 27, that he saw the plane blow up in the sky. His name was Mario Ronchi and he was the owner of the farm in the area where the plane exploded. The reporter from *Corriere della Sera*, Franco Di Bella, hurried straight from him to write a report in which he quoted verbatim from Mario Ronchi, putting his words in quotation marks. Truths in Italy come out this way, when there is not yet an interested party who intervenes to smother the story.

EIR: Is this witness still alive?

Bellini: I do not know. But his testimony is in *Corriere*. When I read Di Bella's news story I took it to be true. Two or three months later, when we decided to make an inquiry, I went to talk with Ronchi, thinking that he would confirm, but he denied everything. He went so far as to tell me that he was not even at the site. Then I realized he had been bought off. Even his niece reported that from a poor farmer, Ronchi had suddenly become rich, rich enough to loan money. And the statements by Ronchi's niece are on the desk of the Pavia prosecutor.

EIR: Was this what convinced him of the assassination of Mattei?

Bellini: If I had any doubts, Ronchi's behavior dissolved them. But then there was also the disappearance of the black box. At the time the airplane fell, it was raining pitchforks, it was eight o'clock at night, and tens, hundreds of carabinieri [military police] rushed in searching for the black box. Vanished.

EIR: What happened to the journalist who interviewed Ronchi?

Bellini: He played possum. He did not have the courage to either confirm or deny, so he did the old middle-of-the-road routine. For me, to hook up with Di Bella was very difficult, he did not want to be caught up with. Then he became the editor of *Corriere*. And his name was found on the list of the P-2 [Propaganda 2, the illegal masonic lodge exposed in 1980—ed.]. I think that for his career, his attitude in the Mattei case played in his favor. He went into the shade knowing that he had really done it, by unmasking a huge international plot.

EIR: The hit on Mattei's plane was set up in Sicily. Is it true that the president of ENI was not supposed to go to Sicily and that he was called in an emergency?

Bellini: Yes. The background of that trip was recounted for the first time in an interview that was written by three people: myself, Enrico's brother Italo, and the journalist from *Il Messaggero*, Salvatore D'Agata, in 1972. Three days before the departure for Sicily, Italo found out from Enrico that he did not want to go, because he had an awful lot of commitments. He had been there the previous month and had said to his collaborators: Don't bother me any more because I won't be back for a few months. Instead, they insisted on his return.

A few days ago Italo's son (Italo meanwhile had died) Angelo told the newspapers that it was [then-Prime Minister Amintore] Fanfani who called Mattei to Sicily. But that is not so. I can attest to it because I was seeing Italo on a daily basis and if it had been Fanfani he would have told me. In reality, in Sicily they deliberately made attacks on the Gela airport, which was ENI's airport, in such a way as to give some people arguments for calling Mattei back to Sicily. Probably Verzotto made the phone call.

EIR: Who was Verzotto?

Bellini: Verzotto was the regional secretary of the DC [Christian Democracy], and a trusted AGIP [Italian State oil company] man. He is the person who entices Mattei to Sicily, and he is also the one who acts in the case of Mauro De Mauro, the Sicilian journalist who probed the death of Mattei and disappeared without a trace.

De Mauro was the Sicilian correspondent of *Il Giorno* and of the Italia press agency, both of which belonged to ENI, and he wrote the news story on the last day of Mattei's life. De Mauro records the speech made by Mattei from the

balcony, which is seen in the Rosi film, and he reproduces it in the correspondence in the next day's *Il Giorno*. De Mauro goes home, he writes the article, and puts the tape into the archive.

When Rosi puts him in charge of making the investigation for the film, De Mauro, who had read my book, sits down to listen again to the tape and he begins to give importance to Mattei's words: "I was not supposed to be here today, but as I see your welcome I am happy." These are Mattei's words.

De Mauro puts things together and goes back to Verzotto himself! Verzotto loses his head and thinks that De Mauro knew too much. In reality he did not know anything. He only knew one thing: He was convinced that there had been a plot and he had this tape in his hands. The mafia boss Di Cristina had said that if he had been Sicilian, Verzotto would not have lost his head. Instead he was a Venetian, and reacted impulsively.

EIR: For whom was Verzotto acting?

