

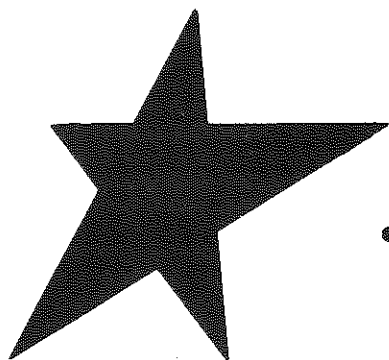
# ● ITALY 1980-81 AFTER MARX, JAIL!



**The Attempted Destruction  
of a Communist Movement**



RED NOTES



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The Attempted Destruction of a Communist Movement

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\*\*\*\*We are always grateful to hear from people who send us articles and reviews about Italy, or news reports and clippings, or translations of Italian Left materials. Some of the fruits of this cooperation are printed here. Thanks to our contributors - and may there be many more!

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• "WE BELIEVE THAT IN ITALY TODAY, AND IN EUROPE, THE POLITICAL PROSECUTION OF THE "WORKERS' AUTONOMY" MOVEMENT HAS A WIDER SIGNIFICANCE WHICH CONCERNS THE BROADEST POSSIBLE SECTIONS OF THE CLASS MOVEMENT IN ALL ITS VARIOUS ARTICULATIONS. THIS IS BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS A SPECIFIC ATTEMPT - AN ATTEMPT WITH OMINOUS IMPLICATIONS - TO "TURN THE CLOCK BACK" HISTORICALLY, TO SET UP AND FORMALISE ON A PERMANENT BASIS A NEW LEVEL OF STATE REPRESSION AIMED TO ATTACK AND DESTROY THE SPACE FOR INDEPENDENT CLASS POLITICS.

THIS TRIAL IS AIMED TO OUTLAW THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT OF WORKING CLASS AND PROLETARIAN AUTONOMY.

WE ARE MILITANTS AND INTELLECTUALS OF THE AUTONOMOUS LEFT MOVEMENT....THE PROSECUTION AGAINST US IS OVERTLY POLITICAL, AND WE ARE ASKING FOR POLITICAL SOLIDARITY."

M.DALMAVIVA  
L.FERRARI BRAVO  
A.NEGRI  
O.SCALZONE  
E.VESCE  
L.ZAGATO

Special Wing G-8,  
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ITALY.

May 10th 1979



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"There is no Left in Italy now. A Left with a platform no longer exists in Italy today. By now, the only Left which exists lives in and around the jails.  
Sergio Bologna, March 1981



# INTRODUCTION

□ This week Britain is in the grip of riots. Young and old people, black and white, men and women, employed and unemployed have been attacking police, burning property and looting stores. A whole sector of people in the working class communities have found a voice that they didn't have before. Official society will try to rub out this experience, crush it, forget it, make it out to be an anomaly, and punish it ruthlessly....but that movement of people cannot be crushed. It has real material roots, and that public voice which it found spontaneously during the rioting must now find a longer term, more organised expression. This, it seems to us, is a project for the coming months.

This experience has not been limited to Britain and Ireland. Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Zurich, Athens and Amsterdam have all experienced the same. And in Italy it was this experience that the autonomia was trying to understand, interpret and turn into organisation.

It seems that in Italy a broad working class movement is in the process of being defeated. The autonomia has been one strand inside that movement, showing itself in the working class, in the women's movement, in the "alternative" movement of young people, in culture and forms of social organisation. The movement of autonomy saw itself separate from and opposed to the further development of capitalist society, and for a communist future (though the terms of that communism were always, and are still, open to debate). And it is precisely that movement which has now come under attack from the police, the judiciary and the established political parties.

This book does not speak as a voice for the autonomy. We would have many points of disagreement with what was anyway a very diffuse and fragmented movement. But the autonomy had identified an important pulse in the struggle and had started to organise around it. And that pulse was beating throughout Europe. It was no accident that the April 7th arrests in Italy came so soon after autonomes had rioted in the streets of Paris: the "movement" is European, and the European State has moved to kill its political expression at birth.

If it were not so bitterly sad and tragic, it would be laughable. Hundreds and hundreds of comrades, young and old, men and women - the cream of a generation of communist militants - are being rounded up and imprisoned. They are charged for crimes like "subversive association" or "insurrection against the State" - vague and nebulous charges, with no basis of proof, but which may carry life sentences; charges which suffice to criminalise a whole decade of dissent and revolutionary organisation from 1969 to the present.

We need not waste words to describe this book. It is a collection of interviews, translated articles, leaflets etc about the attack being mounted against organised (and unorganised) forms of resistance and dissidence in Italy. It is an act of information, but also of solidarity.

The experiences described in this book are not "foreign" or "other". Republicans in Ireland, for example, know what it means to have your movement "criminalised" - hence the prisoners' hunger strikes for Political Status. And today, on the news, Thatcher's government is preparing the concentration camps, the water cannons, the plastic bullets and the gas for use against the working class on the British mainland.

A situation like this demands new levels of understanding and organisation. Somewhere in all this upheaval lie the seeds of a new politics - and we believe that a similar new politics was being experimented in Italy during the past 5 years. Our book describes some of what was being attempted. We hope you find it useful.

London, July 13th 1981

# ARTICLE 'THE ITALIAN INQUISITION'

□ The introductory article for this pamphlet is reprinted from the June 1980 edition of Issues. It gives some of the history of the Partito Armato - the recent development of the "Armed Party" in Italy. The State's counter-attack has involved wave after wave of arrests in the Left movement. The first waves aimed at the leadership of organisations like Autonomia Operaia. The later waves have aimed more at intermediate political cadres. In these prosecutions whole areas of the Left have been "criminalised", and face charges that, in some cases, date back over 10 years.

## You Must Accept a Reality

'You have been badly informed' - writes the mother of one of Italy's top suspected terrorists in reply to an article published in *La Repubblica* - 'my daughter is not emotionally vulnerable. Even if she looks minute and charming, she is strong as iron. She is not destroyed. She is facing jail with courage and a sense of humour. She believes that prison itself is a terrain of struggle. It may be difficult for a man to understand (the article had been written by one of Italy's leading commentators, signor Bocca) but you must accept a reality in which women do not need men in order to be housewives or revolutionaries, in order to live or die'.

Far from sharing her daughter's suspected interest in armed struggle and insurrection against the State, signora Ninni Monroy remains nevertheless convinced that 'there are many ways of interpreting life and my daughter has chosen hers'. It is the kind of argument that however tactfully expressed, (or because it is so tactfully expressed) causes anger in Italian government circles and in the PCI. The fact that the attempt to get the vox populi on the side of the 'iron fist' against political violence is only partly successful is an indication of the extraordinary complex choices facing Italians today. Can repressive measures alone solve the problems of political violence? How is Italy going to face the next decade with thousands of people in prison for political reasons? How many people actually sympathize with and support those who have engaged in violence against the State?

## Armed Struggle, Prisons & Special Police Powers

People have not forgotten that it was shortly after the inauguration of the first centre-left government of 1963, headed by Aldo Moro, that the Christian Democratic Party encouraged the strategy of tension based on the theory of 'opposite extremes'. For nearly a decade, a ruling party already discredited by a history of 'malgoverno', 'clientelismo', scandals and corruption of all kinds - played the extreme left against the extreme right. The Christian Democrats inevitable collaborated with the right to the point of being found enmeshed via the Secret Service in many terrorist activities. The bombing atrocity at the Banca Del Agricoltura in Milan where 16 people were killed marked the real beginning of right-wing terrorism.

Although the extreme right proved ideologically incapable of transcending the ideas of old fascist intellectuals, the extreme left has developed progressive theories and highly articulate analyses of the economic and political situation. Potere Operaio, later Autonomia Organizzata, have produced analyses of the new class composition and the new categories of struggle. While groups like 'Lotta Continua' and 'Il Manifesto' entered the area vacated by the PCI in its movement towards the Centre, a smaller section of the extreme left abandoned the terrain of legal struggle, helping the formation of what is now commonly referred to as the 'Partito Armato', the Armed Party.

It is a new and disturbing reality, not only for Italians but for the Western world. It is the first time that the problem of armed struggle has acquired such dimensions in an advanced capitalist country. The comparisons with Latin America frequently made in the Western Press are obviously misleading.

After the 'blitz' of General Dalla Chiesa of April and December 1979, arrests have continued unabated up and down the coun-

try which in certain cases have led to the arbitrary killing of suspects. Left-wing lawyers have been apprehended and some driven to suicide, while the conditions under which the questioning of suspected terrorists takes place seems to indicate that 'torture' is not too strong a word.

After much speculation about the 'special powers' of General Dalla Chiesa, now in charge of the Pastrengo Division which commands 25,000 people in Northern Italy, it has finally been revealed that he is to report directly to the Home Secretary. This special relationship between the Ministry and a General, which has not even been discussed in Parliament has disturbed many Italian political observers. While there seems to be no end to the wave of arrests, the twelve top security jails are already known to be overcrowded and more than 1,000 people are in prison, suspected of various kinds of terrorist activities: the kidnapping and killing of signor Moro, insurrection against the State or participation in one of the subversive organizations, (said to number about 100).

Shortly before the implementation of the emergency measures at the beginning of this year, the Under-Secretary of State, Franco Mazzola, declared that a government estimate had put the number of terrorists and sympathizers at 100,000. Although (as he told an audience of startled journalists) only a few hundred of them could actually be classified as 'full time soldiers', the government was just as determined to clamp down on their supporters. This was made plain by the nature of the new measures, which bear the mark of the British Prevention of Terrorism Act as well as the 'Law for the Protection of Communal Peace' adopted by the West German government in 1976. The most important aspect of the emergency laws (passed on a vote of confidence because of effective filibustering by the Radicals), consists in a swing towards preventive measures accompanied by the use of terms such as 'suspensions', 'indications' or 'suppositions'. Thus the mere fact of being found in possession of 'documents or things' deemed to have subversive ends, can be punished with up to six years imprisonment. This term can be extended to ten years if the material thought to contain incitement, or apologia, or instructions for the purpose of committing crimes, is actually disseminated.

'Giving shelter' or 'assistance' to people who might be found guilty at a later stage of belonging to a criminal organization (a minimum of three people with access to arms or ammunition) can be punished with up to three years in jail. However, in this case, the authorities have bowed to the sacredness of family bonds by excluding parents and relatives from this provision. In principle at least, those on the run can seek shelter with parents or siblings, and see what happens. An extremely controversial clause is that which halves the punishment for anyone who decides to inform and cooperate with the authorities.

Other measures now allow the police to seal off entire districts, and to enter and search houses and blocks of flats without a warrant. Anyone can be detained for questioning for up to 48 hours without the right to see a lawyer, while, having been charged and imprisoned, a person can wait for up to twelve years in jail before a final judgement is passed on whether he is guilty or innocent. It is hardly surprising that some people have seen this as a 'legal coup d'etat'. The fact that for the first time since 1945 the job of Prefect has gone to a top military man (in Genoa) has only added weight to the argument that the country is increasingly controlled by the military.

Movements against Repression: the "Garantismo"

For over a year, prior to the passing of these new laws, several appeals have been circulated expressing deep reservations about the anti-terrorist measures in the Constitution. The fact that some of these appeals have been signed by some prominent Communist MPs and intellectuals has so angered the PCI that some political observers anticipate a repetition of the kind of purge carried out against members of 'Il Manifesto' in 1969. Sharp divisions have emerged in all the main parties in relation

to the 'garantismo' movement.

The 'garantisti' are people of different political persuasions — socialists, communists, radicals, libertarians, members of extreme left-wing parties — who share the same preoccupation with the preservation of civil liberties, including freedom of expression, even though they fully realize the difficulty in distinguishing between words and actions. This is especially so when revolutionary theories are expounded as in the case of Professor Negri.

What the 'garantisti' want is that justice be seen to be done and are determined to stick to the principle that people must be considered innocent until they are found guilty. They keep reminding Italians that over a year has gone by since the arrests of 7 April while the proclaimed 'decisive evidence' said to be in the hands of the authorities, have actually failed to materialize. Their favourite expressions are 'maccartismo', 'germanizzazione' (West-Germanization) and 'inquisizione' but of course no amount of verbal distancing can change the fact that the phenomenon is essentially Italian, not least because for the first time the criminalization of large sections of the far left is taking place with the sanction of the Communist Party. It is not surprising that while the 'garantismo' movement (now being referred to as PGI, Partito Garantista Italiano,) is open to everybody, the only people who join it in an open dissent with their party are the Communists of the PCI. *L'Unita* has denounced the movement from the outset with articles thundering against the 'indecent' of its views. It has also referred to one of its most prominent members, Giorgio Bocca as a cretin and an imbecile. Bocca has published a number of books on the question of political violence in Italy. (The last one, *Il Caso 7 Aprile, Toni Negri e la Grande Inquisizione*, has just appeared.)

Sciascia, Magistratura Democratica, and Toni Negri Ironically the PCI itself was partly responsible for the formation of the 'garantismo', when Moro was kidnapped the Party promptly called on intellectuals to come out in support of the state. The call was intended to isolate and publicly ostracize all those who had characterised those who had engaged in violent actions and perhaps enlisted themselves in the Partito Armato as 'compagni che sbagliano' (comrades who have made mistakes). This definition, very common in newspapers such as *Lotta Continua* and *Il Manifesto* was sufficiently lenient and non critical to cause a huge scandal. In an attempt to teach the extreme left a lesson, the PCI delivered its ultimatum to the intellectuals who were supposed to clarify this dangerous confusion. 'Are you with the State or with the Red Brigades? You must publicly state which side you are on'. Leonardo Sciascia, unquestionably one of Italy's leading intellectuals, who has since joined the Radicals and is an MP both in Rome and Strasbourg, was one of those who did not respond in the way the PCI would have liked. 'They want me to say that one has to defend this State as it is', he wrote. 'My work of a lifetime, all that I have written and said prove quite clearly that I cannot be on the side of the Red Brigades. But I will not exchange my freedom and dignity, nor the Constitution, for a bit of public order. I am on the side of the Constitution. The State as it is today, is an empty shell.' Sciascia was refusing to bow and come out in support of this State, in the name of something which sounded strange and also alarming: dignity.

Sciascia's uncompromising stance was taken up and developed further by most of the people who have since joined the 'garantismo' movement. Some of its supporters, like Salvatore Senese, the National Secretary of a highly influential group of left-wing magistrates, Magistratura Democratica, believe that 'garantismo', far from playing the role of sympathizer of terrorism as the Christian Democrats and the PCI would have it, 'is the only force in Italy today capable of preventing a large section of the population from detaching itself even further from the State, and falling into the trap of illegal struggle'.

On the other hand, Professor Negri and other members of Autonomia Organizzata and the 'Movimento' are very sceptical about the interpretation of 'garantismo', particularly in relation to its liberal principles such as freedom of speech. There has been a sharp exchange between the semiologist Umberto Eco and Negri on this matter. 'You have known me for 25 years

and have never considered me an idiot', wrote Negri, in response to Eco's demand that he comment on the attack on a university professor who was shot in the legs. 'Do you really believe that in this country one can say what he thinks...?' For Negri, the future of Italy is based very strictly on a political solution. 'In Italy, armed struggle is a reality... It would be grotesque to try and exorcise it by attributing the phenomenon to the subjectivity of a few dozen comrades. In fact the only alternative that exists to prevent the spreading of civil war, consists in the recognition of the new interests and needs of the proletariat. Interests which can no longer be mediated by the existing parties. The outcome will depend on whether the institutionalized political forces will decide to exercise further repression and move towards the destruction and annihilation of sections of the proletariat, or whether the proletariat will succeed in creating new spaces to express its new needs in a dialectical way'. And he adds, 'We are definitely against terrorism, but we are interested in the reasonability of the struggle, including armed struggle.'

#### A Laboratory of Social Ideas

It is this adamant stand which makes it very difficult to discuss ways of finding a solution to the problem of revolutionary intellectuals imprisoned in Italy. The Socialist Party is acutely aware that some kind of extraordinary political initiative may be necessary, but although senior party members have in the past met representatives of Autonomia Operaia, such as Piperno and Pace, who are now also in prison, it is more likely that possible solutions will emerge from different quarters. Piperno thus suggested an amnesty which was given space in *Lotta Continua* and 'read with interest' by some garantisti, and this remains a topic of discussion.

The role of Gramsci in this debate is important. Gramsci, the revolutionary intellectual, has been elevated, albeit in an expurgated form, to the status of a national hero. The younger generation of students are aware that Gramsci never excluded the use of violence in the overthrow of the capitalist State just as everyone knows that he died in prison at the hands of the fascists. Brecht has also been discussed in relation to political violence. Italy is clearly very different today, but the reminder is an apt and disturbing one. Inevitably comparisons have already been made between the hunt and trials of Communists in 1923 (a warrant was issued against Gramsci in February of that year) and some of the trials which will intersperse the next ten or twenty years of Italian political and cultural life.

Even more disturbing for the average person is the fact that apart from factory workers and so-called 'emarginati', so many people who might have been described until a few years ago as 'citizens above suspicion' — lawyers, journalists, professional broadcasters, electronic engineers, medical practitioners, poets — end up in jail. Some of them are 30-45 years old. Suddenly it's no longer 'just a question of students' and the wave of rebellion against the State and the degree of dissidence vis-à-vis the Communist Party in particular appears strangely mature.

A few years ago, everyone was quite happy to hear Italy being described as a laboratory of ideas. But now that it has become clear that some of these ideas seem to require an arsenal to be put into practice, the enthusiasm has quietened down considerably. While most people are holding their breath, no doubt there are others in Italy and abroad who want to see this excessively dangerous experiment cease at once and the entire laboratory locked up.



# INTERVIEW

## INTERVIEW WITH SERGIO BOLOGNA

□ The following interview is with Sergio Bologna, one of the Editorial Board of the journal *Primo Maggio* (First of May). He relates the wave of arrests to the wider context of the class struggle in Italy and the restructuration of Italian capitalism. He deals in particular with the key role of the Faculty of Social & Political Sciences at Padova University — the base of many of the original April 7th defendants. He also looks at the effects of political terrorism in Italy, especially on the Left.

Question: What was the real target of the repressive attack launched by the state in the late 1970s?

Answer: The real target was essentially *autonomia organizzata*, or certain sectors of *autonomia*, especially in Padova but also in Rome and Milan. Rome and Padova were *autonomia's* main centres of organisation; this became particularly clear during the Bologna Convention. It was here that *autonomia operaia* first assumed hegemony in the debate...

Question: You mean the Bologna Convention of 1977?

Answer: Yes, September 1977. But *autonomia* committed a serious error at this point, I think: the error of coming away from the Convention without a well-defined common programme. This error was later to allow the armed groups to insert themselves in this same social area covered by *autonomia*, and to recruit their militants from within it. I think it is clear that this is the area from which the armed groups recruited their militants. In this way the relationship between *autonomia operaia*, *autonomia* in general, and the armed groups is a relationship which was present in the dynamic of the struggles from the very beginning.

The April 7th police operation was planned to take in the whole of this area, in all of its complexity; in particular it aimed to imprison the presumed leadership of *autonomia*. There's no point in my repeating the fact that the charges are an absurdity, but I think it's important that we discuss the substance, the political content of the attack.

The repressive attack was aimed at the whole social area represented by *autonomia*, at a whole history of struggles in Italy over the last 10 years, but in particular from 1977 on. This was a very important period, in which struggles began to have as their base a very different social area: the so-called 'new social subjects', the metropolitan proletariat, women, the 'diffused worker' etc.

The organisational characteristics of work in that period — the way it was

being geographically dispersed and decentralised — imposed, if you like, a real subjective necessity for the development of a form of organisation. A big debate developed in the years preceding 1977 on the question of the relationship between these new subjects and forms of organisation. Some sectors of *autonomia* wanted to privilege a party form; others tended to privilege a more movementist form, linked to the struggles themselves as they arose, with contacts and coordination between the various collectives at a regional level and within the various categories and sectors. We can say that all this was the target for the attack that began on April 7th.

Clearly there was also the objective, for some sections of the main political parties, of mediation, of becoming involved in the plans and negotiations which might have been going on (we don't know if they were going on) behind the scenes of the Moro kidnap. Undoubtedly the PSI was carrying out an operation of mediation during the kidnapping, in an attempt to save the life of the Christian Democrat leader. And some exponents of *autonomia* probably participated in this attempt. This mediation was impeded by other political forces who wanted to be sure that there were no other political objectives behind it. So there was also this tactical objective of attacking the so-called 'party of mediation'.

The operation, then, was intended to hit this whole social area represented by *autonomia*. And we should add that the *autonomia* did respond. But the repression went on intensifying, and was helped by the fact that in many cases the response was first and foremost that carried ahead by the armed groups, the terrorists, while *autonomia* was left completely defenceless. It was operating principally at the judicial level, attempting

to disprove the accusations thrown against it.

#### Workplace Struggles

However, as I said, there was a response, there were struggles, even if the cycle of struggles was coming to an end. Although I should add that it hasn't completely closed, even today. For example, a series of strikes is going on in the public sector. In this sector the unions are very weak and thus the employer faces a big problem of the ungovernability of the labour force. Ferment started in these sectors with the cuts in public spending, and with the restructuration plans that were going ahead not only in the industrial sector, but in the public sector too, at the level of welfare assistance, the services, hospitals etc, and public transport. These are the three principal areas of public spending in Italy. And it was within these 3 fundamental areas (including, obviously, the credit and finance sectors), that the restructuring, the restriction of public spending and thus the attack on the wage levels and manning levels was planned and launched. Nevertheless it is this sector which continues, despite the heavy attack being carried out on it, to produce pointers, moments of struggle, a sort of ungovernability.

Then there is the situation in the big factories, which have been undergoing very heavy restructuring since 1975. I say 1975 because this was the year when the layoffs and the use of *cassa integrazione* [1] really began to bite in the big factories. From Milan — the redundancies at Innocenti, for example — to the crisis in the chemical industry, and concluding with the layoffs at FIAT in October 1980. Thus in the big factories too, there has been a very violent attack on job levels, via a 'technological leap' combined with the closure of many 'lame ducks'.

Side by side with all this there are the growing normative problems, prob-



□ 'Whose bright idea was it to celebrate Gramsci's 40th anniversary in period costume?'



lems of the regulation and control of strikes. This is particularly true of the labour force in the public sector. Right now, in fact, a discussion is going on over whether strikes in the public sector should be regulated.

So, to go back to what we were saying earlier, the arrests of April 7th, December 21st, etc were not able to undermine completely the whole arena of social conflict, but they were able to attack its organised moments. Then, in 1980, the big crisis of the armed movements began. In my opinion it had already begun much earlier, but all the recent *pentimenti*, confessions etc, have meant a complete collapse for the Red Brigades, as well as for Prima Linea and all the other minor groups.

The constant trickle of arrests, added to the big "blitz" operations, have meant that the number of polit-

point where the Ministry is taking measures to build 84 new prisons.

This leads me to believe that unless there is some form of social measure, some form of amnesty, the problem of the prison population risks becoming a long term problem in Italy. The repression has created within itself a whole series of problems, and it remains to be seen how they will be resolved. So, this has given you a synthesis of the objectives of the attack which began with April 7th, and some of the consequences arising from that operation.

Question: Does this question of the reorganisation and restructuring of the industrial and public sectors, and all its various consequences, explain the enormous violence of the state's response to the organisation of this social terrain, a response which was so much harder and more widely articul-

appeared in the process of decentralisation).

Then, with the European crisis, large numbers of emigrants began to return from abroad. The problem of unemployment in Italy, for many years, for decades in fact, had been resolved at least in part through emigration; many people were forced to emigrate in order to find work. But factories in Europe are no longer absorbing labour, or are absorbing labour of a different sort (Mediterranean, Asian and Black labour). This has exacerbated the problem of unemployment. Unemployment no longer concerns the big urban centres alone, but the whole country. The South is obviously particularly affected by the return of the emigrants.

All of this has served to make the general problem of social ungovernability much more acute, and it is this question of social ungovernability which, in recent times, has proved to be Italy's major problem, particularly when this ungovernability began to throw up moments of organisation. The repression was thus intended to hit at a political stratum: not only the organisation of terrorism, but also the political strata which had formed within the universities, schools, factories and so on. The repression had to hit very widely precisely because this social area is very wide, very diffused. There are over 3,000 political prisoners in the jails now, and only 1/5 of them belong to terrorist organisations. All the others are nothing more than comrades who have been involved in the organisation of struggles.

Question: Why was the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences here in Padova so important, so symbolic in the repressive operation against *autonomia*?

Answer: This was because the Faculty of Social Sciences had represented for a long time a sort of synthesis between theoretical production and political practice. Of course, this was true of other places as well as Padova; there is a very large number of university professors in jail. This synthesis between theory and practice has produced a conflictuality diffused around all the big university cities — think of Bologna, for example, or Rome, Milan, Naples, Bari. All these big university centres were also centres for this sort of theoretical production and political organisation. Padova was simply the first among these centres, a sort of model.

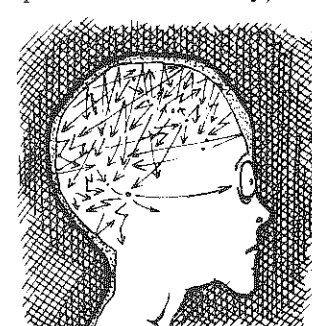
Then there was the question of the prestige, the standing of the Faculty here, of Toni Negri and so on. But above all Padova was important for the continuity of the theoretical production. One of the key points in the magistrates' inquiries has been this element of continuity. This appears in the political interest they have shown

in those comrades who were militants in Potere Operaio at the beginning of the '70s. The recent inquiries all lean very heavily on this question of continuity. They started with PO, and now they're starting on Lotta Continua.

