



Macerata: it was not revenge, but attempted massacre. Racist and fascist

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Only two years have passed but, looking at the collective memory, a century seems to have passed. And yet, what happened in Macerata on 3 February 2018, in addition to upsetting the lives of six people, has marked, for many reasons, the history of our country¹.

On that day in February, around 11 am, Luca Traini leaves his house in Tolentino, takes the car, stops at the bar and at a gas station announcing that he is going to “shoot the niggers”. Then he goes to Macerata. He wanders around the streets of the centre and begins his “hunt”. Equipped with a semi-automatic pistol he starts shooting out of the car window. He doesn’t do it at random. He chooses his target one by one among the black passers-by that come into his sights. There are about thirty shots, some of which hit, one woman and five foreign men, all African. Wilson Kofi, 20 years old, Ghanaian, is wounded in the chest. Omar Fadera, 23 years old, from Gambiano, has a gluttony smear wound. Gideon Azeke, 25 years old, is wounded in the leg. Jennifer Otio, 25 years old Nigerian, is shot in the shoulder. Mahmadou Touré, Malian, 28, is hit in the right hemithorax. Festus Omagbon, 32 years old, Nigerian, is injured in the left arm. That no one is wounded to death is just a case.

The raid takes place in the middle of the city, and before the man stops his car and is captured by the Carabinieri, an hour and three quarters passes. Traini has time to pass in front of Giardini Diaz and the station and walk along via dei Velini, corso Caroli and via Spalato, where he also damages the glass of a Democratic Party headquarters. He then stops in Piazza della Vittoria, where he gets out of the car, takes off his jacket, wraps himself in a tricolour and makes the Roman salute in front of the War Memorial, to the cry of “Viva l’Italia”. It is here that, finally, the Carabinieri block him.

¹ We dealt with the events of Macerata on the site cronachediordinariorazzismo.org underlining immediately the importance of an immediate response from the anti-racist world.



Luca Traini, as will be ascertained later on, is not a madman, he is lucid and in full possession of his capacity to understand and want. What he is staging, before being arrested, is a real *racist exhibition*.²

Traini is 28 years old and lives with his mother in Tolentino, about twenty kilometres from Macerata. His political profile and ideology of reference are immediately clear. He is close to CasaPound and Forza Nuova (from which he receives solidarity and the offer of legal support), before running with the Lega Nord as town councillor in Corridonia in 2017. He has two tattoos. On his temple (right) is a Wolfsangel rune, a symbol that in the 1930s was used in Germany by extreme right-wing forces and in Italy by the Fourth Position movement. On his neck, on the other hand, he has the inscription "wolf" imprinted. The wolf likes to define himself and the imagery of the "hunt" recurs in his statements relating to that day. If that were not enough, in his house the Carabinieri found a copy of Mein-Kampf, a history of the Italian Social Republic and a flag with a Celtic cross.

But from the very beginning, even when it is still in progress, the raid is put in connection with the murder of Pamela Mastropietro, the young eighteen-year-old girl brutally murdered a few days earlier, whose body was found on 31 January. A young Nigerian man, Innocent Oseghale, reported for drug dealing, was stopped the day before in connection with the girl's murder. The horrible massacre that was carried out on Pamela's body deeply shook the small town in the Marche region. The route followed by Traini that morning also crosses via Split, where Oseghale lives. And right from the start the man declared that he wanted to "avenge Pamela". There are all the premises for robbing the racist violence of that Saturday morning in the rank of a solitary attempt to "do justice on your own".

² Annamaria Rivera describes it well, also underlining the cold determination with which Traini acts, in her article "Il terrorismo italico e i suoi complici: Macerata e non solo", published on February 7, 2018, in MicroMega (available here: <http://temi.repubblica.it/micromega-online/il-terrorismo-italico-e-i-suoi-complici-macerata-e-non-solo/>), even before Traini himself, long afterwards, declared that he had "imagined a scenic ending" in a well-known interview with Ezio Mauro, which we will talk about later.



The word “revenge” will remain engraved in the collective memory of most people. The connection of the violence of that Saturday morning with the atrocious murder of Pamela Mastropietro will be the key to the interpretation that will almost completely obscure its ideological and racist connotation. And this, despite the pronouncements of the judges of first and second instance³.

