

Words Simply Fail Us Sometimes... One school girl killed, one in critical condition, by a bomb in Italy.

Anthony Julian Tamburri (May 19, 2012)



While it remains unclear at this point who is responsible for the terrorist act in Brindisi (Puglia) this morning, the perpetrators' choice of target is absolutely inscrutable. It figures, as this blog goes to press, as an obscure episode that also fuels political and social tensions.

SATURDAY, MAY 19. An explosion occurred today outside a school in Brindisi — in the southern Italian region of Apulia — killing one 16-year-old girl and injuring several others. It was early in the morning and students were just arriving at the school, which offers vocational training and is attended mainly by girls.

The police found three gas cylinders at the site that were detonated with a remote control. The device was concealed behind a trash can near a wall 50 meters from the entrance of the school. Both the perpetrators and the motive of the attack remain unclear.

One opinion points to the Mafia, as the school is named after Francesca Morvillo Falcone, the wife of prominent anti-mafia judge Giovanni Falcone who was assassinated with his wife in Palermo,



Sicily, almost exactly 20 years ago to the day, May 1992.

Other observers point to the fact that the city's office of the national tax collection agency Equitalia, is close to the school. Equitalia has recently been targeted by bombs and Molotov cocktails in Rome and other cities — and these attacks were clearly aimed at the heavy taxation policies announced by the new Italian government.

The Apulia Region governor Nichi Vendola said: "It could be either a mafia or a political terrorism attack. It's too early to say. It's an unprecedented event."

Meanwhile Italy's Prime Minister, Mario Monti, is meeting the G8 leaders in Washington, DC. Mr Monti called both the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, and the President of Apulia, Niki Vendola, to offer solidarity and recommend unity against "subversive violence."

The commission of murder per se is an act of infamy at the lowest level. That such a barbaric act takes place in a country that, historically, has given so much to civilization makes it absolutely shameful, and also calls into question the humanity of those who have allowed such things to continue to exist. As Rosaria Costa stated twenty years ago, following her husband's death at the hands of those who also killed Falcone and his wife:

And while we are not in Palermo, but rather in [Brindisi](#) [2], nothing has changed, and there obviously can be no "perdono": for something of this kind, a violence aimed at teenagers, mostly young women, going to a vocational school on Saturday in order to better themselves and, hopefully, have a better future, is simply inscrutable and, we should add, unforgivable.

How obscenely paradoxical, for the irony is just simply overwhelming, that this is a school where students train in social services, tourism, and fashion, three fields that, each in their own way, underscores a type of inter-connectedness among people: social assistance and welcoming visitors especially.

This is not an act of rebellion against an oppressive State, a multi-national that exploits the poor and ignorant, nor a dictator who keeps his nation in absolute squalor while murdering those who rise up against such inhumane tyranny, all of which is also questionable. This is an act of terror, whatever its origins, against those young, innocent women for the most part, who have just crossed the threshold of the age of reason and wanted to educate themselves professionally, precisely because, we can assume, they had great hope for their future, and thus for the future of their country as well. Sixteen-year-old Melissa Bassi lost her future this morning at 7:50 am; her six companions were seriously wounded, one barely hanging on to life as I write.

Italy is a far greater country than what has transpired this morning. Italians are a far greater people than those who set this bomb, and, underscoring their act of inhumane coward-ness further still, detonated it from afar. Let us hope that Veronica Capodieci pulls through, and that she and her sister students continue to have faith in their society nonetheless, and that they will eventually contribute to a better future for and of their Italy.

In the meantime, we need to express our own indignation as Italian Americans, in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Italy. We need to figure out how we can assist in some fashion. And we need to insist that, while the cancers of other countries are reported and their possible remedies discussed in US newspapers and on TV, so, too, should Italy be the topic of such discussions. We need to examine all aspects of our Italian communities and be sure they are discussed as well on the major networks and in print media. We need to be sure that tragedies of this type receive the rightful condemnation from afar as they receive within the boundaries of Italy. As we sing the praises of Italy, so must we examine its problems: all of its problems and especially those that create such a cancer, as was manifested today, within its society. We simply cannot live in an Italian community within the US where Italy is reduced to statues, clothes, food, Ruby-Gate, and the like.

During her trip to the US last week, Italy's Italian Minister of Justice stated: "The Italian war against [M]afia is something we must be proud of, and that we must be credited for." Well, as we wait to see who exactly is the culprit behind such a vile act, perhaps we should examine our own conscience and try to figure out how we might once again, as i-Italy stated, be productive "testimonies of this and of the values that characterize Italy as a nation."

Ottorino Cappelli contributed to this blog.



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