Question: Why was the response to the repression from the Left within the working class so weak and fractured?

Answer: Well, I think the reason is exactly what we were talking about before: the crisis associated with the reorganisation of industry, with the unemployment, and with the break-up of class composition. These are the fundamental elements.

Another element is, of course, that the Italian state apparatuses have been reorganised for a repressive function to a quite incredible extent. There are 5 police forces in Italy, and each one



now has its special unit, specifically adapted to combatting the phenomenon of conflictuality. Thus there has been an enormous enlargement of the repressive powers of the state. Italy now has the largest number of police per head of population of any country in Europe.

Question: But it is not only the response to direct state repression which is missing. The whole area of daily struggles, for example, for political space, or for the provision of services — in other words, of positive demands — has also been more or less absent.

Answer: But we shouldn't forget that reformism has also had its effect. There hasn't only been repression. In some regions, especially those governed by the Communist Party (Emilia etc), but even in some regions governed by the Christian Democrats, the local governments have tried to offer some reformist response: a response which has often tended to cut the ground away from under moments of conflictuality.

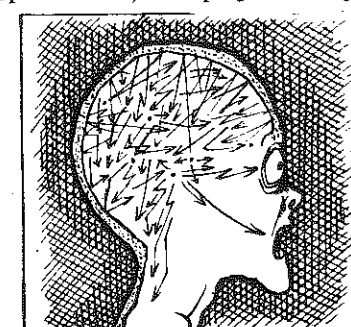
Question: But there has also been a participation by reformist sectors in the strategy of repression, in the annihilation of the needs expressed by the struggles of *autonomia* over the last few years, and in particular since 1977. Reformism has assumed a very clear position of slamming the door on these needs. The whole personnel of the reformist structure has been co-opted within the repressive operation. This became very clear during the April 7th question. This is another aspect which should be explained —

namely the role the PCI has played over the last few years.

Answer: The role of the PCI was essentially defined at the moment in which it chose the road of the Historic Compromise. And the kidnapping of Aldo Moro was the moment of maximum crisis for the Historic Compromise. But even today the PCI has not abandoned the strategy of the Historic Compromise. What has changed, rather, is the increasing unwillingness on the part of the Christian Democrats to accept it, and above all the strategy of the PSI (which has always attempted to oppose this strategy) intervening between the DC and the PCI, and alternating between alliance with the DC and an acceptance of the Left. The PSI has performed the role of a sort of independent variable in the Italian political system, having perceived a danger of its being "squeezed out" in the Historic Compromise.

The PCI's prospects have slowly been disintegrating over the last few years. Partly because it has gradually been losing its political partners. And partly, perhaps, because by now, even internationally, doubts are creeping in about the PCI's real possibilities of entering into government.

At the international level too the PCI has found itself very weak and on unsure ground. The Party's project could only work in the context of an international policy, at least at the European level. But no European Communist Party, apart from the Spanish one, was prepared to give it



support. An alliance with the German Social Democrats also seemed a possibility for a while, but this too fell through. So, one by one, the PCI has lost not only its national but also its international political partners.

It has also been having increasing difficulties with the Soviet Union, in this period of tendency towards a new phase of Cold War. Over the last few years the PCI had begun a dialogue with some elements in the American Democratic Party, but now the Democrats have been replaced and Reagan has been elected. The effect of this will be felt at the level of foreign affairs, including the relationship between the US and the Communist parties of Western Europe. Thus the PCI will no longer be able to find partners in certain circles within the American Democrats either. The PCI's "solution" (the "Italian road to

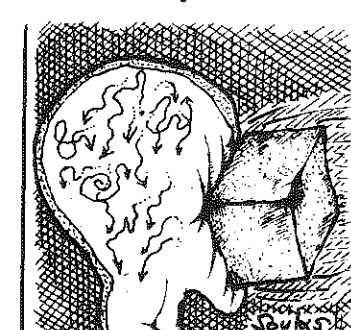
socialism" independent from the Soviet Union) is coming under more and more pressure from the impending Cold War, which is putting even German Social Democracy under pressure. So not only the PCI but German Social Democracy too finds itself in crisis, upsetting the whole hypothesis of a third force in Europe which would counterpose the two big power-blocs.

The PCI is at present tragically incapable of formulating policy; at the level of local government etc, it has been reduced to operating on a day to day basis. It is in a blind alley, with no strategy and no programme. It is finding it very hard to reformulate a strategy. For all the above reasons, the Historic Compromise has failed, and the PCI has become almost "inert" within the Italian political scene.

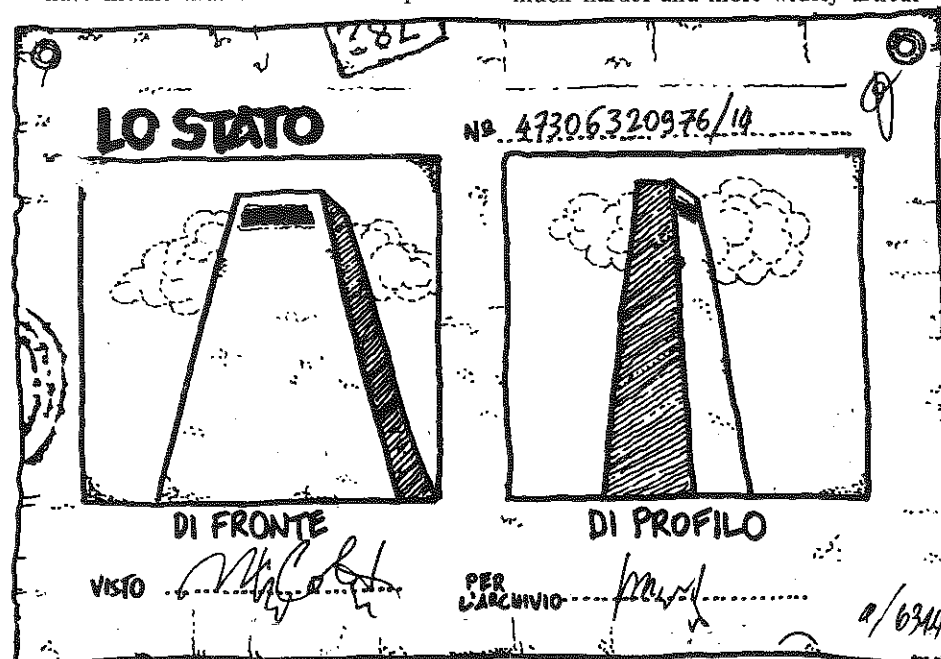
And undoubtedly now a "new Right" is coming into being in Italy, no longer represented by the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano — the neo-fascist party) but by a new sort of mentality; a new bourgeois mentality and also a new working class mentality. What happened at FIAT was fairly significant in this context. The demonstration of the 40,000 was not made up only of foremen; there were foremen, but there were workers too. Each foreman took along 5, 6, 7 workers from his section, so we can't say it was only foremen. It was organised by the foremen, but a lot of workers participated too. So, this "new Right" exists, and in many cases it is formed by PCI cadres. It's a new Right mentality on the question of work; against the refusal of work, for a respect for work, a respect for the company, for bourgeois life and its customs and so on.

Question: Does it make sense, then, to pose an equation whereby the party system is seen as an apparatus antagonistic both to the social and political autonomy expressed over the last few years, and to the new Right?

Answer: I think so. But we must add here that the party-system has lost a great deal of legitimacy. We see this in the phenomenon of what is being called "the Abstention Party". This is a very new phenomenon in Italy; there has never been such a high level of electoral abstention in Italy as there was in



1979. And this is probably a phenomenon which is destined to grow. It means that civil society is increasingly



ical prisoners in Italy has risen to a point unknown even under fascism: about 3,000-3,500 political prisoners. This has created another very serious problem, a future problem — the problem of the prison population, the imprisoned proletariat. Thus another, new, social subject has been created. This is no longer a minority problem, but a mass situation, because side by side with the political prisoners are all their family and friends, and now we are talking about a large slice of the population.

This is not a situation which can be quickly resolved, because the sentences being handed out are very long, and there has been the use of long periods of "preventive imprisonment". We now have a new problem of ungovernability — the ungovernability of the prisons. The prisons are literally exploding. Apart from the fact that they can no longer physically contain the rising number of prisoners, the prisoners themselves have begun organising and giving life to ongoing forms of struggle. We have now reached the

ated than anything which occurred, for example, in 1968?

Answer: Yes, but another problem must be considered in addition to this. There has not only been the reorganisation of big industry, but of small and medium industry too. Italy, like many other countries, had chosen as its model for economic development the model of the "submerged economy", and this gave a considerable degree of equilibrium to the labour market from 1976 onwards. The small and medium industries have shown a much higher rate of profit than big industry in many cases, because the unions' control over the labour force was practically non-existent, and thus the employers didn't run into the same problems of rigidity in the use of the labour force. But with the crisis in Europe as a whole, this sector too was to enter into crisis, especially given that the small and medium industries are often closely linked to and interdependent with big industries (they are often productive units which

detaching itself from the party system. We're getting closer to the American situation in which only 30-40% of people participate in the elections.

**Question:** What is likely to happen in the space created by this increasing detachment from the party system?

**Answer:** Well, we always believed that this would be a space within which the struggles of *autonomia* would grow, but this has not always proved to be true. It is not an equation which can easily be verified. It may be true, but on the other hand, so far it has not happened. The exact opposite may happen — namely the formation of a huge mass of *qualunquismo* [2] which sees politics as by now having nothing more to say.

**Question:** As far as the factory is concerned, was this "new Right" working class created by the changing class composition within the factory resulting from the introduction of new technology, or was it something else as well?

### The Important Effects of Terrorism

**Answer:** I believe it was also the effect of many years of terrorism. Who are these foremen? They are those who more than anyone else are afraid, of being kneecapped or injured. This situation could bring about a new version of the "yellow union", although FIAT probably doesn't need it now, since the factory has been "normalised" and authority has been reimposed. However, it is clear that this huge process of restructuring has not resolved and cannot resolve all the employer's problems of command: the problem has simply been thrown out of the factory into the city.

Turin today is turning into a sort of Naples, even though it's a very different sort of city. The structure of the labour market has changed enormously. The lack of work at a mass level is now juxtaposed with a lack of work at a metropolitan level, at the level of the submerged economy, etc. So now it's difficult for someone on the *cassa integrazione*, or a young unemployed person, to find work even in the submerged economy. Thus the problem of unemployment has become very important even in the areas where the submerged economy had once formed a sort of "safety net" around the big factory, absorbing unemployment.

In this way the composition of the metropolitan proletariat has changed. The main figure is now that of the completely marginalised proletarian, and this creates big problems of "ungovernability", for welfare state type policies. It has also had, and may have, very serious consequences for public order. What will happen now I don't know. I believe that the whole repressive apparatus of the state will make a further qualitative leap; at the fiscal level, at the level of public

spending cuts, at the level of incomes policy and the regulation of strikes, above and beyond the directly military level and the prisons.

**Question:** We haven't yet talked much about the impact of terrorism on this situation. What has been happening to the armed groups over the last period, for example since the kidnapping of D'Urso (December 1980), and what sort of prospects do they have?

**Answer:** I think it would be better to start from Moro, the action which marks the high point for the terrorist groups, and also, if you like, the moment from which their subsequent decline set in. This is true in the sense that, with the kidnapping of Moro, Italian terrorism reached its highest point in terms of its own objectives; it had managed to throw the government, the party-system into complete crisis. In this sense they achieved a real political result. The objective of freeing the political prisoners was not obtained, but probably this was not even the real aim. From this high point, then, a phase began which, although it was still one of expansion (because the number of terrorist attacks was still increasing), was also one of internal crisis, probably accelerated by the wave of repression after April 7th.

The phase ended in the collapse of 1980. Here we can turn to the documents coming out of the prisons at the beginning of 1980, written by the "historic leadership" of the Red Brigades, in which they are critical of the "militaristic subjectivity", as they call it, of the organisation outside the prisons. It's not very clear exactly what they meant or to whom they were alluding, but it was certainly a criticism of the "extermination campaign" — directed at the police force and the magistrates, of these deaths, one after the other, deaths virtually every week. Deaths without any purpose or political perspective, which just created a sense of isolation, not only from the people in general, but even among the organisation's militants themselves. This obviously threw the organisations into internal crisis. So then we had the phenomenon of repentance, the "repentant terrorists", Peci etc, and the general crisis of the Red Brigades, and also of *Prima Linea*, which broke up completely, and of the minor organisations.

There was an attempt by those in jail to re-assume political control of the organisations, to impose a new political line, but I believe by now they have been defeated. The arrests go on, practically every day. Since April 7th people are being arrested every day. Or even if someone isn't arrested, new evidence emerges, new people are put on the wanted list, new arrest warrants are issued, even for people who haven't done anything. People who just threw a Molotov cocktail during some demonstration, who at one time would have been

charged with seditious demonstration, now face charges of membership of armed bands, as if they had killed someone, and risk from 10 to 15 years in prison.

### The Only Left in Italy Exists In and Around the Jails

**Question:** Did the Left undervalue the impact of terrorism?

**Answer:** Very much so. The Left has been completely thrown off balance. We didn't know what to do, we were very divided over how to fight it.

Some sectors of the main parties used the situation to their own advantage — the PSI, the DC, the PCI and so on were able to use the situation to legitimate the repression. The Left was completely cut out of the scene. At a certain point the PCI turned itself into a sort of ideological standard-bearer of the struggle against terrorism, and those to the left of the PCI were left in a state of total confusion. Some had an attitude of comprehending the reasons behind the armed struggle; others of opposing it; and yet others an attitude of dialogue, discussion, sympathy and even support. And this whole series of contrary positions have acted in such a way as to destroy the Left.

*There is no Left in Italy now. A Left with a platform, a Marxist platform, no longer exists in Italy today. By now, the only Left which exists lives in and around the jails.*

**Question:** Can this crisis of identity, this lack of identity within the Italian Left be resolved? Is there any tendency to reconstruct a Left which might resolve this ambiguity, this confusion, which today terms like "class" or "proletariat" are inadequate to define? Is there any way out of this situation in which the prisons are beginning to fill up not only with militants, but with class sectors which are forced to enter into conflict?

**Answer:** It's a problem which cannot be resolved in the short term. The only thing which might be able to resolve it would be a Right-wing government sufficiently strong to call a sort of amnesty, similar to that called by Togliatti for the Fascists when he became Minister of Justice. I believe that only a Right-wing government with a repressive apparatus which is able to militarise society to an enormous degree could grant this sort of amnesty.

■ Interview recorded in Padova March 18th 1981

#### Note:

The *Cassa Integrazione Guadagni* is a nationally established lay-off fund, linked to the Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale, and financed by contributions from workers, employers and the State. It pays a certain percentage of the basic wage to workers laid off for given periods.

# INTERVIEW WITH 2 AUTONOMISTS

□ Two recent events have had a profound effect on the balance of political power in Italy: FIAT's decision to sack 14,500 workers (Sept. 1980). And the Earthquake (Nov. 1980). This interview, with two Italian autonomists, assesses their impact.

**Question:** Could you give us a general overview of what is happening in Italy at present. What have been the significant traits of the situation, say, since Summer 1980?

**Answer:** What we have seen in Italy during the last few months has been primarily the continuation of the repression of the revolutionary movement and a general stepping-up of the offensive of the bourgeoisie, which has been hitting us for the last two years now. The armed organisations have continued to suffer severe losses both inside and outside the prisons. For example, the strategy of prison rebellion/mass escape which had been elaborated by the prisoner comrades has been largely defused and neutralised by the building and reinforcement of the Special Prisons.

At the same time, the fact that a significant number of captured militants have cooperated with the repressive forces, has produced not only a string of arrests and the discovery of hide-outs, but also a general demoralisation and disorganisation which has affected all sectors of the movement. The recent defeat at FIAT was the highlight of the difficult period we are going through in Italy right now.

**Question:** Let us take some of these points in turn. Tell us what happened at FIAT.

**Answer:** All through the late '70s FIAT had been restructuring its cycle of production... not only have many units of production been shifted abroad, but also smaller "diffuse" factories have been spread around Italy. Even in the remaining big concentrations of production, the introduction of computer technology and robots has meant a complete reorganisation of the assembly lines. For example, the old situation where large numbers of workers would all work together inside one shop is largely gone forever. Now, the average number of workers working in one location at the same time is about 4-5! One can imagine the effect of this on the organisation of the workers.

About a year ago, FIAT sacked 61 militants, under a flurry of propaganda about their being "terrorists" or "connected to terrorists". Although opposition to that manoeuvre was relatively strong, and even the Trade Unions were forced to take some kind of position in support of the 61, the long process of tribunals/ law courts/mediation has exhausted the militancy of the movement. So, when FIAT suddenly announced the redundancies for 14,000 workers this Autumn, many comrades and organisations were caught unawares.

There were a number of occasions when it seemed that opposition to this

massive sacking would develop. There was a lot of talk of occupying the factories; large and militant pickets were set up... but there were two events which shattered the potential of any serious resistance.

The first was the organisation of a workers' demonstration by FIAT. The firm brought about 40,000 people from around the country, to Turin, where they marched in support of FIAT's plans. The Trade Unions latched onto this and started a whole panic about "the class being divided" etc.

Then, in the immediate aftermath, came the second event. FIAT management and the Unions worked out a compromise, where instead of the 14,000 redundancies, the Unions agreed to accept 24,000 "temporary" layoffs. FIAT guaranteed that the majority of these 24,000 workers would be re-employed "somewhere in Italy" within the next 3 years. This scheme really broke the back of the opposition.

**Question:** How did the shop-floor militants react to this? And could you elaborate on the particular role of the Communist Party militants inside FIAT?

**Answer:** On your first question... Many stewards, shop floor delegates etc really wanted to fight. The idea of an occupation was tossed around a lot. What we also saw was a massive rift between the FIAT Trade Union structure and not only the national but also the local Trade Union organisation... around the city of Turin. After the compromise was accepted, many people publicly resigned from the Union. The fact that very little concrete organisation came out of that anger must be related to the absence of revolutionary intervention at FIAT, compared with the past, and the related general disorganisation of the movement in Italy.

The PCI-influenced shop stewards were part of that process... which brings

us to the second part of your question. What made their situation even more complex and ambiguous was the fact that their Party took, for the first time in a long, long time, a clear-cut hard line. The PCI daily paper *L'Unita* was calling for a factory occupation. Now, there are many reasons for this... very few of them to do with FIAT... we will come back to them presently. But what the Party did *not* do was to implement that call, in practical terms. For the first time the base of the Party appeared to be now behind the Party line. The Party never explained how, and certainly never pushed its large base inside FIAT, to move into action.

**Question:** With the place that FIAT occupies in Italian industry, do you expect this state of affairs to have a profound influence in other factories across the country?

**Answer:** Certainly! FIAT is the "thermometer" of Italian industry. With that precious victory under its belt, Italian capital will now move and try to emulate the tactics used in FIAT, using them elsewhere. Already in the large steel complex of *ITALSIDER* in Genova robots are being used and introduced on a massive scale. And large scale redundancies are coming. With inflation and unemployment running as high as they are, it is going to be a very hard period ahead.

### The Earthquake

**Question:** Before we get back to some other points arising out of your initial statements, could you talk to us a bit about the recent earthquake and its effects on the people and the political system?

**Answer:** The earthquake was a hard blow on the people living in some of the poorest areas of the country. For them, the next couple of years will be literally a battle between life and death. The number of people killed is still uncertain... the State has, obviously, tried to minimise the casualties. We calculate that anything



The Earthquake: Women from a Village near Naples. (Photo: Tano d'Amico)



up to 15,000 dead may be a realistic figure.

The economic consequences of the earthquake have been commented upon by the Press, so we won't dwell on them. But we would like to stress a number of points which may be little known outside Italy.

Firstly, the role of the Italian Army. One would have expected that in a country like ours, which has a largely conscript Army, the soldiers would have been in the forefront of relief operations. But that is not what happened. The main role of the Army has been conceived and operated as one of *social control*. Relief came a long way behind, as a social priority. This has incensed even sections of the bourgeoisie. There have been reports of Army units, backed by units of the German Army, coming into the 'quake areas equipped only with explosives — which they proceeded to use to flatten villages which had people still trapped under the rubble. This kind of carry-on, together with the large-scale misappropriation of relief funds and materials, has raised a furore. It reinforced the scepticism of large numbers of people towards the State and the Christian Democrat Government.

**Question:** And did the PCI try to profit from this?

**Answer:** Yes, that was our second point. For the first time since the Historic Compromise strategy was elaborated by Berlinguer, the PCI has taken up a clear oppositional stance. They don't want to work with corrupt politicians, they keep saying... so they are on the offensive. Which explains their stance towards the FIAT events mentioned earlier. They probably calculate that popular dissatisfaction with the Christian Democrats is so high that any election right now may make it the largest Party in the country. The earthquake brought so much shit to the surface that it's hard to see how the Christian Democrats could recuperate all this.

This brings us to our third point. As it became patently obvious that State relief was either not reaching the people, or when it arrived it was plainly insufficient, relief brigades were formed among the Left movement. The first such brigade to reach the people was a group of Engineering Union members (FLM). The PCI also sent a number of brigades. But what is the most interesting point for us is that comrades of the Autonomy movement, about 100 from Rome, and 50 from the rest of the country, set up a hospital/First Aid centre and a canteen, serving 800 hot meals three times a day in one of the remotest and worst-hit areas, near Conza.

In our opinion this represents a tremendous breakthrough. The local population accepted us warmly, knowing very well who we were and why we were there. There have been a number of clashes with the Carabinieri and the soldiers, who on occasions were forced to come and eat the food prepared by the comrades. In one particular incident, 9

comrades were arrested and sent back to Rome, accused of "causing dissension among the population", because they pointed the finger and organised the people against gross misappropriation of relief funds by a local colonel.

**Question:** Do the comrades see this work as a one-off attempt, or are there plans to continue and consolidate the gains made?

**Answer:** All of us see it as a highly successful — and practical — attempt to grow roots among the people, while being helpful and answering the people's needs. 5 trucks a day come from the city. We want to keep this up all through the winter, and try to bring all the people who have been there for a general assembly some time in the Summer... probably during the holidays, in August.

### Rebuilding the Autonomy

**Question:** Do you think that this kind of valuable practical experience may act as an impetus for reorganisation for the dispersed forces of the Autonomous movement?

**Answer:** I hope it does, for we are in desperate need of reorganisation. We have lost many people... in prison, or who have simply ceased being politically active. Even during the last year when quite a significant number of comrades got mobilised around the question of opposing repression... even then the haemorrhage has continued. The overall class recomposition which hit the class as a whole hit us hard too. Repression accentuated the problems, and we were left with no capacity to fight, to hit back.

We need time desperately to reassess our experiences. Many theories were accepted too glibly. For example, the whole practice of the movement, on the question of social needs, was interpreted, I believe, too individualistically. Many comrades started from the recognition of absenteeism as an aspect of the general refusal of the class to be exploited, and ended up in a mass process of self-imposed redundancies. People packed in their jobs. This weakened us in the workplaces and left the stage open for all kinds of trips.

A lot of discussion is taking place locally. Let's hope that it's going to be generalised and turned into new forms of organisation. In a certain sense we think it is true to say that the historical phase of *Autonomia Operaia* — as a political organisation — is over and finished with. We are moving on.

**Question:** In the above context, how do you evaluate the recent re-emergence of the armed organisations (and particularly the Red Brigades), which according to the State and many "objective" observers, were supposed to be dead and buried?

**Answer:** This is a complex question. First of all, let us point out that we have very little contact with the armed organisations, so that any opinion or judgement we make is based on information available publicly and our political analysis of the situation.

First of all, it is undeniable that the armed organisations have been hit very hard... they have suffered heavy losses. I personally doubt that Prima Linea and all the other smaller groups will ever recover. So "armed organisations" today really means the Red Brigades.

The Red Brigades were also hit hard. They lost many militants, leading cadres. The fact that some of their leading cadres like Peci began talking to the cops demoralised further the prisoners and their support base outside. The general decline of the popular movement, the sackings of the 61 at FIAT (among whom were Red Brigades militants who ended in prison), the recent defeat at FIAT... all these events must have affected the morale, the fighting spirit and the political line of the organisation. It was common knowledge that the remaining RB structures were reorganising while at the same time engaging in a thorough debate on the future of the organisation.

You see, what most people overlook is that while the claims of the Red Brigades to be the organisational leading detachment of the class and the movement are, obviously, exaggerated, it is nevertheless undeniably true that the militants of the RB are *inside* the class and the movement — and as such are both having an effect, and in turn being affected by changes taking place. Their actions, which appear detached from the logic of the development of struggle, do, nevertheless, constitute an important signpost of what is possible... or impossible, as the case may be.

**Question:** Transpose the above to the recent actions, and what do you get?

**Answer:** If one examines the 3 recent actions claimed by the RB (the execution of the two managers, of FALK [steel] and MARELLI [electronics], and the more recent kidnapping of the magistrate D'Urso, who was the Coordinator of the Special Prisons), one gets two visions. One, the traditional RB perspective of attacking capital and State in a vision of class/civil war. In the first two actions there was no discernible agitation, no working class mobilisation in either of the two factories whose managers were attacked. These actions leave people slightly perplexed and cold. They demonstrate, of course, that the claims of the State about the RB being dead are just superficial claims and no more.