Bellini: To understand it you have to examine the political complicities. In my book I refer to the trip which Fanfani made, when he had been elected prime minister right after the election of Kennedy in the United States, in the spring of 1961. I based myself on the *New York Times* account which, in my view, told the truth. Kennedy began to ask Fanfani questions about ENI: What is it, is it a State entity, who names the directors, how is it possible that ENI's policies don't coincide with those of the government, and so forth. Fanfani was hard put to have to explain that there was a man in Italy, Mattei, who instead of having his policy dictated by the government, dictated it himself! In that very period the negotiations between ENI and the Soviet Union were under way, through which Mattei was buying oil at half the price established by the oil cartel.

Then there is the problem of the center-left. Moro, who was the DC party secretary, had tried to form a government supported by the fascists, the Tambroni government, but without success. He was then forced to support Fanfani's attempt to make an alliance with the Socialists. Very strong opposition came from the United States, fed by the State Department which regarded the Socialists as the same as the Communists. Moro had his contacts in the Kennedy circles, especially with [Arthur] Schlesinger, and he tried to convince them that [Socialist Party head Pietro] Nenni was somebody who took money from everybody, he had taken it from Mussolini, from the French services, and . . . from Mattei. Naturally he also took money from Russia, but all it would take would be for the Americans to replace the Russians and it was a done deal.

This clash between Moro and the State Department and inside the American ruling group on whether or not to support the Socialists getting close to power in Italy lasted two years. It is all documented by the official proceedings which can be consulted through the FOIA [U.S. Freedom of Information

Act provisions]. At a certain point the obstacle seemed to be Mattei. The U.S. State Department imposed the condition that Mattei be gotten out of the way, that is, that he stop financing the Socialist Party. But as long as Mattei was alive, that was impossible.

The obstacle is overcome when Mattei is not there any more and the American emissary, Philip Anfuso (ex-congressman and at the time a member of the New York State Supreme Court) comes to Italy in 1963. Anfuso is the one who, together with Scamporino, when he disembarked in Italy with the American troops [during World War II], he went to free the 700 mafiosi whom Mussolini had confined to the island of Vespignana.

Anfuso had established relations with the Christian Democratic leaders, including Moro, during the liberation.

In January 1963, Philip Anfuso, from Rome, sends to Washington the letter, now declassified, which gives the OK for the government with the Socialists. But what had happened two months earlier? The death of Mattei.

EIR: We have seen who was moving "on the ground" in the operation to eliminate Mattei. But who was giving the orders?

Bellini: It was an interlocking set of interests. The Seven Sisters, who had attempted to make Mattei change policy. They offered him the world on a silver platter. Averell Harriman, in May 1962, during a meeting on his yacht at Monte Carlo, made him a proposal: You can have everything, but you have to become like the French company, which shares in the profits, and is building itself up, but you have to stop throwing spanners in the spokes with deals like the one with the Libyans (Mattei had offered them a division of profits 75%-25% instead of the 50-50 practiced by the cartel). At that time it was believed that the largest petroleum reserves were in Algeria, and not in Libya. It was thought that if Mattei had put together the oil that he might find in Sinai (not much) and what he could find in Algeria (a lot, it was believed), he could have reached the 70-80 million tons which, according to the laws of cost margins, would have thrown oil prices into crisis.

Mattei said "no" to Harriman's offer.

EIR: One year after the assassination of Mattei, Kennedy was killed. Are these two events linked?

Bellini: Let's state how things have gone: The work of investigating the death of Mattei in Italy, I did 90% of it myself. The work on the international connections was done by LaRouche. Something got through to [New Orleans D.A. Jim] Garrison who hints at it in his book. Via Clay Shaw, Garrison arrives at Montreal, to Permindex. LaRouche's analysis of Permindex is precise. It has to do with both the Kennedy and Mattei assassinations, as well as the failed assassination of de Gaulle. LaRouche located very well what was the international organization which could set operations

of this type into motion. It was hardly easy to kill a President of the United States, or a de Gaulle. Or the president of ENI, for that matter.

EIR: How does Permindex enter into the Mattei case?

Bellini: Through David Ferrie, the ex-priest and pederast, and through Carlos Marcello. The thing which is certain is that the operative group was made up of Sicilian-Americans from New Orleans, transported into Sicily on Ferrie's airplane. The basic research into this story was done by Garrison and LaRouche.

