

June 3, 1983

**Information from the Security Services of the BPC:
Reference Report on Case Agca**

Citation:

"Information from the Security Services of the BPC: Reference Report on Case Agca", June 3, 1983, Wilson Center Digital Archive, BStU, Berlin. Translated by Samuel Denney. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/291296>

Summary:

Biographical information about Mehmet Ali Ağca as well as the "groundless accusations" against Bulgaria and other communist bloc states.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Original Language:

German, Russian

Contents:

Original Scan
Translation - English

Department X

Berlin, June 3, 1983

Translation from Russian

Top Secret!

Information from the Security Services of the BPC

Reference Report on Case Agca

Below we summarize our information regarding the person and past activity of the Turkish terrorist, Mehmet Ali Agca, which originate from public and confidential sources.

I. Biographical Information

Mehmet Ali Agca was born in 1958 in the city Malatya (population 184,000) on the southeast coast of Turkey. This region ranks among the most restive areas of the country, marked by terrorism and national antagonism. Agca completed both general schooling and educational schooling in his home city.

In 1978, Agca entered the economic department of the University of Istanbul (Student ID number: 11744). He was however never present in class, and Agca never took an examination. He intensely read correspondence about acts of terror and lived in hotels of dubious reputation. This lifestyle finally led to the assassination attempt that he carried out in Rome.

Agca was a member of the Nationalist Movement Party led by Alparslan Türkeş and of its armed detachment with the name "Grey Wolves" (Boskurtlar).

II. Agca's Trips (in chronological order)

On February 1, 1979, Agca gunned down the editor in chief of the left-leaning newspaper "Milliyet," Abdi Ipecki, on the street with a machine pistol. Then he was able to escape, but was captured on June 25, 1979 in the Café "Marmara" in Istanbul and brought to a military prison nearby. On November 25, 1979, Agca was able to escape from the closely guarded prison located on the grounds of the military base "Wattepe" with the help of a like-minded person by putting on a military uniform and falling in with a patrol. After his escape, his accomplices, two officers and three soldiers, were arrested. Agca made contact with Türkeş's people and received a fake passport. He informed the editorial staff of the "Milliyet" that he "would carry out an assassination attempt on the Pope immediately and at all costs" (the Papal visit was expected on November 28, 1979).

Ankara turned to INTERPOL for the search for the dangerous criminal but received only a negative response. Turkish intelligence nevertheless got onto his trail. They investigated the houses in which Agca lived, the countries to which he traveled, but the western European security services declared Turkish terrorism to be a "Turkish domestic matter." In the spring and summer of 1980, Agca resided in a number of western European countries. He traveled so via Bulgaria and Yugoslavia into the FRG and to West Berlin. Afterwards, he visited France and additional western European countries. Mostly, he resided in Ulm (FRG) and West Berlin. In 1980, he married a girl from West Berlin. With this, he secured himself the full protection of the law from the Bonn side.

On October 27, 1980, the owner of the hotel "Crown" in the old city of Luzerne opposed that this "unshaven Turk" further lived in her hotel. In his room, there were at least three heavy suitcases that were unpacked. He was always ready to leave the hotel, the owner said. On the third day, when the owner told Agca that his room would be occupied by another person, he departed without opposition.

In December 1980, Agca spent two weeks in Tunis. Then, on December 13, he sailed with the steamer [unclear] to Sicily. He began to devote more attention to caring for his external appearance and brought himself to a normal condition. The owner of the hotel "Liguria" in Palermo expressed herself then even enthusiastically about him: "A handsome man with wonderful green eyes, polite and nice." It also made a good impression that he paid for his room on time.

On February 6, 1981, he popped up in Switzerland again. He took up quarters in the hotel "Anker" in Aarau. The "Turkish Islamic Society" and a house of prayer which

was suspected of being a hideout for the "Grey Wolves" were located 100 meters away from the hotel.

On February 8, 1981, he appeared again in Italy, in Milan, where he was recognized by a Turk.