The third action, on the contrary, is part of another vision. It hits the State in a very sensitive area, demonstrating its vulnerability where it is supposed to be the strongest (its judiciary/repressive branches), and reflects a popular feeling against the whole terror of the Special Prisons and what they represent in society. The demand for the closure of the Special Prison at Asinara, which followed the kidnapping, was a truly popular demand. It divides the political parties and the State, and unifies the movement.

■ Interview recorded in Dublin 27th December 1980 by Rebel magazine.

la Repubblica cronaca  
venerdì 2 aprile 1981

Sessantanove imputati rinviati dinanzi alla Corte d'Assise di Roma

# Chiusa l'inchiesta 7 aprile A giudizio Negri, Scalzone e Bignami

In 1018 pagine, il giudice istruttore Amato ha spiegato i motivi delle sue conclusioni - Due imputati deceduti, 4 prosciolti, 5 (tra i quali Negri, Scalzone e Bignami) dovranno rispondere di insurrezione armata contro i poteri dello Stato (un reato gravissimo, punito con l'ergastolo, mai contestato in Italia). 40 di costituzione di banda armata e associazione sovversiva, 27 di partecipazione a banda armata e ad associazione sovversiva, e parecchie di esse anche di altri reati.

## A Brief History of the April 7th Case

On April 7, 1979, police officers throughout Italy raided hundreds of homes and arrested about two dozen people in what said to be a major step forward in the investigation of the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro a year before. Although the Moro action was carried out by the Red Brigades, those arrested April 7th turned out to be university teachers, writers, journalists, and others identified not with "terrorist" organizations but with the political movement to the left of the Communist Party. The best known among them was Prof. Antonio Negri, who had written widely on political philosophy and the theory of the state.

The prosecutors in the case soon charged Negri and the others with being the "secret brains" behind the Red Brigades and virtually all "terrorist" actions which had occurred in Italy in the previous decade. The defendants, who included a number of former leaders of the group Potere Operaio (Workers Power), which was dissolved in 1973, charged that the case was a frame-up created by the ruling Christian Democrats (to make up for their failure to capture the real assassins of Moro) and by the Communist Party (to attract support in the coming election by appearing as a tough "law and order" party).

In the initial pre-trial interrogations which were leaked to the press, it was apparent that the defendants were being tried for their political *ideas* and *writings*. The only piece of concrete evidence that the prosecutors offered was a tape recording of a phone call made to Mrs. Moro by the Red Brigades while her husband was being held. The prosecutors claimed Negri had made that call.

After long delays, a team of six Italian experts said there was no conclusive evidence that the voice on the tape was that of Negri. One expert consulted in the U.S., under irregular circumstances, did claim that it probably was Negri.

All of this became moot, however, early in 1980 when police captured Patrizio Peci, an important leader of the Red Brigades. Peci decided to collaborate with the authorities, but to their dismay he said that Negri and the other April 7th defendants had nothing to do with the Moro affair or the Red Brigades.

Although they were forced to publicly absolve Negri and the others of the Moro charge, the prosecutors simply proceeded to rewrite the allegations in more general terms, accusing Negri and company of organizing and promoting a grand but unspecified insurrection to bring down the state.

■ Reprinted from the Bulletin of the American Campaign Against Repression in Italy (CARI) Spring 1981

Cristina Cazzaniga, i primi due «per negata concessione dell'estradizione» (vennero arrestati in Francia), gli altri «perché allo-

mata e ad associazione sovversiva sono accusati Maria Adelaide Airaghi, Marco Bellavita, Mauro Borromeo, Renata Ca-

riella Marinoni, Giuseppe Nicotri, Francesco Pardi, Massimo Pavan, Maria Perillo, Caterina Pileggi, Cataldo Quisto, Umberto Salvagno, Italo Sbroglio, Giorgio Scrofernecker, Rolando Strano, Antonio Terzani, Fabio Vedovato, Elena Vetterli.

Tra le altre imputazioni spiccano quelle contestate a Jaroslav Novak (quattro attentati e detenzione di armi ed esplosivi), a Oreste Scalzone (rapina, tentativo omicidio, minacce per un episodio avvenuto il 6 marzo 1973, i cui responsabili sono stati già processati e condannati), a Egidio Monferdin e Silvana Marelli (sequestro e omicidio Saronio, occultamento di cadavere, reati per i quali sono stati già condannati Fioroni e Castelli).

## La testimonianza del primo pentito

Per quanto riguarda i reati più gravi, della rapina di Argelato, conclusasi con un omicidio, dovrà rispondere il solo Negri, mentre dell'attentato alla Face Standard, in un primo tempo attribuito a Petra Krause, sono accusati Cavallina, Funaro, Negri, Pancino, Tommei, Pileggi, Silvana Marelli e Oreste Strano. Sempre per il caso Saronio sono stati prosciolti Tommei e Pancino.

Per completare questo primo, schematico quadro, va detto che tutti i fatti commessi da una non meglio identificata «Organizzazione che, secondo l'accusa, faceva capo a Toni Negri, sarebbero stati compiuti tra il '73 e il '75. Solo i tre reati «associativi», dai quali aveva preso il via l'indagine padovana, si sarebbero estesi fino al momento dell'arresto dei principali imputati, cioè fino al 7 aprile '79. Fu-

# THE APRIL 7th CASE



# REVIEW APRIL 7th: ONE YEAR AFTER

□ The following article is translated from L'Espresso, April 7th 1980. The article began by stating: "In 12 months there have been 4 dragnet operations, 127 warrants issued, and 64 arrests. The inquiries are being led by 20 magistrates from 6 different cities. What have they discovered? What will they do? What follows is a complete overview of the various aspects of the judicial proceedings and the people involved."

Readers should note that L'Espresso is a bourgeois magazine, and the article reflects this position. It is concerned only with the arrests among the autonomia, and also virtually ignores the fate of the women arrested in this period.

A year has gone by: 365 days of imprisonment since the "April 7th" arrests, since the big dragnet operation of Easter 1979 in which the Padova judge Pietro Calogero took everyone by surprise with the issue of 22 arrest warrants designed to strike at the leadership of the area of Autonomia and at the "strategic leadership" of the group known as the Red Brigades. The list of charges has not yet been finalised, and committal for trial seems a long way distant. Meantime the affair has become increasingly complicated. The judicial inquiry has sprouted in a number of directions and has turned into an intricate maze within which it is hard to find one's orientation. Three further operations have followed the first big wave of arrests: the "blitz" operations of December 21st 1979, January 24th 1980 and March 11th 1980. (See below)

## A Vast Operation

A few figures are indicative of the scale of the operation. The judicial machine has mobilised enormous forces into play. 20 magistrates have been drafted onto the case, coming from 6 different cities (8 from Rome, 6 in Padova, 3 in Milan and the other three in Turin, Trieste and Reggio Emilia). There have been 127 warrants issued (Toni Negri alone has collected 9), and judicial notices of intent to prosecute have appeared in enormous numbers. There are presently 64 defendants in prison. 20 people have gone underground and so far there have been 8 releases from prison "for lack of evidence". These figures are bound to change rapidly. As it stands, the topography of the judicial process undertaken in the past 12 months is in a state of constant evolution. At any moment the handcuffs may close around the wrist of some other person in hiding. For example, it is known that the Padova Attorney is examining the possibility of bringing charges against a further 40 people, and warrants for a dozen of these are already awaiting signatures. Furthermore, new releases from prison remain a possibility.

As regards the procedural strategy

adopted by the prosecution (concentrating the charges around the central accusation of "armed insurrection against the State", and leaving everything in the hands of the Rome magistrates), this too appears to be changing. Judge Calogero has asked for a speedy trial on the "concrete" criminal charges (robbery, theft, violence etc) and an "enabling" trial on the "crimes of association" (formation of armed bands, and subversive association/conspiracy) in the case of those arrested on March 11th, to be conducted at Padova, without recourse to the Rome magistrates.

But what are the roots of this trial — the biggest political trial of Italy's post-War history? (Even the judges are calling it this.) For the roots, we have to go back to the Moro kidnap. Immediately after the via Fani massacre and his kidnap, Minister of the Interior Francesco Cossiga ordered an enormous round-up of ex-militants of Potere Operaio. But those arrested (around 200) were soon released for lack of evidence. A polemical oper-

ation, which raised something of a scandal. The Minister was accused both of being incompetent and of acting with excessive haste.

## The 'Red Brigade' Charges

At a certain point the Communist Party's "Affairs of State" department steps into the picture: the PCI's judicial experts decided to take a closer look at things. They organised a close examination of the political area of the "armed party". The Padova federation of the Communist Party was particularly active in collaboration with the examining magistrates. Judge Calogero was presented with a list of ex-militants of Potere Operaio and ex-sympathisers of the area of Autonomia who had joined the Communist Party. These lists provided the witnesses (see below) whose testimonies were the basis for the initial arrest warrants of April 7th 1979.

As time went by, some of these witnesses were proved correct, some incorrect or inexact, and some were with-

drawn. Some charges were dropped and some defendants were released from prison. Doubts begin to arise. But in December a new element comes into play: in Matera prison an ex-militant of Potere Operaio begins to talk. This was Carlo Fioroni, an ex-friend of the left-wing publisher Feltrinelli, and one of the kidnappers in the Saronio case. He made a long confession/accusation in which he implicated about 140 of his one-time friends and acquaintances. This led to the arrest warrants issued on December 21st, and then, following the confirmatory confessions of Carlo Casirati (sentenced together with Fioroni for the Saronio kidnap), the arrests of January 24th.

During these months the prosecution's hypothesis also underwent an evolution. At first Judge Calogero's analysis tended to reconstruct the facts within a "continuity of subversion", an underground "red thread" which, over the span of a decade, was supposed to link the leadership of Potere Operaio with the leadership of the area of Autonomia and of the

Red Brigades. This reconstruction was eventually seen to be too schematic and artificial.

Now the enquiring magistrates (Palombarini, Fabiani, Imposimato, Sica, Amato etc) aimed rather at clarifying the role of a number of "clandestine organisational sectors" chosen with precision, and basing their charges on "concrete crimes". And in the light of more recent revelations, the evidence linking a number of the defendants with the massacre in via Fani and the kidnap and murder of Aldo Moro appears to be evaporating. The instructing judges are still examining the possibility of re-framing the Rome section of the charges under the umbrella accusation of "armed insurrection". This is one of the most serious crimes in the Italian penal code, a charge carrying life imprisonment. Until now it had only been used once: it was not used either against the attempted coup d'état of Junio Valerio Borghese, or against captured leaders of the Red Brigades such as Renato Curcio and Alberto Franceschini.

## ROUND 1: APRIL '79

In the pages that follow we have tried to provide the broadest possible overview of the complexities of this year-long inquiry. As regards "April 7th" and "December 21st" we have examined in detail the charges affecting the most important defendants. As regards the more recent arrests (January 24th and March 11th), since the prosecution's charges and the defence lines are not yet clear, we have limited ourselves to a broad reconstruction.

## THE FIRST ROUND-UP OPERATION: APRIL 7th 1979

### ANTONIO NEGRI

47 years old. Professor of "State Doctrine" at the University of Padova. He is seen by the inquiring magistrates as the "number one" figure, the leading actor in the past 10 years of subversion in Italy. So far he has collected 9 separate warrants and 3 judicial warnings of intent to prosecute. The charges number around 80, and range from non-payment of road tax for the Renault in which Aldo Moro's body was found, to around 15 murders and kidnappings, in addition to the charge of "armed insurrection against the State". It is against Negri that the imaginings of the mass media have been unleashed with the greatest ferocity: "the armed prophet", "the bespectacled Devil", "the immobile motor of subversion" etc.

Antonio Negri, Professor of State Doctrine at Padova University, was arrested at home at the end of a search in Milan, where he had just arrived back from Paris (where he was teaching a course on the *Grundrisse* at the Sorbonne). He was shown two warrants: one from the Padova Judge Calogero, and one from the Rome Judge Achille Gallucci. He was the only one of the April 7th arrestees to be immediately charged

with the Via Fani massacre and the Moro kidnap. He was also the first to be transferred to Rebibbia Prison in Rome, where he was questioned three times in a row. He spoke for hour after hour, with a patient rebuttal of the charges brought against him, dwelling at length on the differences between his thought and the viewpoint of the Red Brigades, and tracing the history of Potere Operaio, Autonomia etc. During his third interrogation he referred the inquiring magistrates to the voluminous collection of documents that he had donated to the Feltrinelli Foundation: packets of letters, duplicated documents, leaflets, manuscripts, discussion drafts etc. This material was used by the magistrates to draw up fresh charges against him and against others of the defendants. As of that moment his lawyers urged him to be more cautious in his deposition. However, he was questioned a further 5 or 6 times in May, July and November. Only at the end of January 1980, when confronted by judges from 5 different cities, did he refuse to reply "until there is a clarification of which tribunal is to be interrogating me".

According to the first series of charges, Negri was supposed to be the organisational brains behind a number of "armed bands going under a number of names": the secret leader of a sort of octopus, the armed party, "whose tentacles are concealed as occasion demands behind various names of convenience". According to this interpretation, the dissolution of Potere Operaio after the Rosolina Conference of June 1973 was simply a cover move, to conceal the transition to clandestine activities. Thus certain written utterances of the Padova professor could be taken as incautious confessions (eg: "every time I put on my street-fighting scarf I feel the warmth of proletarian and working-class solidarity") [from *Domin-*

*ion and Sabotage*]. But the most concrete and serious charge against Negri is that he was the Red Brigader who telephoned the Moro household during the kidnap in order to demand negotiations with Zaccagnini. This charge was a surprise move by the prosecution. "When you talk in that agitated manner, your voice reminds me of the telephone caller to Mrs Moro", he was told by Judge Guasco during his interrogation on April 21st.

## Weak Evidence

After months of inquiries this evidence has been given considerably less weight in the proceedings (in fact Judge Guasco has asked that Negri have the charges related to the Moro case dropped): out of the nine experts asked to compare Negri's voice with the recording of the telephone-caller, only the Italian/American Oscar Tosi stated that the voice of the Red Brigades caller "may, with a high degree of probability, be that of Negri". The others either exclude this possibility, or find it dubious. Meanwhile the defence lawyers say that they have traced a restaurant in Milan where Negri was eating, together with a number of other people, at the moment when the Red Brigader was telephoning from Rome. Finally, a while before the recent arrest of Patrizio Peci, a Red Brigader, there was a rumour that he was the person who had called Mrs Moro, and that he had decided to provide proof of the fact. However, the prosecuting magistrates maintain that their case is not based simply on "voice tests", but also on "other elements". According to their version it was Judge Alessandrini himself who had recognised the voice of the Autonomist theorist (at a dinner at the house of Judge Bevere, where he met Negri). This "link" led to a notice of intent to prosecute: Negri was accused of the killing of Judge Alessandrini, which was carried out by Prima Linea in January 1979.

Negri's position worsened considerably in December/January, when he was hit with 6 further warrants and 3 notices of intent to prosecute, issued by judges in 4 different cities (Milan, Trieste, Turin and Reggio Emilia). He was accused of the kidnapping of his friend Carlo Saronio (April 1975); the attempted kidnapping of the industrialist Giuseppe Duina (December 1974); the kidnapping of the industrialist Labate (February 1973); the

NO AI PROCESSI  
CONTRO I MILITANTI  
DELL'OPPOSIZIONE





fire at the Face-Standard factory (October 1974); the murder of the Lotta Continua militant Alceste Campanile (June 1975); the "organisation and leadership of armed bands under the names 'Illegal Work', 'No Truce', 'Centre-North' etc; the transfer of Skorpion machine guns from Austria, the theft of a number of paintings from the house of an art collector in Comasco; the bloody Argelato robbery (one dead; 5th December 1974); and obviously, a whole series of lesser offences connected with these episodes.

The evidence on which these accusations is based is largely unavailable, since Negri has refused to undergo further questioning until the question of the competence of the various judges has been resolved. Furthermore, the arrest warrants contain only the broadest of indications, "so as not to show the prosecution's hand". One of the charges of which the prosecution say they are certain is that relating to the Saronio kidnap. Already in April 1979 Negri had come under suspicion because of a letter written by the politicised robber Carlo Casirati (who, with Fioroni, had organised the Saronio kidnap) to Renato Curcio, the Red Brigades leader. It reads: "In Padova I stayed at Negri's house". However, Negri points out that at the time his Padova house was being let to a student called Antonio Liverani (see below).

#### Hearsay

However, Fioroni then steps into the picture, claiming, in his confessions, that he had heard from Casirati that "the Saronio operation was decided by the Negri group", as a form of self-financing. In January this statement was substantiated from prison by Casirati, who maintained that: "The kidnap decision was taken at a meeting in which Toni Negri took part... Out of the 5 billion lire that were to be asked for ransom, 10% was to go to the Negri group, and the rest to the various underworld figures involved in the operation". A further pointer was added by one of those arrested in the December 21st round-up, Mauro Borromeo, the administrator of the Catholic University of Milan. He said that when Casirati made a number of threats in the course of the Saronio trial ("If I were to name certain names, feathers would fly") a meeting was held in his house, consisting of Negri's closest associates. They seemed very worried by any further confessions by Casirati. Borromeo claims that he said to them: "So... it was you!", because only at that moment did he realise that the people responsible for the Saronio kidnap had been his Autonomia friends.

A number of the Rome magistrates, having seen the papers sent from Milan after January 24th, commented that "Negri might get off the Moro hook, but he certainly won't get off the Saronio charge". However, the defence lawyers present the other side of the coin. "Fioroni, in regard to Negri's connection with the Saronio case, has dealt solely

with impressions and deductions. As for the witness/defendant Casirati, his credibility is zero. Both as regards the Via Zabarella killings and as regards the Duina kidnapping, have been scandalously untrue, and have been proven as such".

During his year of imprisonment Negri has been transferred to 6 different prisons. He has given a number of interviews, and has kept up a regular correspondence with a number of intellectuals of the European and American left. He studies six hours a day, and is in the process of completing an essay on Spinoza. Both in Rebibbia and in the Palmi prison

he has been the most active organiser of seminars, reading groups, debates etc, which serve to keep up the morale of his co-defendants. In a long letter to La Repubblica newspaper he has asked at least for guarantees on 3 points: 1) to know which is the tribunal which is competent to judge him; 2) to be able to be questioned during the public hearing of the appeal in the Saronio case; 3) to be brought as soon as possible to trial for the Moro kidnap "without having to endure the possible 12 years of preventive detention".

Toni and Paola Negri



#### FRANCO PIPERNO

38 years old. Director of the Physics Department of the University of Calabria. He escaped arrest on April 7th by the fact of having arrived late at the meeting of the Metropolis journal. For several months he remained in Rome, in hiding (he was to move to Paris in June 1979), but nonetheless remained in the public eye through a series of interviews etc with Italian weekly and daily newspapers, through photographic "happenings" organised by the Italian satirical magazine Il Male, and through his collaboration on the first issue of Metropolis. There was a lot of discussion raised by an article he wrote for Lotta Continua, in which he proposed an amnesty for political prisoners "as a possible way of resisting the barbarisation of the clash with the terrorists".

On August 17th 1979 he too, along with the other defendants in the Rome section of the prosecution, became the subject of an arrest warrant for "armed insurrection". On August 17th there was a mysterious scene at Viareggio railway station: a shoot-out in which an allegedly armed Piperno was pursued by police, who lost him. In fact the ex-Potere Operaio leader was to be found at that moment in Paris, where he was arrested by French gendarmes at a table outside the Bar Madeleine-Tronchet.

This began the extradition proceedings, requested by Judge Gallucci, on the basis of the July 7th warrant. Meanwhile, in Rome Piperno's position became increasingly serious. On May 29th the dissident Red Brigades Adriana Faranda and Valerio Morrucci were arrested in the house of Giuliana Conforto, a physics teacher and friend of Piperno, who stated that it had been Piperno who had asked her to put up the couple. Furthermore, the prosecution's interest was further

aroused by the publication of the first issue of Metropoli, which carried a cartoon history of the Moro kidnap, in which the face of one of the politicians in favour of negotiations to save Moro's life bore a close resemblance to Claudio Signorile, vice-secretary of the Socialist Party. This raised the question of the contacts between the Socialists and the Autonomists. It emerged that Piperno had held three meetings with Signorile, claiming that Moro's life could be saved, and urging him to press the Christian Democrats into making some form of opening. This was taken by the prosecution as proof that Piperno was a spokesman for the Red Brigades.

Thus, on August 29th, just as the French Chambre d'Accusation was about to reject extradition, a fresh warrant arrived, which threw Piperno's case wide open again. It contained 46 charges, including the Via Fani massacre, the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, the murder of Judge Palmi, the attack on the Christian Democrat offices in Piazza Nicosia etc. On October 17th, following a long procedural wrangle, the Chambre d'Accusation finally conceded extradition — but only "for the crimes of kidnapping and murdering Aldo Moro", describing these as political crimes, but as "particularly odious and therefore meriting extradition". This decision would mean that Piperno would not have to answer the prosecution's charges relating to the other 44 prosecution charges, including the Via Fani massacre, at least in theory. In the eyes of the French judges, the relevant evidence in Piperno's case was threefold: "the fact of having provided refuge to Faranda and Morrucci", "the cartoon-strip in Metropoli which provided precise details of Moro's place of internment", and "the meetings with the Socialist Party, on Piperno's initiative, which confirm his links with the Red Brigades".

However, as the prosecution case has proceeded, these three charges have virtually been completely dropped. The suggestion that the Metropoli cartoon represented accurately the Moro prison has been discounted. The cartoonist, Beppe Madaudo, has explained that the offending scenes had been copied from a photo-romance magazine, which he was able to produce. Then Signorile and the journalists Zanetti and Scialoja stated to the prosecution judges that the meeting with Piperno had happened on the initiative of the Socialist Party.

Signorile also stated that Piperno had played a purely advisory role "without any suggestion that he had a direct link with the Red Brigades". Finally, following the witness statement of a Radical Party journalist, Aurelio Candido, in February 1980, it became clear that it was not Piperno who had introduced Faranda and Morrucci to Conforto, but Lanfranco Pace (see below). This was then confirmed by Pace himself, and by Faranda and Morrucci, who had stated from the start that "it was not Piperno who took us to Viale Giulio Cesare". Furthermore, Fioroni's confessions had resulted in only one judicial communication to Piperno — that of December 21st 1979 — in which he was singled out as a leading member of the FARO paramilitary group ("which functioned between March 9th and March 13th 1972") and was accused of being the mysterious "Saetta", Feltrinelli's clandestine spokesman.

Piperno has been interrogated 3 times and has refused to answer any questions other than those for the charges on which he was extradited. He passes his time in his cell reading Hebrew literature, writing autobiographical stories, and working on an essay on energy physics.

#### LANFRANCO PACE

38 years old. A researcher in socio-economics. He was the subject of an arrest warrant on June 6th 1979, together with 3 other editors of the magazine Metropoli, Paolo Virno, Libero Maesano and Lucio Castellano (see below). He escaped arrest, and took refuge in Paris. The judges began by bringing up his past involvement in the Rome leadership group of Potere Operaio (along with Valerio Morrucci), as well as the publication in Metropoli of the Red Brigades communique relating to the attacks on the Christian Democrat offices in Piazza Nicosia, Rome. When the facts emerged of the contacts between the Autonomia and the Socialist Party during the Moro kidnap, Pace was also charged, along with Piperno, of being a spokesman for the terrorists, of being a sort of ambassador for them.

He took refuge in France. Then, at the end of a Press Conference held in the Hotel Lutetia in Paris on September 14th 1979 (at which the Radical Party's Marco Pannella was also present) he surrendered himself. He was extradited on November 7th. His judicial position is more clear-cut than that of Piperno, inasmuch as the Radical Party journalist Aurelio

Candido confessed to the magistrates that he too had taken Faranda and Morrucci under his roof when they had been presented to him, under false names, by Pace. This was further verification that it had been Pace and not Piperno who had brought Faranda and Morrucci to the house of Conforto. At this point the case against Pace takes on a certain autonomy in relation to Piperno's case.

Regarding Pace's role in the "party of

Oreste Scalzone with his daughter



#### ORESTE SCALZONE

33 years old. A teacher on the "150 hours" courses. Out of all the defendants he is possibly the best known and most popular of the 1968 generation. It was he who, in 1968, was received by Communist Party secretary Luigi Longo as spokesman for the student movement. He has always devoted all his energies to politics, and he is the only one of the "old leaders" who managed to re-emerge in the Movement of 1977, where he chaired the big meeting of the Autonomia in Bologna, and opposed the forces of the "P.38" faction.

He was arrested in the offices of the Metropoli magazine in Rome. Calogero's arrest warrant names him as "one of the principle leaders of Potere Operaio", and charges him with the "fictitious" dissolution of the group after the Rosolina Conference in 1973 and the subsequent continuation of clandestine subversive activities within the framework of the Autonomia and the strategic leadership of the Red Brigades. On July 7th a second arrest warrant is issued against Scalzone, this time emanating from the Rome Judge Gallucci. The charges are more or less identical, except that they are now placed within a framework of "armed insurrection against the State".

Finally, there is the third warrant of December 21st: "On the basis of statements made by the witness Fioroni, and objective confirmatory evidence" the Milan magistrates accuse him once again of having been a "national leader of Potere Operaio; of having met Feltrinelli several times in Milan and Genoa and of having helped him to emigrate to Switzerland; of having attended, together with Piperno and Negri, a meeting in

negotiations" during the Moro kidnap, it emerged that he had been asked to speak with Craxi by the Socialist Party Senator Landolfi, an old friend of his, whom he had met by chance on the morning of May 6th 1978. Landolfi, having listened to Pace's opinions on the possibilities of saving Moro's life, was of the opinion that this might be of interest to the Socialist Party secretary.