The trial

Luca Traini’s first-degree trial begins on 9 May 2018. He is accused of massacre, illegal carrying of weapons and damage with the aggravating circumstance of “racial hatred”. During his first interrogation, the man showed no repentance: “I deny nothing”. His lawyer tries, therefore, to demonstrate his inability to understand and want at the moment of the raid; a thesis contradicted not only by the psychiatric expertise ordered by the Prosecutor’s Office, but also by the words pronounced by Traini himself during the trial. In the five-page spontaneous statement, in which he apologises, he recalls his difficult childhood, but also states that he is “neither mad nor borderline”.

The first-degree sentence was handed down on 3 October 2018: The Court of Assizes of Macerata accepted the requests of the Public Prosecutor’s Office and sentenced him to 12 months’ imprisonment. As the judges specify in the motivations of the sentence: *“The axiom from which the accused moves, trying to remove the obvious racial matrix of his act, is that all drug dealers, at least in Macerata, are black, so shooting a black person means hitting a drug dealer. Since this statement cannot be admitted as true, because drug dealers have no predetermined colour or nationality, the racial matrix is clear. Even not considering the incidence of fascist ideology and its racist drift has consumed a xenophobic raid”*. And that it was an attempted massacre, according to the Court, emerges from the fact that *“the intention was to kill an indeterminate number of people by firing into the crowd (...) The fact, fortunate and independent of the defendant’s will, that*

³ See the beautiful article by M. Pascoletti, “Luca Traini has committed an attack, stop calling it revenge”, Valigia Blu, 4 October 2019, available here: <https://www.valigiablu.it/luca-traini-strage-macerata-media/>.



there were no deaths, does not affect the qualification of the crime as massacre". The Court also judged the repentance expressed at the hearing as "late and unconvincing", where however Traini continued to deny the racist matrix of the raid.

Against the rejection of the request for house arrest, the defence appealed to the Court of Cassation, which rejected the appeal on 15 July 2019, recognising the extreme seriousness of the offence committed and considering that there is "a risk of recidivism due to the continuing lack of understanding of the facts".

Just one year later, on 2 October 2019, the Ancona Court of Appeal confirmed the first-degree conviction. Traini's defence had attempted to drop the crime of massacre and the aggravating circumstance of "racial" hatred, also asking for the renewal of the psychiatric report, in order to prove the man's incapacity to understand and want. These requests were all rejected by the Court. As the lawyer of three of the victims, Paolo Cognini, has had occasion to declare, the sentence is important, *"not so much with regard to the extent of the sentence or the number of years in prison committed, but more for the correct reconstruction and interpretation of the historical facts verified that day in Macerata. A reconstruction which, in fact, leads the commission to believe that on that occasion a crime of massacre was committed, and that Traini's hand was armed with a racially motivated and discriminatory motivation. In rejecting the request for renewal of the expert opinion, the Court of Appeal also confirmed another important fact, namely that Traini did not have a capacity to understand and want to reduce or diminish. On the contrary, the defendant was totally lucid and able to self-determine his actions. Moreover, at the time of the accused act, Traini gave practical and concrete application to the ideological system of racist and neo-Nazi matrix to which he clearly belonged in an organic way"*⁴.

Revenge, apology and repentance: those lenses that distort memory

⁴ Please see: "A Macerata fu tentata strage razzista: la conferma della Corte d'Appello", 9 ottobre 2019, here: https://www.globalproject.info/it/in_movimento/a-macerata-fu-tentata-strage-razzista-la-conferma-della-corte-dappello/22285.



It is not worthwhile here to dwell again on the attempt to dismiss the violent raid of that day as the isolated gesture of a madman (the Minister of the Interior at the time called it “a criminal initiative of individual character”). Instead, the obstinate removal of the racist and ideological matrix of that gesture that followed deserves attention, in the conviction that its explication would have provided further sap to the right. The Macerata raid takes place one month before the vote, in the middle of an electoral campaign in which the migration phenomenon is used as an electoral pick-pick by all parties (not only the right ones).