On April 3, 1981, Agca entered Switzerland, coming from Austria. First, he was seen in Vorarlberg. The gun collector XXXX [redacted], who lives in Vorarlberg, bought 22 handguns from the Zürich arms dealer XXXX [redacted], including a pistol of the type "Browning Nr-35," caliber 9mm, with which Agca shot at the Pope (XXXX's papers were all in order, and XXXX said that he did not know to whom he had sold the "Browning NR-35.")

On April 8, 1981, after a short stopover in Rome, he drove to Perugia and enrolled at the university in Italian courses for foreigners. He paid 150,000 lire for the course lasting three months. Afterwards he left Italy, without having taken part in the courses. "All that serves only as an alibi for him. He probably needed a residence permit for our country," said the director of these university courses, Carlo Vidoni, later.

On April 13, 1981, Agca had a long telephone call with XXXX [redacted] in Sarstedt (FRG) from the hotel "Turin" in Rome. This last-named person is a member of the "Turkish Association," a camouflaged organ of the "Grey Wolves."

On April 19, 1981, Agca brought XXXX [redacted] named XXXX [redacted] with him in his room in the hotel "Diana Parigi in Genoa [rest of sentence blacked out]"

On April 20, 1981, Agca drove to Switzerland, from which he then returned to Italy. From April 15, 1981, Agca took part in a two-week vacation trip on the island Mallorca (Spain). In the hotel "Flamboya," he occupied room number 625 and appeared there as a quiet guest who did not cause any problems. At 11pm, he was always already in his room. He had neither partners nor acquaintances there. One evening, when Agca came to the Italian Restaurant and sat himself down at a table in the corner without greeting anyone and ordered a pizza without meat, one waiter said jokingly to his colleague: "That guy over there looks like a terrorist." The vacation on the island of Mallorca cost 1000 DM.

On May 9, 1981, coming from Milan, Agca entered Rome, where he took up quarters in room 31 at the boarding house ISA on Via Cicerone under the name Faruk Özgün.

On May 13, in the morning, Agca left the boarding house in self-confident silence. He told everyone that he would take to St. Peter's Square to see how Pope John Paul II conducted his "collective audience." At 5:19 pm, he committed the assassination attempt with a "Browning" pistol with caliber 9mm.

The Pope was hit by three bullets: the first pierced his peritoneum, the second injured his right arm and the third his left hand. The Pope's life could only be saved by a serious intestinal operation that lasted five-and-a-half hours and was carried out by two doctors from the Guemelli Clinic. Otherwise, two American tourists - Anne Odre and Rose Halle - were wounded but have since both recovered.

Upon his capture, Agca yelled: "I am a Palestinian partisan; I am a comrade!" In the Rome police administration, Agca's identity could be determined within a few minutes due to a telephone call with the Turkish correspondent Dogan Özguden from Brussels. During the interrogations, Agca said almost nothing. He long held to his assertions that he "had nothing to do with a conspiracy against the Pope, that he planned his act himself and that he carried out the assassination attempt himself. No one directed him behind the scenes, and he had no accomplices."

The Italian experts attached no credence to Agca's declarations. Nevertheless, they thought it correct to uphold the "lone actor" version for a considerable time.

At the main court proceedings, the deputy solicitor general, Nicola Amato, pleaded for a life-long prison sentence for Agca and designated him as "fanatical, unrestrained and crazy terrorist who committed the assassination attempt on the head of the church as a lone actor."

The state secretary of the Vatican, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, said in his sermon at the end of June 1981: "A hostile heart - or hearts? - placed the weapon in a hostile hand so that it could launch a salvo at the heart of the Church and hit the Pope."

The commentator from the newspaper "La Repubblica" went further still: "Essentially

it is to be assumed that this is a right-leaning conspiracy that is aimed at unleashing chaos in Italy.”

In September 1981, the Roman court indicated in its grounds for judgment that a powerful international conspiratorial organization stands behind Agca that maintains contact with right-leaning Turkish extremists and came to the conclusion that Agca was not a lone actor.