December 1971 with the intention of creating a clandestine section known as "Lavoro Illegale" ("Illegal Work"). He is further under suspicion of possession of a false driving licence (under his own name, however) coming from the same (stolen) stock to which belonged the licences found on a number of the people involved in the Argelato robbery. "Oreste had faked a driving licence so as to make me believe that he had passed his driving test — something I had been pushing him to do for years" says his wife Lucia.

Scalzone has been questioned 3 times by the prosecuting magistrates. He has denied that the Rosolina Conference had ratified a transition from legality into clandestine work on the part of Potere Operaio. During his second interrogation, the judge also suggested that he had been seen to fire a gun during the events of March 12th 1977 in Bologna. The defendant was able to prove that, on the day in question, he had been involved in a student demonstration through the streets of Rome; this fact was reported in the pages of Paese Sera on the day in question.

Regarding the charges contained in the December 21st warrant, Scalzone, now in the Palmi Prison, decided not to submit to further interrogation "until a single tribunal is properly organised for me to make my answers to".

After several months of frenetic activity in Rebibbia Prison (articles, interviews, essays, letters etc), during which he had to endure the restrictive regime and particularly harsh conditions of the "Special Prisons", his already poor health (slipped disc, chronic bronchitis) has been worsening. For reasons of "image", however, this is something that Scalzone would prefer not to have known.

**"METROPOLIS"****LUCIO CASTELLANO, LIBERO MAESANO & PAOLO VIRNO**

These three are ex-militants of Potere Operaio, who were arrested on June 6th 1979. They are members of the editorial group of the magazine *Metropoli*. The intention had been that this journal would serve as the single voice of the various groups of the Autonomia, but differences proved stronger than points of agreement, and *Metropoli* (of which thus far only one single copy has been published, since the materials for later issues have been seized by the police before they could be published) finally emerged as the voice of the Scalzone-Piperno tendency. No sooner had it been published (in May 1979) than it came within the judges' firing line.

What particularly interested them was a long cartoon strip relating to the Moro kidnap. According to the judges "too many of the details of the cartoon corresponded to intimate details of the case that had become known to the prosecution". For example, the face of a person supposedly in favour of negotiations to save Moro's life was very similar to that of the vice-secretary of the Socialist Party, Claudio Signorile; the drawing of the delivery van in which Moro was driven after the kidnap was "a striking resemblance" to the real one; and the drawings of the prison in which Moro was kept were "very similar to the hide-out discovered on the Vescovo

estate near Rieti".

On June 6th 1979, immediately after an editorial meeting, Maesano, a 30-year old bank employee, was arrested in a bar; Castellano was followed to the Pantheon, where he was arrested as he ate in a restaurant; and Virno, a 27-year old Neapolitan, was arrested in the afternoon, when he returned home. They were all charged as belonging to the editorial group of *Metropoli*, a magazine which the judges considered to have been the "voice of the Rome column of the Red Brigades".

Particular reference was made to the Moro cartoon. In fact, the cartoonist has explained to the judges that the model for the van that transported Moro was his own van; and that the scenes in the Red Brigades' prison were in fact copied from a 1950s photo-romance magazine *Gran Hotel* — which he showed to the judges.

Judge Gallucci has also charged Maesano with "friendship with Valerio Morrucci" (a friendship which has apparently been documented up until 1976), and with "the presence, in his diary, of a phone number, 2384887, which, suitably altered, could refer to the house of the mother of Faranda". Virno and Castellano, on the other hand, apart from their militant past in Potere Operaio, have also been charged for the contents of a number of articles published in *Metropoli* and for a number of documents held in the magazine's files. None of the 3 received further charges on December 21st or January 24th.



"Serious, sober, reserved sort of chap. Well regarded by his colleagues, very proper with his students, polite and discreet towards everyone..."  
Thinks: "The perfect model of a Red Brigades leader."

**EMILIO VESCE**

40 years old. Headmaster of the Technical School of Piove, Sacco. He was arrested at two in the afternoon on his doorstep in the outskirts of Padova. Judge Calogero has charged him with being "one of the main leaders of Potere Operaio", having belonged to the "Negri tendency" after the Rosolina conference in June 1973, and of then having "joined the ranks of Autonomia Operaia". This is the equivalent of a charge of "armed insurrection". The Padova judge further accuses him of editorship of the magazines *Rosso* and *Autonomia*. The basis for

these charges was the witness statement by a CGIL trade unionist in Padova, Antonio Romito.

When the case documents were transferred into the hands of Judge Gallucci, the Rome judges further charged Vesce with having organised "the printing of Potere Operaio" and the magazine *Controinformazione* (considered to be a voice for the Red Brigades). He was also charged with authorship of a document in which appeared the phrase: "there is no difference between the Movement and the armed party". On July 7th 1979, along with the other defendants arrested on April 7th under the Rome prosecut-

ion, he too was the subject of a warrant alleging "armed insurrection against the State". On December 21st, after Fioroni's statement had been heard by the judges, he received a third warrant from the Milan judges. This time he was charged with having been "the political commissar of the clandestine section of Potere Operaio known as 'Lavoro Illegale'".

It is undeniable that Vesce was a member — even a leader — of Potere Operaio. It is also proven that he was the "responsible editor" of the magazines and newspapers cited (with the exception of *Controinformazione*). However we shall have to await further specification of the charges before we know in what sense the judges consider this to be a crime of "insurrection". As regards the charges relating to the mysterious group "Lavoro Illegale", it is hard to know whether they have any substance. In fact the interrogation on this question was suspended when Vesce refused to reply, describing Fioroni's statement as "a joke". However, the accusation regarding the homogeneity of the Movement with the armed party has been dropped: it turned out that this was the original draft of an article by the sociologist Sabino Acquaviva, which was then published in *Corriere della Sera*.

Vesce has so far been held in 7 different prisons. He has lost 12 kilos in weight since a hunger strike in June. He has also been suffering from severe depression, which has been made worse by the fact that his wife, Gabriella, was recently hospitalised for nervous exhaustion.

**LUCIANO FERRARI BRAVO**

An assistant of Toni Negri, at the University of Padova. He was arrested on his way to lunch at the house of his wife, from whom he lives separated. He was the first to be interrogated by Calogero, and apart from being charged with being "one of the principal leaders of Potere Operaio" and "a leader of the organised area of Autonomia as well as a member of the strategic leadership of the Red Brigades" (the joint charge against all those April 7th defendants who were subsequently transferred to Rome), he is also charged with being "close" to Toni Negri — in fact with being his "right hand man". The evidence against him includes articles published in *Rosso* and *Autonomia* (he was on the editorial committee of the latter magazine).

Other evidence charged against him includes: possession of the duplicated copy of a document whose original was found in the notorious Thiene apartment where a bomb had exploded in the hands of three autonomists who were priming it. Also an appointment in his diary referring to one "Gallinari". The defendant has stated that copies of the document in question were quite widespread in certain areas of the movement, and that he kept his copy in order to write something about it in *Autonomia*. As regards "Gallinari", this was not at all the Red Brigader of the same name, but the name of the landlord of the flat in which

Ferrari Bravo was living in Padova. His defence lawyers, Adolfo Gatti and Tommaso Mancini, have brought forward a number of witnesses to testify that the defendant had "drawn away from politics as early as 1971". Of all those arrested on April 7th, he and Lauso Zagato are the only ones not to have received fresh warrants in the second "blitz" of December 21st 1979.

**LAUSO ZAGATO**

A Padovan, and a high school teacher in Monselice. He was arrested together with Scalzone at the offices of *Metropoli*, to which he was a contributor. Calogero has charged him with the now familiar political/subversive accusations regarding the transition from Potere Operaio to Autonomia. According to the witness statements of Antonio Romito, the defendant was secretary of the Emilia and Veneto sections of Potere Operaio. But the charges against Zagato are based on two other elements: a hand-written 24-page document, containing a list of the "revolutionary struggle" projects of Potere Operaio in 1971; and a further statement by Romito, that in 1974 Zagato was present together with Scalzone at a Padova meeting with the FIAT worker Cristoforo Piancone, a Red Brigader who was later arrested in Turin following a shoot-out (1977). The defendant has denied being the author of the document and having attended the meeting. His defence lawyers have noted that "anyway" in 1974 Piancone was a member of Lotta Continua.

However, the witness Romito alleges that Zagato had confided in another Padova autonomist, Massimo Tramonte, that: "It is Negri, Piperno and one other who are pulling the strings of the Red Brigades". The "other", according to the judges, is Giovanbattista Lazagna.

Fioroni's only comment on this ex-comrade of his is that he was "one of the main exponents of Potere Operaio". Zagato did not receive any further warrant on December 21st.

**MARIO DALMAVIVA**

40 years old. Manager of a Turin advertising agency. Heavy-built, with a certain resemblance to Bud Spencer. Ex-organiser in the FIAT struggles in 1969. He was arrested at home with his wife on April

Perfect Democracy: George Grosz.

7th 1979. He has been charged with the customary "leadership role in Potere Operaio", a charge which is based mainly on the witness statements of Antonio Romito, who recalls him as being one of the "main participants" in the Rosolina Conference.

The judges, having drawn him into the Rome section of the prosecution case, showed him a letter which he was supposed to have received from Oreste Scalzone in 1974, in which the ex-Potere Operaio leader launched an appeal for a "discussion of the present political conjuncture, the insurrectional possibilities in Europe, and the renewed wave of struggles..." Dalmaviva denies ever having received the letter, and says that after the dissolution of Potere Operaio he had withdrawn from politics.

One mysterious piece of evidence relating to Dalmaviva has still not been cleared up. In the archive donated to the Feltrinelli Foundation by Negri there is a piece of paper containing Negri's handwritten note: "Dalmaviva Br = Br" (Br being a possible abbreviation for Red Brigades). In the light of this, Dalmaviva, whose release from prison had previously been considered likely, became the subject of a fresh warrant, issued on July 7th, for "armed insurrection against the State". Fioroni's revelations on the subject of Dalmaviva state only that he was "one of the more active PO cadres at the 1971 Conference". On the basis of this statement, the Rome magistrates hit him with a further warrant on December 21st — this time for participation in an "armed band".

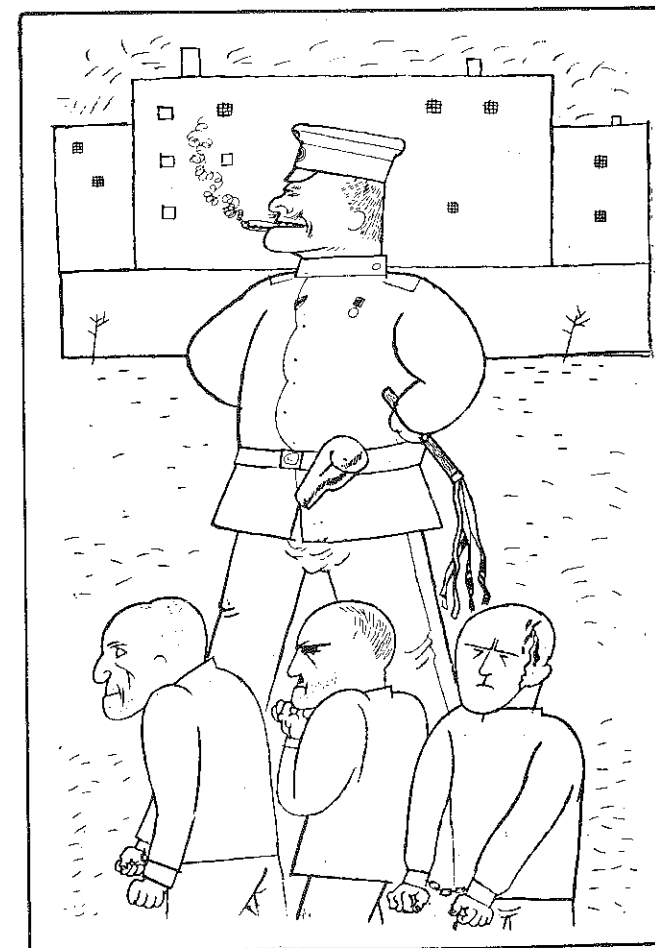
**IVO GALLIMBERTI**

A teacher of electrical engineering, he has several times been on the point of being released from prison. But for one reason or another, the release has each time been put off at the last minute. The last time, he asked to be released because of the serious state of his health (together with Alberto Galeotto, charged with the Thiene bomb explosion of April 12th, 1979), Judge Calogero stated that he was prepared to accept his release, and the Instructing Judge, Palombarini, had signed the order.

Medical examination by both prosecution and defence lawyers have confirmed a "state of deep psycho-physical exhaustion". Gallimberti has lost 16 kilos, finds difficulty in speaking, and suffers from loss of his sense of balance. Galeotto, for his part, has already tried to commit suicide twice in prison. However, the two defendants found themselves victims of the new anti-terrorist laws that came into force on December 15th 1979. These re-introduced an article that had been abolished in 1955 — by which the Venice Procurator General had powers to block the order for their release.

On April 24th the condition of both Gallimberti and Galeotto suddenly worsened, to such an extent that Judge Palombarini ordered them to be taken at once to the Neurological department of the Padova General Hospital.

Meanwhile, some of the charges against the Padova teacher have been dropped (for example, that he was one of the leaders of Potere Operaio and had





# LIBERTÀ PER I COMUNISTI

## 2 febbraio '79

I compagni M. C. Brioschi, V. De Ponti, C. Diana e Cristofori, accusati di appartenere alle B. R., vengono selvaggiamente torturati nelle camere di sicurezza della questura di Milano (pugni, calci, schiaffi, pressione con le nocche delle dita sulle tempie vengono inflitti ai compagni, dopo che erano stati legati nudi a un tavolo).

Altri compagni vengono minacciati e torturati, come testimoniano le interviste rilasciate dagli stessi al Quotidiano dei Lavoratori ed altri quotidiani. Il compagno Tino Cortiana, dopo esser stato sbattuto per varie carceri, viene relegato nel Lager di V. Franchi a Reggio E. e successivamente nel carcere punitivo di Udine col tentativo di distruggere l'integrità psichica.

## 4 febbraio '79

La P.S. e C.C. dopo aver circondato l'intero Quartiere Tiburtino con blindati e con l'impiego di alcune centinaia di uomini, fanno irruzione nella sede del Comitato Popolare Tiburtino e arrestano tutti i partecipanti al convegno "Carcere Repressione".

## Febbraio '79

I compagni S. Bitti, M. Masala, A. Casagrande, A. Bitti, R. Vittrani, A. Franco e S. Fatone del collettivo della Barona, accusati di aver partecipato all'uccisione dell'orefice Torreggiani vengono torturati nelle camere di sicurezza della questura di Milano. I compagni sono stati picchiati con pugni, calci e schiaffi, denudati, bruciati ai testicoli con accendini e sigarette, costretti ad ingurgitare acqua salata con una pompa. Altre denunce di un pregiudicato comune A. Vassi e di un cittadino scambiato per un "terrorista", A. Macina, testimoniano la vocazione di torturatori degli uomini della DIGOS milanese.

## Marzo '79

I compagni V. Acella e R. Fiore accusati di appartenere alle B.R. vengono torturati nella Questura di Torino.

I compagni BARBARA AZZARONI e MATTEO CAGGEGGI vengono fucilati a freddo in un bar di Torino dalle Squadre Speciali.

I loro corpi denudati in segno di ulteriore spregio vengono tenuti esposti per ore.

A Parma DIGOS e C.C. fermano alcuni compagni, fanno irruzione nella sede di Radio Area emittente Comunista e perquisiscono altre sedi e locali di ritrovo di compagni.

Vasta operazione della polizia che porta all'arresto di decine di compagni in Toscana, a Varese e a Bergamo con imputazioni gravissime e ad effetto basate su sospetti mai suffragati da prove.

## 28 marzo '79

La DIGOS irrompe nella sede del giornale Carcere Informazione sequestrando tutto il materiale di redazione per il numero in preparazione e denuncia i redattori per associazione sovversiva.

E' la prima volta che un giornale viene sequestrato preventivamente ancor prima di uscire. Alcuni giorni prima stessa sorte era stata riservata ad Anarchismo a Palermo.

## 7 aprile '79

Nel corso di una vasta operazione della DIGOS vengono arrestati a PADOVA, ROMA, MILANO, TORINO, i compagni T. Negri, E. Vesce, P. Benvegnù, A. dal Re, S. Serafino, P. Nicotri, I. Galimberti, M. Sturaro, G. Bianchini, L. Ferrari Bravo, O. Scalzone, M. Tramonti, L. Zagato, M. Dalmaviva e criminalizzati i giornali Rosso, Controinformazione, Autonomia, Metropoli. Gli ordini di cattura per "aver organizzato e diretto una associazione denominata P.O. e altre analoghe associazioni variamente denominate e collegate fra loro e riferibili tutte alla cosiddetta Autonomia Operaia organizzata", e inoltre "per aver organizzato e diretto una associazione denominata B.R. costituita in banda armata con organizzazione paramilitare", sono 22, le comunicazioni giudiziarie oltre 70.

Con questa operazione hanno un obiettivo molto preciso: stroncare con tutti i mezzi ogni forma di antagonismo organizzato e non al sistema del capitale. La ferocia con cui i vari poliziotti e magistrati "speciali", incarcerano i comunisti rivoluzionari, è uguale la ferocia con cui i padroni programmano i licenziamenti e l'intensificazione dello sfruttamento nelle fabbriche, sul territorio degli strati popolari.

Compito dei comunisti, dei proletari, di tutti i lavoratori e degli sfruttati, è organizzare la lotta e la resistenza al progetto padronale e ai suoi sgherri, nelle fabbriche, nelle scuole, nei quartieri, nella lotta quotidiana per migliori condizioni di vita e per un avvenire comunista.

## Tutti i comunisti devono essere liberati

Coord. Regionale contro la repressione

taken part in the Rosolina Conference). Only one piece of evidence remains in his case: the charge of having been part of the editorial committee of the magazine *Autonomia*. But the articles written by him were concerned with questions of science, and have been described by Palombarini as "irrelevant, from the prosecution's point of view".

### GIANFRANCO PANCINO

Ex-Milan doctor specialising in work-related ailments. Underground since 1977.

He is the next in line after Toni Negri, with the largest number of charges against him. On April 7th, when he was included in Calogero's arrest warrants, Pancino was already underground. In fact he had already been made the subject of an arrest warrant in 1977, when the Milan magistracy were inquiring into Soccorso Rosso (Red Aid). It was Romito, the PCI witness, who stated that Pancino was one of the most influential members of Potere Operaio, and that he had been one of the firmest supporters of the "Negri tendency" at the Rosolina Conference. However, his prolonged absence underground has prevented the magistrates from drawing him much into the limelight.

Fioroni describes Pancino as "one of Negri's closest collaborators, certainly in the leadership of the organisation". He

also accuses him specifically of having conceived the plan of setting fire to ITT/Face-Standard's plant at Fizzonasco, along with "other exemplary attentats against police call-boxes and against a carabinieri barracks". In these attempts, says Fioroni, "young people of less than 20 years old were sent in to take considerable risks, including the son of Dario Fo".

The Saronio kidnapper, Carlo Casirati, cites Pancino in his "deposition" as one of the proposers of a plan of robberies as a means to finance the "North-Centre Cell" led by Toni Negri, immediately after the dissolution of Potere Operaio. Following these fresh accusations against Pancino, a new warrant was issued, alleging Pancino's involvement in "acts preparatory to the attempted kidnapping of the industrialist Giuseppe Duina".

On April 7th 1979 the following were also arrested: PAOLO BENVENIGNU (a bachelor of political sciences), MARZIO STURARO (high school teacher) and LUCIANO MIONI (university student). Others have gone underground: NANNI BALESTRINI (poet and author), ROBERTO FERRARI (engineer), GIOVANBATTISTA MARONGIU (university assistant), GIANNI BOETTO (footballer) and PIERO DESPALI (bachelor of political science, brother of Giacomo, the teacher arrested on March 11th 1980).

## ROUND 2: DECEMBER '79

### THE SECOND ROUND-UP OPERATION: 21st DECEMBER 1979

#### ANTONIO LIVERANI

Liverani was named by Toni Negri as a defence witness, regarding the question of hospitality allegedly provided by Carlo Casirati, the material organiser of the kidnapping of the engineer Carlo Saronio. Negri has been accused of having put up Casirati, the "politicised robber", in his house in Padova. When Liverani was questioned as a witness, he said that in fact it was he who had put Casirati up in the house that Negri had rented to him on the occasion of his transfer to Milan — all "unbeknownst to Negri".

On December 21st Liverani too was charged, on the basis of a warrant issued by the Milan magistracy. The charges against him are based on statements in Fioroni's testimony, that he was "the person in Padova who was concerned specifically with the falsification of documents, as well as being a member of the military structure of the group headed by Negri". The super-witness added, further, that it had been Liverani who supplied him with a "false Italian passport" — the one which was taken from him when he was arrested in Switzerland in 1975. Fioroni too states that he knew that Liverani had met Casirati in Padova some time previously to the Saronio kidnap. On this point Fioroni's statement is

indirectly confirmed by statements from Negri himself.

#### EGIDIO MONFERDIN

36 years old. A doctor at the Old People's Hospital in Venice. According to Fioroni, he was the fiancé of Sylvana Marelli, arrested in June 1979 in the via Castelfidardo hide-out in Milan, and regularly shuttled (at least once a week) between Milan and Venice on behalf of the "Negri group".

Again, according to Fioroni, "Monferdin, together with Tony Liverani and Gianantonio Baietta (note: both of whom were also arrested on December 21st), planned three armed robberies for Casirati to carry out in the Veneto region." Monferdin was supposed to have also operated "in conjunction with Casirati" in the Saronio kidnap, and also to have taken part in the organisation of a "day of guerrilla action in Milan" (December 12th 1971). With Toni Temil and others he is also supposed to have taken part in exercises with arms and explosives on the Asiago Plain. Casirati, for his part, has confirmed these accusations, specifying that the planned robberies were never in fact carried out. However, the most serious charge against Monferdin came a while after, from the judges in Reggio Emilia: he was accused of having killed the young Lotta Continua militant Alceste Campanile. The prosecution suspects that Campanile was

killed because he knew too much about the Saronio kidnap.

#### MAURO BORROMEO

50 years old. Administrator of the Catholic University of Milan. Considered to be far removed from political interests. His presence among those arrested was considered one of the surprises of the December 21st blitz. The surprise grew when Borromeo confirmed the judges' view that he was a sympathiser of the "Negri tendency". In effect, Borromeo used to lend out his houses in the country for secret discussions and meetings.

According to Casirati, Borromeo had organised a dinner at his Milan apartment on the evening of the Saronio kidnap (April 1975), bringing together the group who had conceived the operation, and offering them an alibi thereby. For his part, the defendant admitted to another dinner held at his flat last year, during the Saronio trial: that evening various members of the "Negri group" had appeared very worried by some of the insinuations Casirati was making in the court-room. At that moment, says Borromeo, I realised that my friends had been involved in the kidnap.

#### ANTONIO TEMIL

A student of electrical engineering in Padova. He has been named by Fioroni as an "expert in priming devices for the remote-controlled detonation of explosives, and an expert in telephone tapping and radio transmission". Fioroni claims to have attended a paramilitary camp on the Asiago Plain, where Temil was the instructor in techniques for exploding dynamite. Fioroni also asserts



that Temil was a member of the "clandestine organisation headed by Toni Negri, and known as 'North-Central'". Like all the members of this ill-defined group, he was to remain unknown to the members of Potere Operaio, first, and Autonomia later.

In Padova, Temil's electro-technical expertise was known — so that it was to him that the autonomists entrusted the construction of the Radio Sherwood transmitter. During questioning by Calogero, Temil stated that he had left the Movement in the Spring of 1974; then, during questioning by Judge Amato in Rome, he admitted to having met

Casirati once during a meeting in Porto Marghera, where Casirati was presented to him under another name. ("I recognised him when I saw his photograph in the papers in relation to the Saronio kidnapping").

On January 24th a second warrant was issued against him by Judge Spataro in Milan, accusing him of having participated "together with Negri, Pancino and Monferdin in acts preparatory to the kidnapping attempt on the industrialist Giuseppe Duina in Segrate, December 20th 1974". However, Temil has an alibi for that day. He was getting married in a church in Padova.

## ALBERTO MAGNAGHI

An architect. Teacher at the Milan Polytechnic. Director of the review *Quaderni del Territorio*. His name had already appeared on the list of those arrested on April 7th (as an "important leader of Potere Operaio" who had then entered Autonomia), but at the last moment Calogero had not signed the warrant against him, considering that there was insufficient proof. It was Fioroni's statement that sparked his arrest on December 21st, on the grounds that he had allegedly been one of those in favour of militarisation and the theory of insurrection ("together with Negri, Piperno and Scalzone", says Fioroni) during the 1971 Rome conference of Potere Operaio. Also that he was a member of "the clandestine section of Potere Operaio known as Lavoro Illegale", and that he "had perhaps taken part in the organisation of guerrilla operations leading up to the demonstration of December 12th 1971 in Milan." "Organisation of the operations", according to Fioroni, consisted of preparing molotov cocktails. And this seems to have been the principal element on which the accusation of "insurrection" is based — even though that demonstrat-

ion had not taken place, because it was banned by the police.

