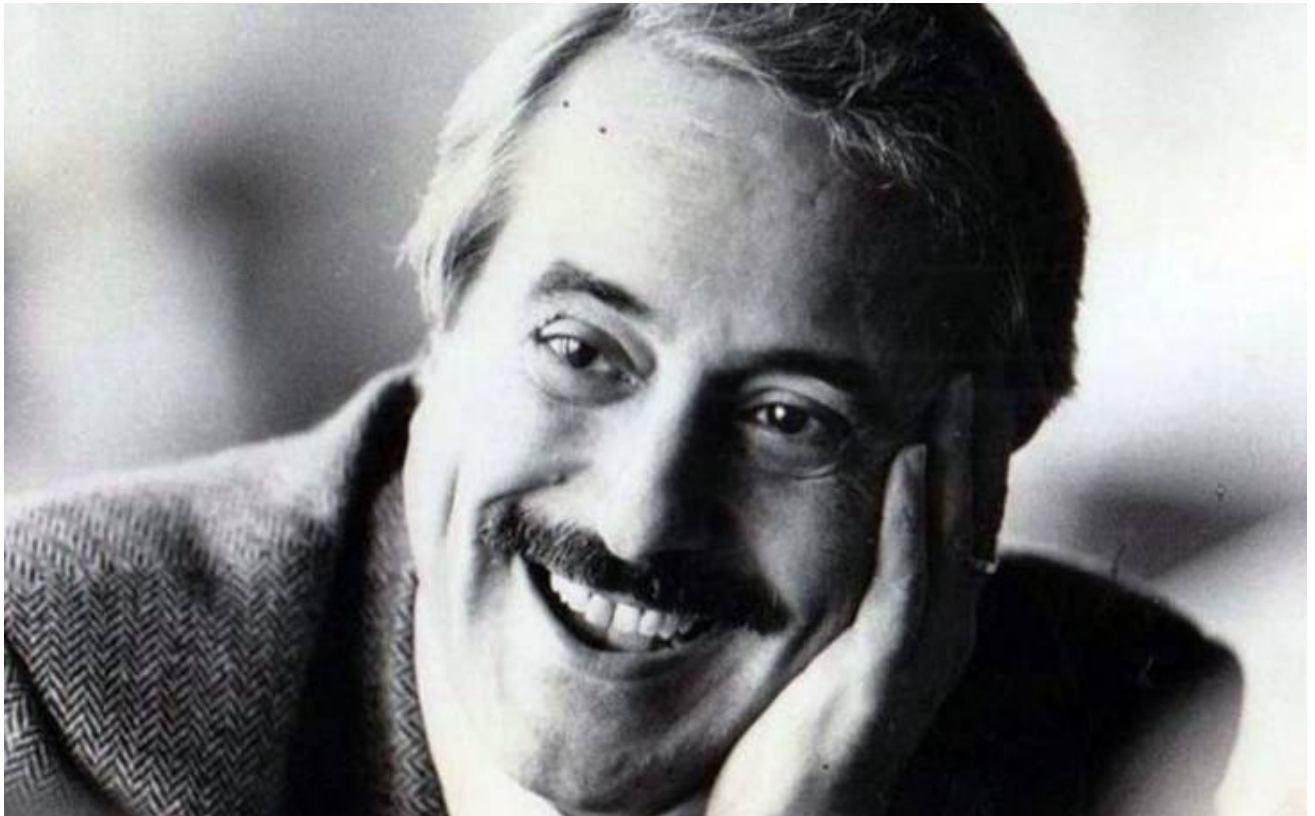


Falcone Remembered Amid (Mostly Un)friendly Fire

Judith Harris (May 23, 2013)



May 23 marks the 21st anniversary of the murder of the anti-Mafia Judge Giovanni Falcone, his wife Francesca Morvillo and their three bodyguards, blown up by 500 kilos of dynamite on the highway between the airport at Punta Raisi and the city of Palermo. Most of those considered responsible are in prison. But what is believed to lie behind his murder, and that months later of his fellow magistrate Paolo Borsellino, is still being analyzed by Palermo magistrates investigating allegations that an illegal secret pact had been forged between the government and the Mafia. In the words of Palermo's chief prosecutor, Roberto Scarpinato, "We must take cognizance that the Mafia evil is not outside of us, but also among us."

ROME - May 23 marks the 21st anniversary of the murder of the [anti-Mafia Judge Giovanni Falcone](#) [2], his wife [Francesca Morvillo](#) [3] and their three bodyguards, blown up by 500 kilos of dynamite on the highway between the airport at [Punta Raisi](#) [4] and the city of Palermo. Most of those considered responsible, acting under the direction of Mafia boss [Totò Riina](#) [4], are long since in prison.