In August 1982, the Italian citizens Paolo Farcetti and Gabriella Trevisin were arrested in Bulgaria. The charge against them was the collection of information that present state and military secrets and the photographing of military objects.

On December 22, 1982, Farcetti and Trevisin were given over to the court, but a sentence was not given. The proceedings were postponed. The court proceedings were taken up again in February 1983.

On November 25, 1982, due to new statements from Agca, the deputy head of the representation of the Bulgaria air carrier in Rome, Sergej Iwanow-Antonow, was arrested. He, along with two former Bulgarian diplomats to Rome, who were already back in Bulgaria – Todor Aijwasow and Sheljo Wassilew – were charged with being involved with the assassination attempt. Agca allegedly also said that he was prepared for the assassination attempt by agents of the Bulgarian intelligence service. After one-and-a-half years of silence (or his “processing”), Agca said that he visited Aijwasow in his apartment multiple times and received the “Browning” pistol with caliber 9mm from him. In his words, Antonow and Aijwasow were with him on St. Peter’s Square during the assassination attempt on the Pope. There was also an attempt to undergird Agca’s “confession” with a photo, which was published in the Western press in which Antonow could be seen in the crowd.

Agca then said that he prepared the plan for the assassination together with Antonow and Aijwasow, and he disclosed that he also met with Antonow, Aijwasow and Attaché Secretary Kolew in Sofia.

The investigating judge Martella declared on January 2, 1983 that seven witnesses, among them also some Italians, confirmed that Antonow was conducting discussions in his office during the assassination attempt and that he had not once been near St. Peter’s Square on this day.

In February 1983, the Italian officials arrested Luigi Sericciolo, the head of the International Department of the trade union UIL, and his wife, the journalist Paola Ella, on the charge of cooperating with the “Red Brigades.” This accusation was not confirmed, but Sericciolo stated that was in large part ready to cooperate with the court. He stated that he attempted to take up contact with the “Red Brigades” who held General Dozier at the urging of employees of the Bulgarian embassy. Additionally, he said that Bulgarian secret service had pledged the terrorists money and weapons for information about NATO which could be obtained through interrogations of General Dozier. The chief witness in the Dozier case, Antonio Sarastra, claimed recently that the Bulgarian secret service made an offer to the “Red Brigades” that held Dozier prisoner. After that, Dozier was accused of political and military espionage.

On February 18, 1983, it became known that the representative of the Soviet air carrier “Aeroflot” in Rome, Viktor Pronin, was arrested without any reason. At the same time, two employees of the Soviet deep-sea fleet were expelled without cause.

The anti-communist vendetta is still going on, in which they are helping themselves to new pipe dreams, false accusations and hypotheses.

III. The Groundless Accusations against the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and other socialist countries

Various western European and American politicians (their names were not mentioned in the press) have declared that the cause for this great magnitude of terrorist activity in Turkey is the existing long border with the Soviet Union. As the Reagan administration claims, the Soviet Union is “the main base, the source of materiel and training center of the terrorists.”

It is claimed regarding a leading representative of the Turkish mafia, Abaner Urfulu that he is a Bulgarian agent.

The Turkish "businessman," the arms and narcotics dealer Bekir Celenk, from whom Agca received 3 million DM, has also been labelled a Bulgarian agent. He was arrested in February 1983 in Sofia.

According to some assertions, Omar Begci, from whom Agca received a pistol, is also a Bulgarian agent.

On 4.26.1982, the Turkish foreign minister gave the Turkish ambassador in Rome the following information (the information is based on a detailed report from the Italian ambassador in Sofia, with which the ambassadors of the NATO countries were entrusted):

At the trial against the "Red Brigades" in Verona, the accused stated that in the time between the abductions of Aldo Moro and Dozier, 63 members of the "Red Brigades" undertook trips to Bulgaria.

There is the allegation that Bulgarians took part in the abduction of General Dozier. The Bulgarian ambassador denies everything, but it is proven that the Bulgarian embassy took up contact to the "Red Brigades." With Bulgarian mediation, the "Red Brigades" established a connection to the PLO."