## IARO NOVACK

36 years old. Employed by a record distribution wholesaler. Fioroni accuses him of having been "an authoritative member of the Lavoro Illegale section of Potere Operaio", and of having taken part in FARO, a small paramilitary group linked to PO. Fioroni states that in the Spring of 1972, when he had fled to Switzerland after the death of Feltrinelli, Novack went to find him, bringing him 70,000 lire. The defendant told the Milan magistrates that he had gone to Switzerland together with the journalist Mario Scialoja who was intending to interview Fioroni, and that the 70,000 lire were in recompense for expenses incurred in the interview. This version of the facts was confirmed by the journalist (*L'Espresso* January 27th 1980), and is proved by a number of photographs taken during the interview.

On December 21st warrants were also issued against: GIANMARIA BAIETTA (printer), AUGUSTO FINZI (white collar worker at Montedison of Porto Marghera), GIORGIO RAITERI (doctor), SILVANA MARELLI (already arrested the previous year in the hide-out in Via Castelfidardo, Milan), ARRIGO CAVALLINA (also involved in the Via Castelfidardo affair), ALBERTO FUNARO (journalist), DOMENICO ZINGA and FRANCESCO SCATTOLIN (both in prison since 1973 for a bank robbery at Velano Olona), ORESTE STRANO (worker), ROMANO MADERA (teacher), MARCO BELLAVITA (photographer and journalist), FRANCO TOMMEI (teacher), ADRIANA SERVIDA, FRANCO GAVAZZENI (Pavia university teacher) and CATERINA PILENGA (broadcaster with the RAI in Milan). There is nobody in hiding in this round-up.

## ROUND 3: JANUARY '80

This was the follow-up to the "Fioroni round-up" of December 21st. This time it was based on statements by another "repentant" armed activist, Carlo Casirati, one of those involved in the Saronio kidnap. He confirmed many of the things that Fioroni had told to the judges in December, and brought to light 11 other people whose names Fioroni had not remembered. This led to the arrest and imprisonment of: ROLANDO STRANO (worker, brother of Oreste, already arrested in December), MARIELLA MARELLI (sister of Silvana, arrested in June), GIORGIO SCHOFFERNACHER, GIOVANNI CALORIA (teacher at the Institute for the Blind in Milan, contributor to the free radios), QUINTO CATALDO (Alfa Romeo worker), and the Venetians GIANNI SBROGIO, MASSIMO PAVAN (worker) and FABIO VEDOVATO (doctor). Three University teachers from Trieste escaped arrest: GIANNISERENO, GIANNI ZAMBON and MARINA

CATTARUZZA. All are accused of membership of an armed band, and all have been taken under the Rome branch of the prosecution.

The arrest of one of the defendants, Gianni Caloria, is particularly surprising. He has been blind from birth. However, Fioroni and Casirati maintain that he was a member of Potere Operaio cadre school. Gianni Sbrogio, on the other hand, was one of the key figures in the workers' struggles at Montedison in Porto Marghera, the brother of the better-known ITALO SBROGIO (who has also received judicial notice of prosecution). According to the evidence gathered by the prosecution, the Venice defendants were supposedly part of the "North-Central" cell, while the Triestians are claimed to have organised "arms traffic from Austria on behalf of the 'Negri Group'."

## ROUND 4: MARCH '80

This blitz is unlikely to be the last. This time only the Padova Autonomy was hit. As on April 7th, one of the warrants was signed by the Rome Judge Gallucci, while all the others (36 in all) came from the Procurator of the Republic in Padova. Gallucci charged "armed insurrection against the State", against LAURA BETTINI (daughter of a literature teacher) who had left Potere Operaio in 1972 and moved to France (she had returned to Padova in 1978). The charge is based on her past friendship with Toni Negri, with whom she is alleged to have had contact in France. Judges Calogero and Borracetti on the other hand, issued charges of "membership of an armed band" against 35 people, all under 30 years of age. Those arrested number 23: DANIELA SARINUTO, GIOVINELLA MAZZACURATI, GIACOMO DESPALI, ANDREA MIGNONE and his wife, MIRIAM MIGNONE, TIZIANO CREMA, GIUSEPPE PEROZZO, MARINA NAZZARI, MARCO CAPUZZO, SUSANNA SCOTTI, ROBERTO ULARGIU, MAURIZIO MOLINARI, SERGIO SARCINELLI, DIEGO BOSCAROLO, GIANFRANCO FERRI, AUGUSTO ROSSI, MARCO RIGAMO, MASSIMO SCAPOLO, LOREDANA OMETTO, ANDREA NESE, CECILIA ZOCCALI, ENRICO GRASSETTO, ALBERTO ZORZI. One of the warrants applied to PAOLO BENVENEGNU, who was already imprisoned on April 7th.

It appears that the Padova magistrates have a further dozen warrants up their sleeves, and about 30 more names on their list. According to the prosecution, the March round-up was aimed "at the intermediate cadres of Autonomy, an organisation which had already had its head cut off in the April 7th blitz". Boscarolo has been charged with a robbery that took place on July 3rd 1978. However, on that day he was in hospital, guarded by carabinieri, and under interrogation by Calogero himself! This oversight has aroused a lot of comment.

However, these new arrests by Calogero have embarked on a new strategy. He is asking that the charges related to concrete crimes (robbery, assault, molotovs etc) be brought to trial as soon as possible. He is requesting formal proceedings only on the "crimes of association" ("membership of an armed band" and "subversive association"). This move has aroused polemic among the defence lawyers, to the effect that once again Calogero is trying to escape the overseeing audit of the Instructing Judge Palombarini.

Translated from *L'Espresso*  
April 7th 1980

# INTERVIEW WITH TONI NEGRI

What follows is an interview with Toni Negri, imprisoned in Trani Prison. It is a written interview, made a month before the Trani Prison revolt (see below).

Question: You have now been in jail since April 7th 1979, and since this date objective evidence has cleared you of what one might call the 'black or white' criminal charges against you, such as involvement in the Moro assassination. The charges which remain are precisely those which cannot be answered with fingerprints or alibis. These accusations reside in a realm in which the legal system is badly adapted to intervene — the realm of ideas and the theoretical and historical continuity and compatibility between various political groups. Can you say something about those charges, and the legal situation in which you and the other comrades in jail find yourselves?

Answer: Our trial will take place in another couple of years or so, since Italian law allows a period of "preventive imprisonment" of up to 5 years and 4 months before the first trial, and 10 years and 8 months before the final trial. The basic charge which my comrades and I will probably face at our trial is "armed insurrection against the powers of the State". This charge carries a sentence of life imprisonment.

## Unprecedented Charges

This is the first time this charge has been brought in Italy since the fall of Fascism. Under Fascism the sentence was the firing squad: we are therefore happy Fascism has been overthrown. It is, however, the only reason for us to feel any pleasure in the fall of Fascism. In all other respects the law is unchanged. In fact, repressive laws have since been increased enormously in number and carry far heavier sentences. Legal procedures have taken on the characteristics of those applying in wartime: you can be arrested and interrogated without legal assistance and held for long periods of time. But as I said above, it is the periods of preventive imprisonment that have reached levels that are quite incredible.

Anyway, let's return to the charges being levelled against us. We stand accused of having attempted to incite an armed insurrection. The state accuses us because it recognises a real danger in the actions of proletarian and working class agitation that we carried on throughout the 1960s. Now, I and the comrades who were working for the development of working class and proletarian autonomy in the 1960s would have been very happy if we had really placed the reproductive institutions of capital in such extreme peril. Unfortunately our actions, despite their undeniable importance, were never this significant: even the bourgeoisie never seems to have felt there was a real danger



of insurrection. But on 7th April 1979 this accusation was nevertheless brought against us.

Who made this accusation? It was made by a few judges, whose political alignment with the Italian Communist Party is by now notorious. It was brought because the actions of autonomia had effectively impeded, through mass action, the PCI's chances of entering into government through an alliance with the Christian Democracy.

This very serious charge of insurrection was therefore brought because we struggled on class terrain, on mass terrain, against this betrayal of the class struggle perpetrated by the PCI in its strategy of Historic Compromise.

Question: The "trial of autonomia", as has been remarked by many, appears as a step in the attempt at criminalisation of the autonomia movement. You, as I remember reading in an article, were shocked by the projection of yourself in the daily press as a "monster". What were the processes called into play in this projection of autonomia as a criminal organisation, and of its theoreticians as monsters? And do you think this project of criminalisation is now failing with the failure of the "hard evidence" against the accused?

Answer: The accusation cannot fail, because it is not based on objective evidence against the individuals accused. The truth is that autonomia has never been an organisation, but rather an often-fluctuating ensemble of organisations. At the organisational level it was non-existent.

Autonomia was a movement. The judges, though well aware of this, have pretended that autonomia was something other than a movement and that those responsible for certain newspapers, free radios and organisational fractions which lived within the movement were politically responsible for the whole.

## Criminalising a Movement

The judges themselves have constructed central committees where only spontaneous initiatives existed, and criteria of objective responsibility where there were only individual initiatives. The great social phenomena of the workers' pickets, the blockading of transport, the "self-reduction" of prices, the occupations of housing and so on, have been linked artificially to an operational strategic centre which was supposed to have commanded and assumed responsibility for all these actions. This is pure fantasy.

Through a lunatic journalistic campaign of mystification, figures were created (such as my own) who were supposedly capable of directing these impressive social phenomena through orders, communications from little secret committees, special agents etc etc. A huge movement which has assailed Italian society throughout this decade was in this way reduced to the pitiful sum total of the experiences, however interesting, of a few individuals, to the ideas and writings, however important, of a few persons.

Social and mass class autonomy, and the organisations living within it, have, in this hypothetical accusation, been tied to



an organisational centre, at whose head presides Toni Negri the "monster". And why a "monster"? Because this gentleman, whilst lecturing in Paris, sent off orders which on the one hand set into motion hundreds of thousands of young people throughout Italy, in the factories, in the schools and on the streets. On the other hand, this gentleman was busy organising all of the military and underground struggles that were going on in Italy in the same period: in other words, he was the head of the Red Brigades, of Prima Linea, and of all the other underground groups.

### A Political Operation

There's no doubt that if I had really been all this, I would have been an excellent manager. But I was not. In reality the stance taken by myself and my friends against terrorist action has always been amply evident. The writings in which we detach ourselves from terrorism are innumerable. The judges continue to maintain this to be a falsity, an attempt at a cover-up. At this point the figure of the "monster" is complete. All that I wrote and said must be considered as a cover-up for my real position as a terrorist. In effect, the only real interest which those in power have in us consists in the criminalisation, through our poor personages, of an entire movement of social opposition.

This operation is entirely political, and has very little to do with the law. The trials, when they come about, will be political trials. The important thing that those in power wish to achieve, with



our arrests and the arrests of the thousands of comrades arrested after us, is to be able to add state terrorism to their criminalisation of the movement.

**Question:** A personal question. What has your experience of prison been like?

**Answer:** My life in prison isn't bad. There are about 3,000 comrades currently held in the Special Prisons (for 'terrorists'). There is therefore a very rich level of political discussion. Our strength, even in prison, is indubitable. So, our conditions of imprisonment are not of the worst. They are without doubt better than those that the common prisoner had to undergo before the influx of comrades into the prisons. The truth is that the warders and prison governors are afraid. Furthermore, everyone knows that the comrades inside represent the best of a whole generation of communist militants. Some warders are communists, and some governors are on the left.

Life in prison, however, is not improved all that much even by these conditions. But communist life within the prisons is not only strong, but also rich in vital initiatives. The worst part of prison, or rather of this sort of concentration camp where we have been herded, is above all the lack of news and information, and the impossibility of joining in the struggle. Over the last few months, during the struggle at FIAT, the comrades looked forward with enormous excitement to the television news broadcasts. And this was true not only for the four or five FIAT workers who are here in my camp: it was true for us all. It was central to all our discussions. It was fundamental in increasing our feeling of anger and desire for freedom to return to struggle alongside our comrades in the working class and proletariat outside prison.

### Closing Political Spaces

**Question:** It seems to me that the Moro assassination provided the lever which the Italian ruling classes needed. It has served to "justify" heavy intellectual repression and the strangling of political space on the pretext of stamping out terrorism in Italy. Do you agree with this? Are your hopes high for a speedy recovery of the Italian left?

**Answer:** The assassination of Moro was the most senseless and absurd initiative the armed groups could possibly have undertaken. In 1977 the proletarian movement had reached an extremely high pitch of mobilisation in all the big Italian cities, bringing to a climax the process of reformulation of the homogeneity of aims of struggle which had begun in 1974. But the movement, precisely because of its extensive nature, was extremely weak. Its problem was how to develop an organisational form springing from its roots in the city, in the factories, in all the various workplaces.

We were all involved in working to-

● (Left) As part of the process of depicting Negri as a "monster", the Press have used heavily touched-up photographs. Note inked-in lines.

wards this development. In September 1977 there was a mass assembly in Bologna which saw the participation of about 30,000 activists: everyone had understood that the principal and fundamental problem was to find roots and an organisational form. It was still necessary to press ahead with the extension of the movement. And it was possible.



Onto this "tissue", the Red Brigades (a group holding a Marxist-Leninist ideology) grafted its theory of the taking-over of the leadership of the entire movement by the armed vanguard. The murder of Moro after a month of imprisonment was supposed to demonstrate the Red Brigades as being the leading force, the hegemony, the 'Bolshevik' leadership of the movement.

In reality the result was the opposite to what the RB expected. The movement was fully engaged, in all its weakness and all its strength, in the project of rooting itself and finding its organisational form. The RB were shown up for what they were — a wild variable. But on this basis, the basis that the Moro assassination determined in the bourgeoisie, the most terrifying campaign of repression we have ever known was set into motion. 3,000 comrades have been thrown into jail in these last two years.

The repressive forces of the bourgeoisie, with the cooperation of those of the trade unions and the PCI, have swept the board clean of an entire generation of militants. The movement's political space has been enormously restricted. Practically all of its papers and its journals have been banned. The space held by the comrades of autonomia inside the universities and factories has been closed. In the name of stamping out terrorism a great proletarian movement of an entirely new sort, developing on the left of the PCI, a movement of young workers and metropolitan proletarians, a movement of resistance to work, has been struck a severely weakening blow.

### Autonomia

I don't know if the recovery will come about quickly. I rather doubt it. What is certain, though, is that the movement still exists, that it has not yet been beaten. Today the problem is the revival of mass struggle together with the re-conquest of political space and the release of the comrades from prison.

**Question:** Calogero (the public prosecutor) has a theorem: Potere Operaio = Autonomia = Red Brigades. The left has another:

Calogero = PCI = Historic Compromise = the solidification of political/hegemonic control by the ruling block in Italy. Can you comment on the role the PCI has played in recent years?

**Answer:** The equation whereby the PCI is supposed to consolidate its own hegemony via the repressive operation mounted against the class Left has already been thrown into crisis. The PCI has helped the bourgeoisie to emerge from the deepest crisis it has ever had to undergo, and now it has unceremoniously been shown the back door. Despite this, the PCI has not gone back on the question of repression. Its Stalinist soul has got the better even over political and opportunistic considerations. The enemy to its left must be fought by whatever means. It matters not that this repressive operation serves as a testing ground for operations which, tomorrow, the bourgeoisie might use against the PCI itself. The revisionist hatred of the left is blind.

### The Communist Party

The masochistic behaviour of the PCI, however, is not only apparent at the level of repression. The last decade has seen a development in the class struggle in Italy which has been able to find in the PCI an element of mediation with the bourgeoisie. In this context the PCI attempted to win back its hegemony over the more active layers of the class, the hegemony it had lost in 1968-69. When it realised that this recuperation was impossible, it unleashed the repression. But without a left wing capable of acting within the factories and the cities, the mediatory action of the PCI proved to be useless to the bourgeoisie. The PCI has therefore been thrown back into opposition.

At this point, gripped by a last tremor of resistance, the PCI placed itself at the head of the struggle. But it was not to last. The unions, by now used to reformism and opportunism, abandoned it forthwith, while the working class left correctly regarded with great suspicion any foray into the class struggle by the PCI. It was this fact that led to the defeat of all the struggles to which the PCI had offered its protection.

Today, within the PCI, a series of political theses of autonomy have begun to develop. But nobody deludes themselves that the Stalinist sectarianism of the PCI can be overcome.

### Potere Operaio

**Question:** In your view what were the major contributions of Potere Operaio to working class thought and struggle, which led to its leadership being singled out for particular attack in the "case against autonomia"?

**Answer:** This is a difficult question to answer. Potop was a complex phenomenon. Its most significant organisational characteristic was without any doubt the fact of being able to unify organically the working class vanguard in certain of the big factories in the North, and the leaders of the students' movement in the big Italian universities. This organic link

provided a very specific political personnel, capable of both mass action and theoretical analysis.

Potop was perhaps the only group among those arising from 1968 able to maintain an incredible homogeneity of political positions after its dissolution. This fact has caused the magistrates mistakenly to believe in an entrism operation conducted by Potop throughout the entire movement, through its dissolution. Furthermore, Potop was for a long period — both in its group constitution and in the later phase of dispersal — firstly the carrier of the debate on the refusal of work, and second the initiator of the debate on the new subject-figure of the metropolitan proletariat. Autonomia was really born, as far as theory is concerned, from the concepts developed by the Potop cadres who continued to work politically after the dissolution, either as individuals, or in small groups within the movement.

Potop was dissolved at the Rosolina Convention in 1973. But in 1977 at the

centrality of their theoretical arguments and the continuity of their political action. Personally, I'm very happy this has happened: it's the proof that, at the moment that other comrades and myself (a minority, but a far-seeing one), realising the enormous intellectual wealth Potop had accumulated and convinced of the group's poverty of experience, imposed its dissolution, we had taken a historic and fundamental step.

### The "New Class Layers"

**Question:** What happened in 1977 which makes that year such a radical "break" for working class struggle and culture in Italy?

**Answer:** What happened in 1977 was that which we did not have the strength to bring about in 1969: the mass break of the proletariat from the reformist organisations. In 1969 we had built up a radical and democratic class behaviour in the factories. The PCI and the unions ably disposed themselves of this transform-



● "Fascists, coup d'étatists, for you there is no tomorrow. Today we are soldiers, tomorrow we'll be partisans". Soldiers' demo, early '70s.

Bologna convention of autonomia, nearly all the speakers on the Italian situation were ex-Potop comrades. Despite the many different approaches, the central argument which emerged — that which saw the working class tendency towards refusal of work emerging within the social make-up of the metropolitan proletariat — was brought to the centre of the debate through the theoretical and agitational contribution of the ex-Potop comrades.

Today the prisons are full of these comrades. I've never tried to work out how many there are, but there are many... many. The institutions of power have thus singled out the leadership of Potop because of their evaluation of both the

creation of Factory Councils. We knew that this was an opportunistic operation by the trade unions, but we too were imprisoned by the ambiguity of this operation.

On the other hand, the relationship which emerged in 1969 between the new class layers and the old vanguard of the "mass worker" was very external, essentially founded on agitation. Furthermore, the relationship between working class antagonism in direct production and proletarian antagonism on the social terrain was very unclear: "Take Over The City", a slogan of those years, was a slogan based completely on the extension of the action of the factory proletariat,

rather than on the uncovering and unfolding of what was a complex social subject-figure. Between 1969 and 1977 we had the formidable existence of a powerful women's movement. It was in the confrontation — often bitter, always important — with the women's movement that the debate was pushed ahead. Without wishing to exaggerate (because there's often been a certain coyness in the admission) I believe that the reasons which lay behind the dissolution of Potop in 1974 came essentially from developments in the women's movement, from the positive transformation that the frustrations of the women wrought on many Potop cadres.

In the meantime, between 1969 and 1977, the initial ambiguity of the trade union debate on the Factory Councils was clarified for all, workers and proletarians alike. The unions, from 1969 on, were making a concerted effort to weaken the authority of the Councils. Above all, they were trying to bend them to the austerity policies which were the war-cry of the PCI in its march towards government. In those years we not only managed, continuously and relentlessly, to demystify the PCI line, but also to live and promote a new social experience: the experience of the movement as a community, promoted directly through a mass experience of expropriation and counter-power. Right. At this moment in time, 1977 "broke out". First in Bologna, where the clashes of the new student proletariat (students forced to work in the "black economy", exploited by the Communist Party administrations in the big cities) raised enormously the level of revolutionary desire; then in Rome, where the PCI's attempt to recuperate the movement ended in Lama (the PCI's trade union leader) being physically expelled from the University.

### Traditional Marxist Analysis

Once again we had anticipated and accelerated the rhythm of events: it would be 1980 before Lama was expelled from the gates of FIAT too. But the transformation set in motion in 1977 is still fundamental. As I have already said, we would probably have managed to confirm organisationally the social reality of the new mass Left, if the Red Brigades had not intervened, with their choice of the path of homicide and terrorism, a choice which we continue to see as at best a tragic error and at worst a betrayal and a provocation.

**Question:** The movement of *autonomia* claims to speak as part of a "new social majority of the proletariat", a majority which includes all those sectors of the working class thrown to the margins of society by the present world-wide crisis racking the capitalist economy. This clearly raises some major question marks for traditional Marxist class analysis. How far do you see your own ideas and those of other comrades inside and outside of jail as a radical departure in Marxist theory?

**Answer:** My comrades and I do not believe

that our analysis is other than a Marxist analysis. It's a completion, a development of it. We believe that the proletarian subject is formed in the conjunction between work time and life time; that society is subsumed in capital, forming a homogenous tissue of exploitation. The crucial problem is this: capital has become really "social capital" and capitalist society has become — really, not by analogy — a "social factory". Education, welfare, family life, transport, culture etc. are all implicated in capitalist accumulation. The conflict between human desires and capital is direct. The mechanism of the production and reproduction of labour power is wholly internal to capital. This is the fundamental point. If all this is true, and if in consequence the proletarian subject develops within all of these life conditions, then the true barrier to the valorisation of capital consists in the relationship between production and reproduction. Our subject is not so much an extreme fruit of the crisis of capitalism as a product of its restructuring.

### We Are Readers of Marx

I don't believe that anything I am saying is less than orthodox Marxism. It is, at any event, the truth, even if it is not orthodox. Orthodoxy does not concern me much. I am a Marxist solely because Marx's analysis is in agreement with phenomena and behaviours that I perceive. As for the fact that our subjectivism is not in agreement with the established currents of Marxist tradition, this means only that other authors are in error. We are not inventors of anything. We are just readers of Marx, and political revolutionary agitators in our time.

**Question:** Reading your *Domination and Sabotage* (translated in *Working Class Autonomy & the Crisis*, Red Notes/CSE Books, 1979) I was struck particularly by your discussion of public spending and the wage, parts of which I quote:

"Public spending and the wage are themes to which the analysis, the theory and the practice of revolutionaries will continually have to return, because in a situation of discontinuity in the cyclicity of the class struggle, the problem of public spending will, in the coming years, assume the same importance as the wage, narrowly defined, has had in past years."

and later:

"The privileged place of the wage in the continuity of proletarian struggles must, today, be extended to the struggle over public spending cuts. Only this struggle can enable the full self-recognition of the proletariat; can fix the bases of self-valorisation; can attack directly the theory and practice of income-as-revenue."

This seems to me a very important concept for the strategy and tactics of working class struggle today. The mass vanguard of the proletarian movement is no longer to be found at the point of production, on the broad and largely mascul-

ine shoulders of the the factory worker "guaranteed" by powerful trade unions, but among traditionally weaker sectors of the proletariat — women, the unemployed, immigrants and so on — as the major consumers and providers of welfare services. The nurses in struggle for improved wages and conditions and thus improved nursing facilities in the hospitals; women demanding the provision of refuges and nursery facilities; groups forming to fight cuts in education and health services; youth demanding more cultural and social facilities; all these now move from the back pages of the annals of socialist historiography to take on capital as major protagonists of the class struggle. Can you enlarge on this question?

**Answer:** Clearly, I'm in agreement with your reflections on the theme of class struggle/struggle over public spending, and with your consequent identification of the social subjects. You ask me to enlarge on this theme.

Well, then, I believe that today, in Italy at least, the problem is to understand the limits of this argument. Here, the separate leadership of this programme has often led the various groups and layers of the class into the hands of capital: the acceptance of particular demands means the incorporation of these particular forces, and the split, the division of the general revolutionary action. Since there are no ideologies which can link diverse class interests at an abstract level, a reflection which can thread right through the various different realities is of prime importance.

### Not in Ideology but in Concrete Action and Revolutionary Thought

The unification of the struggle of one layer with that of another cannot be imposed through ideologies and value-systems — this is the road taken by the Right. We must find within the immediacy of the interests of particular groups the political mediation of the common interest, the desire for communism. We comrades in jail, we 3,000 revolutionary militants shut away inside the Special Prisons of the democratic Italian state, are sure that this desire lives within the masses. Above all, we must press forward a mediation rooted in reflection on the interests of the individual strata: class unity is to be found deep within the process of class self-valorisation. Not in ideology, but in concrete action and revolutionary thought.

■ Interview obtained in the Trani Special Prison, November 1980.



# REVIEW 'REFLECTIONS on a PHANTOM'

□ Toni Negri and Luciano Ferrari Bravo were asked to write an article for the revolutionary magazine *Metropoli*, about the concept of "insurrection". It is under a charge of "armed insurrection against the powers of the State" that they now face possible life imprisonment. What follows is an edited version.

### The Concept of Insurrection

We have been asked to answer the question as to why the State can still have a place for a crime like "insurrection" in its Penal Code.

In reality the crime of "insurrection" is like the cobra in the popular song: whatever you do, you can never manage to catch hold of it. Its essence does not lie in logic, but in something else. From a doctrinal point of view, it is a masterpiece of legal "ambiguity" [...]

