

# *Gianfranco Sanguinetti:*

*“All lying set aside”:*

*Telling the Truth  
About Terrorism in Italy  
in the 1960s and 70s*

**Edited and translated by Bill Brown**

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## General Introduction

Born in Pully, Switzerland on 18 July 1948, Gianfranco Sanguinetti was the son of Teresita (Teresa) Mattei (1921-2013) and Bruno Sanguinetti (1909-1950), both of whom were active participants in both the Italian Communist Party and the anti-fascist Resistance in Italy during World War II. Both were Jewish, but did not practice their religion.

A combatant in the *Fronte della Gioventù per l'indipendenza nazionale e per la libertà* (the Youth Front for National Independence and Freedom), in which she held the rank of Company Commander, Teresa helped to organize the assassination of the philosopher Giovanni Gentile, of whom she'd once been a student. In 1946, she was elected to the Constituent Assembly (its youngest member and its only woman), in which she served as the Secretary to the President.

It was during the Resistance that Teresa met Bruno Sanguinetti (1909-1950), the wealthy son of the owner of the Arrigoni food company and also a commander in the Youth Front. Bruno played central roles in the struggle for the liberation of Florence and the general strike of March 1944. He too participated in the assassination of Giovanni Gentile. He died in December 1950 of a heart attack.

Because they were unable to get married due to impediments stemming from Bruno's previous marriage, the couple was forced to travel to Pulley, Switzerland, where their first child, Gianfranco, was born out of wedlock. (He was named "Gianfranco" in honor of his mother's brother, who was killed by the fascists.) Several months later, they were able to get married officially in Budapest, and eventually returned to Florence.

Gianfranco was politically conscious from a very young age. Thanks to his mother, his household was often visited by important political and cultural figures, such as Umberto Saba, Eugenio Montale, Italo Calvino, Luigi Nono, Carlo Levi, Elio Vittorini, Ernesto Treccani, Paul Éluard, Louis Aragon, Vercors, Camillo Sbarbaro, and others.

At the age of 18, while still a high-school student in Milan, Gianfranco began attending the meetings of *Gruppo 63*, an avant-garde organization of young writers that had been founded, as its name would indicate, in 1963. Inspired by the Beats, the Dutch *provos* and Joan Baez's "Green Wave Movement," Gianfranco helped to found *Onda Verde* (the Green Wave), which eventually formed an alliance with a similar group called *Mondo Beat*. His earliest texts date from this period.

In 1967, Gianfranco joined the staff of *S Magazine*, which had been founded by a radical Milanese high-school teacher named Carlo Oliva (1943-2012). Also participating in this endeavor were Claudio Pavan and Paolo Salvadori, two of Gianfranco's friends from high school. Influenced by the Situationist International, which was known in their country due to Italian translations of *On the Poverty of Student Life* (1966) and the famous events of May 1968, these three young men collaborated on a situationist-influenced essay titled *Dialettica della putrefazione e del superamento* ("Dialectic of Putrefaction and Transcendence"). In early 1969, after meeting Guy Debord and the other members of the French section, they were invited to join the SI itself.

Completed by Eduardo Rothe, a Venezuelan situationist formerly attached to the French section, the Italian section of the SI published the only issue of its journal, *Internazionale situazionista*, in July 1969. Gianfranco was its editor and publisher. Far stronger than the first and only issue of the American's section journal (June 1969), this publication was warmly

received by the main group in Paris. In late September 1969, Sanguinetti organized the VIIIth Conference of the SI, which was held in Venice and included virtually every member of the group. That same month, the French section published *Internationale situationniste* #12, which would end up being its final one.

During the last two months of 1969, the Italian section published two important statements, “Address to the Italian Proletariat On the Current Possibilities for Social Revolution,” which concerned a militant working-class riot in Milan on 19 November, and “Is the Reichstag Burning?” which concerned the bombing of the Piazza Fontana in Milan on 12 December. The last statement by the Italian section was “The Workers of Italy and the Revolt in Reggio Calabria,” which was published in October 1970.

By that time, the Italian section, like its American counterpart, was experiencing intense personal conflicts, and eventually fell apart amidst resignations and exclusions. Sanguinetti was the last one standing and so, in November 1970, he was invited to move to Paris and join the French section. He was able to stay in France until July 1971, when he was expelled by the Minister of the Interior on his way back from Portugal, where he’d delivered a Portuguese translation of Guy Debord’s book *The Society of the Spectacle*.

Sanguinetti’s time in the SI was not particularly peaceful. In various letters sent to other situationists, Guy Debord referred to “an objectively aggressive illogic that went as far as unconscious insolence founded on a sort of bourgeois pseudo-elegance, which was as ill-advised in his case as it would be for anyone else who has the honor of speaking to people such as us” (3 January 1970); “We find it shocking that Gianfranco – whose *absence* on several fundamental questions has lasted several months, and whose serious difficulties with survival, and even [difficulties] with certain simple aspects of correct conduct with respect to his comrades, have been certified by the SI as a whole – has had the imprudence to take part in the examination of the absence of a comrade and the difficulties that this comrade has encountered in his work” (4 February 1970); “Comrade Sanguinetti is cleansed of the suspicion that he reported inexact information on 27 January. He will, however, be excluded on 15 April [1970] if by then he hasn’t remitted to the French section the sum of six million Lira (of which one million will transmitted to the American section and one million to the Scandinavian section); four more million Lira must be deposited by that date, so as to pay off the debts of the Italian section and to enrich its coffers” (11 March 1970).

Between June and December 1970, Gianfranco participated in the SI’s “orientation debate,” which attempted to define what the organization should be and do in the aftermath of May 1968. In November and December 1971, he also assisted in the battle against the presumptuously acquisitive Italian publisher Feltrinelli, writing one of the most scabrous letters that the SI sent out during that period. In April 1972, Debord and Sanguinetti signed their names to *The Veritable Split in the International*, which officially ended the SI.

Back in January 1971, Sanguinetti, seeking an attorney to help him settle certain matters with his family, was introduced to Ariberto Mignoli. Nicknamed “the Doge” by his new client, Mignoli was a jurist and university professor who had significant experience in corporate law. The two became close friends and collaborators: in fact, Mignoli helped Sanguinetti prepare and deliver the “Censor” book to 520 powerful people, using mailing addresses that he shared with his client. It is said Mignoli recognized himself in the portrait of “Censor” than Sanguinetti had drawn and was pleased by this. Although or perhaps precisely because “the Doge” was also very helpful to Sanguinetti as a criminal defense attorney, he aroused the suspicious of Guy Debord, who thought that he was “suspect.”

It was during the mid-1970s that Gianfranco really hit his stride. In addition to assisting Debord on the production of the film version of *The Society of the Spectacle* (1973), he wrote *The Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy* (June 1975), which purported to be and was accepted as a brutally honest statement by an enlightened conservative who took the *nom de plume* Censor, and *The Nonexistence of Censor, Set Forth by His Author* (November 1975), which revealed that Sanguinetti was actually the author – thus causing a nationwide scandal.

Attempting to leave Italy in February 1976, Sanguinetti was stopped at the Swiss border, detained and once again expelled from France. Undeterred, indeed, further motivated by these repressive actions, he redoubled his efforts. In the early months of 1977, he actively participated in the protests and uprisings that erupted in Bologna and Rome, for which he wrote two defiant statements, “Welcome to the Freest City in the World!” and “Notice to the Proletariat About the Events of the Last Few Hours.”

In March 1978, Sanguinetti moved (or moved back to) to the Tuscan countryside, in the Chianti region, where he produced olive oil and wine. “I now live [here] in voluntary exile, so to speak,” he wrote to Debord on 1 June 1978, “where nothing can remain truly clandestine because everyone can see everyone else, and I haven’t failed to have myself seen every Tuesday at the local market, where the Carabinieri prowl, without otherwise budging from here. In brief, I have ‘cultivated my garden’ and my olive trees, like any *gentleman, for fuck’s sake*, must do when living in the country.”

That same year, he wrote *Remedy for Everything: Discourses on the Next Chances for Ruining Capitalism in Italy*, and in March 1979, published an excerpt from it under the title *On Terrorism and the State: the theory and practice of terrorism, divulged for the first time*, which is the book for which he is best known.

Hounded by the Italian police, the secret services and various evildoers, Sanguinetti left Italy in the early 1980s and took up residence in Prague. He (temporarily) stopped speaking and writing in Italian and used French instead.

In the mid-1980s, Gianfranco struck up a friendship with Gérard Berréby, a Parisian fan of the situationists who’d founded Éditions Allia in 1982. He would go on to write several prefaces and fliers for the books that Berréby published.

One of the things that he *didn’t* write was *Il segreto è dirlo*, published anonymously in 1983 and translated into French and published as *Le Secret c’est de tout dire!* by Éditions Allia in 1989. Despite persistent and unsubstantiated claims to the contrary, this book was in fact written by Giovanni Giovannelli, a friend of Sanguinetti, and not by Sanguinetti himself.

At the end of the 1980s and well into the 1990s, Gianfranco traveled to Germany, Austria, Hungary, the USSR and Latvia. He began assembling what eventually became a very extensive, private collection of erotic art, which included a variety of paintings, drawings, sculptures, books and magazines. He also acquired unusual historical artifacts, including a piece of the airplane that, in 1987, a young West German man named Mathias Rust flew right into Red Square in Moscow, without being detected.

In the 2000s, Sanguinetti collaborated with several different artists, including Jason Rhoades, the author of *1724: The Birth of the Cunt*, for which Sanguinetti wrote a preface and supervised its translation and publication in several languages, and the Czech photographer Miroslav Tichý, about whom Sanguinetti wrote a monograph titled *Miroslav Tichý: Les Formes du Vrai – Forms of Truth*, the publication of which coincided with a major exhibition of Tichý’s work (organized by Sanguinetti) in Prague.

In 2013, Sanguinetti, then in the process of organizing his archives, started sending me texts that he wished to be translated into English and posted to my Internet site ([www.notbored.org](http://www.notbored.org)). I'd reached out to him after his friend, Pier Franco Ghisleni, had contacted me to thank me – his “unknown and never seen friend” – for translating and posting his Censor-inspired work from 1977 *Lettere agli eretici: Epistolario con i dirigenti della nuova sinistra italiana* (“Letters to the Heretics: Correspondence with the Leaders of the New Italian Left”) and, in response to my request, had forwarded me Gianfranco's email address. It turned out that Sanguinetti was already familiar with my work: ever since 1999, I'd been posting excerpts from *On Terrorism and the State* and, immediately after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, posted a new translation of “Is the Reichstag Burning?”

In a steady stream, Sanguinetti sent me copies of his 24 September 1978 letter to Guy Debord, his 12 December 2012 letter to Mustapha Khayati and the essays “Dum Novus Nascitur Ordo” (1989), “To the Church with Manzoni . . . With Leopardi to War!” (1993), “Ugliness is the Promise of Misfortune” (1993), “Mathias Rust: King of the Hooligans” (2008), and “The Doge: A Recollection” (2012) – all of which were written in French and previously unpublished. Each of these translations was reviewed and approved by their author, and uploaded to [www.notbored.org](http://www.notbored.org).

In late 2013, Sanguinetti sold his archives to the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, which put an end to our collaboration. Beinecke has also purchased the archives of several other situationists, including Mustapha Khayati, Donald Nicholson-Smith, Jacqueline de Jong, Attila Kotányi, Michèle Bernstein and Raoul Vaneigem. Sanguinetti received a payment of 600,000 Euros for his.

In 2017, Sanguinetti participated in an exhibition at the Museum of Rome in Trastevere that focused on the insurrectionary movement that swept through Italy in 1977. He contributed an essay titled “An Orgasm of History: 1977 in Italy,” which was included in *Il Piombo e le Rose* (Rome: Postcart, 2017) and published to coincide with that exhibition.

On October 3, 2025, Gianfranco Sanguinetti died in Prague, at the age of 77. Notices of his passing and tributes to his legacy were published in Italian, French and English.

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The very first collection in any language of writings by Gianfranco Sanguinetti, this volume focuses on the texts that he wrote denouncing the Italian State's use of false-flag terrorism against its own people during the 1970s. It should not be surprising that there is sufficient material to compose an entire book on the subject of terrorism: Sanguinetti's personal experience with it – “Living in Milan in the 1960s,” he says in “An Orgasm of History,” “I had seen firsthand what was happening, and I understood it more out of necessity than choice, because lives were at stake” – stretches from the first uses of false-flag terrorism in 1969, through the “years of lead” in the 1970s, to the speech by President Sergio Mattarella on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the kidnapping and assassination of Prime Minister Aldo Moro, which took place in March 1978. Over the course of those 50 bloody years, Sanguinetti had been asking the same questions, making the same points and denouncing the same perpetrators.

Why, Mr. President, did you not name the Secret Services, the Confidential Affairs Office, Gladio, the 1970 *coup d'état* staged with impunity by the P2 lodge, which had infiltrated all of the armed forces, the Carabinieri and the police,

the government and the parliament, the economic sector and the banks, the judicial system and the media? Why did you not mention the foreign intelligence services that actively participated in the Italian terrorist experiment, an experiment that succeeded perfectly in its attempt to deceive the world, to the point of being exported everywhere, to America and to France, Germany, England, Spain, etc.? Whoever perpetuates deception and silence [*l'omertà*] concerning this purpose, perpetuates terrorism. Whoever does not name the enemy is his accomplice. Whoever does not punish evil, commands that it be done.

(The reader should bear in mind that Sanguinetti wrote about many other subjects and that there are enough texts to make a second book.)

This volume – the main title of which was selected by Sanguinetti himself – includes three texts from those early years, which, as we've seen, coincided with his membership in the SI: “Address to the Italian Proletariat On the Current Possibilities for Social Revolution,” “Is the Reichstag Burning?” and “The Workers of Italy and the Revolt In Reggio Calabria.” Though Sanguinetti did not write “Is the Reichstag Burning?”, it has been included here in part because it played a key role in the development of his subsequent thinking and in part because he participated in the meetings that sketched out its contents and arranged for its distribution.

The centerpieces of this volume – they are certainly Sanguinetti's uncontested masterpieces – are *Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy* and *Proofs of the Nonexistence of Censor, Set Forth by His Author*. They have been supplemented by a collection of responses to these works published in the Italian press and a special translator's introduction that explains how and when these works were put together, and what relevance they might have 50 years after their original publication.

Two texts included here – “Welcome to the Freest City in the World” and “Notice to the Proletariat About the Events of the Last Few Hours” – come from 1977, when Sanguinetti was an active participant in and a trenchant critic of the insurrectionary movement that flourished in Bologna and Rome during that year. One of their central concerns is the movement's lack of knowledge about and concern with the possible use of “artificial terrorism” against it.

Anticipating the issues that subsequently arose concerning the content and timing of the publication of *On Terrorism and the State*, which is certainly the best known of his texts, this volume includes the letters about the kidnapping of Aldo Moro that Sanguinetti and Guy Debord exchanged in 1978. They are followed by all of the texts that were originally included in *Remedy for Everything: Discourses on the Next Chances for Ruining Capitalism in Italy* and made publicly available at the time by its author: the Table of Contents, the General Dedication, the “Dedication to the Bad Workers of Italy and All the Other Countries,” the “Notice from the Author,” and the “Preface to the Italian Edition.” (The bulk of *Remedy for Everything* still awaits publication and translation into English.)

Completing this section, which is arguably the intellectual center of this volume, are the author's “Preface to the French Edition of *On Terrorism and the State*,” the text of *On Terrorism and the State* itself, a selection of responses to it that were published in the French press, the “Postface to the Dutch translation of Gianfranco Sanguinetti's book *On Terrorism and the State*,” which was signed by the book's Dutch translator, and the letter that the book's Italian-to-French translator, Jean-François Martos, sent to Sanguinetti in June 1981.

There follow two important texts that Sanguinetti wrote in 2012: a letter to Mustapha Khayati concerning Debord's campaign against *On Terrorism and the State* and his attempts to take credit for the Situationist International as a whole, which were continued after his passing by his wife, Alice Becker-Ho; and "The Doge: A Recollection," which not only paints a full portrait of Ariberto Mignoli, but also defends him against Debord's allegations and insinuations. More than 30 years in the making, these two texts (the emotional center of this volume) are vivid testaments to Sanguinetti's self-restraint, honesty and clarity.

The remainder of the texts included here are relatively new. They include two short pieces about recent terrorist attacks ("Paris 13 November 2015: A Morale Operation" and "The Utility of Terrorism, Considered with Respect to the Usage Made of It"), a kind of mini-autobiography occasioned by the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movement of 1977 ("An Orgasm of History: 1977 in Italy - Digression on the Thread of Memory by a former Situationist"), the aforementioned "Response to the speech by the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, dedicated to the victims of terrorism on the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Aldo Moro," and "Western Despotism," which leaves the reader facing the future, not just of Italy, but the world as a whole.

Bill Brown  
New York City  
April 2026

## **“Address to the Italian Proletariat On the Current Possibilities for Social Revolution”<sup>1</sup>**

Comrades,

What the Italian proletariat is making in the factories and on the streets is not yet a revolution, but it is, certainly, *already* revolutionary. Italy is at the center of the crisis that affects bourgeois and bureaucratic capitalism everywhere, as well as at the center of the launching of the second assault by the proletarians of all countries *against every power*. But even today the *truth* of this foreshadowed movement is better known through its enemy’s fears than through the asserted will of its direct protagonists. And now this unstoppable process only lacks the consciousness of what it has already done on a few occasions to see what it can do here in Italy and *everywhere*.

The return of class struggle, which has been absent for a long time, finds its assured beginning in the new movement of spontaneous workers’ revolts. The fact that the expiration of employment contracts and the supportive agitation organized by the trade unions in recent months have sometimes provided more opportunities for demonstrations than the illegal struggles that the workers have engaged in, here and there, since the beginning of the revolt clearly reveals the objective and subjective conditions that were already present. The collective-bargaining agreement was a victory for the labor movement, but it was not *enough*, and today it serves as the bosses’ guarantee for social peace, the legal forms of the buying and selling of labor, and the chain that holds the working class to the capitalist class and its functionaries. But now the real struggle, which no longer needs to make demands, is everywhere, because it is in fact a profound movement that raises the social question in its simple truth and no administrative action can dissolve it.

Since these struggles did not at first concern contracts, no one really expected them to end after the contracts were renewed. But these struggles were destined to grow because one could no longer hide the fact that, above all, it was the unions, which made every effort to put the brakes on, that repressed them. In such a situation, the sudden and unannounced strikes called by workers were already struggles against the unions, which were thus forced into the necessity of increasingly difficult efforts at recuperation, because the workers already knew that their new revolts had to fight against them. The radical actions that were carried out by the workers at Fiat and Pirelli in September, which were the first modern, destructive riots against the commodity and labor in the history of Italy, were also isolated actions that would not have spread if it were not for their exemplary power. With their terroristic falsifications and their monopoly on communication, the trade unions isolate every struggle from all the others, and isolate every worker from the others. In every sector, the unions pursue partial struggles in which they determine the goals and maintain police control. Very clearly, the unions want to keep the workers asleep with an endless series of struggles that do not change anything, and they try to get the workers to accept half of what they demanded, without ever admitting it, even after the most

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<sup>1</sup> *Avviso al proletariato italiano sulle possibilità presenti della rivoluzione sociale* was distributed in Milan, Turin, Trento and elsewhere on 19 November 1969 by the Italian section of the Situationist International. Translated into French as *Avis au prolétariat italien sur les possibilités présentes de la révolution sociale*.

combative actions. If the workers' movement today wants to win on the entire front of its demands – which is what gives the unions some strength at the moment – this is because, getting rid of the illusions of the last 20 years, this movement wants to prove itself able to go beyond them. And this already contains the rationale for getting rid of all the unions.

Today the situation is sufficiently advanced because the unions are often forced to abstain from following the workers onto their terrain; they simply deny the existence of the workers' actions, but these actions are still quite revolutionary because they expel the unions from this terrain, simply by denying any credibility to any representative power. Such a situation cannot last and, in any case, is faced with the alternative of intensifying or fading away (due to the combined powers of repression and negotiations that wear down the majority of the workers in exhausting struggles that end with more concessions being made, and possibly due to the formation of a "popular government" supported by the so-called Communist Party, which will try to defend the old world if it can demonstrate its faithfulness to the bourgeoisie). To the extent that a precarious *peace* still exists, the workers learn to make use of unions such as the Social Security Agency without having any illusions about what they are doing, but, to the extent that the situation unavoidably slips into civil war, the initiative decisively passes to the workers. Not only could they learn how fragile the semi-automated system of production is, but they could also rediscover themselves, their class, their consciousness, and their consciousness of their practical strength. In one factory after another, the workers could give the signal that they are ready for direct and general attack and that they seek allies among the new strata of proletarianized workers. Because they are deprived of methods of communication, the proletarians could recognize each other through their actions. And the consequences of their actions could push them forward.

The most profound meaning of the current struggles, in which the workers try to clash openly with their enemies but most often find themselves confronted with "their" unions, is that these struggles upset the balance of the Cold War between the workers and the union bureaucracies. In order to perfect the social organization of appearances, for which, in the current crisis, they provide the best material support, the unions ask that the "provocative" presence of the police at "peaceful labor disputes" be *hidden*.

In their dreams, the unions imagine themselves, along with the so-called Communist Party, "rendering the police useless" by becoming police officers themselves, and in Parliament they want, "in the name of workers," to purchase the disarming of the police by disarming the proletariat.

In order to exist, the unions need the existence of capital and the State, while the interests of the workers, because they are the producers of all of society's wealth and are therefore its rightful owners, lies in the abolition of capital and the State. Playing at being "extremists" at the head of a movement that is far more radical than they are, the unions are able to claim that they have *asked* for the most that can be demanded from capital, but they never put its existence into question. The unions, reformist by their very nature, remain the best support for employers who have become reformist in their turn. Thus, the political and unionist bureaucracies are not workers' organizations that have become decayed or traitorous; they are the mechanisms by which workers are integrated into capitalist society, which is a society based on private or nationalized property, commodities and salaried labor.

The unions' program is to chase after the class struggle, every day proposing a weak surrogate for it and, to do so, they can never too openly disavow the actions of the rank and file, but must select from, appropriate and pretend to widen their demands. In short, through a

seeming transformation of social conditions, the unions [try to] bribe the workers with handouts disguised as conquests and break their revolutionary force, momentarily making their survival in such conditions tolerable and comfortable. All of the problems of the unions and the Stalinist bureaucrats can be reduced to their miserable preoccupation with maintaining themselves while, at the same time, maintaining their “bargaining power,” but to do so, they are forced to take all kinds of risks to be able to present themselves as the exclusive “representatives” of the workers, and this at the very moment when the rank and file is making “representation” increasingly difficult by removing the only justification for it. The workers see that each new day is worse than the previous one and that they have to be seriously concerned about their future.

Their struggles and their perspective are not limited to Italy, but are international. On 30 May 1968, during the occupations movement in France, the situationists, in an appeal to the workers, wrote, “those who have already rejected the laughable agreements that satisfied the union leaders will discover that they cannot ‘win’ more within the framework of the existing economy, but that can *take* everything by transforming its basis for themselves. The owners cannot possibly pay more, but they can disappear.”<sup>2</sup>

There is no need to invent or spread illusions about the immediate possibility for complete success. The revolutionary movement of the proletariat has returned a half-century after being annihilated by its determined bureaucratic and bourgeois enemies. But at the beginning of modern revolutionary struggle, it is important to show *the maximum* for which it must *immediately* aim and the terrain on which everything will be in play. From now on, the workers must manage, in the factories and everywhere else, to take the floor to speak on their own behalf and *say what they want*. But to do so, they will quickly discover that they will first need to create, through their autonomous action, the concrete conditions (which do not exist today) that will allow them to speak and act, and that they must overthrow the existing conditions.

The greatest danger, which we should not fail to denounce here and which today appears along with the *danger* of autonomous struggle by the workers, is that the unions, seeking out uncertain support, will appropriate the proclivity for direct democracy expressed by the rank and file and illusorily adopt its methods (meetings that ratify decisions that have already been made, referenda, control of production, etc.). The concessions that some sectors have already won and that the others will eventually win are designed to slow down the process of the class struggle, but will not, in any case, immobilize it (cf. the “global solution” proposed during the agreements at FIAT-Mirafiori signed on 26 June). The maneuver of the unions, working in conjunction with the economic directors and capitalist planners, to make the workers *participate* in their own exploitation – offered in the form of a pseudo-control over production that would increase the *pleasure* they take in producing more – was unsuccessful from the start, because it was the ownership of the means of production that was in question. Workers should not have to co-manage businesses with their owners, but should manage both society and their lives without any bosses at all. The “extremism” and “democracy” of the union bureaucracies – like the neo-Bolshevik revolutionary groups that fight only to be their replacements – do not deceive power or the majority of revolutionary proletarians. The proletariat [only] leaves itself in the hands of its “leaders” when it has more confidence in them than in itself. The proletariat is revolutionary or it is nothing: if it is revolutionary, it is the class that has the future in his hands; but when it is

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<sup>2</sup> This statement was issued in the name of the Enragés-Situationist International Council for Maintaining the Occupations.

not revolutionary and becomes a simple accessory of the machines, it is part of the [fixed] capital that is forced to involuntarily serve [its owners] at every moment of its daily life.

If we must wait and yet be active, the *insufficient* minimum will be nothing other than promoting, supporting and extending the agitation (it is not difficult to give basic examples or emulate them: insubordination against all hierarchies; sabotage of machinery and commodities; practicing radical subjectivity; wildcat strikes; organizing in factories); connecting and radicalizing scattered struggles; taking the floor wherever it is possible and useful to support, disseminate and implement these ideas and necessities; consciously opposing the unions and their attempts to falsify democracy and to promote the workers' co-management of capitalist firms; opposing all recuperators, intellectuals, priests and students, and their ideologies; and organizing ourselves in autonomous groups and promoting basic communication. And when only the best will do:<sup>3</sup> the permanent occupation of all the factories, from which all the union leaders and managers have been expelled; [the location of] all power in the workers' assemblies; the organization of self-defense; the election of revocable delegates who act in accordance with the mandates of the assemblies and who are thus responsible to them; and [the making of] appeals to all workers. The rest will be done by the path embarked upon and by collective creativity.

Comrades, the true result of the spontaneous struggles of this period is not immediate success but the extension of the workers' growing consciousness and self-organization. The level reached by the class struggle already expresses the need and, at the same time, offers the conditions for the formation of revolutionary workers' organizations within the proletariat. The degree of autonomy that the workers will be able to attain will decide the fate of their movement. Such a process will lead to the formation of Workers' Councils, which will be connected by means of delegates who are revocable at any moment, and which will become the only deliberative and executive power in the country. As soon as they arise, the proletariat will find in itself the content and the means of its emancipation. In Battipaglia, between 9 and 10 April, as part of their insurrectionary struggle, the workers already experimented with their first attempts at a Council. In Turin, during the Councilist movement of 1920, a manifesto addressed "to the workers and peasants in all of Italy" proclaimed,

The struggle for conquest must be carried out with the weapons of conquest and not with those of defense. A *new* organization must develop as the direct antagonist of the owners' governing bodies; it must then spontaneously arise in the workplaces and unite all the workers, one and all, as producers, who are subjected to an authority that is foreign to them and from which they must liberate themselves (...) This is the beginning of freedom for you: the beginning of a social formation that, spreading rapidly and universally, will enable you to eliminate the parasites and power brokers from the economic field and to become the owners, the owners of your own machines, your own work, your own lives.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The title of an editorial note published in *Internazionale Situazionista* (the journal of the Italian Section of the Situationist International), #1 July 1969. It is a détournement of a tagline by Benson & Hedges, the British cigarette manufacturer.

<sup>4</sup> This particular passage (originally published on 27 March 1920) had previously been quoted in René Riesel's text "Preliminaries on Councils and Councilist Organization," which was published in *Internationale Situationniste* #12 (September 1969).

The perspective of the absolute power of the Councils of all workers does not come at the end but at the beginning of the movement. Self-management of the struggle is the indispensable premise for the self-management of a new society. The demand that all the means of production and communication become the collective property of the workers who are organized in accordance with direct democracy is the only demand that contains all of the others and also the one that the bourgeoisie and the State will never grant because doing so would mean their total expropriation, that is to say, the end of class rule, and thus can only be attained by the social revolution.

PROLETARIANS, DO NOT STOP HERE. ONE MORE EFFORT IF YOU WANT TO BE THE OWNERS OF YOUR OWN LIVES. THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKERS MUST BE THEIR OWN DOING OR IT WILL BE NOTHING.

## “Is the Reichstag Burning?”<sup>5</sup>

Comrades:

The real movement of the revolutionary Italian proletariat leads it towards reaching the point at which it will be impossible – for both itself and its enemies – for any return to the past. While all illusions about the possibility of restoring the “normality” of the preceding situation are all dissolving one after the other, the necessity of risking their respective presents to win their respective futures imposes itself on all parties.

Faced with the ascent of the revolutionary movement, despite the methodical recuperation of the labor unions and the bureaucrats of the old and new “Left,” it becomes impossible for power to once again rejuvenate the old comedy of law and order, this time playing the false card of [artificial] terrorism, in an attempt to conjure away the situation in which it is forced to reveal its game directly to the clarity of the revolution.

The anarchist assaults of 1921 and the desperate actions of the survivors of the failure of the revolutionary movement of that epoch furnished a convenient pretext for the Italian bourgeoisie to instaurate, with fascism, the *state of siege* in all of society.

The Italian bourgeoisie of 1969, powerless though informed by the lessons of its past, has no need to experience great fear of the revolutionary movement, nor wait for the strength that can only be provided to it by the revolutionary movement’s defeat, in order to free itself from its democratic illusions. Today, it doesn’t need the *errors of the old anarchists* in order to find a pretext for the political realization of its totalitarian reality, but seeks to construct this pretext for itself by catching the new anarchists in a police machination or by manipulating the weakest among them in a crude provocation. Indeed, the anarchists offer the best “qualifications” for the exigencies of power: the detached and ideological image of the real movement, their “spectacular” extremism allows power to strike the real extremism of the movement through their intermediation.

### THE BOMB IN MILAN EXPLODED AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT.

The bomb was intended to strike the least radicalized factions in order to ally them with power, and to rally the bourgeoisie for a “itch hunt”: it was not by chance that there was a massacre among the farmers (at the National Agricultural Bank) and only fear among the bourgeois (at the Commercial Bank).<sup>6</sup> The direct and indirect results of those attacks are their clear purpose.

In the past, a terrorist act – as the primitive and infantile manifestation of the revolutionary violence within backwards situations or as misplaced violence on the terrain of unsuccessful revolutions – has never been but an act of partial refusal and, because of this, defeated in advance: the negation of politics on the terrain of politics itself. On the contrary, in the current situation, faced with the advent of a new revolutionary period, it is power itself that,

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<sup>5</sup> *Il Reichstag Brucia?* was written by Eduardo Rothe (a member of the Italian section of the Situationist International) and Puni Cesoni, signed “The Friends of the International,” and distributed clandestinely in Milan on 19 December 1969 by a group that also included Cristina Sensehauser and Filippo Orsini. Gianfranco Sanguinetti paid for the printing costs. The text was later translated into French as *Le Reichstag brule-t-il?*

<sup>6</sup> Where an unexploded bomb was found.

in its tendency to totalitarian affirmation, expresses in this spectacular way its own terrorist negation.

In a moment that sees the rebirth of the movement that suppresses all power separated from individuals, power itself is obliged to rediscover, in its conscious praxis, that everything that it does not kill, weakens it. But the Italian bourgeoisie is the most miserable of Europe. Incapable today of effecting its own active terror over the proletariat, there is nothing left for it to do but attempt to communicate to the population its own passive terror, its fear of the proletariat.

Impotent and clumsy in its attempt to (in this manner) stop the development of the revolutionary movement and, at the same time, to create artificially a force that it does not possess, the Italian bourgeoisie risks losing both of these possibilities in one go. Thus the most advanced factions of power (internal or unofficial, in power or part of the opposition) have made a mistake. Its excess of weakness brings the Italian bourgeoisie onto the terrain of police excess; this is why it begins to understand that its only possible way out of an endless agony goes hand-in-hand with the risk of an immediate end of its agony.

Thus, power must burn, right at the start, the last political card to be played before the outbreak of a civil war or a coup d'état of which it is incapable: the double card of a false "fascist peril" (for the Left) and an "anarchist peril" (for the Right), with the aim of disguising and making possible its offensive against the true peril: the proletariat. Furthermore, the act by which the bourgeoisie attempts to conjure away civil war is in reality its first act in a civil war against the proletariat.

For the proletariat, it is thus not a matter of avoiding or beginning this civil war, but winning it.

And the proletariat has now begun to understand that it cannot win by the use of *partial* violence, but by the *total* self-management of revolutionary violence and the general arming of organized workers in Workers' Councils. The proletariat now knows that it must definitely repulse, with the revolution, the ideology of violence along with the violence of ideology.

COMRADES: DO NOT LET OURSELVES STOP THERE: POWER AND ITS ALLIES FEAR LOSING EVERYTHING; WE MUST NOT FEAR THEM AND WE MUST ESPECIALLY NOT FEAR OURSELVES: "WE HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT OUR CHAINS AND AN ENTIRE WORLD TO WIN."

LONG LIVE THE ABSOLUTE POWER OF THE WORKERS COUNCILS!

The Friends of the International  
Sacco and Vanzetti  
via Orsini # 1970

Stolen mimeograph machine.

## “The Workers of Italy and the Revolt In Reggio Calabria”<sup>7</sup>

Comrades,

A new, more advanced stage of the Italian social crisis has now opened up. To those who denied the existence of the revolution in Italy, a *new* insurrection has demonstrated its permanence.

From now on, in Italy today, any *pretext* is enough to set a revolt down the path of social revolution: at Caserta it was a soccer match,<sup>8</sup> at Reggio Calabria, a regional assembly.<sup>9</sup> It's not the State that *chooses* to “abdicate,” as the Right-wing press says; on the contrary, the proletariat, through its revolutionary struggles, *forces* it evermore resolutely to do so.

A few days after the bombing of December 12th [1969],<sup>10</sup> we wrote<sup>11</sup> that the Italian bourgeoisie was faced with the necessity of *risking* its own present to win its own the future. Now we can confirm that, even if the bourgeoisie risks its own present every single day, it will only win an always more precarious future.

There was a time when the bourgeoisie *humiliated* the proletariat with its victories. But in Italy today, the most miserable bourgeoisie in Europe humiliates itself, provided that the proletariat does not win.

In this new period of crisis, Reggio Calabria is the first example of a town, which, at the heart of capitalist exploitation, has *revolted for more than three months* and has organized its affairs on its own. Isolated by a general wildcat strike and an undeclared state of siege, the town has courageously defended the freedom it has won, firing without restraint on the police forces on several occasions and setting up electrified barricades.

And the Italian State is the first State in Europe that, for three months, has been forced into impotence by a town that has risen up. Even if this insurrection was confused at the start, its duration and the growing violence with which it has affirmed itself now demonstrate its real strength and the *clarity* that it has been able to achieve. True radicalism authorizes every variation; it is the guarantee of every freedom. The game of pure violence is part of the pure violence of *the revolutionary game*.

But in Italy, *everything* is compromised, even the counter-revolution! As if another declaration was necessary for the Italian political class to make itself look ridiculous, Minister

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<sup>7</sup> “Gli operai d’Italia e la rivolta de Reggio Calabria,” unsigned, datelined Milan October 1970. Translated into French by Jean-François Martos as “Les travailleurs d’Italie et la révolte de Reggio de Calabre.”

<sup>8</sup> On 8 September 1969, in Caserta, in response to the penalization of the city’s soccer team due to a match-fixing scandal, the mayor and the town council called for protests. Two days of intense rioting resulted.

<sup>9</sup> On 14 July 1970, in response to the announcement that Catanzaro, and not Reggio, would be the regional capital of Calabria, the city’s mayor, Pietro Battaglia (a Christian Democrat), called for protests. Five days of violent protests resulted. The Italian government sent in the Army and the police to restore “order,” but it wasn’t until February 1971 that the revolt was finally quelled.

<sup>10</sup> The bombing of the Piazza Fontana in Milan.

<sup>11</sup> In the text *Il Reichstag brucia?* (“Is the Reichstag Burning?”), see elsewhere in this volume.

Colombo,<sup>12</sup> has found nothing better to do than to try to pass off the *weakness* of the State as its strength: “No one should confuse the moderation and balance that the State has demonstrated – that is to say, its strength – with weakness”! The realities that the President was trying to hide are the facts that the principle of authority has in these moments been *powerless* to restore order in the streets and that *this powerlessness is its negation*.

As for the Stalinists of the so-called Communist Party, they haven’t stopped slandering the revolt since it began and, “*in a final appeal to the more responsible forces of the majority*,” they called for the government to live up to its “*responsibilities*” and “*sense of duty*” in the face of the continuation of the insurrection. Just as they were the most determined to sabotage the rail workers’ strike that brought a qualitative leap to the revolt by ridiculing the directives of the Italian General Confederation of Labor, the “Communists” are the most determined to demand the massive intervention of the police and the Army against this “fascist revolt.” But, as if *the facts* were not enough in themselves, it was a fascist newspaper that took on the task of contradicting the Stalinists scoundrels: “*This is the revolt of an entire population against the State*”! On October 18,<sup>13</sup> the so-called Communists of Reggio *admitted only to having missed the train as it departed*, when in reality, they’d also *missed the railroad workers*, as well.

Never before has an event projected its gloomy shadow so far ahead of itself, so active was the participation of the so-called Communist Party in capitalist power!

At the beginning of the revolt, the noisy presence of the vested interests of the bigwigs, the lawyers, the mayor and the archbishop – in short, the whole local *camarilla* – was immediately transformed into direct opposition to the insurrection; they promptly began negotiating with their colleagues in Rome for the “surrender” of the city in exchange for the satisfaction of their paltry demands. The spectacular problem of the administrative center no longer fooled anyone and in fact never truly interested *the proletarians* of Reggio. The initial protest regarding the location of a regional bureaucratic administration ultimately led the proletarians of Reggio to take their administration into their own hands. It is upon their heads – and not those of the bigwigs – that the most severe repression is getting ready to descend. Yet the highest echelons of the political police can no longer hope that a *cold-blooded* massacre, such as the one perpetrated on December 12th,<sup>14</sup> will stop the revolt, and, in Reggio, they are already prepared to take the *risk* of perpetrating “a hot massacre.” The provocative, police-related bombs of December 12th only momentarily halted the *irreversible* movement that was making a mockery of all the efforts in favor of social peace by the scoundrels of the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

In the coming months, many trials will continue the repression. But *the real trial* has already taken place and has been celebrated in the streets of Reggio, and it has lasted for more than three months. Sentence was passed in the third month of the revolt, when the proletariat of Reggio repeatedly opened fire on the police. The government and the Stalinists will pay dearly for their victory over Reggio.

Stalinists, gentlemen of the government, bigwigs: You might swallow Reggio, *but you cannot digest it!*

In short, Reggio is the first real *insurrection* of the Italian revolution. Insufficient,

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<sup>12</sup> Emilio Colombo (1920-2013), a Christian Democrat, President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic from August 1970 to February 1972.

<sup>13</sup> The day the rail workers went out on wildcat strike.

<sup>14</sup> The day on which the Piazza Fontana and other locations in Milan were bombed.

incomplete, often confused and, above all, *calumnied*, it has the merit of bringing to a close the stage of quickly repressed, simple revolts, like the ones in Battipaglia,<sup>15</sup> Caserta and the prisons, and it has finally begun the period of *armed* insurrection. At Reggio, for the first time in Italy, the State saw itself *ignored* for a period of time that was as prolonged as it was scandalous, and then attacked directly. So there's no need to be surprised by the many real weaknesses of this insurrection, but rather we should marvel at its strength. The best thing that this uprising produced is its example, which is destined to be transmitted and reproduced.

Having said this, we don't know for what else the proletariat of Reggio can be criticized.  
Comrades!

Now the outcome of the current crisis is in the hands of the wildcat strikers of the North. The revolutionary crisis of Italy will continue to grow in complexity until it opens the way to its radical *simplification*.

While the revolt in Battipaglia was met everywhere with the farce of Platonic solidarity among all the Leftist political groups, from the PCI to the Maoists, no group of politicians has dared to support the insurrection in Reggio, because none of them dare to admit their own refutation. And so, they become the slanderers and active opponents of the very movement that will unmask them. It is no coincidence that, at the very moment that the Army and the police's reinforcements arrived to repress the revolt, the pro-Chinese militants of *Lotta Continua*<sup>16</sup> descended upon Reggio in order to recuperate the movement, thus once more making themselves look ridiculous. There is no greater insult to *the purveyors of lies* than to speak the truth.

The abusive presence of fascist provocateurs, which has been insufficiently combated from within the revolt itself – fascists are no more numerous in Reggio than anywhere else in the country – has proved very convenient for the Stalinists of the PCI, who, very slow to denounce them as such, seized the occasion of their presence to call the revolt “reactionary and fascist.” But speaking the truth is the *advantage* and the *right* of the revolutionary press. We say it clearly: the intervention of the Army and the declaration of a state of siege are *the real victories of the prolonged insurrection in Reggio*. Why in fact was a state of siege declared? Because a city rose up in revolt and took up arms. *And so, long live states of siege in every city!*

The other victory of the Reggio revolt has been to clearly demonstrate to the workers of both the North and South the essentially repressive and police-like roles of the so-called Communist Party and the union bureaucracies in this revolutionary epoch. On October 18th [1970], observing the overwhelming defeat of the unions' police forces, the Minister of Labor, Donat-Cattin,<sup>17</sup> proposed the formation of a genuine special corps of “work police.” Once this is established, Italy will have nothing left to envy in Maoist China, where it is the Army that forces the workers to work.

Comrades!

The government has long been prepared to violate the laws of its own State because, in a moment of revolutionary crisis, when the very existence of the State is at stake, the government

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<sup>15</sup> Between 9 and 22 April 1969, in response to the announcement that two local factories would be closed, workers and residents of the city rioted, destroyed government buildings and occupied the factories in question.

<sup>16</sup> *Lotta Continua* (Continuous Struggle) was a Maoist extra-parliamentary organization, founded in 1969 and dissolved in 1976.

<sup>17</sup> Carlo Donat-Cattin (1919-1991), a Christian Democrat, Minister of Labor and Social Security from August 1969 to July 1972.

has but *a single and inviolable law: the survival of the State.*<sup>18</sup>

We have never forgotten it: “Our terrain is not *the terrain of law*, but *the terrain of revolution*. The government, for its part, has finally abandoned the hypocrisy of the legal terrain; *it has taken its stand on the revolutionary terrain*, because the counter-revolutionary terrain is also revolutionary.”

Comrades!

The *practical problem* that Reggio and all the other bloody battles of the last 24 months has *objectively* posed to the workers isn’t the problem of disarming the police, *but that of arming the proletariat*.

The power that currently exists could only have been wrested from us, and therefore only we can take it back. We owe nothing to anyone, because we own *nothing*. But it is precisely because of this that we are the most menacing creditors!

Comrades!

The police aren’t our only target: there are also the Stalinists of the PCI, the union bureaucrats and the Maoists.

Where revolutionary violence begins, the end of reformism begins.

Soldiers!

In such circumstances, we will not ask you to disobey; it is the *reason* and the *honesty* of the proletarians whom you will be summoned to repress who *impose* such a decision upon you!

Long live the revolutionary proletariat of Reggio Calabria!

Long live the wildcat strike of the railway workers!

Long live the enraged prisoners!

Long live the comrades who in factories all over Italy are tearing up their work cards issued by the PCI and the unions!

Long live the wildcat strikers of the factories in the North!

Long live the absolute power of the Workers’ Councils!

[The Italian section of the Situationist International]

Milan, October 1970

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<sup>18</sup> Karl Marx, “The Trial of the Rhenish District Committee of Democrats,” speech delivered on 8 February 1849 and printed in *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* #231-232, 1849.

**Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy**

*(Véridique Rapport sur les dernières chances  
de sauver le capitalisme en Italie)*

and

**Proofs of the Nonexistence of Censor, Set Forth by His Author**

*(Prove dell'inesistenza di Censor enunciate dal suo autore)*

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## Translator's Introduction

“There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure; but security enough to make fellowships accursed. Much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet it is every day's news.” William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act III Scene II, lines 216-220.

The origins of Censor's *Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy* lie in the exchanges that Gianfranco Sanguinetti had with Guy Debord at the end of 1971, when these two men were drafting the documents that would eventually be published in *La Véritable Scission dans l'Internationale* (Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, April 1972). Concerned with documenting the post-1968 history of the Situationist International (SI), which Debord had co-founded in 1957 and Sanguinetti had joined in 1969, and with continuing situationist subversion after the impending dissolution of the group, they struck upon the idea of publishing an essay titled *The Class Struggles in Italy*.<sup>19</sup>

In the words of Debord's letter to Sanguinetti dated 3 January 1973,<sup>20</sup> such a text, now envisioned as a short book, would need to have the trenchant and assured tone of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Under the heading “Notes on the book in progress,” Debord made the following suggestions.

1. Italy before the crisis. The Italian *miracle* took place in a relatively backwards country, but within the platoon of the industrially advanced countries, and in the country that had *the strongest Stalinist party* in the West. Among the causes of the remarkable expansion of the Italian economy linked to the global process was the fact that Italy had a proletariat that was *deeply involved* (compared to the *Spanish* conditions of the same period).
2. The origins of the crisis. The university and high school students of 1967, stimulated by the agitations of the rest of the world (the USA, Strasbourg) and clashing with much more archaic conditions (the *Zanzara* affair). Role of the influence of the Situationist International then and, later, when *the occupations movement* developed by agitating for factory committees in the north.
3. The Battipaglia trial to the *hot summer* of 1969; then the hot autumn (here, the role of the Italian journal, the Venice Conference, your poster from November, etc.).
4. The bomb. What it *was*; what ends it served. Unfortunate story of Pinelli-Valpreda. The SI at that moment (*Reichstag*).

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Debord's letter to Sanguinetti dated 13 December 1971: “On your side, do not forget that the proletariat, like the publisher, awaits your class struggles in Italy.” *Guy Debord Correspondance, Volume 4, Janvier 1969 - Décembre 1972* (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004), p. 452. The phrase “class struggles in Italy” echoes Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850*.

<sup>20</sup> Published in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Volume 5, Janvier 1973 - Décembre 1978* (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2005), pp. 14-17.

5. The ownership classes in their conscious and coordinated struggle against the proletarian revolution: the bourgeoisie and its disinherited younger sister, the Italian branch of the bureaucracy. Their negotiations for an honest division, among associates, of possession of Italian capitalism (*via* the State). How bureaucratic politics is difficult\* and how its very success left it the poor share [of the spoils].

\*One can only content the workers by buying them off; and if they are actually content, one no longer needs to pay them. But if one goes too far in contenting the workers, one risks completely losing control over them. And so it is necessary, not only to pay them, but to also accord a number of advantages to them (but according them too much radicalizes them, etc.)

6. The ripening of the crisis after the recoil due to the bomb. Reggio. The situation today (Agnelli and his anticipations, the attached article from *Le Monde*, etc.). The point reached by the F.A.I. in its worried hatred of the SI, a thousand other symptoms, without forgetting the revolts in the prisons, which have since spread to America and France.

7. What the proletariat wants; and how it can obtain it.

The central event in this chronology is the bomb, that is to say, the bomb that exploded at the Piazza Fontana in Milan on 12 December 1969. Though the authorities defined the attack as an instance of terrorism and blamed it on anarchists (Giuseppe Pinelli and Pietro Valpreda were arrested shortly thereafter), the situationists believed that the attack was actually a false flag operation that had been planned and perpetrated by the secret services of the Italian State. On 19 December 1969, the Italian section of the SI published *Il Reichstag Brucia?*, which, as its title indicates (“Is the Reichstag Burning?”), likened the event to the Nazis blaming the Communists for a fire set at the Reichstag building on 27 February 1933. Though they were virtually alone in making this claim, the Italian situationists were right: the bombing at the Piazza Fontana was the beginning of what later came to be called the strategy of tension.

Sanguinetti took Debord’s suggestions very seriously; one might even say that he took them literally. Not only does the *Truthful Report* contain seven chapters, but the contents of those seven chapters match up with the contents of the seven sections in Debord’s outline, as well.

But there is a crucial difference between the two. In Debord’s outline, the person writing the history and analysis of Italian capitalism – the person attempting to show why the Italian State had recourse to a false flag operation against its own people – would be a real person (even if, like the authors of *Il Reichstag Brucia?* he didn’t use his real name) and he would speak in his own voice and from the perspective of the situationist movement (the perspective of proletarian revolution). But the author of the *Truthful Report* is imaginary, a character who speaks words that have been placed in his mouth by a situationist. Furthermore, this character – he calls himself Censor, a pseudonym that evokes the officer in ancient Rome who was tasked with

supervising public morality and governmental finances<sup>21</sup> – is not an anti-capitalist revolutionary and he doesn't seek to destroy capitalism in Italy. He claims that he is a conservative member of the ruling class and that he wishes to save it.

Thus, unlike Debord's outline, which anticipates a simple subversion, Sanguinetti's *Truthful Report* is doubly subversive: in addition to using the truth to attack authority (not just the authorities, but authority as such), it uses a usurped authority to do so. Significantly, though the idea to create Censor and use him to write the text of the *Truthful Report* was Sanguinetti's idea, he wasn't the first situationist to undertake a double subversion. In point of fact, it was the use of such techniques as the *détournement* (diversion) of other people's ideas, the provocation of using them for subversive purposes, and the scandal caused by eventually revealing what one has done and why one has done it, that made the Situationist International such a powerful and effective organization, despite its small size, limited means, and short duration.

For example: in October 1966, the SI teamed up with a small group of radical students at the University of Strasbourg to publish *On the Poverty of Student Life*, which was a virulent attack on both French capitalism and the ineffectiveness of student protest movements. Written by a situationist (Mustapha Khayati)<sup>22</sup> and published under the auspices and with the funds of the official student union, *On the Poverty of Student Life* not only caused a major scandal in Strasbourg, but, thanks to the fact that it was widely distributed outside of Strasbourg and translated into several other languages, it also contributed to the growth of the revolutionary movement in France, Europe and the United States.

But Sanguinetti was certainly the first ex-situationist (other than Debord himself) to use these situationist tactics after the dissolution of the SI. Thus he extended the subversion to a third level: not only did he use a usurped authority to attack authority as such, he also did so as an autonomous person, without the authority of the SI to back him up.

In the planning and execution of what came to be called Operation Censor, Sanguinetti received help and encouragement from Ariberto Mignoli, who was his lawyer and friend, as well as from Guy Debord. According to *The Doge: A Recollection*, which Sanguinetti wrote and published in 2012,<sup>23</sup> the character of Censor was based upon Mignoli (aka the Doge), and that, when Mignoli read the manuscript of the *Truthful Report*, he recognized himself in it. But though Mignoli was not an anti-capitalist revolutionary, he wasn't a supporter of Italy's ruling class, either. In Sanguinetti's words, he scorned it because he knew it up-close.

Sanguinetti worked on the manuscript of the *Truthful Report* all through 1973 and 1974. A good deal of it must have been finished during those years because, in a letter dated 15

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<sup>21</sup> In a letter to Mustapha Khayati dated 10 December 2012 (see elsewhere in this volume), Sanguinetti says the name Censor was intended “to echo *Bancor*, [...] the supranational currency invented by Keynes” and that it was also the penname of Guido Carli, who was the head of the Bank of Italy at the time.

<sup>22</sup> Guy Debord's contributions to the success of this scandal cannot be overlooked. Cf. his letters to Khayati dated 9 September 1966, 29 September 1966, 13 October 1966, and 19 October 1966, all of which are included in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Volume 3, Janvier 1965 - Décembre 1968* (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2003), pp. 161-162, 164-165, and 165-168.

<sup>23</sup> See elsewhere in this volume.

October 1974,<sup>24</sup> Debord told his friend that “the beginning of your pamphlet seems *magnificent* to me, that all goes for the best where the tone, the dedication, [and] the pseudonym were concerned, and that, the Italian situation being what it is, I believe – fuck! – that this text could produce an effect much greater than the *Poverty* did in 1966.” But Debord also warned Sanguinetti it is necessary to finish work immediately, because there was always the chance that the text might be rendered obsolete by new events.

Doing his best, Sanguinetti was still working on the manuscript in early 1975. “I prepared for [the publication of the *Truthful Report*] amidst a thousand dangers and unexpected events,” he writes in “The Doge.”

In March of that year, I was imprisoned in Florence and charged by the principal Italian anti-terrorist prosecutor, Pier Luigi Vigna, on the very day that I was transporting the Censor manuscript to the printer in Milan. I was intercepted because the police had to know that I was preparing something and because Mignoli’s phone was tapped because of the bankruptcy of a bank for which he was momentarily the attorney (at the time, I had no telephone as a precaution against taps). To arrest me, the police planted and found bullets from a machinegun in the car in which I was traveling. The manuscript was saved because it had been placed in the violin case of my companion, Katherine Scott, who, along with my friend Mario Masanzanica, were also arrested. The manuscript thus had the singular luck of entering and leaving, unperceived, the women’s prison at Santa Verdiana in Florence. The Doge furnished me with the best criminal-defense attorney in Florence, Terenzio Ducci, who, despite all expectations, got me out of prison in eight days.

The Italian political police were surveilling and harassing Sanguinetti for a number of reasons. First and foremost, despite the explosion of the bomb at the Piazza Fontana and other similar acts that were designed to intimidate them or portray them terrorists, the revolutionary parts of the Italian working class had continued to go out on strike, to sabotage their places of work, and to receive support from other parts of Italian society. Second, despite the fact that the SI had dissolved in 1972, situationist ideas were an essential part of the revolutionary movement. Finally, Sanguinetti himself was seen as one of the most dangerous situationists. He had been summarily expelled from France on 21 July 1971 for his membership in the SI; he had worked on the film version of Debord’s book *La Société du Spectacle*, released in 1973; and, as he says, he was obviously preparing to do *something*, though the authorities didn’t know what it was.

In June 1975, Sanguinetti finally finished working on his book. The following month, a Milanese printer by the name of Dario Memo set to work using the monotype process and special, high-quality paper to produce a luxury edition of Censor’s *Rapporto veridico sulle ultima opportunita di salvare il capitalismo in Italia*. Only 520 individually numbered copies were made. Ostensibly published by Bergio Scotti-Camuzzi, who was in fact not a publisher, but Mignoli’s cousin, the book was sent by mail in August 1975 to 520 Italian politicians, industrialists, union leaders and journalists, whose names and addresses had been furnished to Sanguinetti by Mignoli.

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<sup>24</sup> *Guy Debord Correspondance, Volume 5, Janvier 1973 - Décembre 1978* (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2005), pp. 212-213.

“We laughed heartily when we received [via Scotti-Camuzzi] the letters of thanks from government ministers and high-level civil servants, that is to say, all those who believed that Censor was real and sincere: Giulio Andreotti, Aldo Moro, Guido Carli (the governor of the Bank of Italy), Giorgio Amendola, Pietro Nenni, the Prefect of Milan, the High Council of the Magistracy, etc.,” Sanguinetti recalls in *The Doge*. The laughter intensified in October 1975, when the publisher Ugo Mursia brought out an inexpensive and widely distributed edition of the *Truthful Report*. In fact, this edition was so popular and so well reviewed in the Italian press that Mursia reprinted it twice over the course of the following two months.

We might well wonder how it was that Censor’s book was not immediately recognized as a fake. After all, it *was* a fake, and, if one knew how to read between the lines (or even some of the lines themselves), it was an *obvious* one. Furthermore, fakes and their exposure had been in the news for several years before then. For example, in 1968, the Hungarian painter Elmyr de Hory, who had been forging dozens of paintings and selling them off to some of the most prestigious galleries and museums in the world for more than 20 years, was finally unmasked and imprisoned. In 1969, de Hory told his story to the American novelist Clifford Irving, who not only published *Fake! The Story of Elmyr de Hory, the Greatest Art Forger of Our Time*, but also, two years later, went on to perpetrate a fake of his own, the infamous *Autobiography of Howard Hughes*, for which he was imprisoned in 1972. To complete this cycle, in March 1975 the American film director Orson Welles released a feature-length film, *F. for Fake*, which documented the rise and fall of both de Hory and Irving.

It is obvious that fakers succeed by fooling the experts. Their fakes are so good that even the experts can’t tell the difference. But Welles’ contention was that this commonplace observation, i.e., fakers succeed *despite* the experts, has things backwards. In point of fact, fakers succeed *because* of the experts. It is because of the authority of experts, which is based upon the inability of everyone else to make educated decisions on their own and their consequent willingness to rely unquestioningly on the experts’ judgments (which, in truth, are only their opinions), that fakes are not only possible, but also highly lucrative when they are successfully perpetrated. Fool the expert, and you’ve managed to fool everyone else, in one fell swoop. In Welles’ words,

What’s new? Experts are the new oracles. They speak to us with the absolute authority of the computer. And we bow down before them. They’re God’s own gift to the faker [...] It’s pretty but is it art? How is it valued? The value depends on opinion. Opinion depends on the experts. A faker like Elmyr makes fools of the experts. So who’re the experts? Who’s the faker?<sup>25</sup>

Experts are merely authenticators, not creators in their own right. So as not to be exposed as the fakers that they truly are, they must be experts in two fields: their own particular area of expertise, whatever that may be (modern art or fine wines or political analysis); and the ability to hide instances in which they have been fooled.

Not surprisingly, it is rare that the existence of fakes, once they have been discovered, is publicized. If a fake has been exposed after it has been widely accepted as the real thing, then one is entitled to wonder: how many other, similar things are also fake? But the people who have made purchases or decisions based upon the mistaken opinions of the experts do not want to find

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<sup>25</sup> Orson Welles, *F. for Fake* (1975). My transcription.

out the answer to this question. They prefer not to know, because, if the full extent of fakery were revealed, the entire market for a particular product might collapse and they would be wiped out.

Thus we have our answer. In Italy in 1975, the *Truthful Report* was not denounced as a fake because its author seemed to be an expert, someone who was well acquainted with many State secrets. He might have been bluffing, but what if he wasn't? If *he* said that the bombing of the Piazza Fontana had been perpetrated by the Italian secret services, and that didn't jibe with what you thought you knew about it, then maybe you weren't really privy to the truth. And yet the very fact that such an apparently knowledgeable person had taken you into his confidence seemed to be an indication that you were in fact a real expert. At least Censor recognized you as one. Any suggestion that his book was a fake opened you to the accusation that you were in fact not a real expert, but a fake one, too. And so, in the interests of maintaining your own status as an insider, you kept your doubts (if you had any) to yourself. And then, after the book was published commercially, no one among its secondary audience (ordinary men and women) was willing to proclaim that the thing was a fake because that would have contradicted the unanimous judgment of the experts. And if *they* didn't think that Censor's book was a fake, then why should you, i.e., someone who lacked expertise, think otherwise?

By the same token, these insights about expertise explain how and why fakes and hoaxes have continued to exist and be successful. One would think that, precisely because we now live in a world in which more people have access to more information about more subjects, fakes and hoaxes would be impossible to perpetrate. For example, if you search online for the phrase "lying in the age of the Internet," you will see that the unanimous opinion is that it is no longer possible to lie: the widespread availability of information makes getting caught inevitable. But the simple truth is that, precisely because of the spectacular increase in the quantity of information, which requires time to wade through and evaluate, because of the bad quality of a lot of that information, and because of the speed with which it piles up, the numbers of and reliance upon experts have steadily increased. As a result, the numbers of successful hoaxes and fakes have increased proportionately. The year 2013, for example, has been called the year of the hoax.<sup>26</sup>

In January 1976, Sanguinetti published an essay titled *Prova dell'inesistenza di Censor, enunciate dal suo autore* ("Proofs of the Nonexistence of Censor, Set Forth by His Author"), which revealed that Censor did not exist and that he himself had written the *Rapporto veridico*. Precisely because no one had doubted the existence of Censor or had questioned the veracity of the claims that Censor had made (particularly where the Piazza Fontana and the State's use of false-flag terrorism to stop proletarian subversion were concerned), a major scandal ensued. In an attempt to make that scandal international in nature, Éditions Champ Libre brought out a volume that included *Véridique rapport sur les dernières chances de sauver le capitalisme en Italie*, which was Guy Debord's translation of the text into French, plus Debord's

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Doug Gross, 2013: "The Web's year of the hoax," published by CNN on December 18, 2013: "News alert: some things you read on the Internet are not true. As obvious as that may seem, and as savvy as you'd think we'd be a decade after deposed Nigerian princes began e-mailing us with the promise of vast riches, 2013 has turned out to be the Year of the On-line Hoax."

translation of the *Prova dell'inesistenza di Censor* and selections from the book's extremely positive reviews in the Italian press.

In February 1976, calumniated by the Italian newspapers that had been so easily and completely duped by Operation Censor and hounded by the political police, who now found a new reason to harass him, Sanguinetti fled Italy. Even though he had been deported from France in 1971, he attempted to re-enter that country, where he had friends and supporters. Furthermore, the man who had been responsible for his expulsion, Minister of the Interior Raymond Marcellin, was no longer in office. But Sanguinetti wasn't allowed in, not even temporarily.

To bring this news to the attention of the readers of France's newspapers, which had not seen fit to publish a single word about it, Debord wrote a bitter and sarcastic statement on behalf of Éditions Champ Libre. Published as an advertisement in the 24 February 1976 issue of *Le Monde*,<sup>27</sup> it focused on the failure of France's post-modern academics and the rest of the intelligentsia to register the existence of, not to mention denounce, their government's decision to refuse Sanguinetti entry.

We do not have the presumptuousness to insinuate that the critique of capitalism could at all concern our contemporaries, their work, their ways of making a living, their ideas or their pleasures. We do not ignore the facts that, even as a subject for scholarly discussion limited to a small number of experts, the very justness of the concept of that critique has been controversial and that capitalism, as a hypothesis, is no longer of contemporary interest, because the Thought of [the Université de] Vincennes – at which the best-recycled professors have decided upon the dissolution of history and the prohibition of the criteria of truthfulness in discourse, which is something that is very rich in consequences for them – has recently leapt beyond it.

Furthermore, we are not assured that, somewhere, there really exists a geographical (and an economically quite weak) entity called Italy. And, where Italy's economy is concerned, the eminent leaders of the Common Market – even if the principle of the free circulation of commodities is as much their affair as the free circulation of people – have other reasons to doubt its existence.

The actual existence of Gianfranco Sanguinetti himself, either as the author of a Western *samizdat* or as the target of some liberal-advanced Gulag, is highly questionable. If we, on the unique basis of the magnitude of a public rumor (which also remains outside of our borders), allow ourselves to positively affirm the reality of his existence, his writings and the diverse and harmless police persecutions that have followed from them, one could retort that no one here in France has ever heard of him, and we [as his publisher] feel all the weight of such an objection.

We will also frankly state that we know a number of estimable people who, working for the newspapers or the distributors of books, do not hide the fact that they have been led to conclude that Éditions Champ Libre also does not exist, and, for our part, we do not pretend to have the boldness to settle such an obscure question and thus go against the honest convictions of so many competent people

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<sup>27</sup> Reprinted in Éditions Champ Libre, *Correspondance*, Volume I (Paris, 1978), back cover.

by basing ourselves only upon our contingent desires and limited personal interests.

Given all this, we nevertheless will not allow ourselves to leave open the question of knowing if the world in which we live – the world about which you read all the most up-to-date news every day – truly exists. We are in a position to be assured that, for the moment, it still does.

But Debord's words fell on deaf ears. Sanguinetti was left to fend for himself. He eventually returned to Italy, where, undeterred, he went on to write several new texts, including *On Terrorism and the State*, which was published in 1979.

Though it was published more than 50 years ago, the *Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy* is certainly worthy of being read and studied closely today. Historians of the situationist movement in general and the development of the thought of Guy Debord in particular will find it especially valuable. Though few have remarked this fact, the *Truthful Report* (and Sanguinetti's subsequent book, *On Terrorism and the State*) had a powerful influence on Debord's last major theoretical work, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, which was published in 1988. Attentive readers will note a strong similarity between the five major historical developments presented in Chapter I of the former and the five principal features of the society modernized to the stage of the integrated spectacle presented in Chapter V of the latter.<sup>28</sup> For Debord, what had taken place in Italy in the 1970s was the harbinger of what was taking place in the entire world during the late 1980s. Russia and Germany had held the predominant place that in the formation of the concentrated spectacle in the 1930s; the United States had held the predominant place in the formation of the diffuse spectacle in the 1960s; and France and Italy held the predominant place in the formation of the integrated spectacle in the 1970s, "through the play of a series of shared historical factors: the important role of the Communist Party and unions in political and intellectual life, a weak democratic tradition, the long monopoly on power by a single party of government, and the necessity to put an end to unexpected revolutionary contestation."<sup>29</sup> For Debord, it had been in France and Italy that the spectacle of false-flag terrorism, which isn't violence perpetrated against the State by extremists, but violence launched by the State against itself or the population that it rules, that came to dominate the entire world was first practiced.

The *Truthful Report* was also important to one of Sanguinetti's friends, Pier Franco Ghisleni, who used the tactic of usurped authority to generate *Lettere agli eretici: Epistolario con i dirigenti della nuova sinistra italiana* ("Letters to the Heretics: Correspondence with the Leaders of the New Italian Left"). Not only was this satirical work attributed to Enrico Berlinguer, the head of the Italian Communist Party, but it also presented itself as if it had been printed by the publishing house founded and run by Giulio Einaudi. Though the *Lettere agli eretici* did not create the immense scandal that was caused by the *Truthful Report*, it did create a minor sensation.

What about writers who were not members of the SI or one of Sanguinetti's friends? As Sanguinetti himself has said, "The Situationist International is historically confirmed as a true avant-garde only to the extent that its practices and theories have been applied, taken up, developed, détourned, publicized, etc., by other groups and individuals in other forms, situations,

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<sup>28</sup> Guy Debord, *Commentaires sur la Société du spectacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), p. 25.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

conditions, etc.”<sup>30</sup> Though they may or may not have modeled their respective actions on the *Truthful Report* in particular, all of the following contemporary individuals or groups have certainly been explicitly inspired by the SI’s use of détournement, provocation and scandal: the American activist group the Yes Men, whose members create fake websites and pretend to be corporate spokesmen; the American pro-privacy group the Surveillance Camera Players, which performs détourned plays in front publicly installed surveillance cameras; the English artist Banksy, whose graffiti art is a form of vandalism; the Russian punk band Pussy Riot, which plays scandalous songs in provocative settings; and the Czech art group Ztohoven, which hacks into State TV broadcasts and official government ceremonies.

But what about the contents of the *Truthful Report*? Even though it recorded the history of Italy between 1943 and 1975, and even though it made history in 1975 and 1976, this book is virtually never mentioned in discussions of State-sponsored terrorism or false flag operations, even when anti-capitalist revolutionaries hold those discussions. The same goes for Sanguinetti’s *On Terrorism and the State*. Neither book is mentioned in any of the many studies that have been published on these subjects,<sup>31</sup> nor are they cited in any of the Wikipedia entries for Operation Gladio, Gladio in Italy, the strategy of tension, the years of lead, false flag or state terrorism, or in any of the archives maintained by libcom.org, a libertarian Marxist website.

Perhaps the reason for the spectacular absence of references to and discussions of Sanguinetti’s books is that copies of them are hard to come by. Small presses published both the *Truthful Report* and *On Terrorism and the State* and, as a general rule, book reviewers and the book-buying public ignore the publications of small presses. But it seems that something else is at work here and, in fact, has been at work for many years.

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<sup>30</sup> Email message sent to me on 14 August 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth R. Langford’s *An Analysis of Left and Right Wing Terrorism in Italy* (Defense Intelligence College, 1985); Leonard Weinberg and William Lee Eubank’s *The Rise and Fall of Italian Terrorism* (Westview Press, 1987); Richard Drake’s *The Revolutionary Mystique and Terrorism in Contemporary Italy* (Indiana University Press, 1989); Robert C. Meade’s *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism* (Macmillan, 1990); Raimondo Catanzaro’s *The Red Brigades and Left-wing Terrorism in Italy* (Pinter, 1991); Marco Rimaneli’s *Waning Terror: Red Brigades and Neo-Nazi Terrorism in Italy* (World Jurist Association, 1991); Jeffrey McKenzie Bale’s *The Black Terrorist International: Neo-fascist Paramilitary Networks and the Strategy of Tension in Italy, 1968-1974* (University of California, Berkeley, 1994); Paul Ginsborg’s *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Ganser Daniele’s *NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe* (Routledge, 2004); Silje Dalsbotten Aass’s *State Responses to Terrorism in Italy: The Period 1969-1984* (S.D. Aass, 2005); Graeme Allen Stout’s *Arrested Images: Discourses of Terrorism in Italy and Germany* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Anna Cento Bull’s *Italian Neo-Fascism: The Strategy of Tension and the Politics of Non-Reconciliation* (Berghahn Books, 2007); Pier Paolo Antonello’s *Imagining Terrorism: The Rhetoric and Representation of Political Violence in Italy 1969-2009* (MHRA, 2009); and Richard Cottrell’s *Gladio, NATO’s Dagger at the Heart of Europe: The Pentagon-Nazi-Mafia Terror Axis* (Progressive Press, 2012).

In January 1980, in his Preface to the French edition of *On Terrorism and the State*,<sup>32</sup> Sanguinetti himself noted “the quasi-complete silence that has surrounded a book [*On Terrorism and the State*] that deals with a subject that is spoken about every day, but always in the same mendacious way, on the front pages of all the Italian newspapers as well as on the State-sponsored radio and television stations,” and that the existence of his book has been kept secret by the very people who are believed to have the obligation to speak about terrorism.

The reason for this silence is, I believe, easy to imagine. Sanguinetti didn’t simply assert what many people refused to believe at the time, namely, that the Italian State had bombed, wounded and even killed some of its constituents. He also denounced those who refused to believe that such a thing could *ever* happen. And these people, and all those for whom they spoke, never forgave him, even though or precisely because history has proved that he was right. Such is the price for proving that the experts have lied: they lie about you; they deny that you even exist.

The mistake that the Italian secret services made – the mistake that made Operation Censor possible – was that they turned the tactic of false-flag terrorism into a strategy. Instead of using it sparingly and only when absolutely necessary, they began to use it again and again. As a result, they risked the long-term loss of everything that they had gained in the short term at the Piazza Fontana.

Perhaps this is why there have been no instances of false-flag terrorism in the United States since September 11, 2001: the State knows the risks that it runs if it over-uses it. And from the perspective of the State, the false flag operations undertaken on September 11 were completely successful.

But what if the situation in, say, China<sup>33</sup> gets out of control? Then bureaucratic capitalism might find that one or two more instances of false-flag terrorism are necessary for its survival. If

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<sup>32</sup> *Du Terrorisme et de l'état*, translated from the Italian by Jean-François Martos (Le fin mot de l'Histoire, Paris, 1980), pp. 5-6.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Eli Friedman, “China in Revolt,” *Jacobin Magazine*, Issue 7-8, August 2012, from which I quote at length because of the very strong similarities between the situations in Italy in the early 1970s and in China today.

Today, the Chinese working class is fighting. More than thirty years into the Communist Party’s project of market reform, China is undeniably the epicenter of global labor unrest. While there are no official statistics, it is certain that thousands, if not tens of thousands, of strikes take place each year. All of them are wildcat strikes – there is no such thing as a legal strike in China. So on a typical day, anywhere from half a dozen to several dozen strikes are likely taking place. More importantly, *workers are winning*, with many strikers capturing large wage increases above and beyond any legal requirements. [...] Strikes [...] are never organized by the official Chinese unions, which are formally subordinate to the Communist Party and generally controlled by management at the enterprise level. Every strike in China is organized autonomously, and frequently in direct opposition to the official union, which encourages workers to pursue their grievances through legal channels instead. [...] When faced with recalcitrant management, workers sometimes escalate by heading to the streets. This tactic is directed at the government: by affecting public order, they immediately attract

it does, then a new Operation Censor (a Chinese one) will become possible. I do not relish such a possibility; I simply hope that the revolutionary movement of the future will have one of the weapons that it will need if/when history starts repeating itself.

A few notes about the text. Since I do not have access to the Italian original, I have used Guy Debord's *Véridique rapport sur les dernières chances de sauver le capitalisme en Italie* as the basis for this translation into English. The Italian original included words and phrases from a number of other languages (mostly Latin, but also French and English). Debord was careful to preserve this multi-lingual richness as he translated the work as a whole from Italian into French, and I, translating from French into English, have tried to be careful, too. When Censor has quoted from something in English, I have sought out and used the original wording. When Censor has quoted from something in Latin, I have consulted and relied upon the already-established renderings into English. All of the footnotes are by me, except where noted.

Bill Brown  
New York City  
April 2026

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state attention. Workers sometimes march to local government offices or simply block a road. Such tactics are risky, as the government may support strikers, but just as frequently will resort to force. Even if a compromise is struck, public demonstrations will often result in organizers being detained, beaten, and imprisoned. Even more risky, and yet still common, is for workers to engage in sabotage and property destruction, riot, murder their bosses, and physically confront the police. Such tactics appear to be more prevalent in response to mass layoffs or bankruptcies. A number of particularly intense confrontations took place in late 2008 and early 2009 in response to mass layoffs in export processing due to the economic crisis in the West. As will be explained, workers may now be developing an antagonistic consciousness vis-à-vis the police. [...] A turning point came in the summer of 2010, marked by a momentous strike wave that began at a Honda transmission plant in Nanhai. Since then, there has been a change in the character of worker resistance, a development noted by many analysts. Most importantly, worker demands have become *offensive*. Workers have been asking for wage increases above and beyond those to which they are legally entitled, and in many strikes they have begun to demand that they elect their own union representatives. [...] In just a few years, worker resistance has gone from defensive to offensive. Seemingly small incidents have set off mass uprisings, indicative of generalized anger.

## **Dedication**

To the amicable memory of Raffaele Mattioli, who taught us to be lavish  
with the most precious of our goods: the truth.

Then it replied: 'A conscience that is clouded  
By its own shame or by that of another,  
Will certainly feel that your words are sharp.

But none the less, all lying set aside,  
Make clear to everyone the whole vision;  
And let them scratch wherever they may itch.

For if your words are objectionable  
For the first taste, they will yield nourishment  
Afterwards, once they have been digested.

This cry of yours will do as the wind does,  
Strike hardest on the summits that are highest;  
And that is no small argument of honor.'

Dante, *Paradiso*, XVII, 124-135.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, translated by C. H. Sisson, with an introduction and notes by David H. Higgins (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 426.

## Preface

The author of this *Report* is suffers from a major disadvantage: it seems to him that nothing, or almost nothing, warrants being treated in a light tone. The 20th Century thinks the opposite, and it has its reasons for this. Our democracy, which demands the expression of personal opinions from countless good people who do not have the time to form their own, forces everyone to speak with a lightness that we, in our turn, are obliged to excuse, given the necessities of the times.

Nevertheless, this first disadvantage does not shelter us from an opposite one: if we refuse to use a light tone, we also reject an academic or serious style for the simple reason that we do not intend to demonstrate in 50 pages what can be said in five lines. We hope that this twofold premise will at least serve to excuse, if not justify, the *trenchant*<sup>35</sup> tone.

In these first few lines, we would like to thank a number of illustrious Italians, whom we would name if they were dead, but who at this moment are occupied with important tasks in our economy and politics, and thus will be grateful to us for our discretion, given the undeniably delicate character of the subjects treated herein. All that we can permit ourselves to do is offer to them these pages, which we have finally decided to publish in the form of this *Report*, although, we must confess, we secretly but unsuccessfully nourished the hope that someone other than us would undertake it. On the other hand, given the speed of the Italian crisis, and the urgency of the remedies to be adopted, we have had to resolve ourselves to confiding our opinions in a published work, because, after their previous distribution in the form of confidential notes and private conversations, it hasn't seemed to us that they have encountered all of the desired audience, precisely "there where one can do what one pleases"<sup>36</sup> that is to say, at the summit of economic power.

It is fitting to say immediately that we do not intend to speak for *all* of the Italian bourgeoisie, which has been bastardized by its own illusions of "openness," but only a part of it, in which one can distinguish a veritable *elite*<sup>37</sup> of the powerful. It is to this *elite* that what follows is addressed, in an epoch in which the monopoly on the more or less critical discourse about contemporary society seems to belong to those who are opposed to it in a more or less effective manner, while on our side of the barricade one discerns a pitiful silence and even an ever-more clumsy recourse to embarrassed justifications for it. As for us, at this moment in which we break this monopoly, we are quite far from wanting to seek the least appearance of "dialogue" with our real enemies. We speak from within the heart of our own class so as to perpetuate its hegemony over this society.

Unlike those who critique society so as to revolutionize its bases, we will not make grand demagogic or pedagogic speeches; and rather than responding to our radical critics, we prefer to personally assume the *disgraced grace*,<sup>38</sup> that is to say, the displeasing honor of criticizing, even pitilessly, that which in our management of economic and political power must be effectively criticized with the sole goal of reinforcing its efficiency and domination.

Thus we do not seek to prove that contemporary society is *desirable*, and even less to

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<sup>35</sup> French in original.

<sup>36</sup> There "where everything is possible." Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Inferno*, V, 23-24, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> French in original.

<sup>38</sup> Greek in original.

weigh the possibly modifiable aspects that compose it. With all the cold veracity that we have adopted for all the other affirmations contained in this *Report*, we say that *this society suits us because it exists* and we want to maintain it to maintain our power over it. To speak the truth in these days is a long-term undertaking, and since we cannot hope to exclusively encounter impartial readers, we will content ourselves by being impartial as we write, even at the price of making accusations against the politicians who, over the years, have defended our interests with more good will than success. We must cease to be hypocrites amongst ourselves, because we are in the process of becoming victims of this very hypocrisy.

Today, from the point of view of the defense of our society, there only exists a single danger in the world, and it is that the workers succeed in *speaking to each other* about their conditions and aspirations *without any intermediaries*. All the other dangers are secondary, or even proceed directly from the precarious situation in which this first problem, which in many respects is unspoken and unacknowledged, places us in multiple respects.

Once this true danger has been identified, the task is to avert it, and not see false dangers in its place. Yet our politicians only seem concerned with saving their own reputations, and too often this comes too late. But, on the contrary, it is *saving our base*, first and foremost our economic base, with which we must occupy ourselves. For example, we have all noted the stupidity that currently dominates the debate, conducted under the heading of “the Communist question,” among the principal political leaders, as if this were a problem that is all the more embarrassing because it is “new,” as if we ourselves – and several others, who are certainly no less qualified – had not already set the form, timing and conditions that will render the official entrance of the Italian Communist Party [ICP] into the sphere of power beneficial for both sides, and as if the Communist leaders had not, during the most recent meetings that we have held, already unofficially accepted even the most unfavorable aspects of the project that at this moment, with the prudence that is now necessary, they are attempting to get the rank and file of their party, which believes itself to be more radical, to accept. This imaginary political debate, which does not even serve the majority parties by assuring them of the support of moderate voters – which is a superfluous concern, since the voters always vote as they are told to vote –, cannot mislead the intelligent conservatives, either in Italy or abroad, because we know that it is no longer a question, at the current moment, of seeing if we more or less need the ICP, given that no one can doubt the usefulness that this party has had for us during the last few, very difficult years, when it would have been so easy for its leaders to harm us and perhaps in an irreparable fashion, but instead a question of us being in a position to offer this party sufficient guarantees so that it will not run the risk – once it is openly allied with our management of power – of being dragged down with us in our eventual ruin, for which the ICP would *ipso facto* find itself sharing the responsibility and the consequences, thereby losing its own base among the workers who, no longer having any illusions about the most minimal changes in their fate – a fate that is indeed hardly enviable – and no doubt estimating this to be a betrayal by their leadership, would react freely, beyond any control and against all control. That’s the real question; that’s the real danger.

We know quite well that the Communist parties have many times furnished proof of their aptitude at collaborating in the management of bourgeois society, but we must not rely on such a general certitude, as if it would confer upon our power a reserve of unlimited security, that is to say, a recourse that would be sufficient *in every case* no matter what “the day and hour” of the supreme danger would be, as if this recourse would not itself be a historical force among others, as if this force wouldn’t be susceptible of being eroded, either through inaction or action that was too maladroitly or too tardily engaged in. The ultimate irony for us would be finding ourselves,

precisely ourselves, to be the last dupes of the Communist myth by betting on the *fantasy of its omnipotence*, which we ourselves have constructed at the times in which it was advantageous for us to use it. We must never forget that *the only effective power* is ours and that it is nevertheless threatened. Thus, it isn't sufficient to know that the Communist Party is ready to manage society for our benefit; we must also have a place to offer it in a capitalist society *that still merits being managed*. Who could fail to understand that, if the State and civil society continue to deteriorate at such a dramatic speed under the pressure of the truly irreconcilable enemies whom we – the Communists and us – have *in common*, the Communists, caught up with us in the same disaster, will find themselves as incapable of helping us as the Austrian-Hungarian Empire or the Kingdom of Jerusalem? That the Communists should lament, at that moment, no longer being able to maintain the existing order is a subjective episode that will not offer us any consolation! And if the Communists, by once again taking up the weapons of counter-revolution, crush the attempt to set up a classless society in Italy, they would certainly merit the recognition of the property-owning classes in America and Russia, in Europe and in China, and they might be admitted more or less quickly into the UN as the masters of our country, but we – the real dominant class in Italy, the particular class that can even call itself the founder of the universal bourgeoisie of modern times and the *millennium* that it has effectively imposed on the entire world – will no longer be here. We will endlessly experience *how salt is the taste*<sup>39</sup> of the bread of exile in London or Madrid.

What we must save isn't only the capitalism that maintains the market economy and wage labor, but, rather, the capitalism *in the only historical form that suits us*, which, moreover, can quite easily be shown to be the effectively superior form of economic development. If we can't even offer the Communists a *chance* to save this form of capitalism, they will confine themselves, as much as they can, to saving *another form of it*, the unfortunately crude character of which one has seen in Russia for more than a half-century. The new class of property-owners that this inferior form produces, one knows well, leaves us no existence locally, just as it also suppresses – everywhere in which its crude dictatorship takes the place of the one that we don't fear to call ours – the totality of the superior values that give our existence a meaning.

What we have said here are banalities, obvious facts. Those who do not accept them are sleepwalkers who haven't for a moment reflected on the fact we will lose all of our reasons for managing a world in which our objective advantages have been suppressed since it will no longer be possible for anyone to enjoy them. Capitalists must not forget that they are also human beings, and as such they cannot accept the uncontrolled degradation of *all* human beings and thus the personal conditions of life that they themselves enjoy.

We would like to preempt an objection, even a reproach, that could be addressed to us, and that we judge to be absolutely unfounded when it comes to our *Report*: namely, that we herein reveal secrets that we have come to know over the last few years, which, when it comes to State secrets, have certainly not been few and far between, and that we divulge them without regard for the possibly dangerous consequences they will cause in public opinion. Well! We can immediately reassure anyone who fears this: if one takes into account this twofold presupposition, which is too neglected in our country, that, on the one hand, he who always lies will never be believed, and, on the other, the truth is destined to forge its route with a force that can override the most powerful lies, whose destiny it is, on the contrary, to lose all of their strength to the extent that they are repeated, then we will see that the small number of stark truths

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<sup>39</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Paradiso*, XVII, 58, p. 424.

that we have decided to reveal in this pamphlet can no longer be kept quiet without our running the risk that, in a short period, one or another of them will be put to seditious ends.

Moreover, our remarks will be brief, and we will never dwell on anything for too long, supposing that the readers to whom we are addressing ourselves through special means, and who are the very people with whom we have had dealings during these last few years, are sufficiently up-to-date concerning a good part of the delicate details, of which we will content ourselves with a quick review, that they will grasp the implications or allusions to facts or individuals, while all this will completely escape those who live at a distance from the centers of power in our society.

Instead of the celebrated phrase “I forbid myself to speak and I cannot keep silent,”<sup>40</sup> we prefer the honesty of “I will not say everything, but everything that I say will be true.”<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps it might not be useless for me to specify, before concluding this preface, that we are not in the habit of writing books, not because we don’t love reading them, but precisely because we love them more than this century seems to permit us. This is why, personally speaking, we are grateful for those who today *do not write them* and we abhor the amateur and professional writers of our times, who are illiterate intellectuals unsuccessfully pursuing the remission of their ignorance by publishing the proofs of it in a multitude of unreadable volumes, volumes that our culture industry undertakes to erect as a kind of barricade against true culture, which is currently out of fashion. If we ourselves have taken up the pen, this should rather be interpreted as our manner of payment of a *unique*<sup>42</sup> tax to the troubled Republic. And, if we have chosen to give to this *Report* the literary form of the pamphlet, which has been out of fashion for two centuries, this is only because it possesses the double advantage of being easy to read and quick to write. In it we address ourselves to men for whom the time to read is less than the necessity to act. And if we ourselves were to reject the method of promptly stating everything that appears to be important, without exhaustively treating each question that is raised, perhaps we could leave behind some monumental work of which the historians will one day make use to shed light on the years in question here, but in such case we would lack the time to confront and master (such is our intention) the crucial problems that we limit ourselves herein to sketching out, because we are not in the habit of believing that real difficulties can be resolved *by writing*. Thus, this pamphlet must be read as it was written: in one sitting, following the mood of the moment – a mood that, in this case, can only be as profound as the gravity of the moment allows.

As for the fact that the author of this text has used a pseudonym: this was done to respect the tradition of the pamphleteer, exemplified by the Fronde under Mazarin<sup>43</sup> and by Junius in 18th Century England. Moreover, we are confident that we will be easily recognized by all those who have had the occasion to encounter us over the course of the last 30 years. Finally, for all the others, we prefer that it isn’t our name that encourages the most rigorous reflection, but the seriousness of what we evoke. – Censor, June 1975

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<sup>40</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>41</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>42</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>43</sup> France between 1649 and 1652.

**Chapter I:  
Why Capitalism Must Be Democratic  
And the Grandeur It Achieves By Being So**

“You will soon be, thank Heaven, out of the hands of your rebellious subjects (...) Where they are concerned, my Cousin, I share all of your feelings, as you can see, and pray God that that He will keep you safe, but I cannot approve of your repugnance for the type of government that one calls representative and that I myself call recreational, there being nothing in the world that is so entertaining for a king, not to mention the not insignificant utility that it has for us (...) The representative form of government suits me marvelously (...) Money comes to us in abundance. Ask my nephew in Angoulême [in France]. Here we count by the thousands or, to tell the truth, we ourselves no longer count, because we have our own deputies, a *compact* majority of them, as one says here; expenses, yes, but they are small (...) One hundred votes, I am sure, don’t cost me in a year what Mme. de Cayla costs in a month (...) I truly thought as you did, before my trip to England; I had no love at all for representative government; but there I saw what it really is. If the Turk suspected as much, he wouldn’t want anything else, and he would make his Divan a two-chambered body (...) You shouldn’t be scared off by the words liberty, the general public, or representation. They work to our benefit, and the yield is immense, the danger nonexistent, whatever anyone says.”

(These extracts, translated into Italian here for the first time, come from a secret letter that Louis XVIII sent to Ferdinand VII in August 1823. In Cadix, this letter fell into the hands of a secret agent from Canning, and its publication caused a controversy in England. – *The Morning Chronicle*,<sup>44</sup> October 1823.)<sup>45</sup>

What constitutes the most notable trait of our century isn’t so much the fact that capitalism has been challenged in a reiterated and bloody manner by the workers of all industrialized countries and also in some countries where the economy is still predominantly agrarian (not at all unexpected phenomena, except to those who undervalued the warnings issued by the first failed revolutions of the prior century), nor the fact that serious economic and monetary crises have regularly shaken its internal stability (serious inconveniences, but unavoidable in any complex economic system), nor even the fact that errors in the management of power have been quite numerous and very costly in every country (this fact is inseparably tied to any historical form of domination).

What seems remarkable in our century is, quite the contrary, is that the capitalist system has managed to resist all that, and that, *despite all that*, today it still continues to exist everywhere, in manifestations that are different *and even appear to be contradictory*, as the only existing form of domination in the world, not only capable of overcoming its own crises, but

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<sup>44</sup> English in original.

<sup>45</sup> As Sanguinetti would later point out in his text “Proofs of the Nonexistence of Censor, Set Forth by His Author” (December 1975), “the letter attributed to Louis XVIII is in fact a celebrated literary fake by Paul-Louis Courier.” See elsewhere in this volume.

even coming out of them reinforced to the point that it has managed to spread and impose its methods of commodity production, exchange and distribution upon the whole planet. Even in the Communist countries, the economic and technological systems of modern capitalism have long since become the declared preference of the dominant bureaucratic class.

For the first time in universal history, a determined system has imposed itself *everywhere*, annihilating all of the archaic forms of domination that were opposed to it, at the same time that it has successfully confronted the questions posed to it by new social forces, such as the class of industrial workers and wage laborers in general, who are necessary for the production and consumption of commodities, but who have an underlying disposition to combat in the name of their own “emancipation” the world for which they work and in which they live.

At the beginning of a *Report* dedicated to a critique of the current management of our system, it appears to us necessary, and just, to recognize its unquestionable historical success and its objective merits, which we risk seeing compromised in the near future because of current errors. It is essential to know clearly what we must fight *here and now*<sup>46</sup> in order preserve what we must preserve and to be aware of what we have to lose at a moment when it is crucial to choose how to comport ourselves, and what weapons will help us, if we wish to emerge victorious from the very grave crisis that is the cause of our worries and the reason for this text.

According to Thomas Carlyle, the French Revolution had the demand for truth as its essential meaning. It was an historic proclamation of the fact that all lies, on which one had up until then based the harmonious organization of a social hierarchy, had to be rejected from then on. If these ideas are correct, we can observe that, for the last two centuries, we have managed to avoid the majority of what could harm us.

All of the historically dominant forms of society have been imposed on the masses, who quite simply have had to be *made to work* by force and illusion. The greatest success of our modern civilization is that it has been able to place an incomparable *power of illusion* at the service of its leaders. Later in this pamphlet, we will see that this is also where the weakness of our power lies and threatens to become a serious crisis at any moment, because this illusion must *never* be shared by the ruling *elite*<sup>47</sup> that produces and makes use of it. Cumulative and rapid economic development (cumulative in the dimension of its rapidity), as well the positive technological upheaval that incessantly accompanies this development as its corollary, have caused in the totality of production and distribution an extreme concentration and a control that tends to become absolute. That this control possesses a strategy commensurate with its immense resources is unfortunately refuted by the current state of the world. We will return to this point. But what is beyond doubt is the fact that economic development itself has demanded and brought about (in previously unimaginable proportions) the separation and passivity of the agents of production, that is to say, the very same ones who are identified by another branch of the social sciences as “consumers” and “citizens.”

