

<b>Institution: University of Bath</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: D27</b>
<b>Title of case study:</b> Understanding and Coping with the Legacy of Terrorism
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Bull's research on the legacy of Italian terrorism has enhanced public understanding of the lack of closure around the political violence that convulsed the country in the 1960s to 1980s and in doing so has contributed to processes of commemoration, memorialisation and reconciliation. It has benefited communities of interest in civil society, primarily Associations of Victims, school children, and the wider public. Bombing attacks on innocent civilians and an 'armed struggle' carried out by ideologically-inspired groups in Italy over the period was responsible for over 15,000 violent acts, resulting in around 500 deaths, and over 1,100 injuries. The Italian Victims' Associations with whom Bull has worked have tried to establish the truth, keep alive public memory, inform the public, and especially the young. They have welcomed the active collaboration and input of informed academics such as Bull.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Bull's research on the legacy of terrorism has filled an important void in academic and public knowledge. It has been carried out at the University of Bath since 2004, supported by the AHRC through a period of Research Leave in 2005 and a Fellowship in 2010. Prior to 2008, findings appeared primarily in the form of a solo-authored book, published in 2007, which was extensively and very favourably reviewed. This was followed by other publications and new research, underpinned by a high number of exclusive interviews with ex-terrorists and victims, leading to a new book in 2013. Findings were also disseminated in Italian, and it is in this country that they generated the greatest impact. Terrorism can be best conceived as a tool and terrorists as users of this tool, albeit with diverse aims. In Italy terrorist means were used by extreme-right and extreme left groups, both of which were manipulated by state actors.</p> <p>The research initially focused on extreme-right terrorism, carried out between 1969 and 1980. This form of terrorism has been little examined by academics and is little known by the general public, not least because of its ambiguous and complex nature, yet it has left a deep legacy. The research examined this legacy, exploring issues related to reconciliation, memory, truth and justice, and comparing the views of victims, perpetrators and right-wing politicians in the face of recent judicial verdicts, that were reached in 2004, 2005 and 2010. These verdicts largely failed to identify the individual culprits and resulted in acquittals, albeit with a dubious formula ('insufficient evidence'). However, they also established the involvement of neofascist groups and the connivance of sectors of the state.</p> <p>One major research finding was the reluctance of the post-fascist party to come to terms with the involvement of Italian neofascism in the bombing massacres. The Italian state, in turn, has opted for a strategy of 'amnesia'. In the absence of an officially recognised truth regarding the bombing massacres, different political groups construct their own partisan version of 'the truth', depicting past perpetrators of political violence in heroic terms and/or as victims unjustly persecuted by the state. This situation, defined as a 'politics of non-reconciliation', has left a heavy legacy for Italian democracy.</p> <p>Recent research focused on the legacy of both left and right terrorism and established that the victims – civilians killed in bombing attacks as well as magistrates, journalists, civil servants targeted by armed 'combatants' – had been left out entirely from state measures aimed at overcoming political violence and achieving reconciliation. In this context, the associations representing the victims feel left alone in their struggle for memory, truth and justice. Research examined the role played by victims and victims' associations in making their voices heard and argued for the need of a wider process of reconciliation, commemoration and truth telling.</p>

### 3. References to the research

Italian Neofascism: The Strategy of Tension and the Politics of Non-Reconciliation. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2007, ISBN 978-1-84545-335-0 (Paperback edition 2011, ISBN 978-0-85745-174-3). (can be supplied by HEI on request)

(with Prof. Philip Cooke) Ending Terrorism in Italy, London: Routledge, 2013, ISBN 978-0-415-60288-4 (hbk), 978-0-203-78601-7 (ebk). (can be supplied by HEI on request)

Articles and Chapters:

'The Italian transition and national (non)reconciliation', Journal of Modern Italian Studies, 13:3, 2008, 405-21, DOI 10.1080/13545710802218619.

'Neofascism', in R. Bosworth (ed), The Oxford Handbook of Fascism, Oxford, OUP, 2009, ISBN 978-0-19-929131-1 (hbk).

'Political violence, stragismo and 'civil war': an analysis of the self-narratives of three neofascist protagonists', in Imagining Terrorism. The Rhetoric and Representation of Political Violence in Italy 1969-2009, ed. by P. Antonello e A. O'Leary, Oxford, Legenda, 2009, 183-99, ISBN 978-1-906540-48-7.

'The Strategy of Tension and the armed conflict in a context of (non)reconciliation', in Italy Today. The Sick Man of Europe ed. A. Mammone, G. Veltri, London: Routledge, 2010, 101-13, ISBN 978-0-415-56159-4 (hbk), 978-0-415-56160-0 (pbk).