In the Mattei affair in Italy both the internal policy, and that of the U.S. State Department, and the specific interests of the Seven Sisters had a hand. Together, they brought about his death.

EIR: Some witnesses, including his nephew Angelo, report that Mattei was supposed to meet Kennedy one week after the attack. Do you think so? And what meaning would that meeting have?

Bellini: It is possible that Mattei wanted to meet Kennedy but not, as some people have stated, because he had already given in to the Seven Sisters and decided to capitulate. Mattei was a nationalist, a patriot, and he was neither anti-American nor anti-Soviet. So he had nothing against a deal with the United States.

But at the same time, I believe that Mattei did not understand completely what type of interests he had defied. Perhaps he thought that an accord could be worked out, an accommodation, even with the Seven Sisters, but this would never have been possible because the cartel policy would have been defeated. And the brains behind this cartel are in England, as LaRouche has stated correctly. But Mattei was not aware of that. He was a self-made man, self-taught, and some things he did not understand.

EIR: And yet Mattei in 1956 showed that he understood very well the nature of the conflict over Suez between the United States on the one hand and the Franco-British colonial duo on the other, so much so that he convinced President Gronchi, who was one of his men, to offer Eisenhower a "preferential axis" with Italy on an anti-colonial arrangement.

Bellini: I never went deeply into that episode. But if we want to describe Mattei from the ideological standpoint, it is not possible. Italy is the country of communists who are not communists and Christians who are not Christians. When I was young I always committed an error: I confused the adjective with the noun: And I found out that the Turin communist was the polar opposite of the Naples communist. Mattei was fundamentally an Italian nationalist, a patriot. Until we reach—and I hope it never happens—one-world government, it is logical that an Italian will act in the interest of his own country, just as the others will act in their countries'

interests, without becoming chauvinists.

Mattei used to say: My country is in bad shape. I want to improve it. He had a patriotic spirit which is extremely dangerous in Italy: The least it costs you, is obstructionism.

EIR: Improving Italy for Mattei meant developing the South, am I right?

Bellini: Of course. The backward South was a ball and chain. He saw the South as a mission. And he had observed one thing: that with certain methods, certain things could get done. Today there is no investment in the South because of the fear of the Mafia which demands kickbacks. This southern, Bourbon mentality, some say is in people's DNA and cannot be cured. Mattei did not believe in this theory. He was a perfectionist and said: By adopting the right measures and changing the system, even the South can become civilized.

In his famous speech at Gagliano, he said this in fact: "I am happy to be here and I want to tell you that the methane that will be found in Sicily will not be transported to the continent but will be used here, with Sicilian labor power and Sicilian technicians." That was the beginning of true industrialization.

EIR: Did you meet Mattei?

Bellini: Yes, I first encountered him on May 5, 1945, at a meeting of the economic department of the CLNAI, the Committee for the Liberation of Upper Italy, presided over by Cesare Merzagora, who was to become president of Assicurazioni Generali and president of the Italian Senate. The war in Italy had ended on April 25. At that meeting the "booty" was distributed, that is, the positions. I was named vice-commissioner of Alfa Romeo. There was also Mattei, who was named commissioner of AGIP, a company in the process of being liquidated which nobody wanted (there was also the future brother-in-law of Gianni Agnelli, Prince Caracciolo, consul in Lugano, who, you should take note, was named president of ACI, the Italian Automobile Club).

Mattei was an honest man. You could see his honesty in his face. I asked: Who is that guy? A member of the DC, I was told. He struck me right away because he had something charismatic about him.

Then I saw him again several times. I will go further: In my own way I helped him. When I found out about the interrogation of Soustelle, the head of the OAS, I contacted an official of the carabinieri, one Cristina, who had access to Enrico Mattei's brother Umberto, to put him on his guard. When Umberto saw Cristina again, he told him: "Enrico thanks his friends in Milan, but he cannot do anything because he would have to shut himself up in a bunker and stop traveling." Instead, Mattei had to travel constantly and sabotage was possible. So I believe the Christian Democratic deputy who recently released an interview recounting that Mattei had indicated to him, "I am condemned, I have to die."