This situation has produced, as a natural product of our stage of historical development, *the social necessity for contemplation*, which Bergson, in his time (in the pages of *Creative Evolution*), called “a luxury.” This contemplation is opportunely satisfied by the privileged part of our technology that is dedicated to the capturing and diffusion of images. The reason for this cannot escape anyone acting in good faith. The objective and measurable successes of our society are completely economic and technical. What this society produces, we simply must look

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<sup>46</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>47</sup> French in original.

at. Some people have asked us, moved by a perfectly irrelevant sentimentality: “Must we also love this system?” The question is futile or, rather, if one admits that posing such a question from any perspective transcending real society would be a pure absurdity, we can only say that the question is indeed futile in the sense that it has already fully found its answer from the moment that one poses it in terms of real society, that is to say, in terms of social classes, by wondering, “*Who* would love this system of production?” Those who appropriate its surplus value necessarily love a given form of production. As for the others, why would they love it? Production in itself appears to them as a simple necessity, and this is what it really is. As for the particular form this necessity assumes, those who hold capital don’t find it any more defensible than any other form, and are only attached to it due to the specific advantages that they draw from it. If the excessive hypocrisy of the social thought of our epoch hadn’t so mixed up and dirtied the playing cards that, cheating as always, it has ended up being unable to cheat intelligently, we would blush to recall such truisms. Our workers have in no way decided upon what they produce. And this is quite fortunate, because we might wonder, what they would decide to produce, given their nature? It is quite certain, whatever the infinite variety of conceivable responses, that a single truth would be constant: they would assuredly not produce anything suitable for the society that we manage. And as these workers cannot be dazzled (no more than you or we ourselves) with happiness by the enlargement of the organizational chart of a multinational corporation or by the rate of growth in the sales of fighter planes to the Middle East, but find themselves deprived of any real compensation in the existence that is created for them, we must distribute to them some other compensation. This is what is accomplished by the massive diffusion of images that can be contemplated, though they no longer constitute the “luxury” spoken of by Bergeson, but a contemplative necessity, a *diversion*<sup>48</sup> like the Roman *circuses*<sup>49</sup> or in Pascal’s definition of the term.

Whatever the importance, and even the gravity, of the dangerous weaknesses of our power that we must criticize today, we must not lose sight of the fact that all this is subordinate to these brilliant successes. One can only defend a social order that is alive. And if bourgeois society hadn’t won this victory at the universal level, we wouldn’t be here today to discuss its defense, because it would otherwise be as dead as Darius’ Empire.

If we take a moment to remember (and that would be a healthy propaedeutic during the current struggles) that, a hundred year ago, we risked having the world escape from of our grasp in a short period of time, we will appreciate the importance of the reprieve that we have obtained, which, in addition, has permitted us to undertake a profound transformation of all the conditions for this strategy – a transformation that we can define as follows: the preparation of a whole new battlefield on which we await a disoriented adversary who must at first *recognize* it as such and then is constrained to advance while surrounded by the powerful defenses that we have wisely set up.

One can say that the 19th century, in the wake of the frightening revolutions of 1848, discovered political economy. Society divided into classes and private property had already been challenged: the critique of them seemed inexorably tied to the progress of knowledge, notably among the working classes. Thus, because the ruling class feared the education of the working classes and universal suffrage (and apparently quite legitimately so), it tied its defense to a position in the past, to an attitude of retreat, which continually became more pronounced.

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<sup>48</sup> French in original.

<sup>49</sup> Latin in original.

Modern industry required education, at least a basic one, and education, by spreading, necessarily worked in favor of universal suffrage. The bourgeoisie remembered that the progress of the Enlightenment had accompanied its own march to political power, and it feared that the same route would be followed by the proletariat. Fortunately, the proletariat also believed in this identification of their respective destinies; both classes thereby deceived themselves, because these two revolutionary projects were so different that they could not make use of the same ideas, nor their diffusion and usage by analogous means. Thus, the fears of one class and the hopes of the other were without basis.

Over the course of this century, the development and expansion of political and economic power changed the face of the world, much more than any past revolution had been able to do. What have been the characteristics and the permanent effects of this change? What did it destroy, and what did it create? It seems to us that the moment has come to define and set forth the distinctive traits of the new reality, because today we find ourselves at the precise point where we can best evaluate the results of a series of upheavals. Though we are far enough from their beginnings to be sheltered from the passions of those who orchestrated them, we are close enough to them to distinguish their essential elements. Soon it will be difficult to make an objective judgment of these events, because, by making their causes disappear, the great historical changes that succeed subsequently become less comprehensible due to the very fact of their success. Thus we will now consider the secrets to our victories in the old campaigns, not to seek some hollow compensation in our pride in the successes of bye-gone days, but rather, at the heart of a new war that has suddenly been revived throughout the entire social field, to recapture and consciously use these secrets in other battles that we are called upon to fight. In the epic tale of the old social war, what were our decisive battles, our Salamines and our Marengos?<sup>50</sup>

For the sake of brevity, we will distinguish five of them.<sup>51</sup>

First, we have in a certain manner refuted Carlyle's pronouncement by quantitatively and qualitatively realizing *the progression of the lie in politics* to a degree of power never before seen in history, with its content growing alongside the proliferating extension of its means. It developed with the "radical" bourgeoisie and its journalistic and parliamentary practices, which were followed by the workers' movement organized into socialist political parties. The process begun by the parliamentary representation of the citizens was quite naturally and considerably reinforced by the success of the unionized representation of the workers, since it is true that *all* representation plays our game. What one has colloquially called *brainwashing*,<sup>52</sup> that is to say, the propaganda of false news diffused day after day by all the governments during World War I, subsequently pushed literate citizens beyond a threshold that, in normal times, one wouldn't have thought possible. Cardinal Carafa's remark, made at the time of the Inquisition, remains true: *When the people want to be deceived, let them be deceived*.<sup>53</sup> Fascism was a subsequent pathological excess of unbridled lies, a poor remedy in a time of crisis. It should also be noted that fascism completely failed due to its very nature, but by no means on the terrain of its

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<sup>50</sup> The Persian Emperor Darius, who ruled from 522 BCE to 486 BCE, suffered a crucial naval defeat at the hands of the Greeks at Salamis Island. In 1800, Napoleon won an important battle in Marengo, Italy.

<sup>51</sup> See "The Chief Features of the Revolution" in Arnold Toynbee's *The Industrial Revolution* (1881).

<sup>52</sup> French in original.

<sup>53</sup> Gian Pietro Carafa, aka Pope Paul IV (1476-1559). Latin in original.

methods of propaganda, to the point that Hitler could theorize the fact that “the masses . . . will be more easily deceived by a big lie than by a small one.” The advertising of the modern market then came to exploit these possibilities more rationally, and it has proved its excellence as an autonomous power, although one must naturally criticize the excessively unilateral results that have followed from this very autonomy, which too often hasn’t taken into account the higher interests of the *entirety* of our economic system. And, no doubt, the most significant result of this entire period was the identification of Communism with the totalitarian order that reigns in Russia and, subsequently, with the perspectives of its partisans in other countries, who, over the years, have believed that Lenin and Stalin abolished capitalism. It pleases us to remember in this context that years before Karl Marx’s *Grundrisse* was translated into Italian, our friend, the eminent economist Piero Sraffa, called our attention to the following passage in the book that settled the question: “To allow wage labor to continue and, at the same time, suppress capital, is an action that contradicts and destroys itself.” Thus the social revolution that had been envisioned in the 19th century quite effectively became *utopian*, since it no longer existed anywhere in the global society where it might have been able to assert itself as what it could truly be.

Second, we have witnessed *a magnificent strengthening of the power of the States* as economic powers, political authorities and increasingly sophisticated instruments of surveillance. We can even say that, in this sense, the dream of the bourgeois economists of the 18th century (a legitimate dream, but one that often aroused the hostility of the aristocrats of the time) has been realized, but in a different form. The State theorized by these economists not only had to govern the nation, but also to form and educate it in a specific way. According to Turgot, Quesnay, Letronne, Mercier de La Rivière and so many others, it was the task of the State to shape the minds of its citizens according to a certain model that it had proposed; the State must inculcate in them certain ideas and sentiments that it judged to be useful and necessary to overcome the obstacles that social reality presented to its activity. The economists of that period said that the State had to reform its political and civil institutions, and even the living conditions of its citizens, so that they could be transformed. Bodeau summarized these ideas by advancing this prophecy, which was very radical for his times: “The State makes men as it wishes them to be.”<sup>54</sup> In the 19th century, a very cultivated aristocrat, who was nevertheless too attached to the past, accused these economists of trying to create, through imagination

an immense social power that isn’t merely greater than all those that currently exist; it is also different from them even more in its origin and character. It does not proceed directly from God; its origin doesn’t lie in tradition; it is impersonal; it doesn’t pledge allegiance to the King, but to the State. (...) This democratic despotism (abolishes) all hierarchies in society, all class distinctions, all fixed ranks; composed of individuals who are almost identical and completely equal, this confused mass recognizes only one legitimate sovereign (the State), but it has been carefully deprived of all the faculties that could permit it to direct itself or even oversee its government.

The economists defended themselves against these accusations by invoking public education.

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<sup>54</sup> French in original.

Quesnay said, “despotism is impossible if the nation is enlightened.”<sup>55</sup> The demands that these economists advanced were indeed well founded. Before the French Revolution, Letronne noted that, “for centuries, the nation has been governed by false principles; everything seems to have been done haphazardly.”<sup>56</sup> Today we see what they foresaw. Perhaps it is worth emphasizing that, a century before Marx, contemporaries of these economists, working in the same direction, advanced the current of thought that was subsequently called socialism. For example, one already finds in Morelly’s *Code de la Nature* all of socialism’s doctrines concerning the necessity of strengthening the power of the State, and in this work he foresees “the right to work, absolute equality, the uniformity of everything, [and] mechanical regularity in all of the movements of individuals.” It is surprising to see that in 1755, when Quesnay founded his school, Morelly recommended what is only today being fully realized everywhere. For example, we read in *Code de la Nature* that “cities will be built according to the same plan; all the buildings used by individuals will be similar, (...) Children will be removed from their families and educated in common in a uniform fashion, at the expense of the State.”<sup>57</sup>

The Statist centralization engineered by the bourgeoisie and the socialist bureaucrats is the product of the same necessity and the same terrain; one of these powers is, with respect to the other, what cultivated fruit is to the natural tree. But everywhere the State has become the protagonist that, with more or less efficiency, plans and programs the life of modern society. Therefore, the State is the *palladium* of market society, which even converts its enemies into property owners, as has happened in Russia and China, for example. And this fact allows us to remark that we do not fear resurrecting the old and noble term “market society.” All of the greatness of the world has been brought about by merchants and the societies that they have built. Art, philosophy, knowledge in all its scientific and technical forms, political freedom in its actually practicable modalities – all this only appeared in history, and has lasted, with the emergence and survival of the mercantile bourgeoisie and within the exact limits of its local or universal domination.

Third, *the isolation and the separation of people from each other have been highly refined.*<sup>58</sup> Everything that could more or less directly disturb the tranquility of the social order, everything that united particular communities, guilds, the neighborhoods of old towns or villages, and even the customary clienteles of cafés and churches, has been almost completely dissolved by the putting in place of the new conditions of everyday life and the new urban landscape. We can say that each person now finds him- or herself in a direct relationship with the powerful center of the system that governs even the details of existence, and this center appears to each person, either successively or simultaneously, as a binding governmental authority, as the selector of the industrial production of what will be the only things on the market, and the selector of the images to be contemplated. Thus the masses choose, consume and watch what they want from among the diversity that is programmed for them, but they can only want what is available.

Fourth, *we have witnessed an unprecedented increase in the power of the economy and industry.* The modern economy has succeeded in assigning a value and a price to everything, thus permitting everyone to consume the commodities that industry produces. We might even

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<sup>55</sup> French in original.

<sup>56</sup> French in original.

<sup>57</sup> French in original.

<sup>58</sup> See “Separation Perfected” in Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967).

say that, to the extent that it has satisfied the basic needs of the population, the modern economy has been in the position to offer that population luxuries. Thereafter, what had been superfluous became necessary and this in the double sense that, subjectively, those things came to be perceived as such by the consumer and, objectively, they came to constitute a necessity for the industrial expansion that produced those precise commodities. Thus, at the moment that the citizen as consumer gained free access to luxuries, everything that was valued by the people of the past and everything that was necessary to help them endure poorer and more precarious realities became *useless* and disappeared. From food to leisure activities and holidays, there no longer exists anything that cannot be produced industrially, that is to say, that cannot generate an economic profit.

We do not want to deny that these developments also resulted in previously unknown inconveniences, such as new diseases caused by pollution, etc. But, in any case, the very progress of science – the science of pharmaceuticals, for example – in its turn furnished antidotes that, industrially produced, constitute more commodities that can be sold to the population.

Thus the system came to possess (as an attribute of its sovereignty) an ever-increasing distance between rapidly changing realities and the words and feelings that now only correspond to them superficially. Popular notions, rooted in place for generations, no longer bear any relation to the completely different realities that have been produced by the most modern industries. Whether it is a question of what one used to call work, a vacation, meat, influenza, or a house, economic and State power has all the elements at its disposal to understand the modifications introduced into these realities. This power itself experiments with these modifications, either randomly or by pursuing deliberate goals. And yet people *still speak of other things*, things that have disappeared, using the old words, which are also used during televised debates on electoral programs.

Fifth – and this result concentrates together all the previous ones that we've enumerated – we can admit that the dizzyingly increasing complexity of human society's daily intervention in all aspects of the production of life, and the replacement of every element once considered to be natural by a new factor that we could call artificial, fully justify the absolute authority of any expert who establishes or corrects the new economic and ecological equilibriums without which no one could live.

And so, there are now only experts in the workings of the State and the economy, because there are no operational fields or formal qualifications outside of these areas. Thus *the existing hierarchy is forced to cultivate secrecy and control in everything*, even when it doesn't want to do so. But all hierarchies in history have always wanted this, even when doing so wasn't obviously necessary for everyone's interests. The twofold advantage that we derive from this situation resides in this: discontent with our society no longer makes any sense, at the very moment that it has spread wider than ever before and concerns every single detail. Today, only total refusal, which is always difficult to formulate and put into practice, has a meaning that is threatening to our social order. And this threat is itself attenuated to the extent that a refusal of this kind, deprived of an exact comprehension of the totality and disinclined to envision the repercussions of real, historical confrontations, has the greatest chances of being foolish and content with some ideological illusion that leads its proponents and adherents astray.

This then, in brief, is how modern capitalism has been able to make the entire population participate in the freedom that it has built for it. And it has every right to rejoice in this fact, because this undertaking had never been attempted before, and ominous signs piled up from the beginning. Perhaps a more lucid comprehension of history – for a century neglected in favor of

economic studies that were themselves poorly disengaged intellectually from theology – could have inspired more confidence in the *elite* of the time, who certainly could not have exactly foreseen the appearance of the forms of domination that we have described here, but who could have speculated more boldly on the general line of the evolution to come, and thus perhaps more consciously hastened useful reforms? At the same time, we might have spared ourselves a certain number of inconveniences from which we still suffer, such as the regressive transformation of capitalism in Russia. Let us reaffirm the point: despite the often legitimate, but many times exaggerated anxieties that the question has aroused among the dominant classes of almost all the countries, *capitalism must be democratic* because it cannot be anything else. A brief glance at history, not to mention the most attentive and incisive study of it, always leads us back to the undeniable result that capitalism has never been able to grow, whatever the location, except within a democratic society, [that is to say,] in the precise stratum of society that lived a democratic life, wanted it and needed it. And to develop fully and completely, to transform everything into a commodity and to incessantly renew all commodities, capitalism must constantly give the entirety of the population a choice, the terms of which have been determined by capitalism itself. Because one must be able to choose between two equivalent commodities, one must also be able to choose between two equivalent political representatives. Anyone who remembers fascism, who knows how badly State capitalism is managed by the totalitarian bureaucracies in the East, or who considers the permanent atrophy of the development of the merchant class in ancient Oriental despotism, will find the proof *a contrario* of this axiom.

Those who do not understand the necessity of remaining free quite simply lack the desire for it, and we must give up trying to instill this desire in mediocre minds that have never known this sublime taste. The impassable limits inherent in democratic freedom are its own safeguard, and it is reality that imposes them. Nevertheless, we can conclude that the peoples of the world have been more interested in concrete reforms put into action by democratic capitalism than in the multitude of sermons in favor of an abstract and total “freedom,” a “freedom” that no one has ever seen because it has never been realized. Thus we need only agree on the actual reality of democracy, without being frightened or enthralled by the monotonous illusions that are always springing up about it.

No sensible person would think to deny the fact that participation in the political management of democracy, from its first admirable appearance in history, has been a domain exclusively reserved for a class of rich merchants or landowners, whether it was in the Athens of the 5th century [BCE] or the Florence of the 13th century. We see nothing different from this pattern in the famous year 1793 or anytime since then – beyond the fact that the dominant class of today isn’t as well served by the always more numerous personnel to whom it has delegated the tasks of political administration, and nowhere as scandalously as in Italy, where these roguish and incompetent domestic servants have allowed the roast to burn while they have nabbed the loose change from the pockets and drawers of their masters. As for the other, well-known side of democratic republics – namely the excesses that always resurface from the boundless demands of the people – they clearly constitute the antithesis of democracy. The proof of this is that they have always resulted in its immediate downfall. But we are no longer at that moment in world history when fully realized democracy – established in a few cities – could succumb to these demands without impeding the general growth of a capitalism that was still generally sheltered within its previous social relations. Capitalism has seized hold of the world for its own benefit. The democratic order must be defended without any thought of retreat, “not with spears only, but

with axes too”<sup>59</sup> because, at the same moment that it is defeated, capitalism will definitively succumb, too.

Because for the past few decades they mistook the end of the turmoil of one era for the end of the era of turmoil, discouraged minds and hearts may ask us whether we must resign ourselves to seeing every hard-won certainty ceaselessly called into question, and whether the crisis in society is therefore destined to last forever. We will respond coldly, “Yes.” We must confront the harshest truths, “the truest cause” (to quote Thucydides) of this social war, which is unfortunately but unavoidably permanent. Our world *is not made for the workers*, nor for the other strata of impoverished wage earners whom our reason must place in the simple category of “proletarian.” But our world must be made *by* them, every day, under our command. This is the fundamental contradiction with which we must live. Even during the calmest days, it always keeps alive the spark that could rekindle all of the masses’ insatiable passions and their limitless and insatiable hopes. This is why we never have the right to abstain from being intelligent for too long.

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<sup>59</sup> A quote from Herodotus, Book Seven, Section 135, *The Histories*, translated by Aubrey de Sélincourt, revised with introductory matter and notes by John Marincola (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 413. It also appears in “Investigations without a Guidebook,” an essay published in *Internationale Situationniste* #10, March 1966.

## Chapter II: How Capitalism Was Badly Managed in Italy and Why (1943-1967)

My Italy, though words cannot heal  
the mortal wounds  
so dense, I see on your lovely flesh (...)  
Let your truth be understood here through my mouth – whoever I might be.

Petrarch, *The Canzoniere*<sup>60</sup>

We have rapidly enumerated the objective successes that modern capitalism obtained prior to the last few decades. But since we do not intend here to make an apology for this world – an apology whose utility in the specific field of propaganda we do not deny –, we must set out in several summarized lines the origins of the internal crisis in our own country, a crisis that we are called upon to understand and confront without delay.

We know that, in the States, an illness is at first difficult to recognize, then easy to cure, and that, through its progress, the disease becomes ever more easy to recognize, but more difficult to treat.<sup>61</sup> As for what concerns Italy, we are convinced that, if we have so far been spared a pure and simple irreversible politico-economic disaster, this has been thanks to the relative, contingent weakness of the adversary's forces and less so due to the merit and prudence of our politicians.

If we want to avoid a situation in which the illness becomes too easily recognized through our reliance on chance or hope, we must *immediately* diagnose it and simultaneously begin shock treatment before the workers understand its proportions and seriousness, which would inevitably open up to them new possibilities and new pretexts for struggle, as well as radiant perspectives of victory. The current wait-and-see attitude of the ruling class, which always fears to act or only acts out of fear, makes it look ridiculous in the eyes of the uneducated, working-class masses. People are tired *for a while* before they perceive that they are, and nothing animates and supports a movement more than the ridicule of those against whom it is directed. Such situations are always very dangerous for both parties because they cause impotent despair in one and fatal fervor in the other. To not fall into the opposed risks of

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<sup>60</sup> The first three lines here are from Canto XVI, "To the Princes of Italy, Exhorting them to Set Her Free," but the concluding line is not. Perhaps it was taken from Pierre-Louis Ginguené's *Histoire littéraire d'Italie* (1819).

<sup>61</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Angelo M. Codevilla (Yale University Press, 1997), Chapter III, p. 11: "[B]ecause, by providing for oneself beforehand, one can remedy them easily, but if one waits until they draw close, the medicine is not on time, because the illness has become incurable [...] [I]n the beginning of its malignity, it is easy to cure and difficult to know, but in the progression of time, not having known it at the beginning, nor medicated it, it becomes easy to know and difficult to cure. So it happens in the things of state; because, knowing far-off (which is not given except to the prudent) the evils which are borne in it, one quickly cures them, but, not having known them, one allows them to grow so that anyone knows them, then there is no longer any remedy for them."

dramatizing or de-dramatizing the current crisis, there is only one route: to understand the nature and real depths of it exactly.

Our history from 1943 to 1967, when seen from a distance and in its entirety, appears to us as the representation of a fierce struggle that, in its first five years (up to the elections of 18 April 1948),<sup>62</sup> saw the majority of the country opposed to the *Ancien Régime* of the Kingdom of Italy, which was born old and of which fascism was the supreme episode and the most recent archaism. It was exactly the Kingdom's traditional routines, its inglorious memories, its always-disappointed illusions of grandeur and its mediocre representatives to which the entirety of the new Italian society was unanimously opposed, like a single person.

From the moment that the *Ancien Régime* was permanently destroyed, the elections of 1948 definitively concluded this first period of unified collaboration between the bourgeoisie and the lower classes of our country. By putting an end to the illusions of the workers, who still hoped for a possible collaboration between their parliamentary representatives and those of the wealthy classes, the bourgeoisie showed itself to be more realistic than the workers were. The triumph of the middle class was twofold: over all those who had been *above it* in the defunct Kingdom, and over all those who had been *below it*. This was a complete triumph, but it was only definitive in relation to those who were above the bourgeois, that is to say, the old decadent aristocracy of the large landowners. In this sense, the victory was effectively *complete* because all the economic and productive powers, and all the prerogatives and the government of the young Republic in its entirety, were united as a monopoly within the boundaries that defined this bourgeoisie, which from then on became the unique leader of the ex-Kingdom. It took positions in all the useful posts of power by prodigiously multiplying their number, and very quickly got accustomed to living there, as much upon the public treasury as upon its own industry.

But this was, moreover, a *provisional* success because all the classes that had also contributed to the struggle against the Kingdom – first under fascism, then during the Resistance, and finally during the era of the Constituent Assembly – saw that the largest part of the fruits of victory were “expropriated” at the very moment when this victory became definitive. In such a situation, it wasn't permissible to have too many illusions about the possibility of avoiding a new confrontation within the very interior of the heterogeneous coalition of the forces that emerged victorious from the preceding conflict. This conflict, which itself was part of a vaster conflict of global hostilities, had nevertheless quite weakened the working population and thus permitted the bourgeoisie to dedicate itself to its own interests without fear of once again finding itself obligated to measure up to a strong and unified adversary. On the other hand, after 1948, two decisive events contributed to once again reinforce the position of the new dominant class: above all, the political strategy chosen by Togliatti<sup>63</sup> for the Communists and by the Left in general was not at all in contradiction with the new needs of the democratic and liberal center since, under the sufficiently vague mandate of the economic “reconstruction” of the country, renewed social tensions were momentarily frozen and, conversely – to the extent that this reconstruction was effectively undertaken – political passions calmed down and a public and private wealth such as Italy had never before known developed very rapidly. No one can forget how the Cold War, which excessively augmented international tensions, opportunely served to cool and defuse the

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<sup>62</sup> Thanks to financial assistance and clandestine “hit squads” provided by the CIA, the political right-wing won the Italian elections of 18 April 1948, which were in danger of being won by the Communists.

<sup>63</sup> Palmiro Togliatti was head of the Italian Communist Party until his death in 1964.

real reasons for the internal conflict, which was constantly projected beyond Italy's frontiers. The insurrectional episode of July 1948, for which the attack against Togliatti served as a pretext, was the only noisy consequence of the workers' disappointment after the elections of 18 April, and this was the occasion on which the Italian Communists, who loyally repressed the insurrection from within, with their own troops, proved their coherence and their responsibility with respect to their democratic political choices.

From then on, the particular needs of the bourgeoisie became the general needs of the republican government. They dominated both the foreign policy and the domestic affairs of the country. The spirit of the times was active, industrious, poised; what one calls political dishonesty had precise justifications; it was, by temperament, a timid spirit, but was rash due to egotism, and moderate in everything except its mediocre taste for "well being." This spirit would have accomplished miracles if only it had possessed a little of the nobility of intention that has always appeared indispensable to us, but, by itself, this spirit could produce nothing other than a series of weak governments, without virtue or grandeur. Master of everything as no other aristocracy on the peninsula had ever been, the middle class or, rather, that part of this class that we could call the class of government, had taken up its residence in governmental power and, soon after, in its idiosyncrasies: the government took on the appearance of a private company and was scarcely more than the political expression of a private company properly speaking. None of the members of this class appeared to think about public affairs, except to make them turn a profit for their own private interests or their own political faction, while the holders of economic power and the common people – in a blithe thoughtlessness that united them for a while – occupied themselves with their respective individual interests, which were great in the case of the former and small in the case of the latter, with both contributing to the deceptive success of the ideology of well being.

Posterity, which only sees the brilliant crimes and ordinarily misses the vices that are at the origins of all the most serious crises, will perhaps never know how all the successive Italian governments had gradually but increasingly taken on the appearance of a commercial firm in which all the operations were made in view of earnings that could be derived for its shareholders, naturally under the sign of the public interest. When some of the most authorized representatives of economic power began to worry about the risks and the *costs* of such a system of government, the leaders of Christian Democracy, now accustomed to consider any government ministry as sinecure guaranteed to each of its notables, resorted to the saddest kind of blackmail by threatening to render public several hypothetical scandals in which economic power wasn't any less implicated than political power, with the intent of keeping the reins of the government locked into *imbroglio* and bankruptcy. It was certainly an error to give in to this blackmail. Almost all of the political despicable acts of which we have been the unwilling and mostly powerless witnesses have, in our country, followed from the fact that the men who have been introduced into political life – deprived of a personal inheritance – fear their ruin if they abandon their places in government or from the fact that their ambitions, personal passions or fears render them so obstinate in the continuation of their careers in power that they consider the simple idea of abandoning them with a kind of horror, which distorts their judgment and makes them sacrifice the future to the benefit of the present and their honor to the roles that they play.

On the other hand, no one can forget the responsibility of America, which seems to have accorded more confidence to the forced and artificial stability of the Italian political class – which obviously presented as its own work the recent well-being to which the country had acceded – than to the real craftsmen of the economic miracle, who were the industrialists and

entrepreneurs, in general.

The current politico-economic paralysis, which had to be the direct and principal result of such irresponsible conduct, was the least unforeseeable thing in the world and yet it was regarded as a Cassandra-like prophecy that could have warned against such a possibility, which was what we exhausted ourselves trying to do. If our efforts weren't publicly mocked, this was, in the best of cases, due to a residue of respect and, most often, due to pure and simple fear. Instead of praises for our alleged foresight, which at the moment come to us from all sides, we would have more modestly preferred a more attentive audience at the moment when there was still time to avoid this dreadful situation.

In a political world composed and led in such a fashion, what was most lacking was political life itself. On their side, the majority of the industrialists and, more generally, the holders of economic power, who were once again too devoted to their religion of *laissez faire*,<sup>64</sup> didn't entertain with sufficient clarity the consequences (obviously more damaging to them than to the politicians) of such a doctrine when it was set up as the unique rule for Italian politics and were too trusting of an inertial power that had made the politico-economic machine, following its own internal rules, function "automatically," and all the more so when one kept one's hands off of its delicate mechanisms. What one cheerfully forgot were the very society in which this "automatism" functioned and the profound transformations that it had brought about over the prior 20 years. The industrialists, who were rightly annoyed by the empty and verbose speeches of the government, placed, on the other hand, an extravagant confidence in the simplistic technical studies made by mediocre economists with whom they surrounded themselves and from whom they asked for forecasts that reassured them concerning the expansion of and increase in their profits. With the arrival of the critical moment in which these forecasts were challenged point by point by the facts, *the industrialists asked for more forecasts*, as if to compensate for real losses with illusory certitudes, to which they hastened to make themselves slaves. A collective neurosis seemed to have seized these men, the majority of whom lacked the intellectual strength of their fathers and the character traits of their ancestors. They had inherited their money but not their courage, their pride but not their dignified prudence. The first failures sufficed to depress them psychologically and to rob them of the spirit of free enterprise. Thus they progressively lost the indispensable class solidarity that should have been their first line of defense when they were confronted by the excessive political power and the growing pretensions of their workers – and all this deteriorated into a kind of law of silence; they became accomplices in a shared impotence with the political class that, in truth, they allowed themselves to be fleeced by.

The nation in its entirety then overtly felt a tranquil contempt, as much for economic power as for the political administration, and those concerned were quite wrong to consider this tranquility to be confident and satisfied submission, the forthcoming end of which they did not perceive. Slowly the country divided into two unequal but still not opposed parts: on high there reigned apathy, boredom, impotence and immobility; down below, by contrast, political life began to manifest itself in feverish, irregular and *apparently* extra-political or extra-unionist symptoms that an attentive observer could have picked out without difficulty. We have had the misfortune of being one of those observers, and consequently we were much more sensitive to the inquietude that grew and rooted itself in the heart of our society to the extent that public morals deteriorated into general indifference; we were no doubt favored by our personal

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<sup>64</sup> French in original.

integrity, which has always been above party interests, and by the fact that our interests have never been dependent upon chance. In addition, we were favored by our position, which has required a character hardly inclined to false fears and false consolations, and so it was easy for us to understand the game played by these institutions, as well as the mass of small, everyday facts, where in complete objectivity we examined the evolution of the morals and opinions of the country, among the ruling class as well as among workers. It was thus, and not at all thanks to the chimerical wisdom that today one wants to attribute to us, that we have been able to clearly discern the many indicators that have ordinarily appeared in history in advance of each of its catastrophes and that always herald revolution.

Towards the end of 1967, these symptoms became so numerous that we believed it our duty to communicate in a private manner our preoccupations to the man who, due to the very position that he occupied, had to be able to understand (more than anyone else) the seriousness of the disastrous consequences, and who had the greatest interest in preventing them.

We then said to him that the Constitution of the Italian Republic had abolished all the secular privileges and destroyed all the protected rights, yet let a fundamental one (the right to own private property) continue to exist amidst the utopian perspective of extending that right to everyone. We added that, in a period when half the States in Europe were confronting a growing discontent among the workers and the entirety of the young generation, the property owners shouldn't have too many illusions about the solidity of their situation, nor should they imagine that the right to own private property would continue to remain an insurmountable wall for the simple reason that in Europe, until then, it had never been breached, *because our times resemble no other*. We have shown how, at the origin, when the right to own private property was the only foundation required for the support of many other rights, we defended it without too many difficulties or, rather, our enemies didn't dare attack it directly. The right to own private property constituted a kind of wall within the fortress of society, and all the other rights and privileges were its forward defenses. Blows could not reach it and, on the other hand, our enemies did not seriously seek to besiege it. But today, for many people the right to own private property seems to be the last remains of an aristocratic world that was destroyed *de jure et de facto*. Standing alone, it appears with the greatest obviousness to be a unique, isolated privilege in a leveled society, while all the other protected rights (much more contestable and justly hated) no longer serve as a shield, and so the right to own private property itself has been challenged in the most dangerous manner and with a contagious violence. It is no longer the attacker, but the defender, who seems obligated to justify himself.

Confirming our preoccupations and aggravating them with the weight of an event, what took place in May 1968 showed the world that the time had come when our form of society was revealed to be divided into two large parties in the most unhealthy way. *Real* political struggle, which we could neither prevent nor win with speeches and which unavoidably had its theatre of operations in the factories and streets, henceforth broke out between those who possessed property and those who were deprived of this right and, under a thousand diverse pretexts, our enemies did not miss an occasion to choose private property as the battlefield, and everyday and everywhere salaried work became a *casus belli*. Our political calendar could have been illustrated by an old maxim: "Evil is never at its peak except when those who command have lost their sense of shame, because that is exactly the moment when those who used to obey lose their respect for them, and it is at that very moment that they leave their lethargy behind through

convulsions.”<sup>65</sup>

Thus in France in 1968 and Italy in 1969, we saw our class tremble, without either courage or dignity, as if overwhelmed by the phantasm of its imminent death. Subsequently, this same bourgeoisie, as if awoken from a nightmare, believed itself to be definitively saved, but without seeking any further explanations. We never allowed ourselves to share either one of these errors, because we still heeded the effects that passing whims, determined by this or that circumstance, can have on the human spirit, and because we were too well informed about the singular doctrines that, from time to time, appear or are rediscovered everywhere and that, under different names and labels, have had as their common denominators the denial of the right to own private property and the contestation of the duty of salaried work. The seriousness of the situation in which these things came about could be measured by the extreme ease with which these ideas spread in the factories, neighborhoods, schools, and offices, and the enthusiasms that they aroused.

“Beauty,” Stendhal says, “is the promise of happiness,”<sup>66</sup> and we acknowledge that all the new theories, and the ideas that have simply been sketched out, denounce above all the pallor, boredom, and *routine*<sup>67</sup> of everyday survival in industrial societies; the real ugliness that has overcome the appearance of our towns that have been abandoned to the ravages of urban planners and speculators of all kinds; the pollution of the air, food and minds that has been democratically imposed on all the inhabitants of the urban centers. As a result, we easily understand that this “global” critique, even if it is generally imprecise, easily hit the bull’s eye for people who are bored and impatient with the so-called diversions and *leisure activities*<sup>68</sup> that this society can offer them, and we can likewise explain how at present it has become objectively easy to make the workers believe anything that comes from channels of information that are different from the customary ones, which are accused – often rightfully so – of hiding the truth and being specialized in the manipulation of lies in which the majority of the country has believed for many years. Disappointment, the effects of which are always dangerous, seized the petit-bourgeoisie, which in these last few years has seen the disappearance of the social promotions that had been promised to it by the political parties that it voted for. The disappointment of the petit-bourgeoisie, which we should fear less than the rage of the workers, first manifested itself through the contestation that the children of this class engaged in at the high schools and universities, and subsequently it spread to their families, who were politically oriented toward the right-wing opposition parties or, in the majority of cases, the left-wing ones. The Communist Party was therefore able to offset the electoral losses that had cost it the defection of a part of its base among the workers, who became radicalized and escaped from its control. But what appears to us the most immediately worrisome development is the vulnerability to illusions of happiness and beauty that our political class has created in all the classes, which, due to vocation or disappointment, are now openly opposed to the bourgeoisie, which has prepared the battlefield without preparing itself for battle against the other class, thus forgetting the following infernal prophecy. “To all eternity they will be against each other / The

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<sup>65</sup> French in original: Cardinal de Retz, *Mémoires*.

<sup>66</sup> French in original.

<sup>67</sup> French in original.

<sup>68</sup> French in original.

one lot will arise out of their graves / With fists clenched, the other with their hair cut off.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, translated by C. H. Sisson, op. cit, *The Inferno*, VII, 55-57, p. 74.

**Chapter III:  
In Which the Social War Begins Again,  
and Why Nothing is More Disastrous than Believing that It was Won  
(1968-1969)**

“What causes apathy in suffering States is the duration of the illness, which seizes the imagination of men and makes them believe that it will never end. As soon as they find a way out of it, which never fails to happen when the apathy reaches a certain point, they are so surprised, so relieved and so carried away that they immediately swing to the other extreme and far from considering revolution to be impossible, they believe it to be easy, and this disposition alone is sometimes capable of bringing one about.”

Cardinal de Retz, *Mémoires*

Our social preoccupations were obviously not born from a romantic outburst of the heart, but intelligent reflection, because in the relative but incontestable poverty of certain social strata, we don't see suffering that must be cured – a demagogic utopia on which we will willingly let others speculate – but *a disorder to be prevented*. Yet in no other period of history have so many principles and concepts been enunciated, and with so much pretense and claims to universality, where this matter is concerned. If history seems to most often present itself as a conflict of interests and passions, our recent history up to these last few years – although passions have not been lacking – has mostly presented itself, instead, as a struggle between *principles of justification* and partly as a struggle between subjective passions and objective interests that are almost always hidden behind the flag of “superior” justifications.

Over the years, we have impassively witnessed the lamentable spectacle presented by one segment of our bourgeoisie, which has justified itself to the other segment by claiming to defend the “exploited” people and, conversely, the other segment, which constantly argued about this very issue, was accused of pursuing its own selfish interests. This was one way among others – although less useful than any other – of passing the time when one could still afford to waste it. For our part, we noted that the fictitious interest these otherwise respectable gentlemen had in social questions had a principally psychological origin. This interest was a form of justification, and more or less responded to the “moral” need to assuage one's conscience in one manner or another during the period of the “economic miracle,” which made these men quite euphoric. With an academic casualness and a studied ignorance, they discoursed about social questions, because the new middle class believed them to be more or less resolved and hadn't known about nor comprehended the magnitude of the revolutionary jolts of 1919-1920, nor even how the bourgeoisie of that time had defeated them. However, in reality, a vague anxiety and a genuine disinterest in civil society were hidden behind this “sensitive” façade. Among the members of the bourgeoisie, class spirit had been lost, and this corresponded to the loss of its self-assurance and the acquisition of a great timidity. In our opinion, this new bourgeoisie feared being right and feared being afraid. Shortly thereafter, they came to realize *that they were right to be afraid*.

The ruling class's lack of interest in the changes then taking place in civil society had in fact reached its peak when an unforeseen fact of global significance suddenly woke them up, but in a traumatic way.

The insurrectionary events that shook France in May 1968 unquestionably showed that a new social revolution, one unburdened of all previous illusions and disillusionments, was knocking at the door of modern society. At first it wasn't understood and then it was hidden – not without reason – but this insurrection was, by its very existence, the most scandalous and terrible failure that the European bourgeoisie had suffered since 1848. As in 1848, the wind of revolt blew all over Europe, and it was inhaled in France as in Germany, in Italy as in Czechoslovakia, in Yugoslavia as in England. In different forms and various ways, the thoughts and actions of the populations in open revolt against society turned against the world that is ours, with more or less pronounced violence – the same populations that (no less than the ruling classes) seemed to have forgotten for a half-century what people in the 19th century called the “social question.”

We need not dwell here on the fact that, in 1968, France experienced the most extensive and prolonged general strike that had ever paralyzed the economy of an advanced industrial country, and that this strike was also the first “spontaneous” general strike in history. For several weeks, all of the power of the State, the political parties and the unions was quite simply *erased* for several weeks and the factories and public buildings in every French city were occupied. Because we do not want to obligate anyone to share this opinion, it is outside the scope of this pamphlet to demonstrate why the events of May were profoundly revolutionary and virtually far more dangerous to the world than the Russian Revolution of 1917. Thus we will limit ourselves to considering *the facts* that these events set a very menacing precedent and that the ideas of the movement that began then and there have spread everywhere, because everywhere in Europe the poor classes have grown in number, their importance has grown more than their standard of living, and their aspirations have grown more than their power.

Ever since the French Revolution of 1789, that is to say, ever since the bourgeoisie seized hold of the political responsibility for governing the States all over Europe, the people in these countries have sought to escape their condition, thus periodically changing all of the political institutions. But after each change, they have discovered that their lot hasn't truly improved or that it has improved with an unacceptable slowness with respect to the urgency of their desires. Thus it was inevitable that, one day or another, the workers would finally discover that what has confined them to their situation wasn't the *constitution* of the different States – kingdoms or republics, fascist or socialist dictatorships, parliamentary or presidential democracies – but the very laws and principles that constitute all modern societies, and thus it was natural that the poor classes sooner or later came to wonder if they didn't have the power – and perhaps the right, as well – to change those laws as they had changed the others. And to speak specifically of private property and the State, which are the foundations of the entire social order, wasn't it an inevitable consequence that they were once again (but in a completely new way) denounced as the principal obstacles to the demand for equality among men and women, and that the idea of abolishing them completely – and not in the manner that one said they had been abolished in Russia – came to the minds of all those who felt that they were subjected to and excluded from them?

This natural restlessness in the spirit of the people, this inevitable agitation of their desires, this resentment of unfulfilled needs, and these mob instincts formed, as it were, the fabric out of which professional agitators wove monstrous or grotesque figures, which were rejected by all the political parties and especially by the Communists. In May, in Paris, each person proposed his or her own plan for the construction of the “new society.” One demanded the immediate abolition of wage labor; another the inequality of the distribution of goods; a third

wanted the end of market society and the oldest of the inequalities, the one between men and women; all seemed to agree to exclude any kind of external authority, to experiment with forms of direct democracy, to reject all institutions, political parties and unions.<sup>70</sup>

The most attentive observer was struck by the fact that, quite contrary to what was commonly said at the time, the overwhelming majority of this movement wasn't composed of students, but workers and other wage earners. One could obviously find these ideas utopian or simply ridiculous, but the terrain on which these ideas took root and spread is the most serious subject that the political parties and statesmen can examine today, because what is in question is our very world.

In France and Czechoslovakia, where this insurrectionary movement (it would be more accurate to call it a revolutionary movement) had principally taken hold, who repressed it with the greatest efficiency? Who favored or imposed the return to normal in the factories and streets? Well! In one case as in the other, it was the Communists: in Paris thanks to the trade unions; and in Prague thanks to the Red Army. This is the first lesson that we can draw from those events.

But the social ills that produced the most conspicuous symptoms in France were quickly transformed into an epidemic, and Italy was subjected to the contagion in a completely acute way. The incubation period and the development of the malaise are too recent to warrant writing its history here, and yet they are still so well engraved in our memories that it would be useful to retrace them in this pamphlet. It is sufficient to remember that the so-called student protests were naturally, here as elsewhere, ephemeral and quickly became a simple phenomenon of depravity – tolerable due to the presence of so many others – that occupied the pages of the daily newspapers and the discourses of the intellectuals rather than a vital sector of productive society. Nevertheless, everyone knew that a more muted and less visible, but a far more worrisome movement – parallel to and contemporaneous with the student movement – had begun in the factories, at first without official connections or widespread publicity. Despite the traditional unionized management of the Italian working class, Italy also saw its first forms of “spontaneous” struggles and extra-union strikes. Precisely because the significance of these phenomena were underestimated at the time, it was easy for them to spread during the following months with a growing radicalism. A kind of frenzy seemed to have seized our workers who, united into so-called “base committees,” began in an autonomous manner to advance extravagant extra-salary claims that were sometimes quaint and sometimes absurd, but always noxious because, in every case, they found partisans who were ready to fight for them. Leaving aside all the other examples, we will mention the one furnished by the employees of an important public enterprise in Milan, where at the end of 1968 a “base committee” organized (and with “success”) a series of strikes that aimed at getting the time it took the workers to get from home to their workplace counted as time at work and thus subject to compensation as such!

We had the impression that the workers were quite literally in competition to see who could inflict the greatest amount of damage with their disastrous fantasies. In reality, the declared goal of each particular conflict was out of proportion with the social damage that the generalization of the strikes and demonstrations of all types caused the country. In our opinion, the rest of the workers did not care what they combated: what they wanted was combat *itself*. Thousands of pretexts were found, but this was the single undeclared goal, and no salary increase would suffice to appease them.

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<sup>70</sup> Direct quotes or paraphrases from Alexis de Tocqueville, *Recollections of the French Revolution of 1848*, published 1893, posthumously.

We know that it was, nevertheless, only in 1969 that Italy experienced the full, disastrous “modernity” of its social crisis. In fact, it was the first serious disorders in the prisons and factories of the North, along with the revolt in Battipaglia in the spring of that year,<sup>71</sup> that illustrated the extension of the crisis from one end to the other of the peninsula and that could be called the “qualitative leap” of the crisis’ severity with respect to the prior year. In truth, the passions of the students of 1968, despite their claims that they were from “the Left,” didn’t go beyond politics, while the passions of the working class were *social*, and our readers will not be ignorant of what this inevitably implies. The workers were not demanding this or that reform; they were not contesting a policy, this government or that government, or one political party or another, but society itself and the bases upon which it rests.

And yet, despite all this, we can affirm that in this period the government was not alarmed by what was taking place in the country as were the leaders of the Communist opposition. In the first phase of 1969, the only people we happened to meet who genuinely and justifiably worried about the near future were a few trade-union *leaders*<sup>72</sup> and officials of the Communist Party, because they were the only ones observing the working classes from close range, each day registering their mood and subversive will. The state of permanent agitation in the country had already surpassed not only the hopes but also the desires of the most fervent trade unionists, that is to say, those who believed (wrongly) that they were at the origin of the phenomenon. This wasn’t the first or the last occasion in which we were able to recognize the lucidity of the Honorable Giorgio Amendola,<sup>73</sup> but perhaps on this occasion he surprised us even more than usual and, as a result, we held him in even greater esteem than before. Unlike so many others, this politician possessed an agile mind, cold but cordial, eminently subtle, which immediately went to the heart of any question, but didn’t neglect the details, without prejudice and without rancor, a true connoisseur of the range of human weaknesses and penchants, especially where his party was concerned, and always capable of playing upon them when his interests weren’t opposed to him doing so. In sum, he was a man whom we could not prevent ourselves from esteeming and listening to. And so much more so in such an epoch as post-1968 Italy, when the Honorable Rumor, President of the Council,<sup>74</sup> could find nothing to say to someone who enjoys our confidence other than something like this: “rest assured, everything will end well, there isn’t a free government in the world that doesn’t have to overcome obstacles of this sort.” We, who are less worried about the fate of the government than we are about any other problem, we found that this response perfectly captured this resolute but limited man, limited with a great deal of wit, but this wit is of such a kind that – seeing clearly in detail all that is on his horizon – doesn’t imagine that this horizon could change unexpectedly. On the other hand, we had to keep in mind the industrialists, some of whom – victims of an anxiety that in many cases bordered on pure and simple stupidity – imagined doing nothing more than calling the unions to order, as if the unions, since they weren’t responsible for this situation, were in a position to be officially opposed to it without running the risk of having the movement eliminate

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<sup>71</sup> The revolt occurred on 9 April 1969 in response to the closing of a tobacco plant, which was one of the biggest employers in the region.

<sup>72</sup> English in original.

<sup>73</sup> A member of the Italian Communist Party, Giorgio Amendola (1907-1980) favored non-Marxist moderation in the Party’s dealings with the government and the economy.

<sup>74</sup> Mariano Rumor (1915-1990), a member of the Christian Democratic Party. In 1969, he was the Prime Minister of Italy and, in 1975, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

them and, this time, formally.

It was around the middle of 1969 that the Italian Communist Party was explicitly asked what guarantees it could offer the government to help it stop the workers' movement before autumn and what it would demand in return. The Communists, who knew better than anyone else the magnitude of the stakes and the danger of the moment, transmitted their wishes, but both political power and a large number of industrialists – either because they underestimated the risks of the months to come or because they overestimated the “risks” of any agreement with the ICP – found the compensations demanded by the Communists to be out of proportion to the guarantees that they could offer. With *a posteriori* knowledge, we can say that the Christian Democrats still ignored the strength and utility of a Communist party in such circumstances and that the ICP, for its part, underestimated the strength that the wave of “spontaneous” strikes would have in the following months, because the Communists counted on time and the “natural” speed of the events with a little too much casualness, awaiting the moment when they would be called upon, and the Christian Democrats counted too much on the fact that the Communists – so as to not come to an open break – had in any case to do what they had promised to do, even without receiving immediate compensation for it. The calculations of both groups would have been justified or justifiable if confronting a *political crisis* was the order of the day. Both sets of calculations proved to be insufficient, not to mention reckless, because everyone seemed to forget that Italy was actually in the midst of a pre-insurrectionary *social crisis*. Because the Communist leaders, expecting subsequent developments, remained entrenched in a position that was no less rigid than that of the Christian Democrats, who nevertheless bore the initial responsibility for this stiffening, pending further developments, and did so from the moment it became clear that, in this case, one could not come to the end of anything by this route and that one had to act immediately but in another way. What, consequently, was the direction to follow? We will answer with the words of a journalist (Nicola Adelfi, writing in the pages of *Epoca*), because a great philosopher who taught more than a century and a half ago pointed out that, “there is all of the truth and all of the false in public opinion,” and because journalists are specialists in public and private opinions. To wit:

A number of political, union-related and political symptoms make one think that this situation will continue (...) We don't see how the wave of violence can be broken or even simply attenuated. At least not without the occurrence of something unforeseeable and traumatic in nature: that is to say, something that suddenly and profoundly shakes public opinion and gives it the feeling of finding itself henceforth a step away from anarchy and its inseparable companion, dictatorship.

We couldn't have said it any better ourselves, but for some “unforeseeable and traumatic” event to take place, one needed to have, above all else, a homogenous and less fragile government than the Rumor-Nenni Center-Left coalition. We know that, after the formation of the first Center-Left coalition, various representatives of economic power took up or placed certain men in eminent positions in the unfortunate Socialist parties, which were called unified at the time. Well! To topple the Rumor-Nenni Center-Left coalition, it was enough, at the beginning of July [1969], to ask the Social Democrats (always ready to undertake operations of this kind) to provoke a new split. The unification intended to last 10 years collapsed after only 10 months. The next day, the government fell and, a month later, at the beginning of August, Rumor

constituted his second “single-party” government, in which all the currents in the Christian Democratic Party were represented, if our memory serves us well. Despite all of its inadequacies, Rumor’s cabinet appeared to us to be among the most *efficient* in the history of the Republic, if only for the actions successfully executed by the Minister of Labor, the Honorable Donat-Cattin, and the Minister of the Interior, the Honorable Restivo, during the autumn of 1969, which since then – in an admirable *understatement*<sup>75</sup> – has been called “hot.”

For if it is true, as the foreign press affirmed at the time, that the only institutions that continued to function in Italy were the unions and the police, we owe this to the Ministers of Labor and the Interior. Carlo Donat-Cattin had in fact once been a union leader, and Franco Restivo, close friend of Vicari, then the Prefect of Police, had already had (with Vicari) experience with political terrorism in Sicily (of which Restivo had been the president) after the Second World War, when the bandit Giuliano ran wild.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, in 1968, a number of small attacks using explosives – though they didn’t have serious consequences – contributed to increasing the disorder that the protests by students and workers continued to create in the large towns, and even in the small ones. These were acts of narrowly limited scope in comparison, for example, with the acts of sabotage that were taking place in the factories. These limited attacks bore the signatures of fascist or Maoist groupuscules that were fighting their local adversaries, but these attacks were at the origins of larger ones and, as Tacitus says, “a certain profit is to be had from a close scrutiny of these petty events, unimportant though they may seem at first sight. It is often from such as these that great issues arise.”<sup>77</sup> Because in Italy, at that time and afterwards, the unions and the police weren’t the only forces that still functioned. For several months, the secret services had been quietly mobilizing. And since the political sphere continued to shilly-shally in the face of the worsening crisis, it was necessary to devise (before the summer) a tactical diversion, an artificial tension of which the principal goal was to *momentarily* distract public opinion from the real tensions that were tearing the country apart. In the next chapter, we will see what the undeniable advantages of such a tactic were, and what were also the damages that it inflicted when it was transformed into a strategy, and we will therein render public the critiques that, in another place and at another time, we addressed to our secret services, which – due to a blunder that had no precedent in history – today are publicly exposed to the accusations of the first judge to come along and the entire country.<sup>78</sup>

And so, although the aforementioned small attacks were the *background*<sup>79</sup> for these tactical diversions, their proper beginning coincided with what took place in Milan on 25 April 1969 and during the month of August [1969]. The operations to which we have alluded here

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<sup>75</sup> English in original.

<sup>76</sup> Salvatore Giuliano had been the leader of the Voluntary Army for the Independence of Sicily. He was murdered in 1950.

<sup>77</sup> Latin in original. Adopting the translation in *The Annals of Tacitus*, translated by Donald R. Dudley (New York: The New American Library, 1966), Book IV, paragraph 32, p. 158.

<sup>78</sup> In September 1974, General Vito Miceli, the head of the *Servizio Informazioni Difesa* (the Defense Intelligence Service), was arrested and charged with involvement in a failed coup attempted in 1970 by the veteran Fascist Valerio Borghese and Stefano delle Chiaie’s neo-Nazi *Avanguardia Nazionale* organization. During his subsequent trial, Miceli defended himself by disclosing the existence of a “parallel SID” that had been formed as a result of a secret agreement with the United States within the framework of NATO (i.e. “Operation Gladio”).

<sup>79</sup> English in original.

were, in a certain sense, a dress rehearsal for the events that took place in the autumn of 1969. These events were not long in coming and, starting in September, the first acts of sabotage of considerable magnitude took place at the FIAT factory in Turin, the Pirelli factory in Milan, and hundreds of other places. The top-level negotiations concerning the renewal of the contracts between employers and unions were only one set of pretexts among many others. A number of facts and events – in a period that truly didn't lack them – were eclipsed by others that followed them in an always rising *crescendo*, and we can be dispassionate about them here because the profound meaning that this class war unwittingly gave itself through its intensive and extensive development became more important than the sum of the particular episodes, which were only the Roman mile markers along the road that led, always more obviously, to a social revolution.

In the course of our life, we have encountered well-informed people who have written history without getting mixed up in State affairs, and we have had to deal with politicians who have constantly and solely devoted themselves to the production and prevention of historical events without thinking too much about describing them in writing. We have always observed that the former see general causes everywhere, while the latter – living in the midst of everyday occurrences, which apparently produce each other – readily imagined that all the events that served them well must be attributed to their own personal merits, as if it fell to them exclusively to determine the course of the world, and as if any setback was only the consequence of this or that particular and absolutely unforeseeable event. There are times when both the historians and the manipulators of events are wrong and, if in this epoch one must expect everything, because anything is possible, we must not allow ourselves to be taken by surprise. For example, in the autumn of 1969, which Raffaele Mattioli<sup>80</sup> defined, with the philosophical detachment that was unique to him, as “the lyrical expression of history in action, where no one had the courage to be what he was,” we witnessed the pitiful spectacle of industrialists placing more confidence in the unions than in themselves, and the unions placing their confidence in the concessions that they could obtain from the government, and the government placing its confidence in the efficaciousness of its special services. We were among a small number who knew that the worst that one foresaw was in fact *too optimistic*, just as today few know that Italy once more finds itself *only an hour away* from a general insurrection, and that if this has, fortunately, not happened yet, it is less thanks to the precautions taken by this or that person than to the interplay of other factors.

The struggles surrounding the contract negotiations obtained notable successes on the terrain of salary increases, but it was a pitiful illusion to believe that things would calm down once the new contracts were put into place. As we have already said, from the moment that the workers no longer fought to simply obtain salary increases, it was clear thereafter that, though such increases might be substantial, we could no longer hope to purchase social peace with them. Such peace risked being no more than a happy memory of past times. In fact, when certain categories of laborers – such as municipal workers – obtained new contracts, they continued their illegal strikes under the pretext of supporting the struggles of workers in the private machine-building industries, for whom the negotiations remained suspended. For their part, the unions could not expose themselves to the danger of cutting themselves off from the working masses by disavowing all the strikes that the unions did not want to undertake and had not been able to prevent. On the contrary, they had to accept the existence of those strikes so as to not exclude in

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<sup>80</sup> Raffaele Mattioli (1895-1973) was an Italian economist, banker and business executive. Censor's pamphlet is dedicated to him.

advance the possibility of being accepted by them in turn, at a later stage, as the authorized spokesmen for the workers' demands. To prevent open riots, the union confederations had to find other objectives than salary demands, in order to try to channel the workers' protests towards them.

It was in fact one of those objectives, which appeared artificial even to the workers themselves, that furnished the occasion to unleash a blatant and obvious insurrection. On 19 November 1969, the unions announced a national day of general strikes over the question of rent. In Milan, this strike, which saw the largest abstention from work in the history of the Republic, degenerated into a riot very quickly. The union *leaders*,<sup>81</sup> who made speeches at the Teatro Lirico, were boycotted and insulted by the workers who, abandoning the meeting, severely attacked the forces from the Department of Public Safety, who were forced to withdraw from the entire neighborhood, and then erected barricades in the center of the town.

We have precise memories of this spectacle, because around noon on 19 November we had to cross the Via Larga to go to the home of an industrialist (not far from the location of the confrontations), where we were invited to have lunch with several politicians and other people from the economic world. Since it was impossible to find a taxi, we crossed a part of the city on foot. We found the majority of the streets to be tranquil and almost deserted, as happens in Milan every Sunday morning in the early hours, when the rich are still asleep and the poor are not at work. Here and there, from time to time, a young man – looking more like a suburban salaried worker than a student – tranquilly posted a placard on the façades of the buildings. He offered us several of them, signed by some group of “autonomous workers” or by a “base committee,” and one of those manifestoes surprised us with its gloomy title, which was redolent of the 19th century and went something like this: “Notice to the Proletariat on the Current Occasions for Social Revolution.”<sup>82</sup> Having passed through the obstructions of the police and the demonstrators (not without some difficulty), we finally reached the apartment of our host, who was more anxious than usual. The food was magnificent, as was customary, but the table was deserted. Of the half-dozen people invited, only one other person was present, and he was late and wasn't even the most eagerly expected guest. We sat passively among this useless abundance, and a profound silence descended upon us after I made the simple observation that we live in strange times, in which, as Tocqueville noted in 1848, one can never be sure a revolution won't break out between the moment when one sits down at the table and when the meal is served.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> English in original.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *Avviso al proletario italiano sulle possibilita presenti della rivoluzione sociale* (“Notice to the Italian Proletariat on the Current Possibilities for Social Revolution”), a tract written and distributed on 19 November 1969 by the Italian section of the Situationist International. See elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. the skit by Monty Python's Flying Circus titled “Party Hints” (1972), in which Veronica gives the following advice (my transcription). “This week I'm going to tell you what to do if there is an armed Communist uprising near your home when you're having a party. Well, obviously, it'll depend how far you've got with your party when the signal for Red Revolt is raised. If you're just having preliminary aperitifs – a Dubonnet, a sherry or a sparkling white wine – then the guests will obviously be in a fairly formal mood and it will be difficult to tell which ones are the Communist agitators. So the thing to do is to get some cloth and some bits of old paper, put them down on the floor and shoot everybody. This will deal with the Red Menace on your own doorstep. If you're having canapés, as I showed you last week, or an outdoor

Telephone calls that punctuated the hours made the expectation of dire events even more unnerving. The news accumulated: a Public Safety officer was killed in front of the Teatro Lirico, and neither the police nor the unions were in a position to control the battlefield, which they had abandoned. All through the afternoon, the telephone line was the only umbilical cord that tied us to the world. The worst fears concerned the situation in Turin, because if the workers in Milan believed that the situation there had also escaped from our control, the *chances*<sup>84</sup> that the riot and the strike would remain limited to that day would have completely evaporated. From Rome we learned that the unions still “held” Turin, and that serious incidents had not been reported there or in Genoa. Several hours later, this information was directly confirmed to us by the union *leaders*<sup>85</sup> who were there. Fortunately, there had been no deaths among the demonstrators, because that was the piece of good fortune that, deep down, the agitators counted on. In the evening, Milan – the workers’ Milan – was discouraged to learn that everywhere else the strike had taken place without incident, but in Rome, and certainly not in working class Rome, the events in Milan were perceived in all their seriousness, and they even created more emotion than one could hope for in a capital that is surreptitiously insensitive to the impulses of the rest of the country. The city was notified that there was no time to lose, since in Milan neither the unions nor the police had been able to prevent the riot and, even if this riot had, fortunately, been brief, it was only too well known that none of the conditions that caused it had been surmounted, neither in Milan nor anywhere else in Italy. Thus, there was more than good reason to fear that several weeks later, if not sooner, a new riot would turn into a general insurrection.

Instead, three weeks later, on 12 December [1969], bombs exploded at the Piazza Fontana in Milan and in Rome, and we truly saw the “unforeseeable and traumatic” event of which Nicola Adelfi had written and which so profoundly roiled public opinion in Italy and abroad.

Disoriented and stunned by the large number of innocent victims, the workers remained hypnotized by the unexpected event and were led astray by the rumors that followed it – because, confronted by deeds of this type, their minds are fickle – and, as Tacitus says, “the people could be changed by sudden events and become as prone to mercy as they were to immoderate cruelty.”<sup>86</sup>

As if by magic, the struggles that had been so widespread and so prolonged forgot themselves and ceased.

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barbecue, then the thing to do is to set fire to all houses in the street. This will stir up anti-Communist hatred and your neighbors will be right with you as you organize counter-revolutionary terror. So you see, if you act promptly enough, any Left-wing uprising can be dealt with by the end of the party.”

<sup>84</sup> English in original.

<sup>85</sup> English in original.

<sup>86</sup> *The Annals*, Book 1, Paragraph 69. Latin in original.

**Chapter IV:  
It is Never Good to Merely Defend Oneself,  
Because Victory Only Belongs to the Attacker**

This view prevailed almost universally in the theoretical world before the wars of the French Revolution. But when these wars at one stroke opened to view a quite different world of phenomena in war [...] the people set themselves free from the old models, and believed that all the changes they saw resulted from modern discoveries, magnificent ideas, etc., but also at the same time, certainly from the changes in the state of society. It was now thought that what was old would never more be required, and would never even reappear. But as in such revolutions in opinions two parties are always formed, so it was also in this instance, and the old views found their champions, who looked upon the new phenomena as rude blows of brute force, as a general decadence of the art; and held the opinion that, in the evenly-balanced, nugatory, fruitless war game, the perfection of the art is realized. There lies at the bottom of this last view such a want of logic and philosophy, that it can only be termed a hopeless, distressing confusion of ideas. But at the same time the opposite opinion, that nothing like the past will ever reappear, is very irrational. Of the novel appearances manifested in the domain of the art of war, very few indeed are to be ascribed to new discoveries, or to a change in the direction of ideas: they are chiefly attributable to the alterations in the social state and its relations. [...] The natural course in war is to begin with the defensive, and to end with the offensive.

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*.<sup>87</sup>

We know that the truth is that much harder to understand the longer it has been suppressed. Furthermore, we have too much experience with the interplay of real forces at the heart of human societies, present and past, to be counted among those who claim, either due to naivety or hypocrisy, that one can govern a State without there being secrets or deception. If we therefore reject this utopia, we reject no less and just as resolutely the pretense of governing a modern democratic country by founding it exclusively on lies and the systematic use of the *bluff*,<sup>88</sup> as ex-President Nixon, who repented at the end, believed he could do with impunity. Quite the contrary, we have always firmly believed that the people, when they say they want the truth (which the democratic Constitutions give them the right to have), really want nothing other than *explanations*. So, why not provide them? Why lead them astray into the dead end of the most maladroit lies, as was done, for example, concerning the bombing of the Piazza Fontana? Our leaders, our judges, and those in charge of law enforcement too easily forget that there is nothing in the world more noxious to their power than producing in the mind of the democratic

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<sup>87</sup> Adopting the translation in *On War*, by General Carl von Clausewitz, translated by Colonel J.J. Graham, with an introduction by Jan Willem Honig, Book VI, Chapter XXX and Book VI, Chapter I (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), pp. 583 and 373.

<sup>88</sup> English in original.

citizen the feeling that he is continually taken for imbecile, because this, at bottom, is the spring that unavoidably puts into motion the subtle gears of human passions and resentments, by virtue of which even the most timid of the petit-bourgeoisie will rebel and embrace and nourish radical ideas. The citizen will then feel he or she is right to demand “justice,” less due to a love of justice than the fear of being subjected to injustice in his or her turn.

Today our political class is in the process of realizing how much all the embarrassed and stupid justifications that have accumulated (and always at the wrong moment) on the crucial question of the bombs of 1969 are starting to cost it. If there’s never been a good politics that has been principally founded on the truth, the worst politics would be exclusively founded on the *improbable*, and this because such a politics would incite the citizen to doubt everything, to engage in conjecture, to want to penetrate into all of the State’s secrets with a great abundance of casual suppositions and chimerical fantasies. From then on, any imposter would have the keys to the city and could operate with complete freedom and, from the moment that everything has taken on the figure of shameless artifice, the voter – who habitually contents himself with the plausible – would express with great cries his right to know the whole truth about everything, thus hurling a menacing *hic Rhodus, hic salta*<sup>89</sup> at political power. At that point, everyone would be bold and full of courage in the face of the cowardice with which they would reproach the State, which would be locked into a vicious circle in which it had to successively deny all the preceding official versions of the facts. And this is how a State would inevitably wear out, to the point of losing the strength – we don’t want to say the strength to correct its errors, but simply the strength to admit them. Thus, to regain that strength, it would have to expose itself to the risk of *finally telling the truth*, because power in Italy is in one of those situations, always dangerous to any State, in which *it is no longer possible to say anything other than the truth*. And the truth, when it finally comes out, after all the lies have been refuted, will be strong enough – although this might also seem unbelievable – to confront all kinds of suspicions and prevail over the general distrust.

To that truth that has the look of falsehood  
A man should always close his lips, if he can,  
Because he incurs shame where there is no fault:

But I cannot be silent here; and swear,  
Reader, by the verses of this *Comedy* (...) <sup>90</sup>

Goethe was convinced that “writing history is a way of disencumbering us from the past,” and we will add that we must immediately and definitively disencumber ourselves from the phantom of the Piazza Fontana, whatever the costs, because the moment has come in which it

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<sup>89</sup> This Latin expression (a translation of a line in Aesop’s fable “The Boastful Athlete”) literally means, “Here is Rhodes, jump here.” In his preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, Hegel – in an apparent reference to the Rosicrucians – offered an alternative translation: *Hier ist die Rose, hier tanze* (“Here is the Rose, dance here”). According to Marx, writing in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, “a situation is created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves call out: Here is the rose, here dance!”

<sup>90</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, translated by C. H. Sisson, op. cit, *Inferno*, XVI, 124-128, p. 114.

is infinitely more costly to keep that phantom alive artificially. Moreover, we have wanted this *Report* to be *truthful*, and we wish that the healthy forces in Italy will benefit from the bitter lesson that we must teach ourselves.

Previously [in Chapter III], we detailed what the social situation in Italy was like towards the end of 1969: the workers, without any leaders to obey, were freely acting outside of and *against* democratic legality; they were refusing work and rejecting their own union representatives; in sum they did not want to renew the tacit social contract on which any State based on rights is founded and especially our Republic, which is, according to the first Article of its Constitution, “founded on work.” Every day, and everywhere, the workers were effectively violating this Constitution in a hundred different ways. What was the dramatic choice that our Republic found itself confronted with? The choice had been nothing more and nothing less than this: *put constitutional legality and civil order back into force, or disappear*. Who could the State count on to impose the return to law and order at the moment that the forces of Public Safety and the unions were practically powerless, and the formation of a government with Communist participation was a hypothesis that was rejected as blasphemy by all the other political parties? After the riot of 19 November, the State could no longer count on anything other than its secret security forces and on the effects that their means of information and propaganda could have on public opinion, that is, once public opinion had been sufficiently shaken up by the “unforeseeable and traumatic” bombs of 12 December.

Was the recourse to bombs an error or salvation? It was both at the same time or, rather, the provisional salvation of society’s institutions as well as a perpetual source of successive errors. This is why we are persuaded that that we can never criticize the operation of 12 December enough, because the bombing of the Piazza Fontana – at the same time that it was intended to be the last warning shot against the menace of proletarian subversion – was already the first cannonball of a civil war, and the manner in which this shot was fired showed the incapacity of our forces in such a war. The burlesque quality of the successive failed *putsches* by our extreme-Right was already contained in that manifestation of spectacular incompetence.

We wouldn’t dream of denying the utility for any of the modern countries of similar emergency initiatives, which the necessity of a particular critical moment could impose, just as we would not deny that the bombing of the Piazza Fontana had, in its way, an obviously salutary effect by completely disorienting the workers and the country, and by permitting the Communist Party to rally the workers behind it in democratic “vigilance” against a ghostly fascist peril, while the unions could finally quickly and efficiently conclude the last and most laborious of the contract negotiations. But what we resolutely deny is the idea that these positive effects were ensured or only made foreseeable with a reasonable margin of safety, that is to say, that a remedy that was worse and more dangerous than the illness itself was not applied by taking an unofficial action in such an inexact way, and this from a double point of view. Above all, too many people were familiar with operations of this type, even before 12 December. Here we will limit ourselves to advancing a single proposition. If just one of the representatives of the Left among all those who knew about it had gone public with the truth that today is on the lips of everyone, even if only as a private person, immediately after the bomb exploded. . . .<sup>91</sup> Well! The television could have said whatever it wanted, but *civil war would have exploded immediately* and nothing

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<sup>91</sup> On 19 December 1969, the Italian section of the Situationist International did precisely that in the form of a wall poster titled *Il Reichstag Brucia?* (“Is the Reichstag Burning?”). See elsewhere in this volume.

would have been able to prevent it. We might say that it was a real stroke of luck that this didn't happen and that at that moment the political class had withdrawn into a reserve rife with whispers. Moreover, we can reveal that, due to the worst possible choice of guilty parties – someone like Valpreda<sup>92</sup> wasn't believable as the perpetrator of the attack, even if a hundred taxi drivers had, before dying, given a hundred statements for subsequent public display – as well as due to the manner in which the police and the magistrates behaved during the affair, we made this operation into a grotesque farce of misunderstanding and gloom that was more worthy of a South American dictatorship than a European democracy.

Despite all this, how can the operation of 12 December be considered a success? The bombs succeeded in imposing the desired effects to the extent that all of the sources of information put forth, instead of a single true fact, a variety of labels – anarchist or fascist supporters and outcomes – and these sources of information were at first believed, despite or even precisely because of the contradictory versions. Furthermore, the operation also succeeded because one had never seen such reciprocal support by all the institutional forces, such great solidarity between the political parties and the government, between the government and the forces of law and order, and between the forces of law and order and the unions. Thus, what might have appeared to public opinion as an act of parliament “against” the government, the government “against” the bombs, and the bombs “against” the Republic, was obviously not a conflict between one constitutional power and another, between the legislative and executive powers, but was well and truly the State itself that, in extreme peril, found itself led to use (as best as it could) certain extreme instruments against itself and for its own support, so as to show everyone that, when the State is in peril, everyone is.

Several years now separate us from those events that were dangerous to all and tragic for some, and that we now criticize publicly. Nevertheless, we must not underestimate what was admirable about this “lyrical expression of history in action” (as Don Raffaele called it) in which the State, reduced to the role of *deus ex machina*, managed to stage its own terrorist negation to reaffirm its power, because the cunning of reason<sup>93</sup> that governs and moves forward universal history is present in each of its contingent and decisive episodes, even if people do not realize it immediately, because they are too dominated by the particular passions that serve as pretexts for the permanent conflict that sets them in opposition to each other. Anyone courageous enough to not fear being accused of naiveté would today still be astonished to see how well the expedient of the bombs obtained good effects concerning the masses, but this hypothetical *naïve person*<sup>94</sup> would be mistaken, because, as Machiavelli says, “the majority of men feed upon what appears as much as on what exists; very often they are set in motion more by things as they appear than

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<sup>92</sup> Pietro Valpreda, an anarchist who was initially (and falsely) accused of perpetrating the bombing at the Piazza Fontana. Guy Debord and Sanguinetti felt a certain sympathy for him. See their letter dated 23 October 1971: “In solidarity with you (but not with the Stalinist or otherwise bureaucratic forms that some of your defenders take), we send you the enclosed mandate for 100,000 lire. Revolutionary greetings” *Guy Debord Correspondance*, Volume 4: Janvier 1969 – Décembre 1972 (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004), p. 426.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*.

<sup>94</sup> French in original.

things as they are.”<sup>95</sup> But – and here’s the negative limit of such expedients, also formulated by Machiavelli – “such methods and extraordinary recourses render the prince himself unfortunate and badly assured, because, to the extent he uses cruelty, his government becomes weak.”<sup>96</sup>

Though this might be incomprehensible or terrifying to some people, it is no longer possible to deny the new reality. Beginning in 1969, Italy had a revolutionary “party” that was informal but, consequently, more difficult to strike at. Here, of course, we are not alluding to the para-parliamentary student groups, which truly wouldn’t frighten even the most timid provincial employee, but all those who, in the factories and the streets, individually or collectively, demonstrated a total refusal of the current organization of work, and even work itself, which in truth was already the [total] refusal of the society that is based upon such an organization. Since 1969, all the acts, failures and successes of our domestic and economic policies are incomprehensible if one does not put them into relation with the sometimes open, sometimes hidden conflict that opposes this new reality to all of the traditional institutions, which are now in crisis.

Lacking leaders, as well as a coherent politics, the workers, young people, women, homosexuals, prisoners, high-school students and mentally ill people unexpectedly decided to want everything that had been forbidden to them, at the same time that they rejected *en bloc* all the goals that our society permitted them to pursue. They refused work, the family, school, morality, the army, the State and even the very idea of any kind of hierarchy.<sup>97</sup> This heterogeneous, violent, uncultivated and clumsy “party” wanted to impose itself everywhere with brutality, and it became, so to speak, *the measure of all things*: that which takes place, since no one can any longer prevent anything from happening; and that which doesn’t take place, since our institutions are no longer in a position to make anyone obey them.

To say that this situation has been produced by errors in the management of Italian society would be more than unjust – and the Communists know this well – since such situations can be found in every industrial country, whether they are bourgeois or socialist (as in Poland) – and this the Communists also know well. But such a fact assuredly cannot console us. On the contrary, it is just to say that, in Italy, the *virus* of rebellion found, more than elsewhere, a cultural broth that was particularly propitious for its development, that is to say, a syndrome of pathological infirmities with which our institutions were already chronically afflicted, as we saw in the second chapter of this *Report*.

How have we in Italy reacted to the new revolutionary threat? At first, our politicians simply denied its existence, finding it more convenient to regard the actions of the workers in 1969 in the same manner that they regarded the students of 1968: as little more than a phenomenon of morals, a kind of “fad” that would pass away as do all the others. They neglected to consider the fact that a State can temporarily do without universities, which have since then

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<sup>95</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., Chapter XVIII, p. 67: “Men in general judge more by the eyes than by the hands; because to see is for everyone, to feel for a few. Everyone sees what you appear, few feel what you are.”

<sup>96</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ibid., Chapter XVII, p. 62: “The prince must make himself feared in such a way that, if he does not obtain love, he may escape hatred, because being feared and not hated can go together very well, which he will do always when he keeps himself from his citizens’ and his subjects’ possessions, and from their women.”

<sup>97</sup> A paraphrase of Thesis 12 of “Thèses sur l’Internationale situationniste et son temps,” *La Véritable Scission dans L’Internationale* (Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, 1972).

ceased to exist as universities, but it cannot do without factories. Later, when the daily and measurable reality of the damage caused by the social conflict had become striking, our ruling class awoke from its comfortable sleep, believed itself to be besieged by an enemy who was everywhere and that, for this very reason, was difficult to circumscribe and define, and, from that moment on, it entrenched itself in a policy of *absolute defense*.

In our youth, when we took a course in military strategy, the lieutenant colonel who was in charge gave us a copy of a beautiful book that we still have and that is little known among the men currently in power: Carl von Clausewitz' *On War*. (We should note that the lieutenant colonel's only weakness was being too much of an expert in military questions and too distant from the politics of the regime at the time to have a career in the Italian Army, and the fact is that we haven't heard anything about him since then.) In the 1930s, Benedetto Croce<sup>98</sup> deplored the Italian neglect of this work. "It is only the poor and unilateral culture of those who ordinarily study philosophy, their unintelligent specialization, and the provincialism, so to speak, of their social manners that keep them at a distance from books such as the one by Clausewitz, whom they estimate to be foreign or inferior to their discipline." As for us, who, from the moment that this book was offered to us, judged that it was no less important than *The Prince* to a man of power, we would like to quote a passage from it here so as to critique the political strategy of absolute defense that our governments have adopted these past few years.

What is defense in conception? The warding off a blow. What is then its characteristic sign? The state of expectancy (or of waiting for this blow) [...] But inasmuch as an absolute defense completely contradicts the idea of War, because there would be then War carried on by one side only, it follows that the defense in War can only be relative [...] The defensive form of War is therefore no mere shield but a shield formed of blows delivered with skill. What is the object of defense? *To preserve*.

And Clausewitz goes on, a little later, to say that,

As the defensive has a negative object, that of *preserving*, and the offensive a positive object, that of *conquering*, and as the latter increases our own means of carrying on War, but the preservation does not [...] it follows of itself that we must only make use of [the defensive] so long as our weakness compels us to do so, and that we must give up that form as soon as we feel strong enough to aim at the positive object.<sup>99</sup>

Quite the contrary, to anyone who has observed it with a minimum amount of attention, Italian domestic policy in its entirety, from 1969 until today, appears to be an *absolute defense*, that is, with the sole exception of the use of the counter-attack of 12 December (and we have seen its

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<sup>98</sup> An Italian philosopher, author and politician (1866-1952). His comments on Clausewitz appeared in an essay titled "Succès et Jugement dans le 'Vom Kriege' de Clausewitz," *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale*, Vol. 42, 1935.

<sup>99</sup> Adopting the translation in *On War*, by General Carl von Clausewitz, translated by Colonel J.J. Graham, with an introduction by Jan Willem Honig, Book VI, Chapter I (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), pp. 371-373.

degree of skillfulness). We would like to specify our thinking here, because it goes to the heart of our critique. All during that year, until its last month, we had awaited (and we could only await) the aggravation of the crisis. Since the end of June, only the leaders of FIAT – thus proving their foresight – had sought a “global solution” in the negotiations, which nevertheless remained insufficient because one could not hope to resolve a general crisis through an agreement in one sector. What then, did this “waiting” mean? One quickly saw that it meant leaving to the workers (who launched the offensive) the time necessary to consult with one another, to unite, to strengthen and tighten their ranks. It meant letting valuable allies like the trade unions wear themselves out in a thousand conflicts, during the course of which they were tested daily by the working classes. We do not quite know, and knowing such things now is of little importance, if the roots of the government’s excessive wait-and-see attitude were a conscious *and* erroneous choice or, more likely, a pure and simple refusal to choose. Nevertheless, we know that this refusal produced almost all of the subsequent errors in political conduct and that, at its core, there was a gross miscalculation or, what’s worse, a crass ignorance in matters of revolution. In reality, none of the men who were then in government (and who are still there now) believed that it was possible that the workers – without leaders, resources or apparent coordination – were capable of constituting a real danger to the security of the State and the very survival of our social order. They simply worried about the economic damages caused by the strikes, which were considered to be enormous, while in fact, in their entirety, they only constituted *the least damage*, because at that moment our economic situation was rosy when compared to the one today.

On the contrary, we were in one of those circumstances in which the most serious error precisely consisted in not fearing such an adversarial “party” because it had no leaders. One hardly kept this “party” in mind because it was informal and the State was armed, and yet we have always been convinced (and history only offers us too many examples) that it is fitting to heed populations every time that they take themselves for everything, because “*the misfortune is that their strength lies in their imagination and one can truthfully say that, unlike all the other kinds of power, they can do anything they want to do when they have come to a certain point,*”<sup>100</sup> as Cardinal de Retz once said of the Fronde. Moreover, all revolutions in history have begun without leaders and have ended when they have gotten them.

Thus this absolute defense presupposed that only the workers could carry out “acts of war,” to keep to Clausewitz’s schema, and this attitude on the part of power gave the workers their principal encouragement. Power waited, almost with resignation, and did almost nothing other than wait. Or, more precisely, what one did to justify this attitude amounted to several laughable episodes of an artificial and useless pseudo-offensive campaign, namely the attacks carried out in April and August. We might admire this monument to political irrationality: these attacks, according to one’s calculations or hopes, had won over at least a part of public opinion to the party of law and order at a time when public opinion was generally favorable to the strikers. It was hoped that this war could be waged *with the weapon of public opinion*, blithely forgetting the simple truth that public opinion, when it is hostile to power, harms it, and when public opinion is favorable to power, it does nothing for it as an ally.

It was precisely because, at first, one didn’t want to understand the nature of the conflict and then because one underestimated the danger, that insurrectionary episodes such as 19 November (discussed in the previous chapter) took place. The great fear created by 19 November

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<sup>100</sup> French in original.

was thus necessary and sufficient for the sudden change of course in thinking that led to the operation of 12 December, which – having been conducted with such fury – was rushed and haphazard. In fact, we can say that the time that elapsed between 19 November and 12 December was dominated by the anxiety caused by the approach of an imminent event, which the majority of people imagined would be a riot with much worse consequences than the one in Milan. Every day new authentic or artificial alarms served to put pressure on this or that sector of power or public opinion. A friend whose offices were at Montecitorio<sup>101</sup> reported to us that the entirety of Parliament was so obsessed by the idea of open social conflict, which appeared unavoidable and for which the State was apparently unprepared, that one said it was as if they could read the words *civil war* written on the walls of the chamber. Following the customs of parliamentary assemblies, what was the most troubling in the depths of their minds was that which one spoke of the least, but they implicitly proved that they didn't forget about it for an instant. Added to this was the fact that the unshakeable composure of the head of the government<sup>102</sup> was a preoccupation for those who didn't know the reasons for it and regarded it as a kind of unconsciousness. For those who knew the real reason for it, his composure was an even greater preoccupation. One knew that the High Commander of our Army, if he was incapable of fighting a classic war, was even more incapable of fighting a civil war and, as for the Army itself, we can say – making use of a recent and welcome expression from a book of “political fiction,” written anonymously – “although no one ever speaks about it, our divisions aren't any less disorganized than our postal services.”

As we have always found the personality of Admiral Henke to be baffling, to say the least, we believed we were authorized at the time to discretely advise him to be prudent and keep himself far above the fray that some politicians had long created around him, so that he would not uselessly compromise either his person or his reputation in the forthcoming chaos. It was sound advice, to be sure, to give to a man so impassioned by action, but so little accustomed to acting, that – before having attended to useful or even strictly necessary matters – he always seemed to us ready to undertake noxious and dangerous actions rather than do nothing at all. But this advice wasn't at all effective, like all advice that goes against human nature! What followed only seemed to confirm this.

It is precisely because we did prevent the situation that made the operation of 12 December necessary, and because we then conducted it in such a maladroit fashion, that we have almost imperceptibly made it a habit here in Italy to confront every critical situation in the years that followed by playing the false card of artificial terrorism. This was a tactic that was devoid of plausibility and, above all, utility, but because the expedient of using bombs obtained good results the first time, the authorities have – without posing any further questions – made this tactic into their sole strategy, which has since become known under the names “the strategy of tension” or “the strategy of opposing extremisms.” Perpetually continuing to defend itself against ghostly enemies – sometimes Red [Communist], sometimes Black [fascist], according to the mood of the moment, but always badly constructed – our State has never wanted to confront the actual problems posed by the *real enemy* of the society that is founded on private property and work, and has wasted its time combating the phantasms that it has itself created and thus sought to create an alibi that would exonerate it from its real dereliction of duty. The result of this has been that the State that we currently have hasn't even obtained the people's support for its

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<sup>101</sup> The meeting place of the House of Deputies.

<sup>102</sup> Mariano Rumor.

implausible battles. On the contrary, the following has been the result: para-Statist emergency practices have become completely ridiculous and, as one says, “burned.” Once the game became too obvious, the State was even obligated to put the head of its secret services into prison. No one could possibly have believed that General Miceli would remain in prison for any longer than the time necessary to release him. The insolent hypocrisy with which he was accused was only a prelude to the hypocrisy with which he was released from detention. Great result indeed! The *Servizio Informazioni Difesa*<sup>103</sup> has become the *pierre de scandal*<sup>104</sup> of our country.

And so, we will say this clearly and once and for all: it is time to end the uncontrollable use of “unofficial action,” which is brutal, useless and dangerous for the very order that it, on the contrary, should be able to safeguard through more effective procedures. More particularly, we would like to ask, What have been the actual fruits (the practical utility) of each of the acts of terrorism that followed the one committed on 12 December 1969? What was the usefulness of the pre-electoral attack on the publisher named Feltrinelli,<sup>105</sup> who was an inoffensive Leftist industrialist? What was the usefulness of the elimination of Commissioner Calabresi,<sup>106</sup> when today every citizen knows more about the attacks of those years than he did?

Our secret services’ alternation between ineffectiveness and hyper-effectiveness over the course of the last few years reveals a worrisome ambiguity: those who have the power to resolve it don’t want to, and those who want to cannot because they lack the power. In this matter, the more one knows about the shady maneuvers that take place between the scenes, the less one dares to take the risk of exposing and denouncing them, either because the people who have proof of their existence are personally implicated in this vicious circle or because they fear dying like so many witnesses who weren’t called to testify in the trials of the last few years. Moreover, it is well known that every modern secret service is in a position to greatly abuse its secretive character and thus its power, exercising a degree of arbitrary authority that goes well beyond what is necessary for the defense of the general interests of society and forcing silence (by one means or another) upon anyone who advances some well-founded suspicion about the practices that are certainly not above suspicion. But “*is there any hope for justice when the criminals have the power to condemn their critics?*”<sup>107</sup>

The paradox resides in the fact that it is not the means by which public order is maintained that is blanketed by military secrecy, *but the means by which it hasn’t been maintained*, because everyone has seen how these methods have generally exacerbated the disorder, that is, when they haven’t deliberately created it.

In all the States of the world, a secret service receives its orders from the executive branch, but the executive power is (fortunately) not administered in all the other States of the world as it is in our country. Thus, isn’t it permitted to conclude that the Italian secret services

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<sup>103</sup> Defense Information Service.

<sup>104</sup> The scandalous stone. In ancient Rome, someone who had failed to pay his debts was publicly humiliating by having to sit down naked upon a flat stone and cry out “I surrender all my goods.”

<sup>105</sup> Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (1926-1972) was the founder of a publishing house and a member of the *Gruppi di Azione Partigiana* (“Partisan Action Group”). He was killed on 14 March 1972, allegedly while setting up explosives underneath an electrical pylon.

<sup>106</sup> Luigi Calabresi, the officer in charge of investigating the attack on the Piazza Fontana, was murdered on 17 May 1972.

<sup>107</sup> Slightly modified quotation from Saint-Just. French in original.

have become the *two-edged sword in the hands of a fool*<sup>108</sup> of which the Romans spoke? Due to a ceaseless succession of covert raids and theatrical stunts, the majority of the population has become *drugged* and thus desensitized to the routine – learning about some new carnage at the same time that there’s been a recall to Rome of the inquest into the preceding massacre or the *ex officio* “recusal” of a magistrate who came dangerously close to the truth – that one can no longer hope that the healthy forces of this country are capable of compelling the State to make a radical purification by applying pressure from below. Such a purification is urgently needed, but it must come *from the top*, and our own public intervention marks the beginning of it, while at the same time showing its absolute necessity: “where everything is bad, it must be a good thing to know the worst.”

The magistracy itself, in which men of great value preside, is governed in such a manner that it currently resembles a hapless troupe of traveling actors from long ago. Booed in one place, they are always hopeful (always in vain) of finally being successful in the next town they visit. If this troupe no longer performs the plays that the public in Northern Italy finds obscene or that Rome finds too audacious, it tasks Catanzaro<sup>109</sup> with constituting a Court of Justice that will restage those plays using the same *libretti*, but which are inevitably suspended after the occurrence of the customary discordant prologue because the renown of the preceding failures has arrived before the show itself did. A humorist from another century<sup>110</sup> said that one of the principal differences between a cat and a lie is that the cat only nine lives.

After doing something stupid, men ordinarily do a hundred other stupid things to hide it. Our State, still dominated by the same men, doesn’t behave like a State, but like men: it seeks to limit the damage of one error by making another, more serious one, until it finally arrives at a situation in which it is no longer possible to do anything other than make errors. As one knows, the defense of a bad cause has always been worse than the cause itself, but the defense of a just cause – *and we have the weakness of believing that our world merits being defended* –, when this defense is conducted without dignity and maladroitly, is in any case a crime that produces effects that are, on all points, the opposite of what was intended.

On the question of “the strategy of tension” and the unofficial secret services, it is both necessary and fitting that, from now on, we be more radical than the Communists themselves, and it pleases us to summarize our thinking on this question with phrases that are not ours.

It appears to me that we have come to the very brink of a great danger and that there is no other course of action than choosing between the resolve to enlighten the people and the resolve to prepare oneself for combat against them (...) If plebeian unrest is to be feared, let’s us fear popular disgust no less, and let us guard against all the steps and measures that could incite it. Such actions could lead to even greater evils, evils that do not, moreover, preclude more serious and calculated forms of unrest.

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<sup>108</sup> The Latin expression employed here, *gladium ancipitem in manu stulti*, seems to include an allusion to “Operation Gladio,” which was the Italian code name for the secret NATO plan in which armed groups prepared to either overthrow Communist governments after they’d been formed or before they had seized power.

<sup>109</sup> Not only a politically “neutral” area, but one in which the geography served to aid security procedures. See Sanguinetti’s “An Orgasm of History,” elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>110</sup> Mark Twain, in *Pudd’nhead Wilson* (1894).

Thus wrote Francesco-Maria Gianni, former State advisor to the Grand Duke Pierre-Léopold, in a work from 1792 evocatively titled “The Fears I Harbor and the Disorders I Dread Arising from the Circumstances Currently Besetting the Country.”<sup>111</sup>

To conclude, we will say that the dramatic turn of events – that theatrical protagonist of decadence (and its political chronicle in Italy) – has amply demonstrated the impotence of the governors, as well as a general desire to change the scene, the plot and the actors. All the serious problems of 1969 are still before us and, if one speaks less of them today, this is only because other, no less serious problems have been added since then, while the very men who have not resolved them are still in power. Indeed, at the very moment that we are writing these lines, they are quibbling at great length about abortion, while it is our very Republic that is miscarrying. *Frailty, thy name is Italy!*<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> This appears to be one of Censor’s ruses, for a search for the title attributed to Gianni (“*Les peurs que je ressens et les désordres que je redoute des circonstances que connaît actuellement le pays*”) comes up empty and none of the works he actually wrote in Italian bear a similar title.