Selected papers to the above book, including Professor Bull's, were published in Italy in 2011 by popular Baldini Castoldi Dalai (Un paese normale? Saggi sull'Italia contemporanea), ISBN 978-8866202172.

Grants for the above research:

£14, 013 for Research Leave by AHRC in 2005 to complete 2007 book (see above)

£61,113 for Fellowship by AHRC in 2010 to complete new book on Ending Terrorism in Italy

### 4. Details of the impact

The research has contributed to processes of commemoration, memorialisation and reconciliation, in terms of:

(1) Public discourse, where the public has gained an understanding of the issues and challenges faced by Italian society, including the existence of partisan reconstructions of the past, divided memories and the plight of victims of terrorism, who feel that truth and justice have not been secured. This has been achieved through engaging school-children, the media and online fora.

Research findings, which revealed the existence of widespread feelings of bitterness and mistrust among the victims and many of the citizens, as well as partisan versions of the truth and contrasting representations of the past, first appeared in a book published by Berghahn (reprinted in a paperback edition in 2011, after the hardback edition had sold out - c. 500 copies, a high figure given the price tag of £53). This book received attention in the form of positive reviews and rated 'highly recommended' by USA-based magazine Choice. On the strength of its excellent reviews and citations, as well as adoption in university courses, the research attracted the attention of the Media, leading to:

(a) a commissioned paper in 2009 by il Mulino (a non-academic journal with a circulation of 8,000 and a website with c. 15,000 hits per month) to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Milan 1969 bombing massacre and comment on the disappointing trial verdicts for this massacre as well as on the legacy of extreme-right terrorism.

(b) A further paper was commissioned in 2010 by il Mulino commenting on the disappointing trial verdict in 2010 for the 1974 Brescia massacre. As the Editor stated: 'The author is not only one of the top experts in the field; she is also always prepared to write on these themes for an educated yet not specialist public, as the one addressed by the journal il Mulino'.<sup>1</sup>

The 2009 article was extensively summarised in the authoritative daily *Il Sole24ore* on 13 December 2009 and in the blog by Nicola Rao, author of bestsellers on the extreme-right, starting a debate among right activists concerning neofascism's role in terrorism, an issue they generally consider as taboo. 2 Other Italian blogs and the online Wikipedia cited the research (10 blogs and 12 wikipedia entries) as well as quality media, including British and Italian established newspapers.

Radio interviews with Australian, Belgian and Italian national radio programmes, including a live recording of a 3-hour programme by RAI Radio 3 commemorating the 1980 massacre on 2 August 2010. The Producer states, 'Fahrenheit is one of the most important cultural broadcasts from RAI. We estimate that an audience of at least 200,000 listen to our programme. In particular, the programme broadcast on 2 August 2010 attracted a wide audience given that it focused on a dramatic event which is still present in the civil conscience of the city of Bologna and Italy as a whole. Your participation in the debate and the programme was especially valued and appreciated'.<sup>3</sup>

(c) Keynote speech (to c. 500 people) at a 2012 public seminar on Conflicts in Memory, to 'create dialogue between Aarhus University and the surrounding society concerning subjects of wider societal interest' (<http://matchpoints.au.dk/aboutmatchpoints/>). Bull gave an interview to daily Kristeligt-Dagbladet on the legacy/memory of conflict in Europe, and to italiensklirerforeningen on the legacy/ and memory of terrorism in Italy.<sup>4</sup>

Thanks to this wider dissemination, research was able to enhance public understanding of the continuing relevance and lack of closure concerning the political violence that raged in Italy in the 1960s-1980s and to contribute to processes of commemoration and memorialisation.

(2) Civil society, where it has helped Victims' Associations commemorate the violent past, highlight their exclusion from the reconciliation process, engage in a dialogue with former terrorists and share experiences with other Victims' Associations. This has been achieved through involvement with their events and the media and facilitating their interaction with each other and with former terrorists.

Bull's research collaboration with various victims and their relatives, and the media attention on her advocating the need for a wider process of truth and reconciliation in Italy, attracted the attention of Associations of Victims of Terrorism. Italian Victims' Associations have formed in the early 1980s and are still in existence, comprising roughly 2,000 members. They have been able to:

- (a) raise public awareness of terrorism and its legacy
- (b) educate school children who would not have experience of the events
- (c) begin a process of reconciliation with former terrorists
- (d) earn from other Victims' Associations

Collaboration has been especially intense and ongoing with the Brescia-based Casa della Memoria (formerly the Association of the Victims of the 1974 Brescia Massacre). The Association has benefitted from:

Bull's major speech to an audience of c.2000 local teachers and schoolchildren in May 2010, commemorating the 1974 massacre, widely reported in the local media.

Her involvement in an informed public debate with c. 100 local citizens/students in 2011, also commemorating the 1974 massacre, widely reported in the local media.