The former Colonel Stefan Swerdlew, who betrayed his homeland and stayed in the West in 1980, said in the context of an Italian television show that "in his opinion, his previous job (in all likelihood the Bulgarian "secret service" was meant here) played a role in the assassination attempt on the Pope corresponding to the directives of the KGB. The Bulgarian secret service acts in its own responsibility only in its home country and in the Balkans. For international actions, it acts at the directive of the KGB. The Soviet secret police has its people in every department of the Bulgarian secret service."

In reference to a London radio broadcast on 3.24.1983, the London "Times" published a report on the basis of information from the former Bulgarian citizen Mantalow, who held a high position in the PRB. Mantalow, who betrayed his homeland in 1981, allegedly informed the French secret service that the KGB and the Bulgarian secret service stand behind the scenes of the assassination attempt on the Pope. Mantalow's statements were strengthened by Agca's assertions. Official Bulgarian authorities deny that Mantalow was a diplomat or a secret agent.

The newspaper "La Repubblica" claimed on March 24, 1983 that according to Agca's statements, a Hungarian and an "East German" secret agent took part in the preparations for the assassination attempt on Lech Walesa. According to information from the newspaper, they were explosives experts. In further developing this variant, the newspaper wrote that the assassination attempt on the Pope was planned in order to rob "Solidarity" of its main supporter. At the same time, however, some Western newspapers claim the opposite. For example, the journalist Luigi Cavallo expressed the opinion in the Milan newspaper "Anippe" that the theory based on Agca's "statements" does not correspond to reality.

Craxi suggested breaking diplomatic relations in the lead article of the newspaper "Avanti" from March 20, 1983. In the words of the General Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party, "those who put the weapon in Ali Agca's hand took the most authoritative protector of the Polish people in their sights. No one can assume that "Bulgarian citizens" took part in such an act on their own initiative, as it is also not likely that Bulgarian organs acted without corresponding approval, and that it was not sanctioned by a higher-ranking accomplice, even if they took action," wrote Craxi.

The General Secretary of the Italian Social Democratic Party, Pietro Longo, stated that the "unusually great political meaning of the case not only touches on Italian-Bulgarian relations, but also will impact all eastern European countries."

"Unita" referred to the necessity of remaining measured and objective. The newspaper of the Italian Communist Party took the standpoint that the circumstances must be clarified, albeit with the consideration that "spies do not only come from the East but also from the West."

Italy recalled its ambassador on March 4, 1983, and Bulgaria recalled its ambassador two days earlier.

The essence of the theories of the various international organs of the press, which present themselves as serious, which are primarily built on Agca's statements, can be

sorted out as follows:

"In the hall of the restaurant located on the first floor of the hotel "Witescha" in Sofia, there is one of the secret centers of power. From there, an international terrorist network on a global scale was directed, decisions were made regarding who would be the target of the next assassination attempt or the next abduction. First, the Bulgarian secret service agents conferred with Palestinians and representatives from the south African "frontline countries" and from Namibia, in addition to agents of the "Red Brigades" and other western European terrorist organizations, all in the presence of secret Cuban and Vietnamese liaison officers. Then the order was given, naturally by a previously written approval from Moscow, and within a few hours thousands were put in movement. The assassination attempt on John Paul II was prepared there and in this fashion.

With regards to the anti-communist press campaign, the methods of the newspapers "Paris Match" and "Guardian" are also worth mentioning.

"Paris Match" placed a series of photographs on an entire page with the heading "Antonow follows the Pope." Under this stood in small letters: "In our photos, Antonow is not depicted. An American tourist is serving as a model." The reader who sees these "photos" will likely hardly notice the two lines.

The "Guardian" published all the relevant inventions in two columns. "The investigation confirmed Antonow's alibi" stood under them in small letters.

And nevertheless, it succeeded in placing a cloud over Bulgaria, once again proclaiming full-throatedly an "international communist conspiracy" and spreading distrust among millions of Catholics.