<sup>112</sup> English in original, a revision of “Frailty, thy name is woman,” William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene 2.

**Chapter V:  
What the World Crisis Is  
and the Different Forms in which it Manifests Itself**

Troy, yet upon his basis, had been down,  
And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master (...)  
The specialty of rule hath been neglected:  
And, look, how many Grecian tents do stand  
Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions (...)  
When that the general is not like the hive (...)  
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask (...)  
When the planets  
In evil mixture to disorder wander,  
What plagues and what portents! what mutiny!  
What raging of the sea! shaking of earth!  
Commotion in the winds! frights, changes, horrors,  
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate  
The unity and married calm of states  
Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shaken,  
Which is the ladder to all high designs,  
Then enterprise is sick! (...)  
Then every thing includes itself in power,  
Power into will, will into appetite;  
And appetite, a universal wolf,  
So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make perforce an universal prey,  
And last eat up himself (...)  
Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.

Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*<sup>113</sup>

When the present gave no cause to regret the past, and when the future did not appear compromised by the precariousness of a present like ours, men and women lived their own time in all its richness. To give an evocative example: in the second half of the 18th century, Venetian society could offer itself the luxury of literally forgetting the masterpieces of Vivaldi and Albioni

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<sup>113</sup> Fearing that the result would be a dreadful series of mistranslations, we have *not* provided an English translation of Guy Debord's French, which was in turn a translation of Censor's Italian, which was in its turn a translation of Shakespeare's English. Instead, we have provided these lines as they appear in the original text. But our readers should know that the French version contained two lines that were so different from the original English, and yet so relevant to the themes of *The Truthful Report*, that they could only have been intentionally inserted: "the unity and married calm of states" was rendered as *l'unité et le paisable mariage des classes* ("the unity and peaceful marriage of the classes"), and "when degree is shaken" was rendered as *quand la hiérarchie est ébranlée* ("when the hierarchy is shaken").

because of the new masterpieces of Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte that had come from Vienna.

But in an epoch in which the poverty of a present that is simultaneously anxious and stagnant announces the coming of a troubled and tragic future; in an epoch in which the rediscovery of the masterpieces of the past, quickly pillaged, hardly consoles us; in an epoch in which poverty, and especially cultural poverty, dominates our societies of lost abundance and assaults all of us – individuals and social classes, the leaders and the led, up to the State itself – everyone seems to fidget in a kind of “*absolute anxiety of not being what it really is,*” as Hegel would say. Thus we are witnessing a strange, generalized and universal alienation, by virtue of which no one can any longer play the very role that defines him. The workers no longer want to be workers; the leaders fear to appear to be leaders; the conservatives hide or keep quiet; the bourgeoisie fears being bourgeois. We wish to repeat that, “when all the ranks are disguised, the most unworthy also cut beautiful figures in the masquerade,” and then “the unity and peaceful marriage of the classes” evaporates, because there is no longer a “fixed condition” for anyone.

And, in what concerns the Italian bourgeoisie, which was reminded (unsuccessfully) by Giorgio Bocca<sup>114</sup> that “it wasn’t born yesterday,” and that it was in fact the first bourgeoisie in history and the inventor of the bank, today we see it believe every prophesy of its adversaries, accord greater credence to fashionable Marxism and its predictions (instead of having faith in its own history and culture, which has been forgotten or ignored), and fill its mouth with quibbling about the proletariat and the most adequate means by which the workers should conduct their own struggles – to such an extent one is tempted to tell this part of our bourgeoisie that, in the great sunset of capitalism, of which it speaks, *all cows are red.*<sup>115</sup>

This general crisis of identity, in its turn, is only a particular aspect of the current global crisis, but it does not any less merit our attention for that, and while we are on the subject, we would like to argue *a contrario*, for the benefit of the Italian bourgeoisie, by quoting from (and not providing any commentary on) an eloquent passage from a private letter sent to us by a Russian diplomat, whose name we will not divulge, immediately after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

It is stupidity that causes you Italians to raise the question of the workers. I absolutely do not see what you would like to do with the European worker after you have turned him into a question. If you want slaves, you are crazy to grant to the workers that which makes them masters; but you have destroyed, down to their seeds, the instincts that make the workers possible as a class, that is, *that which makes them admit this possibility to themselves.* What wonder then if your worker finds that his existence today appears to him as a calamity or, to speak the

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<sup>114</sup> An Italian journalist and essayist (1920-2011) who authored a controversial history of the resistance to fascism during World War II.

<sup>115</sup> A détournement of a famous remark in Hegel’s preface to *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807): “To consider any specific fact as it is in the Absolute, consists here in nothing else than saying about it that, while it is now doubtless spoken of as something specific, yet in the Absolute, in the abstract identity  $A = A$ , there is no such thing at all, for everything there is all one. To pit this single assertion, that ‘in the Absolute all is one,’ against the organized whole of determinate and complete knowledge, or of knowledge which at least aims at and demands complete development – to give out its Absolute as the night in which, as we say, all cows are black – that is the very naïveté of emptiness of knowledge.”

language of morality, as an *injustice*?<sup>116</sup>

We have reported this morsel, with the italics that were in the original, not out of a taste for anecdotes, but to show that, in the cold and brutal language that is proper to the Soviet bureaucracy, there can sometimes be more truth, sincerity and realism in it than in the Marxist dissertations of some more or less intellectual members of the Italian bourgeoisie. All the same, it would be the height of historical irony if our own politics, forgetful of people like Machiavelli, must seek its political science lessons from the dominant bureaucracy in Moscow! And yet, in Moscow, the power-holding class seems to forget its own identity less than we do ours, and, despite its immense deficiencies, it is aware of its interests, it knows how to defend them, and it knows *against whom* it must defend them. In Russia and elsewhere, the Communists in fact know better than others in the world today that no true revolution is possible if it is not really proletarian, that is to say, if it does not turn against all domination and all ruling classes, and thus against the ruling class that they themselves constitute in the country where they hold power, and it isn't by chance that their political parties abroad have everywhere ceased to speak of a revolution that they cannot in fact accept, because in Russia in 1917 they knew one directly and, if they managed to use it to seize power, it was only by crushing that revolution that the Communists were able to grab hold of the helm of the State and the economy.

But now, since we are broaching the most important question that we would like to deal with briefly in this chapter, we will say that it has only been since the autumn of 1973 – and here our reference point is the most recent Arab-Israeli war, which was so full of consequences – that the social crisis, which has in the last five years broken out in almost all the European countries, and not just in those countries, has become completely *global and total*.

This crisis is global because, *extensively*, all the regimes and all the countries of the world – in one fashion or another – have been struck by it simultaneously, even if the specific characteristics of the crisis had initially presented different predominant threats in accordance with the respective situations of those different countries. On the other hand, this crisis is total because, *intensively*, it has been the entirety of life – insofar as the crisis has unfolded in the interior of each of these countries – that has been subjected to the contagion.

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<sup>116</sup> This alleged letter is actually a détournement of a famous passage in Nietzsche, “The question of the Working-man,” *Twilight of the Idols*, translated by Anthony M. Ludovici (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 99: “For the life of me I cannot see what people want to do with the working-man of Europe, now that they have made a question of him. He is far too comfortable to cease from questioning ever more and more, and with ever less modesty. After all, he has the majority on his side. There is now not the slightest hope that an unassuming and contented sort of man, after the style of the Chinaman, will come into being in this quarter: and this would have been the reasonable course, it was even a dire necessity. What has been done? Everything has been done with the view of nipping the very pre-requisite of this accomplishment in the bud, —with the most frivolous thoughtlessness those selfsame instincts by means of which a working-class becomes possible, and *tolerable even* to its members themselves, have been destroyed root and branch. The working-man has been declared fit for military service; he has been granted the right of combination, and of voting: can it be wondered at that he already regards his condition as one of distress (expressed morally, as an injustice)? But, again I ask, what do people want? If they desire a certain end, then they should desire the means thereto. If they will have slaves, then it is madness to educate them to be masters.”

Whether it is a question of political or economic crisis, the chemical pollution of the air that one breathes or the falsification of food, the cancer of social struggles or the urban leprosy that proliferates where there used to be towns and country-sides, the growing rates of suicide and mental illnesses, what is called the demographic explosion or the threshold crossed by the noxiousness of noise, the public order that is disturbed by dissent and bandits – everywhere one bumps up against the additional impossibility of *going much farther* along the road of degradation of what had been the conquests of the bourgeoisie properly speaking.

We must admit it: not personally, but as the inheritors of these conquests, *we have not known how to think strategically*. Instead, here resembling the little people, rather than a property-owning class, *we have thought and lived from day to day*, systematically mortgaging the present by accumulating insolvable debts for the future, that is to say, by daily renouncing a future worthy of our past so as to not renounce a few negligible advantages, which are the deceptive advantages of a fleeting present. As the poet from Vaucluse says,

Life passes quick, nor will a moment stay,  
And death with hasty journeys still draws near;  
And all the present joins my soul to tear,  
With every past and every future day.<sup>117</sup>

Thus our ruling classes have today been reduced everywhere to discussing nothing other than the *expiration* of their mandate – a mandate that (we too often forget) we do not hold thanks to God or the people, but thanks only to our own abilities in the past –, and even this global discussion is more or less reduced to the sad examination of the palliatives that would best *delay* this expiration. And this because, in such a process of decadence in action, we have come to the point of total incompatibility insofar as the social, economic and political systems that we govern appear to want to tie their fate to the incessant continuation of a growing and already intolerable deterioration of all the conditions of existence for everyone. One has said that the crisis caused by the oil embargo, and then by the increases in the price of crude oil made by the oil-producing Arab countries, has in turn caused the very serious economic crisis upon which the world debates, and there's something true in this observation, but it is only a part of the truth and certainly the most contingent part, even if we cannot say that it is a passing phenomenon. With respect to the current global crisis, we must say what Thucydides said of the origins of the Peloponnesian War, namely, it is really “the truest cause, but the one least spoken about openly,”<sup>118</sup> because the real crisis today – which no one speaks about – *is not an economic crisis*, like the one in 1929, for example, which we were capable of overcoming (and we know how). Above all, our crisis is a *crisis of the economy*, which means the economic phenomenon in its entirety, and it is within this general crisis that a particular, oil-related, economic crisis is inserted.

This is the most worrisome effect of a converging twofold process: on the one hand, the workers, who have escaped from the controlling framework of the unions, are imposing on us working conditions and incessant salary demands that seriously disrupt our decisions and the

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<sup>117</sup> Petrarch, Sonnet IV, in *The Sonnets, Triumphs and Other Poems*, edited by Thomas Campbell (1879).

<sup>118</sup> Greek in original. Cf. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book I, Paragraph 23, translated by Richard Crawley (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2006), p. 20.

forecasts of our economists; and, on the other hand, these same workers, as consumers, appear completely disgusted by the goods that they willingly purchased not so long ago, thus creating difficulties – if not obstacles – to the circulation of commodities. The result is that we find ourselves in an *impasse*.<sup>119</sup> we are unable to sell the commodities that the workers refuse to produce or consume. At the root of this crisis, there is not – as some people think – the subjective attitude of the individuals involved, though such an attitude does admittedly feed into the process and subsequently worsen the damaging effects. The economy has entered into crisis *on its own* and, through its own internal momentum, has strayed down the road of its own self-destruction. It is certainly not quantitatively that the economy has revealed itself to be incapable of increasing production and developing its productive forces, but *qualitatively*.

The development of this economy, the crisis of which we are the custodians, has been, it must be said, anarchic and irrational. We have followed archaic models that would be more suitable to an agrarian economy than to an evolved industrial economy, because – much like the ancient societies, which always struggled against actual shortages – we have pursued the maximum degree of purely and progressively quantitative productivity, “without distinguishing excess from sufficiency.”<sup>120</sup> This identification with the agrarian mode of production was then transferred to the pseudo-cyclical model of the superabundant production of commodities<sup>121</sup> in which one has deliberately created “planned obsolescence” to artificially maintain the seasonal character of consumption, which in turn has been used to justify the incessant renewal of productive effort, thus preserving the imminence of shortages. And this is why the cumulative reality of such production, which is indifferent to both utility and noxiousness, today returns to haunt us in the forms of pollution and social struggle,<sup>122</sup> because, on the one hand, we have poisoned the world, and, on the other, we have thereby given to the people – at every instant of their everyday lives – a special reason to revolt against us, thus making our lives miserable. In the last chapter of this work, we will present several remedies for this “economic sickness.”

We note here that our power, which from the first symptoms of the new social war has defended (not too well) the abundance attacked by subversion, must today defend a *lost abundance*. In sum, we find ourselves compelled to manage the world’s misfortune. We would ask our readers to be attentive to the following paradoxical coincidence, which is unprecedented in universal history. At the very moment in which the powers of the world are disposed to come to each other’s aid – despite their differences concerning *details*, which no longer truly set them against each other – each one of these powers has such great need of help that none of them are in a position to effectively help any of the others. The power of each State is very limited outside of its own borders, because each one is seriously compromised within them.

On the other hand, the so-called peaceful coexistence between the great powers is not at all the fruit of a commendable choice that was deliberately made in the sphere of global politics, nor was it the result of the successes of modern diplomacy, as the people of the world believe. We know that peaceful coexistence is not a virtue, *but a necessity*, and a much less joyful one

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<sup>119</sup> French in original.

<sup>120</sup> A remark by Francesco Guichardin (1843-1540), an Italian historian and politician.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Guy Debord, “Spectacular Time,” Thesis 149 *et seq.*, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967).

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Thesis 17, “Theses on the Situationist International and Its Time,” *The Veritable Split in the International* (1972), translated by Michel Prigent and Lucy Forsythe (London: Chronos Publications, 1990), p. 30: “Pollution and the proletariat are today the two concrete aspects of the *critique of political economy*.”

than people would like to believe, because if global conflict has no place in these hypotheses, this is not because of the danger that thermonuclear weapons represent, but because of the new and (according to us) more serious social conflict that each nation must attempt to surmount on its own. We can say, in a few words, that global war is no longer possible because peace has abandoned this world and that the highest degree of military power ever attained corresponds to the highest degree of impotence.

Clausewitz said that “war is the continuation of politics by other means,”<sup>123</sup> but even this definition, valuable until now, is no longer true (and it will not be in the future) because today’s alleged “peace” is in fact *the continuation of war by other means*, and it is the continuation of *another type of war* that the States have neither chosen nor declared. The armies themselves must be quickly and completely redesigned following the English example of the professional standing army, trained to fight domestically against subversion, while the secret services will henceforth (from a military point of view) have to principally occupy themselves with domestic politics and not foreign affairs (but hopefully not following the example of the Italian SID!). The next “great war” will be a generalized civil war, and it will thus welcome theoreticians capable of instructing professional units that will be engaged in combat “for hearth and home.”<sup>124</sup>

Naturally, there will still be wars between the States, but they will be “local wars,” such as those fought in the Middle East,<sup>125</sup> and the great powers will have to intervene in them indirectly to limit the damages and counter-attacks on the global level that these conflicts are likely to trigger in the advanced industrial countries, which are all in precarious positions. And here it is important to emphasize the failure of the policies of the great powers, and consequently the entire world, after the Arab-Israeli War of 1973. The Israeli victory, applauded by Europe, was obtained with the military and diplomatic support of the United States (as everyone knows), and yet it cost, and continues to cost, the United States and all of its allies much more than a defeat in the global theatre of operations would have. At that moment, even those who were the most reluctant to admit it were convinced of the vulnerability of our entire economic and monetary system, which had already been put into a very delicate situation by the social crisis.

David Ricardo defined wheat as “the only commodity that is necessary, as much for its own production as for the production of every other commodity,”<sup>126</sup> because, in the economy of that time, wheat assured the survival of the laboring forces themselves in a uniquely privileged manner. Times have changed, and today it is petroleum that can be defined as *the product that is necessary and indispensable for the production and consumption of all the others*. At the time of the Yom Kippur War, it was enough for Europe to foresee the possibility of spending the winter without heat for the Atlantic Alliance – created to resist the armed forces on the other side of the Iron Curtain – to melt like snow in sunlight. Only Caetano remained loyal to NATO, and today

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<sup>123</sup> Clausewitz’ *On War* contains several formulations of this idea: “War is only a continuation of State policy by others means”; “War is a mere continuation of policy by other means”; “War is [...] also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce”; and “War is nothing but a continuation of political intercourse, with a mixture of others means.” *On War*, by General Carl von Clausewitz, translated by Colonel J.J. Graham, with an introduction by Jan Willem Honig (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), Book I, Chapter I, p. 18, *et seq.*

<sup>124</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. “Two Local Wars,” *Internationale Situationniste* #11 (October 1967).

<sup>126</sup> It was *Karl Marx*, not David Ricardo, who said this, and Marx wasn’t speaking of wheat, but of human labor-power.

NATO can no longer count on him.<sup>127</sup>

Later on, and more gravely, the energy crisis, the successive increases in the price of crude oil and all the displacements of the economic and financial equilibriums have produced – within the broader crisis of the economy – the current intensification of the economic crisis and, at the same time, we handed to the Arab countries the sword of Damocles that, for our comfort, they have quite willingly taken upon themselves to hold, suspended, over our industries. In passing, we note the mental debility that can be seen in the economic-political calculations of those who have directed our affairs for the last generation. If we wanted to pursue *this* precise form of expansion, which is largely based on low petroleum prices, then we should have maintained the old form of colonialism, and should not have sacrificed it in favor of illusions of immediate profitability from “neo-colonialism.” Less than 30 years ago, the troops of the principal bourgeois States controlled almost the totality of the countries that produced our raw materials and sources of energy. Through the most simplistic calculations, we chose to abandon these colonies *at the cheapest possible costs* and we did this to *develop our technology as if we still controlled those countries!* A dozen permanent colonial wars would not have cost us a quarter of the costs of the current predicament.

Moreover, this hardly unforeseeable failure came at the moment when American power over the world had begun to decline, and this failure intensified the domestic political crisis, which soon after bring down Nixon, who departed in disgrace, and it brought beyond the critical threshold the crisis that for years that had been silently tearing America’s internal social tissue. Thus, the first effects of all these errors were felt right away, but we have only just begun to see them, and we have not seen the end of them. And what can we say about the naïve casualness with which Nixon’s successor, Gerald Ford, proclaimed the following in his first speech as president? “We know now that a government strong enough to give you everything that you want is also strong enough to take away everything that you have.”<sup>128</sup> “We know now”: but what is it that we know? Today, just a few months after this bold declaration, we know that the federal deficit has grown vertiginously since then, and that Ford hopes that, in the budget for the year 1975-1976, the deficit will not exceed 900 percent of the one from the preceding year. If the poor thinkers of a power that grows poorer in the blink of an eye can foresee good things, their vision is clouded, and if they foresee bad things, their vision is sharp. For example, Henry Kissinger, although he is certainly not a “man without qualities,” resembles Musil’s protagonist<sup>129</sup> in at least one respect: he constantly dissolves action in the vanity of action, and the useful in the useless. In other words, much like the majority of those with whom he meets every day all over the world, Kissinger lacks a strategic vision of what must be done and what must be avoided – beyond merely contingent obligations – to save a world that is increasingly difficult to control, because it is futile to want to dominate that which is falling into ruin, when, instead, it is a question of saving the very thing that one wants to dominate. And concerning the war that the Israelis won over the Arabs, it is enough for us to say to all the modern incarnations of

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<sup>127</sup> Marcelo Caetano, the Prime Minister of Portugal, was deposed by the revolution of 25 April 1974.

<sup>128</sup> Address to a Joint Session of the Congress, 12 August 1974, referring not to “our knowledge,” that is to say, the knowledge of professional economists, but what is known by “the American wage earner and the American housewife.”

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Robert Musil, an Austrian novelist, author of *The Man Without Qualities* (1942).

Metternich<sup>130</sup> that they had better reacquaint themselves with a couple of old maxims. First, “it is never a wise course of action to reduce the enemy to despair” (Machiavelli); second, “those who know how to win are much larger in number than those who know how to make good use of their victories” (Polybius).

As for Europe, which seems to have forgotten that it produced all the masterpieces of human thought, and which for the last 30 years has placed more confidence in the thinkers from across the Atlantic Ocean than it has in those whom it has retained: today it is patently obvious that Europe has fallen apart *even as a simple “economic community.”* And what’s going on in Italy – if we consider the fact that the best efforts in our country to deal with the crisis made by certain circles of economic and political power have only resulted in laughable attempts to return to the old fascist “solution” and this at the very moment when the last ruins of fascism have reached their foreseeable ends in Portugal and Greece<sup>131</sup> – well, it speaks for itself.

The politicians can deny it as much as they want to, but today their currency of exchange – the lie – is depreciated away by inflation, even more so than the lira: one epoch is over and a new one has begun. We know that men, who are so often ready to interpret the past in new terms, are just as frequently brought to interpret the new in old terms, and thus they fail to understand what must be done, because change, as it unfolds through time, always and above all expresses that for which *the hour has finally come*. The concubinage of one epoch with the one that follows it is in no danger of becoming institutionalized in marriage, no matter what is thought by Senator Amintore Fanfani,<sup>132</sup> who would indubitably be more highly esteemed as an interpreter of the Tuscan landscape than as an interpreter of history.

But the intellectual poverty that is durably installed in power in our country (and that saddens it) is fully revealed when we review the apparently innocent reflections with which we are entertained while awaiting some unknown panacea, reflections that abound in our newspapers (and not only in the worst ones). Here, for example, we are thinking of the candor with which our most important daily newspaper has repeatedly stated that it “envies the French for Giscard d’Estaing.” It is quite true that our political class, considered as a whole (and with all due exceptions noted), would bring shame to a tribe of Pygmies, but, all the same, this is not sufficient reason to mock our neighbor, unfortunate France, by pretending to envy it for politicians with whom no tribe of Watusis would be contented. Someone who has less urbanity than we do, but whom has had occasion to dine once or twice with the French neo-President, would come to conclusions about this person that would not be too different from what my lord Niccolò said in his *post mortem* epigram about the Gonfalonier:

The night that Piero Soderini died,  
His soul came to the gates of Hell.  
Pluto cried out: ‘You, in Hell?  
Foolish soul, go to Purgatory  
With the other children!’<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Clement Wenceslas Lothar von Metternich-Winneburg-Beilstein (1773-1859) was a German-born Austrian diplomat. The Revolution of 1848 forced his resignation.

<sup>131</sup> Just four months after these lines were written, fascist Spain could be added to this list.

<sup>132</sup> An ex-fascist and Christian Democrat, Amintore Fanfani (1908-1999) led an unsuccessful campaign to repeal the laws that allowed married couples to get divorced.

<sup>133</sup> Machiavelli, *La Mandragola* (1524).

Pardon us for this literary conceit but, in the current generalization of bad morals, each instance of stupidity asserts the rights that are due it, and imbecility never goes without a patron. Here in Italy, we respect too many unworthy things to be worthy of being respected. At bottom, it is not even Giscard whom this journalistic triviality envies the French for having, but something worse: it envies the enticing *image* of the president-manager, the efficient and hopeful technocrat who casually makes a few spectacular changes in protocol and promotes with juvenile fervor a hundred minor innovations that momentarily distract his country from the coming subversion, which in fact still smolders under the ashes, seven years after May [1968].

The “Italian question” – or the French or the English questions, for that matter – certainly cannot be resolved by simply replacing Flaminio Piccoli<sup>134</sup> or [Mariano] Rumor with someone more “telegenic,” less implicated in the failures of the past or less compromised by association with the Mafia, as is Minister Gioia.<sup>135</sup> No one can deny that it is necessary and, at present, urgent to *also* change the majority of the men who are tasked with defending our interests, but to replace them with people like Giscard would be a remedy that would not fight the sickness at all. The sickness from which we suffer is spoken about, discussed and written about by the very people who, pretending to be doctors, suffer from it: their diagnoses are always diseased and their prescriptions are only additional symptoms of the collective disease. The opinion of Manzoni<sup>136</sup> was that, “we common men are generally made thus: we revolt with indignation and anger against mediocre evils and yet we are resigned to the extreme ones; we support – not out of resignation, but stupidity – the heights of that which we had at first declared to be unsupportable.”

We will not hide from our readers that addressing him so coldly is a thankless task, but speaking otherwise seems impossible and silence would be shameful. And our very coldness in treating the things that touch us so personally is not the product of cynicism, which some malicious minds would like to attribute to us, but the necessity of keeping our cool in the face of the danger that *our* world might be at an end. By contrast, those who do not sense that danger will never be in a position to truly put an end to it.

Those in Italy and elsewhere who currently put forth risky forecasts concerning the economic “recovery,” feigning to believe that this crisis resembles unfavorable but fleeting circumstances in the past, do so primarily with demagogical intentions, estimating that it is useful to make the people (to whom they can no longer promise mountains and miracles) believe that *at least the leaders*, unlike the workers, foresee a certain recovery in the next year, but, with each passing fiscal quarter, these same prophets are unavoidably obligated to delay or cancel the advent of such unfortunately chimerical changes. The illusion of change then only causes a

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<sup>134</sup> Flaminio Piccoli was the General Secretary and President of Italy’s Christian Democratic Party.

<sup>135</sup> In 1973, Giovanni Gioia (1925-1981) was the Minister for Parliamentary Relations. In the 1950s and 1960s, he openly worked to bring members of the Mafia into the Christian Democratic Party. Salvatore Lupo’s book *Storia della mafia: dalle origini ai giorni nostri* (1993) quotes Gioia as saying, “*Il partito ha bisogno di gente con cui coalizzarsi, ha bisogno di uomini nuovi, non si possono ostacolare certi tentativi di compromesso*” (“The Party needs people with whom to form a coalition; it needs new blood. Certain attempts at compromise cannot be prevented”).

<sup>136</sup> Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873) was an Italian poet and novelist. He considered the father of modern Italian.

change of illusions. Piero Ottone<sup>137</sup> recently wrote, and with good reason, that

the expectation of a misfortune is oppressing and unnerving. When at last the misfortune finally strikes, we almost sigh with relief and, paradoxically, we suffer less than before. Until yesterday, we feared that the country would collapse; the simple fact that it still hasn't procures a curious sensation of victory for those who were the most pessimistic.

We, who are neither pessimistic nor optimistic, do not even envy those who possess this "curious sensation of victory," but, as we do not want to leave too much of its bad mood with the readers who have reached the end of this hardly cheerful chapter, we will provide a little pleasantry, the spirit of which is not foreign to its subject matter. The pleasantry, which is a quintessentially Italian minor art form, and indeed the only one that remains alive today, exists in an inverse proportion with the times: the happiest ones come from the most unfortunate days and hold out to them a kind of unique consolation. "It is a shame," the president of one of our most famous national industries said to us as he recounted it, "that pleasantries are not traded on the Stock Exchange!"

Here's a little story, set in another time and place. The chief of a tribe of Sioux, after a year in which the harvest had been destroyed by catastrophic rainstorms, united his tribe at the beginning of winter to tell them the news. Not knowing how well his anxious audience would take it (they'd already suspected the existence of the calamity), he found an oratorical expedient that our politicians would envy. He said, "My brothers, I have *two* bits of news to announce: one is good, and the other is bad. Let us begin with the bad news. This year you will have nothing to eat but shit. And now the good news: as compensation, there will be enough for everyone."

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<sup>137</sup> Leftist editor of *Corriere della Sera* and a correspondent for the BBC.

## Chapter VI: What the Communists Really Are and What We Must Do With Them

Princes (...) have found more faith and more usefulness in the men who were suspect at the beginning of their state than in those whom they trusted in the beginning (...) I will only say this, that the prince will always be able to gain with very great ease those men who in the beginning of a principality had been enemies, who are the kind who need to lean upon others to bear themselves up; and they are more powerfully forced to serve him with faith, insomuch as they know it more necessary for them to erase with works that sinister opinion which one had of them. And thus the prince always draws greater utility from them than from those who, serving with too much security, neglect his things.

Machiavelli, *The Prince*<sup>138</sup>

At this point of this pseudonymous work, there will certainly be people who, in the course of their reading, have recognized our hand behind a good number of the preceding arguments. We do not want these readers, reading what follows, to change their opinions because, if they have divined from whom this exposé emanates, what comes now is only *apparently* in contradiction with our prior stances and, moreover, was already foreshadowed in the preface to this pamphlet. While it is true that, in the past years, if not the last few months, we have said and repeated in answer to the “Communist question” the celebrated phrase by Phaedra’s fox, *they are too green*,<sup>139</sup> we must now make it clear that the fox had his reasons to say this, just as today he would have good reasons to change his mind. In truth, it is not at all a question of a subjective change of opinion on our part but, rather, the objective occurrence of the possibility for a useful and necessary change that we – in the company of other, no less qualified people – have been tasked with preparing, and have been so tasked since the time when it still seemed appropriate for us to emphasize the disadvantages of that change. There is nothing in the world that does not have its decisive moment, and the capstone of good conduct, especially in politics, is recognizing and seizing that moment.

With this established as a premise, we shall not offer novelties in addressing a question that, in fact, is not new: we will say what is necessary and what has become urgent. For those who have had the occasion to know us in the past, what will be new here will only be our current disposition towards the Communists, which has in fact already shown through in the preceding chapters. The hour has come when it is both necessary and possible to reject a large part of the defects in our nation: the ruse that best suits the current situation is doing without one; true intelligence consists in never forgetting this fact; and, in this case, what is prudent is not having too much prudence. At such a moment, it is more important to pay attention to not missing this particular opportunity, than to execute a hundred others with excellence in different directions,

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<sup>138</sup> Adopting the wording in Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., Chapter XX, p. 79.

<sup>139</sup> Latin in original.

because “neither the seasons nor time wait for anyone.”<sup>140</sup>

Ended now are those seasons of games of verbal prestige in which our political trapeze-artists measured themselves in “parallel convergence” with the Communists, offering them what has been called the “strategy of attention,” an antechamber of indefinite duration before reaching the “Historic Compromise,” which the President of the Council, the Honorable [Aldo] Moro, has defined – with precautions that have obligated him to walk on eggshells – as “a kind of meeting half-way, something new, which both is and is not a change in the roles of the majority and opposition parties, the emerging outline of a diversity that doesn’t consist in a change of leadership, but in a modifying addition of the Communist component to the others.” *So much noise just to make an omelet!*<sup>141</sup>

Among the political *leaders*<sup>142</sup> who for months have gargled with the “Historic Compromise” so as to ward it off, no one has yet spoken of the principal and simplest truth in the matter: the “Historic Compromise” is, in the true sense of the term, *a compromise only for the Communists* and absolutely not at all for us. For us, the agreement with the Communists is not at all “historic,” at least if we want to call “historic” any *tactical* action that we find it necessary to take to make those who refuse to work go to work. But in this case, and lacking such an agreement, how many “historic charges” will our police forces have to lead at the factories? And with what results? Even the former Minister of Labor, the Socialist [Luigi] Bertoldi – who is considered by a right-wing journalist, Domenico Bartoli, to be “a subtle interpreter of the Hegelian dialectic” – said it better than anyone else, and once and for all: “We must decide if we want to govern through the trade unions or the Carabinieri.” Because that is the heart of the question, which is as much political as it is economic, because – throughout the last few years – we could have gained much more if we had been able to use the unions three times more than we used the Carabinieri.<sup>143</sup> Alberto Ronchey,<sup>144</sup> who is far from the best Italian editorialist, recently wrote that the greatest economic problem we currently face is convincing people to work, and he is right. At present, it is no longer possible to allow ourselves to live by always hoping that the workers will delay their smoldering revolt for “one more moment,” or that our industry will regain its vitality and vigor, although an anarchy of protest still reigns in our factories. Meanwhile, Italy changes governments, one after another; each of them only lasts for several months; and these are governments that are constantly and uniquely engaged in the titanic enterprise of remaining in power a little longer than what appears possible to them, all the while deflecting all questions, even the least important ones, simply because any one of them would be enough to bring them down. But who today could better impose on the country a period of convalescence, during which the workers would cease struggling and go back to work, than the Communists? Who would be a better Minister of the Interior than Giorgio Amendola<sup>145</sup> when it comes to the eradication of the delinquency that has spread to all levels of society or to the

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<sup>140</sup> Baltasar Gracian, Paragraph CCLXIX, “Make Use of the Novelty of Your Position,” *The Art of Worldly Wisdom* (1637).

<sup>141</sup> French in original.

<sup>142</sup> English in original.

<sup>143</sup> A Federal armed police force.

<sup>144</sup> Employed by *Corriere della Sera*.

<sup>145</sup> Giorgio Amendola (1907-1980) was a deputy in the Italian Communist Party from 1948 to his death. He advocated non-Marxist positions and the making of alliances with other political parties, especially the Socialists.

silencing of the agitators, either through legitimate or illegitimate methods? We must undertake a long-term governmental effort and, to do this, we must have a solid and resolute government. Today, not accepting a “compromise” such as the one in question in truth means, for us, accepting the fatal risk of compromising the very existence of tomorrow. We must remember that neutrality in such an affair is the daughter of irresolution and that “ill-resolute princes most often follow that neutral way in order to avoid present perils, and most often end in ruin.”<sup>146</sup> So as to not see the real danger, we feign to believe that the agreement with the Italian Communist Party is a danger in itself, and we flee before both of them.

Even if they are obliged to admit the justness and utility of what we are saying, timorous spirits may find in our remarks the slight fault that they appear to set little value on the dangerous aspect of placing a Communist party at the heart of political power when, at this stage of the crisis, our powers are incapable of continuing to make the workers work. *Who will guard our guardians?*<sup>147</sup>

We would respond to such an objection that it is unfounded and that fear is a bad advisor. First of all, we must never fear a future and hypothetical danger at a moment when we are dying from a present and certain one, and, moreover, we must never risk all of our fortunes without risking all of our forces. Since the current strength of the Communist Party and the unions has already served us well and, in fact, has been our principal support since the autumn of 1969, and since the effects of this support have, until now, been quite insufficient to reverse the process, there is no doubt that our interests lie in *galvanizing* this strength as a matter of great urgency, and to do so by offering it access to the central point of application in society, that is to say, by introducing that strength into the center of State power.

On the other hand, we will say that the alleged future dangers of Communist participation in our government only exist in the sphere of illusions about the revolutionary tendency that the Communist Party supposedly constitutes in our society. These illusions were artificially spread in an epoch that is now over, that is, when they were useful for the defense of a world that (the times having changed) today needs to be defended with the support of these very same Communists. Only our current crop of politicians – who, despite their dismal failures, aspire to assert their autonomy as something more than simple delegates of Italian society in the service of its governmental administration – still pretend to hold as a real [and permanent] fact in strategic reasoning that which (the allegedly revolutionary tendencies of the ICP) was never anything more than an ideological “export” manufactured expressly for public consumption. Which makes these worn-out leaders subject to this severe condemnation: what they in fact want when they hang on to their old specializations (even when necessary modernization demands their “recycling”) is not to prolong for their own limited interests the apparent existence of a trade that they still know how to ply, but *a trade that they never knew how to ply*.

The Trojan Horse is only to be feared when there are Achaeans inside it. The Communist Party has been able to wear, and must continue to wear, a certain costume to disguise itself as the enemy of our City-State, but *it is not* such an enemy, just as our leader is not Ulysses. In fact, the Italian Communist closely resembles the carpenter in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* who lets half of his face be seen through the lion's mane he is wearing and who says to the members of the audience: “You ladies, you whose gentle hearts do fear / The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor, / May now perchance both quake and tremble here, / When lion rough in widest

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<sup>146</sup> Adopting the wording in Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., Chapter XXI, p. 83.

<sup>147</sup> Latin in original.

rage doth roar. / Then know that I, as Snug the joiner, am / A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam; / For if I should as lion come in strife / Into this place, 'twere pity on my life."<sup>148</sup>

And precisely because we dare to admit that the Italian workers, who have taken the offensive in the social war, are our enemies, we know that the Communist Party is our ally. We can no longer continue to reassure the country by pretending that the opposite is true, because we have come to the moment of truth, when lies no longer work and only force will do.<sup>149</sup> In past years, whenever we happened to discuss the Communists with Raffaele Mattioli, we never heard him suggest that he found them at all worrisome, and many times we heard him repeat the same conclusion: "They are quite brave." When Togliatti, a year before his death,<sup>150</sup> sent his last book to Mattioli, he (both flattered and amused) showed to us the dedication, which was written in the famous turquoise-blue ink of the Communist *leader*<sup>151</sup> whom imbeciles feared but we held in high regard: "To My Friend, etc. with the only regret that I cannot call you Comrade," if our memory serves us well. Who knows if Raffaele Mattioli, were he still with us, would not, in his turn, have written a dedication of the following type: "To Comrade Amendola, in the hopes of soon being able to call you 'Your Excellency.'"

In any event, we will not let ourselves forget that, for a long time, our parliamentary majority has ruled with the Communist opposition, and that the Communist opposition has been opposed to the same things to which the majority has been opposed. And yet today the entire political life of this country is paralyzed by the simple idea – a nightmare to the Christian Democrats – of granting a few ministerial posts to the Communists. Until quite recently, the Christian Democrats found semi-rational justifications for the necessity of their keeping a monopoly on power by continuing to hide the manner in which that power has been exercised, as well as by hiding several particular facts that were so scandalous that, if they were known, would have immediately caused the immediate dissolution of their party. But now that these facts are, little by little, becoming known throughout the country, these justifications have become null and void, and it is the dissolution of Italy itself that we must avoid, if we can.

Moreover, let us pose the question: *What is the alternative* to the "Historic Compromise"? Sooner or later, we will be in a situation in which neither the Communists, the unions, the forces of law and order, nor the secret services will be able to prevent the workers from mounting a general insurrection, the full consequences of which are difficult to foresee. In the best of hypothetical situations – and we only see two of them – if this insurrection does not become a pure and simple civil war, that is to say, if the Communists succeed in taking command of this insurrection (first by seeming to participate in it and then by seizing command of it), it is obvious that Berlinguer<sup>152</sup> would be able to dictate his conditions, and he would not be disposed to sharing his government with us. Riding the crest of the insurrectionary movement, the Communists would seize control of the State in the name of the workers, whom they would call upon to defend it. But, on the contrary, what seems to us more probable is that the credibility of the Communist Party among the workers would be completely exhausted at the moment of

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<sup>148</sup> Act 5 Scene 1, lines 232-240.

<sup>149</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., Chapter VI, p. 22: "Therefore it is necessary to be prepared so that, when they no longer believe, one might make them believe by force."

<sup>150</sup> Palmiro Togliatti, a leader of the Italian Communist Party, died in 1964.

<sup>151</sup> English in original.

<sup>152</sup> Enrico Berlinguer (1922-1984) was a leader of the Italian Communist Party. He favored a "Euro-Communism" that would be separate from the Soviet Bloc.

this all-too-foreseeable insurrection, with the result that the Communists' attempts at "recuperation" among the ranks of the insurgents would be useless or impossible. Civil war would no longer be avoidable, and the Communist Party, severed from its base, inevitably made up of revolutionaries, would no longer be of any use whatsoever to us. These are the two scenarios that form the single alternative to the "Historic Compromise." *There is no third one.*<sup>153</sup>

During such an event, what would become of the Atlantic Alliance, which is already in a state of crisis? And what about the Warsaw Pact, which was powerless during the workers' insurrections in Szczecin and Gdansk?<sup>154</sup> In the tragedy that would follow and play itself out in a theatre of war that would be no less vast than the territories affected by the current crisis, we would only be able to repeat – in the guise of a useless *mea culpa* – this verse from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*:

Where, oh where does the Law hide?  
Reason despairs of its powers,  
Intelligence gropes numbly,  
Its swift resources are dead.  
Our rule is compromised,  
Disaster is near:  
Where can I turn?<sup>155</sup>

In sum, our opinion today on the "Communist question" can be summarized in a single phrase: We do not make an issue of that which is no longer one, while the real questions and problems do not wait upon the decisions of Senator Fanfani, that *slow provider of benefits*,<sup>156</sup> to get irremediably worse. Giovanni Agnelli<sup>157</sup> – who is, among our young men of power, perhaps the only one who can flatter himself with possessing an intelligence that is the most deeply rooted in the reality of our epoch – has openly offered the same analysis that we have put forward. Despite certain differences in the details, our views converge where the majority of the conclusions are concerned. Without saying anything about our private commitments, we will content ourselves with recalling to our readers one of his publicly stated positions, enunciated at the beginning of 1975:

If our sickness is nearly fatal, we may reasonably assume that the Communist Party has understood the necessity of making good use of it, so that we can all save ourselves together. So that class hatred does not end up setting the world on fire and dividing it into two camps: the *enragés* in the streets and the others in their *bunkers*<sup>158</sup> with their bodyguards.

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<sup>153</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>154</sup> December 1970.

<sup>155</sup> See translation by G. Theodoridis (posted to the website of the University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2005) "Chorus: I am astounded! Reason has escaped my mind. Which way can I turn now / now that the palace has fallen?"

<sup>156</sup> A line from Horace's *Art of Poetry*. Latin in original.

<sup>157</sup> The director of FIAT Motors (1921-2003).

<sup>158</sup> English in original.

We could not have said it any better ourselves.

Finally, let us conclude. With the aid of the Communist Party in government, we will either succeed in saving our domination, or we will not succeed at all. If we do succeed, we will with the utmost ease dismiss the Communists, as well as a large number of the current political personnel, as if they were domestic servants. The Communists themselves have already clearly accepted this as an article in their work contract, and we have known since Heraclitus that “all that crawls upon the earth is governed by blows.” And if we do not succeed, nothing else will matter, because everyone will admit that it would be the worst of byzantine discussions – at the very moment that the Turks are at the ramparts – to calculate which trophies are going to be awarded to the Greens and the Blues at the circus,<sup>159</sup> in a world that will have collapsed.

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<sup>159</sup> Factions in the Byzantine chariot races, circa the Fifth Century CE.

**Chapter VII:  
Exhortation to Rescue Capitalism from its Irrationalities  
and to Save It<sup>160</sup>**

They think I'm severe?  
I know I am:  
I force them to think

Alfieri, *Epigrams*

He who considers the world in accordance with reason is himself considered in accordance with it. We must act in accordance with the times, and they have changed. To attempt to go against them is an undertaking whose success is as impossible as its failure is quite assured. The proximity of the fateful moment, *if it is eventually perceived as such by us all*, can paradoxically be our last chance for salvation and perhaps one day we can say, in our turn, what the Prince de Condé said during the religious wars:<sup>161</sup> “We would perish if we were not so close to perishing.”<sup>162</sup> On the condition that we know how to exploit for our exclusive advantage *all* the occasions that are presented to us, not every misfortune that befalls causes harm, despite the undeniable precariousness of our current situation. In the words of the “Exhortation to Retake Italy”:

At present, to know the virtue of an Italian spirit, it has been necessary that Italy reduce herself to the conditions in which she is at present (...) without chief, without order, beaten, despoiled, torn, overrun, and having borne every sort of ruin.<sup>163</sup>

To anyone who would accuse us of speaking too much or too quickly of our ruin and its non-hypothetical imminence, we would retort that such is the primary task of those who truly want to avoid it, because one does not always find oneself in the position to avoid such disasters. And, moreover, what else is there to speak about today?

The intelligent conservative can express the principle of his actions in a single sentence: *everything that does not merit being destroyed merits being saved* – and this immediately and everywhere in the world. But that which does not merit being saved, that is to say, that which is in contradiction with our own salvation or, more simply, anything that is an inconvenience or an embarrassment, must be abandoned and destroyed without equivocation or superfluous scruples. Unburdening oneself of the dead weight of the past is necessary to make the task of cleaning up the present less difficult.

Today, the *principal* irrationality of capitalism is that, although it is under dangerous attack, it does not do everything necessary to defend itself. But we will admit that there are other

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<sup>160</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., title of Chapter XXVI: “Exhortation to take Italy and, avenging, free her from the barbarians,” p. 94.

<sup>161</sup> Louis de Bourdon (1530-1569). The French religious wars lasted from 1562 to 1629.

<sup>162</sup> French in original.

<sup>163</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., Chapter XXVI, p. 94.

irrationalities. We must correct them as well, if we can. In those areas in which our management has been unreasonable, it must be changed, because, ever since the origin of the bourgeoisie, all of our power has been intimately linked to *rational management* and cannot endure without it. There is nothing new about the appropriateness of making profound reforms. We have made them in every epoch. That is our strength: we are the first society in history that has known how to correct itself constantly. We call “unreasonable” everything that is not a real necessity for our possession of society and that produces results that are objectively in contradiction with those necessities, that is to say, results that we ourselves can measure and are felt by everyone. We will discuss the necessary reforms below.

For the moment, we must repeat that, in the midst of the danger, we must (as the French say) *make every piece of wood into an arrow*,<sup>164</sup> starting with the most accessible and malleable pieces available. Thus, we must employ our own Communists – rather than sell the entire country to the Arabs, as some of our apparently insane politicians have seriously proposed, with the sole goal of sparing themselves the experience of a government in which the Communists participate. But this experiment will cost us nothing, while the logic of the other proposal would inevitably lead to our complete dispossession. How is it possible to place, even for a moment, two obviously unequal solutions on an equal footing? What is inconceivable on the plane of logic properly speaking obeys a particular logic that is hidden but easily discernible. Three-quarters of our political personnel would have to be discharged in the scenario that saves us. Whereas in the scenario that spells our ruin, these same people would remain in place, for a few more years, free to squander or embezzle a large part of our capital, which would ultimately result in our expropriation, without even assuring the continued power of the new property owners in the medium term. Pursuing this grotesque prospect further – which in fact supposes that the productive forces and the real estate assets of Europe would in large part be owned by a few Arab potentates, who now control the defective international monetary system only because they temporarily control the principal source of energy upon which the industrialized countries are dependent – would not the workers, who we already struggle mightily to keep in check, expropriate these new masters, given that they foreign, archaic and utterly incompetent, with an even greater facility than they would have with us? Transporting the property-owning class of our country to exotic and backwards locations means selling our birthright for a plate of lentils. But could such *upstarts*<sup>165</sup> truly hope to control our countries? With their own troops or with the help of ours? With our political skills or theirs? Our troops are no longer reliable, and theirs are worth nothing. Our skill is worn out. As for theirs: simply posing the question is to answer it [in the negative].

Thus, we will not be surprised if those responsible for such a strategy, especially in Italy, have no other policy than the complete *liquidation* of our national patrimony and its clandestine export to their Swiss bank accounts. While the high functionaries of our government ministries and economic organizations would charge very dearly – in depreciated money, alas! – to depart from careers that have already departed from them, the hospital in Padua has announced that it will sell to the highest bidder a Mantegna<sup>166</sup> that belongs to it. All of those who are responsible for the management of Italian society, seeing that society hurtle so quickly to its ruin, dream of selling what he or she holds. And, in the final analysis, what they hold is Italy itself, its

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<sup>164</sup> French in original.

<sup>165</sup> French in original.

<sup>166</sup> Andrea Mantegna, an Italian painter (1431-1503).

monuments and its soil. As things stand, it would perhaps be better not to attempt to evaluate the market value of our productive forces, given the caliber of our workers and managers. We must counter those who plan to offer Italian society itself up to a “Public Takeover Bid.”

We would like to return for a moment to one of our preceding statements, according to which we must (without scruples) remove all the *impediments* to the surmounting of the crisis facing our State. For example, a year ago, President Leone,<sup>167</sup> who is not completely unappreciative of our arguments, made an allusion (with perhaps too much circumspection and, thus, without any success) to the necessity of a constitutional reform that certain Communists now believe to be urgent. Today, we must propose a reform that is both radical and favorable to the restructuring of the Republic in conformity with the highest-priority necessities for the survival of our world and that, of course, would not be detrimental to the preservation of democracy, which, as we said in the first chapter of this *Report*, is important to us.

With the commitment of the Communist Party, as much in the drafting as in the implementation of the new constitution, we are persuaded that there is a real possibility of surmounting this great crisis. This new *Magna Carta* must maintain democracy, yes, but in a disabused way, thus contrary to what happened in the first 30 years of our Republic. Maintaining democracy means maintaining the rule of the vote, which is the basis of all the free, modern republics. We know that this rule is the inverse of the one that presided over primitive democracy. Among the ancient Greeks, the rule was to count the votes of those who were ready to fight openly for one camp or the other, and Plato (and subsequent history) showed how this primitive democracy descended into disorder and despotism. In its modern meaning, “democracy” must, on the contrary, be understood to be the manner of making the people vote on all the questions for which they are not disposed to fight. This aspect must be accentuated, and we must summon the citizens to vote, as in the past, but on a much greater variety of subjects that are not detrimental to the smooth functioning of society, and the citizens must continue to choose between diverse candidates. But these candidates, no matter what side they come from, must have already been selected in their turn, and with a qualitative rigor unknown in our times, by a genuine *elite* in the spheres of political power, the economy and culture.

And this economy itself – this modern technology that we make use of, and whose power is virtually unlimited – requires that we make a better and *more intelligent* use of it. That is to say, we must no longer allow ourselves to dominate through this power, which, left to its own devices, incessantly tends to become autonomous, escaping from our hands, which in the recent past have wielded it, above all, according to the democratic and demagogical fictions upon which (during the epoch of “the abundance of well-being” and market abundance) we built a giant with clay feet. But since that epoch is over, we must now cease to make the people consume images that are too beautiful and too wild, and must instead give ourselves the means to make them consume images of a reality that is less harsh than the current one: less pollution; fewer automobiles; better bread, meat and houses; and so forth. In sum, a reform of our economy *from the ground up* and its reconstruction on more solid bases must establish a new economic order, one that is capable of being *both* authentically liberal and severely controlled by the State – certainly not *this particular State*, because the new one must be rigorously lead by an *elite* that is really worthy of the name. We will return to this subject below.

Today, it is incumbent upon us to recognize that we must not only maintain the dominant

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<sup>167</sup> Giovanni Leone (1908-2001), a right-wing member of the Christian Democratic Party, was the President of Italy from December 1971 to June 1978.

class, but *the very best possible dominant class*. Our government ministers must strive to rule through merit and talent, because we know that those who start out aiming at a secondary position will never attain it: they will never attain anything at all. If today this minimum requirement seems too utopian or too ambitious, it is so with respect to the dismal panorama of the current crop of politicians. But such a requirement, which the current situation makes obligatory, is in fact by no means disproportionate to the reality that we must eventually confront and to the long-term tasks that the sound administration of our society requires.

*What is convenient to a prince that he might be esteemed?*<sup>168</sup> Which men are able to save our society? This is what we must ask when we are choosing our governmental ministers; this is what is especially neglected when we privilege a hundred laughable “qualifications,” such as the fact that the Honorable [Aldo] Moro is more or less the enemy of Cefis,<sup>169</sup> or that someone else’s wife is the intimate friend of the wife General Miceli, who at the time happened to be in prison. “Stranger,” Plato says, “the moment has come to be serious,”<sup>170</sup> and we know the interest that this philosopher had in the political problems of our peninsula.

Well! We assert, and we reserve the right to prove it, that today in Italy the men we need do in fact *exist*, and we must make use of them as soon as possible, by bringing them out of the limbo-like depths into which a herd of Christian Democratic notables, disguised as wolves, flatter themselves with having condemned forever, so that these same Christian Democrats can have the pleasure of satisfying their own raging hunger for ministerial posts and patronage in complete freedom. Moreover, just a few traits would suffice to define these men, because merit accounts for so little in our Republic, and a few well-chosen ministers would suffice to make any State function as it should, provided, of course, that it is true that in France under Louis XIII, a single one sufficed. But it is also quite obvious that if we persist in covering the various pastas of our governments in Italian-style sauce – by assigning a ministerial post to a man of Bruno Visenti’s talents,<sup>171</sup> and another one to someone like Gioia, of whom *it is well to say nothing*<sup>172</sup> – we will compromise to the very roots any possibility of action by men of value, and we will once again prove right Mussolini’s self-justifying formula, according to which “governing Italy is not a difficult business; it is a useless one.”<sup>173</sup> Fortunately, the future of capitalism is not inextricably tied to the future of Christian Democracy, no more than it was to the future of fascism, but let us recall that a half-century of stupidity in power is a rather unenviable world record, especially if no one is inclined to contest it. Because today few and far between are the men of talent who will take the risk of compromising themselves in the midst of the administrative corruption of a State that appears to be, in the words of Dante, “that sad sack that turns everything that it swallows

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<sup>168</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., title of Chapter XXI, p. 81. Latin in original. In the translation provided by Guy Debord, this phrase is rendered as “How should the prince govern to acquire esteem?”

<sup>169</sup> Eugenio Cefis, the chairman of ENI (petrochemicals) and Montedison (chemicals), both State-owned enterprises.

<sup>170</sup> *The Republic*.

<sup>171</sup> Bruno Visenti (1914-1995) was an industrialist who became the Minister of Finance in 1974.

<sup>172</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Inferno*, IV, 104, p. 63.

<sup>173</sup> In point of fact, this quip wasn’t made by Mussolini, but by Giovanni Giolitti (1842-1928), who’d served as Prime Minister several times in his life.

into shit.”<sup>174</sup>

To save ourselves from the threat of subversion, which will probably persist in the years to come, even if the Communists in government are able to master it better than we are at the moment, our primary undertaking must not be an obstinate and obtuse defense of current Italy and its incompetent leaders. On the contrary, our primary undertaking must resemble a *scorched-earth policy*, which will permit us to unburden ourselves of these men and the frilly trimmings with which we cover our poor Republic. And, concurrent with this radical housecleaning, we must reconstruct around ourselves a society provided with all the qualities that would render it worthy of being defended and saved in the eyes of many people. And who knows if, at that moment, the workers themselves would not cease attacking us so violently, even if they must always remain irreducibly hostile to private property at the bottom of their hearts? But without venturing into utopian philosophical theories about the future of the world in a time when, personally, we will no longer be around, it is more fitting to consider, while we are still here, all that must be done to ensure that we do not outlive our own world. In the final analysis, who are our real enemies?

We would argue that, today, we face *several* hostile realities, only one of which is historically immanent to our mode of domination and production: the proletariat, which has a natural and perpetual tendency to revolt. The ancient Romans summarized this fact in the adage *we have as many enemies as there are slaves*.<sup>175</sup> Once we have acknowledged this incontestable and enduring fact, it is essential to see if the other realities that are hostile to us have the same immutability and constancy. Even more precisely, we would like to say that it would be fitting to see if these other realities are as necessary and *useful* as the proletariat. Because we should not forget for an instant that the workers, at least when they work and do not revolt, are the most useful reality in the world and merit our respect, for in a certain way they (under our astute direction) produce our wealth, *id est*, our power. Well! We would contest the idea that the other realities that currently jeopardize our power are in fact necessary or unavoidable. We therefore propose to examine at least two of them here: the moral turpitude and incompetence of which our political class have given ample proof, on the one hand, and economic anarchy, on the other. These two phenomena are deleterious, but both fortunately can be eliminated, because they depend on our will.

As for what we define as the “insufficiency” (to speak euphemistically) of our governing strata as a whole, and setting aside all due exceptions, we can affirm that we must no longer have any qualms about letting it sink like a stone in the *great sea*<sup>176</sup> of its errors and scandals, because we already have shown it more gratitude than it deserves for the services that we admit that it has rendered us in the already-distant past, and for too long we have accorded it patience at costs that we did not believe that we were capable of sustaining. Because patience, among all the human virtues, is, according to us, the only one that ceases to be a virtue when one practices it excessively. We leave to the Pope, who is less pressed than we are by the contingent necessities of mundane life in this century, the occasion to make an act of charity by rescuing and absolving these *orphans of power*. Apart from the satisfaction that we must finally provide to public opinion, which is legitimately tired of seeing incompetence in power being rewarded, we can

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<sup>174</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit, *Inferno*, XXVIII, 26-27: “that disgusting tube / Which makes shit of what does down our throats.”

<sup>175</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>176</sup> Latin in original.

spare ourselves the future burden of having to defend the men who, instead of conducting a policy of intelligent conservatism, as we have required of them, have instead preferred a policy of obtuse reaction that always squanders everything that passes through their hands. These are men supported by our capital, which they have declared that they want to defend so as to mock the voters, and now they support themselves upon the voters so as to mock us. Finally, to once again express ourselves by quoting Machiavelli, “while you use it you lose the capacity to use it.”<sup>177</sup>

Moreover, even in the Christian Democratic Party there are intelligent men, and here we are not referring solely to people like Andreotti or Donat-Cattin. But in good conscience, how can we say that the intelligence of these politicians can bring forth fruit when Fanfani asks them to make use of it with the sole aim of defending the indefensible and the futile, meanwhile systematically neglecting to save what is essential? The very survival of a political world of this type is already *in itself* one of the hostile realities that we must cease to keep alive. We must *rid ourselves of it*, “and the combat thereafter will be short.”

As for what we have called “economic anarchy,” we will say that, from now on, we must authoritatively limit the tendency to accumulate excessive profits in certain basic sectors where the level of development reached by modern techniques – especially chemical ones – renders anything technically possible, but where the results assault the population in its everyday existence and tend to deprive it even more of the little that we must absolutely let it have. For example, we completely disapprove of the industrialists who take the risk of uninterruptedly provoking the people, who are made to consume petroleum-based products, chemically treated wines and inedible food with the sole aim of increasing their sector-based profits, insolently neglecting the broader and higher interests of our class as a whole.

We repeat that nothing more provokes the democratic citizen than the impression that we give him when, with impunity and systematically, we take him for a fool. Even when this citizen is disinterested in politics, he is not insensible to the quality of what he eats or the air that he breathes. On the contrary, we must preoccupy ourselves with maintaining the best possible qualitative levels of life, primarily for the dominant class and secondarily for the dominated classes. Moreover, in 1969, an industrialist like Henry Ford said (and we would like to quote his own words), “the terms of the contract between industry and society have changed. (...) We are called upon to contribute to the quality of life much more than the quantity of goods.”<sup>178</sup> Hypocrisy does not result in anything good or, at least, it *must no longer* be profitable. We are scarcely inclined to greet the news from Cefis concerning Montedison’s latest balance sheets with the satisfaction that is felt by the hapless money-saver who is also a small stockholder, especially when those assets have been more or less acquired by the means that Scalfari has recently revealed to the public in his book *The Master Race*<sup>179</sup> and when these very profits, in truth, represent a formidable incitement to social revolt.

And since we have cited Eugenio Scalfari, a man whose courage and intelligence we value, we will seize this occasion to express our opinion on what he has excellently defined as the “State bourgeoisie.”

(Precisely one of the reasons that led us to choose for this *Report* the old form of expression of the pamphlet, instead of a more systematic text, is that we need not forego the

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<sup>177</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., Chapter XVI, p. 60.

<sup>178</sup> Henry Ford, speech to the Harvard Business School, 1969.

<sup>179</sup> Eugenio Scalfari, *Razza Padrona: Storia della Borghesia di Stato* (1974).

pleasure of talking about this and that, as one does in conversation, which allows us to touch upon everything without ever have the pretention of being exhaustive and, at the same, allows us to avoid getting bogged down in the marshes of sophisticated “demonstrations” of which our politicians are fond when they try to pass off their elastic “truths.” To say *the truth*, few words suffice: *the truth is the indicator of both itself and the false.*<sup>180</sup> And because this form of writing is rapid, it appears useful to us at a moment when so many other commitments that cannot be put off impose on us the necessity of not wasting time.)

This “State bourgeoisie,” which combines the faults of the parasitical and decadent bourgeoisie and those of the bureaucratic class that holds power in the so called Socialist countries, is one of the distinctive products of the “Italian style” of the management of power, and it is a highly noxious residue of the parceling out of this power. Cefis, the President of Montedison, is the model that inspired Scalfari’s description. But, in reality, this “State bourgeoisie” exceeds its model; it is nested almost everywhere in the nationalized industries and those that involve governmental participation, as well as in the forest of the 60,000 public “organizations” in existence today, and thus it possesses a proper power that is autonomous with respect to the large, traditional bourgeoisie, and it has founded on this power what Alberto Ronchey<sup>181</sup> has pertinently called “Christian-Democratic State capitalism.” The members of such a “master or ruling race” are, in reality, individuals who have no original personal patrimony and no culture. They aren’t simply deprived of a culture worthy of a ruling class, but they are, even from a distance, obviously deprived of the culture of an austere petit-bourgeois person (a teacher, for example) in the past. Of course, today, only a relatively limited number of these individuals hold real power, and the largest number of them can only do harm due to their limited talents. But this does not change the fact that this phenomenon is growing and thus merits our attention.

Over the course of its history, capitalism has continuously modified the composition of the social classes and has done so to such an extent that it has transformed society as a whole. It has weakened or recomposed, eliminated or even created the classes that have had subordinate but necessary functions in the production, distribution and consumption of commodities. Only the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have remained the historical classes that have – in a conflict that has essentially remained the same for the last century – continued to play out the destiny of the world. But the circumstances, scenarios, supporting players and even the spirits of the principal protagonists have changed with the times.

Thus, this phenomenon is not particular to Italian society. The expansion of the last 30 years, which is unprecedented in the history of the global economy, has involved the necessity of creating a class of *managers*,<sup>182</sup> that is to say, technicians capable of directing the industrial production and circulation of commodities. These *managers*, as one has called them since their modern popularization, these *executives*<sup>183</sup> have necessarily been recruited from outside of our class, which can no longer assume the totality of managerial tasks on its own. Despite a gilded legend, which they are the only ones to believe, these executives are nothing other than a metamorphosis of the urban petit-bourgeoisie, previously constituted in the main by independent

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<sup>180</sup> Spinoza, *Ethics*, I, proposition 36. Latin in original.

<sup>181</sup> An Italian journalist, essayist and politician (1926-2010).

<sup>182</sup> English in original.

<sup>183</sup> This paragraph and the three that follow it are taken directly from “Notes on the Situationist International and Its Times,” *The Veritable Split in the International*, op. cit., Thesis 36, pp. 55-56.

producers of the artisan type, who today have *become salaried*, no more or less so than the workers properly speaking, and this despite the fact that sometimes these executives hope to resemble members of the liberal professions. Given this “resemblance,” which they have obtained on the cheap, these executives have in a certain way become the object of the promotional reveries of many strata of poor employees, but, in reality, they have nothing that could define them as rich. They are only paid enough to consume a little more than the others, but the commodities they consume are always the same ones consumed by everyone else.

Unlike the bourgeois, the worker, the serf and the feudal landowner, the executive never feels *at home*. Always uncertain and always disappointed, he continually aspires to be more than he is or will ever be. He pretends and, at the same time, he doubts. He is the man of uneasiness, so little sure of himself and his destiny – not without reason – that he must continually hide the reality of his existence. He is dependent in an absolute manner, and much more so than the worker, because he is obligated to follow all the fashions, including the ideological fashions. It is for him that our “*avant-garde*” writers and authors make the repugnant *bestsellers*<sup>184</sup> that turn bookstores into supermarkets. We refuse to set foot into such places. (Fortunately there are still several good stores devoted to old books, and these are our consolation.) It is for these executives that, today, one changes the physiognomy and functions of our cities, which used to be the most beautiful and oldest in the world, and it is for them that, in the once-excellent restaurants, they program the repugnant and adulterated cuisine that the executives always appreciate in loud voices so that the people at the other tables can hear that they have learned their good pronunciations from the announcements on the multi-lingual loudspeakers at airports. “Oh, all the wickedly created people!”<sup>185</sup>

Politically, this new class perpetually oscillates, because it successively seeks to attain contradictory things. Thus there is not a single political party that does not compete with the others for the executive’s vote and, at different times, each one gets it from him.

Much like the members of the old petit-bourgeoisie, the executives of today are very diverse, but the strata of upper-level executives, who are the model and illusory goal for all the others, is already tied in a thousand ways to the bourgeoisie properly speaking and it integrates itself into that class even more frequently than it originates from it. Such, in a few words, is the portrait of those in whom our bourgeoisie has entrusted a growing portion of its own functions. Thus there cannot be too much reason to be surprised if these functions have been discharged in the bad manner with which we are all too familiar.

In fact, a progressively growing part of our own class has become parasitical, either through discouragement or inaptitude, and, when this part is not ruined financially, it is at least significantly impoverished, as we might have expected. Well! We will not only say that this part of the bourgeoisie must no longer be defended; we will also say that it must be *eliminated*. Either it will be reintegrated, with dignity and all the intelligence that the current situation requires, into a society whose very tissue we must remake, or, failing that, the Communist ministers who will strike that part of the bourgeoisie with a Draconian fiscal reform (one finally worthy of the name “reform”) will have our full support. And those comfortable, inactive bourgeois should not believe for a moment that a Communist minister would be necessary to make such a reform, because this measure derives less from the “Historic Compromise” than their own behavior,

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<sup>184</sup> English in original.

<sup>185</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit, *Inferno*, XXXII, 13, p. 182: “O you who are the lowest dregs of all.”

which is lacking all combativeness. The people say that necessity sharpens intelligence, and the moment has come in which creativity and the fantastic entrepreneurial spirit, proof of which the bourgeoisie gave in previous times, today encounters all the conditions for being deployed anew. There are only two possibilities: either the bourgeoisie in Italy and elsewhere proves its intelligence and its will to live, or it will perish, having collaborated too much with its own enemies and thus accelerated and rendered unavoidable its own demise – because it had sought to equate its survival as the hegemonic class with the survival of its failings. In that case, its condemnation has already been written:

For these deficiencies, and no other fault,  
We are lost; there is no other penalty  
Than to live here without hope, but with desire.<sup>186</sup>

At the beginning of this final chapter, we alluded to the possibility of implementing reforms. This is not the place to treat in a profound manner such questions, which we have already envisioned elsewhere, in an unsigned document, very confidentially distributed, titled *The Republic of the Italians* in homage to a celebrated text by the pseudo-Xenophon.<sup>187</sup> We do not believe we lack modesty when we recall that this document encountered the gratifying approval of the people who occupy the highest positions of power, because it honors them that we may cite here their prompt grasp of the necessity at hand. Thus we will limit ourselves here to sketching out a few methodological bases for these reforms.

Obviously the difficulty here resides in the necessity of defining what in fact is vital for our economic and social order, that is to say, the necessity of making a strict distinction between the vital things and the appearances that are all too easily accepted by people affected by illusions, complacency and routine. Like everyone else, we recognize that current practices cannot continue, but we do so in a lucid and combative perspective, and not in the imbecilic despondency that currently reigns among all the authors of the errors of the past, who are not even able to discover that these were, quite simply, crude errors, with the result that they have the impression that they have been refuted by a thunderbolt from out of the blue, i.e., in a totally unforeseeable manner. In fact, we must correct the irrationalities of our power and, for those who can view our history with disabused eyes, this is nothing new.

Unbridled capitalism is doomed. From the moment that one can sell anything and everything, it is uncivil to only and primarily produce what is immediately the most profitable when doing so is detrimental to every conceivable future. All of the excesses of competition must be eliminated by the very power of production, and without delay, because, quite literally, *there is nowhere to live* with this form of production, which destroys its own foundations and its own conditions for the future. At a time when the productive process threatens itself because we have believed too much in the value of its *automatism* (which has been helped but never really corrected by political power), all of the social *justifications* for this form of production have universally ceased to be accepted. We no longer believe – no one any longer believes – that the progress of production is capable of *reducing work*. We no longer believe – few people still do –

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<sup>186</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, *ibid*, *Inferno*, IV, 40-43, p. 61.

<sup>187</sup> Pseudo-Xenophon did in fact write a text called *The Constitution of the Athenians*, but it was hostile to its announced subject. As for Censor's *The Republic of the Italians*, it appears that it doesn't exist.

that this form of production is capable of distributing *genuine goods* in ever-increasing quantities and ever-improving quality. Thus, the necessary conclusions must be drawn. As soon as possible, the true holders of social authority – in the sectors of property, culture, the State and the unions – must secretly, and then publicly, come up with a long-term *plan for the rationalization of society*. Capitalism must proclaim and fully realize the rationality that it has carried since its birth, but has only been implemented partially and poorly. If we can accomplish such urgent and necessary work here in Italy – precisely because our country can draw the strength for its salvation from the very extremity of the danger it faces – the “Italian model” of capitalism could be adopted by all of Europe and subsequently open up a new road to the entire world.

From the perspective of a qualitative society, we must, above all, very consciously and clearly distinguish *two sectors* of consumption. One sector should supply authentic quality, with all of its real consequences; the other (that of everyday consumption) should be, insofar as it is possible, purged and purified. For a long time, we have feigned to believe that the abundance of industrial production would, little by little, elevate everyone to the conditions of life enjoyed by the *elite*. This argument has so completely lost its very slight appearance of seriousness that, today, it has become degraded to the point of being nothing more than the ephemeral basis for the reasoning and incitements of advertising. Henceforth we must know that the abundance of fabricated objects demands (with ever-greater urgency) the demarcation of a true *elite*, one that precisely shelters itself from such abundance and keeps for itself the little that is really precious. Without this, there will soon be nowhere on Earth where anything truly precious exists. The mechanically egalitarian tendencies of modern industry, which wants to fabricate everything for everyone, and which disfigures and destroys everything that exists so as to distribute its most recent commodities, has spoiled almost all our space and a large part of our time by crowding them both with mediocre goods. Cars and “second homes” are everywhere. If words remain rich, the things they refer to are not, and the landscape is degraded for everyone. The law that governs here is, of course, that everything that we distribute to the poor can never be anything other than poverty: cars that cannot circulate because there are too many of them; wages paid in inflated money; meat from livestock fattened up in several weeks by chemical feed, etc.

What would a true *elite* love? Let each reader ask himself this in all sincerity. We love the company of people of good taste and culture, art, the quality of well-chosen food and wine, the calm of our parks and the beautiful architecture of our ancient residences, our extensive libraries, and the handling of great human affairs or merely contemplating them from behind the scenes. Who could be convinced that any of that, and specifically the version of it churned out by our current industrial production of cheap trash, could be made available to everyone? Or even to the top 10 percent of our quite excessively large population? And would anyone even dare to suggest that such things could truly be appreciated and enjoyed by just anyone, even by some guy we have made a government minister but who still feels the sweat of his poor childhood and his feverish *arriviste*<sup>188</sup> studies?

Thus we must rethink the entirety of production and consumption, and reeducate ourselves in *class consciousness* by reminding ourselves that our class has the historical merit of discovering the existence of socio-economic classes, and that it was the bourgeoisie – not Marxism – that announced the class struggle and founded upon that struggle its possession of society. Our social *elite* is not closed, as were the “estates” of the *Ancien Régime*. People have easily gained access to it, over the course of several generations, when our educational system

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<sup>188</sup> French in original.

has been realistic and tailor-made for the job, and when we offered to the most suitable individuals the opportunity to enjoy the real, tangible advantages that reward and justify the greatest effort. Likewise, we must remain in a position to offer to the subordinate classes (the craftsmen, the governmental and political/labor union functionaries, etc.) lesser but still satisfying and authentic benefits. Thus, the inclination to valorously elevate oneself on the social ladder so as to attain a qualitatively rich form of existence will be reinforced, because such a goal must appear in all of its beautiful reality and to the precise extent that we can once again begin to enjoy it peacefully. Today, such a reality is out of reach because we have spread false luxury and spurious comfort so excessively (and without thinking about the consequences) that the entire population is understandably quite unsatisfied by them both.

Greed could make the trivial objection that the delimitation of the consumption of things of quality, which would recreate a *barrier of money* against polluted consumption by the lower classes, would also cause unfortunate obligations among the dominant class to spend more money on its everyday purchases. We would respond that the rich must pay for their luxury; otherwise, in a short period of time, they will not have any luxuries at all. The bourgeoisie, especially in Italy, must understand that it is no longer possible for the rich to get everything on the cheap, just as they must also pay their taxes. On the other hand, we must work to improve the people's consumption by correcting, as much as possible, everything harmful to physical or mental health that is currently inflicted on them, and everyone knows that there are a lot of harmful agents, ranging from our means of transportation to our food, not to mention our mind-numbing distractions and leisure activities. At present, the common people are so *worn out* by the abundance of artificial and disappointing consumption that they would accept (with relief) consumption that was measured and reassuring, and that pretty much satisfied their few authentic needs. It would be sufficient for us – to the extent that we make these corrections – to reveal the reality, especially from the medical point of view, of what has become of bread, wine and the air: in short, all of the people's simple pleasures. If the people are justly *frightened*, we will be praised for having stopped them for sliding any further down the fatal slope of current reality. We must no longer create pollution, except when industry *really* cannot avoid doing so, and then we should only pollute industrial zones that have been set aside and peopled on the basis of fundamental criteria, and not all over the country, *thoughtlessly and casually*,<sup>189</sup> as is done now.

On its own, the question of education is so serious that it would almost suffice to make everyone understand that we must urgently reconstruct a qualitative society, as much in our own enlightened self-interest as in that of the entire population. When we see the quantity of graduates from what we ironically call our universities, who are not only bereft of real culture but usefulness as well, who cannot even find jobs as workers because employers routinely refuse to hire such people, and who thus inevitably become malcontents and perhaps even rebels, we consider that they are the products of an incompetence that feels no embarrassment in squandering the State's resources, not without result, but, rather, with the result that we are exposed to dangers, and this clashes not only with the most elemental sense of honesty, but with basic logic, too. The Italians – who invented the university and the bank, who during the Renaissance devised the first and best scientific theory of domination – are now the first ones, and more than any other people, to suffer the crisis of everything in which they have excelled. We can still be the world's leaders, that is, if we can show the world the road that will lead us out of and beyond this crisis.

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<sup>189</sup> *a bischero sciolto*, an old Florentine expression.

If we offer each person a relatively satisfying place, but especially if we can assure ourselves, without shilly-shallying, of the collaboration of what we might call *the elites of control*, we will not have difficulty resisting all subversion with a minimum of intelligently selective repression. Because it is certainly not the so-called “Red Brigades”<sup>190</sup> that put our power in danger, and if today the four fanatics who compose them seem to be a danger to the State, and easily escape from its prisons, this is not because the “Red Brigades” are a small but very powerful group, but quite simply because the State has atrophied to such an extent that anyone can make it seem laughable. When we speak of selective repression, we are talking about defending ourselves against something other than them.

Censorship – and here we confess that we must keep our Communist allies on a short leash – is not in keeping with the very spirit of capitalism. Censorship can only be envisioned in our laws and used in practice as a completely exceptional recourse, at least when it comes to books. We must neither overestimate their danger nor allow ourselves to forget about them. For example, in the last ten years, and taking into account all of the democratic countries, it seems to us that an intelligent censorship would only have had to ban three or four books in total. But it would have been necessary to make these books disappear absolutely, by every possible means. We ourselves have not neglected to read them, but we did so while keeping them away from everyone else, as the library at the Vatican does with erotic books. When books of political critique only concern topical details or local incidents, they are out of date even before there has been enough time for them to attract a large number of readers. We have only to pay attention to the very rare books that are able to attract followers over long periods of time and eventually weaken our power. We must assuredly educate ourselves about them. Nevertheless, it should not be a matter of merely criticizing the authors of such books, but annihilating them. Indeed, we know, but often forget, that the pens of such authors always end up making people take up arms, or at least they do until the reverse becomes true. We no longer remember who said it the first time, but there exists a significant simultaneity between the inventions of printing and gunpowder. In sum, we must treat the authors of certain books as disturbers of the public peace, as harmful to our civilization, which they do not want to reform, but to destroy. On all the crucial points, we must scrupulously guard against all sentimentality and all pretensions to excessive justifications for our censorship. Otherwise we risk corrupting our own lucidity. We do not govern Paradise, but this fallen world.

As terrible as it is, at the moment that we are writing, the situation in Italy is such that no one can accuse us of having exaggerated the danger and discomfort to the point that we have derived all that assaults us as the universal class from the particular misfortunes of this *enslaved Italy, a place of grief, a ship without a master in a great storm*.<sup>191</sup> On the contrary, if we are deeply worried about what has happened and what could still happen in Italy, this is precisely because we know that the crisis is global. Given that capitalist unification is so advanced on the planetary scale, it is global capitalism that we risk driving into the abyss. Italy is no longer what it was for a long time: a backwards province, separated from the modern nations. From this situation came both its misfortune and its peace and quiet. Class power is threatened in Russia as it is in America, but Europe – weak in every aspect – is at the center of the tempest. And all the

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<sup>190</sup> Founded in 1970, the *Brigate Rosse* was an extreme-Left Marxist-Leninist group that preached armed struggle and practiced terrorist tactics. For an extended critique of them, see “On Terrorism and the State,” elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>191</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit, *Purgatory*, VI, 76-78, p. 222.

historical misfortunes of Europe have in common the fact that, at the center of them all, one finds the French, regrettably. Everything permits us to think that, without them, capitalism would have experienced a superior development from the qualitative point of view. The attack by Charles VIII shattered the Italian commercial republics and, three centuries later, Bonaparte went as far as obliterating the even memory of them in Venice. The French Revolution of 1789 gave free rein to the unlimited programs of the riff-raff, while the bourgeois revolution in England in the 17th century appeared to have founded the urban politics that permitted the harmonious development of modern capitalism. Finally, even more recently, while the ideology of commodity abundance appeared capable of calming the discontents of the working classes through consumption – although it is true that astute observers always doubted the stability of such an equilibrium – it was again the French who, in 1968, dealt that ideology its deathblow.<sup>192</sup>

What we confront today is a universal problem and, at the same time, a very old one. Last year, Giovanni Agnelli said that the workers no longer want to work because they have been demoralized by the modern living conditions that we have constructed for them. However much subtlety we might recognize in this quite original observation, we must say that Agnelli – by privileging too much the examination of circumstances that are the most characteristic of the current period – did not go to the heart of the matter this time. The workers do not want to work every time they glimpse the slightest opportunity for not working, and they glimpse opportunities of this type every time that economic and political domination is weakened by objective difficulties or by difficulties that follow from our blunders. If we get to the heart of the matter, to never work again was the goal of the *Ciampi* as well as the Communards.<sup>193</sup> Every past society in every era has, in its way, confronted this problem and managed to dominate it, while at present we are the ones who are in the process of being dominated by it.

Those of our readers who have recognized us know quite well that at no time in our life have we consented to make a pact with fascism, and that we will not make one with any form of totalitarian bureaucratic management, and for the very same reasons. The bourgeoisie must want to remain the historical class *par excellence*. Irrefutable on this point, Karl Marx himself demonstrated very well the error that the bourgeoisie commits when it places its political power in the hands of “Bonapartism.”<sup>194</sup> Thus, we are turned towards the future, but not any old future.

To speak the language of our “executants,” what would be our “model”? While the most cultivated of our adversaries find the blueprint for their model in Pericles’ Athens or pre-Medicean Florence – models that they must confess are quite insufficient, but nevertheless worthy of their true agenda, because they display in their most caricatured forms, behind the utopian radicalism of ultra-democracy, the violence and incessant disorder that are its very essence – we, on the contrary, designate the Republic of Venice as our model of a qualitative society (a model that, in its time, was sufficient and even perfect). Venice had the best ruling class in history: no one resisted it, nor presumed to demand an accounting from it. For centuries, there were no demagogic lies, no troubles (or hardly any) and very little blood was spilled. Venice was *terrorism tempered with happiness*, the happiness of each person *in his proper place*.

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<sup>192</sup> Reading between the lines, we are convinced that one of the “three or four” recently published books that Censor would recommend that the government censor would be Guy Debord’s *La Société du Spectacle*, published in 1967.

<sup>193</sup> The *Ciampi* (wool carders) of Florence revolted and set up a short-lived government in 1378. The Communards were partisans of the Paris Commune (1871).

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852).

And we do not forget that the Venetian oligarchy, which relied upon the armed workers of the Arsenal during certain moments of crisis, had already discovered the truth that an *elite* selected from among the workers always plays the game of society's owners marvelously well.

To conclude, we will say that, rereading these pages, we have not discovered what pertinent objection a rigorous mind could make to them, and we are persuaded that their truth will generally impose itself.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Cf. Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, the concluding paragraph of which includes this line: "I can think of no one Objection, that will possibly be raised against this Proposal."

## “Proofs of the Nonexistence of Censor By His Creator”

### I. Phenomenological

“In the last ten years, and taking into account all of the democratic countries, it seems to us that an intelligent censorship would only have had to ban three or four books in total. But it would have been necessary to make these books disappear absolutely, by every possible means (...) It should not be a matter of criticizing the authors of such books, but annihilating them (...) We must treat the authors of certain books as disturbers of the public peace, as harmful to our civilization, which they do not want to reform, but to destroy.” (Censor, *Truthful Report*)

“Have you read *The Trumpet of the Last Judgment Against Hegel, the Atheist and the Antichrist*?<sup>196</sup> If you still do not know, I can tell you, under the seal of secrecy, that it is by Bauer<sup>197</sup> and Marx. I truly laughed wholeheartedly as I read it.” (G. Jung, letter to Arnold Ruge, December 1841)

Those who up until now regretted not knowing who the author of the *Truthful Report* was, will now regret what they know. Those who were so scandalized by the anonymity of Censor will now have reason to be even more scandalized. Those who praised Censor because they believed it would be good to be seen by a powerful person will no longer be proud of it. And those who until now have prudently preferred to keep quiet and only take a position after they knew the name of the author will have given the measure of everything that their opportunism (like the fearful hesitation that they believe makes a fortress when they are in a predicament) *lets take place*.

In 1841, under the guise of denouncing Hegel as an atheist, Marx and Bauer wrote and published an anonymous pamphlet that was in fact directed against the Hegelian rightwing but that, due to its tone and style, appeared to come from the metaphysical extreme-right of the time. In reality, the pamphlet showed all the menacing revolutionary traits of which the Hegelian dialectic was the bearer in that period, and it was thus the first document that established the death of metaphysics and the “destruction of all the State’s laws” that was the consequence.

Today, it is no longer a matter of demonstrating the atheistic and revolutionary character of the Hegelian dialectic, but a matter of knowing if there exists in the dominant class a strategic thought that is capable of conceiving the prospects for capitalism. I have proved that this thought does not exist. I used the following method. If class power today possesses a thought and a project that deals with the preservation of the dominant order, although they are translated into practice with the misfortunes that we see all around us, what would these things be? Everyone has been able to ascertain that, on every occasion they speak, the representatives of power never say anything that is serious, not even about the affairs that concern them the most. And so one wonders, What do they say to each other when they are far away from the public’s eyes and ears?

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<sup>196</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: *Die Posaune des Jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel den Atheisten und Antichristen: Ein Ultimatum* (Leipzig, 1841).

<sup>197</sup> Bruno Bauer (1809-1882) was a philosopher, historian and theologian. Nine years older than Karl Marx, he studied with Hegel, who died in 1831.

Thus, in August [1975], under the pseudonym of Censor, I wrote and published 520 copies of the subsequently famous pamphlet *Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy*. This pamphlet was sent to government ministers, members of parliament, industrialists, union leaders and the journalists who are the most respected by public opinion. This *Truthful Report* immediately aroused great interest and a vast discussion that still continues today.

But on one point, at least, everyone was unanimous, because everyone believed that Censor existed, and they ventured to recognize him in this or that person from the economic or political worlds (everyone from Guido Carli to Cesare Merzagora, from Giovanni Malagodi to Raffaele Mattioli himself, who according to some journalists directed “Operation Censor” from beyond the grave).

All of them were deceived: *Censor does not exist*. And although his world still exists, the class that he represents no longer has the strength to produce a bourgeois of such lucidity and cynicism. Giorgio Bocca wrote: “Here’s what makes Censor’s pamphlet so exceptionally valuable in certain respects: it is one of the rare, extremely rare examples of right-wing culture that doesn’t exist among us or doesn’t have the courage to manifest itself.” Attributing the *Truthful Report* to Merzagora, Enzo Magri wrote that, “it is assuredly the most cynical politico-economic diagnosis that has ever been made in Italy (...) The logic is made of iron, forceful. Censor’s rigorous and pitiless analysis leaves no room for any doubts.”

Despite the lucid cynicism of Censor, or perhaps precisely because of it, bankers and financiers have greeted my pamphlet with interest. A good number of government ministers, parliamentary representatives and upper-level State functionaries have courteously thanked its first publisher. Some journalists have not managed to hide their admiration, nor even their stupefaction, because the truth is one of the rare things that is capable of causing them to be surprised and spiteful, but also because Censor, in a single blow, destroyed the house of lies that they had patiently but maladroitly constructed over the course of the last few years – on the crucial question of the bombs of 1969, for example. But how could one pretend that the journalists who were incapable of understanding from whence came the *Truthful Report* could, on the other hand, be capable of understanding what has been happening in this country for years? Or from whence came the bombs of 12 December 1969?

All the same, Giorgio Bocca honestly recognized that “this book says more true and terrible things about the hot autumn and the black conspiracies than all of the revolutionary literature,” but by saying so he implicitly admits that he does not know the truly revolutionary publications, because, on 19 December 1969,<sup>198</sup> exactly one week later, I published the truth about the bombs of 12 December.

More irritated than all the others, poor Massimo Rira noted in the columns of the *Corriere della Sera* that “this influential person lets it be clear that he knows important particular facts that reinforce the thesis of a ‘State massacre,’” and, with consternation, he lets out a cry of the heart: “How can we not see a sign of the decadence of the [State’s] institutions in this inability [to keep quiet] by those who are committed to serve them in silence?” Enzo Magri adds: “The anonymous author supports the thesis of a ‘State massacre.’ And the logic is made of iron, forceful.” The predicament (sometimes noisy, sometimes silent) into which the book has plunged the Italian ruling class and all the political parties is complete and distressing. In the case of “Operation Censor,” there is no doubt that the owners of the social spectacle have, in their turn,

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<sup>198</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: “Is the Reichstag Burning?” (Milan).

been the victims of appearances.

Here are a few other examples of this “phenomenology of error.”

“Censor (...) is an enlightened and well-bred conservative, a great tutor of the bourgeoisie, a delegate of private capital (...) Reading this book, we can divine many things concerning Censor’s identity.” (Carlo Rossella, *Panorama*)

“This pamphlet is certainly a beneficial provocation, an ‘Enough!’ declared to progressive unktion (...) An authentic event, a novelty in which we must rejoice, in the name of culture, even if we aren’t in agreement.” (*Europa Domani*)

“Who is Censor? (...) His liberal philosophy, his penchants for contempt and reprimanding the politicians, as well as the haughty character of a great bourgeois possessing a very vast experience in the economic domain, emanate from every page of his writing.” (Enzo Magri, *L’Europeo*)

“Censor made his *Truthful Report* known in the worst conditions: [only] 520 copies in all, published by a first-time editor, and distributed in the middle of August. And yet its success was immediate. Perhaps because the thesis of the author appeared suggestive to many.” (*L’Espresso*)

“Despite his ‘conservatism,’ Censor casts a benevolent eye upon the Communists and the historic compromise, believing that these new political stabilizers will serve to keep capitalism standing.” (*Corriere d’Informazione*)

“Published a few months ago in a numbered edition, this lampoon was immediately reprinted in a commercial edition. But it is both just and unjust, because it is both rare and precious, and thus unusual in publishing; on the other hand, it is exemplary, like a model that merits being proposed to a much larger audience (...) Censor constitutes a political party all by himself: he could be the true gentleman of old minting whose cultural tastes and economic interests are combined in his life, but always safeguarding his decency of life and thought, with a style of comportment and a morality that are true.” (Vittorio Gorresio, *La Stampa*)

“Reading [it] reveals a conservative of vast and very refined culture (...) We would like to know more: we would like to have proof of everything that this anonymous person claims. And, until then, we believe that Censor himself has a debt to pay to public opinion: to help it obtain the proof; to speak clear to the bottom without limiting himself to throwing a paving stone into the pool.” (Gianna Mazzaleni, *Il Resto del Carlino*)<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> For more press clippings, see below.

## II. Ontological

“Today, the first duty of the press is to undermine the bases of the established political order.” (Karl Marx, *New Rhineland Gazette*, 14 February 1849)

“I think of our life in Cologne with pleasure! We are not compromised. That is the essential thing! Ever since Frederick the Great, no one has treated the roguish German people like the *New Rhineland Gazette*.” (Georg Weerth, letter to Marx, 28 April 1851)

Naturally, Marx and Bauer’s anonymous pamphlet created a scandal, but after a few weeks its “rightist” provenance was placed in doubt, and its authors’ subversive imposture appeared in all its menacing reality. A century and a half later, six months has not been sufficient for Italy to perceive Censor’s nonexistence and thus his personal emancipation from metaphysics.

Just as Saint Anselm<sup>200</sup> claimed to provide ontological proof of the existence of God by considering that, if a Being of infinite perfection was conceivable, then it was not inconceivable that this Being could not fail to have the fundamental attribute of existence. In the same way, but a millennium later, the Italian bourgeoisie candidly believed that a bourgeois as perfect as Censor – since he had all the qualities that it lacked (sincerity, rationality, culture, etc.) – could not fail to have the attribute of existence and, due to that attribute, could contribute to the bourgeoisie’s salvation.

Why did our decadent bourgeois so easily believe in the existence of an ally such as Censor? It is quite simple. They believed in it *because they needed to*. And yet, in the words of Vittorio Gorresio, “the only person who could possibly identify the author of the *Truthful Report* was Raffaele Mattioli, who has unfortunately disappeared.” But if conceiving of a bourgeois like Censor obligated the bourgeois to invent him, this is the best proof of the fact that, in our ruling class, there exists no one who can flatter himself with having the qualities that it would like to attribute to Censor.

If we can now, retrospectively, be astonished that, for so many months, none of the people who wrote about Censor publicly expressed any doubts about his existence, it is less surprising to see that many “progressive” bourgeois and a part of the non-Stalinist Left applauded the *Truthful Report* “despite [its author] being a rightist or precisely because he is a rightist,” as Giorgio Bocca said. In any case, Censor belonged to a right wing that did not appear more cynical than it really was, but that assuredly *spoke* more cynically than it had ever dared to before. It is in fact sufficient to consider the appalling extremism that the Italian bourgeoisie in its current disarray has accepted and even admired, if one wants to understand the full magnitude of that disarray. Thus, it is worth quoting here several passages from the *Truthful Report* that provide its exact measure.

“Thus we do not seek to prove that contemporary society is *desirable* (...) We say that *this society suits us because it exists* and we want to maintain it to maintain our power over it.” (Preface)

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<sup>200</sup> Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) was the author of the *Proslogion* (“The Discourse on the Existence of God”).