The thesis of “madness” and revenge sustained in the first hours, and the account of apologies and repentance, proposed with great visibility on the occasion of the two sentences, are basically complementary: they serve to seal a well-known interpretative “thesis”, the one that on the occasion of the most serious racist violence tries to bring them back to the frame of the “fear” perceived in the country. It has already happened, to give just a few examples, with the massacre carried out in Florence in 2011, with the barricades erected in Gorino in 2016, and it happens again in Macerata.

And when the category of fear reigns, any firm expression of protest and solidarity is presented as “dangerous”. In fact, there is an attempt, fortunately stopped, to ban the demonstration of solidarity called by the social centre Sisma⁵. The event takes place on 10 February and 20 thousand people take part, but in the meantime the delegitimization damage is done. Four national organizations withdraw their membership (Arci, CGIL, ANPI and Libera), many people choose to stay at home, the parade takes place in a deserted and fortified city.

Later, the Macerata raid was read as a turning point.

The political elections on the following 4 March registered a very high consensus for the Northern League, which rose from 4% to 20% in Macerata. In reality, the relaunch of the

⁵ On 7 February 2018, the mayor made an appeal calling for “stop all demonstrations”, evoking the risk of tension, followed by the Prefecture.



unscrupulous political initiative of the right was already well established throughout the country. Also, in Macerata. The local Left (as in the rest of the country) had underestimated these episodes, believing that all in all they involved small minorities. But, as we immediately wrote at the time, these small minorities had long since woven networks of relations such as to guarantee visibility and an ability to guide public opinion far beyond their real power relations.

The instrumental connection of Traini's raid with Pamela Mastropietro's murder "serves" exactly this, therefore, to evoke the category of social fear in order to obscure the racist connotation and the ideological background of what happened.

A sensationally losing strategy on the electoral and cultural level, but also very damaging because it opened the way to the subsequent "humanization" of Traini. One example among all deserves to be mentioned.

On 2 February 2019, one year after the massacre, the daily newspaper *la Repubblica* published an interview with Ezio Mauro⁶ to Luca Traini⁷. The attack of the interview is the following: *"Repentant, ready to apologize, aware that he hit innocent people, for an absurd spirit of revenge that led him to shoot in the indistinct human, provided the target was black: indeed, "nigger", as he announced that day. One year after the Macerata raid, Luca Traini tells himself, retracing the motivations and above all the impulses that on 3 February 2018 drove him to leave the house with the Glock pistol, looking for his designated victims, even if personally unknown"*.

One of the most important national newspapers, one year after the massacre, therefore, decides not to interview the people affected, but to offer great visibility to the men who did it and to give great prominence to his "repentance". Traini was able to present himself as a man who acted on the impulse of "feelings", "emotions" and to present himself

⁶ Ezio Mauro also dedicated to the Macerata massacre the book *L'uomo bianco*, published in 2018 by Feltrinelli, in which the fictionalised story of the raid alternates with considerations on the changes in Italian society in recent years, identifying the inability of politics to provide convincing answers to the widespread social "fear" and "anger" one of the factors that "explain" what happened.

⁷ Please see: E. Mauro, "Traini pentito un anno dopo: Dentro di me non c'è più odio, voglio incontrare le mie vittime", *la Repubblica*, 2 febbraio 2019, here: <https://rep.repubblica.it/pwa/generale/2019/02/02/news/traini-218137347/>.



as an “avenger” who wanted to “do justice”, on the wave of a hatred gutted yes, but not racist. Out of 25 questions asked during the interview, only one makes vague reference to his political opinions. An interview “all wrong”, as rightly titled *The submarine* in a commentary in which one observes ⁸: *“Something interesting to ask Traini could be there: for example, you could ask him a few more questions about his path of radicalisation, without being content to hear that for him doing the Roman greeting was a habitual gesture. One could ask him about his contacts, his network of support, his political references. In short, one could try to understand something more about the genesis of a neo-fascist terrorist than about his pathetic self-justifications”*.

⁸ Please see: S. Bendinelli, “L’intervista di Ezio Mauro a Luca Traini è tutta sbagliata”, *The submarine*, 3 febbraio 2019, here: <https://thesubmarine.it/2019/02/03/lintervista-di-ezio-mauro-a-luca-traini-e-tutta-sbagliata/>.