It seems to us... that the magistrates' manner of proceeding towards us was completely illegal, and that the ultimate interpretation of the crime of insurrection, were it rendered effective, would be unconstitutional. In fact it's clear that, given the impossibility of the other two ways of considering the crime of insurrection (the one relating to the effectivity of the attack on all the institutions insofar as it is excluded from the charge itself; and the one relating to legitimacy, because the heart of the state is not there and anyway it wasn't Moro and in any case it has nothing to do with us) — in the heads of our accusers the crime of insurrection rests only on a misinterpretation (a vulgarly contrived interpretation) of the Italian constitution.

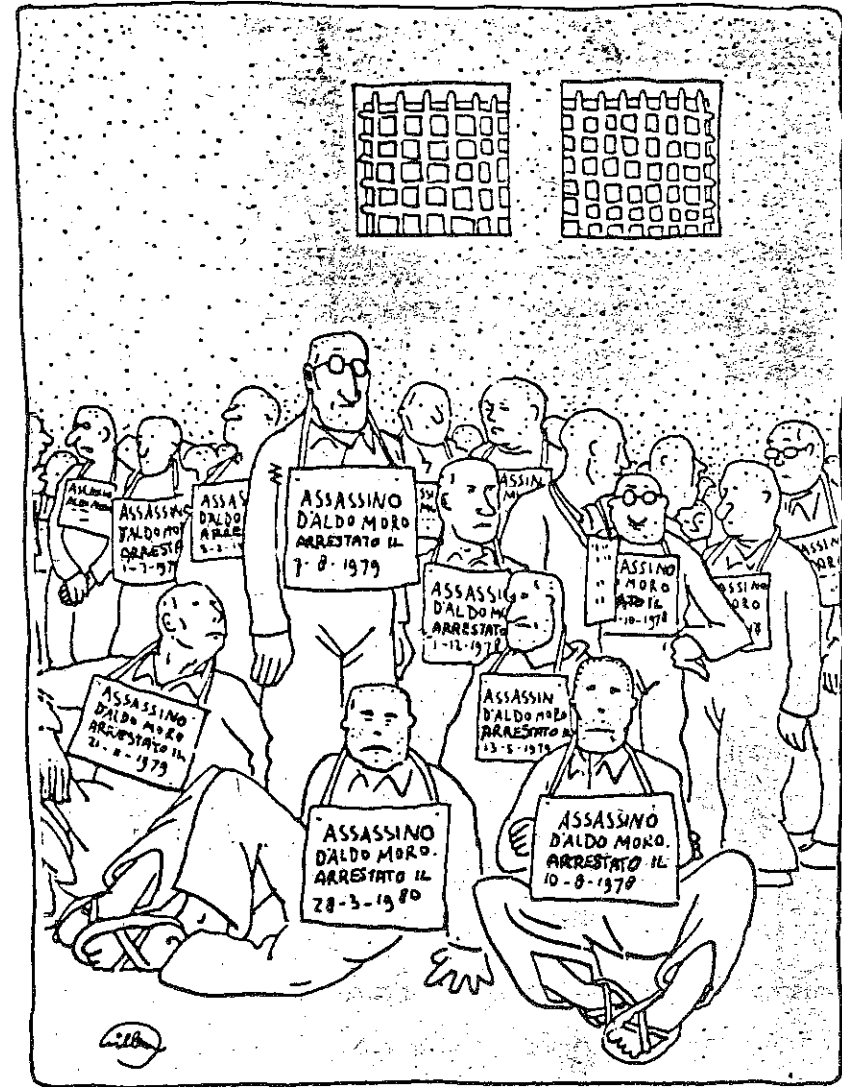
In other words, it is maintained that the formal constitution, which is the only basis and reference for the definition of an example of constitutional crime, is determined by its materiality. When we were arrested, this consisted in the search for the Historic Compromise. That is, in the alliance between two parties, as bearers of the national interest. I must confess I don't know which is more insurrectionalist: an interpretation like this, or what we are accused of. But thus it is: we are in jail, while the way things are now, the magistrates have a licence to kill. To kill the constitution too?

Let us suppose that our magistrates' interpretation should acquire legal validity (what it amounts to is this: the regime of the parties, the party-system that has been established in Parliament is untouchable; the will and the action to alter it is insurrectional).

From this there follow a number of undoubtedly amusing paradoxes:

- 1 That every act implying an alteration of the material constitution (of the parties and the corporations) whatever its source, would qualify as insurrection.
- 2 That insurrection, breaking this corporate materiality of the political order,

To date very many people have been arrested for the killing of Aldo Moro!



would be an act attributable to the formal constitution.

In attributing the crime of insurrection to us, the magistrate is distorting the concept of the constitution in an abnormal and absurd fashion. It is no accident that behind this charge are two magistrates who are notorious: Ciccio Amato, who acquitted Sogno and Cavallo in an investigation of a charge of conspiracy against the State; Ciampini, whose family situation is so compromised by fascism that it is really hard to understand why he doesn't leave his post as public prosecutor — even if it's quite easy to understand why he should maintain this interpretation of constitutional crime.

If things stand in these terms we cannot see why at this point an approach should not be made to the Constitutional Court, to inquire what are the fixed terms of the present constitutional system. If the State in effect is the State of the parties and of their specific alliances, it could even be that we are considered liable to be judged of the crime of insurrection. Be warned. We are well aware that the Italian State is a state in disintegration, the prey of corporate party interests. But we are also aware that we are

strong enough to prevent this recognition being given by the greatest organ of the constitution.

We know that within the organ of the constitution that should be addressed there are individuals who have maintained (with the aim of facilitating the constitutional legitimacy of the PCI) a static definition of the Constitution. But we know that struggles have altered the situation and that today mobility is not just in the bosses' interest, but also in the interest of all those forces that incline towards a reconstruction of the working-class and proletarian movement.

Well then: what is the system's degree of mobility? Is it possible — since this is what is involved — to conceive of transformation? Tell us no. Say it, and confirm the positions of Ciccio Amato and Ciampini, if you believe it.

But along this road isn't there a risk of bestowing an undeserved theoretical dignity on something that has very little dignity about it at all? The risk is certainly there. The initial question also allows for a very banal answer: the Party-state still allows room for the crime of insurrection for the very same reason that the existing penal code is still the one dictat-



ed by Minister of Justice Rocco, with a number of cracks papered over (which after all also concern insurrection — to promote it is no longer punishable with the death penalty but with life imprisonment, which is much more civilised). So what's surprising about that? Cultural backwardness, conservative interests — even if they are the "sectional" interests of the judiciary — and so on. And it could go on in the same terms as far as it concerns this unexpected concrete exhumation of a case to which the manuals dictate no more than the occasional incidental line or two, and which is almost entirely without precedent. In fact it is all too clear that in choosing the charge to incriminate us, the Roman magistrate was obeying practical imperatives that are transparent, though hardly admissible. In the first place to fix it within Roman jurisdiction, and it is of little consequence that this in itself demonstrates how these judges are even technically imprecise, given that unless proved to the contrary, the general laws on jurisdiction are applicable also to article 284.

In the second place, and this is considerably more important, to ensure a period of preventive detention that is practically open-ended. As everyone knows, thanks to the Cossiga law, for a crime of this nature you can spend up to five and a half years in prison awaiting your first sentence.

#### Coherence Has Its Price

But coherence has its price, and it doesn't seem appropriate right now to re-exhume a theory of the State and/or capitalism in disintegration. So let's reformulate the question. In the first place, is working class autonomy, or has it ever been in fact, an insurrectional phenomenon? The very first thing we need to do here is clear up a misunderstanding — the one pursued by the Rome judge — that is, the resurrection of an insurrectionalist thematic that was the historical property of the 1968 group *Potere Operaio*. Agitation for an insurrectional perspective (which never even began to become a theory, far less an insurrectionary practice) constituted a last resort to articulate leninist goals (vieux-leninist?) on a theoretical and 'workerist' corpus, and above all, on a transformation of its referent, of the social subject of the struggles which '68 had begun to reveal in all their breadth. *Potere Operaio* said insurrection for the same reasons Lotta Continua said "Take over the city" and *Il Manifesto* (Yes, Magri himself) put forward guerrilla warfare in the factories. The judges obviously forget, or better still, they are obliged to conceal by whatever means possible, the small detail that P.O. was the very first group to take note historically of the impracticability and inadequacy of that attempt at articulation, and to dissolve. From then on, and from the 7th April defendants themselves, there follows a constant polemic against insurrectionist tendencies — to the point where insurrectionism is defined as a scourge of the movement (cf Negri, *Domination*

and Sabotage, page 15). What does this mean? That insurrectionist tendencies have run through the movement is no less true than is the fact that only impudent opportunism would ever exclude popular insurrection from the horizon of class struggle. Apart from typologies of political science which are not pertinent here, an insurrectional phenomenology is still part of the exercise of the people's right of resistance — as a last resort to block the challenging of pre-existing mass victories, or the last resort to breaking the stalemate on an impassable situation.

And phenomena of this kind have been clearly in evidence throughout the last 20 years of Italian history. Has everyone forgotten July 1960? (And, incidentally, has everyone forgotten Nenni's exaltation of "street-action" and also his innovative effectiveness on the institutional terrain?)

But what has all that got to do with autonomy? Manifestly nothing. Autonomy has a theory and a practice — albeit partial and tendential — which pursue the independent positivity of the "refusal of work". The theory and practice of the construction of the full potential of proletarian power — directed and organised by the proletariat itself.

Is autonomy a "subversive" phenomenon? Nobody can deny it. For that reason, a theory and practice of the use of force is also germane to it, as another, essential, facet of the construction of working-class power. But autonomy has always rejected, with equal decisiveness, the terrorist and the insurrectionist deviations.

Well then? The question is posed again. If a judge should read not the ind-

ividual elements but the totality of elements of autonomy as insurrection — from the self-reductions to the occupations, from the struggle around "social" income, to organisation against fascists and drug dealers in the communities — then what is the explanation? It's too easy to dispose of it by pointing to the quasi-fascist paranoia of a single judge. Calogero revealed it recently with astonishing clarity: the real risk represented by autonomy lay in its possibility of deluding young people about the potential for building paradise on this earth. The Roman judge, who knows his way around, is not so ingenuous and gives away less of his ideological tics. But between the two of them they are actually giving a faithful interpretation of a paranoia which by now permeates the entire party system.

It is the paranoia of those who feel themselves under siege, and can't, or won't admit to the growing disaffection they feel around them. The situation is quite unique. The enactment of a trial for insurrection is desired. That is, for a crime that implies a present danger that would affect the fabric of consensus within the institutions of which the parties constitute the backbone. And none of these is making any kind of comment — not even the one behind the proceedings. So wouldn't this be the appropriate moment finally to demonstrate the obscure genesis of the crisis, and by convicting the guilty ones, to celebrate the end of the danger? Otherwise, if the April 7th trial goes ahead on this charge, how long can the present silence last?

■ Trani Prison  
October 1980



● Two comrades are arrested — and immediately liberated. Early '70s

# RED NOTES

Translation

RN: 5.4.81 (1)

#### ON READING THE 140 PAGES OF CHARGES AGAINST THE "APRIL 7th" DEFENDANTS — "THAT'S SOME STORY!"

● The following article is by Giorgio Bocca, and is translated from *L'Espresso*, March 1981. He details the flimsiness of the evidence against some of the accused from the Autonomy movement.

I have just finished reading the 140-page list of charges which public prosecutor Ciampani has just formally brought against Antonio Negri and his comrades of *Potere Operaio* and the Autonomy. I have already written a book about the "7th April" case in general, and so I will not go over that ground again. Instead I want to make some observations about the lesser defendants.

For example, the poet and novelist GIANCARLO BALESTRINI is accused of subversion and membership of an armed organisation. But what, in heaven's name, is the evidence against him?

"Fioroni and Scalzone telephoned the accused, resident in Rome at the time, in order to get in touch with Feltrinelli when the latter was held up and late for an appointment in Genoa.... Balestrini's name appears several times in Negri's diary for 1975, in connection with the editorial group of *Rosso*. The significance of *Rosso* in relation to armed struggle has already been pointed out. The two above elements show an uninterrupted continuity in the presence and activity of Balestrini in the O." (Editor's note: 'O' stands for Negri's Organisation)

And that, as they say, is that. By virtue of these weighty and undeniably conclusive shreds of evidence, Balestrini has been forced to go underground and faces the prospect of years of imprisonment. Ever since these troubles descended on him, the 'literati' who produced the magazine *Alfabeta* with him have developed a dislike for Balestrini as a poet. As might be expected, they haven't felt fit to lift their pens in his defence. It would be no bad thing if they were to take a little interest in the position of Balestrini as a citizen.

What about MARIELLA MARINONI? Why is she, someone who has been a political militant for at least seven years, accused of subversion? The damning evidence against her is this:

"Fioroni, speaking of Romano Madera, stated that his wife Lele also took part in the Organisation."

And without Fioroni (tn: one of the political supergrasses), what a weight of detective work would have been needed to find out that ITALO SBROGIO used to be a member of *Potere Operaio*! Judge Ciampani reveals that:

"According to Fioroni he held a position of importance in the Organisation — in the Veneto region, to be precise".

Well, to be precise, we would remind our readers that Italo Sbrogiò was a

leading militant of Potere Operaio at the Porto Marghera petrochemical plant, elected to the Works Committee on the Potere Operaio ticket, re-elected to the factory council, and extremely well-known in the workers' movement. But when Fioroni speaks, of course, everything appears in a new light. Some aspects of these charges are, frankly, astounding. JAROSLAW NOVAK, for example, is charged with having planted a bomb in the Rome carabinieri barracks in via Celimontana. Did somebody see him? Did someone mention his presence to Fioroni? No, but the charge is argued as follows: "As regards the first actions taken by FARO, Novak, an important figure in FARO, is to be committed for trial, since his position certainly implies that Novak took part in the crime". What is the evidence for Novak's importance within FARO? It is Fioroni's say-so. And thus the circle is closed.

The evidence that ORESTE SCALZONE planned the Vedano Olona robbery is inductive, but clearly overwhelming! He was in the public gallery at the trial of the two robbers. And what proof is there that DALMAVIVA and MAGNAGHI were members of the Organised Autonomy? Well, there's a letter that nails them. Written by Scalzone in 1977, it invites old comrades to a conference in which discussion was to be on the armed struggle, insurrection and the extinction of the State". Perhaps also on the Apocalypse according to St John.

As is known, the April 7th case relates to a number of episodes: some base, like the killing of Saronio, others vile, like the attacks on the professors at Padova, and others demented. We know that some horrible stories lie behind the April 7th case and we do not in any way intend to cover them up. We are not among those who deny all validity to Fioroni's testimony. To put it briefly, we are not part of the "innocentist" camp. What we want to know is why - politically, juridically and morally it was thought necessary to throw onto the pile people who, it seems, are only guilty of having been, for one or two years, close to the "O" (as the word "organisation" is here abbreviated, although heaven knows why). Is this the road that is supposed to lead to a political solution to terrorism and, as General Cappuzzo puts it, bring young people back to democracy?

■ Translated from *L'Espresso*  
March 1981, p. 23.

## REVIEW A BIT OF BALESTRINI

○ The poet and novelist Nanni Balestrini went underground in 1979, to escape charges of subversive association and armed organisation. To give an idea of the nature of his writing we print here a translation of his best-known book "We Want Everything" - a real life account of an immigrant worker's involvement in the FIAT struggle of 1969-70.

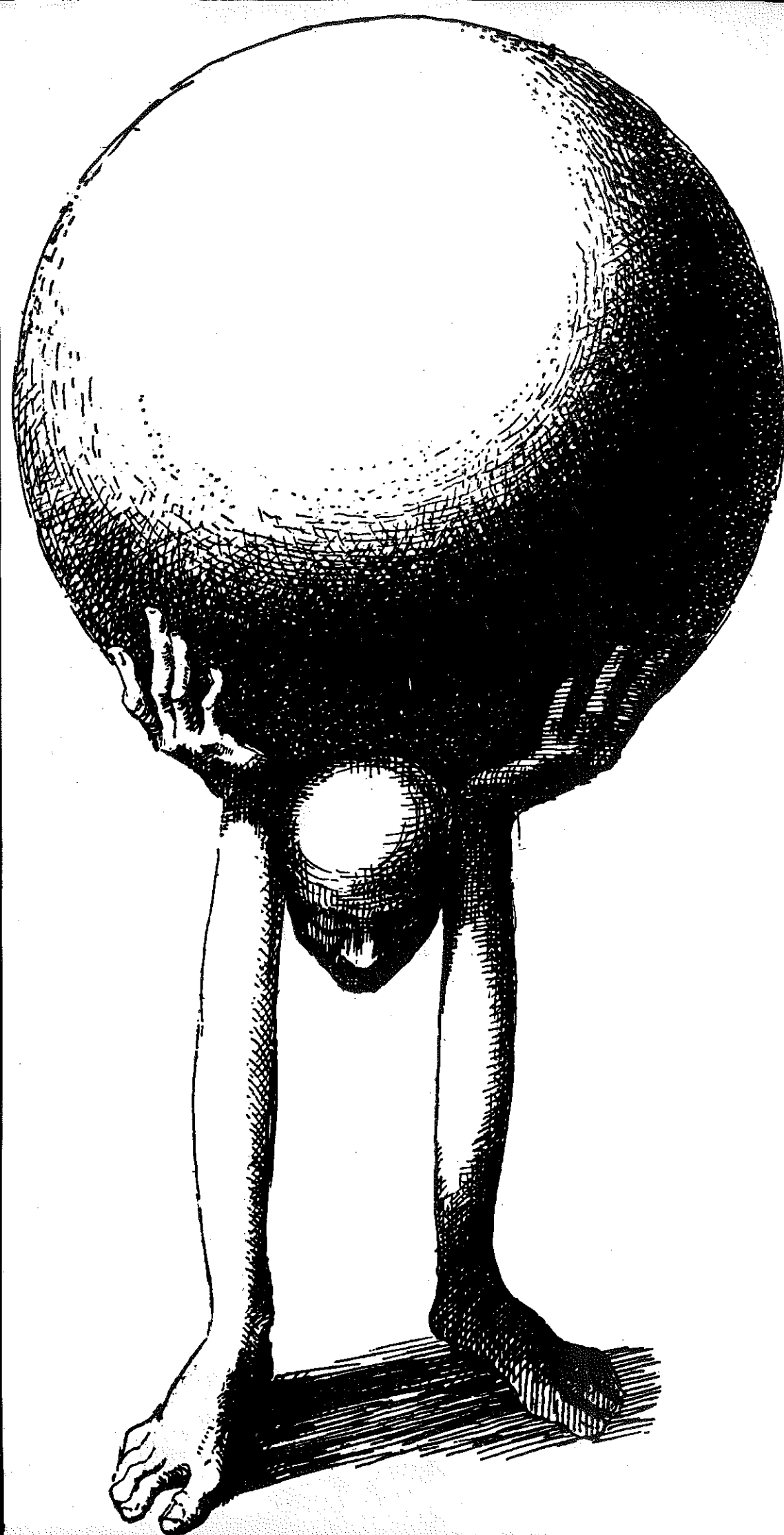
Then we decided to move on to Nichelino, where the battle had been going on since the afternoon... All those immigrants, those thousands of proletarians who live in Nichelino, had built barricades all over the place, using cement drainpipes. Via Sestriere, the main street that crosses Nichelino, was blocked by more than 10 barricades made out of burning cars and trailers, traffic lights, rocks and timber. They made a big fire out of wood from a house that was under construction: the whole site was burning. They threw rocks to smash the street-lamps, and all you could see was the flames. The police played for time - they didn't attack, but let us be. In fact, they only attacked at four in the morning, when reinforcements arrived. Almost all the workers were dead tired, having been battling for over 12 hours. The police relieved each other in relays.

The reinforcement jeeps and lorries arrived by the back route that we had taken earlier - which meant that we were encircled, and had to make our escape. The carabinieri had got out of a lorry, and started chasing us, firing teargas as they came. I was dog tired. I ran and ran. As I was running, I tripped against a rock. I stopped to glance at my shoe, and noticed that a lone carabinieri was chasing after me. Then I saw a comrade, who had been running with me, jump on the carabinieri. They fought, and the carabinieri fell. Then, at

the top of the road I saw smoke rising. We reached the top, and from there you could see the whole wide avenue, with the battle going on. You couldn't tell who had the upper hand, everything was so confused. All I wanted was one simple thing - to stop and have a shit somewhere - but I couldn't.

Some carabinieri attacked us, and I never made it to the centre of the battle, where the fighting was hardest. Just at that moment I heard someone shout: "There they are... there they are!" I saw a huge cloud of smoke in the middle of the avenue, and everyone was running down the avenue shouting. Then, from the middle of the smoke, the police appeared in their armoured vehicles, with their lights lighting up the proceedings. They started firing off teargas. There was a building site at the side of the road, and some comrades had started to gather there. The comrade who was with me headed off towards the building site, and I followed him.

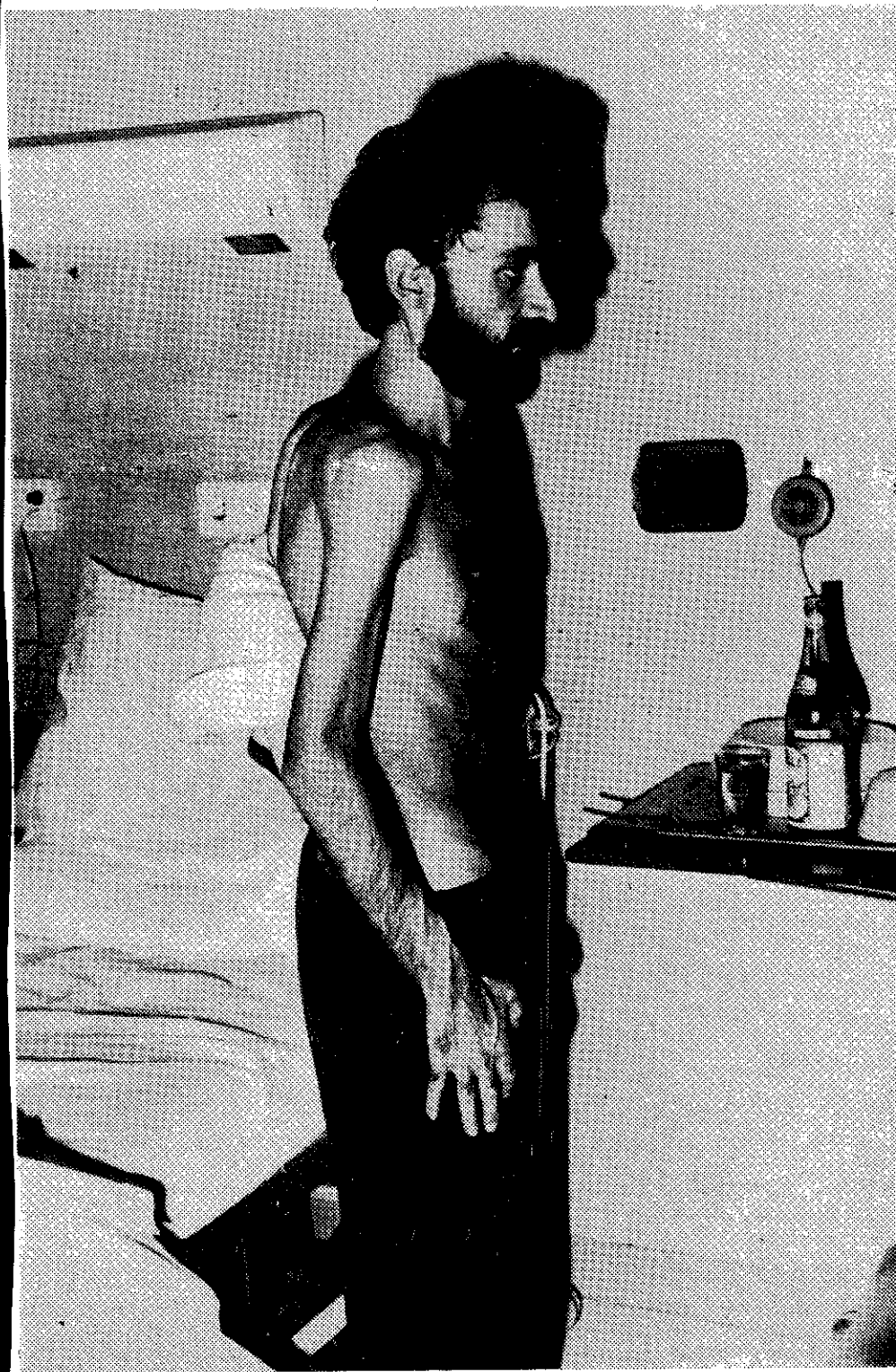
We could no longer see what was going on below, down on the avenue. Nothing but smoke and shouting and explosions. The avenue was hidden by a pall of dust and smoke. You could only see shadows, with a lot of noise, of shouting, sirens and explosions. On my left I heard the revving and the sirens of police wagons coming up the avenue. Two molotovs burst in flames in the middle of the road...