But what is believed to lie behind his murder, and that months of his fellow magistrate [Paolo Borsellino](#) [5], is still being analyzed by Palermo magistrates, who have revived the investigation into



allegations that an illegal secret pact had been agreed upon between the government and the Mafia in 1992 following simultaneous bombings in Rome, Florence and Milan that left five dead. In the words of the chief prosecutor of Palermo [Roberto Scarpinato](#) [6], during this week's commemoration of Falcone in the Justice Building in Palermo, "We must take cognizance that the Mafia evil is not outside of us but also among us."

Palermo prosecutors are now requesting that [President Giorgio Napolitano](#) [7] testify in court on what he may have learned, in his role as Justice Minister at that time, about the alleged pact. If he accepts, he would not be asked to comment, as was earlier requested, upon phone taps in which he was reportedly heard speaking with the defendant, the former Interior Minister [Nicola Mancino](#) [8]. On court order those tapes have been destroyed. Will Napolitano accept? Some here hope he will at least testify, if not in Palermo, from behind his desk in the Quirinal Palace.

Elsewhere a step in the right direction was [Premier Letta](#) [9]'s success in facing down [Berlusconi's Liberty party \(Pdl\)](#) [10] efforts this week to reduce by half sentences for Mafia association. Among those who would benefit from this proposed easing of sentences for alleged [Mafia](#) [11] association is [Marcello Dell'Utri](#) [12], longtime Berlusconi associate. This truly disgraceful attempt to weaken the anti-Mafia prosecutors' delicate position, especially in Sicily, did not succeed; Deputy [Premier Angelino Alfano](#) [13] of the Pdl is reportedly given credit for mediating between the two who share government responsibility, [PD](#) [14] and Pdl.

Otherwise most was unfriendly fire this week. On Tuesday the governing coalition partners decided to place before Parliament, and then before Italians in a referendum, a modified electoral law to replace the hated "[Porcellum](#) [15]" - the dirty pig law, as it is universally known. Passed while [Silvio Berlusconi](#) [16] was premier, it included a provision that whatever coalition cluster achieved a relative majority would have an absolute majority in Parliament. The government's proposed revision would increase the minimum to 40% of the vote in order for a party to win that coveted freebie majority, or from up to 50 MPs to perhaps 25 or 30.

It seemed like a step in the right direction until Wednesday, when the Partito Democratico (PD) leadership unexpectedly converged in opposition, from the youthful captain of the guard [Matteo Renzi](#) [17] to [Rosi Bindi](#) [18] of the old guard, saying that the move was phony, a camouflage instead of true reform, and would do nothing but help Silvio Berlusconi and [Angelino Alfano](#) [19] to become leaders of a future post-election government. Another problem: no mention was made of the Letta government's plans to reduce the number of members of Parliament.

And there is a real if not perceived as an immediate problem. The present government headed by Enrico Letta of the left-leaning PD came to power because its electoral coalition was amplified through its embrace of [Nichi Vendola](#) [20]'s further left party, the [Sinistra Ecologia Libertà](#) [21] (SEL, for Left-Environment-Freedom). This union of two parties gave Letta sufficient votes and hence enough freebie MPs to win control over the Chamber of Deputies, if not the Senate. As a result, Letta rather than Berlusconi or the irascible [Beppe Grillo](#) [22] is premier, thanks to the Porcellum he himself had lobbied to correct for future elections. However, in recent days Italy's high Court of Cassations ruled that, if a ruling coalition crumbles while in government, the validity of the very Parliament is in essence questionable. Although this ruling has slipped conveniently through the cracks, it is precisely the case today because Vendola has slithered out of the coalition that brought the duo Letta-Vendola into office only two months ago.

The ever vocal opposition [Movimento Cinque Stelle](#) [23] (M5S) is also running into new problems. Senior PD members of Parliament are calling for stricter norms for political party funding that would in essence force the truculent Beppe Grillo's M5S to become a party like others, or not be permitted to field candidates for office. Needless to say, Grillo is vociferously outraged, claiming that the parties in power are trying to remove him from the political scene and that, if they go on, he will bring his multitude of followers into the piazzas. At the same time he is cracking down on his own warriors, being asked to concede interviews only to Grillo-approved journalists. Once approved, the interview must take place in an open hall and be tape recorded. Grillo's movement being by its very nature more anarchic than soldierly, there was a chorus of protests against what amounts to a gag rule.



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