

# Cesare Battisti, the Murderer Taunting Italy

by Barbie Latza Nadeau

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Mac Margolis



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**Brazil has halted the extradition of one of Italy's most notorious criminals. Barbie Latza Nadeau and Mac Margolis on the international crisis it's created—and how Carla Bruni got caught in the middle.**

Alberto Torregiani was 13 years old on February 16, 1979, when his father Pierluigi was shot in the head by members of Italy's Armed Proletarians for Communism (PAC) in Milan. The younger Torregiani also took a bullet that day and ended up a paraplegic. Now he spends most days in a wheelchair on the cobblestone Piazza Navona trying to make sure the world won't forget.




France's first lady, Carla Bruni, is rumored to have asked former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to waive the extradition of Cesare Battisti, who was convicted of murdering four Italians in the 1970s. (AP Photo)

Torregiani's protest vigil in front of the Brazilian Embassy in Rome started late last year when outgoing Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva declined to allow the extradition of Cesare Battisti, a member of PAC who was convicted of murdering four Italians in the 1970s, including the elder Torregiani. "You get more by putting your foot down and banging your fists, so that's what we're doing," he tells the supportive crowd gathered around him. "Clearly it's not enough to use diplomacy, so the people's voice must be heard."

Lula's indulgence, penned on December 31, mere hours before he left office, was a blow to many Italians who remember all too well the violence that preceded the "years of lead" when their country was under siege by national terrorists. Further infuriating Italians, rumors that French first lady Carla Bruni, an Italian often at odds with her homeland, had made a personal call to the Brazilian president to ask a "personal favor" by not extraditing Battisti. Bruni's involvement, which she denied after being scolded by Italian politicians, came to light after Bruno Berardi, head of the terrorism and Mafia victims' group Domus Civitas, announced it on Italian television. "Bruni told me that she had personally called Lula asking him not to extradite Battisti as a personal favor," Berardi said. "She asked me not to tell the details of her involvement."

Though Battisti routinely denies any involvement in these crimes, the fugitive militant has become a living symbol of one of Italy's darkest eras. And his protection by Brazil—which saw its own days of rage during the 1964-1985 dictatorship—has incensed ordinary Italians and flared into an international incident that is straining relations between the two countries as never before.

Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini is indignant that "a criminal may soon be able to circulate freely on the beautiful Brazilian beaches."

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Bilateral military and economic accords set to be ratified by the Italian parliament have been put on hold by Italy until the political climate is more conducive to agreement, says Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini, who says he is indignant that "a criminal may soon be able to circulate freely on the beautiful Brazilian beaches." Italians have boycotted Brazilian products and travel agencies, and promise to urge customers to boycott Brazil as a tourist destination. Even the Rome-based United Nations Food and Agriculture Agency, where Italy enjoys considerable sway, has hinted that the Brazilian candidate for its presidency, José Graziano, may be shunned over the affair. "Italy has a complex history, but the law on extradition of terrorists and criminals is very clear," Luca Guglielminetti, spokesman for the Italian Association of Victims of Terrorism, told The Daily Beast. "The return of Cesare Battisti is more than a symbolic gesture. It is a point of law. Not returning him is a slap in the face."

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January 26, 2011 | 1:26am

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Brazil has become a ludicrous contradiction. A third world swamp with a Justice system as credible as a \$5 hooker. How the Brazilians can grant political asylum to a four time MURDERER, and 'transform' a convicted criminal into a 'politically persecuted' victim - is mind boggling. The Brazilian cops recently raided a Rio drug infested slum and killed more than 25 drug dealers - but protect and shelter a criminal murderer who snuffed out four human beings in Italy, whilst 'victimizing' him as a political refugee? It hardly surprizes me that the Brazilians would recognize Hamas and Hizbullah terrorists and hostage taking criminals who call for the genocide of a legitimate minority State, in their charter- and now have a former anarchist with blood on her hands as "President".....what next? Manson for President?

4:42 am, Jan 26, 2011

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The author of the article missed a very important ingredient.

The real reason why Brazilian Ex-president Luiz Inácio da Silva declined to allow the extradition of Cesare Battisti, has nothing to do with Lula or Tarso Genro being left-wing etc...

It has to do with the Lula's official visit to Italy on November 2008. At his arrival at the international airport of Rome, the Brazilian delegation was received by Mara Carfagna, Minister of Equal Opportunity, one of the lowest level ministers on Berlusconi government. Right there Lula and his wife Marisa Leticia felt hurt and "Itamarati" (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil) felt that there was no justification for the fact that the leader of the largest Latin American country on an official visit to Italy was not welcomed on arrival by the Foreign Minister or by a minister on the same level. Italy government could care less about Lula arrival. It seems silly... but Lula's feeling was hurt.

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10:14 am, Jan 26, 2011

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