• THE SUPPORT CAMPAIGN FOR THE PRISONERS  
• THE CONFERENCE IN LONDON



# Il prezzo di una libertà



*Questo è Oreste Scalzone.*

*E' una foto dura da pubblicare.*

*Oreste ora è libero. Non sappiamo quanto potrà liberarsi di quello che ha patito. Noi tutti glielo auguriamo.*

*Oreste sta ancora male. Agitato, non è sicuro del suo destino. Teme anche (e a ciò giunge la barbarie di un sistema carcerario) che un miglioramento di salute lo rimetta in carcere.*

*Oreste ringrazia tutti quanti gli sono stati vicini.*

*Che quest'uomo fosse in questo stato molti già lo sapevano. Lo pesavano, caso mai le bilance fossero truccate.*

*Questa foto è anche un messaggio che esce da un carcere, da quei carceri che restano luoghi misteriosi, lontani e dove, purtroppo, molti vivono ancora peggio di Oreste.*

*E' brutto che un paese arrivi a tanto. Che arrivi a permettere l'esistenza di una fotografia così.*

*foto Angelo Scipioni*

**ORESTE SCALZONE**

LOTTA CONTINUA 16.10.80

## DOSSIER THE CASE OF ORESTE SCALZONE

Red Notes: March 4th 1981

Translation from ACTES: Cahiers d'Action Juridique No.29.

### ● ORESTE SCALZONE

Oreste Scalzone was finally granted bail (provisional liberty) on September 16th 1980, but his health has been reduced to such a state in prison that he is now compelled to remain in hospital.

Imprisoned on April 7th 1979, Scalzone has done the 'Grand Tour' of Italy's "Special Prisons" - Cuneo, Palermo, Termini Imerese and finally Rebibbia prison in Rome. In the past 6 months his health has deteriorated drastically. Scalzone, a militant of the '68 generation, has an old injury dating from those times, next to his spinal column. In addition other conditions have reduced him to the point of not being able to eat. In July 1980 he weighed 46 kilos.

From that date a number of initiatives have been taken, in Parliament and in the Press, to effect his release on bail. Politicians from numerous parties, ranging from the Socialists and Communists to the Radicals and PDUP, have interceded for him, and signatures flowed in to the committee that was formed in Milan.

Despite all this, Oreste was refused bail on August 1st. The judge was of the opinion that his state of health was not alarming! A new application was then made, by three lawyers engaged at the Committee's expense.

Expert opinion stated that Scalzone was dying. He was transferred to Regina Coeli prison, where he underwent an appendicitis operation in the prison hospital. The operation worsened his condition. His weight dropped to 42 kilos, and his right arm was paralysed. On September 2nd he was finally transferred to Gemelli Hospital, a civilian hospital, under the permanent surveillance of two police officers stationed in his room. "It's worse than prison," he said, "At least in prison they're outside your door".

On September 9th Stefano Rodota wrote an article in La Repubblica entitled: "If Judges Play with the Life of a Man". It was still another week before Scalzone was released.

Scalzone's case is only the most extreme of those April 7th defendants, who have been imprisoned for over a year, on charges that rest on the most fragile of evidence; some of them, after a year in gaol, have not even been questioned by the magistrates - and this in a country where preventive detention can last for up to 12 years, and where no date has been fixed for their trials. This situation is intolerable.

\*\*\* On September 16th 1980, after 17 months in prison, and a long public campaign, Scalzone was released on bail ("provisional liberty") to await trial. He was seriously ill. On March 25th 1981, with the judges about to settle his committal proceedings, the newspapers were reporting that he was nowhere to be found in Rome (where he was supposed to live, as a condition of his bail). In fact, as became clear, he and his wife had fled Rome, and had probably left Italy. Faced with the uncertainties of re-imprisonment at any time - and the certain physical and mental destruction that this has involved for him so far - he removed himself, and joined the very many Italian militants who are on the run.

R.N.

# DOSSIER 'WHO IS GIANNI SBROGIO?'

Translation from a Letter from Prison

Gianni Sbrogiò was employed in an engineering factory in Porto Marghera. He was arrested on January 24th 1980, on orders from Judge Calogero. He fell victim to the Fioroni-Casirati twosome, and was cast into the cauldron of the "April 7th affair".

What is he accused of? First and foremost of having been a member of Potere Operaio during the hot years of the workers' struggles at Porto Marghera, with all that this implies in terms of Calogero's equations: namely establishment of and participation in armed bands under various names including CentroNord, FARO and the Red Brigades. He is also accused of having taken part in an "attempted" robbery in 1974.

The fact that Gianni was well known in factory circles in Porto Marghera is a mystery to no-one. He was constantly present and active in the struggles. Potere Operaio, in the early 1970s, was effectively the main expression for the workers' struggles at Marghera - struggles which were over wages and hours, but also over the capitalist organisation of work: workers' struggles to win political dignity and power as a class, both in the factory and in society at large.

We would point out to Calogero that the term "factory warfare" which he finds so suspect meant nothing more than the application of direct objectives: such as refusal of piecework, of overtime, the self-reduction of workloads, refusing to work in hazardous conditions etc. And in fact even the Union was using this same language.

But this is the way Calogero sees things: If these people were theorising factory warfare, then everything that has happened since, by way of a variety of robberies, personal attacks etc, can be laid at their door. This is the same as saying that, if terrorism exists in Italy, it is the fault of those who lived the struggles of '68.

After the dissolution of Potere Operaio, when everyone went their own ways, Gianni committed the sin of staying active in the struggles. For example, when there was the Self-Reduction of electricity bills, or when there were community struggles against the cost of living, or struggles in the factory against sackings and factory restructuration.

Needless to say, in the factory Gianni has always been a stubborn opponent of the official Union line and, together with other comrades, he has been a point of reference for those who continue to believe that the struggle is the only way to resist the employer's counter-attack.

A word or two about the specific charges: the day after December 21st and, again, after the arrests of January 24th, the newspapers, with the Communist Party's L'Unità in the front line, thundered that, finally, nobody could any longer complain of a "trial of political ideas". Here at last were specific crimes - and how! - such as robberies etc. But 6 whole months after the imprisonment of this comrade, still no specific charges have been made - for example, the date, the place, and the nature of this "attempted" robbery - a robbery of which nobody seems to have been aware at the time! This episode too appears to have sprung from the brain of the "repentant" Casirati - whose fertile imagination has already been displayed in other cases.

■ Since his arrest, Gianni has been questioned by Judge Calogero - and then nothing further. He has not been given the opportunity to appear before a judge. Now he has learnt - from the newspapers - that the arrest warrant against him and his companions has been renewed....but he has not yet been notified formally of any of this. In short, he, like so many others of the defendants, is being refused the right to defend himself.

# RED NOTES

Translation

RN: 1.4.81.

## ● AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE PARTISAN T. BIGNAMI ("GUIDO") TO THE JUDGES.

1926 In 1926 I joined the via S.Croce cell of the Communist Party. This was under the Fascist regime. Everytime that comrades were rounded up and arrested, the regime was able - via the militia, the police and the judges - to make the weaker comrades talk. If you were arrested by the militia, before handing you over to the magistrates for questioning, they took you to the barracks in via Mascarella and tortured you for several days. For several days neither your family or your lawyers had any idea where you had been taken. The identical procedure that is being used in many cases in Italy today.

1930 The hard years of repression. There were many comrades who chose the path of collaboration with the regime. These were the first "repenters" in the history of the class struggle in Italy. I remember in particular a charge that was brought against me in 1932, arising from one Bruno Trombetti, who was collaborating fully with the regime. Today this Trombetti, ex-Union official, and representative of the Communist Party, is one of the most faithful strong-arm men in the Party's stewarding apparatus.

I have been imprisoned ten times in my life.

1931 In 1931 I was the courier bringing the Party's clandestine newspapers from France to Italy. In 1932 I was Secretary of the Bologna communist youth federation. In 1932 I set up a party cell in the Weber factory, which was launched on May 1st with the distribution of clandestine leaflets denouncing the government's warmongering policies.

I was arrested - the only one of our group to be taken - on the basis of Trombetti's accusations against me. I was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment - but was then released under the amnesty. I came out of prison in 1933, and found myself sacked.

1934 I was hired at the Drusiani factory, where, on the Party's orders, I set up another cell.

1936-7 Because I was continually being arrested in Bologna, I was forced to go and look for a job in Reggio Emilia. There I joined up the the Party cell at the OMI factory. On January 6th (1936) I was arrested, and sentenced to two years probation/special control. I had to sign regularly at the police station. In this period I was running the Party cells in the Malpighi area, together with comrades Fontana and Mario Pelloni. I was working in the Tartarini/Masotti factory by this time, and had founded another Party cell. Then I opened a small workshop in Casaleccio di Reno, and joined the local resistance.

26th July 1943 I hear the news of the fall of Fascism. I close the workshop,

Red Notes: March 4th 1981.



RN: 1.4.81 (2)

and join other comrades at the head of the flood of workers who were going on a victory demonstration. After 2 or 3 days I was arrested, and sentenced to 2 years and four months imprisonment. When I came out of prison, by virtue of the amnesty that had been granted by the Government that took over from Badoglio, I took the road of clandestinity. As far as the Government was concerned, I had become a BANDIT. After a short period of work with the Calcara GAP (Partisan Action Group), the Party sent me to Spilamberto, and then on into the mountains.

1944 The Montefiorino Republic is set up. I stood in for comrade commander Osvaldo Poppi ("Davide"). Later I commanded the Fourth Carlo Scarabelli Division. After the Battle of Montefiorino (August 1944) I took over as Commissar General of the Antonio Ferrari Brigade. One of my people in that period was Leandro Monti - the father of the Mauro Monti who has now had me arrested. Later I was appointed Commissar General of the Est Giardini Brigade Group, with the responsibility for the liberation of Bologna. We passed through the war front and joined up with the forces of Commander Armando (Mario Ricci) at Lizzano in Belvedere, where I was appointed Commissar General of the Modena Division.

25th April 1945 - The Liberation.

1946 Following the charges brought against the partisans for acts of war, I am forced to flee to France. There I learn that I am accused of being responsible for the killing of a doctor in Spilamberto - the secretary of the local branch of the Fascist Party. I emigrate to Czechoslovakia, where I remain for about four years, living as a political refugee in an ex-concentration camp.

1950 I am cleared of the killing. I return to Paris, since in Italy I had lost everything - job, house, workshop. A year later my son Maurice is born.

1964 I return to Italy. I am unemployed up until 1968: because of my political record nobody was willing to employ me.

1968 I manage to get papers as a heating engineer, and am taken on by the Bologna City Council. There, in the course of trade union struggle, I and others in the same position as myself found ourselves again with a role to play. This was in the early 1970s, at the youthful age of 63, after a lifetime spent at the service of the proletariat.

By now I am a skilled worker. I graduate to the workshops. The Party had set up a group of "model workers" as an example for other workers to follow. I can honestly say that I was utterly conscientious in my work - including various jobs that were not strictly mine - while certain others, such as Marcello Mazza and his acolytes, were more concerned with making themselves careers in the Party, and let their work slide.

1977 At the Bologna Conference, called by the '77 Movement to protest against the repression, I denounce the Party leadership in the form of Zangheri and Pajetta, saying that theirs was a barefaced lie, to deny the violence that the State had perpetrated against the workers and the students - the violence that had led to the murder of comrade Francesco Lorusso.

From that moment I gave up my Party card, since I considered the Party's political line to be against the workers' interests.

1978 I have an operation for cancer of the intestine. In September my son Maurice is accused by the Communist Party's newspaper L'Unità of being a terrorist. I advise him to emigrate to France, to avoid being arrested. That moment was the last I saw of him.

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15th October 1980 I am arrested by Dr Mauro Monti - the son of the partisan. I am alleged - falsely - to have been a member of a subversive association, and of an armed band, inasmuch as I am accused of having rented a flat in Sorrento on behalf of my son. Later I am accused by the Florence judges Vigna and Chelazzi of having made explosive materials for the Prima Linea organisation. These charges arise from accusations made by two "repentant militants", Viscardi and Fagioli.

#### REGARDING THE PRESENT GOVERNING REGIME IN ITALY

At this point I think it would be worth weighing up these various points, and making some observations about the present political situation.

The Fascist regime also claimed to be democratic, in its time. But leaving aside political considerations, the facts speak for themselves:

In 1945, after 24 years of Fascism in Italy, the number of self-declared political prisoners in Italy stood at 3,000. They were called "bandits" - but the day after the Liberation they were recognised not only as political, but also as national heroes and as our liberators from oppression.

In 1980, after over 30 years of anti-Fascist "democracy", there are over 3,000 prisoners who claim the status of political prisoners. They in turn are called criminals and terrorists. The question of the recognition of their political status is now a matter of international concern. Liberation movements throughout the world are demanding this recognition, using forms and systems of struggle that I need not comment on here. One thing is certain: we are not dealing with a handful of isolated crazies, but with widespread movements which are born from the social/economic situation in which we live today. One further fact is certain: when a regime imagines that it can resolve this serious problem by overturning the very foundations of law on which it is based (viz. by the use of Special Laws, Special Prisons, police licence to kill etc), this will simply give new strength, ultimately, to the feeling of popular discontent, and therefore to an opposition which may prove to be armed and violent. Once again the regime reveals its structural inability to resolve the social and economic problems referred to above.

What else can this state expect - a state which has legalised black-mail, swindles and financial scandals (see Sindona, Caltagirone, the oil scandal, Pecorelli, construction scandals, secret arms sales, secret subcontracting deals etc etc)? What else can this state expect, when they prepare the way for pseudo political alternatives via massacres of its own citizenry (from Piazza Fontana, Milan 1969 to August 12th 1980 in Bologna)? Massacres in which the highest political leaders are openly involved, the people whom the State should be watching over. Andreotti, Rumor, Casardi, Miceli, Maletti, La Bruna - who were they really working for? And the secret services....who are they working for?

If those who oppose this State (at this point I am not concerned with the question whether they are armed or not) are defined as criminals, then how can we begin to describe those who stand at the head of this State? And when the judge finds you "guilty", what better proof can there be of your innocence than the fact that they have found you guilty?

#### REGARDING THE SO-CALLED REPENTANT MILITANTS

As I have already said, in the course of my life, and especially under the

RN: 1.4.81 (4)

Fascist regime, I have known and seen hundreds of comrades and others who, under the pressure of the torture by their inquisitors, have not only talked, but have also denounced innocent people. History repeats itself, but never in the same way. The difference today is that today, with the democratic guarantees afforded by a law specially created for the purpose, the man who "repents" becomes a new patriot, a national hero, and everything he says is taken as gospel truth.

I am convinced that this law (tn: reducing sentences for political supergrasses) is not only criminal, from a moral point of view, but can also be seen in juridical terms as an incitement to crime. Its effect is to reduce the penalty for a crime prior to the enactment of that crime. In short, it regards the crime, the killing, as a necessary sacrifice in the process of dismantling the subversive organisations. It is the law of this self-same State that prefers to let a hostage die at the hands of the Red Brigades rather than recognise the existence of a political opposition outside of the formal political institutions. I have often asked myself how much bloodshed could have been saved if the State had accepted the path of negotiation during the Moro kidnap.

#### REGARDING THE EX-COMMUNIST PARTY

In my opinion the Communist Party has the largest share of responsibility for the war-situation that has been created in our country. Because it has criminalised every form of dissent which it has not been able to draw under its own political control...to the point where they even brand as Fascists non-violent people such as the Radicals, because they are not under the Party's control. The Radicals, who, incidentally, in my opinion represent the last shred of democratic cover that this State can hope for. The present leadership of the Communist Party is the Great Party of Repenters: repentant of their opposition to the regime; repentant of their marxist roots; repentant that it was once workers who led the Party; repentant of the forms of struggle that it has used in its time (including the armed struggle); repentant of the promises it has made to the working class. Repentant, yes....but repentant in such a way that it has now become the most savage of policemen against the new opposition, the new movement of proletarian autonomy.

The comrades are right when they write: "From PCI to Peci - The History of a Tendency" (tn: Peci is the name of one of the political supergrasses).

But bitter jokes aside, I am proud to have belonged to this Party - just as I am now proud that I am no longer a member of it, because it has long since parted company with communism. Im and and remain what I have always been. Now, as then, I am a Marxist, in prison. While the likes of Mr Donat-Cattin - who has been publicly proven to have helped his son escape arrest - are free to pursue their careers.

#### REGARDING THE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS IN BOLOGNA

Today, just like before the War, those who end up in prison are not only those who openly fight the system, but also the whole area of those who are not prepared to support this State - those who, while not belonging to the armed organisations, still denounce the crimes, the scandals and the evils of this State.

But the repression does not stop here. Using techniques which are entirely South American in style, the techniques of an openly Fascist state, this Italian State kidnaps and imprisons the friends and relations of those who are on its wanted list - as a kind of blackmail. I AM IN PRISON BECAUSE I AM MAURICE'S FATHER. They have suggested that I call on my son to give himself up. They have asked me to tell where he is, or where he might be.

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And they are inventing false charges against me, to make this blackmail more plausible. Today, as before the War, and as in Chile and Uruguay, they are using the lowest, vilest of people as informers, tempting them into making false statements, with the carrot of the Fioroni Law promising remission. Worms like Viscardi who kill a comrade, calling him an informer (Waccher), and who then not only become informers in turn, but even stoop to inventing accusations because they are terrified of prison. Viscardi, the hardman with the P.38 handgun, who even stoops to informing on the doctor who saved his life when he was wounded.

The judicial proceedings being carried out in Bologna, by the man who has replaced Catalanotti as the PCI's tool within the magistracy, are the proof of what I have stated above. Mauro Monti. In due time I shall have some revelations to make on this man and the way he has openly violated laws that he is supposed to keep and apply. The comrades who have been imprisoned by this judge are inside on no evidence, save the desire of the powers-that-be to strike a blow at that area of social insubordination which in Bologna, obviously, is directed principally against the Communist Party (tn: as the regional governing party).

Some have already been released: Brunetti, Andriani, Rocco Fresca. These are the first proofs that the "repenters" are telling lies. Brunetti too, who has been re-arrested on the basis of the same accusations, will shortly have to be released again. Gabriella dalla Cè, Allessandra Marchi, Nicoletta Mazzetti, Carlo Catellani, Ciano, Paolo Azzaroni, Valerio Guizzardi, Tiziano Cardetti, Gabriella Gabrielli, Wainer Burani, will also be released - in dribs and drabs, as always happens. Because the commotion and furore must always be big when they are arrested - and tiny when they are released. And Judge Monti, the son of my old partisan comrade Leandro, will inevitably finally come to understand the future that lies in store for him, as for the likes of Catalanotti and Calogero: first the laurels, and then the nettles. From the top of the tip to the bottom of the heap.

Perhaps I shall be the only one who will not live to see how all this will turn out. It is possible that my illness will take its toll before sentence has been passed in my own case - and before sentence is passed by the revolutionary tribunal of the people.

■ Signed:  
The Partisan Torquato Bignami ("Guido")  
S.Giovanni in Monte Prison,  
Bologna.

29th December 1980

"I AM COMING TO THE END OF MY LIFE KNOWING THAT NOBODY HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO DESTROY MY DIGNITY AS A MAN AND AS A COMMUNIST. AND THAT - FOR YOU, MONTI, AND VIGNA, AND CHELAZZI, AND THE OTHERS WHO WILL JOIN YOU - WILL BE A FAR MORE TERRIBLE CANCER THAN THE CANCER WHICH IS NOW DESTROYING ME."

Note: At the age of 76, Torquato Bignami has been arrested on the basis of informers' allegations in Bologna. The State demands that he reveals the whereabouts of his son, who is on the run. In this leaflet, published by Radio Carolina, Bologna, he proudly affirms his record as a communist and partisan.



# DOSSIER A PRISONER ON HUNGER STRIKE

## THE STORY OF A POLITICAL PRISONER WHO IS NOW ON HUNGER STRIKE

□ This article describes how, once imprisoned, the prisoners find new charges mounted against them.

In 1969, in Turin, MARIO DALMAVIVA, who worked for an advertising agency, coined the slogan 'Lotta Continua' ('The Struggle Goes On'/'Fight On'), a slogan which was to become the signature on the joint leaflets put out by the FIAT workers and the students, and which, together with 'We are all shop stewards now' remains part of the folklore of Italy's Hot Autumn of 1969-70.

On April 7th 1979, 10 years later, whilst attending an exhibition at an art gallery, Mario Dalmaviva was arrested. In Padova there is a magistrate, Pietro Calogero, who has accused him of being a leader of the Red Brigades. Mario Dalmaviva's political record stops at those struggles at FIAT in 1969-70, which he, a "white collar proletarian", had made his own with his extraordinary perceptiveness and intelligence.

### Prosecuting Potere Operaio

Later there was his experience with the journal *La Classe*. Then, after the summer of '69, the birth of Potere Operaio. There is also the memory of the Rosolina split, Toni Negri leaving the group in the summer of 1973, and the closure of the paper at the beginning of 1974, leading to the dissolution of the group. This disillusionment was followed by the years dedicated to his personal affairs and the reconstruction of his career (Dalmaviva opened an advertising agency; thenceforth his role can only be understood separately, isolated from the old social solidarity).

In the hands and the rulebooks of the magistrates who imprisoned him, his political history has been transformed into a proof of guilt. During his first interrogation (12th April 1979) he was accused of having participated at the Rosolina Conference, where, claims Judge Calogero, acts of violence were planned, some of which were later to be put into effect by the Red Brigades. But above all, claims Calogero, after the "apparent dissolution" of Potere Operaio, Dalmaviva continued to play a militant role in the "unchanged leadership of the organisation". An organisation which, the magistrates obsessively repeat, had played-acted its dissolution in order to develop its clandestine activity. Even the Rosolina split, which everyone involved recalls as particularly painful and violent, was, according to Calogero, just part of the "scene-setting", acted out to permit an underground reconciliation. One of the witnesses held by the prosecution to be fundamental is one Romito, an ex-Potere Operaio militant who later passed

into the PCI. This witness, however, confines himself to describing Dalmaviva as "a leader" of the group.

In the months following Dalmaviva's arrest, he did not undergo further interrogation. In the meantime, the enquiry was transferred to Rome, a real piece of 'bag-snatching' of judicial competence by Gallucci, who challenged Negri with the most serious crime — the assassination of Moro — and dragged 7 others of the arrested comrades behind him to Rome. A hunger strike at Rebibbia Prison finally obtained a further interrogation for Dalmaviva on 15th May. Gallucci's



accusations were identical to those of the Padovan judge.

Recordings of a speech by Dalmaviva at a Potere Operaio conference in Rome in 1971, and notes taken at the time by Toni Negri, were the major exhibits, from which it turned out that during some meetings Dalmaviva had uttered such phrases as "It is necessary to privilege mass violence over models of conflict", or "The first knot to be untied is that of the relationship between the party and the mass levels of autonomy". Witnesses whose names and accusations are kept secret are continually cited. Dalmaviva is transferred from Rebibbia to Asinara Prison, a move which leads to a chain reaction of increasingly serious charges against him.

### The Asinara Revolt

In the meantime, on 7th July, the prosecuting judge Gallucci puts out a new warrant against the accused Negri, Scalone, Vesce, Ferrari Bravo, Zagato, Dalmaviva, Piperno and Pace. For the first time they are charged with insurrection, and the accusation of leadership of the Red Brigades is dropped. The accusation is inconsistent, and is challenged from various directions. But for Dalmaviva the most dramatic episode starts at Asinara, where the prison revolt of 2nd October was, by chance, to find him.

This revolt cost him a new charge — of attempted multiple homicide against a handful of prison warders who had been taken hostage by those involved in the revolt. "I never once moved from my

cell," he was to tell the magistrates interrogating him. "When I saw pieces of the ceiling falling down in my cell — he had previously heard shouting and an explosion — I showed my unequivocal intention to have nothing to do with the revolt. (My lawyer had just presented a petition for my release). The only refuge I could think of was to shut myself up in the lavatory".

### Added Years of Imprisonment

When the revolt is over, Dalmaviva is alone in his cell, and from there he watches the detainees passing by. He hears the warders shouting, he sees the mutineers being cleared out. 50 warrants result from that day's events, including one for Dalmaviva. He is transferred to Trabucato Prison, halfway between Fornelli and Cala d'Oliva. He is kept in isolation, with his cell lights kept burning until 1.00am. The prison governor, Cardullo, hands him over to the section warders with the advice that, at the first sign of insubordination, they should "beat him up first, and then refer the matter to the Governor".

Dalmaviva asks for his family to be notified of his transfer. Cardullo answers, threatening to transfer him "to where only the vultures go" if he opens his mouth again.

This is the deepest moment of psychological collapse for Dalmaviva, the collapse of someone who has been through a bombardment of which he was the helpless victim, who can only become more and more helpless, more and more squeezed-under by the multiplication of arrest warrants, and by the multiplication of years of imprisonment.

From here Mario Dalmaviva was transferred to the "super prison" of Palmi, and then on to Termini Imerese, and finally to Fossombrone. In May 1980 his final appeal for provisional liberty (bail) was quashed. Even the words of Patrizio Peci, "column chief" in the Turin Red Brigades — the city in which Dalmaviva had lived over the last 10 years, and where, in the full light of day, he had carried on his political activity — are to no avail: "Regarding Dalmaviva," says Peci, "I have nothing to say."

■ Translated from *Il Manifesto*  
18th January 1981

● Note: Dalmaviva's statement (opposite) highlights the problems of the *autonomi* in prison: that the prison system must be fought and resisted, but at the same time their forms of resistance must keep a political distance from the military/terrorist approach of the Red Brigades. Dalmaviva eventually won his transfer.

## HUNGER STRIKE BY POLITICAL DETAINEE

I am a comrade arrested and imprisoned at a time when I had abandoned all political activism for years. Jailed in a Special Prison, facing a charge which has never been proved. I call myself a communist, without qualifying adjectives, and without a party. A communist because of my class choice; because of the reference points and methods which inform my political judgement; and by virtue of my standards of ethical behaviour.