“Today, from the point of view of the defense of our society, there only exists a single danger in the world, and it is that the workers succeed in *speaking to each other* about their conditions and aspirations *without any intermediaries*. All the other dangers are attached to, or even proceed directly from, the precarious situation that places before us this primary problem, which in many respects is concealed and unacknowledged.” (Preface)

“(…) We will lose all of our reasons for managing a world in which our objective advantages have been suppressed (…) Capitalists must not forget that they are also human beings, and as such they cannot accept the uncontrolled degradation of *all* human beings and thus the personal conditions of life that they especially enjoy.” (Preface)

“All of the historically dominant forms of society have been imposed on the masses, who quite simply must be *made to work*, either by force or by illusion. The greatest success of our modern civilization is that it has been able to place an incomparable *power of illusion* at the service of its leaders.” (Chapter I)

“This society produces more and more things to watch. Some people have asked us, moved by perfectly irrelevant sentimentality: ‘Must we also love this society?’” (Chapter I)

“Our workers have in no way decided upon what they produce. And this is quite fortunate, because we might wonder what they would decide to produce, given what they are. It is quite sure, whatever the infinite variety of conceivable responses, that a single truth would be constant: they would assuredly not produce anything suitable for the society that we manage.” (Chapter I)

“Because one must be able to choose between two equivalent commodities, one must also be able to choose between two representatives.” (Chapter I)

“Of those minds and hearts that have become discouraged because, for the last ten years, they have taken the end of the troubles of a particular time for the end of the time of troubles, we ask, ‘Must we be resigned to the idea that any certainty that has been triumphantly conquered will be ceaselessly put into question, and is the crisis in society destined to always last?’ We will respond coldly, ‘Yes.’ (…) Our world *is not made for the workers*, or for the other strata of impoverished salaried workers whom our reasoning must place in the simple category ‘proletarian.’ But every day our world must be made *by* them, under our command. This is the fundamental contradiction with which we must live.” (Chapter I)

“And precisely because we dare to admit that the Italian workers, who have taken the offensive in the social war, are our enemies, we know that the Communist Party is our ally.” (Chapter VI)

“Because we should not forget for an instant that the workers, at least when they work and do not revolt, are the most useful reality in the world and merit our respect, for in a certain way they (under our well-informed direction) produce our wealth, i.e., our power.” (Chapter VII)

“Henceforth we must know that the abundance of fabricated objects demands (with ever-greater urgency) the setting up of a true elite, one that precisely shelters itself from such abundance and keeps for itself the little that is really precious (...) The law that dominates here is, of course, that everything that we distribute to the poor can never be anything other than poverty: cars that cannot circulate because there are too many of them; salaries paid in inflated money; meat from livestock fattened up in several weeks by chemical feed, etc.” (Chapter VII)

“We (...) designate the Republic of Venice as our model of a qualitative society (...) Venice had the best ruling class in history: no one resisted it, nor purported to demand an accounting from it (...) Venice was *terrorism tempered with happiness*, the happiness of each person *in his proper place*.” (Chapter VII)

We could continue to quote many other truths contained in the *Truthful Report*. These are such simple truths, moreover, that anyone would be obligated to admit them, once they have been spoken aloud, but they are such atrocious truths that, until now, no leader has wanted to do so: these are the truths *of this world*, and if they are not pleasing, it is this world that we must transform. And since no one among all those who wrote long articles on Censor protested against any of these atrocities, all these excellent bastards – in accordance with the principle *he who says nothing, consents* – have accepted them.<sup>201</sup> We must remember this.

If the virtuous admirers of Censor had been intelligent, they would have immediately realized that such a pamphlet could only have been written from the point of view of the social revolution (*cui prodest?*),<sup>202</sup> and if they had been unintelligent, but less deficient and less desperate, they would at least have concluded that Censor, as a bourgeois, was quite imprudent

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<sup>201</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: These bourgeois and these journalists, who preferred to be scandalized by Censor’s anonymity rather than the truths contained in his *Truthful Report*, are in fact the same people who, until now, have not shown the least qualms about committing or covering up the crimes and monstrous errors of power, of which cynical Censor, had he existed, would have been ashamed. The nonexistence of Censor, so obvious to anyone who read my pamphlet with a grain of salt, but which no one imagined for so long, thus definitively proves the nonexistence of Italy’s political personnel, bourgeois intellectuals and bureaucrats. We knew that the majority of our journalists do not know how to write; now we know that they do not know how to read. No contemporary event has shown these people to be so stupid, and since it is not possible that the Italians themselves are equally so, this is the best proof of the stupidity of *the others* who speak in their place, and thus the Italian proletariat must take its affairs directly into its own hands, so as to not leave for an instant more the monopoly of its government and its words to imbeciles of such appalling incompetence.

<sup>202</sup> Latin for “Who benefits?”

and completely unrealistic, since his central project of reconstituting a ruling elite worthy of the name is quite obviously the most impossible utopia. “Operation Censor,” and the unlimited stupidity that it revealed,<sup>203</sup> have shown this in the purest experimental light to anyone who by chance had nourished the slightest illusion on the subject. But all these naïve spokesmen for decadence, upon hearing about an elite, already dreamed that they were a part of it.

### III. Historical

“In the hospitality of war  
We left them their dead as a gift  
To remember us by.” (Archilochus, *Fragments*)

“There are times in which one can only dispense contempt sparingly, because of the large number of people who need to receive it.” (Chateaubriand, *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave*)

One should not believe that I was motivated by a particular hostility to Italy: I am an internationalist.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti:* I would like to make clear that I did not lower myself by using subtlety to deceive the “qualified” public to which I sent the *Truthful Report*. Anyone with an average level of culture would have immediately and very easily recognized that, for example, the letter attributed to Louis XVIII is in fact a very well-known literary fake written by Paul-Louis Courier; the letter attributed to a Russian diplomat is a very recognizable passage from a well-known work by Nietzsche; there are long *détournements* of Tocqueville, and an entire page of the *Report* was taken from *The Veritable Split in the International* (Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, 1972); or a thousand other obvious flippancies. The last phrase of the *Truthful Report*, in itself, is a properly Swiftian enormity. And yet no one noticed any of this and drew the only possible conclusion.

<sup>204</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti:* If something can console the Italian intellectuals and politicians for having proved their incompetence, it might be the consideration that, in this case, their police are even worse. Some time before giving the manuscript of the *Truthful Report* to the printer, I was released from prison, where I had been thrown, in March 1975, on the extravagant charge of possessing a stockpile of weapons of war, a stockpile whose ghostly existence had never been found except in the completely fantastic enunciation of the accusation against me. This arbitrary act at least allowed the police to conduct four successive searches of both of my residences, and the ones who were in charge found nothing of note in the manuscript, then partially completed, which they read with indiscrete stupidity. At the time, a directive from the Minister of the Interior had orchestrated (in almost every newspaper, including the Stalinist ones and those published by their Leftist imitators) a campaign of calumnies that presented the Situationist International as the hidden power – simultaneously anarchist and fascist – that was organizing terrorism in all of Italy. I am honored to have been a member of the SI, which, by completely different means than terrorism, had unleashed into the world a more authentic and vaster subversion. But it turns out that the SI was dissolved in 1972, due to the very fact of the success of its historical operation, and this dissolution took place at the very moment that the SI had promised to do it: “We will dissolve into the population” (*Internationale Situationniste* #7,

What did I propose to do by writing such a book and inventing such a person? I proposed to harm Italian capitalism, which is the weakest and most stupid element of class domination in the world, and, more particularly, to harm all those who are engaged in the unfortunate enterprise of rescuing it: the neo-capitalist bourgeoisie and the so-called Communist Party.

Who could be served by such a *Truthful Report*? This is something that no one wondered. As the article devoted to the pamphlet in *Il Borghese* showed, it could only harm the Right. For the Christian Democrats and the other bourgeois governing parties, “Operation Censor” has been even more unfortunate than their enormous errors and brazen provocations because the *Truthful Report* definitively denounced them. For the Stalinist-bureaucratic Left, my pamphlet has been more harmful than a hundred wildcat strikes because it irrefutably demonstrates what the Left’s real goals are in Italy today. The enforced silence with which only the press organs of the Italian Communist Party – otherwise so docile in publishing the directives that come from the Minister of the Interior – have greeted my book is the best proof of this.

In reality, all the political parties have suffered from its publication, because they are all each other’s accomplices. But with this operation, the poor Italian State, which has spared us nothing in these last few years – bombs and assassinations that can no longer be counted, although ever since 1969 the workers and almost the entire population have been continuously provoked, deceived and insulted by these crimes, which the bourgeoisie has applauded and about which the Stalinists have cordially kept silent – this *State of provocateurs* has finally been provoked in its turn.

In the *Truthful Report*, there are not only truths, truths that capitalist thought not only does not have the courage to say, but also does not even have the strength to think. Thus, we must wonder: Who does the truth harm? And, Who benefits from the truth? In human history, the truth has always been Public Enemy Number 1 for all power and the principal ally of those who are exploited. And the Stalinists know these facts better than anyone, because, more than anyone else, they have made a specialty of combating them, in Russia and elsewhere.

What did I want to prove by publishing this pamphlet? Above all, I wanted to prove that the card of the “Historic Compromise” is the card of the least-backwards capitalism, the one that has enough intelligence to have understood that the so-called Communist Party and the union bureaucracies are its best allies in the permanent social confrontation in which it is opposed to the workers, and this I did not want to demonstrate to the capitalists, who know it all too well due to their experiences, but to the workers. The fact that the bourgeois have taken quite seriously the proposition advanced by Censor that they should enact the “Historic Compromise” without any further ado demonstrates the fact that they think that the compromise must be enacted. “Censor is serious,” *L’Europeo* wrote, “so serious that his pamphlet can certainly be considered as a real and authentic manifesto of the Italian political and economic right wing.” “One immediately understands,” *Il Giorno* wrote, “that Censor is serious, and doesn’t get lost in the hypocrisies or the bowing and scraping [*les salamalecs*].”

On the other hand, I wanted to prove that the party of social revolution can understand the party of Stalinist-bureaucratic reaction much better than reaction is capable of understanding

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April 1962). Moreover, I personally co-signed the act of dissolution with Guy Debord, the author of the well-known book *The Society of the Spectacle* in April 1972 (cf. *The Veritable Split in the International*). Thus it was perfectly vain to mount such police machinations an entire historical period too late! If they absolutely want to find the situationist critique at work today, they should seek it in the factories held by revolutionaries in Portugal.

itself, and I have also proved that the party of reaction can neither understand nor simply recognize the party of revolution, even when it comes forth to do battle.

What the Italian workers are in the process of learning is quite simply what their Portuguese comrades have just learned, what the French revolutionary workers understood in 1968, and what the Russian and Czechoslovakian proletariats (exploited as they are by the vile bureaucratic capitalism that dominates those countries) have always understood: the so-called Communist bureaucrats and unions *are not at all disposed to accept the abolition of the capitalist exploitation of work* in any country in the world. And in Italy, in particular, they are the best servants of our disastrous capitalism, to which they offer their services to spare it from bankruptcy.

In the decline and fall of Italian capitalism, Censor is nothing other than *the reverse image, as in a mirror, of the Italian bourgeoisie*, and the lucid extremism of this nonexistent bourgeois shows the extent and depth of the revolutionary current that invented him. The difference between the two is that, while this revolutionary current *exists*, Censor does not.

The Ministers of the Interior in all the countries, just like the bureaucrats of the so-called Communist parties, feel the same impotent anger about the reappearance of the modern revolutionary movement. In Italy, where the Italian Communist Party hopes to use class struggle as a way of participating in the management of power, and desperately seeks its opportunity, this anger can only be even greater than elsewhere. Because at this point, if revolutionaries can already harm power, which on its own greatly harms itself, then power is in real trouble. Look at Portugal: for a year and a half, we have prevented any governmental power from really constituting itself there. The “Historic Compromise,” that Holy Alliance between the bourgeois and Stalinist bureaucrats, which one today proposes to introduce in Italy, has already reigned in Portugal since 24 April 1974: *it reigns but it does not govern*. Pitiful result, ridiculous failure!

What do I want to see happen? The triumph of my party, naturally. And my party is the party of the autonomous organization of workers’ assemblies that assume all the powers of decision-making and execution. It is the party of revolutionary workers’ councils, the delegates to which are revocable at any moment by the base; the only party that fights all the bourgeois and bureaucratic ruling classes everywhere; the party that, every time it manifests itself, undertakes to realize the abolition of all classes and the State, salaried work and the commodity, and their entire spectacle. And I will never serve any other.

[Gianfranco Sanguinetti]  
December 1975

## Press Clippings

“What does the mysterious Censor say that is so interesting? (...) ‘This society suits us because it exists, and we want to maintain it to maintain our power over it.’ What society is Censor’s? The capitalist society that extends from San Francisco to Vladivostok, the society in which the holders or supervisors of capital succeed in making the masses work by force or by an ‘incomparable power of illusion’ (...) The last part of the pamphlet is [the product of] an absolute aristocratic cynicism.” (*Il Giorno*, 31 August 1975)

“The life and experiences of Censor are intimately tied to those of the most enlightened capitalism in our country.” (*Panorama*, 11 September 1975)

“And getting to this point, we wonder who this Censor could be, so involved [as he is] in the secrets of these matters (...) It is thus that what we read further on about the hot autumn, the strategy of tension, and the bombs and massacre at the Piazza Fontana can only be left out [of this review], given the authority that the anonymous writer has already acquired when he reaches this point because of the seriousness of his statements (...) Until now the thesis of the ‘State massacre’ has only been supported by ultra-Left groups; the Italian Communist Party itself, officially, is quite lukewarm about agreeing with it. But it is stupefying that it is now publicly endorsed by a committed conservative, whose only care is that of saving capitalism in Italy.” (*Il Resto del Carlino*, 11 September 1975)

“A small volume with a limited print run theorizes the motivations why large national capital seeks the agreement with the Italian Communist Party. (...) Who wrote it is not of great importance, but, on the contrary, the book has such importance from the sole fact that it reflects the ideas of those Italians who believe that the historic compromise will save the bourgeoisie and themselves.” (*Il Borghese*, 15 September 1975)

“A real and authentic manifesto of the Italian political and economic right-wing (...) In any case, what is definite is that it is the most cynical political-economic diagnosis ever made in Italy (...) Censor observes that some people will certainly ask of today’s [system of] production, ‘Must we also love it?’ (...) The problem doesn’t even have meaning. Because capitalism obviously does not love that system, but only the surplus-value it draws from it.” (*L’Europeo*, 18 September 1975)

“A new anonymous author has appeared on the scene of our political literature: he hides himself under the pseudonym ‘Censor,’ but he doesn’t hide his conservative ideas (...) Looks at the Communists and the historic compromise with a benevolent eye.” (*Corriere d’Informazione*, 19 September 1975)

“And this is where Censor’s anti-conformism manifests itself. Instead of fearing the agreement with the Communist forces, the well-advised bourgeoisie must ally themselves with the ICP so as to utilize its incomparable ‘power of illusion’ upon the workers for the support of the traditional domination by the merchant bourgeoisie. The true menace against the current stabilizers doesn’t come from the Communist Party, but from the revolutionary possibility of a general rebellion of the masses against their condemnation to salaried work (...) A mystical

vision of power, moreover, seems to be the light that guides Censor's thought (...) The psychoanalytic key can no doubt furnish the most fortunate interpretation of the drive that provoked this 'truthful report.' One could speak of the protagonist's complex." (*Corriere della Sera*, 27 September 1975)

"The most recent successful anonymous writer calls himself Censor (...) Incapable of defending itself, the bourgeoisie must conclude a pact with the ICP to save the capitalist system. But if it doesn't do so immediately, the revolutionary orgy of the proletarians will sweep away the frightened structures of this society." (*L'Espresso*, 5 October 1975)

"We do not share Censor's elitist conception and the aristocratic cynicism that comes from his long familiarity with Machiavelli, Alfieri, Clausewitz and so many conceptual categories from classical literature. We can at least estimate as odd a discourse that is entirely enunciated from the point of view of those who have the real power and the problem of sharing it as little as possible (...) And yet it is a good thing, in all senses, that Censor has proposed a rightist ideological deciphering, a theory of restoration by reforms and suppressions at the point of a sword." (*Europa-Domani*, 15 October 1975)

"It is in sum a perfect construction of very great literary value due to its style, which, by remaining impeccably sustained, doesn't fail to always be amiable, that is to say, accessible (...) Also does justice to the questions that figure on the advertising band placed on the book by its publisher, where we are challenged to divine who Censor is: 'An enlightened conservative? A cynical reactionary? A disguised supporter of the Left?' These are questions that stimulate the curiosity of the reader, but we can tranquilly set them aside, except for the first one and only in part (...) in the sense that the leading lights that he favors prevail over his possible preference for conservatism. His concepts are dialectical, his recommendations are turned towards dynamism (...) and I even find that his constant and precise cultural references testify to a progressive spirit exactly to the extent that culture is progress, without any adjectives." (*La Stampa*, 31 October 1975)

"In a limited number of copies distributed in August, this cynical and refined *Report* has aroused a whirlpool of interpretations (...) Is he a man from the Right or the Left? What does he really want? (...) If someone consciously sought to create a similar success, and if he succeeded, he would be a genius." (*Epoca*, 15 November 1975)

"Censor (...) is so political that it makes us think of a 'great delegate' from the Communist Party. This has the appearance of being a subtle operation by the ICP." (*Il Giorno*, 26 November 1975)

## “Welcome to the Freest City in the World”<sup>205</sup>

### I.

“Bologna is the freest city in the world.” Renato Zangheri,<sup>206</sup> 1977

“The USSR is the most democratic State in the world.” Stalin, 1939<sup>207</sup>

“Go and preach rubbish to the world.” Dante, *Paradiso*, XXIX<sup>208</sup>

Comrades,

History offers few examples of a movement of social revolt as profound as the one that began in Italy in February 1977, and none in which a Stalinist party not officially in power has so unashamedly fought and insulted the proletariat in struggle. For the first time in the West, a so-called Communist Party has not only proposed to organize the defeat of the proletariat – thus running the risk of being defeated by it (as in Barcelona in 1936) – but also to *triumph over the proletariat* in conjunction with the bourgeoisie. It is useful to state this simple truth with respect to Bologna, which is the Disneyland of Italian Stalinism but also, for that very reason, the stronghold of revolutionary anti-Stalinism.

The so-called Communist Party cannot openly proclaim that its governmental program is to maintain the wage slavery of the working class by any means, but, to earn credibility from its bourgeois allies, it is forced *from now on* to realize its program by repressing and slandering our struggle. To attain power, the Stalinist Italians must criticize their counterparts in Eastern Europe to a certain extent, but in their desire to exercise power, they must do here exactly what there criticize over there. They act like pluralists and democrats among the bosses, and like cops among the workers.

But just as the proletariat no longer has no illusions about the true intentions of the Italian Communist Party, the proletariat should not overestimate the strength of these bureaucrats. Too close to power to not to be its accomplices, the Stalinists are not yet close enough to receive the power and benefits for which they had hoped. Sufficiently far from the working class that they will never be obeyed by it, they are not far enough away to escape its judgment. Of all the Stalinists, the Italian ones are *the most boastful!*

Everywhere, in all the alienation-factories, wildcat struggles, which the union bureaucrats

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<sup>205</sup> “*Benvenuti nella città più libera del mondo*” was distributed in Bologna, Rome and Milan on 23 September 1977, accompanied by an Italian translation of the Situationist International’s text “Minimum Definitions of the Revolutionary Organization.” Sanguinetti added to the latter a subtitle: “Or How to Recognize Those That Are Not.” The main statement was later translated into French as “*Bienvenue dans la ville la plus libre du monde.*”

<sup>206</sup> Mayor of Bologna and member of the Italian Communist Party.

<sup>207</sup> A poster designed by Vladimir Sachkov in 1984 and posted to reddit.com proclaims, “The Soviet government is a million time more democratic than the most democratic of the bourgeois republics.”

<sup>208</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Paradiso*, XXIX, line 110, p. 480.

are no longer able to prevent or hide, break out against work. The workers have found that “the realm of freedom actually begins only where labor that is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases” (*Capital*, Volume III). Here and there, the first forms of the proletariat’s self-organization, in which delegates are recallable [at any time] by the rank and file, are beginning to appear. The more the Stalinists repress our struggles, and the more there is to repress, their dirty work proportionately increases as they engage in it, and their last illusions about their role as the usurping “representatives” of the working class disappear at the precise time when they need them the most. In sum, the so-called Communist Party *no longer has the strength to be what it is not*. And to the extent that the Stalinists want to keep the proletariat prisoner in the logic of their interests in domination, the ICP has become the Bastille of the Italian revolution: if the proletariat destroys it, it will triumph, and then it can take care of all its other enemies.

## II

We are here to fight the ongoing repression, not lament it; we must not mouth rhetoric about the repression, but defeat it. The primary goal of all repression has always been to put the revolutionary movement on the defensive. The rhetoric of repression, which forces the movement to be on the defensive, *plays into the hands of the repression*. Instead, our fight against repression must be an *offensive* struggle, as is our struggle against all the powers of class society. Fighting repression, we must always clearly reveal *all those who enforce it and the different ways they do so*. To recognize and *name* all of our enemies is the preliminary condition for all those who fight and win, and meeting this condition increases the ranks of our allies among the workers. It’s already an important fact to have shown that, when it comes to the repression of struggle, we must first speak of the ICP and the trade unions.

Do not forget, comrades, that the violence of repression is inversely proportional to the violence of the struggle and the number of the combatants. When many break the law and deny social conventions, no one is punished, and while limited battles are easily repressed, great and serious ones are rewarded with victory. To the extent that it exists, repression is a reality that we have to fight by returning to the offensive; we must prevent the current repression from escalating, not by making ridiculous appeals to the bureaucrats in Belgrade,<sup>209</sup> but by *generalizing the offensive* and unleashing new struggles that make the old ones seem insignificant. At this time, any of us can be arrested or killed with impunity, but we should remember that one cannot escape danger without facing danger, and that we should not be afraid of repression, because it is the bureaucrats and bourgeois who fear our struggles. A movement that has prevailed and grown only when it is attacked will face defeat if it abandons this strategy.

Returning to the offensive means generalizing and radicalizing insubordination against every hierarchy; exercising our destructive creativity against the society of the spectacle; sabotaging the machines and the commodities that sabotage our lives; promoting general wildcat strikes of indefinite duration; gathering together in assemblies in all the separation-factories; electing delegates who can be recalled [at any time] by the rank and file; constantly connecting all the places in struggle, without overlooking any of the technical means (radio, etc.) by which

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<sup>209</sup> The location of the first follow-up meeting to the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (CSCE), held between 4 October 1977 and 8 March 1978. On 1 August 1975, the CSCE had signed the Helsinki Accords.

useful communication can be spread; giving direct use-value to everything that has exchange-value exchange (commodities, etc.); permanently occupying the factories and public buildings; and organizing the self-defense of the conquered territories. Let the music play!

It's hard to say how long this State will survive. It's easy, however, to foresee that it will not agree to be destroyed without putting up resistance. As long as it exists, this State will make a habit of repressing our struggles and resigning itself to sacrifice whatever remains of its "liberal" and "democratic" illusions. As for us, we will have to get used to even greater repression, and getting used to it primarily means getting used to fighting it. Fighting repression means fighting the forces that enforce it all the time and everywhere. Proletarian revolutionaries should not expect any leniency from their enemies, nor should they show any for them.

### III

So far, all the repressive measures, from the minimum to the maximum, from slander to tanks, *have not benefited power those in power*, because *they have failed to prevent anything that has happened*. But we must never forget that the smallest mistake made by the movement can harm us irreparably. A lack of theoretical and practical clarity on a strategic issue, such as the issue of weapons, risks producing very serious consequences if the radical movement cannot quickly overcome it. Weapons must be *when everyone is ready to use them*. And everyone will be ready to use them when their use has become *indispensible*. The issue is not tactical, but strategic. Whoever plays with weapons today plays with power, which is better armed than we are, and we must not play with power; we must destroy it.

From the practical point of view, using weapons during a demonstration of 20,000, when only 100 are armed is not only useless, but harmful, as well: thousands of comrades who can not defend themselves would be exposed to the police's bullets. All the police officers are armed; as soon as they decide to shoot at us, there arises a situation in which those few demonstrators who are armed cannot effectively defend either themselves or the others, and those who are unarmed can only defend the others by forming a protective shield, *but without having adequate defensive tools to do so effectively*.

From the theoretical point of view, those few who come armed to demonstrations want to constitute, and in fact in fact do constitute, a *new separate power* within a revolutionary movement that precisely fights *against every separate power* and, as such, condemns it. Recourse to the use of weapons is not a voluntary or abstract matter, but a practical necessity that certain situations require, but by *the entire* revolutionary movement, and not merely *a part of it*. Those comrades who are anxious to possess weapons today are naïve: when we really need weapons, we will quite simply take them *from the enemy*. And we must not neglect the possibilities for provocation that the casual and reckless use of weapons offers police officers who are suitably disguised [as demonstrators] for the occasion. If we really want to fight repression, we must also fight that which provides *a pretext* or a justification for it.

Just as we have no leniency for our enemies, we should have none for ourselves, and we must pitilessly criticize the mistakes that can be fatal to the growth of the movement as a whole. The critique of weapons can never be separated from the weapons of critique. Because it anticipates repression, the impatience to use weapons today, at all costs, actually *delays* the arrival of the moment when the proletariat as a whole will have recourse to them. Those who gratify themselves with the reckless use of weapons are not the most advanced or the "hardest" part of the current revolutionary movement, but the rearguard of its theoretical and strategic

consciousness.

As for terrorism, it has absolutely no utility or justification in Italy today. Historically, terrorism has only been effective when all other forms of revolutionary activity have been rendered impossible by a complete suppression and a significant part of the population has thus been brought to side with the terrorists. But in Italy today, the current movement has already obtained the sympathy of the working class, while terrorism, starting with the [bombing of the] Piazza Fontana, has always benefited the State, even when the secret services have not perpetrated it.

#### IV

Knowing what must be *avoided* is equally as important as knowing what should be done. In an era when *ideas have once again become dangerous*, we must, first of all, defend with our struggle the driving ideas of the movement, which the Stalinists and bourgeois have, naturally, preferred to accuse of having no ideas. Their choice is understandable, because these ideas *imply their negation*. Moreover, if ideas are really so unimportant, which is what the Stalinists and bourgeois are trying to make people believe, then they cannot explain why ideas have been able to create a movement that is so vast, deep and long-lasting as the current one. In the same way, we ourselves could not explain what has caused the hysteria and fear experienced by Cossiga<sup>210</sup> and Berlinguer.<sup>211</sup> By accusing our movement of a lack of ideas, these men are in fact accusing it of not sharing their own *inability to think*.

By the simple fact that it manifested itself in the forms that it did, this movement is the definitive rejection of all political parties and all hierarchies; it is the living critique of all ideologies and political specialists; it embraces the refusal of work and unemployment, and the taste for free communication and dialogue, and thus [the taste] for festivity and games. How did this come about? The protest of the young proletarian generation became revolutionary as soon as it detached itself from the hierarchies of the groups and parties with extremist claims that, after 1968, were tasked with recuperating and leading that protest into the blind alley of alienated militancy. Comrades, we must be careful to prevent from forming among us bureaucratic hierarchies and small groups that have the pretension to lead us! We must combat the imposture of the backwards Leninist and neo-Bolshevik groups: the degree of *real autonomy* from the corpses of the past that we will be able to attain will decide the fate of our movement. We have no need of public safety committees<sup>212</sup> to tell us what to do or not do: our intelligence is always sufficient to understand the necessities of the situation. Public safety committees commit more abuses of power and errors than they prevent; their police-role within the movement in fact reproduces a separate, counter-revolutionary power. Such committees form the basis for recreating hierarchy and become the tool of those who, having understood nothing of this movement or social revolution, have the ambition to become its leaders. Both past experience and modern revolutionary theory teach us that “the revolutionary organization must learn that it can no longer *combat alienation by means of alienated forms of struggle*” (Debord, *The Society*

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<sup>210</sup> Francesco Cossiga (1928-2010), a Christian Democrat, the Minister of the Interior from February 1976 to May 1978.

<sup>211</sup> Enrico Berlinguer (1922-1984) was the National Secretary of the Italian Communist Party from March 1972 to June 1984.

<sup>212</sup> *Servizi d'ordine* (“security services”).

*of the Spectacle*).<sup>213</sup>

What is needed now is precisely what was needed at the beginning of the revolutionary proletarian project: namely, the autonomous action of the working class in its struggle for the abolition of wage labor, the commodity, and the State; the entrance into conscious history, and the suppression all separations and everything that exists independently of individuals. The proletariat already knows its enemies, and it knows that one can only fight and win by organizing Workers' Councils. The Councils are clearly the only solution, because all the other forms of organization have achieved the opposite of what they proclaimed.

Comrades, let us sow the wind and reap the whirlwind! Spread these slogans everywhere, by every available means, radio, posters, writings, speeches, etc.:

Abolish class society!

All power to the Workers' Councils!

Work is the sabotage of life: sabotage work!

Destroy the society of the spectacle!

Humanity will not be happy until the day that the last bureaucrat is hung with the guts of the last capitalist!

Immediately release all those arrested!

The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself!

The Association for the Propagation of the Contagious Epidemic of Anger  
Bologna, 23 September 1977

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<sup>213</sup> Adopting the translation in Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994), Thesis 122, p. 89.

## “Notice to the Proletariat About the Events of the Last Few Hours”<sup>214</sup>

“Those who governed in the West were not impolitic. They judged it essential to save Italy. (...) This whole scheme was upset by a revolution more fatal than all the others. (...) thus delivering the mortal blow to the empire.”

(Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Causes of the Grandeur and Decadence of Rome*)<sup>215</sup>

Comrades,

Revolutionaries must not underestimate either the depth of the current class struggle or the crisis in which all the powers and political parties are floundering, *because that crisis is the result of their own struggles*. But revolutionaries should also not exaggerate and fall into a kind of apocalyptic optimism that announces the victory of total subversion the day after each conflict is settled and afterward relapses into the miserable, imbecilic disillusion of the recuperators, who are already talking about the “ebb of the movement” *precisely when that movement is extending beyond the workers and the factories*.

Yesterday in Milan, for the first time, 3000 delegates from 350 factory councils gathered in a joint assembly, thus breaking the monopoly on workers’ coordination maintained by the trade union bureaucrats and laying the foundations for the first autonomous organization of revolutionary workers since the defeat of the Workers Councils’ movement of 1919-20. Some of us attended this first assembly, which will be immediately followed by others. *The union bureaucracies will be defeated by the workers themselves!*

Today in Italy there is a real danger of *violent* repression and, in some cases, it has already started. But it is not enough to merely be aware of such a possibility, nor is it sufficient to simply protest against the repression: it must be stopped!

The repressive forces of the system are the unions, the police, and the secret services. At this time, these forces have two possible courses of action: either they conduct *preventive* repression of the struggles they fear will break out or they repress these struggles *after they’ve broken out*, though they know that each repressive measure they employ effectively feeds those struggles. In Padua, Florence and Naples, the repression and the arrests of workers and unemployed comrades preceded the violent explosion of the movement. In Bologna, it followed it, which was applauded by the so-called Communist Party. In Rome, the repression has just begun today.

Comrades,

The only way we can prevent this repression is to extend the current movement everywhere, and above all into the factories of every city in Italy. Yesterday, at the Teatro Lirico

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<sup>214</sup> “*Avviso al Proletariato Sugli Avvenimenti Delle Ultime Ore*” was signed “Speedy Pen,” dated Rome, 7 April 1977 and distributed in Rome and Milan. It has been translated into French as “*Avis au prolétariat sur les événements des dernières heures*.”

<sup>215</sup> Adopting the translation in Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and their Decline* (1734), translated with notes and an introduction by David Lowenthal (London: The Free Press, 1999), p. 128

in Milan, the coordination of future fights was prepared by removing them from the control of the unions.

All the political parties have formed a coalition that sustains our decadent capitalism, and they have accused us of being subversives. All right then, comrades: *let's be totally subversive!* Let us not allow them to merely accuse us of being revolutionaries; we must earn this "accusation" and, for us, it is an honor.

There is no need to worry about criminal charges: our own struggle obligates power to retreat, for example, by means of an amnesty. In 1969, charges were brought against a total of 10,000 workers in Milan and Turin. But no one followed through on those charges: power had to choose between celebrating 10,000 guilty verdicts *and provoking a civil war*, on the one hand, or backing down, on the other. And it preferred to avoid civil war.

We need to be clear about the possibilities and risks of the current movement: our only means of true self-defense consist in *extending the struggle throughout the entire country*. Whoever makes a revolution halfway digs his own grave (Saint Just), and we have barely begun to fight. The workers have to occupy all the factories indefinitely and expel the Stalinist bureaucrats from them. Then we will know what needs to be done. The very consequences of our actions will carry us forward. Then the slogan will be: *All power to the Workers' Councils!*

Comrades,

Beware terrorist provocations by the secret services! Let us remember the [bombing of the] Piazza Fontana and immediately denounce hired terrorists. The kidnapping of De Martino<sup>216</sup> is part of the strategy of the SID;<sup>217</sup> it is well known that the APN<sup>218</sup> are masterminded and infiltrated. Terrorist acts, under the most varied labels, only serve power: they are spectacular events that only serve to hide and mask the real class struggle in which we are engaged and that the so-called Communist Party would like to pass over in silence.

Let us expose and denounce the maneuvers of the SID-SIS<sup>219</sup> by clarifying the true objectives that they pursue. The principal function of the abduction of De Martino was to disorient the council of factory delegates who were to gather in Milan a few hours later in an assembly that neither the Italian Communist Party nor anyone else could prevent. This police maneuver failed in that respect. When the unions can no longer control the struggle, it is to be expected that the police and the secret services will emerge.

Comrades,

The old mole has finally come out into the light. We have to make Lama<sup>220</sup> stop provoking the proletariat by brazenly smoking the pipe of social peace.

*The autonomous struggles of the proletariat are growing faster than wages, and the credibility of the so-called Communist Party is going down faster than the value of the Lira.*

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<sup>216</sup> Guido De Martino, son of the prominent Socialist politician Francesco De Martino, was kidnapped on 5 April 1977. He was released on 15 May 1977 in exchange for one billion Lira ransom.

<sup>217</sup> The Defense Intelligence Service (*Servizio Informazioni Difesa*).

<sup>218</sup> The Armed Proletarian Nuclei, which claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of De Martino.

<sup>219</sup> SIS is short for the SISDE (*Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Democratica*) ("Intelligence and Democratic Security Service").

<sup>220</sup> Luciano Lama, a Communist union leader who was expelled on 17 February 1977 from the University of Rome, which was then occupied by revolutionary students.

Long live the Metropolitan Indians!<sup>221</sup>

Long live Radio Alice!<sup>222</sup>

Long live the autonomous struggles!

Long live the workers who ousted the Stalinist bureaucrats from their movement in Milan! Long live the autonomous and sovereign assemblies!

Long live the absolute power of the Workers' Councils!

Rome and Milan

7 April 1977

Via Carlo Pisacane

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<sup>221</sup> *Indiani metropolitani*, a group of situationist-inspired pranksters, known for their face paint, graffiti and public antics.

<sup>222</sup> A pirate radio station.

## Correspondence between Guy Debord and Gianfranco Sanguinetti

Guy Debord to Gianfranco Sanguinetti  
21 April 1978<sup>223</sup>

Since the bombing in Milan,<sup>224</sup> the “Red Brigades” have made steady progress in the escalation of the stakes – Moro isn’t Calabrese<sup>225</sup> – but not in its methods: they have always known how to kill efficiently, yet the exploitation of their attacks still suffers from the same poor, illogical staging, full of hesitations and contradictions.

Leftists, however stupid their intentions and strategies might be, could *never* have operated in this manner by themselves. To begin with, had they not been acting undercover, they would have acted in a way that minimized the time elapsed since the kidnapping (because of the possibilities that they were already infiltrated or would eventually be exposed at some level, not to mention the risks of committing some blunder or encountering some kind of bad luck, which would surely have occurred to at least one of them). They would have immediately, clearly and with the greatest urgency demanded *something*: the liberation of prisoners (as was the case with Baader),<sup>226</sup> the distribution of their propaganda, or the exposure of certain recent practices by the semi-Stalinized, Christian Democratic State through confessions extorted from Moro or quite simply *attributed* to him. But they naturally remain indifferent to the fate of the defendants in Turin; they have no discernible political theses; and they have no desire to compromise the State’s personnel, who, for their part, have shown absolutely no fear on that score.

I suppose that the intelligence of the Italian people, who do not express themselves in the *mass media*,<sup>227</sup> have for the most part understood all of this. From whence come the diverse new developments of the last few days. Moro was “suicided” to better give the impression of a style of terrorism that has been *translated from the German* (and then his body was said to have been found in a lake<sup>228</sup> that might perhaps have contained another body, though this was subsequently corrected by the claim that this second body was actually found elsewhere, because someone must have realized that such a simple coincidence would appear to be implausible and that news concerning incidents that occur in the most remote areas is more accessible to the Carabinieri than to urban terrorists). In Hollywood one says, “Cut! Let’s do that scene again. It

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<sup>223</sup> Published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II* (Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, 1981), pp. 97-100; reprinted in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Volume 5: Janvier 1973 – Décembre 1978* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2005), pp. 455-459.

<sup>224</sup> At the Piazza Fontana, on 12 December 1969.

<sup>225</sup> While Luigi Calabrese was only a police inspector (he was in charge of investigating the Milan bomb, and ended up murdered on 17 May 1972), Aldo Moro (kidnapped on 16 March 1978) was a former prime minister.

<sup>226</sup> Andreas Baader (1943-1977) was a leader of the militant Communist group the Red Army Faction (Germany) who was imprisoned from 1972 until he was murdered in 1977.

<sup>227</sup> English in original.

<sup>228</sup> Here Debord refers to the bizarre events of 19 April 1978, during which the Italian Army, prompted by a false claim attributed to the Red Brigades, searched iced-over Lake Duchessa for the body of Aldo Moro, who was in fact still alive at the time. (He wasn’t killed until 9 May 1978.)

lacked authenticity.” Then Moro will no longer be a suicide, and the demand will be to exchange him [for a political prisoner] in a very short period of time. Etc.

This affair is obviously being conducted by enemies of the Historic Compromise,<sup>229</sup> not by revolutionary enemies of the State. Leftists are ordinarily so naive, even in Italy, that on occasions such as this they fall quite willingly into purely *theological* discussions of the problems posed by revolutionary violence, like that altar boy<sup>230</sup> whose anachronistic aestheticization of anarchist attacks once led him to believe that Oswald killed Kennedy. Discussions something like this: “If God existed, would He have kidnapped Moro?” But shouldn’t we ask instead, “Perhaps Censor exists and he has simply changed his politics?”

The Stalinists obviously know who has struck this blow against them. The *fragile* basis of their politics is the idea that all the Christian Democrats are officially their friends. Some of their friends are now placing pressure on other friends of theirs. The Stalinists insist that one must not give in. How could they say anything else? The *omertà*<sup>231</sup> will govern their relationships until the end. But what will this pressure, pushed to such an extreme, actually yield? The things that are being said are only coded signs of a confrontation that is taking place elsewhere. One has taken great risks to show that the entrance of the Stalinists into the governing majority has not restored order, quite the contrary. One must not forget that, though, *from the point of view of the revolution* and also from the point of view of Agnellian-style capitalism,<sup>232</sup> Stalinist participation absolutely will not change anything in the nature of class society, there are other capitalist sectors whose interests, and even their passions, are completely opposed to the costs of this change in governance and who openly treat it as a *casus belli*.<sup>233</sup>

The Stalinists are cruelly obstructed (Euro-Communism has already failed, in France as in Spain). But while today’s public might be surprised by such enormities, the Stalinist leaders, and a few other old anti-fascists, have seen all this before, and worse, *in another Spain*, during their youth, when Andrès Nin<sup>234</sup> was kidnapped: that’s when they learned to *say nothing*. And just as they defended the Spanish Republic by keeping quiet within the ranks of the International Brigades, they now defend the Italian Republic by staying silent. And the Republics that they defend in this manner do not last long.

Their obligation to keep quiet about various current crimes, simply *because they remained silent during previous ones*, constitutes a fundamental element of the problem, one that is very well known by their enemies and serves to embolden them. Yet this obligation is not grounded solely in their own Stalinist crimes of a bygone era. Through their silence, they effectively collaborated in the attack of 1969, from which all the rest has come. Because they initially feigned ignorance, then knew the truth without truly acknowledging it, and finally knew it without reaching any conclusion – namely that the State itself had instigated the terrorism in Milan (for who seeking an invitation to one end of the State’s table, despite his own shady past,

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<sup>229</sup> The Historic Compromise was a proposal made by Aldo Moro in 1965 to bring the Italian Communist Party (the Stalinists) into the ruling coalition. It was strongly opposed by anti-Communist elements in both Italy and America (NATO, the CIA and the White House).

<sup>230</sup> Raoul Vaneigem.

<sup>231</sup> The code of silence used and enforced by the Mafia.

<sup>232</sup> Umberto Agnelli, the “progressive” president of Fiat Motors.

<sup>233</sup> Latin: reason for war.

<sup>234</sup> The founder of the Spanish Communist Party, later a leader of the PUOM, who was kidnapped and murdered by the Soviet Union’s secret police in June 1937.

would dare to say aloud that the plates are dirty?) – the Italian political establishment descended into this obvious madness. There wasn't a public "Dreyfus affair,"<sup>235</sup> not because the scandal itself was of a less magnitude, but because no political party ever demanded that the truth be fully uncovered and the matter brought to a *definitive conclusion*. Thus Italy, which has already experienced a "creeping May" [1968], has worsened its malaise through the suppression of its own "Dreyfus affair."

Perhaps those who ordered the kidnapping of Moro did not exactly calculate all of its consequences and their interaction with each other, but they have certainly *weighed* those consequences. They are ready to do anything to bring about a change right now, and they are now objectively compelled to obtain it. The people who have done this have shown, by the same token, that they could do even worse. It is the supporters of the Historic Compromise who are now being provoked and *terrorized*. We have already seen how they have reacted. If this pressure doesn't soon succeed in producing some a kind of relief, a forceful blow will be obligatory.

The experimenters who operate in Italy and begin to make Italy into the European laboratory for counter-revolution are used to the general complicity of all those who have a public voice, a complicity that, pushed to such an extreme, gives the country the false appearance of collective imbecility. But one knows very well that there have been one or two exceptions. I once knew a man<sup>236</sup> who spent his time among the *sfacciate donne fiorentine*,<sup>237</sup> and who loved to slum with all the drunkards of the bad neighborhoods. Yet he understood everything that was taking place. He demonstrated this once before. One knows that he could do it again. Thus today he is considered by some people to be the most dangerous man in Italy.

Cavalcanti<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French Army, was falsely accused of passing secrets to the German government in 1894. He was exonerated in 1906.

<sup>236</sup> Gianfranco Sanguinetti.

<sup>237</sup> The shameless women of Florence.

<sup>238</sup> Guido Cavalcanti was a contemporary and close friend of Dante Alighieri.

Gianfranco Sanguinetti to Guy Debord  
I Fagiolini,<sup>239</sup> 1 June 1978  
My dear Cavalcanti,<sup>240</sup>

If, to ensure that I am not forbidden from reading your words, it was necessary for Moro to be kidnapped, then this kidnapping has at least served this one useful purpose!<sup>241</sup> And if, so that I might speak freely to you once again, it were to take 10 scandals or a revolution, I would ask for nothing better. Unfortunately, only yesterday did I receive the letter dated 21 April and that was sent in care of the Doge,<sup>242</sup> who has been abroad for a long time. The preceding silence, which lasted three long seasons, left me so sad that I've been sick all this time. And that idiot Paola told me by telephone that she also had a letter for me, but she still hasn't forwarded it. That girl is so slow in everything she does that she is only now leaving her husband!

On 16 March, the day Moro was kidnapped, I was in Milan, where I had a meeting with the Doge in the afternoon. In the morning, when the news of the event in Rome echoed on all the streets of Italy, chance would have it that I ran into Pietro Valpreda,<sup>243</sup> who I immediately asked if this time he could come up with a better alibi than the one he had the last time. Since he said that he didn't have one, and I didn't either, I told him that nothing could be better for me if we were seen *together* on that morning, because no one would bother me if I could prove in any situation that could arise that I was with a person who has a completely *burned* reputation, and thus no one would dare to disturb me a second time. He then invited me back to his place to listen to the early news reports, and it was there that I proposed to him, since he is so well known all over the world to have had some connection with the provocation of 1969, that he immediately make a public, printed declaration in a thoroughly sarcastic tone in which he cheerfully "claims responsibility" for this new provocation, since it clearly came from the same people who placed the bomb in the Piazza Fontana. I even wrote a short text for him, but as you know he isn't the boldest man in Milan, nor the most lucid, and thus he refused it in a categorical manner, with the argument that he'd had his fill of prisons, police and provocations. He offered me a small bottle of Barbera, which, beyond an alibi, was the only thing he offered me. And now, several days ago, he was condemned (without the possibility of appeal) to 10 months in prison for having, some time ago, insulted the public prosecutor [Vittorio] Occorsio, who was subsequently killed in Rome, officially by neo-fascists, and who was one of the people who had constructed the case against Valpreda. And so he went back to prison without any glory after

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<sup>239</sup> Italian for string beans, this phrase was used by Sanguinetti to indicate his location to Debord.

<sup>240</sup> Written in French and published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II*, op. cit., pp. 100-113.

<sup>241</sup> The last time Debord had written was on 2 August 1977. His remarks were trenchant: "Recall to Niccolò [Sanguinetti's pseudonym], on a more personal level, that I have esteemed him according to his merit (which rarely appears, given his unfortunate conduct), but that he has tired out my benevolence, which has never been unlimited for anyone, due to severe poverties that have too frequently reappeared."

<sup>242</sup> A reference to Aliberti Mignoli, Sanguinetti's friend and attorney. Cf. Sanguinetti's recollections about "The Doge," elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>243</sup> An anarchist who was initially (and falsely) accused of perpetrating the 12 December 1969 bombing of the Piazza Fontana.

being released from it without any personal merit, and the fact that he'd had his fill of prison did not save him from this most recent *mockery*<sup>244</sup> that our system of "justice" made of him!

As for my own particular situation in these troubled times, I immediately realized that, if it had been quite dangerous to not go underground in 1969, to do so in 1978 would be the most dangerous thing that I could possibly do. In fact, right from the first moment, any hunted person who wasn't *immediately* apprehended would, after Moro's kidnapping, find himself depicted in a large photograph in all the newspapers, with all the consequences that this would inevitably entail. Thus I returned as soon as possible to the country, where I now live in voluntary exile, so to speak, and where nothing can remain truly clandestine because everyone can see everyone else, and I haven't failed to have myself seen every Tuesday at the local market, where the Carabinieri prowl, without otherwise budging from here. In brief, I have "cultivated my garden" and my olive trees, like any *gentleman*,<sup>245</sup> *for fuck's sake*,<sup>246</sup> must do when living in the country.

The choice was a good one, and if I have not avoided being harassed, as you will see, I have certainly avoided much worse annoyances. By contrast, many Leftists did go underground, due to stupidity or mythomania concerning the repression, and now they're being hunted down and arrested every day with no other justification for it than their absence.

Your analysis of 21 April most resembles the famous letter that Messer Niccolò [Machiavelli] wrote from Marignano, I believe, to Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, and perfectly corresponds to the text that I would have written and actually started to write, although in a less concise fashion, in the form of a short pamphlet, with the title "*Ultimo Avvertimento al signor Giulio Andreotti sul terrorismo - ovvero contributo al disintossicare l'opinione del pubblico circa il rapimento di Aldo Moro, e gli attentati che seguiranno.*"<sup>247</sup> For a variety reasons, I have not been able to publish or even complete it. Among others, I gave this "proof": that if it truly was the Leftists who kidnapped Moro, this would signify that, *for the very first time*, the Italian State isn't lying to us in the matter of terrorism, but this, being incredible, must be excluded. And in any case, I would say that, even if Andreotti or Berlinguer had proof that this attack had been carried out, what do I know?! by the Mafia or by German skinheads? how would what they'd say be any different from what they have said? Etc. And, as for the Stalinists, since they speak in counter-truths, always evoking a "conspiracy hatched by reactionary trade unions" when it is actually a question of a spontaneous and general proletarian revolt, as it is in Rome and Bologna in 1977, it is completely normal that they never speak of this particular conspiracy, exactly when it is a question of artificial provocations like those of 1969 or those attributed to and claimed by the Red Brigades [RBs]. And concerning the RBs, which is quite capable of shooting the legs of the bosses, if not killing them, at one time or another, they are incapable of pulling off such attacks and also incapable *of even imagining them*. Etc., etc. As announced by its title, my short pamphlet would have ended with *an intimidating warning* (*avvertimento*<sup>248</sup> is a word from the *underworld*) addressed to Andreotti, a vague threat but so much more lugubrious for that, if he doesn't stop the [State's] terrorist practices. Presenting itself as *upside-down terrorism* or an

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<sup>244</sup> Italian in original.

<sup>245</sup> English in original.

<sup>246</sup> Italian in original.

<sup>247</sup> *Final Warning to Mr. Giulio Andreotti about Terrorism or, Rather, a Contribution to the Detoxification of Public Opinion on the Abduction of Aldo Moro and the Attacks that Followed It*, never published.

<sup>248</sup> Italian in original.

anti-terrorism, much more disturbing than routine terrorism, this pamphlet would certainly have created a scandal, all the more because I would have been busted three hours after it was published, *at least* for threatening the President of the Council, for calumny, for diffusion of *di notizie false e tendenziose atte a turbare l'ordine pubblico*,<sup>249</sup> and for perhaps even kidnapping Moro. It is truly a shame that I didn't put it together, but when I say that I've been sick, this isn't a rhetorical flourish.

After that, things got complicated. The Doge, coming to find me during Moro's captivity, recalled to me the remark that you'd previously made to him in Florence, namely, "*in Italy today, everything is possible*," and he added to this idea that we other Italians are good for nothing, but we are capable of anything. Thus, the rest of the story of Moro and his death has led me to not exclude any hypothesis. And although what you wrote to me is completely plausible and rational, [and though] it is as true as what I also thought, I will try here to envision this story in an inverted perspective: you will see that everything truly is possible. Nevertheless, I will not do this as an academic exercise, as did the sophist who eulogized Helen despite what every Greek thought of that whore, or as an aesthete, like the altar boy did with respect to Kennedy from his tranquil little corner of Brussels. I am in all senses of the word right in the middle of this field of obscure battle, and perhaps this fact allows me to see better or pushes me to deceive myself more. But since I live in this Italy, which is *serva e pericolosa*,<sup>250</sup> for me there is the greatest urgency in not deceiving myself, not believing something false about it, nor excluding something a priori: a *questione di vita di morte*,<sup>251</sup> as one says here.

Thus, here is my reasoning and my hypothesis. You will pardon me, I hope, for the length, but I would need even more time to express myself better. The Italian Leftists are very stupid, obviously. But this same stupidity, on the one hand, isn't completely sufficient to render them all incapable of doing anything at all and, on the other hand, is quite sufficient to convince them that terrorism can be a good thing. And you know that the Italian Leftist, unlike the French one, isn't a contemplator of theory, but a contemplator of practice, [that is to say,] more Edouardian than Salvadorian,<sup>252</sup> and where the Frenchman contemplates theory (and thus creates an ideological monster), the Italian contemplates practice (creating a terrorist monster). Goethe's remark, "nothing is worse than active mediocrity," seems to have been tailor-made for the Italian Leftists. In fact, the same stupidity that had for a long time prevented them from understanding *from whence* came the attack of 1969 could very well have subsequently manifested itself when the provenance of the attack became *confusedly* clear to them and allowed them "theorize" that one naturally responds to State terrorism with "proletarian" terrorism. It is an unquestionable fact that there are many Leftists in Italy who have become terrorists in the last few years, and among them there are quite a few young workers (there are a hundred known groups). It remains to be seen if a blow like the Piazza Fontana is beyond their reach or not. One knows, for example, that German and Spanish leftists have been successful in their attacks against Schleyer and Carrero Blanco.<sup>253</sup> I will concede that the Spanish have had much more

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<sup>249</sup> Italian in original: "false news and tendentious acts that disturb the public order."

<sup>250</sup> Italian in original: "servile and dangerous."

<sup>251</sup> Italian in original: "question of life and death."

<sup>252</sup> More like the ex-situationist Eduoardo Rothe than the ex-situationist Paolo Salvadori.

<sup>253</sup> Hanns-Martin Schleyer was a former Nazi, a businessman and a Christian Democrat who was kidnapped by the Red Army Faction and murdered on 19 October 1977 in retribution for the

experience with clandestinity and guerilla activities, and that the Germans are probably better organized. But in my hypothesis, this isn't the problem, but seeing *against whom* they have struck: the "advantages" of the Germans and Spaniards over the Italian terrorists are balanced by the advantages constituted by the incompetent stupidity of Italy's police forces, which are always in competition amongst themselves to see which one wins the award for the most imbecilic. Italy's terrorists are not geniuses, but its secret services are *nonexistent* (crushed under the weight of their 1969 attack, the arrests in Catanzaro,<sup>254</sup> and the [subsequent] dismantling undertaken by Andreotti himself), and, as for the efficiency of Italy's police and Carabinieri, "posing the question is already a response to it," to make use of your phrase.

(Here's a relevant anecdote, but I could cite a thousand other more instructive ones that personally concern me less. The authorities only came to get me on 12 May [1978], when Moro's body was already quite cold, but did so after having ransacked my sister's home in Rome, as well as that of my other sister. As if this wasn't sufficient to put me on my guard, the day before their arrival they thought it would be good to come in a group of four, in civilian clothes and in a regular van, to inspect the place, feigning to be hunters though the hunting season had ended here as everywhere else. Since I was strolling on my *podere*,<sup>255</sup> I did not see them, but they were recognized by the Sardinian shepherd, who they waved at, and he recognized one of them. Ten minutes later I was informed. The next morning, at 7:30, eighteen (*sic!*) Carabinieri arrived in several military and civilian vans. Expecting them for two full hours, I knew, thanks to a peasant, that one of their vans (with Carabinieri and a military radio inside) had been surveilling my house from afar since 6 o'clock. They were armed to the teeth, with bullet-proof vests, and descended all at once from their vans with their submachine guns pointed at my house. It seemed to me that I was watching a film, and I believe that they believed that they were in one. The captain who commanded the operation was completely inept, because, if he had made such a show of force and had the radioman ready to call in reinforcements, he had to believe that he was confronted with a terrorist or several of them, but, if he had been, he at least should not have arrived (with 18 officers) from the side same of the hill upon which my house sits! What was the use of the surveillance conducted the day before? And even if I didn't expect their visit (which was impossible), they woke me up with the noise from their five vans, and if I was a terrorist, with two bombs in hand at the window, I would have killed 18 people in the blink of an eye. Then this valiant captain lost five long minutes surrounding my house with 10 of his men in a very iconographic, even choreographic maneuver that was also very stupid because the door facing them was *wide open*. I'd left it open precisely to de-escalate the situation that I'd expected, but since they didn't know that I'd expected them, they should have taken advantage of this fact. This ridiculous operation at least had the result of cleansing me of the suspicion of being a terrorist, [at least] according to what the captain said afterwards, and here we reached the heights of idiocy, because, if I *was* a terrorist, and if I'd wanted to not appear to be one, I'd had 15 hours to remove or hide anything incriminating I had in my possession. Then, although they remained here a long time, they completely forgot to search my large cowsheds,

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murder in prison of Andreas Baader. Luis Carrero Blanco was a Spanish Admiral and Francoist who was killed by the ETA on 20 December 1973.

<sup>254</sup> In 1974, Vito Miceli, the head of Italy's Military Intelligence and Security Service, was arrested in Catanzaro and charged with political conspiracy for his role in the failed *Golpe Borghese* of 1970.

<sup>255</sup> Italian in original: "family homestead."

which they didn't even open up, or the cellar. And one cannot even say that they came here for some other reason, because the judge's warrant, which authorized their search even during the night, said that I was suspected of having committed crimes *contro la personalità dello Stato*,<sup>256</sup> *id est*<sup>257</sup> Moro. In every other instance, the police also comported themselves in an equally maladroit fashion. I end this parenthesis by saying that the only result of this operation has been that the local peasants are very excited by what took place here, expanding upon and distorting the story, with word of mouth of the affair reaching as far as the suburbs of Arezzo. I've heard from people who do not know me that they finally found the leader of the RBs and from others that I myself had been "discovered" and arrested.)

The Italian secret services have been *sure of being the only ones* to orchestrate terrorist attacks for such a long time that, when real terrorism takes place, they've been taken completely by surprise. And as for Italy's police, who are only trained for maintaining public order and, from the investigative point of view, are especially inept (80% of all crimes committed go unpunished), they have been, ever since the days of Calabresi,<sup>258</sup> so well instructed in the fabrication of false evidence against false suspects that, when it comes to a *real* deed and a concrete crime, they are routinely paralyzed. In the inquest into the Moro affair, they didn't even seek to find false suspects, which could demonstrate that they believed that if they looked, they might actually find the real ones. If they still haven't found any, this again proves their inability, but also that the task isn't easy. (Moreover, the Germans still haven't managed to find Schleyer's kidnapers, and their prisons, [apparently] so secure, weren't sufficient to prevent two good women from springing a terrorist, although here one might suspect that this escape was teleguided by the security services so that they could follow the escapees back to Schleyer's kidnapers, but, if this was the case, we will soon see.)

In Italian society, where the only stable thing is society's very instability, where nothing is solid and nothing functions, one wouldn't be surprised if very small terrorist groups could, over time, profit from the fragility of the system. By doing so, they could appear to be the only solid things within the very inverted social and political panorama of which they themselves are the product, which thereby assures them of success. But one can also say that such successes against the system *don't truly harm it*.

The fact that terrorism brings fuel to the spectacle's fire doesn't prove that the followers of the spectacle are always the ones who orchestrate terrorism, nor does it prove that the Red Brigades are black,<sup>259</sup> as the Stalinists say. What it proves is that the followers of the spectacle are still in a position to exploit what their police forces cannot manage to repress, and it also proves the thoughtlessness and impotence of the choice to orchestrate terrorism. It furthermore proves that the system is incomparably more capable of absorbing these attacks than preventing them. When applied to terrorism in the society of the spectacle, the argument *cui prodest?*<sup>260</sup> isn't of any utility, because one sees that terrorism (or at least its stated intentions) are officially opposed by those who actually might profit from them, but without achieving significant results, and that terrorism is perpetrated by those who are ultimately harmed by it, with significant

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<sup>256</sup> Italian in original: "against the personhood of the State."

<sup>257</sup> Latin for "that is to say."

<sup>258</sup> Police Commissioner Luigi Calabresi was the lead investigator into the bombing of the Piazza Fontana.

<sup>259</sup> Anarchist rather than Communist.

<sup>260</sup> Latin for "who profits?"

immediate effects. In fact, we have seen that Italian capitalism is quite capable of harming itself, on its own, much better than the Leftists can, and, conversely, that Italian Leftists can also harm themselves, on their own, by devoting themselves to terrorism *à bischero sciolto*.<sup>261</sup>

And even in this apparent madness there must be a hidden rationality, since what is real is rational (and *Corriere della Sera* was almost theoretical on 27 April [1978] when apropos of the Moro affair it demonstrated its own theoretical impotence: “All forms of rationality seem be drowning in emotionalism and spectacle. The *mass media*<sup>262</sup> thoughtlessly aids this process . . .” And *L’Espresso*, believing itself to be more refined, titled an article “*Les Brigate rosse fanno proprie certe strategie della ‘società dello spettacolo’*”).<sup>263</sup> The hidden rationality in this reality is that, in its apparent madness, Italian capitalism, like Italian Leftism, condemns itself by its own movement. And the historical utility of terrorism will be that it convinced all revolutionaries that terrorism is useless and all capitalists that it can be dangerous. Because I wonder to what extent it will be useful for the State to let this phenomenon continue while losing all control over it.

This State was the first to begin the terrorist game, knowing well that, up to the present, no terrorism of this kind has ever brought down a State. But if there is someone in Italy lucid enough to continue to make casual use of it, I would be surprised if he also doesn’t have the intelligence or historical knowledge to recognize that the history of provocations ever since the adventures of the parish priest named Gapone,<sup>264</sup> who helped to provoke nothing less than the Revolution of 1905, is full of very dangerous examples of missteps. And if the terrorist phenomenon is no longer mastered by the State, which will cause its personnel to live perpetually in fear (as a sort of purgatory in which one only nourishes oneself on hope), then I strongly doubt that this or that governmental minister, industrialist or powerful person has the stoic lucidity to console himself with the realization that no one, in the final analysis, is indispensable to the State. And living continually surrounded by cops who, if official, are incompetent and, if private, are costly – well, *questa non è vita!*<sup>265</sup> Indeed, the only message that Moro left to Italy and his friends in a number of letters that were written in his tortuous and unmistakable style is, finally, that *it isn’t worth dying for this State*. And who could say that he was wrong? Certainly not his friends, for whom the State is only good insofar as it assures them of a livelihood and a very *comfortable* one at that, as everyone knows.

And since every act of terrorism has its *fans*<sup>266</sup> among the very Leftists who, before becoming Leftists, applauded their soccer teams, without wondering too much from whence this terrorism came or could come, or to what it might lead, it is normal that terrorism also produces recruits, and then the *fan*<sup>267</sup> sometimes become a soccer player. Thus does the phenomenon grow like a cancer that feeds upon itself ever-more rapidly until it strikes ever-more higher targets,

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<sup>261</sup> Italian in original: “without reflection and casually.”

<sup>262</sup> English in original.

<sup>263</sup> Italian in original: “The Red Brigades adopt certain strategies of the ‘society of the spectacle.’”

<sup>264</sup> Georgy Gapon, a police agent who organized a procession on 22 January 1905 that led to a massacre, which in turn greatly undermined working class support for the Czarist regime.

<sup>265</sup> Italian in original: “that isn’t living.”

<sup>266</sup> English in original.

<sup>267</sup> English in original.

which have never been reached before, due more to the fact that they weren't supposed to be reachable than for any other reason.

I would even say that, for a while now, in Italy as in Germany, the terrorists have been technically successful in all of the attacks they've perpetrated, which demonstrates the extreme fragility of these systems with respect to this phenomenon. (Nor is it by chance that terrorism strikes these two countries in particular: both have never known revolutions comparable to the ones that took place in France, Spain and England; both combated the revolutions that broke out in 1919-1920 with fascist terrorism; both lost the Second World War; and for both "democracy" was imposed upon them as the price for that defeat.) From the military point of view, about which you know more than I, it seems to me that terrorist acts in those instances where one can't respond to them with general reprisals are quite easy to commit: they have the advantage of surprise and do not have the disadvantage of classical attacks, in which the attacking forces must be quite superior, because the terrorists don't need to occupy and hold a country, but to occupy the territory of the spectacle without, moreover, knowing how or being able to master it. Furthermore, one has seen that the Germans and Israelis obtained excellent results by adopting terrorist tactics at Mogadishu and Entebbe, respectively.<sup>268</sup> To fail at operations of this type, it appears to me, one must be quite idiotic, as the Egyptians were at Cyprus,<sup>269</sup> an easily avoidable blunder. And this facility of execution can very well suggest to the terrorists that they should undertake increasingly risky operations.

As for those who began terrorism and provocation in Italy, the least one can say is that they didn't heed Seneca's remark, according to which "it is easier not to begin than it is to stop" once one has embarked upon such a route and, nevertheless, one knows that Seneca (as Nero's advisor) knew something about provocations and terrorist tactics. Thus, if these types of attacks can, as we know, be of service to certain State forces, the chain reaction started after 1969 might, at least initially, have relieved these forces of the necessity of organizing it directly. But when everything proceeds automatically, these forces face a new problem that they cannot manage to master thereafter, in a second stage. And in my opinion, we have already arrived at that second stage.

It is impossible to understand this *new* phenomenon, because it takes places in a new context, that is, if one doesn't know the theory of the spectacle, and the new proofs of this fact are that even the bourgeois, when they speak of terrorism in Italy, speak of the spectacle, and that (according to what *Panorama* said last week) your book (of which a new pirate edition was made several weeks ago for purely *speculative* reasons, I believe, in the crudely economic meaning of the word) is one of the biggest sellers in Italy. Never has a book been pirated so often during the life of its author and, for various reasons, as yours has been in Italy over the course of the last 10

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<sup>268</sup> On 18 October 1977, in Mogadishu, Somalia, a German counter-terrorist squad stormed and rescued all the passengers from an airplane that had been hijacked five days earlier by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. On 4 July 1976, in Entebbe, Uganda, a squad of commandos from the Israeli Defense Forces stormed and rescued over a hundred passengers from an airplane that had been hijacked seven days earlier by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and a German group called the Revolutionary Cells.

<sup>269</sup> On 19 February 1978, at the Larnaca International Airport in Cyprus, Egyptian troops attempted to intervene in a stand-off with hijackers, but, due to a lack of coordination with the Cypriot authorities, they ended up fighting a battle with the Cypriot military in which more than 20 Egyptian soldiers were killed.

years! (This would certainly be the moment to produce a veritable *first Italian edition*, one that is accurate and perhaps augmented by a preface that explains this phenomenon.)<sup>270</sup> It seems to me that there have been a few rare periods in history in which the greatest and most important ideas and theories are spread with as much speed as the greatest events themselves, and this is due to the simple fact that *these periods understand and believe these theories are events of the greatest magnitude*, which, as Gondi<sup>271</sup> would say, are capable, after a sufficient amount of time, of producing events *grandissimi*.<sup>272</sup>

You can't even remotely imagine the precise point to which things in Italy have come: the *escalation* of madness, on the one hand, and the general degradation of everything, on the other. And even what I've advanced concerning the terrorist phenomenon is not raving that has no support in reality. Perhaps you recall that slut from Naples or Rome who one day came to Caldaie<sup>273</sup> and showed so much pleasure when you stroked her cunt with both hands. Perhaps you also recall that she had a brother who was hardly better than her where morality was concerned, because they were both equally incestuous and didn't even hide it. Anyway, it turned out that this brother had met a known terrorist whose name he didn't want to tell me and, furthermore, I do not even recall his name or that of his slut sister. And this brother told me that, despite his own dubious morality, he was surprised by the casual nonchalance that reigned in that ready-for-anything milieu, which is capable of many things, all of them useless to us and too spectacular, so much so that one could believe that we'd returned to the times of Nechaev and Dostoevsky. In any case, it would be better for us, who still believe in certain principles, to not get mixed up with sluts, incestuous couples and terrorists!

Do you know Alfieri's remark about Italy, which Stendhal quoted?

"Finally, what can I say? Modern Italy, which has reached the very heights of nullity and abasement, still shows me (good God! must I say it?) by the execrable and yet sublime crimes that one sees committed every day that, even today, it, more so than any other country in Europe, abounds in raging souls who are above all fears and for whom only a battlefield and the means to act are lacking to make them immortal."

Since 1786, when Alfieri wrote this, there have been five revolutions, five republics, and two empires in France, while in Italy there have been the *Cinque giornate* in Milan, the miserable *Risorgimento*, a *sciammannato* monarchial reign,<sup>274</sup> Mussolini, and the epic *Resistenza*<sup>275</sup> from which our first amazing *Republic*<sup>276</sup> was born! But Italy hasn't had a real

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<sup>270</sup> Just a few months later, in January 1979, Champ Libre would publish Debord's *Préface a la quatrième édition italienne de "La Société du Spectacle."*

<sup>271</sup> Guy Debord.

<sup>272</sup> Italian in original: "on a grand scale."

<sup>273</sup> The street in Florence where Sanguinetti maintained his residence.

<sup>274</sup> The Five Days (*Cinque giornate*) refers to the war for independence fought between 18 and 22 March 1848. The Resurgence (*Risorgimento*) was the period from 1815 to 1871, during which Italy was unified into a single nation. The disordered or untidy (*sciammannato*) monarchial reign was in power around the time of World War I.

<sup>275</sup> Italian in original.

<sup>276</sup> Italian in original.

battlefield or any real means to act. This, too, can explain the current suicidal activism of Italy's terrorists.

The departure point for each of these Leftists is a lack of money. Thus they begin with several *hold ups*,<sup>277</sup> they kidnap a rich bourgeois, then they have plenty of money that they don't know how to use "for the cause," so they start preparing the infrastructure for terrorism properly speaking (apartments, cars, weapons, radios, etc.). And they use this simple reasoning: "What I've done so far was quite easy, but no one has spoken of it; so let's do something about which everyone will be obligated to speak and that will strike a blow against the class adversary." And among all the things of which everyone is obligated to speak, on the field of class struggle, terrorist acts are obviously the ones that obtain this result at the least cost. Yet in the vast majority of cases, that is the only result that it produces. The mindset of the modern terrorist is not practical in the sense that it isn't the mindset of someone who executes an attack to enjoy the advantages that can be derived from it or to trigger specific, concrete effects; it is, rather, the mindset of a voyeur who places a mirror on the ceiling so as to watch himself fucking someone or, failing that, to watch himself getting fucked. Everything that he does he does to see it deformed and exaggerated in the mirror of the spectacle. Because today killing someone like Moro or Giscard makes more noise than stabbing Caesar in person did in the past, anyone can believe that he is greater and more formidable than Brutus. This fact, added to the fact that today there are far more Moros than Caesars in the world, places the role of Brutus within everyone's grasp.

The risk of spending one's entire life in prison doesn't even bother the young terrorists because they all think that they will outlive this State (and who could, *a priori*, prove that they are wrong on this point, given that Italy is constantly on the point of collapse?), and, in any case, they hope to not be arrested or, if so, to escape from custody and, in the worst-case scenario, the fact of remaining in jail for several years doesn't mean shit to those who only have a choice between the certain risk of spending their lives in a factory and the uncertain risks of alternating between periods spent underground and periods spent in jail. That's quite precisely what they think. Certainly they are very backwards in matters of historical awareness, knowing neither art nor the art of living, and they don't even manage to grasp the simple truth that, when people who present themselves as revolutionaries act in the same manner in which the secret services act, their condemnation has already been pronounced. But this derives from the fact, which you yourself mentioned, that in Italy after the [bombing of the] Piazza Fontana, there was no "Dreyfus affair," and that no one, and especially not those self-avowed revolutionaries, were able to draw definitive *conclusions* about State terrorism. And the perpetual *state of terrorism* (six terrorist acts per day in 1977) into which Italy has plunged is the logical consequence of that failure, and contemporary terrorism appears to me to be the exact compensation that this State has earned for having done everything to prevent a "Dreyfus affair" from breaking out with respect to the attack in 1969. What's worse is that one doesn't see how all this can end up, if not in a social revolution, which would be the only remedy to the alienated violence of terrorism, as well as all the rest. The fact that the group that abducted Moro did not make him spit out the truth concerning the attack of 1969 isn't as surprising as it might first appear: it is another consequence of the suppressed Dreyfus affair. The question of 1969 *didn't interest them* because, if it did, they wouldn't be who they are. These ideologues of clandestinity are, above all, *the underground figures of ideology*, and they are the worst ones, if in this matter it is possible to

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<sup>277</sup> English in original.

have a preference. They almost never speak of ideology because the majority of them are Stalinists and they aren't ashamed to declare it. The Stalinism of the Red Brigades constitutes, as it were, the last bloody surge of the disappointed illusions of a bloodthirsty Stalinism that is in a state of total disarray, and the bearers of this ideology believe that they are vindicated by the failures of the Stalinism that has become "democratic," as much in Italy as in France or Spain.

There are also other groups with different ideologies, and they only have terrorist practices in common. One of these groups is even pro-situ, and I froze when I read the beginning of the only document that, to my knowledge, this group has produced: Debord was right when he said . . . etc.! This group, *Azione Rivoluzionaria*,<sup>278</sup> has also been the only one, up to now, to shoot at a Stalinist from *L'Unità*.<sup>279</sup> I live in a municipality of 20,000 inhabitants run by the Stalinists, and I view with some anxiety the possibility of petty police harassment and summary justice [that could take place] if this continues and positions the situationists as the authorities that justify terrorism against Stalinists.

As for the political prospects in Italy, about which I have not spoken, what you have said appears completely sufficient to me, [that is to say,] about the weakening of the Stalinists, even from the electoral point of view; about the prevailing *omertà* (but at a terrible cost!); and about the very possibility of a coup d'état, given the incredible disorder in which Italy currently finds itself. Perhaps I am too optimistic if I, while not wanting to neglect the role that the stupidity of those in power plays in Italy's fate, repeat again that, since everything is possible, *ci sarà guerra, e presto, e malgrado la sciocchezza di codeste bande*,<sup>280</sup> provided, of course, that those who can profit from it do not seize the opportunity to do so sooner rather than later.

Afterwards, it will be too late. I still plan to write *Rimedio a tutto*,<sup>281</sup> but I would like to speak to you about it. Otherwise, it will be difficult for me to do it on my own, and yet I feel that I must write it immediately or never. I'm missing I-don't-know-what, rather, I do know: I'm missing your advice and encouragement.

I will send you a great many press clippings and documents, some of which I've cited above, but I do not know where you will be. And, as you know, above all else in the world, I would love to see you, but it appears almost impossible for me to cross the border into France, which surely is well guarded against Italians, and I have broken off my relations with the trucker with whom you are familiar. Can you not come to *enslaved Italy, not mistress of provinces, but a brothel?*<sup>282</sup> 1977 was an exceptional year for Chianti. And I still have two *demijohns*,<sup>283</sup> thus a total of more than 100 liters, which I haven't dared touch since 1975, hoping, as the peasants of Auvergne say, to celebrate [*arroser*] our meeting in the best conditions.

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<sup>278</sup> Founded in Tuscany in 1977 by Gianfranco Faina, who died of advanced lung cancer in February 1980, and Salvatore Cinieri, who was killed in prison in 1979. Revolutionary Action mostly attacked the media and Christian Democratic politicians.

<sup>279</sup> The official newspaper of the Italian Communist Party.

<sup>280</sup> Italian in original: "there will be war here, and soon, despite the nonsense uttered by these groups."

<sup>281</sup> In 1979, Sanguinetti would in fact write his *Remedy for Everything*, of which *On Terrorism and the State* would form a part. See elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>282</sup> Italian in original. A quotation from Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Purgatory*, VI, 76-78, p. 222.

<sup>283</sup> Italian in original.

And to conclude, these are the lyrics of a madrigal from the *16th century*,<sup>284</sup> the music of which is very beautiful, to dedicate to the workers in your next film.

« Io non compro più speranza,  
ch'egli è falsa mercanzia.  
A dar solo attendo via  
quella poca che m'avanza.

« Cara un tempo la compri  
hor la vendo a buon mercato.  
E consiglio ben che mai  
non ne compri un venturato... »

I buy hope no longer,  
Because it is false merchandise.  
I only seek to give away  
The little that remains for me.

Once I bought it dearly,  
Now I sell it cheaply.  
And I strongly advise that never  
should a fortunate soul buy any.<sup>285</sup>

I embrace you, Alice and you.

Niccolò<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Italian in original.

<sup>285</sup> Italian in original. From a song by Marchetto Cara (1465-1525) called *Hor vendutho la speranza*. I have located and translated another verse (perhaps the song's chorus?): "Hope is like a dream that passes into nothing / Hope is the demand that can be weighed in the wind / Hope often destroys those who dance its dance."

<sup>286</sup> Debord did not respond to this letter.

Gianfranco Sanguinetti to Guy Debord  
15 August 1978<sup>287</sup>

Cavalcanti used to say that there has never been a Dreyfus affair here [in Italy]. But if such a thing invariably entails unpleasant consequences, it nevertheless is not without remedy: an international Dreyfus case, foisted on this poor country, could be engineered. In short, here is a project to be clarified, Niccolò having received remarkable material concerning many historical examples of provocations, material that is hardly accessible and too little known, which could be printed without any problems (thanks to very trustworthy bad workers) as a kind of short manual, conceived as follows.

Title: *Technical Solutions to Political and Social Questions*.<sup>288</sup> Subtitle: *Practical Manual for Internal Use, With Historical References and Useful Examples, Examined in the Light of Recent Italian Experiences*.<sup>289</sup> Author: *Army Chief of Staff*.<sup>290</sup> Graphics would be identical with the official publications of the *E.M.*<sup>291</sup> Colophon: “75 copies of this manual have been printed in collaboration with the London Higher Institute for Strategic Studies”<sup>292</sup> (for example). Thanks to the very useful collaboration of certain persons, the celebrated Admiral, etc. Date: just *before* the latest Italian scandal.

Since it is here in Italy that one experiments with counter-revolutionary strategies, as Cavalcanti says, it seems to me that it is necessary to launch a *counter-attack* here, by once again taking up the good habits of Mr. Niccolò, to say the unspeakable about the State.<sup>293</sup>

*R. a T.*<sup>294</sup> is finally *completed*. It must still be proofread and typed up. Attached is the definitive index (around 200 printed pages, I believe).<sup>295</sup> The book appears to me to be well conceived, and I would like to believe it is executed to the best of my ability.

I can announce to Cavalcanti that the first Strasbourg scandal in the factories<sup>296</sup> *has taken place* in Milan, with the greatest success imaginable, thanks to a group of situ-inspired workers. Two factories, Motta and Alemagna, united under the name UNIDAL after being purchased by the State, have gone bankrupt. They produced foodstuffs and cakes, which had been popular, by employing more than 5,000 workers, which isn't a few.

It took two years, but the result was obtained. I was informed of it by one of those workers, who came to find me. In Chapter XIII [of *Remedy for Everything*] (On Sabotage Considered as One of the Fine Arts), I will make this scandal public. In fact, the story of this

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<sup>287</sup> Written in French and published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II*, op. cit., pp. 113-117.

<sup>288</sup> Italian in original.

<sup>289</sup> Italian in original.

<sup>290</sup> Italian in original.

<sup>291</sup> Short for *Esercizio Militare*, i.e., the Italian Armed Forces.

<sup>292</sup> The International Institute for Strategic Studies is located in London.

<sup>293</sup> A reference to the precedent established by Sanguinetti when he used a fictitious person (Censor) to tell the truth about the bombing of the Piazza Fontana in Milan on 12 December 1969.

<sup>294</sup> *Remedy for Everything*.

<sup>295</sup> See elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>296</sup> A scandal analogous to the publication of *On the Poverty of Student Life* at the expense of the student union at the University of Strasbourg, November 1966.

bankruptcy was already a scandal, but all the details were distorted because the story was reported by the *Corriere [della Sera]* through a barrage of fake editorials, which hushed up the crucial detail, which was that this bankruptcy was the determined and premeditated work of conscious, situationist-inspired workers who quoted *La Soc. del la S.*, etc. It would take me 30 pages to recount to you the truly scandalous aspects of this story; I will limit myself here to a very short summary. In addition to wildcat strikes, these workers bankrupted the factory principally by declaring to the entire country what its products *actually* contained. Having stolen the list of all the Italian distributors of the factory's foodstuffs from the management, they first warned and then challenged these distributors to continue to sell poisoned things. Naturally, this caused a great scandal, but it wasn't enough to convince the managers to change their methods of production, nor to bankrupt the factory, the deficits of which had been paid off by the State for two years running. Then, in various but very effective ways, the workers declared to the public that, starting on a certain day, they would begin to spit and piss into the [already] poisoned foodstuffs, which were dangerous to their producers as well as their consumers. This, coupled with certain quite new means of sabotage, *was sufficient*.

During these two years, these workers amused themselves, as they said, like crazy people. At the beginning, the *situs* [among them] were a very small group, but the illness quickly spread to the others. Three months after the arrival of my friend, he and several other workers were laid off, but supported by their comrades they appealed to the courts, where they demonstrated with the most advanced facility that they had only acted in the interests of the factory's good name and the consumers [good] health. The court then condemned the firm to take those workers back and pay them damages and interest. This example then spread, and several other workers, emboldened by that first success, filled complaints against the factory's management, pleading that they'd experienced nervous troubles due to the noise and a thousand other things, always winning their cases and thus monetary damages. Thus, a young worker continued to be paid, but on the condition that *she no longer had to show up at the factory*, etc.

The funniest part of the story is that several workers, including my friend, got themselves laid off just before the bankruptcy, for which they received extravagant compensations, *which they themselves had calculated with management, after a precise accounting of the damages that, if they had remained on the job, they would have sustained during the subsequent three months*. And since they were always the winners on the terrain of the *détournement* of the justice system, management granted them what they demanded, or almost all of it. My friend, for example, who had sworn to me that he had only really worked two weeks over the course of two years (although he almost always came to work, though, alas! to do *other things* while there), received over six million lira as compensation. And the ringleader of this game, who was the first [among them] to read *Spectacle* and put it to good use, received 13 million lire. If all this isn't scandalous, then I don't know what is!

Some of these workers are now in South America or touring the world in search of a new base of operations, thus taking literally the famous advertising slogan of an American airline company that, underneath a photo of an exploding *cocktail*,<sup>297</sup> asked, "How can you change the world if you still don't know it yet?"

My friend is in Greece, with his wife. I hardly delude myself when I say that with such workers, and such politicians, *managers*<sup>298</sup> and courts, Italy will not last long!

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<sup>297</sup> English in original.

<sup>298</sup> English in original.

Best wishes,

Guicciardini<sup>299</sup>

[P.S.] Have you received the books I sent to Chateau-Boujoum?<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> One of Gianfranco Sanguinetti's pseudonyms. Francesco Guicciardini was a friend and critic of Niccolò Machiavelli.

<sup>300</sup> The domicile of an Afghani friend of Alice Becker-Ho.

Guy Debord to Gianfranco Sanguinetti  
29 August 1978<sup>301</sup>

Dear Friend,

I completely approve of the projects mentioned in your letter of 15 August.

Nevertheless, I note that they are, without the least attempt at an explanation, in perfect contradiction with the theses that you inopportunately put forth in your letter of 1 June.

Thus I would like to know the reasoning that motivated those analyses, which were so disparate:

- (a) direct pressure from the authorities?
- (b) indirect pressure from the authorities, but politely presented through the insinuations of the very suspect Doge?
- (c) the pure pleasure of contradicting Cavalcanti, an activity to which you have too often been devoted, to the detriment of better activities?

In the expectation of reading a response to this remarkable problem,  
Cavalcanti

P.S. I have just received the books. Thank you. I would love to have a copy of the 1977 pirate edition of [*The Society of the*] *Spectacle*.

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<sup>301</sup> Written in French and published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II*, op. cit., p. 118; reprinted in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 5: Janvier 1973-Décembre 1978*, op. cit., p. 473.

Guicciardini to Cavalcanti  
24 September 1978<sup>302</sup>

Dear Cavalcanti,

Occupied as he is by what I will describe, Niccolò belatedly responds through me to your letter, which only arrived 10 days ago. He asks me to convey the following: there is in fact a significant contradiction between the two letters in question, just as there was a contradiction between what he thought before writing what must be said on the subject and what he thought while writing it. Of the hypotheses that you have advanced, he rules out the first two, and does not judge himself to be in the best position to judge the third one, which in my opinion cannot be ruled out. He maintains that sometimes having to deal with someone who, on certain delicate subjects, does not make mistakes, actually serves as a sort of catalyst for him to make mistakes. Though I find this explanation to be a preposterous, it seems to me that he is like that, even if I cannot find the precise reason for it, and it seems to me that, for Niccolò, who is habituated by a poor education to constantly run up debts, it is easier to continue to incur them than to settle up or even to stop himself. Deplorable though such an attitude is, I know him well enough to know that, as a rule, he is far more adept at recognizing stupidity in a fool than at recognizing reason where it actually resides. His initial, spontaneous his judgment is invariably sound, but afterwards, through the very act of reasoning, he distances himself from it and he takes off on a tangent, armed with his baggage of sophisms, in which he would not so completely wallow if he were not so *sfacciato*.<sup>303</sup> [...]

*Author's note dated 29 April 2013:* this is the first part of my letter of 24 September 1978, in which I responded to Guy's three questions. My letter is signed Guicciardini. It is four pages long. I could not speak of the German anarchist in this letter,<sup>304</sup> and this explains its convoluted structure. Later on, I touched upon *Remedy for Everything*, which was in the process of being typed up, and the risks that I was running, not only where the police were concerned, but also with respect to the Stalinists: the strangers who were wandering around my house and who had cut the chain that blocked entrance to my private road; the fire that had been set at my house on the previous Sunday; other provocateurs who had cut down the two oak trees in my fields and who had threatened me with another fire; the fact that I perhaps needed to distance myself from the place; the very suspect mail carrier who was a stoolpigeon for the cops (he lived next door to my property);<sup>305</sup> the letters from Guy that arrived open; the new vineyards that I was preparing; how the publication of *Remedy to Everything* would be accompanied by a scandal perpetrated by the wildcat workers and friends at the Motta and Alemagna factories in Milan, plus a postscript in which I announced the occurrence of another fire (previously threatened) set on my property just before I sent off the letter, on 27 September.

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<sup>302</sup> Not included in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II*.

<sup>303</sup> Italian in original: "impudent or cheeky."

<sup>304</sup> See Sanguinetti's letter to Mustapha Khayati dated 10 December 2012, elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>305</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti, 29 April 2013: nota bene* [note well] that three weeks ago, on 8 April 2013, the newspapers in Florence announced that this very mail carrier, who had an arsenal in his house, had blown himself up trying to get rid of the TNT that he possessed by exploding it in the fields next to my house, and that he is now in a coma.

**Remedy for Everything: Discourses on the Next Chances for Ruining Capitalism in Italy**

*(Rimedio a tutto)*

and

**On Terrorism and the State: the theory and practice of terrorism,  
divulged for the first time**

*(Del Terrorismo e della Stato. / La teoria e la pratica del terrorismo /  
per la prima volta divulgate)*

**Remedy for Everything:  
Discourses on the Next Chances for Ruining Capitalism in Italy<sup>306</sup>**

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<sup>306</sup> The title of *Remedy to Everything* a détournement of François-Joseph Lange de La Maltière's *Remède à tout, ou constitution invulnerable de la félicité publique* ("Remedy for Everything, or the Invulnerable Constitution of Public Happiness"), first published in 1793.

<sup>307</sup> Note that, in what follows, I have only translated those parts of *Remedy for Everything* that have been published.

<sup>308</sup> This chapter would be published under the title *On Terrorism and the State* (Milan, 1979).

## General Dedication

“I know that you will not make yourself an accomplice to an operation that, more than all the others, would destroy C[hristian] D[emocracy] (...) The first thing to say is that it is a matter of something that repeats itself (...) One speaks of it less these days, but enough for you to know how things take place and you, *who know everything*, are certainly informed of it (...) But (...) to spread calm in the entourage (...) you can *immediately* appeal to Pennacchini, who knows everything (in detail) better than I (...) Then there is Miceli and (...) Colonel Giovannoni, who Cossiga esteems (...) After some time has passed, public opinion will understand (...) The important thing is to convince Andreotti that, if he plays the trump card, a bloc of intransigent opponents will probably be constituted.” (Aldo Moro, letter to Flaminio Piccoli, only made public on 13 September 1978)

“I know that the demand for an intransigent truth has spread. But I also know that many things (...) require discretion, silence (...). And this in the interest of the objectives that we want to attain. This is exactly why, since the day of my arrival at this Ministry, I have not ceased to recall to each person the duty of discretion, I would even say the wisdom of silence.” (Virginio Rognoni, Minister of the Interior, 24 August 1978)

“When fate decrees that the people will have faith in no one, as sometimes occurs, after they have been deceived in the past either by events or by men, this inevitably leads to ruin.” (Machiavelli, Book I, Chapter 53, *Discourse on Livy*)

## **Dedication to the Bad Workers of Italy and All the Other Countries**

No doubt it is not yet time to do good. The particular good that we make is [merely] a palliative. We must await a very great, general evil for general opinion to prove its need for proper measures that do good. *What produces the general good is always terrible or appears bizarre when we begin too soon.* (Saint-Just, *Posthumous Writings*)<sup>309</sup>

It is to you, the bad workers, that I address this pamphlet, which, if it does not fulfill the obligations that I have to you, is nevertheless the greatest gift that I can send you in these times, because I have sought here to express in words the same total, resounding and salutary insubordination that you express even better and always with more radicalism through your actions and your struggles against work. And since neither you nor the others can wait another hour for me without contenting yourself less as a result, you must not complain that I have not given you more than this. Perhaps you should criticize me for not having known how to describe all the misery (which is very great) against which you revolt today or for not having known how to reveal all of the richness of your revolt, which is not slight, but in such case I do not know who is less obligated to the other: me to you, because you have encouraged me to write what I could not have written without you, or you to me, because by writing this pamphlet I will not have satisfied you.

Thus, take hold of this *Remedy for Everything* as one takes hold of everything that comes from a friend, always considering the intention of the giver more than the quality of what one receives from him.<sup>310</sup> And my intention, just like yours, is to harm this world, which harms you, to unmask those who are paid to deceive you, and to spoil the good reputations of those who still enjoy them. Nevertheless, if here I directly attack the men who are known today, but who will quickly be buried by oblivion or by the consequences of their own abuses, it matters less to me to displease them than, through them, to strike against *all the institutions* of this society, institutions

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<sup>309</sup> Louis Antoine Léon de Saint-Just (1767-1794). Fragment #3, *Fragments on Republican Institutions*.

<sup>310</sup> See the “Greetings” that begin Book I of Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy*: “I am sending you a present which, though it may not meet my obligations to you, is of such a kind that it is, without a doubt, the best gift Niccolò Machiavelli could send to you, for in it I have conveyed as much as I know and as much as I have learned of worldly affairs through long experience and continuous study. And since neither you nor anyone else could desire more of me, you cannot complain that I have not given you more. The poverty of my wit may displease you, if by chance these narratives of mine are weak, and so may the failures of my judgment, if I am often mistaken in my arguments. This being true, I do not know which of us should be less obligated to the other: whether I should be so to you, who have forced me to write what I never would have written for my own sake, or you to me, when in writing, I may not have satisfied you. Take this, therefore, in the way in which all things are taken from friends, where one gives greater consideration to the intentions of the sender than to the quality of the gift being given.” Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated with an introduction and notes by Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 13.

that they represent so well but defend so poorly, in the hope that they will be defended in their turn. My only desire is that this pamphlet will be capable of inciting those who still work without protesting – the good workers – to be *less good*, and those who, like you, already revolt – the bad workers – to become *even worse*.

To write such things against this world is easier than reading them, and reading them is easier than doing them. As for me, I would prefer to read what I write and to see and do what I read. Despite this, I would consider myself *hardly practical* if today I did not put my pen to certain ends *a little better* than so many others who say they use weapons in a manner that I believe is less efficacious, because it is the pen that puts weapons to work, and not the reverse, as is desired by the owners of this society and the naïve fanatics of armed struggle, who, on this point, are more in agreement than they would like to believe.