These speeches appeared in a commemorative volume distributed to c. 250 local/regional schools and libraries. Feedback indicates that they gave rise to in-class discussions in schools on terrorism and its legacy, thereby partially compensating for the lack of inclusion of these issues in the school curriculum.

Her involvement in a heated public debate in 2010, before c. 200 local citizens, following a live interview broadcast by the local TV station. Many commented on the need for more such occasions to remember the past and discuss its legacy.

Other victims' associations from Italy, Spain and the UK have been interested in the research. Bull has brought them together in a knowledge transfer workshop, held in Bath in June 2012.

Participants included: from Italy, Mr. Milani, President, Casa della Memoria; Mr. Guglielminetti, Head of International Relations, Associazione italiana vittime del terrorismo (Aiviter); from Spain, Mr. Silva, President, Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory; from the UK, Ms. Dover, Programme Manager, Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace; Mr. Gallagher, President, Omagh Support Group. This enabled the associations to meet and compare aims and activities, as well as approaches to and practices of reconciliation thereby extending the reach of Bull's impact

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beyond Italy.

Jo Dover wrote that 'The workshop provided an opportunity to widen our existing contacts, especially in view of the importance our organisation attributes to cross-national links [...] We would welcome further collaboration with Italian and Spanish victims' associations to promote these processes [of dialogue and reconciliation] on a wider scale'.<sup>5</sup> Manlio Milani stated that the workshop had stimulated his association to establish contacts at the European level and to develop a similar comparative approach in Italy. Guglieminetti wrote of his gratitude for Bull's work, stating that 'It is for us very important that academic work, after decades of absence, focuses its attention on the activities of the victims of terrorism and their associations. This is a very useful acknowledgment for promoting a debate between theory and practice, history and memory, academic research and the didactic activity carried out by victims among schoolchildren. Furthermore, I am convinced that associations like mine need their work to be analysed and verified by academic researchers working on terrorism at the European level.'<sup>6</sup> Collaboration with these associations is ongoing. Indeed Bull was invited to join the Radicalisation Awareness Network's working group Voices of Victims of Terrorism (VVT). RAN is set up by the European Commission as an EU-wide umbrella network of practitioners and local actors involved in countering violent radicalisation.

Recent research has also discussed the ways in which the narratives and memories of both former terrorists and victims can foster a dialogue and has identified a group of former terrorists who are open to a dialogue with victims. This has enabled Casa della Memoria to facilitate a pioneering and confidential on-going dialogue among a small group of victims and former terrorists, to encourage reconciliation. 'Your ideas and reflections have spurred a debate with other associations (especially those in Bologna and Milan) but above all they constitute an important reference point for a project that sees former terrorists (from the Red Brigades and Prima Linea especially) work together with relatives of victims (like Agnese Moro). This frank exchange of views will soon be in the public domain with the aim of drawing attention to the theme of public memory, which must include the participation of both victims and perpetrators. The document we are discussing also aims to show that it is possible to embark on a path of social reconciliation especially when it is a matter of crimes involving (and perpetrated against) society as a whole and not just individual victims. When a joint document will be produced and the public initiative will take place, you will be able to see, I am pleased to say, that they will both have been informed by the themes and issues you put forward in your research'.<sup>7</sup>

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

1. Letter by Deputy Editor, il Mulino
2. See Nicola Rao's blog with summary of Prof. Bull's il Mulino article:  
<http://nicolarao.ormedilettura.com/2009/12/25/estratto-di-un-saggio-scritto-da-una-storica-italo-inglese-sul-numero-di-dicembre-gennaio-della-rivista-culturale-il-mulino-dedicato-al-il-sangue-e-la-celtica/>
3. Email from RAI3 Producer of programme commemorating Bologna massacre in 2010. RAI Radio 3 programme commemorating Bologna massacre on 2 August 2010 available at:  
[http://www.radio3.rai.it/dl/radio3/ContentItem-3d39eaa4-f4d0-409f-81c8-ae8f2895abfd.html?refresh\\_ce](http://www.radio3.rai.it/dl/radio3/ContentItem-3d39eaa4-f4d0-409f-81c8-ae8f2895abfd.html?refresh_ce)
4. Kristeligt-Dagblad, 27 June 2012 (partially accessible on Kristeligt Dagblad website). Interview with Professor Cecchini, accessible on the website of the association italiensklrerforeningen ([http://xn--italiensklrerforeningen-i9b.dk/articles.php?article\\_id=4](http://xn--italiensklrerforeningen-i9b.dk/articles.php?article_id=4))
5. Letter by Programme Manager, Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace.
6. Letter by Aiviter's Head of International Relations.
7. Letter by President, Casa della Memoria