If you, the bad workers, judge that this *Discourse* is not too inferior to the ambitious intention that animates you and animates me, I will not fail to do even worse the next time, pushed as I am by my natural desire to commit (without any respect) everything that could *bring the attack* to the masters of our world, our times and our lives. If, moreover, you find in these pages only a single supplementary reason to unleash new and more violent attacks against all those who oppress and exploit you – the bureaucrats and the bourgeois – and to violently demystify the hoaxers who still pretend to speak in your name and place, *Remedy for Everything* will have satisfied my desires and there is nothing I desire more than that.

## Notice From The Author

Today, those who fear ideas have little fear of books. Each week the market offers an infinite number of books and no ideas; people seek their ideas outside of the market and the bookstores. And in Italy as in Iran,<sup>311</sup> people find what they seek in the streets.

Everything leads one to believe that, if thinking in the form of writing still is not prohibited in our country, this depends less upon the liberalism of the legislators than the fact that one does not run the risk of reading anything new, with the result that those who want to read books that are worth the effort *must write them themselves*, given that this sector of social production is (as much as the others) subject to the currently prevailing conditions of falsification and pollution. The very editors who today publish *anything* do indeed publish anything and, seeing what they publish, we can be certain that we can find the most interesting things among what they do not publish. Here I can provide easy proof, without which one might think that it is due to a lack of interesting writings that Italian editors do not publish anything interesting.

For two years after the success of the scandalous pamphlet that I wrote under the pseudonym Censor, several bourgeois publishers informed me that they were completely disposed to close their eyes to the subversive content of what I wrote so that they did not have to deprive themselves of the business that, in their opinion, my publications could bring them. When I committed myself to writing another book, one entitled *Remedy for Everything*, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore hurried to submit to me a publishing contract according to which, in addition to the book in question, he would have a monopoly on all of my publications for *the next ten years*, which was obviously a pretense that was beyond his means; consequently, I refused. As a result, he limited himself to paying for the book in advance, which he bought, as one says, *a scatola chiusa*.<sup>312</sup>

But when the zealous directors of this famous publishing house read the completed manuscript, they were literally *terrorized*, as if no one could still *show in writing what could be said* of this [Italian] State and its entire spectacle. According to the specialists in *marketing*,<sup>313</sup> subversive ideas can certainly sell well and, in any case, better than an absence of ideas, the sale of which is the specialty of those gentlemen. But at a time when the workers no longer want to be workers, we should not be too surprised to see that publishers fear being publishers. In this case, we can say that these audacious *managers*<sup>314</sup> not only bought my book with their eyes closed to the risks and dangers, but also *a bischero sciolto*,<sup>315</sup> as one says in Florence, because they must have and did imagine that I would write either a eulogy for this world or a futile lament for it. They hoped to do good business with subversion and, instead of that, they lost their ill-advised investment of “venture capital” by paying [me] so as to not to buy [the book from me]! These incapable but, in the final analysis, entertaining managers of this publishing house resemble the managers of our entire bankrupt economy. No one should be surprised if, very rapidly and not only thanks to the merits of these *managers*,<sup>316</sup> that economy ends up in the most

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<sup>311</sup> On 16 January 1979, after two years of intense demonstrations and protests, the Shah (Mohammad Reza Pahlavi) fled Iran, which he had ruled since 1941.

<sup>312</sup> Italian in original: “sight unseen.”

<sup>313</sup> English in original.

<sup>314</sup> English in original.

<sup>315</sup> Italian in original: “thoughtlessly and casually.”

<sup>316</sup> English in original.

complete ruin.

Waiting to *make a little Iranian revolution*, and certainly a better one, here among us, I only publish (for the moment) the dedication and the preface from *Remedy for Everything* conjointly with the chapter in it that relates to the terrorism against the proletariat that our State has practiced with impunity for the last decade. As for the rest of the book, it can wait. Nevertheless, the truth about terrorism, which one can immediately read here *and only here*,<sup>317</sup> has no publisher, but as the reader will see, it has no need of one. This truth violently refuses the clandestinity to which one would like to reduce it, and it is capable of inaugurating an *Italian samizdat* to get itself diffused.

Today, the innumerable enemies of that truth – who come from the Center, Right and Left – *must declare themselves* by exposing themselves on uncovered ground to combat it, because all of their lies no longer manage to hide it. And no matter what one can say about that truth today, in five or 10 years, or even before then, when everything has become clear to everyone, it will be what I have written about terrorism that people will remember, and not the streams of ink that all the professional liars and the imbeciles currently release on the subject.

To those who fear the truth, I want to offer several truths that will make them fearful; and to those who have no fear of it, I want to offer a reason that proves that the terrorism of the truth is the only one that benefits the proletariat.

Milan, March 1979

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<sup>317</sup> This line greatly displeased both Gérard Lebovici and Guy Debord, who complained that Sanguinetti had ignored the existence of Debord's *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of "The Society of the Spectacle"*, which Éditions Champ Libre had published in February 1979, two months before the publication of *Del Terrorismo e dello Stato*. See "Preface to the Dutch translation of Gianfranco Sanguinetti's book *On Terrorism and the State*," elsewhere in this volume.

## Preface to the Italian Edition

Victory will go to those who know how to create disorder without loving it. (Guy Debord, *Internationale Situationniste* #1, 1958)

Intelligence is perhaps the most widely shared thing in our country: each person thinks that he or she is so well provided with it that the very ones who are ordinarily the least likely to find contentment in any other thing, like our leaders, are not in the habit of desiring to have more of it than they already do. And since it is not likely that everyone is deceived about this subject, we must wonder how and by what necessity or mysterious interest this intelligence, allegedly possessed by such a large number of people, appears so infrequently in our country and not at all, not even on exceptional occasions, among those who, either in power or seeking to gain access to it, continually tell us that, if they are incapable, it is our fault and that, if Italy comes to ruin, the fault won't be theirs.

The fact is that this country, which proclaims itself to be free and democratic, is in fact led by several hundred heroic imbeciles who fear the consequences of the intelligence of all the others much more than they fear the consequences of their own stupidity, who curb that intelligence by all available means to better give free rein to their stupidity, and who can get away with it because their stupidity does not risk being publicly sanctioned by our sporadic electoral circuses, while they nevertheless make daily use of it according to their whims. In such a social and political organization, which these gentlemen have so opportunely fashioned in their own image, it seems completely normal to me that any voice that distinguishes itself from the dominant mediocrity and makes no compromises with it is naturally reduced to silence by a multitude of quasi-automatic mechanisms that perhaps remain the only relatively efficient things amidst the general lack of efficiency.

For my part, I have never presumed to be more perfect than anyone else. On the contrary, I have often desired to have the quick and lively intelligence and imagination of someone else. I have only had the chance to be engaged, from a young age, in a voyage down a road along which I have encountered a few people of the highest intelligence that this era has produced, despite itself, and I have no fear of admitting that this has already permitted me to *harm* this world, that is to say, its owners, not as much as I would have desired, but certainly more than the modesty of my forces, on their own, would have allowed me to hope.

Naturally, I do not exaggerate those first results because I have not been contented with them, just as I know that no one would be so unjust as to attribute to a single person, or to several people, the fault or the merit of having thrown our class society into a war in which the multi-colored forces of preservation have found themselves on the defensive and in an always-more precarious way. Those who first contributed to this, apart from the fact that the historical circumstances were favorable, were innumerable young proletarians who – although they are not known by name – remain the principal protagonists.

Without fear of being contradicted, I can even affirm that the last 10 years of class struggle have already allowed us to harvest such results and have showed so clearly the incapacity and abjection of our enemies – both bourgeois and Stalinist – that we cannot fail to consider the recent progress of the subversion of the dominant order with extreme satisfaction. Indeed, we can expect so many further encouragements in the future that, if this subversion (among the occupations of men) is the one that is serious and has a solid future, I dare to believe

that it is the very one that I chose in an era in which certain choices were less propitious than they are now.

Working *against this world* by obtaining tangible results, that is to say, by not being contented with the principal ideological compensation of being part of an impotent “opposition,” is a long-term task that also involves some inconveniences. But to work *for this world* is not much easier and more than often becomes, both objectively and subjectively, quasi *impossible*, and here I am not only thinking of the new *selective* unemployment into which our bankrupt capitalism has thrown an entire generation of young proletarians, which is an action that testifies to an imprudence and a lack of foresight whose consequences have still not been fully measured. In reality, the question surpasses our frontiers as much as the crude errors of our politicians and economists do. All the allegedly “very serious problems of our times” derive from a single, very simple fact; for each and for all, *it is time to resolve all the problems* and to resolve them directly, by oneself and also collectively.

That this is in fact *possible* is demonstrated by the terror that this blunt perspective is capable of provoking among all the current bosses of alienation and their political and labor union servants. That this is now *necessary* and urgent, as well, has, on the contrary, no need of particular demonstration because our class society, which is already *essentially* uninhabitable, has now *visibly* become so. Those who cannot understand this must also give up the idea of understanding the rest.

The politicians, economists, psychologists, sociologists, semioticians, intellectuals, specialists in public opinion and all the other imbeciles who whore around with power ceaselessly evoke those “very serious problems” and yet keep to themselves what they really *designate*. Those who drool and quiver with delight each time that their bosses ask them to sniff out a new phenomenon in which the crisis manifests itself – that is, those who love definitions and labels – today find a thousand pretexts for never naming what their science can never resolve but which *they do not want to see resolved by other people*. In reality, their trade principally consists in *showing that they are necessary* to their employers, and this is precisely their dominant preoccupation in this period, when the proletariat thinks that neither these experts nor their bosses are necessary. If such a phenomenon seems curious, we can certainly not say that this is what determines the novelty of this era, because it is only a consequence and not even the most interesting one, and if there is something surprising in the phenomenon of general disarray, it is only the extravagant credit that such specialists continue to benefit from among those who continue to employ them in the hope of . . . we don’t even know what. Here, as elsewhere, they confirm the old adage: the servant takes after his master.

Faced with such a tableau of the decomposition of the old world, the false consciousness that still reigns but *no longer governs* shamelessly accuses the young proletarian generation – which has re-launched the offensive against the society of the spectacle – of not being in a position to resolve the questions that are at the origin of its revolt and at the root of the crisis about which all the constituted powers are now debating. The contrary is what is true, because, in reality, the young proletarians are accused of *posing questions that power cannot resolve* from the moment that power itself is put into question.

And what do these famous “problems,” neutralized or falsified by all the enslaved thinkers, really consist of? What are they precisely? Society divided into classes, work, private property, the very conditions in which we are forced to survive and produce (as well as all that we are forced to produce and consume), the lies of bourgeois “democracy” and “liberty” (as well as the bureaucratic lies of “communism” and “equality”) – in sum, the society of the spectacle in

its entirety – *no longer functions* at the very moment that its reality *has been universally put into question* and attacked by a refusal that is not momentary and partial, but permanent and total.

All proletarians have been able to determine, at their own expense, that working for this world simply means exchanging one's life and time for a miserable salary that only guarantees survival and a perpetually precarious situation. And it is precisely salaried work that is being put into question and ultimately refused in a thousand different ways and on a thousand different occasions. More of a dialectician than his boss, the Italian worker is rediscovering a truth that old Hegel candidly expressed, but without really weighing the consequences or foreseeing the results: "Working means annihilating the world or cursing it."

Until now, the workers have limited themselves *to cursing this world*; today it is a question *of annihilating it*.

Ten years ago, "Never Work!" was written on the walls of Paris during the May revolution, and, in February 1977, this same command reappeared on the walls of Rome, greatly reinforced by the simple fact that, in the meantime, it had been translated into Polish by the workers in Stettin, Gdansk, Ursus and Radom in 1970 and then again in 1976, and also into Portuguese by the workers in Lisbon in 1974.

*Surpassing the economy* is the agenda everywhere, and proletarians, by refusing to work, show that they know perfectly well that work is principally *a pretext* that continually keeps them *under control* by forcing all of them to always be occupied with something other than their true interests. "On their banner, they must erase the *conservative* slogan 'A fair salary for a fair day of work' and write the *revolutionary* one 'Abolish salaried work!'" (Marx). Furthermore, even Lord Keynes, writing in his famous *Treatise on Money*, had to agree that "for anyone looking towards the future, the economic problem is not *the permanent problem of the human species*" – and in this he showed himself to be less obtuse than his current epigones and fervent out-of-season zealots. The fundamental fact is not so much that all the *material means* exist for the construction of free life in a classless society, as is the case today; it is, rather, that "the blind underemployment of class society's means can neither be interrupted nor go much further. Never has such a conjunction existed in the history of the world" (Debord).

I know several workers who are much more seriously occupied with [the reality of] political economy than unfortunate Franco Modigliani,<sup>318</sup> and with more effectiveness than inept Giorgio Napolitano,<sup>319</sup> but *from the opposite perspective*: that of the destruction of political economy. They put their theoretical discoveries into practice, and their critique of the economic system surpasses and invalidates the critique that the unjustly famous Piero Sraffa<sup>320</sup> believes that he has made. And, inversely, these workers are beginning to theorize the first practical results of their direct experiments *on the fragility of the economy*. They read Paul Lafarge's pamphlet *The Right to be Lazy*, in which – although it was written at the end of the 19th century and has been ignored by our ignorant economists – assuredly remains the most important and most modern work of pure critique of political economy to be appear after Marx. Well in advance and with great lucidity, Lafarge foresaw the reasons that capitalism would be led to [inaugurate] modern consumption, as well as the salient characteristics of what he calls "the era of falsification," which we are living in today. He also indicates the irremediable contradictions

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<sup>318</sup> An Italian-American economist (1918-2003) and the recipient of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1985.

<sup>319</sup> An Italian politician (1925-2023) and a prominent member of the Italian Communist Party.

<sup>320</sup> An Italian political economist (1898-1983).

in such consumption and, finally, that which summarizes and resolves them: the refusal of work and the surpassing of the economy.

The workers have finally been forced to see that the colors in which the dominant spectacle arrays itself to camouflage its monstrous traits are the very same dismal colors produced by the *cancer factory* in Cirié – a factory that, as everyone knows, destroys the workers at the same time that it produces dyes. This factory can be justly cited as the admirable quintessence of all the others; the only difference between them is that the *destructive cycle* of its productive forces is slightly more rapid and radical than elsewhere. But all factories have a close relationship with the cancer factory.

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As was said of Louis XVI, capitalism *must reign or disappear*. But to reign it must know how to constantly foresee and seek to avoid the breaking point of the unstable equilibrium that exists between everything that capitalism must impose and inflict on everyone – renunciation, sacrifice, constraint, boredom, pollution, et al. – and that which everyone can objectively support and is subjectively disposed to tolerate. Today, the very development of capitalism is such that, while the threshold of toleration *tends to fall* – as much for historical reasons as for simple biological ones – the quantity of all that this type of society must impose on us for its own particular necessities for survival *tends, on the contrary, to rise* without limits or wisdom, that is to say, due to its own movement, which is absolutely autonomous and independent from the real needs of men and women, and even from their most basic and irreducible requirements for survival. The spectacular-commodity society – that immense *immobile motor* – must constrain every person to sustain it and defend its anti-historical immobility. Nevertheless, the Herculean Columns of alienation, the limits that no one must ever cross, are no longer far away, or at the antipodes of the world or human knowledge, but are close to everyone, wherever they are. And every person must be capable of surpassing them if we do not want “to deny [the] experience, following the course of the sun, of that world that has no inhabitants” (Dante), that is to say, the experience *of the negative at work*, which is already the *practical* negation of all the limits that are arbitrarily imposed on the vast majority of humanity, that is to say, the proletariat, forced to live in a mindless state without ever giving any reality to its talents, its mutilated capacities or its unrecognized desires.

Descartes said: “My third maxim was to endeavor always (...) to conquer myself rather than fortune, and change my desires rather than the order of the world.”<sup>321</sup> Today, since the times have changed – and, with them, men and women, and their aspirations and desires – we must abandon all uncertainty and scruples. And thus our first maxim reverses that of the philosopher: *Always seek to change the order of the world instead of changing your desires*. And the proletariat must now seek to conquer, not fail, because only a violent desire for victory can assure the victory of the most authentic desires, which are also the least confessed.

All of the developed industrial world now presents itself as a sinister and endless suburb, of which Cirié, Seveso<sup>322</sup> and their surroundings are both *the anti-historical center* and *the image*

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<sup>321</sup> René Descartes, *The Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, Part 3, translated by John Veitch, (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1853).

<sup>322</sup> The location of a terrible industrial accident that occurred on 10 July 1976.

*of its future*, that is, if this world remains any longer under the direction of those who proclaim themselves “responsible” for politics and the economy. And modern spectacular capitalism can already contemplate itself – as if it were looking into a magical mirror that reveals the near future – in the generally censored images of the monstrous children recently born in Seveso.

Our bourgeois philanthropists might regret that this is so, but soon they will regret even more *that things are no longer this way*, because the quantity of all that this society imposes and inflicts on us has already surpassed the threshold beyond which any barely maintained equilibrium has been violently broken and can only be violently reestablished, but *always more provisionally than before*.

In such conditions, where the development of class society in all its bourgeois and bureaucratic variants is opposed, not only to the interests of the vast majority but also to the most elementary and fundamental conditions for the simple survival of the species and individuals (as well as their will to live), it is not a question of the proletariat delaying or avoiding a social war that *has already begun*, nor is it a question of the proletariat exhausting itself in a multitude of small skirmishes that are ceaselessly renewed because they are ceaselessly condemned to failure and fought “for the defense” of some nonsense (“Salaries, Jobs, Country,” as the unionized and Stalinist scoundrels like to bark). On the contrary, it is a question of the workers counter-attacking by going on the offensive and winning the war in the entire theatre of operations, which is global, as is the current crisis of all the powers. Because what is in play today is nothing other than *the destiny of the world*. Nevertheless, it is not at all in the name of some so-called “historical mission” (more or less unavoidable and prophesized) that the proletariat is called to become *the class of historical consciousness*, but because it is only from the position of fundamental superiority that the proletariat can successfully attack and combat all the forces of *unconsciousness* that are represented “democratically” (and they are the only ones that are represented) in contemporary capitalism. Henceforth, these forces will principally manifest themselves through their failures, disasters and infamies.

Since its beginnings, capitalism has been combative, and for a long time it has fought against all the other retrograde forms of power and social organization that have been opposed to its expansion. It has imposed itself and come out victorious from the wars that it has fought because (and only to the extent that) its development and conquest have corresponded to historically determined necessities and possibilities, of which none of its ideologues have ever been truly aware, just as today none of its contemporary ideologues are aware of the fact that the historical task of capitalism has *ended*. Today, now that it has conquered the world, become exhausted by its very successes, and been managed in an insane way by the half-witted heirs of the conquerors of the past, capitalism must once again and above all confront precisely that which has permitted it to attain such power: the proletariat. The social peace that capitalism has enjoyed for so long – since the failure of the social revolution in Russia and all of Europe – has almost made it forget the existence of its old enemy and this at the same time that there is no doubt that, today, capitalism has completely lost its former combativeness. All of its efforts now aim at preventing a social war for which it is not prepared, which it is *already desperate to win*, but for which its preceding development – so exalted until recently – has created all of the presuppositions.

On the contrary, the proletariat always finds itself at the center of a daily and permanent conflict, which is sometimes open, most often hidden, but always violent, and has lasted for a century and a half. Today, the class that has been continually at war against the conditions of its own oppression must necessarily perish or gain the upper hand over all the other classes that –

sometimes at war, sometimes at peace – are never as ready to attack, nor as prepared to defend themselves. On the other hand, it is in the very nature of this war that the property-owning classes can never annihilate their enemy, that is to say, *abolish* the proletariat, which would mean abolishing *the very conditions for their own supremacy*. They need the proletariat; the proletariat *has no need* of them. This is the heart of the matter.

As if all this wasn't sufficient, we must note that the logic of such a conflict also includes the fact that, while the property-owning classes are constrained to consider each of their victories as *provisional*, and each respite that the proletariat concedes to them as uncertain, the proletariat, for its part, is obligated by its very condition to never accept any peace *if it is not the peace of the victor*. And it is precisely this fact that makes the proletarians always increase their *immense pretensions* as they go along and despite their past defeats, which were also provisional. Thus, the workers of the entire world continually plunge into the most profound despair and, in a rhythm that always quickens, the same forces that are opposed to them just barely win their victories. It is precisely in this manner that the proletarians impose on themselves the higher necessity of winning, not only this or that particular battle, but *the entire war*.

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Marx said that human beings only pose the problems that they can resolve, and I would add that, today, we have precisely arrived at the point where *it is no longer possible to resolve any of them without resolving all of them*. This is why this pamphlet is called *Remedy for Everything*.

Our strength exactly resides in the facts that we are faced with *all the problems* and that we also have the necessity, as well as the possibility, of *resolving them all*. By contrast, the weakness of our enemies – bureaucrats and bourgeois – lies in the fact that, in addition to being confronted by all the problems, they have the imperative necessity of *not resolving them all*, that is to say, they are in a situation in which they truly cannot resolve any of them. Thus, this is exactly the nature of their situation today: they do not have the strength to resolve any problem and yet they are not in a position to prevent others from resolving them, nor can they coexist with these problems for very long. Thus, we must not be surprised by the fear and confusion that will henceforth reign in their ranks.

Until 10 years ago, it seemed impossible to the greatest number of people that anything could be changed; today it seems impossible to everyone *that anything can continue as it did before*. And yet, 10 years ago, the resigned thinkers of the impotent Left pompously decreed that the world had reached its definitive order, and that there was no other “choice” than the one between the Russian, Chinese and Cuban lies that their dishonest controversies weakly nourished. [Herbert] Marcuse, full of illusions, still claimed to demonstrate to us the disappearance of the proletariat, which was supposedly cheerfully dissolved into the bourgeoisie, and Henri Lefebvre, disillusioned, was already chattering on about “the end of history.” By confessing so maladroitly that the reality of the period was all that they dreamed, they were only taking their poor dreams for reality. But after 1968, they had to come to sad terms with the stupidity from which they suffered. Marcuse became resigned to keeping quiet, and Lefebvre returned to the fold by speaking on behalf of the French Stalinists.

Today, when the time of disorder once again begins to disturb the sleep of the dominant classes, all the pathetic ideologues who are short on ideas have lost their audiences, but they have found unexpected jobs as defense attorneys for the old world. In Italy, where the crisis is the

most serious, they have lost all restraint and – one step ahead of subversion – pop up here to hastily don the togas of the fatherland and appear over there like old cuckoo clocks to ceaselessly strike our ears with the same banalities about the defense of the republican order and the customary trivialities in favor of the democratic institutions with the same feigned and self-important conviction of the priests of a church that lacks a loyal congregation because faith is lacking in the miracles that they promise: namely, that history will stop, as if by enchantment, due to their magical formulae.

Every time that they show up on television or in one of the newspapers that imprudently invites us to appreciate the delights of the democracy that – fuck! – was born from the Resistance, just as they were born from the estimable cunts of their mothers, people like Valiani, Amendola, Asor Rosa, Moravia, Bobbio, Bocca et. al demonstrate that they do not want to understand that the violent and contradictory events that feed the columns of the newspapers only prove that *their era is over* and that a new world is here. These old caryatids that hope to support the desecrated and crumbling temple of the dominant lies and abuses for a little while longer – these extremists of consensus and fanatics of legality – do not know that their laws do not control the future or that, before judging the new men, one should judge the old laws. And, furthermore, the “democracy” and “liberty” with which these gentlemen gargle and assault our ears are, for them, *what colors are to someone who is blind from birth*. The proof of this is simple. If they knew the real meanings of these words, they would not make use of them so casually when speaking of our miserable republic. But when *real democracy* imposes itself – that is to say, when all decision-making and executive powers belong to the revolutionary workers’ councils, from which every delegate is revocable by the base at every instant – well! then we will see all these gentlemen who today speak nonsense about democracy either combat it or, more probably, *flee from it*, as is their habit. But faced with the peremptory and insolent appeals with which these gentlemen gratify us today, the young proletarians are obligated to conclude that, if these respected hoaxers are solid in their courageous defense of all the current lies and abuses, it isn’t by chance, but is in fact because they collect large payments for doing so. How many millions does honest Leo Valiani<sup>323</sup> receive each month, or each week, to write what he writes? And what would he write if he had the salary and life of a worker? And Bocca? And all the others?

Lichtenberg said that he didn’t know a man in the world who, having transformed himself into a blackguard for a thousand *thalers*,<sup>324</sup> would not prefer to remain honest for half that sum.

Disappear, grotesque masquerade, charlatans of incurable diseases: you fear too many things to be feared and respect too many things to be respected! You judge everything wrongly, while people are beginning to judge you rightly. Do you not know that half of the country is laughing at you and the other half ignores you? You should at least know that, faced with the

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<sup>323</sup> Leo Valiani (1909-1999) was an anti-fascist militant and organizer of the Resistance during World War II. In the 1970s, he wrote for *L'Espresso*, a leftist news magazine. In the words of an obituary written by Philip Willan and published in *The Guardian* on 21 September 1999, “In the 1970s and 80s, his was one of the firmest voices to denounce the violence of politically motivated terrorists. He criticized the laxness of Italy’s penal laws and even went so far as to argue for a restoration of the death penalty. He insisted that the state had to be defended against all sources of violence, whether the originators were fascist thugs, terrorists or Mafiosi.”

<sup>324</sup> Silver coins.

tragic-comic farce that constitutes your very existence, the court martial of our critique will soon celebrate its saturnalia! And one should not reproach me for having recourse to invective. Ever since Dante, all those who have regarded the powerful and their servants with disabused eyes have always been *constrained* to have recourse to invective. Because it is not enough to judge the acts and speeches of men; one must also *judge men according to their acts and speeches*.

Until now, the entirety of the country has remained spectators of its governmental ministers and all those who deceive it and speak in its name. Today the country must begin to judge them and to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's: 23 thrusts of the sword.

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In the eras in which intelligence reigns, one can judge men and women according to the use they make of it; in the centuries of decadence, during which some skillful people live, one must judge men and women according to their interests and merits; and in those periods when extreme mediocrity collides with great difficulties, which is the case today, one must consider the general conditions in which men and women live, the pretensions, fears and particular interests of those in power, and make our judgments based upon this mix. Thus, if today we witness the edifying spectacle that is offered to us daily by all the defense attorneys for the old world, who take the floor with ardor and haste to ejaculate their pleas in turn or all at the same time, this is because they fear that each time might be their last and because they all feel – with confusion, but not without good reason – that the tribunal of history is at the point of handing down a sentence that only comes too late. And if in their vain oratories these mercenary defenders of all the abuses sometimes seem reckless, this is only because, when fear has passed a certain limit, courage and cowardice can temporarily produce the same effects.

If the politicians and intellectuals are temporarily agitated by the word *courage*, it is principally to ask each other *what it is* exactly. And if, after the clamoring has ceased, they have not been able to give a response, we need not look very far to find the reason. As a general rule, men and women always speak the most of what they lack the most, and particularly in the situations in which they have the greatest need of it. Thus, while a poor person speaks of money, Franco Rodano<sup>325</sup> speaks of courage. Lama, Moravia, Arpino, Calvino, Vasco Pratolini, Elio Petri and a hundred others try to outdo each other in their discussions of it. It isn't only Antonello Trombadori<sup>326</sup> who has spoken of it – and, at least on this occasion, he showed himself to be reckless by speaking of rope in the house of the hanged man. And almost all of them have spoken of courage to accuse [Eugenio] Montale<sup>327</sup> and Sciascia<sup>328</sup> of cowardice, even though these last two have at least had the *minimum courage* to express publicly the disinterest and disgust that this State inspires in them, while the Stalinist Amendola<sup>329</sup> fears to see the State

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<sup>325</sup> An Italian politician (1920-1983) who preached a mixture of Catholicism and Communism.

<sup>326</sup> An Italian politician, journalist and art critic (1917-1993).

<sup>327</sup> An Italian poet, writer, and music critic (1896-1981).

<sup>328</sup> Leonardo Sciascia (1921-1989) was a writer who later became a politician affiliated with the Italian Communist Party, from which he resigned in 1977. In the years that followed, he was elected to the European Parliament and devoted himself to investigating the kidnapping of Aldo Moro.

<sup>329</sup> Giorgio Amendola (1907-1980), a member of the Italian Communist Party, was a writer and member of the Constituent Assembly.

collapse before the Christian Democrats have been able to share it with him.

All this demonstrates that one can say of courage what Marx said of consciousness. It is certainly not the courage of men and women that determines their social condition, but, on the contrary, it is their social condition that determines their courage and cowardice; and it suffices to consider the provisional character and current fragility of the social positions that these usurpers occupy in a society as uncertainly divided into classes as ours is to be sufficiently informed of their alleged “courage.” Moreover, it goes without saying that no one has asked them to be [truly] courageous.

Cowardice has always existed, even if every age has not had the chance to see it in power. In our age, cowardice would like to be in the majority, but *it already is* the majority of the government; it has its heroes, and it publicly awards itself the dignities and honors that were, in other times, reserved for courage. All of the political-intellectual controversies about courage have only made obvious the profound cowardice of all those who have participated in them, since, if one cannot give oneself courage, one cannot take away one’s cowardice. Indeed, one *cannot even hide it*, because I have never known a coward who at least has had the simple courage to recognize his cowardice and thus hide it better.

These periodic, weak and boring “polemics,” which constitute the principal pastime of all the *eunuchs of power* – that is to say, the intellectuals – once again demonstrate the incurable weakness of those who participate in them. The weapons of their “critiques” do not fire because they are, as Camoens<sup>330</sup> would say, “covered with the rust” of the social peace that they have enjoyed for too long, but only until recently. And we know that weakness is perhaps the only fault that one cannot correct, precisely because its effects are unimaginable and even more prodigious than the effects of the most vivid passions.

These courageous gentlemen defend the archaism of society’s institutions only to avoid the misfortune of having to defend themselves. Nevertheless, they no longer even know how to get these institutions *to function*, and their archaic nature cannot get these men respected or venerated. Quite the contrary, these institutions discredit themselves every day, and they age even more rapidly than their coryphées. And, as their decadence becomes ever more obvious, they inspire a contempt that becomes so universal that they are less and less in a position to do harm. Thus, the political world has fallen into a disastrous imbecility at the very moment when society as a whole has become *more intelligent*. Today, this imbecility and this intelligence harm power to an equal extent, and power finds itself constantly eaten away from the inside and attacked from without.

The social war that is coming has already put into motion all the individuals and all the classes of society because, by putting the interests of everyone back into play, it confers on everyone an interest in the [outcome of the] battle and it calls upon each person to choose his or her camp: on the one side, all those who fear a war *that they can no longer prevent* (the capitalists and the bureaucrats of the so-called Communist Party); and, on the other side, all those who have no power over their own lives and *know it*.

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In the following chapters, I will write against the order of existing things, but I will do so *in relative disorder*. If I were to deal with this order in an orderly way, I would be according to

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<sup>330</sup> A celebrated Portuguese poet (1524-1580).

much honor to my subject, because I want to show that *it is incapable of it*. As Saint-Just already said, “the present order is disorder put into laws.” Before concluding this preface, there is hardly any need of saying that *Remedy for Everything* does not want nor can it be a remedy *for everyone*. Indeed, it proposes *to harm* many and hopes to be useful to an even larger number. The utility of such a pamphlet will thus be measurable *according to the damage* it is capable of causing, directly or indirectly, immediately or in a little while, to the owners of alienation, because everything that is harmful [to them] is not useless for this purpose. Only that which is useless is harmful [to us]. I hope to be *clear*, but if someone persists in not understanding, I will preoccupy myself less with this than he or she would. It is said that this era can no longer be unconcerned about what it produces and, if it produces certain books, this means that it also produces *those who know how to read them*.

The owners of this world, as well as its salaried “critics,” will be exasperated and vexed by seeing that only their most irreducible enemies are in a position to really understand it, and the dominant class will see with a justified inquietude that its real problems are only exposed by those who work at its subversion. Our government ministers and all the politicians will be justly disturbed by having to read our writings to finally be able to contemplate themselves with realism, but in the perspective of the destruction of all their powers. The heads of the bourgeoisie’s secret services – for a dozen years predisposed to provocations, assassinations and State terrorism – will justly be made furious by seeing their maneuvers constantly unmasked by the very people against whom these crimes were conceived, and even the death of Moro will finally appear in its true and sinister light.<sup>331</sup> The great decomposing bourgeoisie certainly will not want to pardon me, either for this pamphlet or any of the rest, and some among them – like Indro Montanelli,<sup>332</sup> who has already cried about it for the last two years or so – wants to accuse me of being a *traitor to my class*, because I have turned all of my weapons against the aforementioned high bourgeoisie, from which I have come. Well, I am honored to receive such an accusation, because there is no humiliation (nor anything else) that this bourgeoisie has not amply merited, and the working class, which has been subjected to the largest number of class betrayals on the part of its alleged representatives, will have reason to congratulate itself because *for once*<sup>333</sup> their class adversary has been struck by the same fate.

Thus, *Remedy for Everything* will also be a *settling of accounts* with the entire underworld that the dominant class democratically imposes on the dominated classes, and also a settling of accounts with this or that *precise* person who has, until now, abused with too much impunity the patience of the exploited classes or, rather, the silence to which they are reduced. As in Hell, here one will find various graves and many damned souls – bourgeois and Stalinist, professional liars and labor-union bureaucrats, politicians and intellectuals, among others – with the result that, at the end, I, too, will be able to say to the reader:

Now you may judge of such as those  
Whom I accused just now, and of their faults,  
Which are the reason for all the ills you suffer.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Aldo Moro (1916-1978), while still the Prime Minister of Italy, was kidnapped and murdered in an attempt to stop the “historic compromise,” which he had long championed.

<sup>332</sup> An Italian journalist, historian and writer (1909-2001).

<sup>333</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>334</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Paradiso*, VI, 97-99, p. 375.

## Preface to the French Edition of *On Terrorism and the State*<sup>335</sup>

If many books on terrorism are published in Italy, few of them are as little read as this one and none are as ignored by the press. Published at the end of April 1979, distributed slowly in a limited number of bookstores, *Del Terrorismo e dello Stato* was out of print by the beginning of the summer and has not been reprinted in Italy because of several difficulties created for me by a stupid and crude judicial-police persecution to which I will return. It is more interesting to ask oneself here, at the beginning, about the reasons for the quasi-complete silence that has surrounded a book that deals with a subject that is spoken about every day, but always in the same mendacious way, on the front pages of all the Italian newspapers as well as on the State-sponsored radio and television stations. Apparently my book was discussed in an *ad hoc* program that preceded a regularly scheduled installment of a television news-magazine, but, as several people have reported to me, this was only done so that a motley collection of experts on terrorism, brought together for the occasion, could say that the theses of my book “are not convincing.” The most curious fact is that neither the television news-magazine nor the newspaper that wrote about it have ever dared to evoke these famous “theses” on Italian terrorism, which they nevertheless hastened to describe as “unconvincing.” On the contrary, do they fear *that they are convincing* and is this why they keep silent about them with so much zeal? Do they fear that my arguments are in fact considered by [some] people to be more persuasive than their maladroit fantasies about terrorism, since all these reporters have made it their duty to make no allusions to them? If so, why so many precautions? What the devil is written in a book that is so scandalous that its existence is kept secret by the very people who are believed to have the obligation to speak about terrorism? Does *On Terrorism and the State* contain State secrets?

Well, yes: *this book contains State secrets*. Is not the principal secret of the Italian State the fact that its own secret services have organized and pulled the strings of terrorism? And this is precisely the very thing that is amply demonstrated in *On Terrorism and the State*.

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What is *not convincing* is not my argumentation, but the self-contradictory behavior of the State and its loyal servants with respect to my book. On the one hand, they speak of it to say nothing about it, that is, when they aren't trying to have the Italians think that what I say isn't “convincing.” On the other hand, several days after the televised “review,” the political police and a judge who is known for the unfortunate zeal that he employs in trying to render probable all of the official lies on the subject of terrorism began a complex and solemn judicial-police persecution of me. Thus, should I think that I committed the crime of not having been “convincing”? If our [Criminal] Code makes provisions for such an offense, all the prisons of Europe would not be enough to hold our politicians, journalists, judges, police officers, union leaders, industrialists and priests. No, this was not why I was persecuted. I was in fact persecuted because I was *too convincing* when I accused the State of the crimes that this same State then sought revenge for, but, as we will see, with the embarrassed clumsiness proper to guilty parties

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<sup>335</sup> *Del Terrorismo e dello Stato: La Teoria E La Pratica Del Terrorismo Per La Prima Volta Divulgate*, translated into French as *Du terrorisme et de l'état: la théorie et la pratique du terrorisme divulguées pour la première fois* by Jean-François Martos (Paris: Le fin mot de l'Histoire, 1980). Preface dated January 1980.

who want to pass themselves off as innocent. The men who govern this State are, as one knows, the same ones who governed during the massacre at the Piazza Fontana and, so as to not be accused of perpetrating it, they have been continuously obligated to accuse other men of their own crimes and all other crimes, as if they want to give a supplementary and practical confirmation of the theory of Madame de Stael,<sup>336</sup> according to whom “the life of any [political] party that commits a political crime is always linked to that crime, either to justify it or, *by virtue of its power*, to make that crime forgotten.”

A series of disparate accusations – so crudely false and arbitrary that, one after the other, they collapsed without my attorney having to intervene – were made against me during these past six months and, according to the whims of those who imagined them, they ran from smuggling to terrorism, and, naturally, included the possession of weapons and subversive association.

Of all these accusations, which could have brought me 20 to 30 years in prison if one kept to the letter of the law or, on the contrary, [if they were pursued] would have covered in ridicule those who made them against me, there were two of them that could have found a basis in reality (if one were to take them seriously and in a certain manner), while the others were completely false and bizarre.

I have indeed been a smuggler, but an honorable one. Since 1967, have I not smuggled in from France the driving ideas of modern revolution, that is to say, the ideas of the Situationist International? And I also admit that, judging from the conditions in which the Italian State has found itself since then, this smuggling of the French disease has not benefited it: the contagion has been more rapid and deeper here than elsewhere, and the illness has not been eradicable. Unfortunately for my accusers, under the terms of our Code, as well as the Helsinki Accord, the smuggling of ideas is not condemnable, and we know quite well that, when the Italian State is concerned with ideas, it is surely not to get them cleared through customs. The accusation of smuggling thus collapsed miserably, even if it desperately sought, but unsuccessfully, to camouflage itself behind other common law pretexts.

As for the accusation of subversive association, although I do not exactly know what “subversive association” means in the context of the old fascist Code that is still on the books, I recognize that it, too, could have a basis in reality, since I belonged – in broad daylight and not clandestinely – to the Situationist International until its dissolution, which took place in the faraway year of 1972. I find this *inquisitio post mortem*<sup>337</sup> of the SI laughable. A judge concerned with fairness, in addition to investigating the SI, would also have to open investigations into Marx’s Communist League and the International Association of Workers, and issue a warrant for the arrest of the descendants of all those who housed Bakunin during his stay in Italy.

The accusation of weapons possession was based on absolutely nothing, and it certainly wasn’t better founded for having been brought against me several times, but always without success. Contrary to the nattering of President Pertini,<sup>338</sup> it seems to me that the civil war still hasn’t begun – the proof of this is that he is still President of this thing that resembles a republic

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<sup>336</sup> Anne Louise Germaine de Stael-Holstein (1766-1817), a French novelist and political theorist.

<sup>337</sup> Latin in original: “postmortem inquest.”

<sup>338</sup> Alessandro Pertini (1896-1990), a member of the Italian Socialist Party, served as the president of Italy from 1978 to 1985.

– and thus it is useless to possess weapons. And, in any case, those who accuse me of possessing weapons must at least find them, or at least plant them on me, and neither has happened yet.

Adding the arbitrary to the most obtuse arrogance, the Republic’s chief prosecutor claims that, “according to the contents of the documents of the Red Brigades, there exist close connections between the ideology of this group and that of the Situationist International, of which the aforementioned Sanguinetti is a representative.” Beyond the fact that the Italian section of the SI has not existed since 1970 and that, as a result, I cannot be [one of] its “representative[s],” and beyond the fact that the SI never had an *ideology*, because it fought against all of them (including the ideology of armed struggle), one must note at least two things. First, it would be less unfruitful if the judges in question educated themselves before making accusations. Second, it would be much easier to show “close connections” between the police-like ideology of the aforesaid prosecutor and that of the Red Brigades than between the ideology of the Red Brigades and situationist theory. And nothing in the world is more radically opposed to what I wrote about the Red Brigades than what this group says about itself, with the support of both the bourgeois and the bureaucratic press. Finally, I note – so as to not rely on arguments that are too facile – that is easy to buy the publications of the SI in Italy and that there are many people who know them, despite what the voice of this or that imprisoned Autonomist<sup>339</sup> says. Furthermore, anyone who reads these publications can ascertain that in no case does there exist “close connections” between these writings and the documents of the ghostly Red Brigades, despite what that impertinent prosecutor claims.

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In the same way, and at the same time that the authorities were conducting this maladroit persecution – which was filled with low blows but at least had the merit of being public and official, as were the incriminations, searches, surveillance and wiretaps connected to it – obscure and vile people who were by their behavior easily identifiable as cops, acting with fewer scruples but with no more success, operated in the shadows with the aim of provoking or intimidating me. Not being an intellectual, and not having the necessity of making a living from what I write, I have never claimed to receive better public recognition than this for what I myself publish, at my own risk and peril, at a time and in a country where no one dares to run the risk of saying to people *that which one doesn’t want people to hear*, that is to say, the simple truth about terrorism and the rest.

For the benefit of readers who don’t live in Italy, and to give Italy the publicity that it merits, I will add that several travelers have been stopped at the border by the Italian police, taken by force to a large city and interrogated at length for the sole reason that they possessed a copy of this book; that the magistracy has opened an investigation into those who have distributed it; and that the DIGOS,<sup>340</sup> without even having obtained a proper seizure order, has arbitrarily seized whatever copies it has been able to find.

Thus, there is no longer any doubt, if there ever was one: *I have told the truth*. And thanks to the harm one wants to do to me, I know that my work is good, and I certainly would not have provoked such hatred if no one had heard me. In fact, among the people who have read

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<sup>339</sup> A member of *Autonomia Operaia* (“Workers Autonomy”).

<sup>340</sup> The *Divisione Investigazioni Generali e Operazioni Speciali* (DIGOS), which is officially tasked with fighting organized crime, terrorism and capital offenses.

what I have written, and who are of various ages, conditions and opinions, many have approved, few have doubted, and none have refuted me.

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Since the first edition of this book, many events have taken place, none of which have necessitated the least modification (in either the entirety or the details) of its arguments or conclusions. Indeed, these events have only confirmed them. We have witnessed the elimination of [Parco Emilio] Alessandrini, a judge who was becoming troublesome, first for taking apart the rigged trial [of those accused of the bombing] of the Piazza Fontana, and then – several hours before being killed [in 1979], officially by [Leftist] subversives – for having questioned an ex-chief of the SID<sup>341</sup> about his false testimony and the false testimony given by his superior officers, Andreotti and Rumor,<sup>342</sup> at that rigged trial. Then we saw a disciple of Moro, the Honorable [Piersanti] Mattarella, the President of the Sicily, meet the same end as his master, and *for the same reason*, on 6 January 1980, on the eve of his formation of the first regional government of “compromise” between the Christian Democratic Party and the Italian Communist Party. On diverse occasions, we have also seen several police officers suddenly get iced so as to heat up support for and nullify all opposition to the *villainous laws*<sup>343</sup> that surpass and invalidate the old fascist laws (thought to be too tolerant), as well as the republican Constitution. But the most important of all the novelties that appeared during this past year was certainly the fact that the ICP – seeing its prospects for active and immediate participation in the government evaporate with the death of Moro – adopted a fallback position, which was to make a warhorse of its active participation in the spectacle of terrorism and its repression. This is clearly the principal novelty to appear after the publication of the first edition of this book, and it merits a few remarks because it once again demonstrates that, not only do the Stalinists know that it is power that perpetrates terrorism, but also that those who wish to be in power in Italy today must demonstrate that they know how to perpetrate terrorism. And this is so true that even a former government minister (a Socialist) recently declared in an interview that, “in Italy, one makes policy with terrorism.”

Until 7 April 1979,<sup>344</sup> the ICP contented itself with issuing stupid, ritualized appeals against terrorism, which it defined by feigning to believe all the official versions of the attacks, thus proving its good will to the Christian Democrats and its bad conscience to everyone else. But from that day on, the Stalinists, through the intermediary of the magistracy, began to put to good use their vast and rich 50-year-long experience with the “discovery” of fake suspects, the staging of rigged trials, the production of false testimony and prefabricated proofs.

Since their twofold goal was to show their merits to the Christian Democrats and to get rid of a limited but embarrassing force (because it was situated to their left and insulted them), the Stalinists found among the Autonomists the guilty parties for 10 years worth of assassinations, massacres and [other acts of] terrorism. There wasn't a crime committed in the

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<sup>341</sup> The *Servizio Informazioni Difesa* (DIS), a defense intelligence agency.

<sup>342</sup> At the time of the investigation, Giulio Andreotti (born 1919) was the Minister of Defense and Mariano Rumor (1915-1990) was the Minister of the Interior.

<sup>343</sup> French in original Italian version.

<sup>344</sup> The day on which the Italian authorities began arresting dozens of alleged subversives, including Antonio Negri and Franco Piperno.

1970s that wasn't committed by this or that Autonomist. From unsolved murders to the Moro affair, from mysterious kidnappings to the thefts of works of art and racehorses, every crime was solved, suddenly and as if by magic; every offense found its guilty party and every guilty party found his or her compensation in a prison sentence. To obtain such a harmonious settlement of the trials of the past decade, *the genius for harmony and invention*<sup>345</sup> of a simple Stalinist magistrate was certainly not enough. The entire organization (both its hidden and public parts) of the ICP was mobilized with the goal of proving that *Autonomia* was the armed struggle. As if by chance, the only Autonomist leader to remain at liberty, the naïve Pifano, was very quickly caught with his hand in a sack that contained two non-functioning Lance missiles, furnished to the aforementioned Pifano by the FPLP,<sup>346</sup> a Stalinist Palestinian organization that was, according to General Miceli himself, notoriously linked by reciprocal recognition to the Italian secret services. Thus, if until that moment the links between *Autonomia* and terrorism could not be demonstrated, the zealous Pecchioli<sup>347</sup> was, several hours later, able to declare to Parliament that, faced with such an eloquent fact, no one had any right to doubt that the Autonomists constituted the strategic leadership of terrorism, which was what the Stalinist magistrate Calogero<sup>348</sup> had already maintained, but without any proof. The poor Autonomists, who for their part have never understood terrorism or revolution, have thus ended up – such coveted prey – in the carnivorous jaws of the Stalinists and the magistracy, without even understanding why or how. One must hope that, where their self-instruction is concerned, they make better use of their time in prison than they did when they were free.

In both their ingenuity and their crudeness, the Stalinists' admirable methods of accusation are not at all original, but closely match the ones used in the famous Moscow "show trials" of the 1930s. The only difference is that the arrested Autonomists have still not been declared guilty of all the crimes that have been committed. The incongruity of these most-recent juridical procedures must not be held against the Stalinists. No doubt they would quickly disappear if the Stalinists had control of the police forces and could make use of their tested and infallible system during the interrogation phase.<sup>349</sup>

For the secret services and the ringleaders of the Christian Democrats, who have suffered so many judicial humiliations these past few years – certainly not due to the honesty of the judges, but their own lack of ability – the great trials of the Autonomists, which have been so skillfully mounted, have opened up unexpected perspectives and new fields of action. Indeed, ever since 7 April 1979, the spectacle of terrorism has made immense progress and, if, until then, the secret services had been compelled to go too far, now that the Stalinists have shown themselves to be such skillful and unconditional allies, there is reason to believe that, like Ulysses, they will fashion "wings for that foolish flight, always gaining a little on the port side."<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Here Sanguinetti has détourned the title of a well-known series of violin concertos by Vivaldi: *Il Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* ("The Contest Between Harmony and Invention").

<sup>346</sup> *Front Populaire de Libération de la Palestine* ("Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine") founded in 1967.

<sup>347</sup> Ugo Pecchioli (1925-1996), a member of the Italian Communist Party.

<sup>348</sup> Pietro Calogero (born 1939), the public prosecutor in Padua.

<sup>349</sup> An allusion to the murder of Giuseppe Pinelli, allegedly one of the perpetrators of the bombing at the Piazza Fontana, on 15 December 1969.

<sup>350</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Inferno*, XXVI, 125-126, p. 158.

Acting in this way, the bureaucrats of the ICP have done nothing other than what they are capable of doing and incapable of not doing when they find themselves within reach of power. They know perfectly well that, this time more than ever, they have every reason to be dishonest, because it is in the current period that their historic enterprise is being played out, and it is natural that they seek to put into play all of their forces, since their entire fortunes are at stake.<sup>351</sup> They have a supplementary reason to immediately show all of their historical dishonesty. They are certainly not ignorant of the fact that it is uniquely because of their dishonesty, and not for their well-hidden virtue, that the bourgeoisie can now employ them in their service. And, more precisely, the Stalinists know that they must continuously invent and discover conspiracies against bourgeois democracy, either to feign to love it better or to show to the world all of the dangers that it runs without their help.

If the ICP behaves this way in public, it surely acts with the same contemptible baseness in its “private life” at the factories, that is, by indicating to the bosses the identities of the “terrorist” workers (those who do not want to submit and so practice absenteeism, that is to say, those workers who *struggle*), so that they can be fired and denounced in the name of the justice of work.

Contrary to the hopes of subtle Berlinguer,<sup>352</sup> the bosses and the best-advised men in the Christian Democratic Party have concluded that the more the ICP shows itself to be useful without being a part of the government, the more useless it would be to bring them into it, with the result that all that the Stalinists do (and by all possible means) to attain power is in fact what keeps them out of it, which further alienates them from the electoral sympathies and illusions that they had once garnered. But this is the drama of the Stalinists and it doesn’t concern us, at least insofar as they have not become malicious enough to return to the practice of their preferred art, which is political crime. Until then, we must note (this is what immediately concerns us) that bourgeois terrorism and Stalinist terrorism, both of which seek the same goal, reveal themselves to be what they have always been, and give the working classes an excellent occasion to recognize and combat *all* of their enemies, both bureaucratic and bourgeois.

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The active servility with which the entire Leftist intelligentsia at first tolerated, then adopted, the official accusatory theses about terrorism and the Autonomists’ connections to it could seem properly stupefying to someone who doesn’t know that this intelligentsia has always acted in this fashion every time that it has had the opportunity to act otherwise. The governmental-Stalinist version of the facts was accepted point-by-point and thus publicized without the least respect for historical truth or so-called “intellectual dignity.” Furthermore, it is notorious that, for the last half-century, the role of Italian intellectuals, who are Stalinist for the most part, has been irreplaceable in the diffusion of all the lies on the subjects of socialism and revolution. Today, since they can no longer lie about Soviet, Chinese and Cuban “socialism,” they have been reduced to the spreading of limitless lies about bourgeois democracy. To

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<sup>351</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated with an introduction and notes by Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, op. cit., Book I, Chapter 23, p. 76: “It has never been judged a wise course of action to endanger your entire fortune without committing all of your forces.”

<sup>352</sup> Enrico Berlinguer (1922-1984), the Secretary General of the Italian Communist Party.

safeguard it, they have willingly made every sacrifice and have even safeguarded it without making any sacrifices at all. Thus, the recent government decrees concerning [police] custody, the penalties for crimes of terrorism and “possession of subversive documents” were approved without protest and in homage to the fetish of democratic guarantees. The new provisions on preventive detention will permit the State to keep an accused person in prison *for 12 years without trial*. From now on, the Italian magistracy, for which the existence of courtesans has never been a State secret and no longer has to be proved, does not have to bother with demonstrating the guilt of whomever is *de facto* condemned to 12 years in prison, and this is just the beginning. From now on, the accusation coincides with the condemnation, and the fiction of democratic liberty in Italy has ended *even as a fiction*. Italy is a democratic republic founded on the exploitation of work<sup>353</sup> and executive orders.

In a passage in *The Phenomenology of Mind* that is little known by our intellectuals and that relates to governmental terrorism, Hegel says,

By no manner of means, therefore, can it [the government] put itself forward as anything but *a faction*. The victorious faction only is called the government, and just in that it is a faction lies the direct necessity of its overthrow, and its being government makes it, conversely, into a faction and hence guilty (...) Being suspected, therefore, takes the place, or has the significance and effect, of being guilty.<sup>354</sup>

When the arbitrary *no longer fears* to appear as what it has always been, and when being guilty or innocent no longer has *any importance*, since the condemnation becomes *the only certitude*, then anyone who combats the arbitrary no longer has to fear *being guilty*. He or she is condemned for being condemned as much as for committing an honorable crime. Thus, we cannot let ourselves be governed innocently. And so, waiting to destroy all the prisons, let us give the enemy good reasons to fill them, certainly not by falling into the well-set trap of terrorism, but rather by fighting openly and by all means all those who today make use of it and practice it: government ministers, politicians, bosses and police officers.

In our times, intellectual Jesuitism calls democracy “the arbitrary,” freedom “the freedom to lie,” and testimony “systematic and obligatory informing.” “*Thus the informers, a class invented to destroy the commonwealth, and never enough controlled even by legal penalties, were stimulated by rewards,*” Tacitus said,<sup>355</sup> though he – unlike our intellectuals – confessed that he preferred the dangers of freedom to the tranquility of slavery. These same intellectuals, after having debated courage back and forth, and up and down, proudly concluded that today one must have the courage to be a coward. The reasoning in fashion these days is simple: if one loves democracy, one must defend it; to defend it, one must combat its enemies; to combat the enemies of democracy, no sacrifice is too great; the nobility of the goal justifies every means; no democracy for the enemies of democracy! What was *essentially* not a democracy has now *visibly*

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<sup>353</sup> Cf. Article I of the Italian Constitution.

<sup>354</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, “Absolute Freedom and Terror,” *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated from the German by J. B. Baillie (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1910), p. 600.

<sup>355</sup> Latin in original. Adopting the translation in *Tacitus: The Annals & The Histories*, translated by Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2003), Book IV, Section 30.

ceased to be one.

And who are the real enemies of democracy? All those who *objectively* put it in danger by propagating ideas that are incompatible with it, and all those who *objectively* support its enemies by not supporting the State. In sum, the enemies of *this* “democracy” are all those who practice democracy.

In 1924, had this “democracy” – so sincere, so quick to pretend to be the contrary of what it really is – been in power, instead of Mussolini, one can be certain that the means would have existed to accuse the Leftists of the assassination of Matteotti,<sup>356</sup> just as one accused the Leftists of assassinating Moro in 1978. But as Mussolini had less need of lies than the current State, he would not have needed to employ intellectuals such as Leo Valiani<sup>357</sup> to speak to us of State crimes with the same admiration that one speaks of the virtues of Cato [the Younger].

I know quite well that the Italian intelligentsia has a number of reasons to be fearful and dishonest; I even know its self-justifying arguments by heart; and I would never dream of refusing it the freedom to be contemptible. What I find tedious is the fact that intellectuals constantly intervene with respect to terrorism in the newspapers and weekly magazines, as if an obscure force pushes them to publish the proofs of their unlimited baseness, and as if it were still necessary to convince anyone of it, whereas they might be better off if they confined these proofs to their books, so that their baseness is not known to either posterity or their contemporaries.

For example, no one among the great thinkers in matters of terrorism has yet formulated the simplest of arguments on the subject. If the ghostly Red Brigades [RBs] were a spontaneous grouping of subversives, as one says that they are, and if Negri<sup>358</sup> and Piperno<sup>359</sup> were the leaders of the RBs, as one pretends that they are, then why would that clever group allow the State to imprison its leaders, who deny that this is what they are, and why would they not even seek to exonerate these men, if only to try to recuperate them afterwards? If, on the other hand, Negri and Piperno are not the leaders of the RBs, and are not even members of that organization, then the hypothetical subversives of the RBs would have even more reason to publicly clear them of these accusations. Indeed, they would have three good reasons for doing so: to not allow leaders to be falsely attributed to them without protest; to not be accused of allowing innocent people to be condemned in their places; and, finally, because – being protected by clandestinity – they run no risk of clearing the names of the people currently accused.

Since nothing of the sort has happened, we must conclude that the real leaders of the RBs have the same interest as our State does in having it believed that Negri and Piperno are their leaders. This novel convergence of interests between the State and the RBs has nothing fortuitous or extraordinary about it and can only stupefy the stupid people who have not realized that the RBs *are the State*, that is to say, one of its armed appendages.

Therefore, even these few simple deductions, which, on their own, suffice to prove the enormity and fragility of the generalized lies about terrorism, are too bold to be formulated by our free thinkers, who are so free that they have come to the point of *no longer thinking*. On the contrary, they revel in trying to outdo each other with sub-Machiavellian and maladroitness theories,

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<sup>356</sup> Giacomo Matteotti, a socialist leader who was murdered by the fascists.

<sup>357</sup> In April 1945, Valiani was one of the signers of the document that ordered the execution of the Italian dictator.

<sup>358</sup> Antonio Negri (1933-2023) co-founded *Potere Operaio* (Workers’ Power) in 1967 and was active in *Autonomia Operaia* (Workers’ Autonomy) between 1973 and 1979.

<sup>359</sup> Franco Piperno (1943-2025) was active in both *Potere Operaio* and *Autonomia Operaia*.

such as the one that tries to prove that the dissolution of *Potere Operaio*, which occurred six or seven years ago, was a diabolical simulation that allowed its leaders and militant members to better devote themselves to armed struggle. And this has been repeated for months without anyone perceiving that the hypothesis is absurd, and for the very good reason that, if *Potere Operaio* had truly been the cover for terrorist activity, why would its leaders deprive themselves of such a valuable legal front?

The truth is completely different and, as is customary, to find it one must reverse the shameless lie with which one would like to camouflage it. It certainly isn't *Potere Operaio* that feigned to dissolve itself to better devote itself to terrorism, but the famous SID that feigned to dissolve itself to have its past terrorism forgotten and to practice it better thereafter. Other salaried thinkers, from Scalfari to Bocca,<sup>360</sup> reason fraudulently when – admitting that the strategies of the RBs, among other things, aim at preventing the arrival of the ICP into power, which is what I have demonstrated – they believe that this aim results, not from the aversion that the Communists cause in certain sectors of Italian capitalism and its secret services, but from the aversion that the Soviet Stalinists feel for their Italian counterparts. Our thinkers who are paid by the week thus conclude that Moro was kidnapped with the support of the KGB and the Czech secret services. The Italian capitalists, the military men and the agents of the SISDE, SSMI, CESIS, DIGOS and UCIGOS,<sup>361</sup> as well as [the American President Jimmy] Carter, would be happy to see the ICP in Italy's government, but this is, unfortunately, not possible because the Russians and the KGB don't want it to happen. What bad luck! If the KGB was behind the Moro affair, then who or what is behind Bocca and Scalfari, those idiots? And is it possible that they have been raised to such heights by their own strengths?

In any event, this curious and stupid theory, which impetuous Pertini hastened to make his, clearly serves to reassure the bad consciences of all those who want to believe that this State, because it is at war with terrorism, cannot be directing it, too.

For my part, I note with legitimate satisfaction that my book, which at first forced silence upon all those who are paid to speak, then obligated them to talk all day and commit themselves to an interminable series of outrageous remarks designed to support the opposite of the truths that, with this book, began to circulate freely in Italy.

In an extremely different sense, here one can mention Russia, because contemporary Italy and Russia under Stalin are perhaps the only States in the world that are *exclusively* maintained by the secret police. In Russia, "counter-revolutionaries" were discovered everywhere, and anyone opposed to Russia was accused of being one. In Italy today, "revolutionaries" are discovered everywhere, and every extra-parliamentarian, even the most timid ones, are open to this accusation. According to the judges and newspapers, Negri, Piperno, Scalzone and the others would be the leaders of the Italian revolution, its brains and its strategists. I have defended them here as innocent people, but I would never dream of defending them as revolutionaries, because they are neither guilty nor revolutionary. In reality, all of the Autonomist leaders are only naïve politicians, and even as politicians they are imprudent failures. One has never seen [true] revolutionaries dine with magistrates, as Negri has done, nor converse over a meal with an ex-minister of Mancini's type, as Piperno has done. Neither man is a [true] revolutionary for a

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<sup>360</sup> Eugenio Scalfari (born 1924) was the editor of *La Repubblica*, which he founded in 1976, and Giorgio Bocca (1920-2011) was the author of *Il Terrorismo Italiano* (1978).

<sup>361</sup> The various Italian agencies tasked with gathering intelligence and conducting covert operations.

thousand other reasons that are so obvious that it is useless to recall them. The Italian revolution follows a completely different course and completely different ideas, and it deliberately passes over these leaders, these brains and these strategists, just as it passes over all those who understand nothing about terrorism, that is to say, the counter-revolution.

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One knows the passion that the freest people (the ancient Greeks, for example) had for the enigma, which they considered to be the *Hic Rhodus, hic salta*<sup>362</sup> of wisdom. Confronted with an enigma, the wise person must know how to solve it *at the cost of his or her life*. Solving it was a struggle in which the one who could not do so could not expect any indulgence. If one believes in the legend reported by Heraclitus, as well as by Aristotle, Homer, who was the wisest of the Greeks, died from despair because he had not been able to solve an enigma. He who does not manage to solve an enigma is deceived by it; he who is deceived is not a wise man; he who is not wise dies, because the wise man is a warrior who must know how to defend himself or succumb, because it is only in battle that he can prove what he is.

An eminent Hellenist has observed that the formulation of an enigma “contains the distant origin of the dialectic, called upon to open up without interruption the enigmatic sphere, according to the structure of the *Agon* and the terminology itself.”<sup>363</sup> Nietzsche had already said that dialectics is “a new art-form of the Greek *Agon*.”<sup>364</sup>

Therefore, Italian terrorism is *the last enigma of the society of the spectacle* and only those who reason dialectically can solve it. It is because of the lack of dialectics that this enigma continues to deceive and cut down all the victims that this State liberally sacrifices at its own altar, because it is on this unresolved enigma that it provisionally maintains itself. Thus it is necessary and sufficient to solve this enigma, not only to put an end to terrorism, but also to provoke *the collapse of the Italian State*. Only those who have an interest in doing so will resolve this enigma *in practice*. But who has an interest in untangling the enigma of terrorism? Obviously no one, *except the proletariat*, because only the proletariat has the necessary urgency, the motivations, the strength and the abilities necessary to destroy the State that deceives and exploits it. The goal of all the provocations of the last 10 years and the subsequent pedagogical campaign to indoctrinate the masses was to mastermind people’s thinking, to obligate them to think certain things. With terrorism, the State hurled a deadly challenge at the proletariat and its intelligence; and the Italian workers can only accept it and demonstrate that they are dialecticians, or passively accept their defeat. Today, all those who speak of social revolution without denouncing and combating the terrorist counter-revolution have a corpse in their

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<sup>362</sup> This Latin expression (a translation of a line in Aesop’s fable “The Boastful Athlete”) literally means, “Here is Rhodes, jump here.” In his preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, Hegel – in an apparent reference to the Rosicrucians – offered an altered translation: *Hier ist die Rose, hier tanze* (“Here is the Rose, dance here”). According to Marx, writing in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, “a situation is created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves call out: Here is the rose, here dance!”

<sup>363</sup> Theodor Adorno, “Enigmaticalness, Truth Content, Metaphysics,” in *Aesthetic Theory*, translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum Books, 1997), pp. 118-135.

<sup>364</sup> Frederick Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, op. cit., p. 79.

mouths.<sup>365</sup>

Having reached the height of imposture, the State has never felt so assured of itself, but in this it is much more deceived that it believes it is, because the State manages to deceive fewer people than it hopes and even fewer than it needs. But, more particularly, this discredited State is deceived when it believes itself to be believed always, that is to say, when it believes that the lies propagated about terrorism by all the sources of information suffice to corrupt the entire population for the simple reason that there are no other sources. The proletariat, which, as one knows, has no means of expressing itself freely, thus cannot even express its legitimate incredulity concerning the tragic-comic farce of terrorism, at least to shut up (once and for all) the sycophants who speak of terrorism in the manner that we have described, as well as their constituents, who are precisely the constituents of terrorism and the beneficiaries of exploitation.

This being said, never – not even in wartime – has the Italian State, having recourse to systematic brainwashing, been able to corrupt so many minds so cheaply.

In contemporary Italy, everything that is obviously false and only what is false finds a home; it is sold, purchased and a source of profits. The staging and propagation of the infection of terrorism is a colossal and profitable enterprise that ensures the employment of tens of thousands of journalists, cops, secret agents, judges, sociologists and specialists of all kinds. “Only the truth has no clients,” Montesquieu said in less mendacious times, but today the truth *has no need of them*.

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I hope that this preface will help readers outside of Italy understand the forces, interests and fears that, in barely 10 years, have made it *the country of the lie and the enigma* (to adopt the title of the famous book by Ciliga on Russia under Stalin).<sup>366</sup> On this peninsula – cradle of modern capitalism, headquarters of the Papacy, center of Christianity and Euro-Stalinism, and privileged place for the counter-revolutionary experimentation that stretches from the Counter-Reformation, through fascism, to the current enterprises of the secret services and the Stalinists – where the vestiges of past grandeur attract so many visitors from abroad, the putrid wastes of the decomposition of all that marked the past millennium now flow and the entire population is besmirched by the fetid and foul smell of Christianity, capitalism and Stalinism at their ultimate stages of infection, all of them supporting each other for one more moment in the face of the menacing imminence of the most modern revolution, all of them meeting here to put to work the most merciless and desperate repression, and to argue about the most efficient system to condemn history, which has condemned them.

But whatever the events that await us, the only certainty is that they will obligate the Italian proletariat to make its own the phrase by Lucius Junius Brutus: “*I swear that I will never*

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<sup>365</sup> A détournement of a famous remark by the situationist Raoul Vaneigem: “People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth” (*The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 1967).

<sup>366</sup> The title of the Italian translation of Anton Ciliga’s *Ten Years in the Country of the Disconcerting Lie*, which was first published in 1940 under the title *The Russian Enigma*.

*let either this person or any other govern Rome.*<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Latin in original. See Titus Livius, *The History of Rome*, translated by D. Spillan (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), Book 1, Paragraph 59: “By this blood, most pure before the pollution of royal villany, I swear, and I call you, O gods, to witness my oath, that I shall pursue Lucius Tarquin the Proud, his wicked wife, and all their race, with fire, sword, and all other means in my power; nor shall I ever suffer them or any other to reign at Rome.”

## On Terrorism and the State

The wily shafts of state, those jugglers' tricks,  
Which we call deep designs and politics,  
(As in a theatre the ignorant fry,  
Because the cords escape their eye,  
Wonder to see the motions fly,  
Methinks, when you expose the scene,  
Down the ill-organ'd engines fall;  
Off fly the vizards, and discover all:  
How plain I see through the deceit!  
How shallow, and how gross, the cheat!  
Look where the pulley's tied above! (...)  
On what poor engines move  
The thoughts of monarchs and designs of states!  
What petty motives rule their fates! (...)  
Away the frighten'd peasants fly,  
Scared at the unheard-of prodigy (...)  
Lo! it appears!  
See how they tremble! how they quake!

Swift, "Ode to the Honorable Sir William Temple," 1689<sup>368</sup>

All acts of terrorism, all the attacks that have struck and that strike the imagination of men and women, have been and are either *offensive* or *defensive* actions. Experience has long since shown that, if they are part of a strategic offensive, they are always doomed to failure. On the other hand, experience has also shown that, if they are part of a defensive strategy, such actions can hope for some success, which is nevertheless momentary and precarious. The attacks by the Palestinians and the Irish, for example, are acts of *offensive* terrorism, while the bombing of the Piazza Fontana and the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, for example, are *defensive* acts.

However, it is not only the strategy that differs, depending on whether the act in question is an instance of offensive or defensive terrorism, but also *the strategists*. The desperate and those suffering from illusions have recourse to offensive terrorism, while it is *always* and *only* States that have recourse to defensive terrorism, either because they have been thrust into some serious social crisis, as the Italian State has been, or because they fear such a crisis, as does the German State.

The defensive terrorism of the States is practiced *directly* or *indirectly* by them, that is, with their own weapons or with those of others. If the States have recourse to *direct* terrorism, it is directed against their own populations, as was the case with the massacres at the Piazza Fontana, on the *Italicus* or at Brescia.<sup>369</sup> If, on the other hand, the States decide they must have

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<sup>368</sup> *The Poems of Jonathan Swift, D.D., Volume I*, edited by William Ernst Browning (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1910).

<sup>369</sup> The bombing at the Piazza Fontana in Milan took place on 12 December 1969. The bombing of the *Italicus Express*, a train operated by the *Ferrovie dello Stato* ("State Railway"), took place

recourse to *indirect* terrorism, such acts must appear to have been directed against them, as was the case in the Moro affair.

The attacks directly realized by detached units or by the unofficial services of the State are not customarily claimed by anyone, but are imputed or attributed to this or that convenient “guilty party,” such as Pinelli or Valpreda.<sup>370</sup> Experience has proved that this aspect is the weakest point of this type of terrorism and determines the extreme fragility of the political usage one wants to make of it. The results of this same experience show that the strategists of the State’s unofficial services seek to give their own acts much greater credibility or at least less improbability, either by directly claiming them in the name of the initials of this or that ghostly group, or even by getting them claimed by an existing clandestine group, whose militants are apparently or believe themselves to be strangers to the designs of the State apparatus.

All the secret terrorist groups are organized and directed by a clandestine hierarchy that is composed of the militants of clandestinity themselves, who perfectly reflect the division of labor and the roles proper to the current social organization: those on high decide on what is to be done and those below execute orders. Ideology and military discipline protect the true summit from all the risks and the rank-and-file from all suspicions. Any secret service can invent for itself a set of “revolutionary” initials and carry out a certain number of attacks for which the press will make good publicity and from which the secret service in question will find it easy to form a small group of naïve militants, whom it can direct with the greatest ease. But in case a small terrorist group spontaneously constitutes itself, there is nothing easier in the world for the detached units of the State to do than infiltrate it and then, thanks to the means at their disposal and the extreme freedom of maneuvering that they enjoy, to substitute themselves for it, either by well-chosen arrests made at opportune moments or by the assassination of the original leaders, which, as a general rule, takes place during an armed conflict with the “forces of order,” informed in advance of such an encounter by the infiltrated agents.

From that moment on, the unofficial services of the State can dispose as they please of a perfectly effective organization, composed of naïve or fanatical militants who only ask to be led. The small original terrorist group, born from the illusions of its militants concerning the possibilities of launching an effective strategic offensive, changes strategists and becomes nothing other than a *defensive* appendage of the State, which maneuvers it with the greatest agility and assurance, according to its own necessities of the moment or those that it *believes* are its own necessities.

From the [bombing of the] Piazza Fontana to the kidnapping of Moro, the only things that have changed are the contingent objectives that this defensive terrorism has achieved, but *the goal* of the defensive *can never change*. And the goal from 12 December 1969 to 16 March 1978, and today, as well, has in fact remained the same: to make the entire population, which had not supported the State or had been struggling against it, believe that it *at least has an enemy in*

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on 4 August 1974 and was at first “claimed” by *Ordine Nero* (“Black Order”), a neo-fascist group. The bombing at Brescia, Italy, took place at the Piazza della Loggia on 28 May 1974, during an anti-fascist protest.

<sup>370</sup> Giuseppe “Pino” Pinelli (1928-1969) was an Italian railway worker and anarchist activist. Accused of perpetrating the attack at the Piazza Fontana, he was murdered on 15 December 1969 by the Italian police, who forced him out of a fourth floor window. Pietro Valpreda (1933-2002) was an anarchist and writer who was accused and convicted of perpetrating the attack at the Piazza Fontana.

*common* with the State and that the State will defend the population on the condition that no one questions it. The population, which is generally hostile to terrorism, and not without reason, must then agree that, *at least in this instance*, it *needs* the State, to which it must delegate the most extensive powers so that the State can vigorously confront the arduous task of the common defense against an enemy that is obscure, mysterious, perfidious, merciless and, in a word, *illusory*. Faced with a terrorism that is always presented as *the absolute evil*, evil in itself and by itself, all the other evils, which are much more real, become secondary and must even be forgotten. Because the struggle against terrorism coincides with *the common interest*, it is already *the general good*, and the State that generously leads that struggle is the good itself and by itself. Without the cruelty of the devil, the infinite kindness of God cannot appear and be properly appreciated.

The State, extremely weakened by all the attacks it has suffered every day for 10 years – attacks on its economy made by the proletariat, on the one hand, and attacks on its power and prestige made by the ineptitude of its managers, on the other –, can thus silence both them by solemnly tasking itself with staging the spectacle of the collective and sacrosanct defense [of all] against the monster of terrorism and, in the name of this pious mission, it can take from all of its subjects a supplementary portion of their already limited freedom and thus reinforce the police-related control of the entire population. “We are at war,” and war against an enemy that is so powerful that any other discord or conflict is an act of sabotage or desertion. It is only to protest against terrorism that one has the right to the recourse of the general strike. Terrorism and “emergency,” a state of emergency and perpetual “vigilance,” become the only problems, at least the only ones with which it is permitted and necessary for people to be occupied. All the rest doesn’t exist or becomes forgotten, and in any case is shut up, banished, repressed into the social unconscious because of the seriousness of the question of “public order.” And confronted with the universal duty of its defense, everyone is invited to become an informer, to be base and to become fearful. For the first time in history, cowardice becomes a sublime quality, fear is always justified, and the only form of “courage” that is not contemptible is the one that approves and supports all the lies, abuses and infamies of the State. Since the current crisis doesn’t spare any country in the world, there are no geographical boundaries between peace, war, freedom or truth. These borders pass through every country, and each State arms itself and declares war on the truth.

Someone doesn’t believe in the hidden power of the terrorists? Well then, he or she must change his or her opinion when confronted with cleverly filmed images that show three German terrorists at the moment of boarding a helicopter, and they are so powerful that they even manage to escape from the German secret services that are better at filming their prey than catching them.

Someone doesn’t believe that one or two hundred terrorists are in the position to deal a deathblow to our institutions? Well then, he or she will see that five or six of them are able to abduct Moro and his escort in a few minutes and will thus have to admit that the danger to those institutions (so loved by more than 50 million Italians) is real and terrible. Perhaps someone still believes otherwise? He is an accomplice of the terrorists! Everyone will then agree that the State cannot go down without defending itself and, whatever the costs, this defense is a sacred and imperative duty for everyone. And this would be the case because the Republic is public, the State is for everyone, everyone is the State, and the State is everyone, because everyone enjoys its advantages, which are equally shared. Is that not democracy? And this is why the People are sovereign, but watch out if they do not defend democracy!

Are you convinced? Or do you, poor citizens in the mood for critique, still believe – in

the wake of the Moro affair – that it is the State that has launched such attacks, such as the one at the Piazza Fontana? Vile suspicion! The dignity of the State’s institutions is sullied by it. Zaccagnini<sup>371</sup> is crying: look at this photograph. Cossiga<sup>372</sup> is crying, too: look at this television news-magazine, and once and for all stop making accusations against all those who do not hesitate to sacrifice the life of another person in the name of the defense of our very democratic institutions! Or perhaps, poor citizens, you still believe that we, the government ministers, generals, and secret agents of “anti-terrorism” – to speak ironically – that we, in particular, would be disposed to sacrifice Aldo Moro, that remarkable statesman of elevated sentiments, that example of moral rectitude, our friend, leader, protector and, when necessary, our defender?<sup>373</sup>

That is precisely what one would not want to be thought by each good citizen (who never doubts, always votes, pays up if he isn’t rich and, in any case, keeps his mouth shut). Suspicions about the State’s role in the massacre at the Piazza Fontana are permitted, because the victims were merely ordinary citizens, but one would surely not want the State to be suspect when the victim is its most prestigious representative! Kennedy?! That kind of thing is a thing of the past.

This was precisely why the agony of Moro had to last for such a long time, so that each person, at his or her leisure, had plenty of opportunity to follow the spectacle of the kidnapping and the feigned discussion about the negotiations by reading the pathetic letters and merciless messages from the ghostly Red Brigades, which channeled the indignation of the simple people and the poor in spirit, and thus gave some weak probability to the whole story and a reason for it to manifest itself as a collective psychodrama. The general contemplation and passivity continued to hold, which was the most important thing.

If Moro had been killed along with his police escorts on the Via Fani, everyone would have thought it was just another settling of accounts between the capitalist *gangs* and rival centers of decision-making – *which is actually what it was*. In that case, the death of Moro would have been regarded like the death of Enrico Mattei,<sup>374</sup> neither more nor less. Yet no one has noted that, if some powerful group today found that it was necessary or in its own interests to eliminate someone like Mattei or Kennedy, this group would certainly not do it the same way that it had been done in 1962. Instead, they would claim the attack or have it claimed (in a secure way and with the greatest ease) as an assassination by this or that small and secret terrorist group. This is why, in the case of Aldo Moro, one had to stage a long, drawn-out kidnapping: to emphasize the sometimes pitiful, sometimes pathetic, sometimes “firm” character of the government and, when one calculated that the people were convinced of the “revolutionary” origin of the kidnapping and the responsibility of “extremists” for it, then and *only then* did Moro’s captors receive the “green light” to get rid of him. And you, Andreotti, who are less naïve than you are flippant, don’t tell me that all this is news to you, and do not feign offended virtue, if you please!

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<sup>371</sup> Benigno Zaccagnini (1912-1989), one of the founders of the Christian Democratic Party.

<sup>372</sup> Francesco Cossiga (1928-2010), the Minister of the Interior at the time Moro was kidnapped and, in 1979, the Prime Minister of Italy.

<sup>373</sup> *Note by Jean-François Martos*: Allusion to Moro’s defense of the secret services to Parliament during its investigation of General De Lorenzo’s failed coup d’état of 1964.

<sup>374</sup> Enrico Mattei (1906-1962) was the administrator of Italy’s National Fuel Trust. He was killed in a mysterious plane crash that was originally investigated (and found to be an “accident”) by Giulio Andreotti, then the Minister of the Interior. The crash was reclassified as a murder in 1997, but no suspects have ever been identified.

The cloud of smoke raised in the country, which concerned the question of knowing if one had to deal [with the kidnappers] or not – a question that still impassions many cretins –, was the thing that had to succeed the best and was, on the contrary, the thing that failed the worst. Here the artificial aspect of the entire machination, put onstage from just behind the scenes, appeared even more clearly than the staging of the kidnapping itself. The people who refused to negotiate, that is to say, the leaders of the Christian Democratic Party and the Italian Communist Party, refused to do so because they knew perfectly well that the staging of the drama foreshadowed the epilogue that was actually offered to us, and because they also knew that, given the situation, they couldn't lose the opportunity to *for once*<sup>375</sup> appear inflexible at the expense of others. This is why we can admire Zaccagnini and Cossiga, Berlinguer and Pecchioli<sup>376</sup> gargling unrestrainedly with the phrase “dignity of the republican institutions,” which had already been so well respected by then-President Leone.<sup>377</sup> The leaders of the parties that refused to negotiate also knew that they could not lose the opportunity to see Moro dead, and thus much less dangerous to them than alive, because a dead friend is much more valuable than a living enemy. Hypothetically, if Moro had been freed, which was impossible, the Stalinists and the Christian Democrats knew quite well that Moro would be three times more dangerous to them than if he were dead: his popularity would be reinforced by his adventure; he'd been discredited in every way by his “friends” when he couldn't defend himself; and thus he'd be an open [and popular] enemy of both his “friends” and his former Stalinist allies. Thus, given the situation, no one has the right to criticize Andreotti or Berlinguer, because they only acted in their own best interests. What one can reproach them for was having done it *so badly*, that is to say, for having raised more doubts and suspicions than applause through their sudden and unforeseen conversion to an inflexibility that obviously did not derive from their respective characters, their past histories, or their alleged will to safeguard the institutions, which their deeds scorned at every instant, and so this inflexibility had to derive from their undiscoverable [and true] interests.

As for Berlinguer in particular, he did not lose the opportunity to once more show himself (as if everyone had not already been convinced) to be the most inept politician of the century. In fact, from the beginning he was as clear as day that the kidnapping of Moro was above all a blow *against the “historic compromise,”* and certainly not dealt by Leftist extremists – who, in any case, would have kidnapped Berlinguer himself to punish him for his “betrayal” – but a group of powerful and interested people who were irrationally hostile to the “compromise” with the so-called Communists. I say *irrationally* because such a policy would certainly not undermine the interests of capitalism. But obviously diligent Berlinguer was not successful in convincing *all* the political sectors, military circles and powerful groups of this, despite the fact that he dedicated five years to this task and to this task alone. And so Aldo Moro, for a long time designated as the artisan of the government of “national unity,” paid the price just as he was bringing that enterprise into port. As Machiavelli said, “from which one draws a general rule, which never or

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<sup>375</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>376</sup> Enrico Berlinguer (1922-1984) was the National Secretary of the Italian Communist Party from 1972 until his death. Ugo Pecchioli (1925-1996) was the head of the Italian Communist Party's National Commission.

<sup>377</sup> Note by Jean-François Martos: Forced to resign due to charges of corruption lodged against him.

rarely fails: that whoever is the cause of another becoming powerful, is ruined.”<sup>378</sup> And it isn’t by chance that he makes this remark in the chapter entitled *De principatibus mixtis* [Of mixed principalities] and that the current governmental majority is also mixed. With the disappearance of Moro, all the other political leaders who had been partisans of the “opening,” Democratic Christians and others, were *warned*, because those who decided upon and put into operation the kidnapping of Moro thereby demonstrated that, at any moment, they could do even *worse*. Craxi<sup>379</sup> was the first to understand this, but [eventually] all of the politicians did. And Berlinguer, instead of denouncing this immediately, instead of admitting that the blow struck his politics dead, once again preferred to keep quiet, feigned to believe all the official versions of the facts, played the zealot in the hunt for witches, incited the population to become informers (one doesn’t know about what or whom), continued to pad out his own lies, supported Christian Democratic intransigence and hurled invectives against the extremists in the naïve illusion of thereby reassuring the hidden sectors that had kidnapped Moro. But the strategists behind the Via Fani operation mocked Berlinguer’s abstract good will towards subversives, because they knew that he knew and because they also knew that, when it is a question of real subversion, which harms the economy, Berlinguer could do nothing at all to prevent the actions of the wildcat workers. It isn’t enough to *want* to defeat subversion, Berlinguer: you must also demonstrate *that you can do it*. The leaves of abstract [good] will are made of dry leaves that have never been green, imbecile!

And, in fact, as everyone can determine, the Italian Communist Party hasn’t ceased since then to experience the bitter consequences of its stupid dishonesty. During the kidnapping, the ICP was widely accused by the bourgeois press of definitively being the ones responsible for it because the so-called Communists had encouraged all sorts of illusions about the social revolution among its militants and obtained beautiful results from doing so. Then it lost the elections; then abject Craxi (who during the abduction had already had his eye on the side of those in favor of negotiation, which he knew was impossible, but which permitted him to differentiate himself from the others [in his party]) passed over to the offensive by accusing the Stalinists of everything, but dressed these accusations up under the cover of heated ideological quarrels that served as pretexts, which were all the more laughable because they came from a man of his intellectual and cultural stature. But each time the one who lost these quarrels was Berlinguer, and the ICP – because it had not wanted to be fought by its allies in the government – had also forgotten how to fight them. Upon each defeat that the ICP suffered, one witnessed the passably comic scene in which Piccoli<sup>380</sup> and Andreotti caressed Berlinguer’s neck, and recommended that he not despair and continue on as before. And yet, despite all these reversals, even today the Stalinists stubbornly continue to feign to believe that Leftist extremists killed Moro. Thus one can say that the interminable series of failures that the ICP has incurred has been *truly merited*, since it is nothing as “the party of struggle” and nonexistent as “the party of government.” What appears to me less comprehensible and more unjustified than all the rest is the fact that the Stalinists lament these failures without any modesty and always portray themselves as victims, but without ever saying *what* they are the victims of, that is to say, their own inaptitude, on the one hand, and the intrigues of their enemies, on the other, and these enemies are much less inept and indecisive than they are, as the Via Fani operation, among

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<sup>378</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., Chapter III, p. 14.

<sup>379</sup> Benedetto Craxi (1934-2000) was the head of the Italian Socialist Party.

<sup>380</sup> Flaminio Piccoli (1918-2000) was a member of the Christian Democratic Party.

others, testifies to and certifies.

The parties in favor of negotiation, on the other hand, survived their defeat, and drew some strength from the weakness of the parties opposed to it. The former were represented by Craxi for reasons of pure convenience and by *Lotta continua* due to the extreme stupidity that prevented even these militants from perceiving that they are *an integral part* of the spectacle that they want to combat and with which they feed themselves with both hands. Naturally, in this party in favor of negotiation there were many intellectuals, whose perspicacity and depth of thought no longer need demonstration. In any case, these characteristics were supplemented by the most crass ignorance of history, which is even less pardonable on the part of those who have a comment to make about everything and make money from their alleged knowledge. Let me explain: that which above all unites bourgeois reactionaries, the good souls of the progressive bourgeoisie, fashionable intellectuals, the contemplative supporters of armed struggle and the militants who complain about it is precisely the fact that, apropos of Moro, they all believe that, for the first time, the State *hasn't lied* where an act of terrorism is concerned, and *therefore* the kidnapping was the work of revolutionaries, with respect to whom the lugubrious Toni Negri has said, "we underestimated their effectiveness (...). We are disposed to make our self-critique" for having "underestimated their effectiveness." Thus, all these people, willingly or unwillingly, are the victims of this umpteenth lie by the State. Both the extra-parliamentarians and the Leftist intellectuals certainly admit that the State always makes use of terrorism *after the fact*,<sup>381</sup> but they cannot conceive that it would also have recourse to killing its "most prestigious" representative. And this is why I spoke of their ignorance of history: none of them know or, in any case, none of them remember the infinite number of examples in which States in crisis, in *social* crisis, have precisely eliminated *their most reputable representatives* with the intention and in the hope of arousing and *channeling* general indignation – generally ephemeral – against "extremists" and malcontents. Of a thousand possible historical examples, I will only cite the Czarist secret services, the formidable Okhrana, which – foreseeing with terror (and with good reason) the revolution of 1905 – killed no one less than Plehve, the Minister of the Interior, on 28 July 1904 and, when this didn't seem sufficient, killed Grand Duke Serge, uncle of the Czar, a very influential man and the head of military conscription in Moscow, on 17 February 1905.

These perfectly successful attacks were organized, executed and claimed by the "Combat Organization" of the Revolutionary Socialists, who had just come under the direction of the famous Azev, a truly ingenious engineer and Okhrana agent, after he replaced the revolutionary Guerchuni, who was opportunely arrested shortly before.<sup>382</sup>

I cite this unique but admirable example of provocation because 500 pages wouldn't be enough to cite all the notorious examples from the 19th century, and because Italy in 1978 had a vague but quite real resemblance to Russia in 1904-1905. In any case, we must note that all powers in difficulty *always resemble each other*, just as their behaviors and manners of proceeding [in such instances] always resemble each other.

The logic currently followed by the strategists of this [terrorist] spectacle is simple, flat

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<sup>381</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>382</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: arrested thanks to Azev, Guerchuni heartily recommended to his comrades that Azev himself should be placed at the head of the "Combat Organization" due to the courage and daring he showed while transporting weapons, explosives and publications of the Revolutionary Socialists into Russia from Switzerland, where this party's Central Committee was in exile (specifically, in Geneva).

and ancient. Provided that we do not recognize their *real* difficulties or the irremediable contradictions with which this old society struggles, the masters of the spectacle of terrorism can flatly present to us the most contradictory things: the terrorism of 1978 is presented as the unavoidable consequence of the proletarian revolts of 1977 and [the bombing of] the Piazza Fontana is presented as the logical end of the “hot” year of 1969. Nothing is more false! The revolts of 1977 were in fact the consequence of the “hot” autumn [of 1969] and the kidnapping of Moro was in fact the consequence of the provocation of the Piazza Fontana. History advances through dialectical contradictions but, like the scholastic philosophers, the spectacle flatly proclaims *post hoc ergo propter hoc*:<sup>383</sup> the fault is attributed to the fact. In 1977, the young proletarian generation rose up against its misery?<sup>384</sup> Well, [that means] in 1978 these same enraged young people kidnapped Moro! And it hardly matters that the Red Brigades [RBs] had nothing to do with the revolt of 1977, which they, on the contrary, accused of “spontaneity-ism”: the young proletarians of 1977 were subversives; the RBs are made up of young people; [therefore] the RBs are the subversive elements of 1977. Not at all, gentlemen of the government! And you, the general officers of the unofficial services, *since you are always deceived*, you would like it if everyone were just like you! And whoever denounces your provocations is immediately accused of being the provocateur, because reality is always upside-down in the spectacle.

Gentlemen of the government, the truth is that, as in 1977, when your chairs shook under your asses, and the earth shook under your feet, *you* – yes, precisely you – went on the counter-offensive, only this time you killed one of your own, precisely the one whom you and your secret auxiliaries considered to be the most able to arouse popular indignation (no one would have raised an eyebrow if it had been Rumor or even Fanfani<sup>385</sup> who had been kidnapped), the one who was the most responsible for the current “political framework,” which, as you can see, did not please *all* of the capitalist sectors that you and your military organizations are called upon to defend. In his circumstance, one can say that Moro was the Italian equivalent of Allende,<sup>386</sup> and, behind the [false] accusation that Moro was serving the interests of the bourgeoisie and capital instead of those of the proletariat, there was in fact (and badly camouflaged) *the opposite accusation*, that is to say, the accusation that Moro wasn’t serving capitalist interests in the way that certain capitalists had wanted.

On 16 March [1978], the day of the Via Fani operation, I could not stop myself from

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<sup>383</sup> Latin in original: “after this, therefore because of this.”

<sup>384</sup> See “An orgasm of history: 1977 in Italy,” elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>385</sup> Mariano Rumor (1915-1990), a member of the Christian Democratic Party, was the Minister of the Interior in 1963 and between 1972 and 1973, the Prime Minister of Italy between 1968 and 1970, and then again between 1973 and 1974, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1974 and 1976. In 1973, Rumor was the target of a bomb that was set by Gianfranco Bertoli, allegedly an anarchist but actually an agent for the *Servizio di Informazioni delle Forze Armate* (SIFAR). Amintore Fanfani (1908-1999), a member of the Christian Democratic Party, was the Prime Minister in 1954, between 1958 and 1959, and then again between 1960 and 1963, as well as the Minister of the Interior between 1954 and 1955, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1958 and 1959, in 1965, and between 1966 and 1968.

<sup>386</sup> Salvador Allende Gossens (1908-1973) was the President of Chile between 3 November 1970 and 11 September 1973, when he was deposed and murdered by the Chilean military, with the support of the American Central Intelligence Agency.

immediately thinking two things. First, I thought that the secret services had *finally* been reorganized and had recovered a bit from the affair of 12 December 1969 and the humiliations that followed from it<sup>387</sup> (here again and once more, reality is inverted in the spectacle: one attributed the success of the Via Fani operation to the non-existence of the secret services). Second, I thought of the passage in *Candide* that states, “in this country it is found requisite, now and then, to put one admiral to death in order to spirit up the others to fight.”<sup>388</sup>

Sciascia, who is the best known of the Italian readers of Voltaire, certainly isn't the most subtle one, since – forgetting about this passage and all of reality – he lost himself in this or that phrase from one of Moro's letters without discovering that no detail observed under a microscope can indicate or let one catch a glimpse of *the entirety* of the facts. And indeed, even today, Sciascia believes that Craxi and the others really had an interest in or the intention of working with “the revolutionaries” [to free Moro] and, with the eloquence worthy of the best defense attorney, he is indignant about the lack of friendship shown for Moro by his “friends,” which is an insignificant detail, instead of reserving his indignation *for what is essential*, namely, the facts that virtually the entire world was deceived by this provocation, [new] police-related laws were passed and, despite the hypocritical and despicable appeals from the intellectuals and the pope against “extremism,” a hundred innocent people are now locked up in prison for a very long time. Tell me, Sciascia: what importance does it have for history, or even for the truth of the matter, that Aldo Moro had, among others, the misfortune of having such disloyal and dishonest “friends”? Perhaps it is a novelty that the Roman political world is made up of scoundrels and assassins? Sciascia, have you never read what Cardinal de Retz (a better pamphleteer than you) said three centuries ago? “There are many people in Rome who would be happy to assassinate those who are [lying] on the ground.” You, the new Emile Zola, do not accuse the enemies of Dreyfus,<sup>389</sup> but his calumnious friends; not the criminals and the ones responsible, but those (they abound among the journalists for *Corriere della Sera*, for which you write) who have the simple fault of slandering and dishonoring the victim, *post festum*.<sup>390</sup> Sciascia, if you regret the fact that Moro had such “friends,” why don't you begin by setting a better example, by ceasing to fraternize with the indecent and unspeakable Bernard-Henri Lévy?<sup>391</sup> But I have already said the unspeakable about the intellectuals, and it is useless to add any more.

As for the groupuscules with revolutionary pretensions, which have all thrown themselves headlong into theological dissertations about violence and the strategy of “revolutionary” terrorism, I will only recall here that they have long since proved the nature of their comprehension of reality, starting with [the bombing of] the Piazza Fontana, then on every

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<sup>387</sup> Formed in 1966, the *Servizio Informazioni Difesa* (“Defense Information Service”) was officially dissolved in 1977.

<sup>388</sup> *Voltaire's Candide or the Optimist*, no translator listed, introduction by Henry Morley (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1884), Chapter 23, p. 92.

<sup>389</sup> Emile Zola (1840-1902) was a French author. On 13 January 1898, the newspaper *L'Aurore* published his open letter, entitled *J'accuse!* (“I Accuse”), which concerned the conviction of Alfred Dreyfus, a French soldier falsely accused of espionage.

<sup>390</sup> Latin in original: “after the fact.”

<sup>391</sup> A French “new philosopher” (born 1948), author of *La Barbarie à visage humain* (1977), an anti-Marxist diatribe.

subsequent occasion, such as when they applauded the assassination of Calabresi<sup>392</sup> without stopping to think that this police commissioner had been eliminated *by his own bosses*, for whom he had become cumbersome (he had been involved in the prosecution of Valpreda, the assassination of Pinelli, and something else: several weeks before he was killed in his turn, he had “recognized” Feltrinelli as the unrecognizable cadaver found in Segrate, something for which all the newspapers celebrated “his memory, his shrewdness,” etc. without any of them wondering if he managed to do this thanks to his [keen] memory, his shrewdness or, on the contrary, *something quite different*).

These alienated extra-parliamentarians always lose themselves in everything that the Stalinists say about terrorism because they do not know that the ICP can only *lie* and the only thing they can never believe is *the simple truth*: for example, the facts that the RBs are masterminded, that Moro was eliminated by the unofficial services, or that they themselves are fucking idiots, good to throw into prison any time it is useful to do so.

The Stalinists, from the moment that they can be [justly] accused of not knowing what is fascist, or not being able to distinguish what is simply *police-related* from what is fascist, must be accused of lying when they say that the provocation of the Piazza Fontana was “fascist style,” and they lied quite maladroitly, because they didn’t say “this is fascist,” but “this is fascist *style*.” The fact that General Miceli, openly fascist today,<sup>393</sup> was already a fascist when he was the head of the SID did not determine his actions back then: the secret services receive their orders from the politicians and do what the politicians tell them to do. Though maladroit, the Stalinists’ lies about the bombing of the Piazza Fontana certainly had motivations behind them. Because they wanted to keep quiet about what they knew, and because they, too, were attacked (and quite violently) by the wildcat workers, the Stalinists had to give credence to the ghostly “fascist danger” of 1969, in the face of which they could try to reconstitute “the unity of the working class” under their control. A week after the bombing, metalworkers in the private sector, who were in the forefront of the proletarian movement and were its toughest part, were forced to give up their right to strike (starting with the one announced for 19 December) and to accept the contract imposed on them by the unions. Longo<sup>394</sup> and Amendola knew quite well that, if they had immediately told the truth, *the civil war would have begun on 13 December*, and today they know that those who try to be invited to eat at a corner of the State’s table can certainly not say out loud that *the plates are dirty*, and so they say, quietly and secretly, “the plates are dirty, we know, but if you invite us, we will keep quiet about it,” which is precisely what has happened.

Since the Stalinists kept quiet in 1969, this so-called “party of clean hands” had to *continue to keep quiet* and lie about all the subsequent provocations and assassinations perpetrated by the secret services of the very State from which, today, they want to receive recognition for observing the *omertà* and, as payment, a few crumbs from the Christian Democrats.

For a long period, the situationists were the only ones in Europe to denounce the Italian State as the creator and exclusive beneficiary of modern, artificial terrorism and its entire

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<sup>392</sup> Luigi Calabresi (1937-1972) was a high-level political police officer in Milan who was tasked with investigating the bombing at the Piazza Fontana. He was murdered on 17 May 1972, allegedly by members of *Lotta continua*.

<sup>393</sup> He was a member of the Italian Social Movement, founded in 1946 by supporters of Benito Mussolini.

<sup>394</sup> Luigi Longo (1900-1980) was a member of the Italian Communist Party from 1964 to 1972.

spectacle. And, to the revolutionaries of all countries, we identified Italy as the European laboratory for counter-revolution and the privileged field for experimentation with modern police techniques, and we did so starting on 19 December 1969, when we published our manifesto *Is the Reichstag Burning?*<sup>395</sup>

The final phrase of this manifesto – “Comrades, do not let yourselves stop here” – is, without exception, the only thing that has been challenged by subsequent history. The movement stopped on that precise day and it couldn’t be otherwise, because we were the only ones who had full awareness of what the Piazza Fontana operation meant and *we said what it was*,<sup>396</sup> without

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<sup>395</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: this is the occasion to cite, as an example of revolutionary lucidity, several passages from this manifesto, which one could find posted at the Piazza Fontana and the principal Milanese factories during the period when the repression was the worst. “(...) Faced with the rise of the revolutionary movement, and despite the methodical recuperation undertaken by the unions and the bureaucrats of the old and new Left, power saw itself constrained (...) to play the false card of terrorism (...) The Italian bourgeoisie of 1969 (...) no longer needs the errors of the anarchists of the past to find pretexts for the political realization of its totalitarian reality, but instead seeks to manufacture such pretexts on its own by cornering the anarchists of today in a police machination (...) *The bomb in Milan exploded against the proletariat*. Intended to strike the least radicalized categories and thus ally them with power, and to give the call to arms to the bourgeoisie (...) It isn’t at all by chance that there was a massacre among the farmers (at the National Agricultural Bank) and only the fear of one among the bourgeois (the unexploded bomb found at the Commercial Bank). The direct and indirect results of the attacks *were their purpose* (...) But the Italian bourgeoisie is the most miserable in Europe. Incapable of making its own active terrorization of the proletariat succeed, it can only attempt to communicate to the majority of the population its own passive terror, that is to say, its fear of the proletariat. Powerless and maladroit in its attempts to stop the development of the revolutionary movement and, at the same time, [unable] to create a strength that it does not possess, the Italian bourgeoisie risked losing both battles on a single blow. Thus, the most advanced factions of power (internal or unofficial) have made a mistake. Excessive [social] weakness has brought the Italian bourgeoisie onto the terrain of police excess: it understands that its only possibility of getting out of its endless agony passes through the risk of the immediate end of that agony. Thus, right at the start, power has had to burn the last political card it has to play before [the outbreak of] civil war or a *coup d’état* of which it is incapable [of winning or defeating] – the two-faced card of a false ‘anarchist peril’ (for the Right) and a false ‘fascist peril’ (for the Left) – with the goal of masking and making possible its [counter-]offensive against the real danger: the proletariat. Moreover, the act with which the bourgeoisie has tried to avert civil war is, in reality, its first act of civil war (...) Thus, it is no longer a question of the proletariat avoiding or beginning it, but winning it (...) The proletariat now begins to understand that it isn’t by partial violence that this civil war can be won, but by the total self-management of revolutionary violence and the general arming of the workers organized into Workers’ Councils. It now knows that, through revolution, it must definitively reject the ideology of violence as well as the violence of ideology (...) Comrades: do not let yourselves stop here (...) Long live the absolute power of the Workers’ Councils!”

<sup>396</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: the only exception to the general rout was “Bombs, Blood, Capital,” a tract by Ludd, published in January 1970, that openly accused the secret services of the massacre.

any other means than a “stolen mimeograph machine,” as was indicated in our manifesto. As the people say, “those who have bread have no teeth, and those who have teeth have no bread.” All those courageous extra-parliamentarians who had newspapers and other rags had no teeth, and they published nothing pertinent about the massacre, occupied as they were, and still are, with the search for the “correct strategy” to impose on the proletariat, which is only good for being directed and being directed *by them!*

Because of their incurable inferiority complex concerning the ICP’s ability to lie, which is indeed superior to theirs, these extra-parliamentarians immediately accepted the version of the facts accredited by the ICP, according to which the bombs were “fascist style” and *therefore* could not have been the work of the secret services of this “democratic” State that is so “democratic” that it never worries about what is said by these extra-parliamentarians, although they are the only ones considered to be “dangerous” to the spectacle, for which they are badly compensated but indispensable walk-on actors. Their false explication of the facts perfectly matched the true ideology of their groupuscules, then infatuated with Mao, Stalin and Lenin, and now by Guattari, Toni Negri and Scalzone,<sup>397</sup> or by their miserable “private lives” and ridiculous whorehouses. Since these alleged “extremists” *do not want* to tell the truth, and do not know how to openly accuse the State of being *the* terrorist, they also do not know how to combat it with any tangible results. Because saying that the bombing was “fascist” is as mendacious as saying that it was “anarchist,” and all the lies – though apparently in contradiction with each other – are *always united* in the sabotage of the truth. And only the truth is revolutionary; only the truth is able to *harm* power; only the truth can infuriate the Stalinists and the bourgeois. And the proletariat, always deceived and betrayed by everyone, has learned to seek the truth on its own and is impervious to lies, no matter how “extremist” their authors claim to be. In the same way, and due to the same *guilty* ineptitude, all the extra-parliamentarians of 1978 merrily fell into the trap set by the kidnapping of Moro, “the work of comrades who were mistaken.” You great oafs, don’t you realize that, once again, you were the only “comrades who were mistaken”? Brave extra-parliamentarians, Dante already wrote your epitaph.

But you take the bait, so that the hook  
Of the old adversary draws you to him;  
And so check and recall do very little.<sup>398</sup>

Victims of their own false consciousness, which always expresses itself in ideology, the extra-parliamentarians could not for long elude the questions posed by spectacular terrorism and, from 1970 on, they began to consider the question of terrorism as such, in the empyrean of ideology, in a completely metaphysical way, completely abstracted from the reality of the thing. And when the truth about the massacre at the Piazza Fontana finally saw the light of day, after all the lies about it collapsed one after the other, neither the good souls of the intellectual-progressive bourgeoisie nor the scarecrows for sparrows at *Lotta continua* and their consorts were able to pose the question in its real, that is to say, *scandalous* terms: *the democratic Republic [of Italy] did not hesitate to perpetrate a massacre* when it appeared useful for it to do

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<sup>397</sup> Pierre-Félix Guattari (1930-1992) was a French militant, psychotherapist and philosopher, perhaps best known for his collaborations with Gilles Deleuze. Oreste Scalzone (born 1947) is a Marxist intellectual and one of the founders of *Potere Operaio* (“Workers’ Power”).

<sup>398</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Purgatorio*, XIV, 145-147, p. 261.

so, because, when all the laws of the State are in danger, “there is only a single and inviolable law for the State: that of its survival” (Marx). And this is *exactly* the famous “sense of the State”<sup>399</sup> that one made Moro assume and with which the philistines now decorate his corpse. In ten years, no one has wanted to trigger a “Dreyfus affair” concerning the behavior of our secret services, the leaders of which enter and exit prison on the sly, to the general indifference of all the privileged holders of the “sense of the State,” that sublime sixth sense with which our politicians are endowed, unlike common mortals, who are mutilated by it, such as those who were at the Agricultural Bank and not killed [on the day of the Piazza Fontana bombing], but by something else. Perhaps there is someone who is convinced that this mysterious “sense of the State” is something other than what I’ve said it is. “Moro had the sense of the State” and “Berlinguer has the sense of the State”: if these expressions do not mean what I’ve said they mean, then they are empty, which means that one could say that a young woman has “the sense of her cunt,” I have the sense of my balls, and Tina Anselmi<sup>400</sup> doesn’t have [much] sense even if she *causes* a sensation.

Since the extra-parliamentarians at first did not believe they knew, then knew without believing, and finally believed *without concluding* that *it was indeed the State that launched the terrorist attack in Milan*, the entire country has entered into a period of apparent madness and mad appearances. The entire question of terrorism has become the subject of academic diatribes and enthusiastic invectives that have led some (the bourgeois and the Stalinists) to hypocritically condemn terrorism “whatever its color” – as if they weren’t precisely the ones who have encouraged and covered it up, each time, by giving it *the color that best suited the moment* – and have led the others (those who believe themselves to be “extremists”) to fondle the idea that “one responds to State terrorism with proletarian terrorism.” And this comes at the right time for our secret services. The first small, clandestine terrorist groups (the RBs and the Armed Proletarian Nuclei [APN]) had just been formed when the police, the Carabinieri and the detached units started competing to see which one would be the first to infiltrate these small paramilitary groups with the goal of preventing their attacks or masterminding them according to the necessities and *desires* of the moment and the powerful.

Thus everyone could see how the APN was radically destroyed, either [indirectly] by arresting their members and exhibiting them in a disgusting way at this or that trial, or directly by turning them into objects for target practice, a meticulously arranged spectacle in which the “forces of order” were exhibited for the pleasure of the most repugnant bourgeois.<sup>401</sup>

Things panned out differently with the Red Brigades. We know the names of only two of the agents who infiltrated this group, that is to say, Pisetta and the Christian Brother, Giroto,<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> Cf. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*. Note that, in 1958, Giulio Andreotti published a book entitled *Il senso dello stato*.

<sup>400</sup> A Christian Democrat (born in 1927) and the first female member of an Italian cabinet, first as Minister of Labor, then as Minister of Health.

<sup>401</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: this bloody spectacle was offered sparingly, but in a repeated fashion: when the police waited for Abatangelo in front of the Bank of Florence and killed two of his comrades; when Mantini’s sister was killed in cold blood in her secret hideout in Rome; and dozens of other cases. Should one believe that it was by chance, and not due to infiltration, that “Italy’s Finest” obtained such *successes*?

<sup>402</sup> Marco Pisetta (1945-1990), who knew Renate Curcio back in 1968, infiltrated the Red Brigades in 1972. Silvano Giroto (1939-2022) was also known as *Frate Mitra* (“Brother

who – despite being quite clumsy as *agents provocateurs* – were able to trap Curcio<sup>403</sup> and the other members of what can justly be called the “historical group” (the militants who had no experience with clandestinity and were hardly “ferocious” as terrorists). Despite this, the RBs were not dismantled after being decapitated [in September 1974], not because of the prudence of the other militants, who were no less naïve than their original leaders (who themselves fell into the very first trap set for them), but *because of the decisions made by their new leaders*. And why would the State, already in difficulty *for other reasons*, lose this opportunity to make use of a terrorist organization that had an autonomous appearance, although infiltrated and tranquilly directed from afar? I do not at all believe that General Dalla Chiesa<sup>404</sup> is the “warrior genius” of which Carl von Clausewitz once spoke, but he’s certainly read Clausewitz with more attention and profit than Curcio did and [in any case] had greater means to put at the disposal of his talents. General Dalla Chiesa – along with his colleagues at the SISDE, the SISMI and the CESIS<sup>405</sup> – had a good laugh at all the proclamations of the ideologues of armed struggle who intended “to bring the attack to the heart of the State,” because Chiesa knows that the State doesn’t have a heart, not even a metaphorical one, and because, like Andreotti and Berlinguer, he knows that *the only attack capable of killing the State today is the violent denunciation of its terrorist practices*, which is precisely what I am making here.

Although he is better informed about tactics than strategy, and although he confuses strategy with stratagem, thus substituting cunning for the art of war, General Dalla Chiesa nevertheless knows perfectly well that terrorism is *the substitute for war* in an era in which large-scale world wars are impossible or, in any case, it is no longer permitted to have one proletariat massacre another in an exhausting and bloody battle. Our General and the upper-level strategists of the political police also know that spectacular terrorism *is always anti-proletarian* and that it is *the pursuit of policy by other means* (the pursuit of the anti-proletarian policy of all the States). And the fact that the State *needs* modern, artificial terrorism is proved by the fact that it was precisely here, in Italy, that the State *invented* this form of terrorism 10 years ago. And we know that the Italian bourgeoisie has long used invention to replace what it lacks in power. It was the Italian bourgeoisie *that invented fascism*, which was so successful in Germany, Spain, Portugal and everywhere else it was necessary to crush proletarian revolution. And the spectacle of terrorism has already been immediately successful for the German government, which does not envy our situation, but envies our imagination, that is to say, the imagination of our secret services, which permits our government to navigate through shit without drowning in it, just as

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Machinegun”). Working with General Dalla Chiesa of the Italian Carabinieri, he infiltrated the Red Brigades in 1974.

<sup>403</sup> Renato Curcio (born 1941) co-founded the Red Brigades in 1970.

<sup>404</sup> General Alberto Dalla Chiesa (1920-1982) was a high-ranking officer in the Carabinieri. In September 1974, his “anti-terrorist” unit captured Renato Curcio. On 3 September 1982, the General was murdered, allegedly by the Mafia.

<sup>405</sup> After the dissolution of the *Servizio Informazione Difesa* in 1977, the *Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Democratica* (“Intelligence and Democratic Security Service”) took charge of domestic intelligence, the *Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Militare* (“Military Intelligence and Security Service”) took charge of military intelligence, and the *Comitato Esecutivo per i Servizi di Informazione e Sicurezza* (“Executive Committee for Intelligence and Security Services”) took charge of coordinating of the activities of the SISDE and the SISMI.

in the 1920s it envied us for Mussolini.

That this [Italian] State has need of terrorism is, on the other hand, something that each one of its representatives is now completely convinced of, through experience if not due to reasoning, and has been so ever since the immediately and miraculously fortunate outcome of the Piazza Fontana operation. The proof is that, *if there has not been* a “Dreyfus affair” where the Piazza Fontana is concerned, this is certainly not because the event was less scandalous, but because all the political parties have, for different reasons, understood that, if this bombing saved the State (which each of them defend in their own way), *the truth* about it is capable, by itself, of definitively *destroying it*. And if there has been no “Dreyfus affair,” this is also because, among our enslaved intelligentsia, no equivalent of Emile Zola has ever demanded or wanted to demand *a truthful conclusion* about the bombing. Giorgio Bocca’s book on terrorism<sup>406</sup> discreetly begins in 1970 [not 1969] and, as for the other Brahmins of culture, such as [Pier Paolo] Pasolini and Sciascia, they have – in the blinding light of the Reichstag fire – preferred *to chase fireflies*, without even finding any, obviously, since they always discuss the responsibility of pollution for their disappearance and raise pleasantly “polemical” lamentations about it, but without ever denouncing *terrorist pollution*, of which they are both the accomplices and the victims.

I would like it if the unofficial services and the generals – who will read *Remedy for Everything*, or at least the chapter that concerns them, attentively – pay immediate attention to two things that I say to them about the fragility of their strategy. Dalla Chiesa: note, above all, what Clausewitz teaches you in the chapter that he dedicates to the stratagem.<sup>407</sup>

But however much we feel a desire to see the actors in War outdo each other in hidden activity, readiness and stratagem, still we must admit that these qualities show themselves but little in history (...) The explanation of this is obvious (...) In fact, it is dangerous to detach large forces for any length of time merely for a trick, because there is always the risk of its being done in vain, and then these forces are wanted at the decisive point. The chief actor in War is always thoroughly sensible of this sober truth, and therefore he has no desire to play at tricks of agility (...) In a word, the pieces on the strategic chessboard want that mobility which is the chief element of stratagem and subtlety (...) [Craftiness] does no harm if it does not exist at the expense of the necessary qualities of the heart, which is only too often the case.

The second thing to consider with respect to a strategy that is founded on provocation is as old as the world. It is noted by Seneca – and if I quote him, it is because, as Nero’s advisor, he knew about State terrorism and provocations – that it is “easier to not go along this road than, once one has begun, to stop.” Like a[n addictive] drug, artificial terrorism needs and requires the administration of ever-larger and *more frequent* doses, *because any future seems evil and already is*, as Dante would say.<sup>408</sup> Redo your calculations, politicians and generals, and you will see that *they were incorrect*.

If the State needs terrorism, as I have demonstrated, it also needs to avoid getting caught

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<sup>406</sup> *Il terrorismo Italiano, 1970-1978* (1978).

<sup>407</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, op. cit., “Stratagem,” Book 3, p. 168.

<sup>408</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit. *Purgatorio*, XX, 85. p. 286: “To make the future evil and the past look less [so].”

red-handed every time it uses it, so that its ministers can put up a better front than Rumor and Tanassi did at Catanzaro<sup>409</sup> (their only equals in this are Malizia, Maletti and Miceli).<sup>410</sup> And for the State, what better occasion than that offered by a group like the Red Brigades, decapitated and available, with its former leaders in prison and ignorant of everything? Nevertheless, I must say that, even if its former leaders were freed – given that two infiltrators were enough to bring them down – a single one who was less crude than “Brother Machinegun” or Pisetta would have been enough to make them go where one wanted without arousing any suspicion. I know quite well that the currently known infiltrators, as well as the majority of the *agents provocateurs* at work today, did not invent the butter knife, but our clandestine militants aren’t any more subtle than they are, as we have seen. And even if they were all Lenins, as they imagine themselves to be, one would still have to remark that the Bolsheviks were deeply infiltrated several times. Roman Malinovski, worker and Okhrana agent, made a part of the Bolshevik Central Committee, enjoyed the blindest confidence on the part of Lenin, and sent to Siberia hundreds of militants and leaders. To a suspicion expressed by Bukharin, Lenin (according to his wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya) responded that it was “unworthy of a conscious militant; if you persist, it will be you who will be denounced as a traitor.” But the case of Malinovski is not an isolated one. Opening the secret archives of the Okhrana in 1917, Lenin was (not without good reason) stupefied to discover that, of 55 officially active and regularly paid professional provocateurs, 17 “worked” among the Revolutionary Socialists, and a good 20 of them shared the job of surveilling the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and certainly not their rank-and-file militants! And Lenin had the bitter surprise of discovering that the provocateurs were always those “comrades” to which he – the man who was so prudent and so expert in matters of clandestinity – accorded the greatest esteem and the greatest confidence because of their service and the boldness they showed on several occasions.

Today, the practices of the Okhrana, which were very sophisticated and refined for their times, are no more than primitive. The modern unofficial services of the State, of *any* State, dispose of a number of means and people of all classes and all social appearances, well trained in the use of weapons and ideas, and often much more *capable* than the naïve militants, who pay the price for it. The organizational form of the political party, which is always hierarchical, is in fact the one that is best suited for infiltration and manipulation, which is exactly the opposite of what the bourgeois press says. All the rank-and-file nuclei, which are made up of clandestine militants, are kept separate from each other and in ignorance of everything, without any possibility for dialogue and debate, and everything functions perfectly due to the blindest [obedience to] discipline and the most expedient orders from an inaccessible summit, which is generally nested in this or that ministry or powerful group. And, if some provocateur ever arouses suspicion, he is always providentially arrested and made a star by the press, which removes him from danger and washes him of the suspicion. Thanks to an unbelievable and “heroic” escape, he can then be put back into action. And often these provocateurs do not come

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<sup>409</sup> In 1974, Catanzaro was the location of the trial of the alleged perpetrators of the bombing of the Piazza Fontana.

<sup>410</sup> General Saverio Malizia (born 1914) was the legal counsel to the Ministry of Defense and the Deputy Prosecutor of the High Military Court. He was convicted of perjury in 1979. General Gianadelio Maletti (born 1921) was the head of counter-intelligence for the *Servizio Informazione Difesa* between 1971 and 1975. He was convicted of falsifying public documents in 1979.

out unscathed.

Thus, here is *one more reason* why I would warn any subversive of good faith about organizing hierarchically and clandestinely in a “party”: in certain conditions, clandestinity can be necessary, while all hierarchies always and only benefit the world we seek to bring down. In revolutionary groups that do without militants and leaders, and that are founded *on the qualitative*, infiltration is practically impossible or immediately discovered. “The only limit to participation in the total democracy of the revolutionary organization is the recognition and effective appropriation by all of its members of the coherence of the organization’s critique, a coherence that must prove itself in the critical theory properly speaking and in the relationship between this theory and practical activity” (Debord).<sup>411</sup>

In several of the Red Brigades’ “hideouts,” and this isn’t news, abundant amounts of ultra-confidential materials have been recovered, and they contained the locations of police officers, police stations and even government ministries, which, strangely, have never been assaulted or sacked by the RBs. Confronted with such eloquent facts, [sources of] spectacular information have always pretended to explain them by once more emphasizing the ultra-efficient organization of the terrible RBs and, to strengthen this brilliant bit of advertising, they have added to it the “fact” that these clandestine militants – who are hunted, but so widespread – have infiltrated themselves everywhere, even into the police stations and ministries. Confronted with this explication of such a gloomy and maladroitly camouflaged reality, I can only laugh. Once more, the intelligence of 50 million Italians, who are not Germans ready to drink from the poisoned baby’s bottle of the television set, is being abused by the *Corriere* and *L’Unità*,<sup>412</sup> and those who attribute such stupidity to ordinary people in fact *only reveal theirs*, which, to surpass so many limits, certainly cannot be so ordinary. Once more, power speaks in counter-truth: it is not the RBs who have infiltrated into the police stations and ministries, but agents of the State, employed by the police stations and ministries, who have been infiltrated into the RBs on purpose, and certainly not only at their summit.

And if, during 10 years, the merciless and great struggle against the “monster” of terrorism – a struggle that has been so glorified in words – has only resulted in the hypertrophy of this “monster”; if the trial [of the suspects in the bombing] of the Piazza Fontana has never truly *begun*, this derives from the fact – which is comic or repugnant, I don’t know – that those who have always been tasked with this merciless struggle are *the same secret services that have always directed and animated terrorism*, and certainly not because of alleged “deviations” or “corruption,” but *simply because they have executed in military fashion the orders that they have received*. And all the militants who have been exhibited in the public cages of the courts, as if they were ferocious beasts, [but who are really] naïve children whom one would like to see grow old in Italian prisons, are always and most assuredly *the least implicated*, even if they have been designated “the leaders” and “the strategists” (nothing is easier than making a naïve fanatic believe that he or she has taken part in this or that operation simply because he or she distributed the tract that claimed responsibility for it).

And our general officers amuse themselves by counting the medals and attestations of high merit that they collect, either by nourishing terrorism or by “discovering” the “guilty

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<sup>411</sup> Guy Debord, “Minimum Definition of Revolutionary Organizations,” July 1966, printed in *Internationale Situationniste* #11, October 1967.

<sup>412</sup> *L’Unità*, founded by Antonio Gramsci in 1924, was the official newspaper of the Italian Communist Party.

parties” at opportune moments.

In this phenomenon, which might arouse the virtuous indignation of hypocrites, there is really nothing new, and it has been repeated for centuries in the eras of corruption and decadence of all the States. For example, Sallust, who is the historian of the corruption and crisis of the Republic of Rome, reports that the censor Lucius Marcus Philippus denounced Lepidus, a general felon, before the Senate in these noble terms.<sup>413</sup>

I could wish above everything, Fathers of the Senate (...) that evil designs should prove the ruin of their contrivers. But, on the contrary, everything is in disorder as the result of civil dissensions, which are aroused by those whose duty it rather was to suppress them (...) You, meanwhile, muttering and shrinking, trusting to the predictions and incantations of soothsayers, pray rather than fight for peace, and you do not realize that by your irresolute decrees you are losing your prestige, he his fear (...) His acts of sedition have given him a province and an army, what might he not have gained by good conduct, when you have rewarded his crimes so generously? (...) As to your conduct, I lack sufficient wisdom to know whether to call it cowardice, weakness or madness (...) You [Lepidus] are a traitor to us (...) <sup>414</sup> You claim to reestablish through such a war the concord *that is rendered vain by the very means by which it is obtained*. What impudence!

The truth is exactly this: the social peace that terrorism can procure is “rendered vain by the very means by which it is obtained,” with the difference that, today, *the impudent ones* are the representatives of the Republic and all the orators who fulminate against terrorism in all of their speeches, always feigning not to know what the entire country has been saying since the famous year of 1969. Listen a little to what is said by a modern Lepidus, the honest Leo Valiani,<sup>415</sup> who in the pages of the *Corriere* during July 1978 was not ashamed to regret the “too mild sentences” given to some underling.

[They] encourage the subversive to persevere, to dare to do even more. We do not ask the judges to condemn someone without being convinced of his [or her] guilt. But when the Republic is grappling with clandestine organizations such as those who sowed death at the Piazza Fontana, as it is at this moment (...) any indulgence concerning those who are active in such subversive organizations is suicidal.

And, in the name of God, what indulgence could surpass that of Valiani, an expert in Stalinist and bourgeois terrorism, fellow traveler of these two forms of terrorism and accomplice of all the lies about them, who still feigns to be ignorant (and he is not the only one in Italy to do so) of the fact that “the clandestine organization that sowed death at the Piazza Fontana” was none other than Admiral Henke’s organization, the famous SID, which for the sake of decency – that is to say, *indecenty* – today has a different name? And does one want to continue to listen to Valiani’s

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<sup>413</sup> C. Sallustius Crispus: *Histories*, translated from the Latin by Patrick McGushin (London: Oxford, 1992), Book I, 67.

<sup>414</sup> The next two lines do not appear in the translation of this text that I have consulted.

<sup>415</sup> Leo Valiani (1909-1999) was a journalist for *L'Espresso*.

chatter for the next 10 years, only this time with respect to the execution of Moro? What parliamentarian, what honorable bastard, among all those who reproach each other for their “indulgences,” talking nonsense about “safeguarding the Republic,” has dared to expose himself by accusing and *naming* the assassins of 1969?

The fact is that the task of safeguarding this criminal Republic *depends solely on these parliamentarians’ ability for cover for those assassins and the killers of Moro*, as well as the murderers of Calabresi, Occorsio, Coco, Feltrinelli, Pinelli, et. al. And all the government ministers and honorable parliamentarians know this very well: they continue to keep quiet so they can receive new remunerations that will complete their already substantial share.

Ever since the great fear of 1969, our regime has accorded an immense trust in its senior political-police officers and their abilities to always find *technical and spectacular solutions* to all of the historical and social questions that face them. Thus, our regime is in the process of committing the same error made by the Czarist regime, which dedicated all of its attention and care to building the best and most powerful secret police in the world, which is what the Okhrana was at the time. This permitted the Czar to continue to survive day by day, without anything changing for another decade, but his eventual fall was only more violent and definitive. As a bourgeois thinker, Benjamin Constant, has said:<sup>416</sup>

Only an excess of despotism can prolong a situation that tends to dissolve and can maintain under class domination all those who conspire to separate themselves from it (...) Even more harmful than evil, this remedy has no durable effectiveness. The natural order of things takes revenge against outrages that one wants to subject it to, and the more the compression has been violent, the more the reaction will be terrible.

And in Italy, the effects of ten years of political-police policy are beginning to make themselves felt, and that includes their harmful and uncontrollable effects. The State still exists, with more authority and a worse reputation than ever, but its real adversaries have grown in number, their awareness has [also] grown and, with it, the effectiveness and violence of their attacks. In the eras in which the police make policy, a complete collapse is always what follows.

Today, sinister Craxi seeks easy applause by feigning to discover that, in Russia, [mere] crimes of opinion are considered to be crimes against the State. Scandalous novelty! Poor Craxi, have you not seen that here in Italy *crimes against the State are considered to be crimes of opinion*? Is this not a fact more worthy of your virtuous indignation? Ridiculous man! Who do you want to convince that your soul is immaculate? You, who strut about with your worthy colleague Mitterrand: do you believe that we have forgotten that Mitterrand is *a gangster* who, several years ago, paid other, more obscure gangsters to fake an attack against him?<sup>417</sup> Craxi, no one believes you when you proclaim *I am without fault before the throne!*<sup>418</sup> And you, leaders of

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<sup>416</sup> Benjamin Constant (1767-1830). Quote taken from Chapter XIII, *L’Esprit de Conquête et de l’Usurpation*.

<sup>417</sup> On 16 October 1959, François Maurice Adrien Marie Mitterrand (1916-1996) – the future President of France and leader of the Socialist Party, then a senator – was allegedly the target of an assassination plot that was in fact organized with a right-wing deputy named R. Pesquet.

<sup>418</sup> Latin in original. *Book of Revelations*, 14:5: “And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (King James).

the [Italian Socialist] Party: you are just like Mitterrand. When it is a rival, and not one of you, who commands the attacks, you keep your mouths shut, and you speak of the firmness of the State when it is confronted with your own provocations!

Here is another proof, in addition to all the rest, that in Italy crimes of State are considered to be simple crimes of opinion. In 1975, when, under the pseudonym of Censor, I published *historical* (not legal) proof that it was the SID that perpetrated the massacre at the Piazza Fontana, all the newspapers and journalists widely reported my conclusions, but they were more scandalized by the fact that an anonymous person, apparently close to power, dared to openly accuse the SID than by the completely believed fact that the State had organized and executed a terrible massacre so as to emerge unharmed from a very serious social crisis. The journalist Massimo Riva admirably expressed the thinking of all his colleagues when he wondered, in the *Corriere*, what mysterious maneuver among the powerful the Censor affair announced. “What is behind it? The fear of telling the truth? A warning to the regime’s big shots?” It wasn’t my scandalous statements or conclusions, but my anonymity that caused the scandal. To say it better: the fuss surrounding the identity of Censor only served to mask the scandal of what I denounced. Everyone preferred to advance maladroit conjectures about my identity and thus avoid speaking of what I said. “A warning to the regime’s big shots?” According to Riva and the others, this was the crux of the question, and what was scandalous was only *the end of the omertà* among the powerful, and not the crimes they had committed.

But, as always, the best was Alberto Ronchey, who will only astound us when he no longer manages to be astounding. With respect to my proofs, he said, “Whatever the responsibilities and intrigues of the SIFAR-SID<sup>419</sup> or other detached units,” *despite them*, “where the bombs [and] events are concerned (...) if one truly believes in a ‘State terrorism,’ we would be confronted with a criminal system of government and no one should have anything to do with it, neither the Communists, the Socialists nor the others.”<sup>420</sup> What is truly unbelievable is not State terrorism, but Ronchey’s manner of reasoning. Since he himself, the Communists and the Socialists in fact have “something to do” with such a government, *therefore* (according to Ronchey) we have a sufficient guarantee that State terrorism is not believable and indeed *does not exist*, “whatever the responsibilities and intrigues” of the SIFAR-SID. To reason as Ronchey does: God is believable, *therefore he exists*. [In contemporary discourses] on the subjects of terrorism and the State, one has the impression of being returned to the discussions about the existence of God and the Devil. Are they real? Do they exist? And, if they do, are they truly believable? Quite wisely, the poet says, *Certainly it was true, but not at all believable to those who weren’t masters of their reason*.

I have not managed to understand where the Roncheyes of this world hope to arrive with their theological logic. I have never said that the secret services have been behind every attack, given that, today, even a *Molotov cocktail*<sup>421</sup> or an act of sabotage against production is considered to be an “attack,” but I did say – and I have been saying it for almost 10 years – that all the spectacular acts of terrorism have been masterminded or directly perpetrated by our secret services. And the reader should note that I didn’t say “by *the* secret services,” which could refer to those of a faraway or exotic country, but *ours*, yes, the secret services of Italy, whose touch

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<sup>419</sup> Originally formed in 1949, the *Servizio di Informazioni delle Forze Armate* (SIFAR) became the SID in 1965.

<sup>420</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: A. Ronchey, *Accadde in Italia, 1968-1977*.

<sup>421</sup> English in original.

and stench, cleverness and clumsiness, tactical ingenuity and strategic stupidity I always recognize.

For example, observe how the SID came to perpetrate the Piazza Fontana operation: by successive attempts and approximations. It decided to perpetrate a massacre of the population and it prepared for it with two general rehearsals: the bombs at Fiore and the bank at the train station in Milan on 25 April 1969, and the bombs on the trains in August of the same year. The secret services thus prepared public opinion and prepared themselves technically with these *backgrounds*.<sup>422</sup>

The kidnapping of Moro was also rehearsed in advance, because our unofficial services, even if they changes their targets, always have the same manner of proceeding, which is something for which Machiavelli would never pardon them. In April 1977, the kidnapping of De Martino was one such rehearsal, and it took place without the spilling of blood, because our secret services never want blood to be spilled during one of their rehearsals. On both 25 April 1969 and later in August, no one was killed. Nevertheless, such rehearsals have *always indicated the target* to be struck: in 1969, it was the population and in 1977-1978, a politician. The *very day* of the kidnapping of De Martino, which was claimed by a hundred ghostly groups, I denounced it as a general rehearsal by the secret services in a poster that was printed and distributed in Rome.<sup>423</sup> The second rehearsal, which indicated the target that had been selected – that is to say, a politician – was the bomb at the office of Cossiga, then the Minister of the Interior, which assured this act of a lot of publicity.<sup>424</sup> Then came the attack against Moro, and blood was spilled, because it was not a general rehearsal.

Under the pressure of the menacing revolts of the beginning of 1977, the secret services, which had always been on their guard and never inactive for the last 10 years, began to move decisively in a quite precise direction, and the two aforementioned provocations (which weren't the only ones made by those services) were, nevertheless, the ones that clearly indicated the target chosen and the events to follow.

Thus we can advisedly say that the kidnapping of Moro was *the least unforeseeable thing in the world*, since it was *the least unexpected thing* there where one can do what one wants, that is to say, at the summit of power. First of all, one feared that De Martino, a friend of the Stalinists, would be elected President of the Republic. By making him pay several hundred million lira to regain his son, one destroyed the reputation of this “Socialist.” Moro was then publicly designated Leone's successor and, though he was less valuable as a target for ransom-demanding kidnappers than De Martino or Leone, he was the one responsible for the agreement with the Stalinists and, as President, he would have been even more so. Two plus two equals four, even in politics. And so, on *16 March 1978, the President had to die*, to parody the title of a book by Andreotti.<sup>425</sup> Six months after the Via Fani operation, while the anti-Stalinist policies of Craxi first showed themselves, Amintore Fanfani – who is called *The Ghost* in Tuscany – launched his first rigorous attack against the government, the secretariat of the Christian

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<sup>422</sup> English in original.

<sup>423</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: “Notice to the Proletariat About the Events of the Last Few Hours,” Rome, 7 April 1977. [See elsewhere in this volume.]

<sup>424</sup> Francesco Cossiga (1928-2010), a member of the Christian Democratic Party, was the Minister of the Interior between 1976 and 1978. On 7 April 1977, a bomb exploded outside of his personal residence.

<sup>425</sup> *Ore 13: Il Ministro deve morire* (“1 pm: The Minister Must Die”), published in 1974.

Democratic Party, the “emergency cabinet,” and the “agreement” made by Moro, by denouncing “the abuse of unanimity” and the inefficiency of the “equivocal” government of “national unity,” and by announcing the surpassing of “a political season” – all of which was applauded by the Craxians and “feared” by the Stalinists. Although Fanfani is, after Berlinguer, the Italian politician who has collected the greatest number of failures, he *is not* a cretin (more intelligent than clever and less shrewd than ingenious), *The Ghost* only drew *political conclusions* from the Moro affair, since it is true that terrorism is the pursuit of policy by other means.

As long as power exists separately from individuals, it will surely not be individuals who are in short supply. No functionary of power or capital is irreplaceable or indispensable for the maintenance of domination: neither Kennedy, Mattei, Moro, nor any of those who are still alive and active. In periods of trouble, the thing that is indispensable to a power that does not want to be replaced is precisely *the elimination* of certain men, either because they are too compromised or exposed, like Rumor, or because they desire a “replacement” (even a minimal one) that arouses the fears or suspicions of certain sectors of power, and one knows that the most reactionary sectors are always *the best armed*. Moro’s “overtures” to the Communists were thus perceived as opposed to certain interests and as a concession to “change” – and this despite the fact that, historically, it is precisely change that such overtures *try to prevent*, but without too much conviction or sufficient guarantees – that is to say, in a manner different from the one desired by a faction of power and certain military leaders.

In history, all powers have always behaved like all the other powers have behaved and, to the extent that the current police-politics of provocation follows its course (and I have already demonstrated that it cannot fail to do so), its powerful, semi-lucid, semi-unaware and *completely* fear-dominated strategists find themselves with the *necessity* of getting rid (mafia-style) of certain men of whom they made use just the day before. There is nothing new in this, and it is a supplementary confirmation of the old [and previously mentioned] precept, according to which “he who causes another to become powerful ruins himself.” Neither Moro nor any of his colleagues prevented the political police from becoming powerful over the course of the last 10 years; none protested against or combated a phenomenon that they all, on the contrary, nourished. Moro was the first victim of some importance mowed down by this politics, but he wasn’t the only one. The strategists of terror had already gotten rid of other, less important, but no less utilized people. We can cite several still-fresh examples: the liquidation of Calabresi; the distant and mysterious death of the fascist Nardi,<sup>426</sup> accused of assassinating Calabresi; the “suicides” of a good number of SID officers; the “accidental” deaths of several people who testified at the Piazza Fontana trial; the spectacular and simultaneous attacks against Coco<sup>427</sup> and Occorsio [in June 1976], which were claimed – with the concern for symmetry that is always present in the spectacle of “opposing extremisms” – by both the Red Brigades and the fascists. It is thus worth remarking that both of these magistrates were more than a little involved in [the spectacle of] terrorism: Coco in the troubled and incongruous kidnapping of [Judge] Sossi;<sup>428</sup> and Occorsio in the great spectacle of the prosecution of “the human beast,” Pietro Valpreda. Naturally, all the mendacious sources of information presented (as confirmations of the official versions of these events) facts *that precisely contradicted them*: Coco “did not give in” to the

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<sup>426</sup> Gianni Nardi (1946-1976) alleged died in a car accident in Spain on 10 September 1976.

<sup>427</sup> Francesco Coco (1908-1976), an Italian magistrate.

<sup>428</sup> Mario Sossi (1932-2019), allegedly kidnapped by the Red Brigades on 18 April 1974 and released on 23 May.

RBs and *therefore* they took revenge against him, even though one doesn't understand why they didn't take their revenge by killing Sossi. I take a hostage, and I blackmail you; if you do not give in, is it you whom I kill, or the hostage? Illogical logic, but spectacular logic, just the same.

As for Occorsio, he spent his final hours investigating the fascists; *therefore* they are the ones who had an interest in killing him. But, for heaven's sake, let no one advance the least suspicion about this logic. Namely: if Occorsio was occupied with the fascists during his final hours, after being occupied with the anarchists, but with equally poor results, then *someone* suggested to him to make the switch so that the fascists could be made to claim responsibility for his death, thus giving it a "plausible" explanation (one couldn't accuse Valpreda of killing Occorsio *as well as* perpetrating the attack at the Piazza Fontana: he is a "guilty party" who is worn out, burned and unusable; if one were to read tomorrow that he had killed his mother-in-law, no one in Italy would believe it).

The judges who are currently occupied with the Moro affair are the least enviable people in Italy, and they must pay careful attention. They must take care to not lose themselves in their investigations or displease certain sectors of power; they must pay attention *to everything, always* because, for the State, the first opportunity to get rid of them will be the best one; and the RBs will soon after "claim responsibility" for their deaths, which will thus be explained to public opinion. And in Italy today, anything that can be explained *is thereby justified* and, if the explanation is improper (because no one can reply to it), it is an explanation that *cannot be appealed*, a lie that cannot be refuted and thus is no longer a lie. To speak as Ronchey does: if someone refutes it, it isn't refuted; if it is refuted, the refutation is not "believable"; if it is not "believable," *the refutation doesn't exist*. Few things that Orwell predicted in *1984* have not been verified. For example, read the following passage.

In some ways she was more acute than Winston, and far less susceptible to Party propaganda. Once when he happened in some connection to mention the war (...) she startled him by saying casually that in her opinion the war was not happening. The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the Government (...) itself, "just to keep people frightened." This was an idea that literally had never occurred to him.<sup>429</sup>

Several extra-parliamentarians, lost within their puerile illusions and fetishistic ideology of armed struggle, would perhaps object that, since they *believe* in the armed struggle, other people, more "extreme" than they are, *could actually practice it* and be responsible for everything, including the kidnapping of Moro. I would respond that I have never doubted, either in public or in private, the imbecility of our extra-parliamentarians as a whole; but it is fitting to observe that, where they are concerned, they never doubt what the spectacle says about armed struggle or they themselves. Brave, alienated militants, pay attention to this only: if Moro had indeed been kidnapped and killed by free and autonomous revolutionaries, as the State has told you and as you believe, then it also follows that, *for the first time in 10 years*, the State *hasn't lied about a matter concerning terrorism*. But this, being unbelievable and absurd, can be excluded.

On the contrary, the sad truth is that you *have always believed* all the lies of the past concerning Valpreda, Feltrinelli, the RBs and the rest. Even the anarchists' official newspaper,

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<sup>429</sup> George Orwell, *1984* (New York: The New American Library, 1950), Part Two, Section V, p. 117.

*Umanità Nova*, hastened to protect itself in the wake of the attack at the Piazza Fontana by separating its “responsibilities” from those of Valpreda, thus proving a courage suitable for its intelligence.

Many extreme-Left militants believe that they are shrewd because they understand that Pinelli didn't fall on his own from the fourth floor of the Central Police Station, but they will never manage to surpass their *record* for perversity, since they shortly thereafter applauded our secret services when they killed Commissioner Calabresi. Our bourgeoisie and Stalinists, who have already proved their inaptitude so well, thus have reasons to be consoled when they consider the stupidity of all their allegedly “extreme” adversaries, who in a certain way compensate for their own stupidity, even if this doesn't annul it. And indeed, in 10 years, no extra-parliamentary groupuscule has ever managed to harm the State in the least, because none of them have been able to help the practical struggles of the wildcat workers in any way or to contribute to the advancement of their theoretical consciousness.

Impotent and maladroit, militants today accuse the State of being morally “responsible” for Moro's death *because it didn't save him* (and not because it was the one who killed him), just as in 1969-1970 they accused the State of “moral responsibility” for the massacre at the Piazza Fontana, certainly not for ordering it done, but for not ordering the arrest of several fascists who were implicated in the affair, at least on the legal plane. The newly elected politicians who please themselves by imitating the gestures of the established ones continue to ignore the fact that politics has nothing to do with morality, but, rather, with the ideology that justifies certain policies, that is to say, all the lies that politics normally require. This is why they always and only speak of the “moral responsibility” of the State and thus become re-responsible for all of its lies.

But let's reason absurdly; let's try for a single instant to consider the idea that the kidnapping of Moro was conceived and pulled off by subversives. In such case, there would be several questions to be asked, and these are precisely the only questions that the contemplative militants have never asked, occupied as they are with admiring all that they are incapable of or with disagreeing with everything in which they do not participate. That is to say, *everything*.

Above all, one must wonder how it is possible that, over the course of two months, these subversives weren't able to accuse Moro of anything other than serving the interests of the bourgeoisie, instead of those of the proletariat, as if this “crime” was particular to Moro, as if there was no one in Parliament who was also “guilty” of it! The absurdity of such an accusation renders it perfectly unbelievable. Moro had never claimed or tried to make people believe that he defended the interests of the workers, despite what is said by the Stalinists or the extra-parliamentarians. To accuse him of such a “crime” is to accuse the rich of not being poor, or an enemy of not being an ally. If these hypothetical “subversives” staged the “trial” of Moro to make such an accusation against him, they could have spared themselves the trouble and killed him along with his police escort on the Via Fani. But, as I have already said, behind this accusation was the opposite one. The abductors of Moro actually accused him of not sufficiently serving the interests of the bourgeoisie, and certainly not serving them too well.

Besides, the maladroit parody of “proletarian justice” clumsily staged by Moro's jailers *didn't even try* to get him to spit out the truth about the massacre at the Piazza Fontana or a hundred other, equally scandalous facts that any powerful man naturally knows, facts that would be highly instructive to the proletariat. Where this is concerned, we must remark that, if Moro in one of his first letters feared he would have to speak about “unpleasant and dangerous” truths, this did not worry anyone in the government, which shows that our ministers never feared

anything of the kind, because *they knew* that they had nothing to fear. In their own proclamations, Moro's abductors never knew how or even wanted to address themselves to the workers, to whom they had nothing interesting to say. After having stated with assurance, just after the kidnapping, that "nothing will be hidden from the people," Moro's jailers, through his mediation, immediately began a long and secret correspondence with all the powerful men in the Christian Democratic Party, to whom the attack was a *warning*, and the kidnapping lasted for as long as was necessary to convince them all. The first *proof* of their convictions that they had to give was precisely that of not "negotiating" and they all hastened to give it. The terms for the release of the hostage – whom the RBs would have freed, at least officially, if the State agreed to release 15 imprisoned militants – seem to have been set *only to be rejected*, certainly not because they were unacceptable to the State, but because (not being of any interest to any sector of the proletariat) these terms could not claim the support of any spontaneous or violent movement in the country – and Moro's jailers did not even try to inspire any such movement. Where the abductors betrayed their identities as agents of power, and did so in the most maladroit manner, was in their strong desire to be officially recognized by the existing powers: everyone from the ICP to the Christian Democrats, from the Pope to Waldheim.<sup>430</sup> This fact, and it alone, admirably proved that, not only did the abductors recognize the legitimacy of these powers, but also they were only preoccupied with being recognized *by them*, and certainly not by the proletariat. For their part, the party leaders betrayed themselves when they admitted that the goal of the kidnapping was to divide the political forces of the government and added that it had failed to do so, when in fact it *succeeded*. The Christian Democrats and the Craxians quickly understood that they had to separate themselves, gently but resolutely, from the Stalinists. If Moro's jailers had been subversives, such a division would not have interested them, because any subversive knows that the only division likely to create disorder is the one made between the exploited and the exploiters, and certainly not any division between the different political parties that, in the spectacle, only represent the different forces that are used to maintain the same exploitation, even when the beneficiaries of it change. Finally, if Moro's abductors had been subversives, they certainly would not have given up the opportunity to release him, because Moro – calumniated by all his "friends" and betrayed by his recent allies – would have openly fought against all those whom he had previously protected. On the contrary, by killing him, the artisans of the Via Fani operation opportunely got out of difficulty all the powers, especially the Christian Democrats, for whom Moro was useful dead, but very harmful alive.

In any case, if Moro's abductors had been subversives, they certainly would not have chosen the freedom of Curcio and the others as the terms in the negotiations, because such terms would have given an excellent pretext for power to send the RBs packing and thereby not "lose honor." If his abductors were going to choose to pose unacceptable terms, they should have demanded *something other* than the liberation of only 15 prisoners, and those who set unacceptable terms are always attentive to the fact that they should not be too easily rejected, as was the demand concerning those few Brigadists. But in reality, Moro's abductors did not want any of what they officially demanded: they knew that they could not openly demand what they really wanted without unmasking themselves. Today, *they have obtained* what they wanted. And, shortly before Moro's jailers did away with him, all the real terms of the blackmail *were inverted* with respect to the spectacular and official terms set for the Christian Democrats, and those real

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<sup>430</sup> Kurt Josef Waldheim (1918-2007) was the Secretary General of the United Nations from 1972 to 1981.

terms became this: either you change your policy or we will free Moro and you will see that *it will be him* who changes it. Things being what they are, the Christian Democrats and the “Socialist” leaders wisely preferred that *they be the ones* to change the policy at the expense of Moro, instead of risking a situation in which Moro changed it *at their expense*. Thus goes the world, despite all the flapping of the wings of the Capitoline geese, who claimed the opposite.

All of our incapable extra-parliamentarians, dazzled like primitive peoples by the technical success of the Via Fani operation, were not able to see beyond it by realizing that those who disposed of so many means and tactical capabilities surely would not put them at the service of a strategy that was as poor and unbelievable as the one attributed to the RBs, but, rather, at the service of a political design of much greater scope. But the extra-parliamentarians, faced with the operational efficiency on display at the Via Fani and in what followed it, naturally preferred to attribute it to “comrades who were mistaken” and not to enemies *who do not make mistakes* and calmly fuck people over. Here as well, our poor Leftists have taken their poor desires for reality, without suspecting that reality always surpasses their desires, but not in the manner that they desire. And if they were less ignorant, they would not have neglected the abilities of the unofficial Italian services so much and so wrongly. For example, they would know that, for Italy, the only war operations that were truly successful in World War II were the *commando* raids carried out by the Navy. It seems to me hardly necessary to recall how this brilliant tradition was admirably transmitted from the Navy to the secret services, first by Admiral Henke, who has never been an imbecile, and then by Admiral Casardi,<sup>431</sup> who is even more capable. Between them came the ignominious interregnum of Vito Miceli, an unskilled general who has in fact succumbed to his own ineptitude and Andreotti’s prudence, which was not late in perceiving it. In fact, Andreotti did not have General Miceli arrested because he was responsible for the SID’s “deviations” – which began well before Miceli’s tenure, as Andreotti knows – but because Miceli’s clumsiness threatened to blow the lid off the secret services’ pot. Once more, Andreotti showed himself to be a finer politician than he wants to appear: he passed off his attack on Miceli as a concern for loyalty to the Constitution and thus won the predictable sympathies of a part of the Left. Andreotti’s only error was, as usual, his false modesty and vanity. He rejoiced too much after Miceli’s arrest, tried too much to appear naïve and declared on several occasions that, due to prudence, he had never wanted to occupy himself with the secret services, which was a scandalous declaration for a government leader, but necessary for someone who – having been occupied with them [out of necessity] – saw “things of which it is well to say nothing,”<sup>432</sup> things that were *so scandalous* that one could only keep quiet about them *by feigning not to know about them*. And Andreotti knows that the scandal of ignorance is the price he must pay to feign ignorance of certain scandals. Nevertheless, he remains comical, like the fable in which the fox disguises himself as a lamb so as to be better accepted by the wolves.

Setting aside the admirals, we must note that, in Italy, there are excellent superior officers among the Carabinieri, because not everyone is like Miceli or La Bruna<sup>433</sup> and only the Micelis and La Brunas get caught in the trap. On the other hand, there is a deeper and more dialectical argument that works in favor of the leadership of our secret services: if this era demands that

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<sup>431</sup> Rear Admiral Ferdinando Casardi was the commander of the Italian 2nd Cruiser Division during the Battle of Cape Spada on 19 July 1940.

<sup>432</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Inferno*, IV, 104. p. 63.

<sup>433</sup> Captain Antonino La Bruna worked in the domestic security branch of the *Servizio Informazione Difesa*. His superior officer was General Maletti.

certain men practice terrorism, it is also capable of *creating* the men who are needed by terrorism. Furthermore, one need not believe that the Via Fani operation was a super-human masterpiece of operational abilities. Just yesterday, even Idi Amin Dada<sup>434</sup> could pull off certain technical successes, about which the poor militants of *Lotta continua* will never cease to be astonished.

A great number of workers, many of whom I have encountered in the most diverse situations and who are much less naïve than the extra-parliamentarians, immediately concluded that “*they* kidnapped Aldo Moro,” and by this they naturally meant those who have power. And to think that as recently as yesterday such workers voted and generally voted for the ICP!

The irreparable split that exists in this country between all those who have the floor (the politicians, the powerful and their servants, some of whom are journalists), on the one hand, and those who are deprived of the opportunity to speak, on the other, expresses itself perfectly in the fact that the former – who are distant from the ordinary people and protected by the barrier of their bodyguards – *no longer know* what the latter say and think in the streets, restaurants and workplaces. As a result, the lies of power have become tangential; they have entered into a kind of autonomous orbit due to centrifugal force. And this orbit *no longer touches* any part of the “real country,” in which the truth makes its way so much more easily because no obstacle hinders or intimidates it. In contrast, the spectacle has *become autistic*, that is to say, it is suffering from a schizophrenic psychopathological syndrome in which the ideas and actions of the sick person can no longer be modified by reality, from which he or she is irremediably separated and is thus constrained to live in his or her own world *beyond the real one*. Like King Oedipus, the spectacle has gouged its eyes out and continues blindly in its own terrorist delirium. Like King Oedipus, it no longer wants to see reality and, like President Andreotti, it says that it wants to know nothing about the secret services; it even proclaims that they were dismantled several years ago and no longer exist. If, like King Oedipus, the spectacle no longer wants to see reality, this is because it only wants to *be seen*, contemplated, admired and accepted as everything that it pretends to be. Thus, it wants to be heard, without ever hearing, and it even doesn’t worry too much about not being heard. What seems to be the most important thing to the spectacle is that it can pursue its endless paranoid voyage. At the very moment that the police claim to make history, all historical facts are explained by power in a *police-related* way. The Hungarian psychiatric researcher Joseph Gabel<sup>435</sup> says that, according to what he defines as the “police conception of history,” history is no longer constituted “by the entirety of objective forces, but by good or bad individual actions”; every event “is placed under the rubric of miracle or catastrophe.” The interpretation of an event no longer involves its historical explanation, but the determination of its cause by either Red or Black magic. Thus, for power, the bombing of the Piazza Fontana was the *miracle* that made the unions renounce strikes and allowed the State to avoid civil war. In contrast, the death of Moro announced a mysterious *catastrophe* that, thanks to the skill and inflexibility of our politicians, spared us. But this has no importance to the large number of “plebian people” – to make use of an expression favored by the Stalinist Amendola – who have said, “If they kill Moro, it doesn’t interest me at all: that’s *their* affair,” which is something I’ve heard thousands of times. “The country resisted; it knew how to react.” What a

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<sup>434</sup> Idi Amin Dada (1925-2003) was the military dictator and President of Uganda between 1971 and 1979.

<sup>435</sup> Joseph Gabel (1912-2004) was a Hungarian-born French sociologist and philosopher. His book *La Fausse Conscience: Essai sur la réification* was first published in 1962.

good joke! The only reaction from this “mythological” country was (quite wisely) *to not believe* anything that one said to it.

Parallel to the catastrophic or miraculous explication of history, the spectacle comes to *no longer know* what it dominates, no longer grasps hold of the reality and thoughts that it urgently must master. As Machiavelli says, “when one knows the least, one has the most suspicions.” The entire population, and the young people in particular, become suspect in the eyes of power. At the same time, if artificial terrorism claims to be *the only real phenomenon*, all the spontaneous revolts – such as those in Rome and Bologna in 1977<sup>436</sup> – become, in accordance with the “police conception of history,” *a conspiracy* that has been artificially plotted and conducted by forces that are “hidden” and yet “quite identifiable,” which is what the Stalinists believe even today. Everything that power cannot foresee, because it hasn’t organized it, thus becomes a “conspiracy” against it. On the other hand, artificial terrorism, since it is organized and conducted by the masters of the spectacle, is a *real* and spontaneous phenomenon that these masters continually feign to combat for the simple reason that *it is easier to defend oneself against a simulated enemy than a real one*. And power would like to refuse the very *status* of enemy to its real enemy, which is the proletariat. If the workers say they are against this demented terrorism, “they are for the State,” and if they are against the State, “they are terrorists,” that is to say, enemies of the common good and thus *public enemies*. And against a public enemy, everything is permitted, everything is authorized.

Gabel goes on to say that “the police conception of history represents the most extreme form of political alienation (...): unfavorable events can only be explained by external actions (the conspiracy) and they are experienced (by the sick person) as an unexpected, ‘unmerited’ catastrophe.” And this is why any spontaneous strike must be an insult to “the working class,” which is so well represented by the unions, and any wildcat struggle is “provocative,” “corporative,” “unjust” and “unmerited.” All this goes back to the clinical framework of autistic schizophrenia. “The *syndrome of external action* (...) is the clinical expression for the irruption of the dialectic in a reified world that can only accept the event as a catastrophe” (J. Gabel, *False Consciousness*). The irruption of the dialectic corresponds to nothing other than the *irruption of struggle* in a reified world, which, more exactly, is the spectacular-commodity world, which cannot accept struggle, *even in the domain of thought*. Thus, this spectacular society is no longer even capable of *thinking*. Those who reason logically, for example, can only accept the identity of two things when it is based on the identity of subjects. In contrast, the spectacle, which is para-logical, establishes identity on the basis of the identity of predicates and thus says: “the devil is black; that which is black is the devil,” or “the Jew is bad; that which is bad is Jewish,” or “terrorism is catastrophic, the catastrophe is terrorism.” Aside from terrorism, everything else goes well. Unfortunately, there is terrorism: what can we do about it?

If I say, “a police officer must have a legally unblemished record; Mario Bianchi<sup>437</sup> is a police officer; therefore he has a legally unblemished record,” the schizophrenic will say, “Mario Bianchi has a legally unblemished record, *therefore* he is a police officer.” Thus the spectacle, when it has reached the point of autism, says, “those who kidnapped Moro are terrorists; the RBs are terrorists; Moro was kidnapped by the RBs.” No identification is improper to the spectacle, except for one, which is the only one not made. Namely: the State has proclaimed for years that

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<sup>436</sup> See “An orgasm of history: 1977 in Italy,” elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>437</sup> Mario Bianchi (1939-2022), an Italian filmmaker who specialized in sexploitation and pornography.

it is combating the RBs; it has infiltrated them several times without ever trying to dismantle them; *thus the State makes use of the RBs* as a cover, because *the RBs are useful to the State*, thus RBs = the State. Power has confessed in a thousand different ways that it fears the making of such an identification: for example, when it invented the neurotic and maladroit slogan, “Either with the State or the RBs,” which means “Either with me, or with me.”

A long time before the advent of the spectacle, religion – which has always been a functioning ideological prototype for all the old forms of power – had already invented the Devil, the first and supreme *agent provocateur*, whose role was to assure the complete triumph of the Kingdom of God. Religion projected the simple necessity of concrete and real power upon the metaphysical world. Thus Cicero *needed* to amplify the risk constituted by Catiline to magnify his own glory as savior of the fatherland and to multiply his own abuses in this way.<sup>438</sup> For any power, the only real catastrophe is being swept from history, and each power, once it has become weak and senses the imminence of this real catastrophe, has always tried to consolidate itself by feigning to fight an unequal battle against a convenient adversary. But such battles have also been the final prayers *for focus and domus*<sup>439</sup> made by power in trouble. History is full of examples. According to Paul-Louis Courier,<sup>440</sup>

Just as scandal is necessary for the greater glory of God, so too are conspiracies for the maintenance of the political police. To conjure them into existence, to stifle them, to change them, to reveal them – this is the great art of government ministers, the strong point and goal of the science of statesmen, the *transcendental politics* that we have recently perfected by men of exceptional talent in the field and that the jealous English seek to imitate and counterfeit, but crudely (...). From the moment that a minister’s intentions become known, he is instantly rendered either unable or unwilling to carry them out. A known policy is a lost policy; affairs of State, State secrets (...). Decency is necessary for a constitutional government.

Courier wrote this in 1820, at the height of the Restoration. Today, fearing a new and more frightening revolution, the State uses the same practices as before, this time at a much higher level, to obtain a *preventive* Restoration. The “transcendental politics” of the past is the imminent politics of the spectacle, which always presents itself as “the adversary of all evil,” as Dante said of God; thus, according to the spectacle’s autistic logic, all that is opposed to the spectacle itself *is evil*. And faced with this pitiless, preventive Restoration – this despicable series of provocations, massacres, assassinations and lies that seek to camouflage a crystal-clear reality – there are growing numbers of sociological “studies” and enslaved and progressive journalists who, having a better grasp on their personal security than on the simple reality of the facts, compete with each other in their expressions of a “certain sympathy” for “armed struggle” and clandestinity, as does the unspeakable Giorgio Bocca under the pretext that all this reminds him

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<sup>438</sup> Cicero (106-43 BCE) was the Consul during the conspiracy organized by Lucius Sergius Catilina.

<sup>439</sup> Latin in original: “hearth and home.”

<sup>440</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Paul-Louis Courier, Pamphlets politiques. [Translator: See “Lettres au Rédacteur du ‘Censeur,’” Lettre X, 10 April 1820, published in Pamphlets politiques II (Paris: Nelson / Lutetia, no date), pp. 238-239.]*

of his epic struggles as part of the Resistance. Men like Bocca are, so to speak, “legitimate” when, under the influence of fear, they declare that they feel sympathy for terrorism, because they earn four or five million [lire] a month, and because they feel that the existence of terrorism guarantees them that this income will continue. But those who have nothing are *deceived* by these men, who always lie with the goal of perpetrating their dirty tricks easily and at the expense of others. People like you, Bocca: one doesn’t kill them; that would be showing them too much respect! No one wants to see you die, but, for my part, if I ever encounter you on the street, be certain that *I will teach you how to live*, you idiot.

On the other hand, there is the defense attorney Giannino Guiso, who tells us about the ideological subtleties of Curcio, the sociologist Sabino Acquaviva, who expands upon grandiloquent “explanations” of terrorism, and the pedant [Mario] Scialoja, a journalist for *L’Espresso*, who pretentiously discourses about the “strategies of armed struggle”; and all of them feign to be “in the know” about the secret affairs of the social revolution by seeking to give credibility to artificial terrorism as a prelude to revolution. But

You will be surprised, when you come to the end,  
That you have not persuaded us of anything.<sup>441</sup>

Respected hoaxers, I have only one thing to say to you: unlike you, for the last 13 years I have known a large number of the revolutionaries in Europe – they are also known by all the police forces – who have contributed the most, in both theory and practice, to reducing capitalism to its current conditions and, without exception, *none of them* have ever practiced or even applauded modern spectacular terrorism, which is a fact that appears obvious to me. *There are no secret affairs of the revolution*: today, everything that is secret belongs to power, that is to say, to the counter-revolution. And all the police forces know this perfectly well.

Gentlemen of the government, it is fitting that, from now on, you have a calm conscience on this point: as long as your State exists, and as long as I am alive, I will never stop denouncing the terrorism perpetrated by your unofficial services, whatever the costs, because doing so is *the primary concern of the proletariat and the social revolution* at this moment in this country. And this precisely because, as Courier says, “a known policy is a lost policy.” And if this criminal State continues to lie, kill and provoke the entire population, it will henceforth be constrained to take off its “democratic” mask, act against the workers in its own name, abandon the current comedic spectacle in which the secret services display themselves (thereby supporting the illusions of naïve militants about the “armed struggle,” which are in turn used to render those services’ provocations plausible), and throw into prison hundreds of people, while the police forces train themselves for civil war by shooting at sitting ducks.

Ever since 1969, the spectacle, to continue to be believed, has had to attribute *unbelievable* actions to its enemies, and, to continue to be accepted, it has had to ascribe *unacceptable* behavior to proletarians. As a result, the spectacle has generated enough publicity that the people who allow themselves to be frightened will choose “the lesser of two evils,” that is to say, the current state of things. When *the real leaders* of the RBs ordered that unarmed people be shot in the legs – something that is only worthy of police-like cowardice and certainly

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<sup>441</sup> Note by Jean-François Martos: A quotation from a work by Paul-Louis Courier, in French in the original Italian version of this text. Note that this quotation slightly modifies a line in Moliere’s *L’Ecole des femmes* by replacing “persuaded me” with “persuaded us.”

not worthy of revolutionary courage – and when those leaders ordered such attacks, which struck second-tier industrial executives, they knew exactly what they wanted to accomplish, which was to frighten that part of the bourgeoisie that doesn't have sufficient class consciousness (because it doesn't enjoy the advantages of the big bourgeoisie) and to win it over to the side of the latter with the upcoming civil war in mind. The fragility of such artificial terrorism lies in the fact that, when one adopts such a tactic, it becomes known and thus judged; as a result, everything that gave this tactic its force now weakens it, and thus the great advantages that it assured its strategists become a major inconvenience.

The current President of the Republic, Pertini, who is a naïve man, always and only fears fascism, because he only fears what he knows. But from now on, what he must fear is *what he doesn't know* and, *as quickly as possible, know what he must fear*, that is to say, not an overt dictatorship, but a formidable, hidden despotism of the secret services, one that is all the more powerful because it uses its strength to vigorously affirm that it doesn't exist. It is not at all by chance that, in September 1978, Fanfani imperceptibly invented a new and important cabinet post that had no precedent in our institutional history: Advisor to the President of the Republic for Problems of Democratic Order and Security. And it was not at all by chance that, to fill this position, Fanfani called upon Major General Arnaldo Ferrara,<sup>442</sup> who is considered – where military matters are concerned – to be one of the best officers in the Carabinieri and Europe as a whole. By putting on old Pertini's side a young general like Ferrara, “a man with eyes of ice and refined tastes,” Fanfani has not only institutionalized a *de facto* situation by sanctioning the power attained by the unofficial services, but he has also taken the first step towards crowning his old dream of a presidential republic. Arnaldo Ferrara, an intelligent and refined officer, who recently refused to become the head of the SISDE (the secret service attached to the Minister of the Interior) and who didn't give in to Andreotti's insistence that he renounce his own personal ambitions – this superior officer who “has penetrated into the most secret of the State's secrets and those of the men who represent it” (as Roberto Fabiani has assured us) – is in fact *the new President of the Republic*. Moreover, Ferrara now possesses powers that no President of Italy has ever had. In fact, his position as “advisor” (an honorific title in appearance only) guarantees him more and better powers than any other official and, at the same time, a freedom of action whose limits are difficult to determine but easy to surpass. Faced with such developments, the proletariat can only combat them on open ground or get used to them by tolerating of all their serious consequences.

If one truly wants to know it, this is the precise purpose of outfitting the Presidency of the Republic with a man “beyond all suspicion”: it serves to hide the Republic's *end* and its “painless” transformation into a police State, all the while maintaining the spectacle of “democratic” appearances. The Honorable Pertini – since he has always remained at the margins of his own political party and, as he is the only politician who (never having had real power before) has always been a stranger to the practices of the unofficial services – is thus the man who *knows the least about these practices* and who offers the best qualities to be manipulated by hidden powers without realizing it. The detached units of the State, having reached their current level of power, can only continue to make use of the same tactics of *infiltration* that were used with success on the RBs, but this time they will be extended *to all of the State's institutions*. In these conditions, not only will terrorism not cease, but it will *grow* quantitatively and

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<sup>442</sup> Arnaldo Ferrara (1920-2016), the Acting Commander-General of the Carabinieri Corps in 1977.

qualitatively,<sup>443</sup> and one can already foresee that, if a social revolution does not put an end to this tragic farce, Pertini's presidency will be *the most dire* period in the history of the Republic. And so that someone doesn't come to tell me that what I say is "very serious": I know that perfectly well, but I also know that to keep quiet, as all the others do, is *even more serious*, and that the most serious phenomenon is the one that everyone witnesses without ever denouncing. There is nothing secret in this phenomenon, which nevertheless remains *undisclosed* to the general awareness and, as Bernard Shaw said, "there are no secrets better kept than the secrets that everyone guesses."<sup>444</sup> And consciousness *always comes too late*.

In such conditions, the first duty of all conscious subversives is to *pitilessly chase all illusions about terrorism from the heads of those called to action*. As I have already said elsewhere, historically speaking, terrorism has never had any revolutionary effectiveness, except when all other forms of subversive activity have been rendered impossible by complete repression and an important part of the proletarian population has been led to take part in terrorism silently.<sup>445</sup> But this is no longer or *still not* the case in contemporary Italy. Moreover, it is fitting to note that the revolutionary effectiveness of terrorism has always been *very limited*, as the history of the end of the 19th century has shown.

In contrast, the bourgeoisie, which established its domination in France in 1793 thanks to terrorism, must have renewed recourse to this weapon (in a strategically defensive context) during a historical period in which its power is universally being placed in question by the very proletarian forces that its own development has created. At the same time, the bourgeois State's secret services cover for their terrorism by making opportune use of the most naïve militants of a Leninism that has been completely frustrated by history, a Leninism that, between 1918 and 1921, also used the same anti-worker terrorist methods to destroy the soviets and seize control of the State and the capitalist economy in Russia.

All States *have always been terroristic*, but they are more violently so during their births and when they face the imminence of their deaths. And those today who, either due to despair or because they are victims of the propaganda that the regime creates in favor of terrorism as the *best example*<sup>446</sup> of subversion, and who thus contemplate artificial terrorism with an uncritical admiration (and even try to practice it on occasion), do not know that they are only *competing* with the State *on its own terrain* and that, on this terrain, not only is the State stronger, but *it will always have the last word*. Everything that does not destroy the spectacle *reinforces it*, and the incredible reinforcement of all the governmental powers of control that has taken place thanks to the pretext of spectacular terrorism has already been used against *the entire Italian proletarian movement*, which is the most advanced and most radical in Europe today.

For us, it is certainly not a question of "disagreeing" with terrorism in a stupid and abstract manner, as do the militants of *Lotta continua*, nor is it a question of admiring the "comrades who are mistaken," as do the so-called Autonomists (who thereby give the despicable

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<sup>443</sup> On 2 August 1980, the central train station in Bologna was the site of the worst terrorist attack in Italy to date. It was immediately (and falsely) blamed upon a neo-fascist group, the *Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari*.

<sup>444</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893), Act III.

<sup>445</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Cf. the manifesto entitled *Benvenuti nella città più libera del mondo* and distributed in Bologna, Rome and Milan on 23 September 1977. [See elsewhere in this volume for "Welcome to the Freest City in the World".]

<sup>446</sup> Latin in original.

Stalinists a pretext to preach in favor of informing on others systematically). On the contrary, it is a question of simply judging terrorism according to its actual results, who practices it and what usage the spectacle makes of it, and finally coming to *conclusions* about it.

*The true terrorism* is the practice of continually obligating everyone to take positions for or against mysterious and obscure events that are prefabricated with this precise intention in mind. Furthermore, continually constraining the entire working class to come out against this or that attack, to which everyone except the unofficial services of the State are strangers, is what permits the union bureaucrats to unite (under their anti-worker directives) the workers of every factory in turmoil, where some mid-level executive or other is regularly shot in the leg.

In 1921, in the midst of the repression of the Kronstadt soviet, when Lenin famously declared “here or there with a gun, but not with the opposition of the workers; we have had enough of the opposition of the workers,” he showed himself to be less dishonest than Berlinguer, who said “with the State or with the RBs” because he had no fear of declaring that his only goal is the liquidation of the workers’ opposition. Well, from the precise moment that someone affirms that he or she is “with the State,” *he or she knows that he or she supports terrorism*, which, in this case, is the most putrid State terrorism that has ever been deployed against the proletariat. Such a person knows that he or she supports those responsible for the deaths at the Piazza Fontana, on board the *Italicus*, and at Brescia, as well as the assassins of Pinelli and a hundred other people. Such a person should no longer break our balls because we have had enough of the crocodile tears shed for the “martyrs” of the Via Fani and enough of the provocations, the crude efforts at intimidation, the assassinations, the prison sentences, the brazen hypocrisy of the defense of “democratic institutions” and all the rest.

As for us, the subversives, who support the workers’ opposition and do not support the State, we will prove ourselves to be so, above all and on every occasion, by continually unmasking all the acts of terrorism perpetrated by the secret services of the State, to which we willingly leave *the monopoly on terror*, and by making the State’s shame more shameful by making it public.<sup>447</sup> by giving it the publicity that *it merits*.

When our turn comes, we won’t be lacking weapons or valorous fighters. We are not slaves to the commodity fetish of weapons, and *we will procure them* when they are necessary and in the simplest fashion: by taking them from your generals, police officers and bourgeois, because they already have enough of them for all the workers in Italy. “We have no compassion and we ask no compassion from you. When our turn comes, we will not make excuses for the terror.” (Marx).<sup>448</sup>

A thousand repetitions of [the attacks at] the Via Fani and the Piazza Fontana will not benefit capitalism as much as a single anti-bourgeois and anti-Stalinist wildcat strike or a simple act of sabotage against production hurts it. Every day, millions of oppressed minds wake up and revolt against exploitation, and wildcat workers know perfectly well that the social revolution does not make its way by accumulating dead bodies, which is a prerogative of Stalinist-

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<sup>447</sup> A phrase that appears in the situationist pamphlet *On the Poverty of Student Life*, translated by Ken Knabb, in *The Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley: the Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), p. 408, echoing Karl Marx, “Introduction to a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right” (1844).

<sup>448</sup> Karl Marx, “Suppression of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*,” *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* No. 301 (May, 1849) translated by the Marx-Engels Institute, in *Marx & Engels: Collected Works*, Volume 9.

bourgeois counter-revolution (a prerogative that no [true] revolutionary has ever contested).

As for those who have joined up with alienated and hierarchical militancy at the moment of its bankruptcy: they can only become subversives *on the condition that they leave militancy behind*, and only if they succeed in negating in acts the conditions (set by the spectacle itself) for what is today designated by the vague but just term “dissidence,” which by nature is always powerless.

From now on, those in Italy who do not use all the intelligence that they have to *quickly* comprehend the truth that is hidden behind each lie told by the State are *allies* of the enemies of the proletariat. And those who still claim they want to combat alienation *with alienated means* – militancy and ideology – will quickly realize that they have renounced *real* combat. It will certainly not be the militants who will make the social revolution, nor will the secret services and the Stalinist police be able to prevent it!

## Press Clippings<sup>449</sup>

This Leftist “*Action Directe*,” my dear, “the French equivalent of the Italian Red Brigades,” exploded bombs in the midst of the cleaning ladies at Orly Airport (...) Seven injured. You say it is Leftist. “*Action Directe*” fired upon police officers on guard in front of the Iranian embassy, injuring two people. Despicable Leftists! Unluckily, detectives from the *Brigade criminelle* arrested one of the truly guilty parties. He was a detective from the *Renseignements généraux*, also an extreme-Right militant and someone implicated in pro-Corsican-independence attacks (all Leftists, as well).

Complete silence has greeted Gianfranco Sanguinetti’s book, *On Terrorism and the State*, which I recommended to you three weeks ago. Everyone should read it; that is why no one has spoken to you of it. Certain people in France need “*Action Directe*” to exist. Thus one has provoked the birth of the French Red Brigades; one has even fabricated them, because such a group can always be useful if power threatens to change hands. Those who push the passage to “direct action” are the very ones who have reasons to present people like Piperno and Pace as the assassins of Aldo Moro. Have you noticed their formidable discretion since the arrest of the detective from the RG? This cop was in possession of the weapon that fired upon the gendarmes; in other words, this should make waves. This same cop was tasked by the RG with surveilling anarchist groups. Snicker and meditate upon that. (Delfeil de Ton [Henri Rousset], *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5 July 1980.)

This implacable diagnosis comes from Milan and Gianfranco Sanguinetti, whose book has been quashed in Italy by the political police. Nevertheless, this importer, this smuggler, of “situationism” into Italy attained runaway sales with his “Truth Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy,” signed Censor, behind whom everyone thought they saw a politician close to power (...)

Sanguinetti keeps it short and hits home. For him, “*those who want power in Italy must demonstrate that they can manage terrorism,*” and “*if the States have recourse to direct terrorism, they must perpetrate it against the population.*” For him, there is no doubt that the [recent] attack in Bologna must immediately be connected with the one at the Piazza Fontana in Milan in 1969, where the role of certain Italian secret services has finally been exposed. Thus, it appears that “*the original terrorist group*” objectively becomes, not only an accomplice, but “*a defensive appendage of the State.*” In fact, Sanguinetti says, they are the same people! Moro was assassinated to terminate the “historic compromise” between Communists and Christian Democrats, and also to warn “liberals” who are a little too tempted by timid reforms.

The text was written in April 1979. This past Saturday, 2 August [1980], Aldo Moro’s widow, heard by the ad hoc investigatory commission, confirmed that, during an international summit, her husband was warned or, rather, threatened that he should change course as soon as possible or leave the political stage. She also emphasized how Andreotti, then the President of the Council, and the current one, Cossiga, who was then the Minister of the Interior, refused to give Moro an armored vehicle. Case made, and Moro’s widow is not a “situationist” (...)

There will be other attacks, Sanguinetti easily predicts, because “*like a drug, artificial*

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<sup>449</sup> “Several Judgments by the Commentators on Gianfranco Sanguinetti’s *On Terrorism and the State*,” collected and translated by Jean-François Martos and published as an insert to the second edition of *Du Terrorisme et de l’Etat* (Paris: Le fin mot de l’Histoire, 1981).

*terrorism necessitates and demands to be administered in always more massive and more frequent dosages.*” One comprehends that, by describing all this, he has hardly made friends. One comprehends that his book has hardly been discussed, because it insults almost all the journalists in Italy “who count” by treating them like lachrymatory sheep. And yet all he had to do was think logically to create this small bomb of probability about Italy and the modern State. (Dominique Durand, *Le Canard enchaîné*, 6 August 1980.)

The publication of the “Proofs of the Nonexistence of Censor by His Creator,” which explained the hoax that had victimized the “well-informed minds” of Italy and openly exposed their misery, as well as instructions that come “from above,” no doubt explain the silence in Italy that has fallen upon his most recent publication (...)

Even “*Libération*” [is silent]. This is not a question of “not dispiriting Billancourt,” but of “not dispiriting *Lotta continua*.”

The specialists in Italy at this newspaper have known about the book since April, but have said nothing about it. Here and there one grants that Sanguinetti “is a brilliant person,” but F.L. “has read the summary and finds his theories absurd.” Our prized Katia Kaup proposed to publish a few “good pages” the day of the funerals, but nothing came of it, though the profound reason for the hostility towards Sanguinetti’s book was finally revealed. “*He has a house in the country and goes horse-riding.*” One will understand that I jumped at the occasion (...) to speak of this book, which seemed cursed until now (...)

More than a year before the new attack in Bologna, Sanguinetti announced in his book that, “*the detached units of the State, having reached their current power, can only continue to make use of the same tactic of infiltration used with success with respect to the RBs, by extending it today to all the institutions of the State. In these conditions, not only will terrorism not stop, but it will increase, qualitatively and quantitatively.*”

In fact, the author only recognizes a single [form of] terrorism: “the terrorism of the truth”; for him, “*a thousand Via Fanis and Piazza Fontanas will not benefit capitalism as much as it is harmed by a single anti-bourgeois and anti-Stalinist wildcat strike or a simple, violent and successful sabotage of production (...)*”

Gianfranco Sanguinetti has been prohibited from visiting France since 21 July ‘71. (Hélène Hazera, *Libération*, 18 August 1980.)

“(...) the most intelligent book one has written on the question (...) tragically confirmed by the attack in Bologna (...). In my opinion, what he has said is greatly applicable to terrorism in France (including Corsica) (...) a book that we should study in our departmental groups.” (L’Ecole Emancipée, 5 September 1980.)

In the last 10 years, there haven’t been a dozen works, and I am being generous, that have been so completely subversive. With the result that we cannot give any review of it alongside the cultural chatter, which would be absolutely inappropriate. Get a copy now: although our French State is formally liberal (as well as stupid), we do not see how a text as manifestly harmful can long remain freely available. But, on the other hand, its means of distribution (...) is such that its circulation cannot be suppressed. (The Manchette Bros, *Charlie Hebdo*, 17 September 1980.)

Perhaps the strongest page in this very strong little book that Gianfranco Sanguinetti dedicates to so-called “Leftist” and “black” terrorism in Italy is simply the reprint of a manifesto

that he and his friends published in 1969, exactly one week after the massacre caused by the bombing of the Piazza Fontana in Milan.

Soon after, Valpreda, the “guilty party,” was arrested and spent several years in prison before his complete innocence was recognized and the real assassins, who were neo-fascists, were put on trial. Meanwhile, unfortunate Pinelli, who got in the way, was defenestrated. Later, the shady police commissioner Calabresi was liquidated because he was too involved and knew too much about it. In 1969, all of the press and the official voices screamed about the “anarchist” attack. But right from the start, Sanguinetti and his friends stated that it was a staged attack, a provocation. Which today is obvious.

Whether it’s Red Brigades or Black Brigades, the number of infiltrated agents in their ranks (from the monk Girotto to the informer Pisetta), the role that the Italian secret services have played (from the Borghese conspiracy and the “Rose des vents” to the arrest of General Miceli, head of the SID), and the strange discoveries produced by each new “Red” or “Black” attack (from the massacre at Brescia in 1974 to the massacres in Bologna in 1974 and 1980, and from the kidnapping and assassination of Moro to the most recent attacks), makes things such that, from this sorcerers’ cauldron, comes the powerful scent of machination, an odor comparable to the stench that comes from the archives of the Czarist Okhrana – which, under the direction of the famous Azev, did not fear to have its own agents kill Plehvo, the Minister of the Interior, or Grand Duke Serge, the uncle of the Czar, and which had “raised” its “Lenin agent,” Roman Malinovski, up to the Bolsheviks’ Central Committee. In Rome today as in St. Petersburg yesterday, who profits from terrorism? The response is clear: not the people. (Claude Roy, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6 October 1980.)

(...) with biting conviction and in an implacable style, stuffed full of Latin quotations and verses from Dante, he accuses the Italian secret services of having organized *all* the attacks (including the assassination of Aldo Moro) to reinforce the unsteady national consensus. *Id fecit cui prodest?* (Guy Rossi-Landi, *Lire*, October 1980.)

A “scandalous” book (...) Two years later, nothing has contradicted Sanguinetti. And in any event, reading these 139 pages will much better inform the reader than the torrents of bad literature unleashed on the question ever since the spectacle of terrorism took hold of the media stage. (Marc Kravetz, *Magazine Littéraire*, January 1981.)

**“Postface to the Dutch translation of Gianfranco Sanguinetti’s book  
*On Terrorism and the State*”<sup>450</sup>**

In Holland, in a region among the least impoverished, the most moderate and the most “democratized” in this poisoned world, where one can get together to critique the quality of the heroin, and where the pneumatic drills that have chased away the inhabitants are subsequently displayed, with the graffiti that denounces them, in the city’s subways like works of art – here in Holland as well as elsewhere the desire to follow the excellent example of our Italian comrades grows: “their absenteeism; their wildcat strikes that no particular concession can appease; their lucid refusal of work; their scorn for the law and all the Statist political parties” (Guy Debord, *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of “The Society of the Spectacle”*). Here as elsewhere, the conditions that render life impossible for us compel us to struggle – to engage in the only struggle in which it is still worth the difficulty of investing our talents and in which the possibilities of deploying these talents are infinite. Therefore, if we want to bring this struggle to a successful conclusion, it is necessary to know the enemy’s weapons, and their uses, so as to turn them against it, or at least render those weapons powerless.

Dutch commentators aren’t more innocent than their Italian colleagues; indeed, they are just as indifferent to the truth. And it goes without saying that, among us as well, all politicians and union leaders lie to the same extent that the industrialists make profits by selling lime as insecticide, and insecticide as food, because, here and there, the truth serves them so little. Moreover, no one knows how to discern the truth any longer, with the exception of the comrades who think on the basis of a proletarian perspective and who have nothing to lose and everything to gain. It is for them that I have translated this book.

And to please these comrades even more, to provide all suitable clarity to the theses that are defended here with so much verve, but not always with as much precision, we originally intended to introduce them with Debord’s *Preface*, as translated by Jaap Kloosterman. Sometimes Sanguinetti’s book gives the impression that its author needs to persuade himself of the validity of his own theses, which the author of *The Society of the Spectacle* did not need to do. As there are a large number of confluences between these two books, from the choices of historical examples to certain stylistic details – from which one could deduce a close collaboration<sup>451</sup> – the pages of the *Preface* that deal with the same aspect of the class struggle, on the same terrain, and at the same time, might seem to the reader to be a summary of *On Terrorism*, but the same disturbances are in fact analyzed in it with a method and a rigor that are lacking in Sanguinetti’s exposition. By contrast, the *Preface* lacks – and this is very good – the laborious and abstract schemas in which Sanguinetti believes he must and can classify *all*

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<sup>450</sup> Written by Els van Daele, dated 1 May 1981, and published in *Over het terrorisme en de staat: de theorie en praktijk van het terrorisme voor het eerst wereldkundig gemaakt* (Bussum: Wereldvenster, 1982). Translated into French as “Postface à la traduction hollandaise du livre de Gianfranco Sanguinetti, *Del Terrorismo e dello Stato*” and published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondance, Vol. 2*, op. cit., pp. 118-124.

<sup>451</sup> *Note by Els van Daele*: we recall that these two authors co-signed the principle text in *The Veritable Split* and that Debord translated Censor’s *Truthful Report* [from the Italian into French].

*terrorism*. By limiting himself to speaking of the maneuvers of the Red Brigades, in general, and the execution of Moro, in particular, “Gianfranco Sanguinetti shelters *On Terrorism and the State* from all critique (...) To speak of the RBs as an extension of the Italian secret services indeed no longer appears well founded,” as a comrade in Paris has noted.<sup>452</sup> Without concerning himself with history, Sanguinetti banishes [from his analysis] the many forms of terrorism that, in our century alone, have been and are still employed, not only by the State or by the mafia, but also by the most implacable enemies of the State and political economy, as much offensively as defensively, as *one* weapon in the struggle.<sup>453</sup> By only implicating *State* terrorism in his critique (the ETA and the IRA want to conquer the State, while the RBs and GRAPO<sup>454</sup> exist to defend it), and by presenting this critique as a *general* one, Sanguinetti – at the beginning of the 10th chapter of his *Remedy for Everything* – places all armed struggle in a bad light, and, by further developing several nuances, he only manages to contradict himself and to unintentionally demonstrate that his schema is defective. “This schema cannot be vaguely imputed to an error in judgment. It finds its truth in an active policy of wait-and-see (‘I would consider myself *hardly practical* . . .’) that Sanguinetti sets up as the *non plus ultra*<sup>455</sup> of the revolutionary attitude for those who are not among the ‘bad workers’ to whom his book is dedicated” (*Rien qu’on pion*). And yet the author loudly demands to be in the first position as *the* “specialist” in the denunciation of Italian State terrorism, today and in the future.

But it so happens that he was already not up to this pretention even before he formulated it – because of what we can read in a letter written by Guy Debord to Jaap Kloosterman on 23 February 1981:

After the end of our organizational links in 1972, for several years I maintained a

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<sup>452</sup> Note by Els van Daele: *Rien qu’un pion sur l’échiquier*, anonymous tract published in Paris, February 1981.

<sup>453</sup> Note by Els van Daele: Thus, in Spain, apart from the ETA and GRAPO (which fulfill exactly the same function as the RBs do in Italy), one has seen in action many autonomous libertarian groups that do not at all fit into the categories of Sanguinetti’s [concept of] terrorism, but that have, all the same, dynamited railroad lines and attacked businesses and banks. These groups have conceived of their actions in the much more fecund theoretical framework of *the armed struggle of the proletariat*. They have undertaken their operations as a part of, and as support for, the offensive strikes of Spanish workers, which especially marked the years 1976-1978. And these are groups that, in general, have taken up the most advanced [theoretical] positions. “One must not forget that the major part of the workers’ movement still scorns theory, considering it to be the work of intellectuals. By contrast, we scorn the ‘intellectuals’ who don’t have the passion to put the operators’ manual of revolutionary theory into practice, but we do not despise theory itself, which we make use of, even against those very intellectuals. This is what we call theoretical expropriation” (see *Appels de la prison de Ségovia*, Paris, Champ Libre, November 1980). Before giving up the ghost, the last Spanish government in place before the military coup of January 1981 was forced to free the guiltiest of these comrades, who were all in prison. [Translator: note that the “Appeals from the Prison in Segovia” was the project of Guy Debord, whom Els van Daele does not mention in this context.]

<sup>454</sup> The *Grupos de Resistencia Antifascista Primero de Octubre* (First of October Antifascist Resistance Groups) was a clandestine Marxist-Leninist organization founded in January 1976.

<sup>455</sup> Latin in original: “ultimate statement.”

very close collaboration with Gianfranco on several projects and very good personal relations [as well]. But all this is over. At the moment that Moro was kidnapped, I wrote to Gianfranco and revealed the truth of this entire affair, advised him to reveal it [in Italy] immediately and, at the same time, go underground, since he was, in any case, in great danger, because the enemy knew that – having written *Censor* – he was probably the only one in Italy who *could* possibly reveal this truth at that very moment, that is to say, when the enemy absolutely didn't want to run this risk, when Moro was still alive, etc. (To reveal what had taken place once the affair was over, almost forgotten, and other spectacles had taken the stage, would only express 'an opinion,' although a dangerous one, certainly.) For reasons that have remained very obscure to me, Gianfranco *then* responded that my thesis – which he subsequently took up – was brilliant and ingenious, but *he* believed that it was true Leftists who then held Moro captive. Nevertheless, this was a belief that no slightly reasonable person, very up-to-date with the Italian situation until the day before these events, could possibly entertain.<sup>456</sup>

The idea that true Leftists had kidnapped Moro was a belief that no one in Holland alerted by *Censor* and having the occasion to read a few foreign newspapers could entertain, either.

And yet the author of *Censor*, who tells us that, on 16 March 1978, he “has not been able to keep himself from thinking” that the kidnapping of Moro was the work of the Italian secret services, didn't allow anyone to stop him from subsequently choosing to reject this very idea – and [so] once again the spectacle obtained its [desired] effect and succeeded in hiding the truth for as long as was necessary. The spectacle isn't only effective when it hides a secret or when one believes what it says; it is even more so when it is considered as an enigma to be resolved or when one doesn't know how to combat it. When Moro was kidnapped, Sanguinetti missed the opportunity to intervene. And, in its turn, the act of keeping his error hidden determined the course of all his subsequent actions. No doubt it was his guilty conscience that dictated this promise to him: “As long as your State exists, and I am alive, I will never stop denouncing the terrorism of your parallel services, and no matter what,” but *post festum*.<sup>457</sup>

It is certainly not by keeping such secrets that one obtains the position of fundamental superiority from which one “can attack and successfully combat all the forces of thoughtlessness” in order to *vanquish* them. And it is not by passing over in silence the fact that *someone else* had known these things, and known them so well, that one will be able to prevent

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<sup>456</sup> Published in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2006), p. 86. In this letter, Debord also wrote: “Under no circumstances can I accept that my *Preface [to the Fourth Italian Edition]* appear within the same volume as Gianfranco's *Terrorism*. I believe that it is an excellent idea to publish *Terrorism*; it is entirely accurate regarding the central issue it addresses and abounds in highly valid arguments on that subject. However, it is also extremely deficient theoretically, and adopts a tone of the most disagreeable pretension, when it has the audacity to attempt to address (and reduce to a ridiculous schematic) the comprehensive historical and strategic question of armed struggle in general, and even the specific phenomenon of terrorism in all its forms, as it has existed in such diverse guises throughout history.”

<sup>457</sup> Latin in original: “after the fact.”

the revelation of a truth of which one is ashamed. But what cruel irony it is that this revelation took place due to the fact that Dutch comrades wanted to add Debord's *Preface* to Sanguinetti's *On Terrorism*<sup>458</sup> – the very *Preface* that Sanguinetti never mentioned until now, not even in the 1980 French edition of his book, which I have made use of, and which was subsequently reprinted unaltered! This peculiar maneuver was further clarified by a letter [to Jean-François Labrugère and Philippe Rouyau] from Gérard Lebovici (Éditions Champ Libre), dated 12 September 1980, on the subject of another French translation of *On Terrorism*<sup>459</sup> that was sent to him in the hope of having it reprinted (a copy of this letter was sent to Sanguinetti).

As for the possibility of republication by Champ Libre, the comforting fact that the text has encountered a certain commercial success (as you have told me) has no importance here. Éditions Champ Libre is entirely indifferent to all economic considerations, whether it is a question of gains or losses. And this is indeed very fortunate, given the current centralization of book distribution, the subservience of the newspapers, the indigence of the bookstores, the boycott attempted from all sides, etc. (...)

Moreover, I have seen the complete manuscript of *Remedy for Everything*. The part that has since been extracted by the author and translated by you is incontestably the most interesting. I recognize that Gianfranco Sanguinetti merits esteem for the unique courage he has shown by affirming in Italy a truth that the powers-that-be [*des forces*] want to hide by every means possible. And I am happy that his words have caused many echoes in France and in many other countries, and will continue to do so in the future.

But in January 1976 I published the first non-Italian edition of *The Truthful Report*, which is an excellent and exemplary book. Naturally I cannot envision publishing a weaker and poorer book by the same author.

Sanguinetti deals with “the theory and practice of terrorism, developed for the first time” and clearly adds that his text permits his readers to “read it here, and only here.” It seems to me that Gianfranco Sanguinetti's current firmness doesn't at all authorize his glorious tone on this aspect of the question. I myself published, in *February* 1979,<sup>460</sup> a little book<sup>461</sup> in which someone already said all of the truths that Sanguinetti published in April of that same year (this work was immediately sent to him and a translation of it appeared in Italy as early as May [1979]). What's more, I have photocopies of a correspondence exchanged while Moro was being held, still alive, between Sanguinetti and one of his foreign correspondents.<sup>462</sup> This correspondent put him on guard by exposing the entire truth of the affair, and advised him to reveal it as soon as possible. At the time,

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<sup>458</sup> Note by Els van Daele: Debord's *Preface* would appear along with a Dutch translation of the film script for [Debord's 1978 film] *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni*.

<sup>459</sup> Note by Els van Daele: There are two French translations of *On Terrorism*: one by Jean-François Martos, which I have made use of; and the other, which I haven't seen, was published in Grenoble. I only received a copy of Lebovici's letter a few weeks ago.

<sup>460</sup> Note by Els van Daele: so, earlier than April [1979].

<sup>461</sup> Debord's *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of "The Society of the Spectacle."*

<sup>462</sup> Guy Debord. See correspondence elsewhere in this volume.

Sanguinetti responded by resolutely declaring his skepticism concerning this version of the facts, or he only pretended to be so for reasons that remain obscure to me. When one has lost several months before finally wanting to admit the obvious, there is something out of place in insisting on one's avant-garde originality.

I find, therefore, that, from the point of view of Éditions Champ Libre, the useful truths in *On Terrorism and the State* lack a bit of freshness.<sup>463</sup>

We could have been able to quite simply adopt this excellent position if this volume also included the *Truthful Report*, the two translations of *On Terrorism* and so many other books that Champ Libre could and wanted to publish; in sum, if, in this aspect, the conditions here [in Holland] weren't so different from those in France. The valuable arguments and the useful truths gathered together in *On Terrorism* apropos of the machinations to which the Italian State has had recourse, the decree of its decadence, and what led to it, have been almost unknown here, until now.

We can only welcome the fact that these insights will henceforth be available to all those people who read Dutch and, furthermore, that – thanks to this *Postface* – are not only revealed State secrets, but also the secret of their revelation.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> Published in *Éditions Champ Libre: Correspondance*, Vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 70-72.

<sup>464</sup> *Note by Els van Daele*: copies of this *Postface* have been sent to Gianfranco Sanguinetti, Guy Debord, Gérard Lebovici, Jaap Kloosterman and Jean-François Martos.

## Letter from Jean-François Martos to Gianfranco Sanguinetti<sup>465</sup>

Paris, 3 June 1981

Dear Gianfranco:

I have recently received two documents with which you are already familiar: one is the correspondence between you and “Cavalcanti,” which Guy [Debord] has made available to Michel [Prigent]<sup>466</sup> and I. The other is Els van Daele’s “Postface to the Dutch translation” of *Terrorismo*.

In light of the critiques of you that are developed in these texts, *tacere non possum*,<sup>467</sup> it is thus necessary that I give you my opinion of them, holding myself to the strict truth.

Beyond the reasons that you have given (for example: the fact that you are actually in Italy permits you to “see better” as well as be “more mistaken”)<sup>468</sup> for your affirmation that genuine Leftists kidnapped Moro, you have not at all explained how or why you changed opinions and advanced the viewpoint, initially expounded by Guy, that the RBs are manipulated. Thus, apart from the fact that you missed an occasion to immediately create a scandal greater than that of “Censor,” Guy was right to ask you if this was a matter of pressure from the Doge or something else.

As far as knowing if “the theory and practice of terrorism” are “divulged for the first time,” and if the truth about terrorism can be read “only here,” this could just as easily refer to the kidnapping of Moro as to State terrorism in general, which Victor Serge, for example, discussed back in 1925.<sup>469</sup> I am quite in agreement that the truth about the kidnapping of Moro had still not been published *in Italy*, given that *Terrorismo* was already at the printer when you received a copy of Guy’s “Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition,” and I also recognize that this truth was more dangerous for you to publish, for example, when your house was almost set on fire: your courage need not be further demonstrated. But I think that, so as to avoid any confusion, especially after your correspondence with “Cavalcanti,” it would have been clearer to signal the existence of the “Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition” as soon as possible, immediately after you made precise the conditions that preceded the publication of these two texts – even if this was not easy and posed tactical problems.

When you asked me, last August [1980], about the critiques that I might make of your book, they appeared to be of two kinds: concerning the style and concerning a certain “tradition” of critical theory, which the new conditions of this era must necessarily require one to surpass

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<sup>465</sup> Published in Jean-François Martos, *Correspondance avec Guy Debord* (Paris: Le fin mot de l’Histoire, 1998), which was quickly withdrawn from distribution after Martos was sued for copyright infringement by Librairie Arthème Fayard and Alice Becker-Ho, aka Alice Debord. Martos subsequently published *Sur l’interdiction de ma “Correspondance avec Guy Debord”* (Paris: Le fin de l’Histoire, 1999).

<sup>466</sup> Michel Prigent (1950-2011) and Lucy Forsyth (no data available) translated Sanguinetti’s *Du Terrorisme* from French into English as *On Terrorism and the State: The theory and practice of terrorism divulged for the first time* (London: B. M. Chronos, 1983).

<sup>467</sup> Latin in original: “I cannot remain silent.”

<sup>468</sup> Quoting from Sanguinetti’s letter to Debord dated 1 June 1978. See elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>469</sup> Victor Serge (1890-1947), author of *Les Coulistes d’une sûreté générale: l’Okhrana* (Librairie du Travail, 1925).

(broadly speaking, the old truths easily become a new ideology if one does not take care). Thus one cannot indefinitely advocate the “true democracy of the Workers Councils” (p. 58) without falling into an attitude that is too rigid, at once mechanical and unilateral. And does it suffice, as we discussed then, to simply wait for the proletariat to create new forms of organization for itself? By posing the question in *Songe d’une nuit d’émeute*<sup>470</sup> (“the Stalinists can clamor for self-management and the workshop council, but we no longer want to receive advice, nor remain workers, nor self-manage our own slow death. As for the factories in which they would like to confine us, they will disappear as places of separated production” . . . “It is necessary that the proletariat takes hold of this theory”), I came to the limits of a certain critical discourse on the proletariat, on the necessity of self-interpretation of the struggles by those who make them, and thus on the necessity of the theoretician to aim at his own abolition as a theoretician, as the “voice of those who have not yet found their own voices.” If not, one becomes ensnared in contradictions of the type that, for example, consist in wondering if the workers can expect more from you or what gifts you might give them, as on page 39, when you détourn Machiavelli, which perhaps appears, if not “excessive” (*Rien qu’un pion sur l’échiquier*), then at least a little too stiff. The style of “Censor” seems ill-suited for the subject matter of *Terrorismo*. In the same perspective, the affirmations on page 9 that “the civil war has not yet begun” and that “it is therefore useless to take up arms” would present Mesrine<sup>471</sup> and the prisoners in Segovia as “deluded” simpletons or “naive fanatics of armed struggle” (page 41). But reality seems more nuanced to me: there is not, on the one hand, a “wildcat worker” who possesses the attribute of revolutionary activity through spontaneous strikes and sabotage, and, on the other hand, individuals or groups who can only take up arms in periods of generalized insurrection. And when you advance (despite everything) the idea that “the revolutionary efficacy of terrorism has always been very limited, as all of history since the end of the 19th century has shown” (page 135), this is not sufficient to invalidate the critique made by Els van Daele when she states: “By only implicating in his critique *State* terrorism (the ETA and the IRA want to conquer the State, while the RBs and the GRAPO want to defend it), and by presenting this idea as if it were a *general* critique, Sanguinetti – at the beginning of the tenth chapter of his *Remedy for Everything* – shows all of armed struggle in an unfavorable light.”

This said, I believe that the central truth of your book is as scandalous now as it was when I first made this assertion in the notice of the book’s publication into French and I also believe that the fact that you found yourself alone in Italy can bring you even greater honor.

As all of this is now being discussed by several comrades, and so as to make precise to them what I think, I have also communicated this letter to them.<sup>472</sup> And, awaiting your response,<sup>473</sup> or better still hoping to see you if you come to Paris, I send you and Katarina my best wishes. – Jeff

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<sup>470</sup> No publication details are available.

<sup>471</sup> Jacques Mesrine (1936-1979), a charismatic French criminal and anti-authoritarian whose autobiography, *L’Instinct de mort*, was published by Éditions Champ Libre in 1977.

<sup>472</sup> Guy Debord, Carlos Ojeda, Michel Prigent and Els van Daele.

<sup>473</sup> Sanguinetti did not respond to this letter. On 18 August 1981, Martos wrote to Debord: “Since I have not received a reply to my letter of 3 June, my relations with Gianfranco are currently suspended. In this regard, you must have received my letter of July 31 to the Dutch comrades. Give that their letter of 12 June was noticeable ‘impregnated’ with a highly unpleasant, inquisitorial spirit, and implied rather dubious conduct on my part, I felt compelled to set the

**Letter from Gianfranco Sanguinetti to Mustapha Khayati  
Concerning On Terrorism and the State and Guy Debord<sup>474</sup>**

10 December 2012

Dear Mustapha,

I have reflected upon your hypothesis, according to which Guy, starting from a certain moment, “had the desire to minimize the role of his companions,” and that, after his death, Alice has only been the executrix of this final wish for effacement. It is not improbable that towards the end of his parabola, Guy had obeyed what one calls in Italian the “annihilation drive,” which brought him to annul the reality of the other and make it disappear as if it had never existed.

In any case, before then and fortunately so, Guy wasn’t at all like that, because I recall how often he had emphasized to me the important role of the first “artistic” period of the SI and, likewise, the considerable role played by this or that situationist, by saying – with the modesty of great men – that his merit had been his ability to grasp, solidify and give form to the impulses, thoughts, etc. that came to him from other people. Without minimizing his personal merits, this ability seems normal and unquestionable, because, otherwise, what’s the use of a group? But this was the Guy whom one loved, the one to whom one will always be grateful, whose works one admires and with whom one has been able to do the most beautiful things, and I in particular was able (and for a long time) to share a life together with him, of a richness that is rarely shared today, in the new conditions of the world. Then, at a certain moment, things changed.

Your letter has caused me to take the effort to search through the correspondence and, moreover, through the documents that support your hypothesis. They exist. I haven’t yet found a late letter (to an assistant on one of his films?) that asked him what became of the other situs, and Guy responded something like, “I made them disappear.” But I recall reading that in the published correspondence.

In what concerns me personally, it is certain, in any case, that starting from the success of Operation Censor, in which he didn’t believe very much, there came upon Guy a somewhat suspicious kind of caution towards me. And then for a long time he sought a pretext to attack me, not frankly or directly, which was something he could do by writing to me directly, but obliquely, in an undeclared, asymmetrical war, and, a few years later, by spreading (left and right) insinuations and calumnious hypotheses about the Doge, about me, about my conduct in the Moro Affair, etc.<sup>475</sup> These practices, to the extent that they were of a calumnious character, called for the only conduct to adopt against calumny: *to ignore it* and especially *not fall into the*

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record straight, informing them that any further discussion under such conditions was out of the question, regardless of whatever other merits they might have possessed. What you tell me now regarding Gianfranco, and the dangers that I might face, appear even more serious than I had previously imagined.” Jean-François Martos, *Correspondance avec Guy Debord*, op. cit. In a letter to Michel Prigent dated 29 August 1981, Debord wrote: “The [...] fact [...] that Sanguinetti had found nothing to say in response to Jeff after two months proves that Jeff’s letter was powerful enough to silence someone who is, and feels himself to be, so obviously guilty.” *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Decembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>474</sup> Circulated privately.

<sup>475</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: See my note on “the Doge.” [Translator: elsewhere in this volume.]

*trap of defending oneself against it.* I did not respond to the manipulator or to those who were manipulated, neither then nor afterwards. This epistolary offensive reached its paroxysm in 1981, after the first two French Éditions and the Éditions published in German, Greek and Portuguese of *On Terrorism*, published in Grenoble, Paris, Hamburg, Athens and Lisbon – Dutch, English and Spanish Éditions were imminent.

Here I am obligated to make a long digression on something that concerns me particularly, which will allow me to better specify the strategy with which Guy proceeded, and what damage he proposed to do, because I have read the letters (many of them for the first time) that he wrote left and right during the summer of '81, when he was violently overtaken by a paranoid and maneuver-heavy crisis. One knows that paranoia is generally lucid, structured and systematic. With Guy, it filled out a letter addressed to Michel Prigent (dated 22 May 1981), in which, several lines apart, he wrote, "I am thus obligated, so that no one will have the occasion to say that perhaps I have manipulated this or that person, to break off all relations . . ." and then, "The *method of the truth* isn't a too-difficult application (...) I see a simple and clear example of it in Els van Daele's postface to *Terrorism*."<sup>476</sup> This Postface, which was entirely or in part constructed by Guy, and which was imposed upon the Dutch publishers, *isn't the refutation* of manipulative practices, as he claims, but their *definitive and monumental confirmation*. Likewise for the "Foreword" imposed upon the English edition, which was signed by Lucy Forsyth.<sup>477</sup> Thus, I take the occasion of the present letter to you to, as it were, get a few pebbles out of my boots.

It was at this precise time that Guy launched his offensive against me. The principal explication that I find for this murky operation was the success that my book on terrorism enjoyed abroad, where the people who published it or undertook to publish it did so with more impact than that produced by his *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of "The Society of the Spectacle"*. Guy thought that *On Terrorism* had more success than it actually had, the success of Censor still being fresh. His second line of attack aimed at eliminating me from the subversive movement by preventively discrediting all that I might still do and write, as well as what I had done with others.

These operations began with the sending of a dismissive letter, signed by [Gérard] Lebovici (12 September 1980), to Philippe Rouyau and Jean-François Labrugère, who were preparing to reprint their translation of my book into French.<sup>478</sup> They continued with the recruitment of a bad soldier, the French translator Jean-François Martos, in the spring of 1981, because it is from his translation that, generally speaking, the other Éditions of *On Terrorism* were made. By having Martos under control, Guy could also control the future Éditions, as was the case in Holland and England. He imposed a condition upon Martos, an *a priori*, as he called

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<sup>476</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>477</sup> Sanguinetti's assertion that it was in fact Debord who wrote and imposed both the "Postface" to the Dutch edition and the "Foreword" to the English edition (*On Terrorism and the State: The theory and practice of terrorism divulged for the first time*, op. cit., pp. 6-13) certainly appears borne out by the otherwise inexplicable "coincidence" that these two texts share, not only the same ideas, but the same way of phrasing them, the same overall shape and tone. Both texts also make extensive use of the same excerpt from Debord's letter to Kloosterman dated 23 February 1981.

<sup>478</sup> *Éditions Champ Libre: Correspondance*, Vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

it, if they were to be friends and collaborators: his relations with me had to end. The hostilities subsequently continued with the copying and distribution of four letters from three years before, that is to say, at the time of the Moro affair in 1978. They included the one from Guy (21 April 1978) in which he asked me to intervene in the affair and go underground (which would have been a very serious error in Italy at that time: anyone not found at his address was condemned in advance) and a letter from me (1 June 1978) in which I got muddled up in opposing hypotheses in order to gainsay the proposed strategy. I was wrong about the precise point, but I knew why, and this was neither serious, “suspect,” “obscure” nor “guilty,” as Guy would say three years later. Then there was another letter from me to Guy (15 August 1978) and the response from Guy (29 August 1978) in which he posed three questions to me. My response (24 September 1978) to that last letter was not published.<sup>479</sup> We will see why it wasn’t.

Since life is (fortunately) richer and more complicated than Guy’s paranoid simplifications, I will recount for you what I could not say to anyone. I had first-hand information from a German anarchist in the RAF [Red Army Faction] who was close to me at the time. I had previously seen her battle courageously at the barricades in Bologna in September 1977. Shortly afterwards, she immediately denounced the assassination of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Karl Raspe in the prison at Stammheim. She was persecuted and quickly arrested by the Italian police at the behest of the Germans, who wanted to extradite her. She was also in contact with stray Italian terrorists of good faith; she had first-hand news; and thus, in my letter to Guy, I tried to envision things in the perspective of the information that I had come to learn in this fashion, without being able to discern how much of it was true or uncertain, nor was I (obviously cautious) able to cite my sources: in the Moro affair, the authorities had adroitly ensnared sincere terrorists who didn’t know for whom they worked. Furthermore, you know that they had tried to implicate me,<sup>480</sup> though I’d never been a terrorist.

Thus, this was information that I could not communicate to anyone, and I certainly couldn’t *write it down and send it* to Guy: the German anarchist – thanks to a famous marriage of convenience with the son of her Italian attorney a week before her arrest, which *ipso facto* made her an Italian citizen – wasn’t extradited to Germany, had narrowly avoided incarceration at Stammheim and had survived. I could not nor did I want to write to other people about this, not even in 1981. And especially not to [Martos,] a simple translator of my book who so impertinently demanded an accounting from me.

Martos, with whom I was never friendly, and whom I never considered to be a subversive, came to be – if not because of his vague desires, then because he’d translated *On Terrorism* – recruited for Guy’s stable, and thus believed that he’d been admitted into the ranks of international subversion, when he was always nothing but an opportunist. He was commanded to write to me a letter that demanded an explanation for the contradiction there had been between the hypothesis advanced in my letter to Guy dated 1 June 1978 and the thesis supported in my book. Guy took pains to distribute my response to his three hypotheses, written on 24 September 1978, *between two fire-bombings* of my house in the country. In that letter, I clearly rejected the

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<sup>479</sup> See elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>480</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: In the large-scale legal and police-related operation conducted by the anti-terrorist prosecutor Pier Luigi Vigna in November 1979, a few months after the publication of *On Terrorism*.

first two hypotheses and partially admitted the third one. Although truncated,<sup>481</sup> the correspondence made public three years later was made to justify questions about my integrity.

Thus Martos sent me his eminently insolent letter (3 June 1981). I did not respond. And for good reason. He had written his malicious and inquisitorial letter on instructions from Guy and he had written it to please Guy, and it demonstrated especially well that Martos had been recruited like a marionette. The goal of the letter was to set the bases for a subsequent campaign to defame and dishonor me in the poor circle of puppets with whom Guy wanted to surround himself, a circle to which this letter was immediately sent. Here it is necessary to make clear that [Jaap] Kloosterman and [Michel] Prigent were not properly part of Guy's stable, but Guy was interested in them because each was preparing an edition of *On Terrorism*.

You know as well as I that, in Italy, I had done and risked, alone, what no one else at the time had risked to do in order to denounce *coram populo*<sup>482</sup> modern terrorism – which today one calls *false flag*<sup>483</sup> operations – and what I continue to risk every day. In the name of what would I need to satisfy the malicious and aggressive curiosity of parasitic spectators who, while I lived in a state of emergency in Italy, amused themselves by spreading ignoble suspicions against the only person they knew who had fought the enemy on the front lines? I had something other than their insolence, which bordered on calumny, to defend myself against. They could fuck themselves! Since I never responded to them, I pulled the carpet out from under their feet, and I am quite happy that I behaved in that fashion. They remained famished; I did not feed their hunger for explanations and gossip. *Never complain, never explain.*<sup>484</sup> They have nothing to be proud of.

In any case, twenty years later, on 11 September 2001, *it was my book that people recalled*, then already amply distributed on the Internet in several languages, and not theirs, who had inscribed their ignominious suspicions, their insinuations and their names in the infamous columns that testified to their cowardice. They have never risked, neither then nor subsequently, producing anything efficacious against the new spectacular terrorism with which they filled their mouths. They preferred to accuse me of having denounced it *a little later* than they had desired. And if they complained of my supposed “lateness,” and if they believed that it was truly urgent, *what the devil prevented them from doing so on their own?*

Martos was only a spectator and a puppet who had never been arrested or even interrogated by any police officer or judge; he had never experienced attacks, interrogations, trials, searches, or criminal charges – all the things to which I was subjected over the years.

At that time, in Italy as well as in Germany, one didn't have the leisure of masturbating with the spider webs of the French pro-situ opportunists. I had cops and saboteurs at my door, and my friends were arrested. Several died during those years. I had to defend myself against other dangers, quite real ones, imminent and threatening, not the dishonest provocations that came to me from the other side of the Alps. In 1979, Licio Gelli activated the fiancé of one of his daughters, the son of a Carabineer, to stage a provocation against me, after which I was indicted

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<sup>481</sup> The full text of Sanguinetti's letter to Debord dated 24 September 1978 has never been published.

<sup>482</sup> Latin in original: “publicly, in front of the people.”

<sup>483</sup> English in original.

<sup>484</sup> English in original.

for the crime of contraband, and the affair ended with a violent encounter.<sup>485</sup> And it could have turned out worse.

I had neither the time nor the desire to confront a colossus the size of Martos. His correspondence with Guy is a catalogue of gossip. He has since then tried to sell it to the highest bidder and has sold none of it. His use value is identical to his exchange value. For all these reasons, it was wise for me to let him and the others talk. An old Tuscan proverb says: “*acqua che scorre e gente che parla non si parano.*”<sup>486</sup> And so I let them run on.

Guy’s strategy of attack was then deployed in numerous letters sent to several people, as one learns from his *Correspondance* (vol. 6). Therein he alludes to vague “serious reasons” and “reasons that have remained very obscure to me,” to a “suspect attitude,” to a “damning document” (?) concerning my letter of 1 June 1978, with phrases that push his correspondents to believe in and let them imagine very serious things, but they are always shrouded in mystery (“I believe I have told you *the least possible* and, at the same time, the minimum necessary,” he tells Martos on 24 July 1981)<sup>487</sup> or even contain very hypocritical insinuations (in the same letter, he says, “I have been Gianfranco’s friend. I certainly do not want . . . to discourage those who at the moment are his friends, by revealing to them all that I know,” *but without ever saying what that might be*). A little further down: “I want to warn you about certain dangers; I no longer know if Gianfranco knows about them or refuses to know about them,” without ever indicating *what exactly* they might be, because – beyond a paranoid suspicion (or a pretext for suspicion) about the Doge, in either case *totally unfounded* and, furthermore, not stated in plain language – *there was absolutely nothing to say*. “I have told you to ask him what he thinks about the ‘Doge’ these days. This is a kind of password *to assure your protection*” (letter to Martos dated 24 July 1981). *Porca Madonna!*<sup>488</sup> Protection?! From what? By whom? In Italy, it is the Mafia that offers protection! If there were dangers that I did not see, wouldn’t I have the right to be immediately and directly informed? But these smoky dangers did not exist.

One could believe just about anything after these insinuations, which were as heavy as they were unfounded, and this was well and truly the reason for their existence, through which paranoia became contagious, as was the case with poor Carlos Ojeda, who indeed became crazy for a moment.<sup>489</sup>

To impose his Postface (signed by Els van Daele) upon the Dutch edition of *On Terrorism*, he wrote to Jaap Kloosterman, “One knows very well that Gianfranco *is guilty*” (letter dated 29 August 1981),<sup>490</sup> because Jaap was a bit skeptical about what Guy had evoked so vaguely, and he was about to publish my book in Holland. And to Michel Prigent, who was about to publish an English edition, he wrote, “Sanguinetti has found nothing in the letter from

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<sup>485</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: At the time, no one knew anything about Licio Gelli or Operation Gladio.

<sup>486</sup> Italian in original: “You can’t stop water from running or people from talking.”

<sup>487</sup> *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 163.

<sup>488</sup> Italian in original: “God fucking damn it!”

<sup>489</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: See Guy’s letter to Carlos Ojeda, dated 29 August 1981. [Translator: *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 177-178.]

<sup>490</sup> Though Debord did write to Jaap Kloostermann on 29 August 1981, it is in fact in Debord’s letter to Carlos Ojeda dated 29 August 1981 that this line appears. *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987*, p. 178.

Jeff [Martos] to respond to (...): which proves that Jeff's letter was strong enough to reduce to silence someone who is *so obviously guilty*" (letter dated 29 August 1981).<sup>491</sup> And then, that same day, in the grips of the same acute crisis, he wrote to Carlos Ojeda: "One knows very well that Gianfranco has been *guilty* for a long time and in the eyes of many people, due to what he hasn't said and what he has said." Because he kept himself from saying precisely *what* I was guilty of, one might have well and truly believed oneself to be in Kafka's novel *In the Penal Colony (In der Strafkolonie)*, in which "the crime is never in doubt." In any case, one knows quite well that calumny surpasses any demonstration: it is content to be repeated and passed from mouth to ear.

Once again, in the same paranoid attack of the summer of 1981: "Gianfranco hasn't responded to you (...) This is a terrible verification: even worse than what I would have thought" (letter to Martos dated 29 August 1981).<sup>492</sup> Verification of *what*? Not of *the truth*, certainly! What was verified here was only *his obsession*.

Here Guy comported himself in a dishonorable manner, one worthy of some politician: he knew me better than anyone since 1969, and he knew well that I always comported myself in an inflexible, courageous, adroit and irreproachable manner with all the authorities, police officers, members of the army, judges, ministers, provocateurs, and jailers, and this in all the different countries in which I had to deal with them. It was this very comportment that always saved me. And it was thanks to my comportment in such dramatic situations that I was able to save many people from even worse consequences.<sup>493</sup> Guy didn't even hesitate to write as one might do in a report about diverse facts in a newspaper for the plebs: "... since Gianfranco, in whom this genre of detestable acumen hardly surprises me, has managed to not respond [to Carlos Ojeda] on all the burning questions (...) what consequences shouldn't one fear?" (letter to Martos, 29 August 1981).<sup>494</sup>

Here I note in passing that the Dutch and English Éditions of *On Terrorism*, both published in 1982, are the most striking examples of schizophrenia in the history of publishing since the *Anti-Machiavel* by Frederic the Great, patron of Voltaire.<sup>495</sup> Both of these Éditions publish my text and, at the same time, launch an attack against my person (under the signatures of Els van Daele and Lucy Forsyth). This gives the impression that the book was only published so that their suspicions about and censures of its author could be spread.

The height of the hypocrisy and false consciousness was only reached two months later, when Guy, feigning scandalized innocence, wrote the following to Lebovici on 18 October 1981:

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<sup>491</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>493</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: Where this is concerned, the comportment of the French Minister of the Interior (Raymond Marcellin) – always well informed by his cops – seems to me more astute and realistic when he declared the day before my expulsion from France (and thus tried to justify it), "It is a very poor tactic to pretend to propitiate an irreducible adversary by increasing one's concessions to him (...) To come to terms with him is to add shame to an assured defeat." (*Le Monde*, 27 July 1971).

<sup>494</sup> *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>495</sup> A chapter-by-chapter rebuttal of *The Prince*, published in September 1740.

“Do you know the most recent text by Voyer?<sup>496</sup> In it he incites [the reader to] the murder of Sanguinetti by insinuating that he has deliberately worked for the Italian police!”<sup>497</sup> Voyer, who has always been crazy, published a manifesto in which he said, among other things, “The question that is justly posed with respect to Sanguinetti is: how is it that he is still alive and free? After all, he is perhaps an agent of the secret services. But one has seen that such an affiliation is no longer a guarantee of security in Italy today.” But despite his madness, Voyer honestly added: “It is necessary that the author of the ‘*Protest*’ applies to himself the method that he applies to Sanguinetti. One must grant Sanguinetti the merit of having denounced the spectacular usage of Stalinist terrorism that is made by the Italian State.”<sup>498</sup>

Faced with Guy’s ingenuous, outraged innocence concerning Voyer’s poster, one must wonder: *what had he himself insinuated that was different just the day before*, but with more authority and emphasis? Wasn’t he the first one to have appealed for a kind of virtual semi-public lynching of me? After seeing Voyer’s manifesto, had he finally perceived the effects of and reactions to his calumnious allusions, only two months after making and spreading them around?

Whatever the case may be, all this is pitiful, and borders on ignominy, or at least warrants an explanation in terms of pathology. In an extremely virtuous declaration, made hardly a year prior to that, in a letter to Diego Camacho (written by Guy but signed by Lebovici) that criticizes Camacho for his insinuations about the death of Durruti, Guy proclaims: “Champ Libre never publishes authors who insinuate anything, whatever the political necessities they support!”<sup>499</sup> And he wrote to Lebovici on 3 July 1980: “Obviously you cannot publish Camacho, who *insinuates* (...). He even insinuates with a poisonous caution (...) He boasts that he ‘insinuates’.”<sup>500</sup>

Thus, using his own insinuations and aiming at his own particular goals, Guy positively (and vainly) tried to make me disappear by defaming me. But *he failed* because he never succeeded in convincing anyone other than his sycophants, and he also didn’t succeed in breaking into the wider circle of the revolutionaries, in Italy and elsewhere, who knew me, that is

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<sup>496</sup> Jean-Pierre Voyer, “Réponse à l’auteur de ‘Protestation devant les libertaires du present et du future sur les capitulations de 1980,’” in Issue #1 of *Revue de préhistoire contemporaine*, Paris, 7 October 1981.

<sup>497</sup> *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>498</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: The anonymous pastiche called “Protestation devant les libertaires du present et du future sur les capitulations de 1980,” which caused so much ink and suspicions to flow among Guy and the others in his circle, was in reality written by someone named Jean-Claude Lutanie, who died in 2006. It was reprinted in 2011. [*Translator*: in the words of the editors of the 2011 edition: “The *Protest* above all testifies to a disappointment with respect to situationist thought and its ‘youthful, unkept promises.’ Lutanie essentially takes aim at Debord, accusing him, if not of jealousy for a radicalism of which he was quite incapable, although he claimed it, then at least bad faith in his affirmation that the group [*Action directe*] was manipulated by the State.” Cf. Debord’s letter to Kloosterman dated 13 July 1981: “I have asked Gérard [Lebovici] to send you a copy of a short, very shady pamphlet (...) which, it seems to me, must be read with great attention.” *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 158.]

<sup>499</sup> Letter dated 4 August 1980. Champ Libre, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>500</sup> *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Décembre 1987*, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

to say, those who [in his eyes] merited the title “fanatical, inept Sanguinettists.”<sup>501</sup> The actions against me taken by the judges, police officers, provocateurs, Stalinists and fascists at least had a justification in the damage that I had done them and would continue to do them.

It is certain that, for the man who wanted to be a strategist, who admired Clausewitz and invented *Kriegspiel*,<sup>502</sup> the campaign against me in the summer of 1981 essentially ended in a single result: the precious acquisition of a single authorized “historian” of the SI.<sup>503</sup> I believe that Guy must have realized this, because this campaign was very quickly ended and abandoned, and no one spoke of it any more, as if nothing had happened, which is also quite strange. His serious and quickly forgotten suspicions thus sounded false and became suspect.

One can circle around this problem as much as one wants: it remains the case that, from the strategic point of view, this campaign was a failure and even a reversal: neither the English, the Dutch, the Germans, the Greeks, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Italians, nor (later on) the Americans joined the small French pro-situ sycophantic herd that was thus reduced to Martos alone, who was unanimously scorned. But the greatest defeat for Guy was that, for once in his life, he was cut down to the role of a manipulating and maneuvering politician. I am happy that I didn’t have any role in this low-down game, that I didn’t feed it, and that I remained impassive in the face of the calumny.

It is true that, in 1981, I didn’t have all the documents that are available today. In them, one can even learn that one of the Frenchmen who came to my place in the country reported to Guy, either directly or by way of [indirect] gossip. But even if I had known all of the hidden agendas of these dealings, my quite anti-political character would have prevented me from standing up in such an arena. In any case, I knew enough about them at the time to choose to let the enemy fleet, which was so badly piloted, run aground against the reefs that broke its reputation, without lowering me to their depths.

In that climate of poison, disinformation and hostile and dishonest intoxication, Guy still dared to complain that I’d never cited his *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of “The Society of the Spectacle.”* He wrote the following to Lebovici on 25 June 1980: “Thank you . . . for the French edition of Gianfranco . . . The preface for the French edition is, in any case, better than the rest of it. It is true that the author doesn’t cite me, but who ever cites me?”<sup>504</sup> Perhaps that was my real capital crime! But, moreover, the question itself was badly posed: *it was him* who should have cited and even supported *me* – knowing [as he did] that I was fighting behind enemy lines, in extreme conditions – because, when he wrote his *Preface* (January 1979), he had already read the manuscript of *On Terrorism* (October 1978),<sup>505</sup> which had been written well before his text. It is also true that, in May 1981, he felt the necessity of defending himself against a

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<sup>501</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: see Debord’s letter to Martos dated 25 February 1982. [*Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Decembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 202: “The Sanguinettists of whom you speak are inept fanatics, because they only pose questions to their idol concerning a few very precise and important points, already ‘taking sides’ against him.”]

<sup>502</sup> A cabinet game marketed by a company formed by Debord and Lebovici in 1976.

<sup>503</sup> Martos’ *Histoire de l’Internationale Situationniste* was published by Éditions Gérard Lebovici in 1989.

<sup>504</sup> *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Decembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>505</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: see Debord’s letter to Paolo Salvadori dated 12 November 1978: “I have read Gianfranco’s manuscript.” [*Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 5: Janvier 1973-Decembre 1978*, op. cit., p. 483.]

suspicion *that no one had raised* when he noted the following in his Postface (signed by Els van Daele) to the Dutch edition of *On Terrorism*: “Since there are a great number of concordances between the two writings, from the choices of historical examples to certain stylistic details (...), the pages of the *Preface* (...) appear to the reader as a summary of *On Terrorism*.” This clarification has the air of an *excusatio non petita*.<sup>506</sup>

Why did Guy place himself on a slope that was so slippery for him, when there was no necessity to do so? That’s the question. In his politician-paranoid downward slide, there was – as is often the case in paranoia – a method; in any case, there was a paralogic that satisfied itself with the pseudo-reality that it itself had created in order to combat *an effigy* of a pseudo-enemy. *False flag*<sup>507</sup> terrorism, or religion, functions in the same manner, as one knows. On the one hand, Guy recognized the arguments I made in *On Terrorism*; on the other hand, he wanted to create an emptiness around me, and he tried to stop any influence that I might have in the subversive milieu of the time, not because he thought that my influence was harmful, but, on the contrary, because he recognized that my book “is very true, and [it would be] very good to have it known, as soon as possible, for its accurate analysis of the Red Brigades” (cf. his letter to Mikis Anastasiadis dated 25 June 1981).<sup>508</sup> And, as he wrote to Kloosterman on 23 February 1981, “I think that it is a very good thing to publish *On Terrorism*, which is exactly true on the central question that it concerns, and full of very valuable arguments about it.”<sup>509</sup> A year before that, in a letter to Anastasiadis dated 5 August 1980, he wrote, “You no doubt know that [in answer to the demand for it] Gianfranco’s book has already had a second French edition. Thus pseudo-terrorism begins to find its antidote . . .”<sup>510</sup> Guy’s contradiction was thus between the affirmed utility that he recognized in my book and his desire to diminish its importance or to make me disappear.

Did Guy believe that it was my influence or that of the other situationists that was diminishing? Or quite simply, did he not want me, as one says in Italian, scratching around and going through his henhouse? And this was a man who knew very well that Retz had already established that, in matters of calumny, everything that doesn’t do harm works in favor of, not against, the one who is attacked.

This attitude, reinforced by the “annihilation drive” of which I spoke at the beginning of this letter, naturally was extended to all those who had contributed the most to the subversion of which the SI was the bearer. He wanted to remain alone. Thus it is not an exaggeration to say that, from that moment on, he began to systematically minimize the role played by all the other members of the group. As a result, there was only room around Guy for mediocrities and opportunists, whom he launched, in an adventurist manner, against those who had been excellent. This has had obvious consequences, even after his death, in the great work done by Alice (I say “great” in the sense of volume). One of the consequences of this degradation are all the pathetic books written to the glory of Guy: the sycophantic biographies and the supervised pseudo-histories of the SI by a multitude of revisionist “historians” and by impecunious “philosophers,” professors, journalists, etc., who have allowed themselves to be shamelessly

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<sup>506</sup> Latin in original: “no apology requested.” A Latin proverb (*Excusatio non petita, accusatio manifesta*) says that “an unrequested excuse is a manifest accusation.”

<sup>507</sup> English in original.

<sup>508</sup> *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979-Decembre 1987*, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid*, p. 65.

herded, flogged and censured by Alice. There has also been a proliferation of publications by essayists, archivists, and laborious and impoverished opportunists seeking the misplaced vanity of the backseat driver. None of this has happened by chance: it has been desired and promoted by Alice, but, before that, by Guy himself.

Among the apologists one can find real pearls: for example, the book by Apostolidès, which, in the fury of making me disappear, reaches philological summits never attained even by the KGB. After having claimed that the French version of the *Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy* was more “elegant” than the Italian original (!),<sup>511</sup> and in order to complete his demonstration that Censor was not in fact Sanguinetti, but Debord, he removes all doubt with the following wise lesson: “One remarks the affinities between the two names, Censor and Debord: they each possess two syllables; the vowels are identical, as are the number of letters.”<sup>512</sup> The “affinity” for which I chose the pseudonym *Censor* is, on the contrary, with *Bancor*, the supranational currency invented by Keynes; it was also the penname of Guido Carli, who was the head of the Bank of Italy at the time. That is quite far away from the furious demonstrative keenness of Apostolidès, the unfortunate orphan of Pope Pius XII,<sup>513</sup> Mao and Lenin who only demonstrated that his spastic research was part of a spectacular cult of personality.

To tell the truth, I must confess to you that I wasted very little of my time documenting the above (except for the book by Jappe,<sup>514</sup> which, at the time it was published in Italy, I warmly recommended to Alice that she publish in France: but it too, if I recall correctly, was published with some censorship or arrangements). The fact is that reading such works immediately bored me; they have no historical value because they are all stale due to servility or Alice’s directives. The real struggle *is completely absent from them*, to the profit of a mythological and laughable combat that is designed, after the making of historical revisions, to have this or that individual appear or, rather, disappear (preferably to make all of them disappear) so as “to certify that he (Debord) remains the Unique One.”<sup>515</sup> I have been contacted several times, fortunately bashfully, by these almanac salesmen, to whom I have never given anything to nibble upon. There would have been much to discuss about these productions, if I didn’t have anything better to do, or if I

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<sup>511</sup> It was Debord who translated the book from Italian into French.

<sup>512</sup> Note by *Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: Jean-Marie Apostolidès, *Les Tombeaux de Guy Debord*, Paris, 1999, cf. 99-104.

<sup>513</sup> The infamous pope who reigned during World War II.

<sup>514</sup> Anselm Jappe, *Debord* (Pescara: Tracce, 1992).

<sup>515</sup> Note by *Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: Apostolidès, *Les Tombeaux de Guy Debord*, p. 103. Another official falsifier, even more mean-spirited (if that is possible), is Vincent Kaufmann, who concludes, “The SI is to be considered as the work (in all the meanings of the word), or as one of the works, of Debord alone” (*Guy Debord: La Révolution au service de la Poésie*, Paris, 2001, p. 278). This judgment is repeated again, on p. 285, to better convince the reader. On p. 277, Kaufmann writes, “The Italian Gianfranco Sanguinetti (...) was nothing in it . . . he was truly not in the loop during the final debates that shook the SI.” One hundred pages later, he continues, “Behind Censor, there was indeed Sanguinetti, but behind Sanguinetti was Debord, or at least his style, in all the senses of the term (...) Is it so surprising that he hastened to translate the book by Censor into French?”

instituted a pricing structure for the most boorish of these authors: Bourseiller,<sup>516</sup> Martos, Kaufmann, Apostolidès or some other seller of Bordeaux wine.<sup>517</sup> They will be quickly forgotten. Thus, let us move on.

The most surprising thing is that the practices cooked up by Guy for his sycophants, in addition to his unusual versions of things, have been taken up blindly, without any verification or documentary research, by these alleged historians. This crude and simple-minded ideological vision allows these brave militants of history to share and propagate a mythological and weak-willed version of the facts. It is passably comic to ascertain their quasi-unanimity on the idea that Guy's departure from Italy (among other things) was caused by a shadowy persecution or an expulsion of which he had supposedly been the victim in 1977. In fact, his departure, which took place before the Censor project, was the consequence of a series of prosaic facts: disappointments with Florentine girls; irritation with the fact that he had cut off the gas-heating in Florence in mid-winter; someone had stolen the wine from the cellar of the priest of Pieve de San Cresci, where he'd been staying; banal monetary problems that I had had, etc. Thus, there are a crowd of errors of this sort on the tombstones<sup>518</sup> and monuments erected to his glory, all of them working upon the fabrication of a legend and a myth.

The first wave of makeshift "historians" has been merrily burned and sacrificed upon the altar of sycophantic praise, which Guy, quoting [Jonathan] Swift, liked to recall is the daughter of existing power. If he caught sight of these tombstones, I believe that he would rather have concluded with the words of Schopenhauer: "That soon the worms will nibble on my body, this is a thought that I can tolerate; but the idea that the professors will do it with my philosophy, that horrifies me."

I hope, Mustapha, that this letter will serve to throw a little light on the self-interested confusion that surrounds the distribution of my book on terrorism.

Best wishes,  
Gianfranco

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<sup>516</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Bourseiller succeeded in the brazen enterprise (among others) of writing an essay titled "L'IS face au Terrorisme," without citing me, if only to state that the *Truthful Report* was written by Guy (cf. *Archives et Documents Situationnistes*, 2, Denoël, Paris, 2002).

<sup>517</sup> An allusion to Philippe Sollers.

<sup>518</sup> In English the title of Apostolidès' book is *The Tombstones of Guy Debord*.

## “The Doge: A Recollection”<sup>519</sup>

One morning in January 1971, I went without an appointment to the Piazza della Scala in Milan to have my very first meeting with the banker Raffaele Mattioli, “the greatest banker since Lorenzo de’ Medici,” *Le Monde* wrote upon his passing. After speaking about our mutual friends, the poets Eugenio Montale<sup>520</sup> and Umberto Saba,<sup>521</sup> I asked him if he knew an “incorruptible” attorney who could help me resolve certain questions concerning my family.<sup>522</sup> Don Raffaele, as he was known to his intimate acquaintances, picked up the telephone and without hesitation called Professor Ariberto Mignoli. My meeting with him took place immediately, over lunch on that same day. Here I wish to evoke the singular figure of this gentleman, an aristocrat from another era, a distinguished jurist, courageous to the point of recklessness, discreet and reserved, a loyal friend, and, finally, a man. He passed away in 2004 and this was a great loss for me.

That day, dressed in my motorcycle gear, I found myself facing a kind of reincarnation of Francesco Guicciardini,<sup>523</sup> which was an impression that was due to his nature, his character, his experience with men and his vast humanist culture. With perfection, he knew both the dead and the principal living languages of Europe, as well as all the literature that these languages have produced. He was 50 years old then, and I was 22. He told me straight away: “I am not incorruptible, but I would be corruptible only if you found a way to elect me the Doge of Venice.”<sup>524</sup> From then on, I informally referred to him as “the Doge.”

We quickly became friends. I was certainly the least important of his clients, but surely the closest to him spiritually. He wasn’t a conformist, but he certainly wasn’t a subversive. We understood each other perfectly. He was, in a certain way, my Montaigne and I was his Etienne de la Boétie.<sup>525</sup>

Shortly after meeting him, I had to escape to Switzerland because, one night in March 1971, there was a very strange break-in at my house in Milan. [Guy] Debord wrote to me in Switzerland and said that, at the same time, the cops were looking for me in Paris. Mignoli regarded all this with curiosity. He was what one called a “universal” man in the Renaissance: a

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<sup>519</sup> “Le Doge.” Written in French, dated 17 December 2012, circulated privately and then published online by several independent websites. Translation reviewed approved by the author 20 February 2013.

<sup>520</sup> A resident of Milan, Montale (1896-1981) won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1975.

<sup>521</sup> Born Umberto Poli, “Saba” (1883-1957) was a lifelong resident of Trieste. Though he died when Sanguinetti was still quite young, he knew “Saba” because the poet had been a great friend of Gianfranco’s father, Bruno Sanguinetti.

<sup>522</sup> It appears that these questions concerned quite complex matters involving inheritance of the family estate.

<sup>523</sup> An Italian historian and statesman (1483-1540). A friend of Niccolò Machiavelli, he is considered one of the major political writers of the Italian Renaissance.

<sup>524</sup> In the Most Serene Republic of Venice (circa Eighth Century C.E. to 1797), the Doge was the elected chief magistrate and leader. Since this Republic has disappeared, Mignoli was saying that he was “condemned” to remain incorruptible.

<sup>525</sup> These two men, Michel de Montaigne (a philosopher) and Etienne de la Boétie (an anarchist), lived during the 16th century and were close friends.

great lord at his ease with all the subjects and in all the situations in which a man must be interested. Though his clients were the banks and the largest industrial firms, with which he maintained professional and formal relations, he sometimes loved, as Machiavelli would say, “to slum” all night with me in Milan’s *osterie*<sup>526</sup> and working-class taverns, where, divested of the “curial” clothes of the day, we fraternized with the simple people and the scoundrels who frequented such places. He would hire a taxi for the night, and we made the rounds. In the early morning, we sang songs with the locals in Milanese dialect, which, naturally, he knew well. He knew the Spanish anarchist songs of the Civil War better than I did. He was too aristocratic to not scorn politicians and all the public figures; so we agreed on this, as well. Thus, to his friend Professor Giampaolo de Ferra,<sup>527</sup> Mignoli was “substantially an extremist.”

During the Second World War, he was an officer in the Marines, which was an anti-fascist corps and the aristocracy of the Italian armed forces. In 1943, when the Nazis occupied Italy, the fleet deserted en masse and the Doge went to Switzerland, where he became part of Luigi Einaudi’s circle.<sup>528</sup> He was a professor at the University and an indefatigable worker, a great jurist, and the best business attorney. But he was also many other things, as well. I do not have the pretention to make herein a complete portrait of him, which would require the addition of the brushstrokes of his friends, such as Guido Rossi<sup>529</sup> and Giampaolo de Ferra.

It is certain that Mignoli was the most refined bibliophile among all those whom I have met. He showed me, among other treasures, the copy of Spinoza’s *Tractatus* (a first edition) that its author dedicated, signed and offered to Leibniz, and a first-edition copy of Casanova’s *Escape from the Prisons*, which he found in Prague. One day I gave him a copy of an old edition of *Werther*: it was the only one that he lacked. He had, among many other things, an eminently singular collection of hand-written menus from 14th century European taverns. He was a friend of the greatest printer of the 20th century, Giovanni Mardersteig, about whom he wrote an admirable *Recollection*, published by his son in an edition of 200 copies. He gave me a series of polemical pamphlets concerning hereditary quarrels between my ancestors, the Sanguinettis and the Padoa, printed by Bodoni<sup>530</sup> in the 18th century. Of course I caught my case of bibliophilic illness from him.

In 1971, in Lisbon, where he frequented the best restaurants and hidden places (the most elegant or the most popular, but always well-chosen), he introduced me to an old friend of his, the Galician anarchist José de la Viuva, who had fled after the Civil War and kept a small café (dirty and beautiful) where – after having closed the shutters as a precaution – they sang all the songs banned under Franco, Salazar and Caetano. The Doge scorned dictatorship as well as democracy, but he used to say that dictatorship arouses an intense desire for liberty, while democracy puts it to sleep.

He knew works by Greek, Latin, Italian, French, German and English authors by heart, and he often quoted from them, either in the original language or in an Italian translation. He had an astonishing memory: he said that it wasn’t an innate talent, but only a question of practice,

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<sup>526</sup> Italian for “pubs.”

<sup>527</sup> Professor at the University of Trieste between 1972 and 1981 and a member of the General Council of the Bank of Italy.

<sup>528</sup> An economist and politician (1874-1961) who served as the President of the Republic of Italy between 1948 and 1955.

<sup>529</sup> A Milanese attorney and author (1931-2017) who had also served in the Italian Senate.

<sup>530</sup> Giambattista Bodoni (1740-1813), the most important printer of the 18th century.

and that everyone could have it, if they applied themselves to it. He was an Epicurean in the manner of Montaigne, and his motto was that of Epicure: “Live hidden.”

He was a distinguished gourmet. At the end of dinner, he never ordered cognac, because he said that, if came from a bottle that had already been opened, it had lost its bouquet. Thus he preferred to uncork a bottle of the best Spanish brandy, the Gran Duque d’Alba, or Lepanto, and he said that it was best to finish it off slowly. Once, in Brazil in 1984, he had me meet him in a small village two hundred kilometers from Sao Paulo, where he’d gone to savor the best *feijoada*<sup>531</sup> in the country.

I seem to recall that it was there that, speaking of the then-recent war in the Falkland Islands, he, amused, quoted to me passages from Junius<sup>532</sup> and Dr Johnson,<sup>533</sup> recently republished, and this anecdote in particular: when Lord Sandwich threatened the ultra-democratic deputy Wilkes, who had ridiculed King George III and who was part of Junius’ band, by telling Wilkes that he would die on the gallows or of the pox [a shameful disease], Wilkes replied, “That would depend, my Lord, on whether I embrace your principles or your mistress.”<sup>534</sup>

Shortly after our first meeting, I began to be seriously bothered by the French authorities, which finally arrested and expelled me, without any charges being brought against me, without any right to *habeas corpus*, through a simple *lettre de cachet*<sup>535</sup> from the Minister [of the Interior] Raymond Marcellin in July 1971. The Doge was outraged, as if this injustice had been done to him personally. He guided me to a business lawyer, Mr. Marty-Lavauzelle, who in turn sent me to a young criminal-defense attorney. This attorney, working with the Minister of the Interior, prepared a trap for me, in order to compromise me.<sup>536</sup> The Minister especially feared

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<sup>531</sup> A stew of black beans, beef and pork.

<sup>532</sup> The pseudonym of an anonymous writer who contributed a series of political letters to the *Public Advertiser* between 1769 and 1772.

<sup>533</sup> Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), a poet, biographer and lexicographer.

<sup>534</sup> I have directly quoted from the original English.

<sup>535</sup> An unappealable executive decree. The reader might be amused to learn that, according to Wikipedia, such letters “were letters signed by the king of France (...) The wealthy sometimes bought such *lettres* to dispose of unwanted individuals (...) The *lettres de cachet* were a prominent symbol of the abuses of the *ancien régime* monarchy, and as such were suppressed during the French Revolution.” These illegal practices, under the name extraordinary renditions, were reintroduced by the CIA after 11 September 2001.

<sup>536</sup> Cf. Guy Debord’s letter to Sanguinetti dated 20 March 1972: “[Daniel] Vaconsin isn’t your attorney but the attorney of the police. He has considerably aggravated everything (so as to further his own affairs with the Minister of the Interior). He dares to *openly* ask you to become an *informer* in the SI and the revolutionary movement. His phrases leave no doubt: they would love “to have unpublished information”! It is necessary that you “merit the recognition” of the police (whereas it is the Minister himself who is guilty of such an arbitrary gesture towards you), as if you are a *captured* gangster, to whom one proposes that he should give up his accomplices so as to avoid the penitentiary. The simple fact that Vaconsin has written to you such an outrageous letter is already *compromised*. [...] You must immediately write to Vaconsin: 1) that you refuse this outrageous proposition; 2) that he *is no longer* your attorney.” *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 4: Janvier 1969-Décembre 1972* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004), pp. 520-521.

that a “Strasbourg Scandal”<sup>537</sup> was going to be perpetrated in the factories of France, and that I was financing international subversion. Thanks to Guy Debord and the Doge, the trap was detected [and avoided]. Mignoli was inflexible, and he drafted, on my behalf, a memorable complaint that sought to have the compromised attorney brought before the President of the Bar Association; Debord translated it into proper French, and the attorney in question was disciplined. This affair took on important dimensions, in such a way that Marty wrote that it risked becoming a new Dreyfus Affair. Mignoli and Debord met each other for the first time in Paris, and they obviously liked each other. They met again in 1973, or 1974, over dinner at my place in Florence, and the meal continued until the next day.

One day in Milan, seeing that I was sad due to worries about love, Mignoli asked me, “Don’t you have another girl to think about?” I responded, “Yes, a girl named Mary: a Scottish violinist who is in Marburg, north of Frankfurt.” He said, “Listen to me: there is a plane bound for Frankfurt leaving at 4 pm. If you’d like, I will send my secretary to buy you a ticket, and meanwhile we will have the time to have lunch together. If you’d like, you can bring her the two bottles of *Nozzole* Chianti 1964 that Mattioli has offered me.” That evening, I was at a concert in Marburg, where we celebrated with the Chianti. Mignoli was indeed “substantially an extremist.”

In 1975, the Doge and Debord were the only ones who knew about and helped me with the Censor scandal, which I prepared amidst a thousand dangers and unexpected events.<sup>538</sup> In March of that year, I was imprisoned in Florence and charged by the principal Italian anti-terrorist prosecutor, Pier Luigi Vigna, on the very day that I was transporting the Censor manuscript to the printer in Milan. I was intercepted because the police had to know that I was preparing *something* and because Mignoli’s phone was tapped because of the bankruptcy of a bank for which he was momentarily the attorney<sup>539</sup> (at the time, I had no telephone as a precaution against taps). To arrest me, the police planted and “found” bullets from a machinegun in the car in which I was traveling. The manuscript was saved because it had been placed in the violin case of my companion, Katherine Scott, who – along with my friend Mario Masanzanica – were also arrested. The manuscript thus had the singular luck of entering and leaving, unperceived, the women’s prison at Santa Verdiana in Florence. The Doge furnished me with the best criminal-defense attorney in Florence, Terenzio Ducci, who, despite all expectations, got me out of prison in only eight days.

I went to Milan. Mignoli gave me the following brilliant idea: “If you want the scandal to be momentous,” he said, “make a monotype, luxury edition of very few, numbered copies, printed on special paper, and sent to the addresses that I will provide you with.” The project lacked a “publisher” who could serve as a screen. Mignoli recommended his cousin, Sergio Scotti-Camuzzi, a young and very conservative attorney, a professor at the Catholic University of Milan, to whom he warmly recommended my text and all the discretion that the operation required. Scotti, who had already helped me with several real-estate deals, and who wanted to become a publisher, knew the owner of high-quality print shop, a man named Dario Memo. The realization of the project was begun. After my release from the prison in Florence, I hid myself

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<sup>537</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Here I refer to the situationist scandal at the University of Strasbourg that was organized by Mustapha Khayati in 1966.

<sup>538</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Censor (Gianfranco Sanguinetti), *Rapporto verdico sulle ultime opportunità di salvare Capitalismo in Italia* (Milan: Scotti-Camuzzi, 1975).

<sup>539</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: the *Banca Privata Italiana*, whose owner was the financier Michele Sindona, later assassinated while in prison.

by dividing my time, incognito, between Bergamo and Milan. The Doge adored this operation; he was quite invaluable to me, one might even say indispensable, for the success of the scandal. Better than anyone, he saw the importance and the stakes of the operation, as well as the damage that the scandalous truths that Censor uttered could cause. The more he saw the police bother me, the more the operation impassioned him, because he believed in it, it amused him, and we spent many afternoons and evenings perfecting the typographical details and the list of the private addresses of the important people (plus a few selected journalists) to whom the *Truthful Report* would be sent. He always provided exemplary courage, discretion and loyalty. The operation was a radiant success. In the final analysis, the portrait of Censor that I came to paint was more or less a portrait of him. He recognized himself in it.<sup>540</sup> I found myself in the position of James Boswell with respect to Dr Johnson.<sup>541</sup>

It is difficult to describe his joy at seeing the entire ruling class of Italy fall into the trap: he scorned it as much as he knew it up-close. We laughed heartily when we received [via Sergio Scotti-Camuzzi] the letters of thanks from government ministers and high-level civil servants, that is to say, all those who believed that Censor was real and sincere: Giulio Andreotti, Aldo Moro, Guido Carli (the governor of the Bank of Italy), Giorgio Amendola, Pietro Nenni, the Prefect of Milan, the High Council of the Magistracy, etc. To their credit, one could say that the trap had been well prepared, but also that chance had helped me in an unexpected manner. In Chapter IV of the *Truthful Report*, I'd written: "Thus, isn't it permitted to conclude that the Italian secret service has become the *gladium ancipitem in manu stulti* of which the Latins spoke?"<sup>542</sup> Here one must remark that the existence of the secret organization called "Gladio" would only be publicly revealed by Andreotti *15 years after* the publication of my book, and that, at the time, this little phrase in Latin must have been understood as a veiled threat that surely came from someone who was very well-informed of the most-secret things. I believe that at least a part of the judicial troubles that Mignoli subsequently faced were retributions from the people in power for his collaboration with me, which was difficult to forget and pardon.<sup>543</sup>

Once the scandal exploded, and when I revealed myself by publishing *Proofs of the Inexistence of Censor* at the beginning of 1976, the *Corriere d'Informazione* included a third tabloid page that contained an eight-column long, completely fake and ignoble interview with

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<sup>540</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Here one can see the extent to which rich reality differs from the impoverished, malevolent and sycophantic ineptitudes spread about Debord by the repugnant Jean-Marie Apostolidès in the chapter titled "Le Révolutionnaire et son double," which appears in his *Les Tombeaux de Guy Debord* (Paris, 1999), pp. 99-104. The same goes for the counter-truths that another adulator (who as "official" as he is mean-spirited), Vincent Kaufmann, writes in *Guy Debord: La Révolution au service de la Poésie*, Paris, 2001.

<sup>541</sup> Boswell (1740-1795) was the author of *Life of Samuel Johnson*.

<sup>542</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: The only one, to my knowledge, who noted this phrase and placed it [via a footnote to Chapter IV of *The Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism*] into the context of the "Gladio" organization was Bill Brown, on [www.notbored.org](http://www.notbored.org), in 2012.

<sup>543</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: In 1984, he was sentenced to four years in prison for the sudden bank collapse of April 1974, supposedly engineered by Sindona [*le crack de Sindona*]. The attorney for one of the banks involved, the Doge was subsequently absolved in a second trial.

me.<sup>544</sup> By chance I was in Milan. I saw the newspaper that morning and immediately called the Doge and told him that I was going directly to the offices of the *Corriere* to beat up the journalist who had invented the false interview, someone named Dario Fertilio.<sup>545</sup> He told me, “If you do that immediately, *you will have the extenuating circumstances of immediacy*. Afterwards, come to my office to prepare a press release.” I complied. He was pleased with the success. We drafted a funny press release, very violent, which was printed the next day by all the newspapers, even those in Sicily and Sardinia. The press release ended with the following phrase (dictated by the Doge), which made a great impression: “with respect to these dirty tricks, it is urgent to return to the manly custom of the duel.” No one, or almost no one, defended the *Corriere*: the falsification was too crude, and my reaction was too immediate and effective. The *Corriere* was alone in crying about “the attack on freedom of information.” The other newspapers laughed about it. But to avoid an embarrassing trial, the *Corriere* didn’t dare to denounce me for the slaps that its shameless journalist received in the presence of his director. In any case, as a precaution, Mignoli presented to me the great criminal defense attorney Alberto Crespi, a collector of primitive paintings, Botticelli’s and other treasures, who declared himself happy to defend me if need be.

After the *kidnapping*<sup>546</sup> and killing of Aldo Moro in 1978, when the repression became crushing, he advised me to hasten my denunciation of *false flag*<sup>547</sup> terrorism, and he was the first person in Italy to read the manuscript of what would become *On Terrorism and the State*.<sup>548</sup>

In 1981, when Debord circulated his insinuations about the Doge and I, I reported them to him. I recall that he simply said this: “This is truly a shame, because in some sense this renders *useless* all that there had been between us.” This “useless” *understatement*<sup>549</sup> was strong and sufficient.

Several years later, when Mignoli was in mourning (he’d lost his wife and one of his daughters for different reasons in the same week), I was constantly with him that summer, as well as towards the end of his life, when we passed entire days together. Of his declining health he never said a word, except for a single, stoic phrase: “it is not bright [*brillante*].”

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<sup>544</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: *Corriere d’Informazione*, 23 January 1976. The press release I go on to mention was published that same day.

<sup>545</sup> The reader might find it amusing that, according to the Italian Wikipedia entry for Dario Fertilio, *Ha pubblicato diversi saggi e monografie su temi politici e sull’informazione, nei quali afferma la necessità di ricercare e difendere le libertà individuali* (“He has published diverse essays and monographs about politics and information in which he affirms the necessity for studying and defending individual liberty”).

<sup>546</sup> English in original.

<sup>547</sup> English in original.

<sup>548</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: This fact completely contradicts the suspicions spread among the French pro-situationists. To read about this matter, see my letter addressed to Mustapha Khayati dated 10 December 2012 and now published on [www.notbored.org](http://www.notbored.org). [Elsewhere in this volume.]

<sup>549</sup> English in original.

He rarely published, other than his remarks on legal subjects, but he wrote superbly. In 1990, he wrote a text titled *Wealth and Wisdom*. Here I permit myself to translate [from the Italian into French] several passages from it.<sup>550</sup>

With respect to such a tragic framework (...) it poses anew Ecclesiastes' problem of the supremacy of the spirit over wealth: in a moment such as the present, in which the society in which we live has taken on a decidedly economic character [*empreinte*], producing a self-satisfied era. . . . Our lives have become businesses, whereas they had once been presences. What one considers moral progress is only the complete subjection of the individual to the power of the State, which can lead to a complete abdication of personality, especially if the preoccupation with earning money stifles any initiative. This pretention that our times are morally superior has, at its origin, a syllogism, because one earns money more easily and more securely in current times than in the past. It has thus created a new sense of security of an economic nature, and yet all forms of securities have a devastating effect on our spirits. Self-satisfied eras are in fact desperate eras. . . . On the one hand, man enjoys himself and amasses riches as compensation for his desperate situation; on the other hand, despair is the ultimate end point of a self-satisfied age, which pleases itself with its economic conquests, bereft of those powerful emotions that lift up and sustain the soul, elevating itself beyond itself by infusing variety into the uniformity of our conditions and of the monotony of our days. Therefore before us is a question of substituting more energetic and elevated passions for the love of material comfort. . . . An essential quality for our happiness, Schopenhauer would say, is courage. For the world in which one plays with 'iron dice,' one must have a firm spirit, armored against the decrees of destiny and armed against the machinations of men. . . . For the truly resigned man is not he who has attained understanding, but the one who has simply ceased to fight."

In this text, one finds Leopardian<sup>551</sup> but also situationist reminiscences. Neither of us was impermeable to the other. He often repeated this phrase, so true, from Sallust: *Idem velle ac idem nolle, ac tandem vera amicitia est* (To want the same things, and to not want the same things, this in fact is true friendship).<sup>552</sup>

Such a man was the Doge. Such was he who had been the object of abject insinuations. Such was the one whose memory I want to avenge today.

Gianfranco Sanguinetti, 17 December 2012

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<sup>550</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Ariberto Mignoli, *Ricchezza e Sapienza*, Milan, 5 May 1990 (manuscript). Certainly the archives of such a discreet man will contain many other important texts, unpublished or privately circulated, that would be worthy of discovery and publication.

<sup>551</sup> Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1937) was one of the greatest philosophers and poets of the 19th century. Cf. Gianfranco Sanguinetti, "To the Church with Manzoni . . . With Leopardi to War!" (1993).

<sup>552</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: The first part of this phrase later became the editorial slogan of the Parisian publishing house ALLIA.

### “Paris 13 November 2015: A Morale Operation”<sup>553</sup>

“The French must be aware that we’re proceeding with major attacks. The political powers must tell the French people that we’re proceeding with mass attacks.” General Vincent Desportes, 29 October 2015.<sup>554</sup>

**There must be a little conceptual order at this moment, when emotions, propaganda and hysteria risk upsetting any balanced consideration of the events of the day before yesterday.**<sup>555</sup>

In Paris we are faced with a *Morale Operation*.<sup>556</sup> In the art of unorthodox warfare, *Morale Operations* are those whose goal is to introduce stupefaction, confusion and mystifications in order to sow distrust, terror and disarray in the ranks of the enemy or those of undecided or uncertain allies. This type of psychological warfare was elaborated and put into practice by Colonel William J. Donovan of the American OSS in 1943.<sup>557</sup>

The French High Command knows quite well who is behind Daesh, and so Division General Vincent Desportes could openly declare, on 17 December 2014, just [weeks] before the *Charlie Hebdo* operation,<sup>558</sup> in an open discussion before the Commission for Foreign Affairs, Defense and the Armed Forces: “What Dr. Frankenstein created this monster [called Daesh]? We can affirm it clearly, because it has consequences: the United States. Through short-term political interests, other actors – some of whom portray themselves as friends of the West – have, through complacency or deliberate intent, contributed to its construction and reinforcement. But the most responsible is the United States.”<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> “Paris 13.11: Morale Operation.” Dated Geneva, Switzerland, 15 November 2015, and published online by Effimera.org.

<sup>554</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: cf. <http://www.franceinter.fr/emission-le-79-vincent-desportes-un-jour-ou-lautre-il-y-aura-un-attentat-de-masse-en-france> (French only). [*Translator*: this radio news report is titled “One day or another, there will be a mass attack in France” and seems to be a response to the French military’s recent mass attacks against the “terrorists” in Iraq and Syria.]

<sup>555</sup> On Friday, 13 November 2015, simultaneous and coordinated terrorist attacks were carried out in Paris, France, and the city’s northern suburb, Saint-Denis, allegedly by Daesh. More than a 100 people were killed and 400 wounded.

<sup>556</sup> English in original.

<sup>557</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: Cf. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morale\\_Operations\\_Branch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morale_Operations_Branch).

<sup>558</sup> On 7 January 2015, commandos killed almost a dozen people working for *Charlie Hebdo*, allegedly in retaliation for its depictions of the Prophet Mohammed.

<sup>559</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: presided over by Jean-Pierre Raffarin, the Commission heard from General Henri Bentégeat, a former Army Chief of Staff; Army Corps General Didier Castres, second-in-command of the Operations Staff; Mr. Hubert Védrine, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs; Division General Vincent Desportes, retired, now a professor associated with the Paris College of Political Science; and Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, the Minister of Defense. Thus, we can conclude that not only the military, but also all the political leaders, were also up-to-date. Cf.: <http://www.senat.fr/compte-rendu-commissions/20141215/etr.html> (French only).

The entry of anti-ISIL Russian forces into Syria has disordered all the plans made by the USA and Israel, for which ISIL<sup>560</sup> is an expensive plaything. A few days before Putin did it, the French took the autonomous initiative to bomb ISIL, once in Iraq and twice in Syria. For ISIL's real bosses, this was [open] defiance, and so they needed to bring the French to task and reunite the Western front under their command.

Through a diversified action led by military commandos in the heart of Paris and against carefully chosen symbolic targets, the French political leaders were given a harsh warning on 13 November.

There is *no war against terrorism anywhere in the world*, because *all the States make use of it*. One knows that terrorism isn't an enemy, but simply *one of the means* by which war is conducted.

Back in 2008, Lieutenant Colonel Jean-Pierre Steinhofier wrote the following in the *Revue Défense Nationale*. "The notion of the 'global war against terrorism' is a semantic, strategic, military and juridical perversion that, conflating the enemy with the enemy's method of combat, has led the Western States into an intellectual impasse that scrambles their reflections in many domains and ends up in absurd situations."<sup>561</sup>

France's vague and independent [military] actions, as well as the dispersion of its forces across too many theaters of action, from Africa to the Middle East, the confused vacillations of its policies and poisoned information have all condemned the country's military actions to failure and have exposed France itself to all kinds of reprisals. As we have just seen in Paris.

France's political leaders now find themselves in the uncomfortable situation of making it seem that they don't know from whence the blow ultimately came. They prefer their customs of lying to the population and passing themselves off as unaware idiots, rather than risk further enraging their treacherous allies. The Germans and other allies were warned by this same blow.

The spectacle of masks, the theater of shadows, the game of dupes, the staging, the dramaturgy and the *mainstream*<sup>562</sup> narration of things are all part of what the aforementioned Lieutenant Colonel calls the "intellectual impasse that scrambles reflection in many domains and ends in absurd situations."

Meanwhile, the populations [of these countries] are being accustomed to the massacres that are being planned for them. They must learn in blood that the accomplice of terrorism isn't merely the one who organizes it and brings it about, but all those who believe the official versions of events, as well. Without them, terrorism would be a less effective weapon and even a very dangerous one for those who make use of it.

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<sup>560</sup> The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, aka Daesh.

<sup>561</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: J. P. Steinhofier, *L'Ennemi innomé*, in *Revue Défense Nationale*, #712.

<sup>562</sup> English in original.

## **“The Utility of Terrorism, Considered with Respect to the Usage Made of It”<sup>563</sup>**

It is quite sad to see, in our times, the advance of barbarity in social mores, as well as in the moral stupefaction of individuals, who spare themselves no baseness. In this new ethical universe, competition is no longer aroused by excellence and emulation, but by the systematic debasement and denigration of the others. Attacking the target through calumny and ingratitude has become commonplace. Both this calumnious attitude and this cynical ingratitude, which strikes out at those to whom one feels obligated, are no longer limited to other individuals, but are today extended to include things and even, finally, *the very words* that designate those things. And so I cannot claim that words are necessarily innocent, but I will give them, too, a fair trial before condemning them as guilty.

Let's take the case of the word “terrorism,” which was invented by the French in 1793. If we consider the subject without prejudice, we must denounce the existence of undeniable paradoxes: terrorism is slandered every day by all of its beneficiaries, much more intensely than it is critiqued by those who are subjected to it, and it is slandered in an even-more virulent way by the very ones who order it, profit from it, direct it and impose it on victimized populations. Quite unjustly, we can say, because it is thanks to terrorism that these demiurges govern the world today, legislating, torturing, executing, enriching themselves and prospering by extorting the most unrestrained license in their command over the world – a license that they couldn't otherwise enjoy.

It is a sad thing to encounter ingratitude, but it is even sadder to see it at work when the ingrates continue to draw such great benefits from the slandered thing in such an insolent manner. If we consider things in a spirit that is fair and impartial, we must admit that the [current] weak French president and his destitute government would never have been able to impose upon France all the unconstitutional and extra-judicial measures that they has been able to pass thanks to Operation *Charlie*<sup>564</sup> and [the attack on] 13 November. These were difficult measures to impose, but they were demanded by those Hollande<sup>565</sup> must obey. Thanks to all that, perhaps the weakest and most unpopular government that France has ever known was able to unleash wars and “regime change” abroad with impunity, and to instaurate a state of emergency domestically, including the suspension of civil liberties, which is the secret dream of the majority of the world's governments.

We are forced to conclude that the French President, as well as those to whom he must report, owe an infinitely large debt of gratitude to terrorism, which they cannot erase by unjustly slandering it as if it were the origin of all the world's evils, whereas, quite the contrary, it is the source of all the supplementary and extraordinary powers that they are arrogating [and using] against society without any opposition. Thus it is disconcerting to see ingratitude have the audacity to transform itself into pure empowered hypocrisy.

Now let us consider in an unbiased fashion the other advantages that terrorism procures

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<sup>563</sup> “De l'utilite du terrorisme, Considérée par rapport à l'usage qu'on en fait,” dated 8 December 2015, and published online by Mediapart.fr.

<sup>564</sup> A reference to the attacks carried out against the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January 2015. A total of 12 people were killed and 11 wounded.

<sup>565</sup> François Hollande (born 1954) is a Socialist who was President of France (2012-2017).

for those who condemn it hypocritically. Faced with [the spectacle of] terrorism, there is no risk of revolt in the French *banlieus*, although the reasons for revolt are even more acute than before, despite the events that so preoccupied the political leaders of 10 years ago.<sup>566</sup> But there are other advantages.

Thanks to terrorism, the authorities can compel people to shut themselves into their homes; they can criminalize any situation, arbitrarily indict and condemn anyone, search homes and the Internet when and where they want; they can kill at will, torture, place under house-arrest, and censor strictly – all without any risk of provoking indignation, critiques or opposition.

Thanks to terrorism, the State and its political beneficiaries can, as if by magic, become “good” because – after sacrificing a small portion of the population – they can bravely, proudly and virtuously set themselves up as *the protectors* of the remaining people. Thus terrorism becomes the long-sought-after Philosopher’s Stone, something capable of sanctifying power, edifying politicians and whitewashing the Mafioso “protection” of their subjects, which is what all States hope to obtain.

With domestic social peace obtained thanks to terrorism, the economy (and thus profits) can start up again, and they can do wonderful things abroad, such as selling otherwise unsellable Rafale planes to terrorism’s big sponsors.<sup>567</sup> In the aftermath of Operation Charlie, the CEO of Dassault proclaimed angelically and briskly, “The stars being rather well-aligned right now, we are going to try to push our advantage in order to try to get a fourth contract before the end of the year.”<sup>568</sup> But the advantages of terrorism for the economy are multiple and they don’t stop there. Abroad, thanks to the terrorist armies that have been set up (Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, the Islamic State), the West has reaped huge profits in the pillaging of the Third World.

A philosopher produces ideas; a poet produces poems; a priest sermons; a professor treatises, etc. Terrorism produces attacks. If we look closer at the relations of this sector of production to the whole of society, we will see much prejudice. Terrorism doesn’t simply produce attacks, but also counter-terrorist legislation, jurists to write new laws, journalists to indoctrinate public opinion, TV programs, films, specialized judges, police officers experienced in the repression of terrorism, professors who give university courses and publish their inevitable treatises, psychologists, novels about submission – and these books, films and so forth are launched upon the general market as commodities. As a result, terrorism produces an augmentation of the national wealth.

Terrorism also produces counter-terrorism, the criminal justice system, henchmen, prisons, judges, offices, jurors and an entire branch of industry and the security services. And all these different trades, which constitute so many categories of the social division of work, develop different capacities of the human spirit, create new needs and, as a correlative, new modes of satisfaction. Thus torture has led to the most fertile mechanical inventions, and many honest artisans are employed in the production of these instruments.

Sometimes terrorism produces moral effects; sometimes tragic ones. Thus it renders good service to the moral and aesthetic sentiments of the public and the political class, to which

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<sup>566</sup> The widespread rioting of November 2005.

<sup>567</sup> On 3 May 2015, *Business Insider* carried a report titled “French Mideast policy helped Rafale jet sales: experts,” which claimed that “anti-US suspicion in the Middle East” has permitted the French defense company Dassault to “finally score several lucrative deals” with Egypt, India and Qatar.

<sup>568</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: cf. *Le Point*, 2 June 2015.

terrorism always furnishes the occasion to rage against something obviously more immoral than it is. Terrorism breaks up the monotony and the daily, banal security of bourgeois life. It prevents stagnation and provokes tension and anxious mobility, without which the goad of competition itself would be dulled. Terrorism stimulates the productive forces, makes financial capital move and electrifies the Stock Exchange.

At the same that it, practiced at the global level, eliminates surpluses from the labor market, thus decreasing competition among the workers, terrorism – when it produces lots of victims and damage – simultaneously prevents salaries from falling below the minimum. At the same time, the struggle against terrorism absorbs more people into the economy, thus reducing unemployment. In any case, terrorism – the staging of civil war so as to avoid one – saves many lives by comparison.

Terrorism isn't merely useful; it is *necessary*, like evil. We know that which is called "evil" is the great principle that makes us social creatures; it is the basis, the life and the reference point of all occupations, without exception; it is in evil that we must seek the true origin of all the arts and sciences; and, if evil no longer existed, society would be condemned to decline, if not perish utterly.

**“An Orgasm of History: 1977 in Italy  
Digression on the Thread of Memory by a former Situationist”<sup>569</sup>**

“They think I’m severe?  
I know I am  
I force them to think . . .”  
Vittorio Alfieri, *Epigrams*, 1783

**The catastrophe of the ideologies.**

There were two 1977s in Italy, one of which was nothing more than the final gasp, the death rattle of the illusions, lies and crimes of which the pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese bureaucracies and their local followers were the bearers and the beneficiaries, still constituting the dead weight and false consciousness of the purportedly extremist groups that arose from the ashes of 1968.

As early as 1969, the Italian situationists, in the editorial notes for the journal *Internazionale Situazionista*, affirmed that:

“The critique of ideology is the premise of all critique [...] However, we must accelerate the process of decomposition of ‘Marxism’ (workerism-bureaucracyism, theoretical underdevelopment-ideology of underdevelopment). [...] To become aware of its own content, the social conflict against modern conditions of survival brings to the surface all the carcasses of the past, which it takes pains to clear away. [...] The consumption of ideology must once again support the ideology of consumption. [...] There is only one step from ideas to facts. Actions will improve them. [...] But in the current movement, the SI simultaneously prefigures the future of the movement itself. When all the internal conditions are met [...] to abolish the division into classes and the classes themselves, the division of labor and labor itself, and to abolish art and philosophy by realizing them in the liberated creativity of life without dead time, when only the best will do, the world will be governed by the greatest aristocracy in history, the only class in society and the only historical class of masters without slaves. This possibility occurs today, perhaps for the first time. But it occurs.”<sup>570</sup>

**The devastation of critical thinking.**

In the frightening and desolate landscape of the devastation of critical thinking brought about by hegemonic, dogmatic and arrogant ideologies that served the Left and the far Left and

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<sup>569</sup> Gianfranco Sanguinetti, “Un Orgasmo della Storia: Il 1977 in Italia: Digressioni sul filo della memoria di un ex-situazionista.” Written in Italian and published in *Il Piombo e le Rose* (Rome: Postcart, 2017); published online by Francosenia Blogspot in 2017. For insurrections as orgasms of history, see Yves Frémion and Volny, *Les orgasmes de l’histoire, 3 000 ans d’insurrections spontanées* (Paris: Éditions Encre, 1980).

<sup>570</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: *Internazionale Situazionista*, n. 1, July 1969, “Quando solo il meglio sarà sufficiente.” [When only the best will do].

to which all the intellectuals conformed, the explosion of the 1977 revolt – later known as the Metropolitan Indians – was a disruptive and unexpected event, an uninvited spoilsport at the wedding of the Communists to the Christian Democrats, an embarrassing and inappropriate scandal, a public and brazen orgasm of history. It is therefore inappropriate to speak of it, and indeed almost no one has. This was the other 1977, the one that knew how to say a new word, in a new way, to borrow Girolamo Savonarola’s expression. Despite the silence that still surrounds it, this movement of social revolt was the most modern of the postwar period.

### **The rejection of the ideologies.**

In its most genuinely subversive aspect, the 1977 revolt was a radical rejection of the voluntary servitude imposed by every ideology; it was a rejection of militancy, politics, representation, hierarchy, and irrevocable delegation, and a rejection of any compromise. It was also an explosion of creativity and imagination, open to every artistic influence, from the Futurists to the Situationists. The *langue de bois*<sup>571</sup> of vulgar Marxism had permeated, infected and poisoned not only its own doublethink, which was indigent and counterfeit, and the petty and miserable language of the mainstream Left, but also that of all those small groups of people who believed themselves to be extremists, from 1968 onward, almost without exception. The “social practice” of these militants, who later joined the Autonomists in 1977, was worthy of their bureaucratic language – confusing, pompous, threatening, apodictic and redundant, just like the totalitarian ideologies they propagated. Among them were many well-intentioned individuals, but not the leaders they had accepted. It was precisely these arrogant leaders, admirers of terrorism and armed struggle, yet cowardly and stupid, combined with police provocations and repression by the ICP [Italian Communist Party], who were the true gravediggers of that movement: no honest historian will contradict me on this point.

### **An execution in effigy.**

On 17 February 1977, the powerful leader of the Communist trade-union police, Luciano Lama, was mocked, humiliated and driven out of the University of Rome like a dog. This was the founding scandal of the movement, for it was the absolute novelty of a free assembly that managed, in actual practice, to own its own freedom and its own public square, driving out those who still hoped to muzzle and usurp it.

It was a veritable execution in effigy of the trade union and the Communist Party, and, in the same square, for additional ignominy, a derogatory effigy of Luciano Lama was hung.

Despising the intellectual dishonesty of many who retrospectively project their current judgments back onto a time when they showed neither lucidity nor honesty, I will quote below what I wrote at the time, and what I still hold today. I am not among those who change their minds when the wind changes.

### **20<sup>th</sup>-Century “Communism.”**

The imposture of so-called 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Communism did not collapse in 1989 in the Eastern European countries (at that time, only the discredited regimes in power from which the USSR had suddenly withdrawn all support collapsed). In fact, it collapsed in 1977 in Rome and Bologna, as well as other Italian cities. This deception had lasted 60 years, and that was enough. What was called “Communism” in countries like Russia, China and elsewhere was nothing more

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<sup>571</sup> French in original: literally wooden language; waffling or doublespeak.

than a brutal system of expropriation and accelerated primitive accumulation of capital. It reproduced and concentrated all the horrors that capitalism had perpetrated in Western Europe from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onward, already described by Marx in the famous chapter in *Capital* devoted to this accumulation, which Marxist idiots, thanks to their ideological blinders, read without realizing that the same monstrosities were happening before their own eyes in Russia and China. Soviet and Chinese “Communism” were in reality a disguise for ancient Eastern despotism, which thus perpetuated itself under another name, as Wittfogel<sup>572</sup> and others have amply demonstrated. The “cunning of reason” had made generations of men and women live and die by building a work that had nothing to do with what they believed, wanted or deluded themselves into thinking they were doing. Instead of socialism, they built a capitalism without a bourgeoisie and without private property. Everything belonged to the State, that is, to the bureaucracy that directed it despotically, as in ancient Eastern despotism. It would be necessary, and perhaps even urgent, to call things by their real names. But that would be enough.

### **The role of the Italian Communists in 1977.**

The Italian Communist Party, already in a sexual frenzy [*in fregola*] at the time, when it was preparing to enter into the governing coalition, became even more hot and bothered [*s'incanagli e s'incattivì*], and began to fight the movement with every means at its disposal, in order to better establish itself as the watchdog of the ruling class. I wrote at that time: “For the first time in the West, a so-called Communist Party proposes not only to organize the defeat of the proletariat, thus running the risk of being defeated along with it – as happened in Barcelona in 1936 – but it also proposes to triumph directly over the proletariat, together with the bourgeoisie. It is useful to declare this simple truth precisely in Bologna, which is the Disneyland of Italian Stalinism, but which, precisely for this reason, is also the stronghold of revolutionary anti-Stalinism.”<sup>573</sup>

Luciano Lama’s expulsion from the University was also an unexpected and resounding slap in the face to all the neo-Leninist, Maoist, Castroist, workerist and other small groups of people who had never ceased to prostitute themselves for Stalinism and its crimes, of which they had always been followers. There’s no need to name names here because their leaders are too well known to everyone due to the publicity that capitalism has decided to give to the most backward and impotent of its apparent enemies – those, I mean to say, who would soon be rinsing their mouths out with the “geometric power displayed on the Via Fani.”<sup>574</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Karl Wittfogel, *Il Dispotismo Orientale*, translated into Italian in 1968, 1980. [Translator: Karl Wittfogel’s *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* was originally published in English by Yale University Press in 1957.]

<sup>573</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: The manifesto “Benvenuti nella Città più libera del Mondo!” datelined Bologna, 23 September 1977. [Translator: “Welcome to the Freest City in the World!” included elsewhere in this volume.]

<sup>574</sup> See Franco Piperno’s *Dal terrorismo alla guerriglia*, December 1978, which refers to the “geometric power” that was allegedly demonstrated by the military capacity of the Red Brigades during their ambush and kidnapping of Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro on the Via Fani in March 1978.

### Repression and poetic justice.

To please the capitalists, and to get rid of a competing political force on their left, it was the orthodox Communists who had them [Piperno and many others] thrown in jail on 7 April 1979, which was a kind of poetic justice for these neo-Bolshevik Autonomist leaders. The trial lasted nine years, but the repression was unprecedented in scale, leading to over 25,000 arrests and investigations into 60,000 young people, which resulted in several centuries of pretrial detention and which, had they occurred in an Eastern European country, would have sparked worldwide outrage.<sup>575</sup> In Czechoslovakia during the same period, 200 arrests (plus a few more later) were made of supporters of Charter '77,<sup>576</sup> but these figures are incomparable to those of the coordinated repression perpetrated by the Italian Communists. The numbers of people subject to this repression are the best indicator of the depth and breadth of the revolt, and they also measure the infamy of both the Communists and the State, as well as that the subservient intellectuals who generally (with very rare exceptions) supported it. Because the complicity of the so-called “constitutional arc”<sup>577</sup> was so extensive, and because these facts were absolutely shameful, the order was given to censor the 1977 revolt completely. And this order was carried out. 1977 became taboo, one of the many shameful aspects of the Republic that was “born from the Resistance,” as was said, to cover them up.

The leaders of the Autonomists were then, after a few years in prison, welcomed with open arms by the French State, from which a farsighted Interior Minister expelled me as early as 1971 – this was a sign that these leaders were not so dangerous after all. Even today, refined and profound connoisseurs of history, they claim that the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 was “an event of sublime beauty” and that the terrorists themselves were “a bold handful of intellectuals.”<sup>578</sup> Probably educated in Hollywood.

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<sup>575</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Maria Rita Prette (ed.), *Gli organismi legali -7 aprile (inchiesta giudiziaria contro l'Autonomia)*, in *La mappa perduta*, 1 (Progetto Memoria), 2<sup>a</sup> ed., Dogliani, Sensibili alle foglie, novembre 2007, p. 265. [Translator: Maria Rita Prette (ed.), *The Legal Bodies - April 7 (Judicial Inquiry Against Autonomy)*, in *The Lost Map*, 1 (Project Memory), 2nd ed., Dogliani, Sensibili alle foglie, November 2007, p. 265.]

<sup>576</sup> Drafted in January 1977, Charta 77 was an informal civic initiative, the distribution of which the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic considered to be a political crime.

<sup>577</sup> The political parties that participated in the Constituent Assembly and played leading roles in drafting and approving the 1948 Republican Constitution: the Christian Democratic Party, the Italian Communist Party, the Italian Socialist Party, the Italian Democratic Socialist Party, the Italian Liberal Party and the Italian Republic Party.

<sup>578</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: “ ‘L’11 settembre? Un evento dalla bellezza sublime,’ lo scrive Franco Piperno, ex leader di Potere Operaio. I terroristi? ‘Un pugno audace de intellettuali,’ “ *Corriere della Sera*, Cronache, 11 Settembre 2011. [Translator: “ ‘September 11<sup>th</sup>? An event of sublime beauty.’ An editorial by Franco Piperno, former leader of Potere Operaio, published in the online edition of the *Quotidiano di Calabria*, is a gut punch and is sure to spark discussion. It’s a long tirade against the United States in which Al Qaeda terrorists are described as a ‘bold handful of intellectuals.’”

### **The destruction of the younger generations.**

It was with the repression of the '77 movement that the Italian State began a systematic destruction of the younger generations, one after another, now replaced by young migrants imported as slaves from Africa. To carry out this destruction, the State has used terrorism, unemployment, drugs, poverty, the police, the courts and prison.<sup>579</sup> But this destruction of Italian generations continues with impunity even today, with mass unemployment, immigration organized by the political Mafia, and the emigration of those young Italians who are forced to flee elsewhere to save themselves.

### **Refusal of compromise and obedience.**

1977 was also a reaction to Enrico Berlinguer's verbal squabbles about the "Historic Compromise" [of the Italian Communist Party] with the ruling class and against the working class, which was denied any opportunity to express itself, and to that other squabble about "parallel convergences" on the part of [Prime Minister] Aldo Moro. As usual, workers were asked to make sacrifices and remain silent, with inflation exceeding 20%, poverty rapidly growing, wages falling and youth unemployment at its highest, which has since become endemic. The 1977 that I knew and loved, however, was a rebellion so free that it's hard to imagine in today's domesticated society, in which there isn't even time to say "*Don't smoke!*" before everyone obeys this demand – a society in which everything that isn't mandatory is forbidden. Today, the world, as Giacomo Leopardi<sup>580</sup> would say, "has fallen into obedience."

### **An unforgivable movement.**

Against this monumental corruption and all those ill-conceived ideas, a radical and easygoing movement suddenly rose up, unforgivably, proudly and unexpectedly – a movement never before seen in Italy or anywhere else in Europe. It was a volcanic eruption of fire and lava, of bold and successful initiatives, that, with great care, blended together imagination, art, life, self-irony, sarcasm, politics, derision and subversion. Because it was unforgivable, this movement was never forgiven, but was instead slandered, vilified and repressed by all the powers that be and discredited by the intellectuals who were subservient to the Communist Party. And, even today, 40 years later, it remains scandalously covered over by a woolly, insincere veil [*un velo peloso*] of insolent censorious impudence that has been torn by the solitary courage with which Claudia Salaris, Pablo Echaurren<sup>581</sup> and a few other *happy few*<sup>582</sup> have treated it – people who were in fact among the protagonists of a movement that didn't need them, but which immediately aroused my enthusiasm.

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<sup>579</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: For the introduction and distribution of heroin in Italy in the 1970s, with the aim of crushing dissent, see "Operation Blue Moon," implemented by the CIA.

<sup>580</sup> A celebrated Italian philosopher, poet and essayist (1798-1837).

<sup>581</sup> Claudia Salaris and Pablo Echaurren (a married couple) have written extensively about Futurism and the movement of 1977 in Italy.

<sup>582</sup> English in original.

### First digression: Censor's prank.

I must make a digression here into the book of my memory.<sup>583</sup> In 1977, I was 28 years old and had already been living in voluntary confinement for over two years, isolated on a carefully chosen Tuscan hill, because I was a constant target of the police, the Carabinieri and the anti-terrorism prosecutor Pier Luigi Vigna. Vigna had already had me arrested and detained, albeit for only eight days, in March 1975 in Florence, while I was heading for Milan, because I'd been accused of transporting weapons of war. These weapons had indeed been placed in my car – I don't know whether they were planted there by the Carabinieri, the police or the *Guardia di Finanza* [the Italian finance police], because at the checkpoint where I was stopped, all three of these police forces were, remarkably, on the scene. In reality, on that very day, I was carrying something more dangerous than weapons, namely, the manuscript of my book, which was later published under the pseudonym of "Censor." In that pamphlet, which was titled *Rapporto Veridico sulle ultime opportunità di salvare il Capitalismo in Italia*,<sup>584</sup> I pretended to be an old, ultraconservative, cynical and nonchalant<sup>585</sup> bourgeois who, of course, admitted the demonstrable usefulness of the State's recourse to terrorism, starting with the attack upon the Piazza Fontana,<sup>586</sup> in its attempt to defame and repress subversives and proletarians, and thus spare us a civil war, but who harshly criticized the subsequent police and judicial missteps [*dérappages*].

As for the Communists, Censor asserted that we, the bourgeois, had received from them all the necessary proof that we should bring them into the governing coalition in times of crisis, to fight against the working class – something at which they had demonstrated they were excellent everywhere in the world – only to then throw them out once the crisis was over. Which was what in fact happened and continues to happen today, only their names, but not their professions, have changed, and this happened despite the fact that the Communists' hand basket was upended by the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro in 1978, which was ordered by forces within the system that were irrationally hostile to the use of the Communists against the working class. These were the same forces that preferred to use, as a *deus ex machina*, the ineffable Red Brigades instead of the Communists, as, later on, they used Bin Laden after the collapse of the Soviet Union and, today, the Islamic State. These were, and in part remain, *inconceivable* things – things that will disturb anyone's false consciousness, in any case. My goal in "Operation Censor" was to use the enemy's methods, by creating a *false-flag* pamphlet, by making my enemies say the *unspeakable*. I therefore demonstrated experimentally and scientifically how easy it actually is to deceive the general population, and the enemy itself, with the same methods used in the staging of terrorism. In this way, I exposed the fraud and deceived the deceivers using their own methods.

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<sup>583</sup> *del libro della mia memoria* is a phrase that appears in Dante's *Vita Nuova* (1293).

<sup>584</sup> *Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy*, elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>585</sup> *disinvolto* can also mean "insolent."

<sup>586</sup> There had been at least two terrorist attacks prior to the bombing of the Piazza Fontana: one targeted the Trade Fair and Railway Station in Milan (25 April 1969); the other targeted several passenger trains (8-9 August 1969).

## Second digression: the Censor Scandal.

The pamphlet was published shortly thereafter<sup>587</sup> in an edition of 520 numbered copies, in elegant monotype typography and on special paper for the bibliophiles, and was distributed by mail to the elite: bankers, politicians, journalists and even Pope Paul VI. Each copy bore a typographical dedication *ad personam*.<sup>588</sup>

I dedicated this *Truthful Report* to the memory of the humanist banker Raffaele Mattioli, who had passed away two years earlier, and with whom I had been a young friend, and this fact further muddied the trail that could have led to me. The publisher, Sergio Scotti Camuzzi, was later thanked in letters from Giulio Andreotti, Aldo Moro, Pietro Nenni, Giorgio Amendola, Guido Carli, Bruno Visentini, Gianni Agnelli, the Superior Council of the Judiciary, the Prefect of Milan and others. All the journalists, but especially the Left-wing ones, who were eagerly awaiting the “Historic Compromise,” augmented their flattery by weaving dithyrambs in favor of the wealthy and elitist Censor, whose favors they were already vying for, even before they knew who he was. They seemed unperturbed by his extreme cynicism concerning the use of terrorism and the Communists against the working class and, more particularly, against the poor in general, which certainly wasn’t very *politically correct*.<sup>589</sup> Senator Merzagora, the former interim president of the Senate and of the Republic, Guido Carli, the Governor of the Bank of Italy, who signed himself Bancor, and even Eugenio Montale, who later wrote me a letter about it, were suspected to be the author. The book became highly sought-after and aroused morbid curiosity. The publisher Mursia published five subsequent Editions later that same year.<sup>590</sup>

## In prison.

My main concern on the day of my arrest was to hide the manuscript, which I immediately gave to my partner, Katharine Scott, who was headed to Venice, along with her violin and briefcase. When the police car in which we were being transported headed for the headquarters of the Florence police, I began singing (in French) a shortened version of Gilbert Bécaud’s famous song “Et maintenant.”<sup>591</sup> The words, changed for the occasion, became instructions to my companion to save the manuscript, defend herself and then hide. Thus did the manuscript, along with our baggage, enter the Santa Verdiana women’s prison in Florence, where it stayed for two days, without arousing any suspicion, before being released and taken to

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<sup>587</sup> A letter from Guy Debord to Sanguinetti dated 20 May 1975 suggests that the original publication date was supposed to be early or mid May: “The unfortunate delay in all this pushes us back, concerning the translation [of the pamphlet into French], to publication in September, the beginning of June being the limit point for the Parisian edition.” *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 5: Janvier 1973-Decembre 1978*, op. cit., p. 268. There were further delays, as indicated by a letter from Debord to Sanguinetti dated 24 July 1975: “Something was assuredly lost on 15 June, but it is true that the passing of this deadline means that there is a different and perhaps even greater advantage, *if the work is distributed well*, despite the season and if the force of its delivery remains strong.” *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>588</sup> Latin in original: personalized.

<sup>589</sup> English in original.

<sup>590</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Censor, Rapporto Veridico sulle ultime opportunità di salvare il Capitalismo in Italia*, Scotti Camuzzi Editore, Milano, July 1975. Reprinted several times, under the same title, by Editore Mursia.

<sup>591</sup> Words by Pierre Delanoë, music by Gilbert Bécaud, sung by Gilbert Bécaud (1961).

a safe place. My singing was so unashamed that a policeman asked me, “Excuse me, but we are arresting you. What reason do you have for singing?” The person who enforced the arrest warrant was none other than the famous police commissioner Giuseppe Impallomeni (P2 card no. 2213).<sup>592</sup>

If the manuscript had been found, I wouldn’t have been released from prison before being forced to reveal its provenance, and I already had to defend myself against the charge of weapons possession, which I did by very simply telling Pier Luigi Vigna, “You put the weapons there, and I’ll prove it.” If I remember correctly, conviction on charges of possessing and transporting weapons of war carried a minimum sentence of 12 years behind bars. The manuscript, on the other hand, constituted a subversive fraud, which was very dangerous for its bearer and, if revealed, would have been used against me even before it came to light. During the short time I spent in prison at Murate, I didn’t know the manuscript’s fate, but, as soon as I was released, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that it had passed undetected and unharmed through the bars of the women’s prison. So, I was happy: I was free, I could still do harm, and I could take revenge on my enemies. A friend of Boccaccio, Paola da Certaldo, considers these facts the first two “joys” of being in the world: “The first joy is to take revenge [...] The second joy is to get out of prison.”<sup>593</sup> I hid in Bergamo and set to work every day, preparing the edition, undisturbed in the Piazza Vecchia library, in front of the Palazzo della Ragione.

### **Proof of Censor’s nonexistence.**

The scandal was such a success, and the secrecy of the operation was so impenetrable (no one knew except Guy Debord, Professor Ariberto Mignoli, Professor Sergio Scotti Camuzzi, who was the second publisher of the pamphlet, and another accomplice),<sup>594</sup> that I myself was forced, six months later, to reveal the nonexistence of Censor. In any case, I could not keep the secret any longer, because, in November 1975, in Milan, intelligence officials had ordered Scott Camuzzi to reveal Censor’s real name within 24 hours.

I then published another pamphlet, again in monotype, in 520 numbered copies, on 15 January 1976: *Prove dell’inesistenza di Censor / Enunciate dal suo Autore*. It was delivered first to Giorgio Bocca, who had been the first to be mistaken about Censor’s identity, in his commentary in *Il Giorno*, and published at the same time in the first or second issue of *La Repubblica*, the new daily newspaper, in order to reach the maximum audience.<sup>595</sup>

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<sup>592</sup> *Propaganda Due* was the name of a super-secret Italian Masonic lodge that was headed by Licio Gelli, a banker who was suspected of organizing the terrorist attack upon the Bologna train station that took place on 2 August 1980, and made up of thousands of influential Italian journalists, politicians, businessmen and military officers who planned to recapture Italy in the event of a Communist revolution.

<sup>593</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Paolo da Certaldo, *Libro di Buoni Costumi*, §276, in Vittore Branca, *Mercanti Scrittori*, Milano: Rusconi (1986).

<sup>594</sup> In a letter to the Italian Situationist Paolo Salvadori dated 16 March 1975, Guy Debord refers to “a certain literary project that [Sanguinetti] had to hide from everyone *except you* and that perhaps has been presented discretely to you alone.” *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 5: Janvier 1973-Décembre 1978*, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>595</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Gianfranco Sanguinetti, *Prove dell’Inesistenza di Censor enunciate dal suo autore*, Milano, January 1976. [Translator: *Proofs of the Nonexistence of Censor / As Enunciated by his Author*. See elsewhere in this volume.]

This second pamphlet plunged all those who had lauded the first one into irremediable consternation and dismay, and because they'd given me the opportunity to experience their servility, infamy, ignorance and stupidity, I mocked them. The incipit set the tone for what followed: "Those who have until now regretted not knowing the identity of the author of the *Truthful Report* will now regret knowing it. Those who were scandalized by Censor's anonymity will now have reason to be scandalized by something else entirely. Those who praised Censor, believing they were currying favor with a powerful figure, will be ashamed [...]" etc.

I was never forgiven, and I never did anything to be forgiven. In fact, I did worse. An opportunity arose to do so, precisely because of the 1977 movement, as we will see later.

### **The movement's greatest weakness.**

One of the greatest weaknesses of the '77 movement was its lack of awareness of the phenomenon of terrorism, which, then as now, was used as a political tool. But Italy was, as I've written several times, the global experimental laboratory for modern false-flag terrorism. Saying so today is a banality, because this type of terrorism has been very successful and has been employed against the general population almost weekly by and in every country. It never targets banks, politicians or those in power: it always targets the poor. But back then, its deployment wasn't so obvious. The phenomenon's sheer novelty demanded attention that wasn't there, and I tried to attract attention to it starting in 1969,<sup>596</sup> then again in 1975 and 1977, and again thereafter. And so here I must make another digression on terrorism because it would be decisive in Italy for over 15 years, and subsequently in the rest of the world.

### **Another digression on terrorism.**

Most of the participants in the movement were younger than I was, and so they hadn't had the opportunity to experience firsthand the criminal use the State had, since 1969, been making of terrorism, which politicians, magistrates and journalists presented as the ultimate form of subversion when, quite the opposite, it was (and still is) the ultimate, cowardly and hateful bulwark of capitalism and the State's secret services against class struggle. The extra-parliamentary groups, in their irremediable poverty, generally fell for the deception and even foolishly and ambiguously admired the "comrades who make mistakes," and sometimes they themselves "made mistakes" and ended up like rats in a trap. The Communists knew everything about what was going on, but remained silent, as always, simply in order to profit from it. No other party had any interest in telling the truth. It was then that the game of threats and blackmail, of bargaining, collusion and corruption began in Italy – a game that has only spread and worsened. Living in Milan in the 1960s, I had seen firsthand what was happening, and I understood it more out of necessity than choice, because lives were at stake. And many people close to me, or my friends, died or were unjustly sentenced to long prison terms because of it.

### **The Reichstag burns.**

After having taken refuge in Switzerland following the bombing at the Piazza Fontana, the Italian Situationists delegated one of themselves to return to Milan and, on 19 December 1969, together with three trusted friends, published the manifesto that we had agreed upon, titled

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<sup>596</sup> 1969 was the year in which *Il Reichstag Brucia?* was published by the Italian section of the Situationist International.

*Il Reichstag Brucia?* and signed by “The Friends of the International.”<sup>597</sup> This manifesto claimed that the massacre was the work of the Italian secret services and that its purpose was to target and defame the proletariat in order to put an end to the class struggles of the “Hot Autumn” of 1969. Among other things, it stated: “The direct and indirect results of the attacks are their goal [...] It is Power itself that, striving for its own totalitarian affirmation, has spectacularly expressed its own terrorist negation.”

The Piazza Duomo, the Piazza Fontana and other symbolic places in Milan, such as the service areas of some large factories, were plastered overnight with copies of this manifesto, which were, it was made clear, generated by a “stolen mimeograph machine.” But no newspaper, no magazine, dared to quote from or reproduce the text, and this was understandable. It aroused distrust even among members of the extreme Left, who remained silent. It is curious that gullible people like the Italian extra-parliamentarians were distrustful when faced with the simple truth if it did not come from some source that they considered to be “authorized.”<sup>598</sup>

### **The Piazza Fontana trial.**<sup>599</sup>

As already mentioned, I decided to drop the mask regarding Censor’s pamphlet at the end of November 1975 because the police had summoned me to Florence in order to inform me of a summons to testify at the Piazza Fontana trial, which had been moved to Catanzaro, which was as far away from Milan as possible. Taking the utmost precautions, I disappeared from all the addresses with which I was associated, because several witnesses had already vanished, never to return. Traveling under an assumed name, I presented myself to Judge Gianfranco Migliaccio, a cultured young gentleman from southern Italy. On the advice of Guy Debord, I provided him with a very brief written statement, in which I reiterated that I had no judicial evidence to present to the Italian State, which, moreover, was not my duty to provide. I asserted that I was merely the witness to an historic event, and I considered history the only tribunal worthy of respect. This judge had already read Censor’s pamphlet with enthusiasm. He expressed disappointment with this testimony, which was of little help to him, and he asked me why I had so little faith in the judiciary. But above all, he asked me what I would have done if I had been in his place, which was a question I never expected, but which demonstrated his sincere good faith.

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<sup>597</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti:* The Situationist in question was Eduardo Rothe, originally from Venezuela. Cristina Sensehauser, Puni Cesoni and Filippo Orsini also participated in this meritorious operation. [*Translator:* the reader might already be aware that this tract was translated into English and widely distributed on the internet in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks that took place in the United States on 11 September 2001.]

<sup>598</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti:* The only exception to the silence was *Bombe Sangue Capitale*, the leaflet published in Milan in January 1970 by the libertarian group Ludd – Consigli proletari. [*Translator:* in November 1969, this group, described by Guy Debord as “pro-situ students,” had published a “likable” tract called *Avere per fine il movimento reale* (“To have as goal the real movement”). See the letter from Guy Debord to Paolo Salvadori dated 24 November 1969, in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 4: Janvier 1969-Décembre 1972*, op. cit., p. 162.

<sup>599</sup> The trial of the main defendants, Pietro Valpreda and Mario Merlino, both anarchists, began on 23 February 1972. On 18 March 1974, in Catanzaro, two more defendants were added: Franco Freda and Giovanni Ventura. By 27 January 1975, a neo-fascist and journalist named Guido Giannettini had also been added to the list of those accused.

I asked him if we could talk alone, and he ushered the clerk out. I told him there were two possibilities: either he wanted to advance his career in the judiciary, and then it would be better for him to validate all the lies of the official version; or he could go down in history as a fair and courageous judge. “And what would you do in that case?” he asked. I bluntly replied, “I would start by arresting General Gian Adelio Maletti, the head of the Secret Service’s Section D, and Captain Labruna.” It emerged later that both were members of the P2 Lodge.

We parted on excellent terms, and I have always had respect for this man. No sooner said than done: in February 1976, the General and the Captain were arrested; they were convicted a few months later in Catanzaro. Among the other things, General Maletti, when cornered, revealed the CIA’s involvement in supplying the explosives used at the Piazza Fontana. Judge Gianfranco Migliaccio will therefore go down in history for having written the following in the indictment of Maletti and Labruna: “The subversive forces responsible for the attacks [of December 12, 1969] were part of the SID in 1969.”<sup>600</sup>

### **In the Pythagorean places.**

When telling a story, even a dramatic one, there are always comical and sometimes paradoxical twists that put things back into a realistic perspective. And so here I will offer a digression on my trip to the Pythagorean places. Guy Debord, whom I had visited in Paris – illegally, having been expelled from France<sup>601</sup> – around mid-November 1975, in order to worsen the scandal concerning the revelation of Censor’s identity, had anticipated my warning that the position of a witness is more dangerous than that of a defendant. He expressed his deepest concern about my trip to Calabria and the entire period preceding my testimony, as well as about the publication of my second pamphlet, the one in which I planned to cast aside Censor’s mask, which he rightly considered to be the most critical of the two. He therefore urged me to organize my protection in a “military” manner. I abandoned the two houses in which I lived and took refuge in an unassuming 15th-century villa in San Domenico di Fiesole, which had been donated by Cosimo de’ Medici to Marsilio Ficino – a place where an enviable peacefulness reigned, where there was a splendid garden and an exterior gallery with two high-reliefs that depicted Plato and Marilio, who was Plato’s first modern translator and interpreter.

In the meantime, I had asked a famous gynecologist in Rome, who was a neighbor of mine in the countryside, if he knew anyone in Calabria who was powerful and capable of helping me out. He suggested a banker whose wife had had her uterus removed by him (so that she could later show off her body in a bikini, he told me) without ever asking for payment for the operation. In gratitude, the banker arranged for a truckload of sheep to be delivered to the gynecologist’s farm every year. When I arrived in Calabria around mid-afternoon under an assumed name with my partner, I rang up the banker, saying I was a friend of a friend and needed advice. Within a half-hour, he was at my hotel, where we exchanged pleasantries and he offered us whiskey. Afterwards, he said, “Please excuse, Madame, but we men must talk alone.” We two walked away. He quickly came to the point. He asked me from whom I needed

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<sup>600</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Cf. Gianni Barbacetto, *Il Grande Vecchio*, among other accounts.

<sup>601</sup> On the orders of Raymond Marcellin, the French Minister of the Interior, on 27 July 1971, after Sanguinetti had returned from a trip to Portugal during which he delivered the typescript of a Portuguese translation of Debord’s *La Société du Spectacle* to a publisher. No charges against Sanguinetti were ever lodged.

protection and for how long. I replied that I needed his protection until the next day and all the way to Catanzaro, and that I needed to be protected from the police and the secret services, against whom I was going to testify. He didn't bat an eye. The courthouse in Catanzaro was more than an hour's drive away. He told me that there was no problem, that he would take of everything and that from now on I would be his guest. And so, later that evening, we went for a traditional after-dinner stroll down the city's main street. It was an immediately instructive experience: when we passed, everyone took off their hats, but never my host. The conversation was pleasant and light, at least until my partner had the unfortunate idea of asking our host about the Mafia situation in Calabria. I gave her a light tap on the shin. Our host stopped, turned slowly toward her and, with a surprised expression, asked, "Which country do you come from Madame?" "England," she replied. I will always remember his comment. "Ah! I see you read a lot of newspapers in England." Then, after this incident, the walk continued peacefully.

The dinner at his villa was magnificent. He asked me what year I was born and, learning that I was born in 1948, we drank excellent Cirò 1948 all evening. Around midnight, a car came to pick us up and, as he said goodbye, he told me that two large, dark Fiats would arrive at the hotel at seven o'clock the next morning and that we were to get into the first one. Indeed, at seven o'clock sharp the next morning, the cars were already waiting for us. The driver was in the first one, and four men were in the second. We arrived in Catanzaro in little over an hour. I said goodbye to my escort and entered the courthouse to testify before Judge Gianfranco Migliaccio. After my testimony, I felt much lighter, and I went with my partner to an old tavern in which a small barrel of Marsala hung behind the bar. "How much is in it?" I asked the innkeeper, and he said that there were only a few liters left. Since I needed a small barrel to store the Vin Santo I produced in Tuscany, I expressed my interest. "If it were empty, I'd give it to you," he replied. "Then let's empty it," I added and offered some to all the customers in the inn until the barrel was empty. And then I left Catanzaro, happy and with that barrel under my arm.

### **My second expulsion from France.**

A few weeks later, on 11 February 1976, I was recognized at the French border while riding a night train, pulled off it, expelled from the country and handed over to the Swiss police, who, after a brief investigation, released me. This incident, which occurred almost simultaneously with the publication of the French edition of *Censor*, outraged Guy Debord, who avenged me by having Gérard Lebovici buy a half-page of space in the daily newspaper *Le Monde*, in which Debord's "Declaration" concerning me was published. This statement remains a literary masterpiece of irony and Swiftian black humor. Because it was published as an advertisement, it was printed without the censors of that newspaper, which was being cheerfully and cruelly mocked [for not covering the story], taking any notice.<sup>602</sup> We were not bored.

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<sup>602</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Le Monde*, 24 February 1976. [Translator: this "Déclaration des 'Éditions Champ libre'" in part states, "Gianfranco Sanguinetti [...], having presented himself at the French border on 11 February, was turned back due to the application of a refusal-of-stay decision taken on 21 July 1971 by Marcellin, the Minister of the Interior. We know that this kind of administrative manifestation of national security requires no judicial approval, cannot be appealed and thus is permanent. Even though the political regimes in Europe want to make small changes in their continuity, this naturally does not have any bearing on those who contest all of those regimes equally."

### **The usefulness of digressions.**

This digression on some early signs of my 1977 is perhaps unnecessary, but it is useful for helping younger people understand the climate in which we then lived. Even today, after reading my book *Terrorismo e dello Stato*,<sup>603</sup> there are people who ask me why I wasn't simply killed. After all, I was hated, not only by the police, but also by all the Marxist-Leninists, the Maoists, the Communists, etc., and nothing would have been easier than to fake a settling of scores in the subversive camp, without even inconveniencing the police who had in any case thoroughly infiltrated it. As in all things, Machiavelli would say, one can conclude that, if the worst didn't happen, it was partly due to luck and partly due to virtue, that is to say, prudence.

### **The spirit of the times.**

The spirit of the times was very different back then from what it is today: life was dangerous, but people felt free. Neither I nor anyone else would have dreamed of talking about these events 40 years later. We didn't know if, come tomorrow, we'd be locked up in prison for 20 years or perhaps killed. We lived each day as if it were our last, and for many the last day came early. But at least they put up a fight. Today, however, people die even more often than back then, without having lived, when those who govern over and through terror – that is to say, politics and the Deep State – decide to perpetrate massacres in New York, Boston, Madrid, London, Paris, Brussels, Nice, Berlin, Istanbul, Manchester, Tehran and elsewhere, come tomorrow. Because it is with terror and fear that one governs everywhere in this world. These massacres cost little, but have a huge impact, changing the entire social climate, and they allow for the establishment of a perpetual and widespread state of fear, distrust and emergency, against which there is no revolt. The script is tried and tested, and it's always the same. After each massacre, the State immediately kills the person or persons it instantly designates as the culprit(s), without any further judicial formalities, and reassures the population that everything is now under control – until the next massacre takes place.

Back then people didn't succumb to fear. Every massacre, every war, every assassination, concerned us and was an occasion for new struggles. Today, after every new massacre, the masses remain silent. Those who speak, condemn and pretend to be indignant are only the hypocritical beneficiaries of those massacres – the government ministers who issue liberticidal decrees and the journalists whose function is to corroborate all the *fake news*<sup>604</sup> and to validate the official lies.<sup>605</sup>

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<sup>603</sup> *On Terrorism and the State* (1979). See elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>604</sup> English in original.

<sup>605</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: See the following two texts: Gianfranco Sanguinetti, "Paris 13.11: Morale Operation," published online by Mediapart, 2 December 2015, and Gianfranco Sanguinetti, "De l'Utilité du Terrorisme, considérée par rapport à l'usage qu'on fait," published online by Mediapart, 8 December 2015. These interventions were then translated and published several times in English, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Czech, etc. [*Translator*: see elsewhere in this volume for the English translations of these two texts under the titles "Paris 13 November 2015: A Moral Operation" and "The Utility of Terrorism, Considered with Respect to the Usage Made of It," respectively.]

### **Psychological operations and low-intensity warfare.**

Today, people think that massacres only affect others, those who get killed. But they are in fact committed against the living; indeed, in their submissive, perverse and nihilistic way of thinking, the survivors are now grateful to the States for having been temporarily “defended” from severe police measures and thus spared, at least for the time being. The crowds, offered as burnt offerings to Power, which has invented and fabricated all of the cruel, fictitious enemies that it needs and are well documented in films produced by propaganda agencies, are resigned like lambs at Easter. These are *Low-Intensity Operations*<sup>606</sup> and psychological operations (PSYOPS), which are well codified in military literature and which perfectly achieve their goal: to frighten and demoralize the populations against whom one always governs. Advertising, propaganda and politics all treat the populations as if they were small children. Terrorism is a child’s tale told to instill fear, support the pursuit of security and enforce obedience.

In the 1970s, such submission to arbitrary power would have revolted us. Today, however, we are witnessing a Leopardian massacre of illusions,<sup>607</sup> in which the acceptance of lies and deception concerning the latest massacre have become the norm, not cowardice, shame or complicity. People have become accomplices to the lies they listen to without reacting. They have not yet learned that they cannot allow themselves to be governed innocently.

### **Pavlovian experiments.**

In the 1970s, spectacular terrorism only existed in Italy and, to a lesser extent, in Germany. Because its experimental Pavlovian deployment against the deceived masses had, as expected, produced good results, it was then used everywhere. My amazement greatly increased when I saw that the 1977 movement was so defenseless against provocation, so naïve and imprudent when faced with the issues of weapons and terrorism – which were, in fact, effectively used to defeat it.

### **The importance of naming one’s enemies.**

It was precisely about these topics that, in 1997, I spoke in Rome at assemblies that brought together many activists and published two manifestoes, which were distributed at demonstrations in Rome and Bologna. These manifestoes clearly demonstrated my high degree of concern about the movement’s lack of theoretical and practical clarity on several crucial issues: the potential scope of repression by the Communists and the State, bureaucratic manipulation, the use of weapons and terrorism.<sup>608</sup> This pre-insurrectionary movement that had fought and named almost all of its enemies, *except terrorism*, was clearly destined to be defeated by it.

Everyone who participated in these events knows that the atmosphere back then was one of great enthusiasm, generosity, creativity, friendliness, tolerance, optimism and good spirits.

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<sup>606</sup> English in original.

<sup>607</sup> See Giacomo Leopardi, *Le Massacre des Illusions* (Paris: Éditions Allia, 1993), for which Sanguinetti wrote a publicity flier titled *À l’église avec Manzoni, avec Leopardi à la guerre!* (“To the Church with Manzoni . . . With Leopardi to War!”).

<sup>608</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: *Benvenuti Nella città più Libera Del Mondo!* and *Avviso al Proletariato Sugli Avvenimenti Delle Ultime Ore*. [Translator: “Welcome to the Freest City in the World” and “Notice to the Proletariat About the Events of the Last Few Hours,” both included in this volume.]

Trust in other people was still present. Many young people, even unaccompanied girls, could still be seen hitchhiking along the streets. Today, this is unthinkable. The public's mood has changed. Distrust reigns supreme, indifference and cowardice are fostered everywhere.

### **Remedy for everything.**

I often went to Rome and, just as often, [Metropolitan] “Indians” came to visit me in the countryside. I thought that the most useful thing I could do was to arm their minds. I began writing pamphlets that would eventually be compiled into a book, which would be called *Rimedio a Tutto*<sup>609</sup> and bring together around 15 thematic pamphlets, each organized as a chapter, each with its own title. The complex events of that year, the rapid decline of the movement, and the extraordinary events of the following year, which included the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, meant that I decided not to publish that book, but only the chapter on terrorism, and a preface, because it seemed the most urgent thing to get done. These texts were rejected by the publisher Mondadori, and so I later published them myself, in my own name, under the title *Del Terrorismo e della Stato. / La teoria e la pratica del terrorismo / per la prima volta divulgate*.<sup>610</sup> My “Notice to the Reader” concluded with this statement: “To those who fear the truth, I want to offer several truths that will make them fearful, and to those who have no fear of it, I want to offer a reason that proves that the terrorism of the truth is the only one that benefits the proletariat.”

### **Free de Sade!**

A reminder of the events of 1977 comes from rereading my correspondence with Debord, which are part of my archives.<sup>611</sup> I can glean some relevant information from them, recorded in real time, which I briefly summarize below.

On 31 January and 1 and 2 February [1977], I was gratified by the conclusion of two trials and a case in Milan, which was ultimately postponed, against the weekly magazine *L'Europeo*, which had refused to publish my denunciation of a fake interview with me. In Florence, I was sentenced to a paltry penalty for the affair of the weapons of war, which were planted and discovered in my car two years earlier – a fine plus reimbursement of the court's costs, which was a sign that the prosecution's case had miserably collapsed. Regarding the events of February in Rome, I wrote that, for the first time, a young proletarianized generation had explicitly identified the Communists and the labor unions' police forces, as well as capitalism, as its enemies. I reported that in Bologna, the Communists' stronghold and showcase city, armored vehicles had been used to repress demonstrations, as had been done in Budapest and Prague. On the walls of Rome, I recounted having read this singular and admirable demand, among many others: “Free de Sade!” I discussed the phenomenon of free, “pirate” radio stations and their essential function as a communication hub: Radio Alice had already been shut down on 12 March. In Rome, people were shouting, “Tanks in Chile, unions in Italy!” and fleeing trade unionists responded with “Siberia! Siberia!” The conflict was constant, and the Stalinist

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<sup>609</sup> *Remedy to Everything*. For its preface, its dedication, notice to the reader and the chapter about terrorism, see elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>610</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: Milan, March 1979; second edition, expanded, April 1980.

<sup>611</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: These archives are now located at Yale University, at the Beinecke Library, thanks to the tireless work of Kevin Repp, who collects and curates the archives of the postwar European avant-garde for this library.

bureaucrats were given no respite. The Communist Mayor of Bologna had sent a wreath to the funeral of the Francesco Lorusso, a student who'd been killed by the Carabinieri, but the wreath was refused and returned to its sender.

### **The Communists in full regalia.**

The Communists, already decked out for their announced marriage to the Christian Democrats, and smug and embittered by their electoral success, desperately sought to prove themselves worthy of the bride and to gain a seat in the government, and threw off their masks and repressed the movement, which, however, was beginning to spread to the factories. On 6 April, over 350 factory councils sent between 3,000 and 5,000 delegates to the Teatro Lirico in Milan, which was an assembly disavowed by the Communists. The workers argued for the need to open a new phase in the conflict, no longer defensive, but counter-offensive. Thus the foundations of *dual power* were being laid. These delegates convened a national assembly of delegates at the end of the month, which, as I said, was in reality equivalent to a call to all Italian workers to elect their own recallable delegates and thus bypass the unions. The situationists had always been resolutely in favor of workers' councils in which each delegate could be recalled at any time by the rank and file. I pointed out that, because of the risk of the movement spreading further and becoming even more radical, violent repression and even police provocations could be expected. The "Historic Compromise" had suddenly become obsolete before it was even born, and, in any case, it could no longer be presented as a so-called victory for the working class. It is now known that the double game of the Communist Party, which had claimed to be independent from Moscow, was confirmed by the fact that on 31 March 1977, it received a million dollars from the KGB.<sup>612</sup> All suppositions that Moscow was opposed to the "Historic Compromise" were contradicted by this fact.

### **Censor's enemies.**

It is known now that Richard Gardner, the American Ambassador to Italy, later wrote that Eugenio Scalfari, the publisher of *La Repubblica*, had told him in April 1977 that, "only when Berlinguer takes control of the police will there be civil peace in Italy." Gardner also said that, "Leopoldo Pirelli did the same thing shortly thereafter, expressing the same opinion, which I was beginning to hear from a worrying number of Italian business leaders, namely, that to solve Italy's economic problems, there was no other choice than to let the Communists into the government."<sup>613</sup> The business community was siding with Censor, whose enemies remained Licio Gelli, the secret services and the police forces, which were completely infiltrated by members of the P2 Lodge, the Americans and the fascists, all of whom actively collaborated in the staging the spectacle of false-flag terrorism, both Red and Black, which was then called the "strategy of tension."

### **Sneers.**

I wrote to Debord to tell him that in Rome I'd seen a bookstand in front of the University that was more than half-filled with pirated Situationist editions. Various Situationist slogans

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<sup>612</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: See the chronology on the website of the Fondazione Cipriani.

<sup>613</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: Ibid. [Translator: see Richard N. Gardner, *Mission Italy: On the Front Lines of the Cold War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).]

were plastered on the walls. They included “The revolution will be a celebration or it won’t be anything at all” and, in French, “*Ne travaillez jamais!*”<sup>614</sup> I told him that the Metropolitan Indians were the spearhead of the spontaneously formed groups that best expressed the spirit and modernity of the movement. Standing in front of a burned-out armored vehicle in Rome, while the police defended the trade unionists, I’d heard them chant these cruel, sneering words: “We don’t want armored vehicles anymore, send us tanks, or we won’t play anymore.” In Bologna, there was graffiti that proclaimed, “Gasoline is expensive, make good use of it.” I also told him that weapons had appeared among the Autonomists, who were mistakenly considered to be more radical than the Indians, and that this group, more structured than the Indians, was at great risk of infiltration and manipulation. I spoke at 8 o’clock in the evening of 5 April, two days after the repression began, at a meeting in the University’s auditorium. The assembly was free but rather weak. Bureaucrats and police officers were in the audience; they didn’t express themselves but listened attentively. My remarks touched on three points: (1) how to avoid and discourage repression; (2) the need to send a delegation to Milan on the night of 5 April to attend the assembly at the Lirico the next day, with a specific mandate to establish direct contact with all the factory councils and to maintain in constant contact with everyone; and (3) after naming and insulting every bureaucratic group, I called for a demonstration the next day in the very center of the city, at the Campo dei Fiori.

#### **Unassailable remedies against repression.**

My speech concerning repression was a slavish détournement, if not an outright plagiarism, of what Machiavelli puts into the mouth of an insurgent during the Ciompi revolt in Florence (*Istorie Fiorentine*, Book III, Chapter XIII). Since I don’t remember my exact words, I will quote here the essence of Machiavelli’s speech, from which mine was directly taken.

“We must now seek two things, and have two goals for our deliberations: one, that we may not be punished for the things done in the past; the other, that we may live with greater freedom and satisfaction than in the past. Therefore, wishing to be forgiven for old errors, we must commit new ones, doubling the evils, multiplying the arson and theft, and strive to have many companions in this, because when many err, no one is punished, and because small infractions are punished, while large and serious ones are rewarded; and when many suffer, few seek revenge, because universal injuries are borne with more patience than individual ones. Therefore, multiplying evils will more easily allow us to achieve impunity and will open the way to obtain what we desire for our freedom. We must therefore use force when the opportunity arises, and none is better than this, since our enemies are disunited, the government, uncertain, the magistrates dismayed. This course is bold and dangerous, but where necessity presses, boldness is judged to be prudence, and one never escapes danger without danger; and when one sees prison and death awaiting, remaining quiet is more dangerous

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<sup>614</sup> “Never work!”

than taking action, because in the first case the evils are certain and in the second case they are uncertain [...]”<sup>615</sup>

So much for the repression. I asked for an immediate vote concerning the delegation to Milan and the mandate to be given to it. The same was true for the demonstration the next day in Campo dei Fiori.

Despite the atrocities that I had described, I was never interrupted, and at the end there was applause. The assembly’s weakness, however, was demonstrated by the facts that it did not immediately put my demands up for a vote, instead postponing such a vote until much later, when the delegates were already due to catch the train to Milan, and that it moved the demonstration on 7 April from Campo dei Fiori to the far outskirts of the city. There was a bureaucracy still in the making, which dared not express itself, but which was beginning to weigh in on the decisions. It was late, and many were leaving.

### **De Martino’s provocation and kidnapping.**

Shortly afterward, toward the end of the same evening of 5 April, news spread of the provocation that I had feared – the highly unusual kidnapping in Naples of the son of Francesco De Martino, the former Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party. De Martino was on the verge of being elected President of the Republic; the then-President, Giovanni Leone, was implicated in several scandals and was about to resign. The real problem was that Francesco De Martino was a friend of the Communists, and thus he needed to be discredited and eliminated from the presidential race. The kidnapping was an attempt at political diversion, a poisoning of the public’s mood, and a distraction of public opinion away from real current events, from the Milan Assembly of Councils, and towards other things, like the passage of repressive laws. It remains highly enigmatic and unexplained to this day.<sup>616</sup> First claimed by the NAP,<sup>617</sup> then by many others, the kidnapping ended when the family paid a ransom of one billion lire, which was an enormous sum. However, it was a botched operation, and a poor dress rehearsal for the kidnapping of Aldo Moro the following year. Years later, in 1980, a certain Vincenzo Tene, who had been charged and convicted of kidnapping Guido De Martino, wrote to me from the prison at Spoleto (he’d read my book on terrorism). “According to Justice,” he wrote, “I was convicted as the instigator and executor, while the reality is very different.”<sup>618</sup> But he didn’t go into detail. The real instigators were in fact never discovered, and three of those convicted were murdered during a temporary work release from prison. Italians are the most refined people in Europe. Stendhal said that there are things [in Italy] that cannot be understood in countries where there is less need for precautions.

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<sup>615</sup> *The Florentine History*, written by Niccolò Machiavelli, translated from the Italian by Ninian Hill Thomson, M.A., in two volumes, *Volume I* (London: Archibald Constable and Co. Limited, 1906) pp. 188-189; translation modified to match Sanguinetti’s quotation of the original.

<sup>616</sup> Abducted on 5 April 1977, Guido De Martino was held prisoner for 40 days. He was released on 15 May.

<sup>617</sup> The Nucleus of Armed Proletarians worked within Italy’s prisons, inciting certain prisoners to take up armed struggle.

<sup>618</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: See my archive at the Beinecke Library, Yale: volume 33.

### **Notice to the proletariat.**

Having heard the news that morning on the radio, I immediately wrote “Notice to the Proletariat About the Events of the Last Few Hours,” which I signed “Fast Pen.” With my small group of Indians, I went to a printer, who agreed to print it clandestinely. But, out of prudence, he didn’t want his typographical characters to be used, so I transcribed it in my own handwriting. Two hours later, it was printed up and ready for distribution at the demonstration in the suburbs planned for the evening of 5 April. In this manifesto, I wrote the following, among other things: “The only way we can prevent this repression is to extend the current movement everywhere, and first of all to the factories in all the cities in Italy. [...] Comrades! Beware of terrorist provocations by the secret services! Let us remember the Piazza Fontana and immediately denounce the hired terrorists. The kidnapping of De Martino is part of the strategy of the SID.<sup>619</sup> [...] Terrorists acts, under the most varied labels, only serve power: they are spectacular events that only serve to hide and mask the real class struggle that we are fighting and that the so-called Communist Party would like to pass over in silence. [...] When the unions are no longer to dominate the struggle, it is normal for the police and secret services to take over.”

For the first time, I realized the practicality of the new IBM-Heidelberg printing system. I mailed my manifesto to government ministers and powerful figures to whom I’d already sent the pamphlet that had been signed Censor (I’d kept my mailing list). I later learned that a manager at the Banca Commerciale at Piazza della Scala in Milan posted the manifesto on the bank’s notice board, which angered the union representatives at the *Commissione interna*.

### **Indian perfidy.**

An imaginative initiative by some well-advised Indians also treacherously contributed to the botching and sabotage of the De Martino operation. A phone call from someone claiming to be a Catholic, a Socialist and a member of one of the secret services reached the radio stations and newspapers. In this call, the man, motivated by loyalty to the embattled Socialist leader [De Martino], relayed a heartfelt, plausible and resolute message that disassociated his own responsibilities from those of his colleagues in the secret services. The immediate and casual manner in which this call was conceived, disseminated and perceived ensured that this “virtuous” agent’s denunciation was believed by those in high places and further disrupted the plans of the real perpetrators. I believe it also contributed to the disaster of that botched kidnapping, now become a farce and – who knows? – might even have saved the life of the unfortunate Guido De Martino. In any case, this time, the specialists in poisoning were themselves poisoned.

### **State of emergency in Rome.**

Returning from Rome to my farm in Tuscany, I had to leave that place immediately because I noticed the coming and going of unmistakably suspicious characters around my house in the open countryside, a fact that was confirmed by the Sardinian shepherd who lived on the same hill as I did. Without even finishing a letter to Debord, I left immediately. I finished it in and mailed it out from Milan, where the festive atmosphere of Rome was absent. This was a time when one never knew whether the precautions that had been taken were sufficient or inadequate, because, in many cases, there hadn’t been enough of them. The repression that had begun in April worsened when, in May, I was back in Rome, where Interior Minister Cossiga had declared

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<sup>619</sup> The Servizio Informazioni Difesa (Defense Information Service).

a ban on all demonstrations – a *de facto* illegal state of emergency. The movement that had begun in February had unleashed the most effective and violent attacks ever seen in a Western country on the reputations of the Communist Party and all the other institutions of the State. Recognizing all of its enemies, this pre-insurrectionary movement was destined to grow, but only on the condition that it also recognized terrorism as one of them. The airwaves were no longer a State monopoly. Free radio stations and a free press had played crucial roles, changing the very concept of information.

### **Theoretical truths.**

Certain theoretical truths, which the movement had transformed into a practical force, were certainly less numerous than the damages they had caused by imposing themselves. Among these truths, I list the following: (1) the society of the spectacle must be rejected; (2) the Communists must be openly denounced as the main police force of class society; (3) work must be refused, even by the unemployed; (4) the logic of militancy, of the leaderships and hierarchies of bureaucratic groupuscules, and of politics must be rejected; (5) real democracy and the revocability of delegates must be discovered; (6) *détournement* must be constantly applied in the streets, on free radio stations, in posters, etc.; (7) there must be the birth of a new, very modern spirit, full of self-irony, invention, black humor and sarcasm; and (8) the proclamation that the revolution should be a festival must be made. These ideas were, in fact, Situationist. Nothing was mediocre, up to a certain point. And everything headed towards disaster from the moment that weapons began to appear.

### **Counteroffensive and police provocations.**

The Communists had succeeded – almost everywhere, though not always – in preventing many workers' struggles from merging with the movement. The workers' assembly at the Teatro Lirico in Milan did not have the expected outcome. The police's counteroffensive, which had begun shortly before the provocation of the De Martino kidnapping, continued with weapons and disguised police officers mingling with and shooting at the demonstrators, as has been documented by photographs taken by Tano D'Amico and others. There were many deaths, for which the movement was clearly blamed. Even the fascists, who are always useful to those in power at such times, were shooting people. Terrorism had returned, and we know who benefits from it, and we also know who uses it. The Red Brigades – that is to say, the secret services that led them – had not yet been unmasked. Wildcat strikes were spreading, as were the occupations of schools, vacant homes, factories, town halls and train stations. There were many acts of sabotage, prison rebellions and occupations of uncultivated land. But the repression progressed. There were many layoffs, the sliding wage scale was eliminated, the rate of inflation was 20 percent, and there were criminal complaints and convictions, searches without judicial authorization and instances of intimidation. "Provisional arrest" without the right to a lawyer was approved, as was prosecution for the crime of "possession of subversive documents," which meant that anyone with a leaflet in their home could be arrested. Free radio stations were jammed and shut down. The movement was cut off from all credible information. On 18 and 19 May, the police occupied Rome. The movement was irremediably coming to an end.

### **A boa constrictor as a guard.**

Since illegal searches were becoming widespread, and conducted without a warrant or witnesses, and since I had been the victim of them several times, I bought a boa constrictor in

Milan, let it loose in my country house and dutifully informed the Carabinieri. This caused quite a stir and even sparked great fear in the surrounding area, despite the fact that it was a gentle creature that limited itself to eating mice. Without entering the house, the Carabinieri came to question me about my initiative. I told them that criminals were not longer afraid of my three dogs and that bandits, some of them disguised as Carabinieri, were now breaking into homes.

### **“That louse Sartre.”**

In July, I warned Debord that “that louse Sartre,” along with other French intellectuals, were – in an appeal to stop the repression in Italy – pretending to acknowledge that the Communists were playing a role in the repression, as if they hadn’t always and everywhere played precisely such a role.<sup>620</sup> The Italian intellectuals, who were followers and parasites of the Italian Communist Party, instead fully supported and justified the virulence of the repression. Sartre complained that the Communist Party was no longer Togliatti’s. That was enough.

### **The infamy of Italian intellectuals.**

Today they’re either dead or silent, but back then Italian intellectuals honked like Capitoline geese and wailed like mourners against the movement. It is worth recalling what I wrote about them at the time.

“The active servility with which the entire Left-wing of the intelligentsia first tolerated, and then adopted, the official accusatory theses about terrorism and the Autonomists’ role in it might seem downright astonishing to anyone who did not know that it has always behaved in this way, every time it had the opportunity to behave differently. [...] It is, moreover, well known that, for half a century now, the role of the Italian intellectuals, most of whom are pro-Stalinist, has been irreplaceable in the spread of every lie about socialism and the revolution. Today, when they can no longer lie about Soviet, Chinese or Cuban ‘Socialism,’ they have been reduced to shamelessly spreading their lies about bourgeois democracy, for the sake of which they accept any and every sacrifice, even doing without it completely. [...] From now on, being indicted coincides with being convicted. [...] I know well that the Italian intelligentsia has a number of reasons to be cowardly and dishonest, I even know by heart the arguments with which it justifies itself, and I would never dream of refuting its freedom to be despicable. What I find annoying is that these intellectuals continually intervene on the subject of terrorism [...] as if some dark force compelled them to publish the proof of their own obtuse cowardice, and as if anyone still needed to be convinced

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<sup>620</sup> This appeal took the form of an open letter signed by Sartre, Michel Foucault, Felix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze, Roland Barthes, Philippe Sollers and others. It protested against the investigation and imprisonment of hundreds of Italian intellectuals, including “Bifo” (Franco Berardi) and Antonio Negri. An English translation appeared in *Italy 1977-8: Living with an Earthquake*, a pamphlet published by Red Notes in 1978. On 19 July 1977, in an article signed by Paul Hofmann, the *New York Times* reported that, “in a statement clearly prompted by the Paris manifesto, the Italian Government said yesterday that 263 leftists were under detention in Italy in investigations of 37 murders, 13 attempted murders, 48 robberies, 26 kidnappings and other crimes.”

of it. Instead, they would benefit greatly by keeping their interventions confined to their works, so that they would be known neither by posterity nor by their contemporaries. [...] Today's Italy and Stalin's Russia are perhaps the only States in the world that have been governed exclusively by the secret police. In Russia, 'counterrevolutionaries' were discovered everywhere, and every opponent was declared 'counterrevolutionary.' In Italy today, 'revolutionaries' are discovered everywhere, and every extraparliamentarian, however timid, is declared a 'revolutionary.' Negri, Piperno, Scalzone, etc, would be, according to judges and journalists, the leaders of the Italian revolution, its 'brains' and its strategists. I have defended them here [against criminal charges] because they are innocent, and I would never dream of defending them as revolutionaries, because they are neither guilty nor revolutionary. In reality these Autonomist leaders are nothing other than naive, imprudent and unfortunate politicians, even as politicians."<sup>621</sup>

### **The announcement of the end of the movement.**

The end of the movement became clear and irreversible at the International Conference on 23-25 September 1977, which was supposed to lay the foundations for its expansion, but which the Autonomist leaders undermined by sympathizing with armed struggle. There is no more foolish attitude than that which "sympathizes" with armed struggle. Either engage in it and accept the consequences or don't engage in it – in any case, explain the reasons for the choice made. "Sympathizing" meant offering the enemy a stick with which to beat the sympathizers, and that is what the Autonomist leaders were foolishly guilty of. In the manifesto I published in Bologna on that occasion, "Welcome to the Freest City in the World," I was very clear on this matter, but unfortunately my words went unheeded. It deserves to be quoted here.

"So far, all the repressive measures, from the minimum to the maximum, from slander to tanks, have not benefited those in power, because they have failed to prevent anything that has happened. But we must never forget that the smallest mistake made by the movement can harm us irreparably. A lack of theoretical and practical clarity on a strategic issue, such as the use of weapons, risks producing very serious consequences. [...] Weapons must be used when everyone is ready to use them. And everyone will be ready to use them when their use has become indispensable. The issue is not tactical but strategic. Whoever plays with weapons today plays with power, which is better armed than we are, and we must not play with power, we must destroy it. [...] From a practical point of view, using weapons during a demonstration of 20,000 people, when only 100 are armed is not only useless but harmful. Thousands of comrades who cannot defend themselves would be exposed to the police's bullets. [...] From a theoretical point of view, those few who come armed to demonstrations want to constitute, and in fact do constitute, a new separate power within a revolutionary movement that precisely fights against every separate power. [...] And we must not overlook the

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<sup>621</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti:* Gianfranco Sanguinetti, "Prefazione all'edizione francese nella seconda edizione di *Del Terrorismo e dello Stato*" (Milano, Grenoble, Parigi: 1980. [Translator: see the "Preface to the French edition of the second Italian edition of *On Terrorism and the State*," elsewhere in this volume.]

possibilities for provocation that the improvised and reckless use of weapons offers to the police officers who are suitably disguised. If we truly want to fight repression, we must also fight that which can provide a pretext and a justification for repression. Just as we have no indulgence concerning our enemies, we must have none concerning ourselves, and we must mercilessly criticize the errors that could be fatal to the growth of the entire movement. The critique of weapons cannot be separate from the weapons of critique. Those who satisfy themselves with the foolish use of weapons are not the most advanced and toughest part of the current revolutionary movement, but the rearguard of its theoretical and strategic consciousness. As for terrorism, in Italy today it is absolutely devoid, not only of utility, but justification, too [...] starting with the bombing of the Piazza Fontana, it has always benefited the State, even when it wasn't the secret services that sponsored it."

### **Theoretical and practical underdevelopment.**

The grim Autonomist leaders, for whom the main goal was to gain hegemony over the 1977 movement, even at the cost of destroying it, today have no particular reason for pride. They believed themselves to be in Russia in 1917, and clumsily mimicked the Russian Bolsheviks, as well as their ideological errors and atrocities. Their strategic vision was nonexistent. They represented the sum of the weaknesses, misunderstandings, unforgivable cultural backwardness, gaps in historical knowledge and the theoretical and practical underdevelopments of the now hegemonic part of the movement, which, thanks to them, the Communists, terrorist provocations and repression, ended disastrously, just as I feared and warned about in my Bologna manifesto. An entire generation paid dearly, in the form of hundreds of years of pre-trial detention, for the perverse combination of Catholicism and Leninism that permeated the ideological DNA of the Autonomists' leaders.

### **Debord's detachment.**

The interests of Debord, to whom I'd written about the vicissitudes of this pre-insurrectionary movement and my own particular, somewhat Casanova-esque vicissitudes, had already shifted away from Italy and also away from the Situationist International's work, which had long since ended.<sup>622</sup> He'd found a film producer in Gérard Lebovici and was shooting his

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<sup>622</sup> Debord only wrote to Sanguinetti three times in 1977: once on 21 January, before the 1977 movement had begun and at a time when their friendship was ending ("As you must know, after our last meeting in Venice, I arrived at the firm conclusion that I have *said everything* to you and that you yourself have *completely responded* to me. This is naturally why I have not written to you since then. Understand well that, when I say 'said everything' and 'completely responded,' I do not restrain myself from concluding these dialogues in the literal and limited senses of the term, but I have evoked the totality of our relations, in acts as well as in words, in facts as in absences. And, on the other hand, when I say 'our most recent meeting in Venice,' I do not want to limit these conclusions to this anecdote or this group of anecdotes: I only regard Venice as a moment, the latest, of a process that you know quite well."); once on 14 June, to simply acknowledge receipt of a copy of "Notice to the Proletariat About the Events of the Last Few Hours" and the "very remarkable [...] latest news from Italy"; and once on 12 September, to coldly reject the manuscript of *Remedy to Everything* ("Contrary to the project that you have

finest film, *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni*, which would be released the following year. Our relations had cooled, although he did invite me to visit him in the countryside in October 1977, which ultimately did not happen. My impression is that he certainly watched the 1977 insurrectionists with interest, but that he failed to grasp the novelty and importance this movement represented, not only for Italy, but for the whole world, as well. It is surprising to me that, at the beginning of 1979, in his “Préface à la quatrième édition italienne de *La Société du Spectacle*,” he made no mention of 1977.<sup>623</sup> I don’t think he ever mentioned it in his subsequent writings, either. Perhaps he considered Italy to be “lost” to the cause for some time, and, in any case, he was alone, and certainly had no “troops” to send.

### **The young generations erased from history.**

Of the two 1977s I mentioned at the beginning of this text, the worse one had overwhelmed the better one, only to be defeated, in its turn, by its own shortcomings and mistakes and by the holy alliance of all the existing powers. The wounds left by this repression, which was extended to all veterans of previous movements and continued for 10 years, did not heal, and from then on, Italian youth disappeared, so to speak, from history. It no longer made history, but instead was subjected to it, and continues to be subjected to it, as it no longer shows any trace of virile virtue. Thanks to successive school reforms and to their families’ neglect of *paideia*, which, since the time of the ancient Greeks, has been at the heart of the formation of a

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described to me, concerning a book taking the title *Remède à tout*, I do not find the one that you have since then proposed to Champ libre to be very interesting. It seems to me that it would only compete with the dismal recuperationist collection titled *Indiani in città* [Indians in the City]. In any case, concerning similar themes, it is useless for us to insist upon the care, or the fatigue, of a meeting.”). In a letter to Gérard Lebovici dated 2 September 1977, Debord wrote that, “the book *Indiani in città* [published in 1977 by Cappelli editore, Bologna] appears to me to gloomily confirm the journalistic evolution of Sanguinetti. He mentioned this book to me with interest – perhaps he never actually read it – and he offers us a Leftist version of it so as to engage in a certain kind of rivalry; whereas he simultaneously tried to excite me with the idea of a more serious project, which aimed at justifying a meeting between us! Although it includes several sympathetic inscriptions and more, this book (in its commentary) is an ignominious anthology of the worst recuperative thought.” *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 5: Janvier 1973-Décembre 1978*, op. cit. pp. 409-410, 424, 435 and 436.

<sup>623</sup> Translated into English by Michel Prigent and Lucy Forsyth as “Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of *The Society of the Spectacle*” (London: BM Chronos, Oct. 1979). Though this preface doesn’t mention 1977, it discusses terrorism in Italy at some length. “But it is at this stage of the analysis that one is well-founded in calling to mind a ‘spectacular’ politics of terrorism, and not the ‘fact,’ repeated vulgarly with subaltern finesse by so many journalists and professors, that terrorists are sometimes prompted by the desire to make themselves spoken about. Italy sums up the social contradictions of the entire world and attempts, in ways well known to us, to amalgamate in one country the repressive Holy Alliance between class power – bourgeois and bureaucratic-totalitarian – that already openly functions all over the surface of the entire earth, in the economic and police solidarity of all States, although, in this too, not without some discussions and settling of accounts in the Italian manner. Being for the moment the most advanced country in the slide towards proletarian revolution, Italy is also the most modern laboratory for international counter-revolution.” Translation modified.

young person's character, young people were taught ignorance. Thanks to spectacular and digital distractions, Italian youth lost its identity, its curiosity, its true passion and its illusions, and embraced an infinite resignation to its condition, fearful and extremely fragile in the face of every risk, desperately taking refuge in the most comfortable, passive nihilism – that is, in Dantean cowardice. Concern for precarious survival drove out concern for life itself. The very being of Italian youth contracted and became defensive. Indifferent to the fate of the world, and experiencing an indeterminate but constant state of danger, youth today takes refuge in a narcissistic and desperate hedonism. Thus it has lost every conceptual, linguistic and cultural reference that it used to share with previous generations and that are indispensable to any true and historical dialogue; perhaps today's youth even believes that the world has always been as it is today. The past and the future no longer interest it. There is little interest in the present. It therefore lives in an eternal, schizoid and paralytic absence. To alleviate the desperation of young people, some politicians in Italy are now proposing to grant the youth a so-called "citizen's income," which means preparing these young people to be corrupted into giving up their existence and their struggles, and finally disappearing from a society of old people with whom they no longer have any dialogue. Young people in Italy thus live in a state of siege, refusing to arm themselves against the adversities promised and heralded by a threatening and looming future, from which they seek to escape, often by taking refuge in the most comfortable and protected place – their families of origin. Incapable of forming passionate bonds and building long-term projects, intolerant of the inconveniences of pursuing virtue and knowledge, they cannot see beyond their own precariousness and so retreat into sterile victimhood. Without having fought, they apathetically experience a sense of defeat, lacking all the critical tools and even the curiosity to investigate the reasons for that lack. Of course, I hope that I'm wrong, indeed, I'm certain that I'm wrong because of this simple fact: the younger generations in Europe, America, Russia and China will have no other choice. By necessity, not choice, they will be forced to avoid succumbing to the development of capitalism, now transformed into a new despotism. Or else these generations will be decimated, more radically than a century ago, during the great new war that is brewing. To return to Machiavelli's reasoning here, if these younger generations do not revolt, evil is certain, and if they do revolt, it is evil that is uncertain.

### **Normalization and manhunts.**

1978 was the year in which widespread repression deepened and expanded, and there was a more narrowly focused manhunt of all those in open conflict with the system, for which Moro's kidnapping was the pretext. In 1979, at the same time as the 7 April trial, all of the other magistrates involved in the Communist Party racket, as well as various journalists and intellectuals, distinguished themselves through their zeal, efficiency and determination, if not through their intelligence. They took this moment as an opportunity for a generalized settling of scores – a real Stalinist-style normalization, worse than that in Prague after 1968. For years, a variety of accusations and charges continued to rain down on my head: subversive association, the possession of weapons, participation in an armed gang, terrorism, smuggling, etc. And this rain became a hurricane after the publication of my book *On Terrorism and the State*, at the beginning of 1979. Not satisfied with the gaffe of arbitrarily arresting me in 1975, prosecutor Pier Luigi Vigna investigated me again after the kidnapping of Aldo Moro. The investigation extended to Milan and involved Prosecutor Armando Spataro, who claimed – in an unheard-of philological extravagance – that, based upon "the content of the documents of the Red Brigades, connections emerge between the ideology of that group and that of the Situationist International,

of which Sanguinetti is an exponent.”<sup>624</sup> To which I replied that the Situationist International had dissolved in 1972, and therefore I could not be its “representative,” and that the SI never had “an ideology, because it fought all of them, including the ideology of armed struggle.” And, after noting that Situationist publications were widely known in Italy and accessible to all, I took the liberty of advising the impertinent prosecutor that he should educate himself before bringing charges.

### **Undercover asymmetrical provocations.**

At the same time as this public persecution by the authorities, shady and vile figures were operating undercover, for example, by setting fire to my farm several times over a period of years. For the most part, these fires didn’t start from elsewhere and reach my farm, but started right there.<sup>625</sup>

Shortly after the publication of *On Terrorism*, a strange man, a car dealer, showed up at my house, declaring his desire to buy an old 1950 Bentley coupé of mine. In 1971, I’d smuggled the manuscript of a Portuguese translation of *The Society of the Spectacle* across the Portuguese border without arousing suspicion of that country’s shrewd dictatorship, which was intent on censoring books. I pointed out to this man that the car still had French plates on it and needed to be cleared through customs first. He said he would take care of it. Since he was offering a considerable sum of money, I sold the car to him. Shortly thereafter, the Finance Police stopped him, the car was confiscated and I was charged with criminal and administrative offenses for smuggling. I later learned that the buyer was the son of a Carabinieri and a close friend of Licio Gelli’s daughter.

Because of all these vicissitudes, and many others like them, I wrote the following: “If there were any doubts, from now on there are none: I have told the truth [about terrorism]. And from the harm that is intended for me, I understand that my work is good, and certainly I would not have aroused such hatred if many people had not listened to me.”<sup>626</sup>

### **The end of the rule of law.**

From that time onward, all of the “constitutional arc” parties agreed to put an end to any semblance of the rule of law in Italy, without arousing any protest among the virtuous souls who still claimed to exist within this most virtuous “constitutional arc.” From then on, Italy became the home of the most blatant lawlessness, prey to boundless corruption, institutional crime, oppression, arrogance, and insatiable pecuniary debauchery, all of which continues to feast on the flesh of the Italian people, already torn apart by terrorism, with the impunity guaranteed by

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<sup>624</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Gianfranco Sanguinetti, “Preface to the French edition of the second Italian edition of *On Terrorism and the State*” (Milan) and *On Terrorism and the State* (Grenoble, Paris 1980). The original indictments are in my archives at Yale, as is the unpublished manuscript of a pamphlet against Judge Pier Luigi Vigna, which was to be published in the event of my arrest.

<sup>625</sup> In an email to me dated 29 April 2013, Sanguinetti referred to a fire that had been set at his house in mid September 1978 and included a photo of it, which showed that the fire had come within 90 meters of the building.

<sup>626</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: “Preface to the French edition of *On Terrorism*.”

the law.<sup>627</sup> The new legal nihilism has allied itself with the new financial nihilism, and together they collaborate harmoniously in the general disaster. These were also the consequences, and not the least of them, of the defeat of the 1977 social revolt. In this, Italy was once again the international laboratory in which the tools were tested that, thanks to false-flag terrorism, have now spread throughout the neoliberal world, headed towards a new and unprecedented despotism, which has already subjugated all of Europe and the United States. To distinguish it from Eastern despotism, I call it Western despotism.<sup>628</sup>

### **A new kind of coup.**

While the Communist Party was fully engaged in crushing the movement of young proletarians in 1977, it failed to notice that someone else had already seized the State that the Communists also coveted, using a completely new, silent and previously untested technique. In 1969, Longanesi published *Tecnica del Colpo di Stato*, an ingenious little book written by Edward Luttwak, who argued that, “a coup d’état consists in infiltrating a limited but critical sector of the State apparatus and using it to wrest control of the remaining sectors of the government.”<sup>629</sup> Licio Gelli’s P2 Lodge simply implemented Luttwak’s analysis. It had infiltrated many critical elements of the Italian government: a Party secretary, three ministers, 44 parliamentarians, 12 Carabinieri generals, five members of the Guardia di Finanza, 22 officers in the Army, four officers in the Air Force, and eight admirals, as well as magistrates, publishers of newspapers and journalists, bankers such as Roberto Calvi and Michele Sindona, businessmen such as Silvio Berlusconi, all the heads of the secret services and many other figures within the State apparatus. Once infiltrated into that apparatus, P2 gave rise to the “strategy of tension” and, together with the Gladio organization, was able to carry out massacres that bloodied Italy with impunity.

A secret American Army manual on unorthodox warfare from 1970, signed by General W.C. Westmoreland, includes the following instructions for destabilizing or stabilizing the governments of different countries: “Terrorist activities are particularly useful in gaining control of the population. Terror can be used selectively or indiscriminately. [...] There may be times when the governments of the host nations show passivity or indecision in the face of Communist subversion and, in the interpretation of U.S. intelligence services, do not react with sufficient effectiveness. [...] U.S. military intelligence must have the means to launch special operations that will convince the governments of the host nations and public opinion of the reality of the danger posed by the insurgents. To achieve this goal, U.S. military intelligence should try to infiltrate the insurgency by means of agents with special assignments who are charged with the task of forming special-action groups among the most radical elements of the insurgency. [...] If it has not been possible to successfully infiltrate such agents into the rebel command, it may be

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<sup>627</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: The Italian State had promised to compensate the victims of the massacres of the 1970s and 1980s through a specific law that was never implemented on the grounds that such compensation “costs too much.” This refusal was renewed in May 2017. The relatives of the victims of the Piazza Fontana massacre were ordered to pay the costs of the litigation.

<sup>628</sup> See “Western Despotism,” elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>629</sup> Italian translation of Edward Luttwak, *Coup d’État: A Practical Handbook* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

useful to instrumentalize the far-Left organizations for one's own purposes in order to achieve the above-described objectives. [...] These special operations must remain strictly secret.”<sup>630</sup>

Today, this new type of silent coup – executed through cooptation and infiltration, destabilization and stabilization, and first used in Italy – is enjoying great success worldwide and has spread to almost all Western countries, not only in counterinsurgency operations, but also in finance, banking, the mass media, politics, the military, the judiciary and so on. Today, it is no longer concealed and has established its own institutions: the European Union and the European Central Bank.

### **Exult, Italy. . .**

Our peninsula – after having invented the Church, the papacy, capitalism, banking, public debt, promissory notes, the Counter-Reformation, the Mafia, fascism, false-flag terrorism, the “Historic Compromise,” Gladio and the P2 Lodge, after artfully erecting the spectacle of political assassination – continues to make history by concocting and exporting all of the worst that can be inflicted on humanity. “Exult, Italy, for you are so great, that on sea and land you beat your wings, and through Hell your name spreads.”<sup>631</sup>

For many reasons, it is clear why 1977, that critical and decisive year, has been silenced and removed from public consciousness, just as the indomitable revolts of the Greek people against the imposition of the despotism of the European Union have been shamefully censored for years. Today it is Greece that has become an experimental laboratory for Western despotism, amid universal indifference.

1977 should instead be remembered for its crucial importance. It was a widespread revolt, albeit in a single country, against a new universal disorder then imposed everywhere by force, by the violence of spectacular terrorism, in tears and blood. After the defeat of that revolt, every law was trampled on, every acquired right was progressively abolished, and all the gains achieved by the exploited classes in the West over a century and a half of class struggle were nullified. Now the model is the slavery that reigns in Chinese factories, where workers, often children, commit suicide every day out of desperation – factories used by the entire world, without asking any further questions. We live in societies ready to wage war for “human rights” – “humanitarian” wars, of course – and even the slave trade occurs for “humanitarian” reasons: the suicide of workers, reduced to desperation, is also part of these “human rights.” The Italian Institute of Statistics has solved the problem radically and definitively. Ever since 2010, it simply no longer takes suicides due to economic causes into account.

### **The monstrous realization of the “Historic Compromise”**

Today China is the monstrous yet paradigmatic realization of the “Historic Compromise” between Communism and capitalism, which was invented by ingenious and extremely dishonest Italian Communist leaders. This project, which combines the worst of both totalitarian systems and already marks the present and future of the world, also defines the foundations of the new

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<sup>630</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: Field Manual 30-31, with Appendices FM 30-31A and FM 30-31B, now published by the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the P2 Masonic Lodge, annexes to the report, volume VII, pp. 319 et seq. [*Translator*: this Manual was translated into Italian and published in October 1978 by *L'Europeo*.]

<sup>631</sup> A détournement of Dante, *The Inferno*, op. cit., Canto XXVI, verses 1-3 (“Florence” replaced by the word “Italy”).

despotism that is asserting itself everywhere with impunity. Total freedom of expropriation for the rich, and total slavery for the poor.

**The glory of 1977.**

The Italian 1977, which fiercely opposed the wicked project I've just described, was thus truly an orgasm of history: its intensity, as well as its brief duration, proves this to be true. It is precisely this fierce opposition to the perverse "Historic Compromise" that is the fundamental and unforgettable legacy that 1977 has left for the history of class struggle, lest humanity "fall into obedience." That this was not enough certainly cannot be blamed on the movement. The simple facts of having existed, and of having fought against that project of enslavement, were instead its glory, for there have not been many other attempts as modern and as explicit anywhere in the world.

**“Response to the speech by the President of the Republic,  
Sergio Mattarella, dedicated to the victims of terrorism  
on the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Aldo Moro”<sup>632</sup>**

Mister President,

Your speech<sup>633</sup> in memory of the victims of terrorism – without denying all of the lies and ambiguities that were spread about this subject 40 years after the fact – perpetuates the concealment of the truth, the simple truth that those who directed Italian terrorism were deputized to kill first.

A kind of commendable confession, censored by the press, slipped out when you confirmed that our country had been bloodied “with the complicity of subjects who betrayed their role as part of the state apparatus.”<sup>634</sup> But you stopped there. Don’t you think that this fact is the basic scandal of terrorism? And why didn’t you name the accomplices? Did someone prevent it?

Without this complicity, and without this impunity, we would not have had 25 years of terrorism. Why, Mr. President, did you not name the Secret Services, the Confidential Affairs Office,<sup>635</sup> Gladio, the 1970 *coup d’état* staged with impunity by the P2 lodge, which had infiltrated all of the armed forces, the Carabinieri and the police, the government and the parliament, the economic sector and the banks, the judicial system and the media? Why did you not mention the foreign intelligence services that actively participated in the Italian terrorist experiment, an experiment that succeeded perfectly in its attempt to deceive the world, to the

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<sup>632</sup> “Riposta al discorso del Presidente della Repubblica Sergio Mattarella dedicato alle vittime del terrorismo, nel quarantennale dell’assassino di Aldo Moro.” Published online by Effimera (16 May 2018).

<sup>633</sup> Cf. Flavia Crestwell, “Aldo Moro hailed a hero 40 years on from his death,” published online by *The Italian Insider*, 9 May 2018.

<sup>634</sup> “Today is a day of remembrance and solidarity. We remember all those who have paid for the cruelty of terrorism with their lives, those who have served our institutions and our society without yielding to blackmail and fear, those who have maintained their dignity, becoming a testimony to the freedom of each one of us. [...] Our country has been bloodied since the end of the 1960s, by terrorist attacks of all kinds, by subversive strategies sometimes implemented by complicit subjects who betrayed their roles as members of state, by political violence caused by ideological degeneration, even by the association and intermingling with criminal organizations and armed bands. [...] Many, too many people have been barbarously and vilely murdered. Many of our fellow citizens have been hit, wounded, and have suffered from and still bear the signs of that senseless brutality: men and women in our security forces, professors, students, magistrates, journalists, politicians, businessmen, traders, workers, trade unionists, soldiers, public administrators. They’ve become targets because they’re identified as symbols, or perhaps because hatred has manifested itself into this desire to kill, this transversal message of death. [...] Not forgetting also means reckoning with this story that has passed through the life of the Republic and has greatly tested its democratic construction, which the Italian people managed to build after Liberation Day, and that the constitution made into a heritage of values as well as juridical norms.” Ibid.

<sup>635</sup> Intelligence agency within the Italian Ministry of the Interior.

point of being exported everywhere, to America and to France, Germany, England, Spain, etc.? Whoever perpetuates deception and silence [*l'omertà*] concerning this purpose, perpetuates terrorism. Whoever does not name the enemy is his accomplice. Whoever does not punish the evil, commands that it be done.

You know perfectly well that these State apparatuses are still intact and operating today, and this is proven by the fact that even you carefully refrained from naming them, you who have more personal reasons than others to denounce them, you who were hit with a heavy loss at the hands of these same people.<sup>636</sup> Why, on the day of remembrance, do you not remember that the Supreme Court of Cassation, acquitting the accused, ordered the relatives of the victims of the massacres at the Piazza Fontana and the Piazza della Loggia<sup>637</sup> to pay their court costs? Didn't it occur to you?

Your speech carefully avoided saying anything that could compromise the unpunished survival of these apparatuses, which have their hands full of Italian blood. You told us that terrorism has been defeated by democracy: this is a counter-truth. On the contrary, *terrorism won because it put an end to all forms of democracy, freedom and truth* in Italy and elsewhere: this was in fact its task.

Today we make a mockery of the will of the Italian people, because whatever it expresses and decides upon, Italy remains governed by the famous "automatic pilot" evoked by Mario Draghi.<sup>638</sup> Whoever enters the government must follow the directives dictated by the "automatic pilot." It is because of this fact that you, like your predecessor,<sup>639</sup> are truly this pilot's guarantor, but not the guarantor of respect for the Italian Constitution.<sup>640</sup> To say this is simple honesty. Terrorism, with the support of all those who have not definitively unmasked it, has progressively reduced, and then [completely] suppressed, every liberty of the people; militarized society is in a state of exception, and the Italian Constitution is now shredded paper. As you know, Italy, as well as other countries that are victims of terrorism, have long lived in a post-Constitutional regime.

How is it possible that you did not realize that we live in a time when the real powers claim to have the enemies whom they themselves have made, tailored, and deployed for the spectacular use they intend to make of them? And who does not realize that the true masters of our time project all of their own particular infamies and cruelties upon these simulacra of fictitious enemies? And then pretend to fight them resolutely, to convince the voters that "Good," represented by them, has triumphed over "Evil," incarnated from time to time in the form of the terrorists of the Red Brigades, [Osama] Bin Laden and the Islamic State [ISIL], manufactured and directed by them? You, too, Mr. President, live in the society of the spectacle: haven't you noticed it?

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<sup>636</sup> In 1980, Mattarella's brother Piersanti was assassinated by the Mafia, an event that reportedly motivated him to enter politics as a member of the Christian Democratic Party.

<sup>637</sup> On 28 May 1974, bombs exploded at the Piazza della Loggia in Brescia during a protest against fascism.

<sup>638</sup> Mario Draghi (born 1947) was the President of the European Central Bank from 2011-2019. Cf. Brian Blackstone, "ECB Chief Plays Down Italy Fears," *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 March 2013.

<sup>639</sup> Giorgio Napolitano, a member of the Italian Communist Party.

<sup>640</sup> The Constitution of the Italian Republic was enacted by the Constituent Assembly on 22 December 1947. One of the signatories was Teresa Mattei, the author's mother.

In 1979, in the Preface with which I began my book *On Terrorism and the State*, in which I denounced, without ever being contradicted, the mystifications concerning the murder of Moro [specifically] and terrorism [in general], I'd already written: "And whatever we say today, in 10 or 20 years, or before, when everything has become clear to everyone, people will remember what I wrote about terrorism, and certainly not the rivers of ink that all the professional liars and the idiots are currently spreading about it."

That you, Mr. President, 40 years after the fact, are still pretending to seek the truth, to avoid saying it, the truth that many people today know very clearly – this is a further offense to the Italian people. Who endure so much.

With the utmost respect for historical memory,

Gianfranco Sanguinetti, 11 May 2018

P.S. This letter has been sent by post because the e-mail address of the Presidency of the Republic is not working.

## “Western Despotism”<sup>641</sup>

The conversion of the Western representative democracies into a completely new form of despotism has, because of the Covid-19 virus, taken on the juridical features of *force majeure*<sup>642</sup> (in jurisprudence, *force majeure* is, as we know, a case of exonerated responsibility). And thus the new virus is, at the same time, both the catalyst of this event and the distraction of the masses *by fear*.<sup>643</sup>

Notwithstanding the hypotheses that I have made since the publication of my book, *On Terrorism and the State* (1979), about the manner in which this conversion from formal democracy to despotism takes place (at least to my ineluctable eyes), I confess that I didn't imagine that it would take place under the pretext of a virus. And yet the ways of the Lord are truly infinite. As are those of the Hegelian *cunning of reason*.<sup>644</sup>

We can say that the only reference [to such a turn of events], as prophetic as it is worrisome, is the one that I've found in an article that Jacques Attali,<sup>645</sup> former patron of the BERD bank,<sup>646</sup> published in *L'Express* during the [swine flu] epidemic of 2009.

“If the epidemic becomes a little more serious, which is possible, given that is transmittable by people, there will be truly global consequences: economic (the models leave one to believe that this could involve the loss of three trillion dollars, or a decrease of five percent in the global GDP) and political (due to the risks of contagion). We would have to put into place a global police force, a global stockpiling and thus a global fiscal policy. Thus we would come, much faster than economic reason alone would permit, to put into place the bases for a truly global government.”<sup>647</sup>

The pandemic was envisioned thus: how many [computer] simulations were run by the large insurance companies! And by the protective services of the States, too. Several days ago, the former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, returned to the necessity of a global government:

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<sup>641</sup> Gianfranco Sanguinetti, “Il Dispotismo Occidentale,” dated 1 April 2020, and published online 17 April 2020 by Francosenia. Translated into French as “*Le Despotisme Occidental*” and published online 20 April 2020 by *Lundi Matin* #239.

<sup>642</sup> Latin in original.

<sup>643</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: I see that Edward Snowden has arrived at the same conclusion in an interview with him that was published on 10 April 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5OAJnveyJo>.

<sup>644</sup> In German, *List der Vernunft*. Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (German original: 1837).

<sup>645</sup> An odd fact is that Attali quotes approvingly from Censor's *The Truthful Report* in his book *Bruits: essai sur l'economie politique de la musique* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1977), translated by Brian Massumi as *Noise: the Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1985).

<sup>646</sup> The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

<sup>647</sup> *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti*: [https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/sante/avancer-par-peur\\_758721.html](https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/sante/avancer-par-peur_758721.html). [*Translator*: this link has expired.]

“Gordon Brown has urged world leaders to create a temporary form of global government to tackle the twin medical and economic crises caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.”<sup>648</sup>

It is hardly necessary to add that such an occasion could be *seized upon* or *created*, without anything important changing. Once the intention is there, and the strategy designed, it suffices to have a pretext and then to act as a consequence of it. Not one of the heads of State was taken by surprise, except perhaps right at the start, due to stupidity. Afterwards, from Giuseppe Conte to Orban, from Johnson to Trump,<sup>649</sup> etc., all of these politicians – no matter how boorish they might be – quickly understood that the virus authorized them to do what they pleased with the old constitutions, rules and laws. The state of necessity would pardon all illegalities.

Once terrorism – which was exploited a bit too much, we can all agree on that – had exhausted the majority of its potentialities, which had been so well developed everywhere during the first 15 years of the new century, the moment came to pass on to the next stage, which I announced in 2011, in my text *Du Terrorisme au Despotisme*.<sup>650</sup>

Incidentally, the *counter-insurrectionary* approach that the improperly called “war against the virus” has taken up immediately and everywhere confirms the intention that underlies the “humanitarian” operations of this war, which isn’t being fought against the virus, but against all the rules, rights, guarantees, institutions and people of the old world: here I speak of the world and the institutions that have been in place since the French Revolution and that are now disappearing, under our very eyes, over the course of several months, indeed, as quickly as the Soviet Union disappeared. The epidemic will end, but the measures, possibilities and consequences that it has unleashed and that we are now experiencing will not. We are giving birth to a new world in pain.

Thus we are witnessing *the decomposition and the end of a world and a civilization*, that of bourgeois democracy, with its parliaments, its rights, its powers and its counter-powers, henceforth perfectly useless, because the laws and coercive measures are now being dictated by the executive [branch of government], *without being immediately ratified by parliament*, and because the judicial powers, as well as the powers of free [public] opinion, are losing even the appearance of independence and thus their function as counter-weights.

And so, the people are being brusquely and traumatically conditioned (as Machiavelli has established: “injuries must be done all together, so that, being tasted less, they offend less”):<sup>651</sup> the *citizen*, who disappeared a long time ago and was replaced by the consumer, now sees him- or herself reduced to the role of simple *patient*, over whom one may exercise the right to life or death, to whom one can administer any treatment whatsoever, or even decide to kill, according to

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<sup>648</sup> Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/mar/26/gordon-brown-calls-for-global-government-to-tackle-coronavirus>. [*Translator*: I have quoted directly from the English-language original.]

<sup>649</sup> Giuseppe Conte is the Prime Minister of Italy. Viktor Orban is the Prime Minister of Hungary. Boris Johnson is the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Donald Trump is the President of the United States.

<sup>650</sup> A Google search for this phrase, previously unknown to me, only brings up links to the present text. Since the same results occur when I translate this phrase into Italian (Sanguinetti’s first language) – *Dal terrorismo al dispotismo* – we may safely assume this text has not yet been published.

<sup>651</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, op. cit., Chapter VIII, p. 35.

his or her age (productive or nonproductive) or following any other criteria that has been decided upon arbitrarily and without the right of appeal, upon the discretion of the caregiver or other people. Once he or she has been imprisoned at home, or in a hospital, what can he or she do against coercion, abuse or arbitrariness?

In Italy, for example, the Constitutional charter was suspended without causing the least objection, not even from the “guarantor” of the country’s institutions, President Mattarella. Become simple anonymous and isolated monads, human subjects no longer have any “equality” to assert or any rights to claim. The law itself will no longer be prescriptive, but has already become discretionary, like life and death. In Italy, we have seen that, under the pretext of [fighting against] the coronavirus, one can kill, straight away and with impunity, 13 or 14 unarmed prisoners,<sup>652</sup> whose names, crimes or circumstances do not even have to be given, and *no one gets upset*. The Italians have done even better than the Germans did at the prison in Stammheim.<sup>653</sup> They should admire us, at least for our crimes!

Other than money, nothing is discussed anymore. And a State like Italy is reduced to begging from the sinister and illegitimate Eurogroup<sup>654</sup> to get the capital necessary for its transformation from a democratic form to a despotic one. This is the same Eurogroup that, in 2015, wanted to savagely expropriate the entire national heritage of Greece, including the Parthenon, and to confer it to a German-controlled fund in Luxembourg. Even *Der Spiegel* characterized the diktats of the Eurogroup as “a catalogue of atrocities” intended to mortify Greece, and Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, in an article published in *The Telegraph*, said that, if one wanted to put a date on the end of the European project, that was it. Now the thing is done. Only the Euro remains and only provisionally.

Neo-liberalism has had nothing to do with the class struggles of old; it doesn’t even have a memory of them; it believes it has erased them from the dictionary. It believes itself to be all-powerful, which doesn’t mean that it doesn’t fear class struggle, because it knows full well what it is preparing to inflict on the people. It is obvious that the people will soon be hungry; it is obvious that the unemployed will be numerous; it is obvious that the people who work off the books (four million in Italy) will have no support. And those who have precarious employment, and who have nothing to lose, will begin to struggle and engage in sabotage. This explains why the strategy of the response to the pandemic is, above all, a strategy of *counter-insurrection*. We will see this in spades in America. The FEMA<sup>655</sup> camps will soon be full.

Thus, the new despotism has at least two good reasons for imposing itself in the West: one is to confront the internal subversion that it provokes and expects; the other is to prepare for an external war against a designated enemy, which is also the oldest despotism in history, about

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<sup>652</sup> Cf. Zoe Tidman, “Coronavirus: 12 inmates dead and 16 escape as Italy prisoners [sic] riot over lockdown measures,” *The Independent*, 12 March 2020. According to a blatant lie told by Alfonso Bonafede, the Italian Minister of Justice, “Unfortunately, 12 inmates have died from what initial findings suggest are mostly overdoses on drugs taken from the medical room during the disorder.”

<sup>653</sup> The prison at which several members of the Red Army Faction were murdered by the German authorities, circa 1976-1977.

<sup>654</sup> A group composed of the Ministers of Finance from the countries that participate in the European Union.

<sup>655</sup> The Federal Emergency Management Agency, not at all a factor or player in the current crisis in America, but a perennial bugaboo for conspiracy theorists.

which we have learned nothing new since the publication of *The Book of Lord Shang* in [China during] the fourth century BCE.<sup>656</sup> This is a book that all Western strategists should hasten to read with the greatest attention. If one should decide to attack Chinese despotism, one must begin by demonstrating to it that one is better than it *on its own terrain*, that is to say, more effective, less costly and better performing. In brief, a superior despotism. But this *remains to be seen*.

Thanks to the virus, the fragility of our world now appears in broad daylight. The game that is currently being played is infinitely more dangerous than the virus itself and will cause many more deaths. And yet our contemporaries only fear the virus.<sup>657</sup>

It seems that the current era has tasked itself with contradicting what Hegel said with respect to the philosophy of history: “World history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom.”<sup>658</sup> But freedom itself only exists insofar as it struggles against its opposite, he would add. Where is it today, when, in Italy and France, people denounce those who do not obey?

If a simple microbe has been enough to throw our world into obedience to the most repugnant despotism, this means *that our world was already so ready for despotism that a simple microbe would be enough*.

The historians will call the time that is now beginning *the era of Western despotism*.<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>656</sup> Shang Yang, *The Book of Lord Shang: Apologetics of State Power in Early China*, edited and translated by Yuri Pines (Columbia University Press, 2019).

<sup>657</sup> But see Giorgio Agamben, “L’invenzione di un’epidemia,” *Quodlibet*, 26 February 2020, among others.

<sup>658</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Reason in History, a general introduction to the Philosophy of History*, translated by Robert S. Hartman (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1953).

<sup>659</sup> Cf. Karl August Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism. A comparative study of total power* (Yale University Press, 1957).

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## **Colophon:**

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