A kind of "stateless" communist: the sort of figure who, I believe, makes up the majority of the movement in Italy today. One of those who, in order to place themselves politically, have to use the prefix 'ex'. I'm ex-Potere Operaio. During the 21 months of "preventive imprisonment" now behind me, with great care and effort I have been rebuilding a political perspective. I've found a demarcation line between solidarity and defence of my (in many ways uncertain) political identity.

That is the starting point from which I take up my position on the question which today represents the political watershed. Certainly it is schematic and crude, but it is unambiguous — because I believe that, today, ambiguity can only silence our voices, inside and outside prison.

In short, I am both outside of and opposed to the armed party. I am, and always have been, opposed, because I believe that the politically motivated subjective exercise of violence, if it is not to be a simple reflection of class behaviour

already present in the social confrontation, needs legitimisation. Not the formal legitimisation of the State, or of legislation, which is 'legitimated' by the ferocity of its adversary, but a class legitimisation. Such a class legitimisation comes about when a credible political project of "changing the status quo" meets with, roots itself in, and is recognised by, a significant element of the class. My judgement, and one that I stand by, is that this legitimisation has not been given.

It doesn't seem possible. On the one hand the magistrates have accused me, together with the other comrades of April 7th, of having been at the head of the insurrectionary project. They then prevent us from defending ourselves, and find us guilty without bringing us to trial. Time and the ferocity of the prison mechanism are being used to resolve the contradictions opened with the "April 7th affair".

On the other hand, the initiatives of the Red Brigades, "dialectically linked" with a considerable number of the political prisoners in the Special Prisons, forces the tiny grouping of which I am a member to choose. Either we give in, muttering ever-more feebly "I'm nothing to do with this". Or we support, *de facto* and despite the increasingly clear distinction between us, the Red Brigade initiative.

For me Asinara has posed a clear test, in the same way that Trani has for other comrades. Even the terrain of the struggle against prison conditions, in which I am and intend to continue to be active, turns out to be prohibited ground for those such as myself who conceive its direction and aims as lying outside of

the logic of militarism.

I believe that only a real break with this tragic game of war, an accumulation of social power expressed politically, can locate the political — and not militaristic — solutions to the very thorny question of the political detainees, in order to solve the question of the use of prisons, the "special laws" and the use of the legal system as a means of political and social repression.

Today the absence of a credible external voice speaking up on these issues, and the minority nature of my position, have forced me to an individual form of struggle. Fully aware of the possible consequences, I have begun a hunger strike to the death.

My aims are the following:

1. To reaffirm that I am wholly innocent of the accusations brought against me. And to demand the right — both for myself and for all the other comrades arrested on April 7th — to demonstrate this publicly. In other words, we demand to be brought to trial immediately.
2. Having affirmed my political identity, I affirm my intention to defend it. I recognise myself to be in a collective situation, but I believe it to be impossible to do this within the confines of the Special Prisons. For this reason, in order to guarantee the possibility of my existing politically, I aim to obtain my transfer to a normal prison. And I intend to do this through a political struggle.

Mario Dalmaviva  
Fossombrone Prison.

□ Translated from *Il Manifesto*  
14th January 1981



# DOSSIER 'AMNESTY' ON ITALY

## ● THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ITALY

The April 3rd 1981 edition of the Italian newspaper La Repubblica carried a report of a meeting of the Italian section of Amnesty International. That report included the following:

"A red-bearded Dutchman, Dowe Korff...the head of the European section of Amnesty's research department, dealt with the question of Italy. He said: 'We are very concerned at the possibility that the penal system in Italy may be being subjected to abuses of a political nature.'"

Amnesty's report devotes 4 pages to Italy.

'In Italy,' said Korff, 'there are problems concerning human rights, and we are trying to analyse them. There are laws which are formulated in a vague manner, which can be used in order to eliminate political dissent.'

'The majority of these laws refer to acts of political violence, but they have resulted in the imprisonment of people who appear to have very slender links with violent organisations. This is the case for a number of the April 7th defendants.' The names of Carmela di Rocco, Massino Tranonte, Sandro Serafini and Alisa del Re were cited. Later, in a discussion of maximum security prisons (Amnesty has been conducting an inquiry into the effects of these prisons, in West Germany) the names of Mario Dalnaviva and Luciano Ferrari Bravo cropped up.

The names of Ivo Gallinberti and Alberto Galeotto also occur in the report. Amnesty has asked for both to be released from jail, on grounds of ill-health. They had asked also for the release of Alberto Buonoconto, arrested as a member of the NAP, who had become sick in prison. He was finally released. A few months later he committed suicide.

'I am not saying that there is absolutely no evidence against these defendants', said Korff, 'since, in such an event we would have considered them as "prisoners of conscience" and would have adopted them. However, there should be an obligation to provide public opinion with concrete evidence, and a fair trial within a reasonable period.'

Translated from  
La Repubblica  
April 3rd 1981

□ Italy '79 Committee  
April 6th 1981

# RED NOTES

On April 3-4th 1981 a Conference was called in London, called "After Marx, April". It was planned as an act of solidarity, on the second anniversary of the "April 7th" arrests in 1979. It followed on from active campaigning by the "Italy '79 Committee" in support of the prisoners. It was also designed to introduce and promote debates on working class "autonomy" or "autonomies" - ideas that have been slow to take a foothold in Britain, but have an international dimension - especially in Italy, Germany, Switzerland and France.

The event was divided into 4 main sections: on Class Composition and the Restructuring of Capital; Criminalisation in Italy and Europe; Post-political Politics - Needs, Desires, Feminism and Sexuality and Practical Support for Italian Political Prisoners.

Contributors to the event included Franco Berardi ('Bifo') of Radio Alice, speaking of the emergence of "new social subjects" in Europe, and their autonomy in regard to capitalist institutions and culture; Felix Guattari on the subversiveness of desires when organised collectively in an anti-capitalist sense; John Merrington (Italy '79 Committee) on the State's attack on the autonomia in Italy. There were also speakers who covered the situation of the Padova women's movement, the West Berlin squatters movement, and the movement in Britain.

Felix Guattari, representing the Paris April 7th Committee, presented an appeal document, and outlined their objective of persuading the Russell Tribunal on Human Rights to adopt the case of Italy. (See p.44) The case of Mario Ferrandi was also raised.

The discussion ranged far and wide during the 2-day event. Attendance at the meeting provided a good base for future solidarity initiatives, and these are now in the process of being planned.

One of the contributors to the Conference was a comrade from Lotta Continua per il Comunismo. Below we reprint the text of the speech he made, dealing with the reorganisation of prison and punishment in Italy.

## COMRADES,

Perhaps I could best start with a joke. I have a proposal: why don't we change the title of this event? Instead of "After Marx, April" we should call it "After Marx, Jail"...

In short, I aim to speak of problems, of difficult and bitter experiences, such as the criminalisation, the imprisonment, and the transformation of the ruling power system, that apply in Italy today. This is the contribution that I want to make, in the name of our organisation, in the course of our debate.

For many - too many - comrades in Italy and in other countries of Europe, "April" has not yet come. They are still enduring a hard and cold winter of segregation, separation and persecution.

Twenty days ago in Bologna there was a strong and beautiful demonstration in memory of Francesco Lorusso, a comrade killed in March 1977 by the Carabinieri (a special police of the Italian state). In that demonstration, everyone was shouting a particular slogan: "Comrades out of the prisons, because Spring is coming". In Italian the slogan has a very beautiful ring. This slogan serves to remind us that we must intensify our effort via debate and political activity, for the liberation of all the comrades, of all the political prisoners and also of the whole imprisoned proletariat.

This discussion and activity cannot be confined within boundaries of single nations and countries. Nations are like prisons, where proletarians and revolutionaries are divided, segregated and shut up - especially today.

Information, debate and propaganda: these of course are really necessary. But we need to develop a particular understanding of what the prison is today. In short, the nature of the general transformation of Power we are experiencing today.

I would like to begin with some information, and an assessment of the situation in Italy today.

1) It is perfectly understandable that ten glorious years of continuous class struggle in Italy, with the fear it has produced within bourgeois Power and the State, have also produced a hard, ruthless and enormous repression. More than 3,000 political prisoners are today locked away in Italian prisons. This is the fact from which we have to begin. The class character of this repression is clear: anyone who has fought in the factories, in the schools, the metropolitan areas etc, is persecuted. Police operation after police operation: a whole breed of revolutionaries has been criminalised.

The purpose of this general operation, however, is not only for the State to take revenge for the past. They don't

only want to hit whoever is guilty of all the various forms of struggles, be they peaceful or violent. The State is pursuing two important tasks. The first is to remove, for the younger militants and proletarians, what we call the "historical memory" of all the struggles, by removing the direct and concrete protagonists of those struggles, especially those who led them. The second and perhaps more important is to experiment with a new and "reformed" prison-institution, new shapes and kinds of social discipline to be applied to the whole population.

It is necessary to dwell on these two points a little, because they are very important.

2) The "historical memory" they want to erase. The State of the 1980s, much more authoritarian and disciplinarian than in the past, acts in two ways. On the one hand we have the fact that the militants are being isolated in the prisons (in Italy now you can stay for two, three, four years, locked away in a prison waiting for your trial and sentence, even though Italian law says that you are not "guilty" before judgement). On the other hand, the State makes every effort to create a false and damaging picture of the struggles from 1968 till now. With this second purpose, the State (but also the media and the whole party-system) wants to make people believe that everything that happened in that period has been only violence, common crimes, bloody terrorism, all without a reason. The revolutionary process is set up for judgement, like other times in history, to demonstrate not only that it was "mistaken", but also that it was "dirty", full of "crimes", opposed to the "peaceful interests" of millions of proletarians.

All the enormous imagination, passion, desires and needs of our ongoing struggle for liberation is portrayed as some sort of craziness. They don't want the younger generation to continue, perhaps in better ways, the experiences of their elders. With this in mind, there is much political and cultural meaning in the construction of a special type of person in these days: the "repenter", the *pentito*. We call this figure the *pentito di Stato*, the "State-repenter", the "Crown witness". People who, when imprisoned, completely sell out their own history, themselves, their comrades and friends, because they expect to gain some advantage from this sell-out. They buy their own freedom by selling the freedom of the others. This figure, the *pentito*, is a direct creation of the State. It is not accidental that a few days ago the Italian Parliament promulgated a new law to permit favoured treatment of "repenters".

Of course, we don't consider as "pentiti" all those forced to undergo special and difficult conditions, for example



torture or sensory deprivation, and who end up objectively helping the State. You're not a "repenter" simply by virtue of losing control of your mind and body. In the past year in Italy we have seen a real collapse of many comrades, as an effect of isolation, and the loss of all relation with the outside world. We must also point out that the Italian State (like the German, French British, etc) is developing new scientific means for the control and destruction of revolutionaries.

At this point we should add that there has also been a cultural phenomenon that has aided this State process of criminalisation: the mentality of "riflusso", depression, the sense that things are slipping away, an ideology of the crisis of revolutionary perspectives — all this has become very widespread recently. It has helped the State repression, objectively, because it has promoted a counterposition (sometimes a philosophical counterposition) between people's individual self-interest and political activity (albeit this counterposition was justified in the face of the old and alienating kind of political activity). For this reason we think that we also need a political and cultural struggle against this cultivation of depression, this *riflusso*, as well as against the destruction of the "historical memory" of the struggles.

3) *Prison as a laboratory of social discipline.* In the Italian movement, it is clearer now that the 1980s are really very different from the 1970s. The form of power has changed and is still changing. The old shape of the State is transforming in a new shape. This is also for international reasons that I won't go into here.

We cannot respond to these transformations in the old ways. So it is necessary to understand the present reality of the Prison, especially what is *new* in this process.

I have said that the State is not only seeking a revenge. I have said that it wants to erase the "historical memory" of the struggles. It seeks a new settlement for the 1980s: stable, safe and disciplined. This is the point. Well: the Prison as institution (a total institution) is being shaped specifically to this end.

It becomes more than ever a test-bed, a laboratory, and it must offer "useful" discoveries applicable to all other social structures.

### The Restructuring of "Prison"

The Italian example is crucial to understand. While the number of political prisoners is growing continuously, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total, the prison population has shrunk considerably in recent years. What does this mean? The growth of the "politically guilty" has a clear political meaning which I have already outlined. The diminution in the numbers of the imprisoned proletariat, however, must be explained in a different way. It does not mean, of course, less State-punishment for the so-called "guilty". It means only that the State is able to punish more "efficiently" (more efficiently from its own point of view), with a different strategy, and in a more scientific way. This situation shows the emerging role of what we shall call the *diffusion of imprisonment* within society as a whole. This phenomenon is widespread and concrete. Let me describe it briefly.

First of all, there has been a change in the relation, the traditional liberal relation, between *crime* and *punishment*. Law, which in a traditional liberal system claims some relationship between "crime" and "punishment" ("the punishment to fit the crime") now changes its function. The repression which it must guarantee from the point of view of the established social order, now follows a qualitatively new strategy. For example: the overall quantity of so-called crimes in society (crimes of every kind) grows, but the State distinguishes more precisely between small and big "crimes", from the point of view of its interest, and responds in a different way to each. Many small crimes are now being written off, while others are being penalised more heavily. The State, for this purpose, constructs a *new and unwritten hierarchy of crimes and punishments*. At the top of the list is the crime of *political and social subversion*. For this reason, in Italy, there is a growing phenomenon of *garantismo* — a civil rights position, a democratic and reformist protest against the dis-

appearance of legal guarantees.

So, while punishments are diminishing in quantity, (especially in the context of the Prison institution), they extend their function to the whole society. Small crimes, even in the event that they are not completely written off, *are administered by different systems in the body of society*. In Italy we have, for example, the "confinement" (internment) of "dangerous people", we have part-time prisons, "controlled freedom", etc. Thousands in Italy are labelled the "guilty" people in this situation.

It is necessary to remember this fact, because criminalisation cannot be understood only as "more repression": it is a wide strategy, with many tactics, and already a direct extension into society. The new hierarchy of punishments I have described has the purpose of division and control. Its principle is: divide and rule. The State expects to bring about different behaviours with these different treatments, and especially the impossibility for those punished to unite and fight together. Of course this system is effective only under conditions of a wider social control and supervision. We can say: a wider control and supervision with the aim of a reduced but more effective punishment.

It is, however, necessary to say that *control* and *supervision* in this "diffusion of imprisonment" is not only a State operation. We think that a new shape of bourgeois state is growing up in Italy and in all of Europe: what we call the "Social State". It is not only the superstructure of an economic base, as in the traditional Marxist analysis, but is a State deeply penetrated throughout society. So many functions of the traditional State are worked out directly within the wider society as a whole. Direct control and supervision, for example. Everybody lives in a condition in which every action seems to be observed, controlled and supervised, because the disciplinary character of the capitalist mode of production now requires a deep-rooted molecularisation of life, a molecularisation which is a pre-condition for this control.

*Prison has entered completely into society*, within a whole system of "enclosures", even if this does not imply that struggle becomes entirely impossible. You can observe this process in every part of the society. Look at the transformation, for example, of the Taylorist system of production: the wide replacement of the assembly line with so-called "islands" of production. Look at the use of microelectronics inside and outside direct production. Once upon a time the Prisons were modelled on the factories. Now it seems that factories have their models in the Prison. We have a "social" prison — that is, "prisons without walls". This is the starting point also, for an understanding of the "prisons with walls".

### The Prisoners Fight Back

In Italy there are 260 "prisons with walls": large, medium and small. A whole system of division. In Italy this system is known as the *circuit of differentiation*. Moreover, prisons are divided into various kinds: "special" prisons for the "very dangerous" (especially for comrades), "normal" men's and women's prisons, etc. The "special" prisons were built in 1974, for the purpose of the complete segregation of many political prisoners charged with terrorism. In these terrible prisons, which the whole of the imprisoned proletariat wants to see abolished, it is normal to suffer sensory deprivation and also physical torture. Their (real) function is certainly not what bourgeois law calls the "re-education of prisoners", but rather the *destruction of the prisoner*. Their "model" is the German prison of Stammheim, where, as you surely know, there have been many so-called "suicides". Some of the Italian prisons are even worse than the German ones. There are also "special" sections in the "normal" prisons, in every prison, because the division must be kept deep-rooted and articulated.

It is very important to point out the efforts being made by all prison administrations in separating the "common" prisoners from the "political" prisoners. From this point of view, in order to oppose this situation, we must consider every prisoner a political one, even those who don't have a liberation outlook. On this problem there has been a long

and serious debate in Italy, a discussion not yet resolved.

Regarding the "prison with walls", there are two things to be added. The first is that the disciplinary power of the prison is stricter and more wide-ranging than the law sets out: law stops at the door of the prison, because what happens inside is really a different matter. The second is the particular and special nature of jail as a mechanism. If you are put in a jail for a "crime", you soon *accumulate* other "crimes". This is not only true in the commonplace sense that "prison creates criminals", but also in the sense of a continuous growth of your punishment. If you are given a 3-4 year sentence, it's really difficult to get out before 5-6 years. This is not a joke. Everything you do — especially if you organise with others — counts as a crime for which you must pay. *For this reason many prisoners try to escape from prison, even if they only have short sentences to serve.*

4) I want to add something now about the political debate in Italy, especially regarding the struggles of the prisoners. Not a great deal, because it is not easy to give a "history" of the prisoners' struggle.

These struggles within the prison have provided the basis of the continuous restructuring of the prison-institution, even when there is not a direct intervention by Parliament and Government.

Prisoners fight for their immediate needs: survival, health, free association etc. But they also fight for political demands to break the separation between "inside" and "outside", and to assert their own identity as political subjects.

About the first point, as regards their living conditions and needs. These are important things, and are assuredly not "reformist" things, because if they don't defend their lives, it is impossible to talk about the destruction of the "total institution". We think that it is a mistake for people (including those in the prisons) to distinguish "small reformist struggles" from "big revolutionary struggles". It is not possible to divide a "minimum" from a "maximum" programme. Against the "social imprisonment" there are two conditions for victory — conditions that entail a long-term struggle: a wide and active mobilisation outside; and the consciousness and organisation of the prisoners inside.

Regarding the second point: it is very important that the prisoners fight for *general* goals that are important for everybody. It is not possible to discuss here all the various different political "lines" within the prisoners' movement in Italy. Regarding revolutionary strategies we are in a situation of open debate among revolutionaries, with strong disagreements among them. However, before concluding, we would like to say one thing: the liberation of all the prisoners requires a political outlook that demands the abolition of the whole prison-institution. The communist process, as opposed to the traditional historical experiences of socialism, is for a society without prisons.

We say: No more prisons! It is absurd, mistaken, or worse, to believe in "socialist prisons" or "people's prisons".

The (still embryonic) experience we are creating in Italy, still in development, is for a continuous revolutionary process. For this we ask for a contribution, both in theory and in practice, of all comrades, of many countries.

To the imprisoned comrades, to all the segregated sisters and brothers, for their and our liberation!

■ Lotta Continua per il Comunismo

London

April 3rd 1981.

● In Europe the *Italian political refugee* is now becoming a familiar figure. Earlier this year there was talk that the French Government would consider giving political asylum to Italian militants. Perhaps with Mitterand's new socialist Government this will become a reality, and we shall see one EEC country offering shelter to the political dissidents of another.



Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa: da Genova alla Francia, un colpo durissimo alle Brigate rosse.



L'ultimo garantista dopo l'approvazione delle leggi cosiddette antiterroriste.

## ITALY 1981

- ITALY 1981 -

- 3,500 POLITICAL PRISONERS -
- WHY, AND WHAT CAN BE DONE? -

Meeting: Small Hall,  
Conway Hall,  
Red Lion Square,  
London WC 1

Monday 6th April

7.30pm

On the second anniversary of the "7th April" arrests in Italy, a solidarity meeting/press conference is being called in London to publicise the plight of some 3,500 men and women being held without trial, on political charges, in jails in Italy.

Speakers from Italy, France, the USA and Britain will outline the charges being brought, the nature of conditions in prison, and the steps being taken to organise an international campaign of support.

An illustration of the gravity of the situation: many of the Autonomy militants are being charged with "insurrection against the powers of the State". This charge was instituted under Fascism and was never repealed. Communist Party magistrates have been to the fore in this persecution of the Autonomy and the Left. A new social and political structure of repression is being experimented.

We are particularly concerned to break the wall of silence that has descended on these matters in Britain. In short, the largest revolutionary communist movement that the West has seen in many decades is being destroyed, piecemeal, under our noses. And the British press - both Right and Left - stays silent.

As an example: In October 1980 two Italians were arrested in London. A passing note in the "Guardian" identified them as Fascists wanted for the Bologna bombing. Then....silence....until March 26th....when a London court heard the case for these people to be extradited. The extradition - for political crimes - was granted. And not one single word was heard in the Press, radio or TV. A comparison might be made between this Star Chamber approach, and the broad-based movement of protest that accompanied the Italian Government's attempts to extradite F.Piperno and L.Pace from France in 1980, or the campaign organised in this country in support of Astrid Proll.

We are sending you this Announcement in the hopes that your publication might see fit to cover the Meeting, this Monday.

\*\*\* We would also draw your attention to the fact that a conference is being held in London this weekend - "After Marx, April" - which will be looking at the development of autonomous movements and political repression in Italy and in Europe as a whole.

The Italy '79 Committee  
March 31st 1981

# DOSSIER END THE PRESS BLACKOUT

Anyone who has followed the fortunes of the mass Left movement in Italy is aware that a tragedy is taking place. That movement is being destroyed by imprisonment and judicial repression. And in the English-speaking world we are subjected to a systematic Press blackout regarding these developments.

The Press blackout is such that even people who should know better (and who have an active concern for Italian politics) have asked us questions like: "Is Toni Negri still in jail?"

Let us be clear: this ignorance arises only from the fact that the newspapers of both Left and Right are systematically censoring Italian news.

One example: while the Polish workers' struggle merited whole pages of analysis and comment in the British Press, the historic struggle of the FIAT workers in September 1980 warranted only one or two column inches.

Another example is the case of MARIO FERRANDI:

### Extradition Proceedings against an Italian in London

In November 1980 the Guardian newspaper informed us that 2 Italians had been arrested in London, in connection (it said) with the Fascist bombings in Bologna. Then... silence... until March 21st 1981... when a London magistrate heard the case presented by the Italian Government for these people to be extradited. The extradition order, for political crimes in Italy, was granted by the magistrate. It then turned out that the prisoners were not Fascist at all, but were of the Left.

Marco Campari, and Mario Ferrandi (known as "The Rabbit", and alleged member of Prima Linea) are now awaiting their appeal against extradition, which is due to take place this week (April 9th, we believe).

The extraordinary thing is that Ferrandi has been kept in a top security wing of Brixton Prison for six months, under restricted visiting conditions, awaiting extradition. During all that time his case did not feature in the media. And the day after the extradition order was granted, not one British newspaper, of Right or Left, saw fit to publish the fact.

An unfavourable comparison can be made between this trial-in-silence and the broad-based movement of protest that accompanied the Italian Government's attempts to extradite Franco Piperno and Lanfranco Pace from France (again, on political charges), or the campaign organised in this country in support of Astrid Proll.

The charges against Ferrandi were outlined in Corriere della Sera of March 25th. They include the wounding of a personnel manager and a general manager of two firms, the killing of a drug dealer,

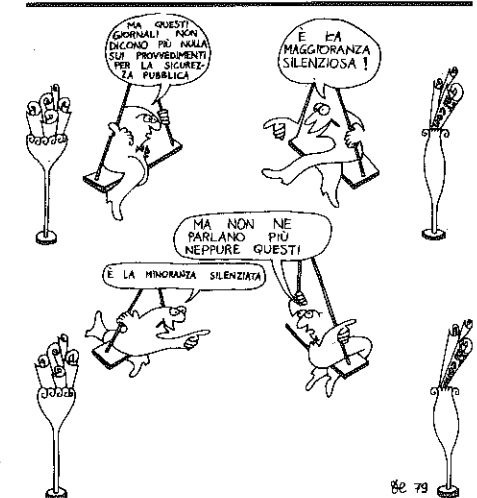
the killing of a policeman during a demonstration, an arson attempt against a prison administration office and an armed robbery. Ferrandi points out, first, that the charges against him are based on the evidence of a political supergrass ("pentito"), and second, that all the alleged crimes have quite clear political connotations. The charges against him are political, and thus in contravention of the extradition treaty (1873) between Italy and Britain.

Ferrandi's appeal against extradition will be heard this week.

Leaflet published by  
Italy '79 Committee: April 6th 1981

### Teeth & Bones

The above-mentioned censorship exists partly at an official level. It is now a policy of the Italian media to censor out of existence the armed groups and terrorists. Since, for many of them, terrorism and the extra-Parliamentary Left are one and the same thing, that blanket censorship tends to cover the attack on that



### THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS:

"But why do these papers no longer say anything about the Government's law and order measures?"

"They're the silent majority."

"But these ones don't say anything either."

"They're the silenced minority"

Lotta Continua December 1979

broad-based Left movement as well. In the same way that the British media attempt to censor the IRA and the Irish struggle out of existence.

The censorship also exists informally. For example, you might think that the Guardian newspaper might make good its claims to liberalism by publicising what happens in Italy (the repression, the destruction of this movement). But the Guardian newspaper reporting has been even more despicable than those who have simply ignored Italy. The Guardian, in the shape of correspondent George Armstrong, systematically trivialises Italy.

Armstrong did one honest thing, way back in 1979. He published an article just after the April 7th arrests, strongly

suggesting (as has been subsequently proven) that the "Red Brigade" charges were a fit-up. Since that time he has dropped the affair like a hot potato. And his articles now are like a modern-day version of the aristocratic Grand Tour: for him Italy is picturesque, comical, eccentric, artistic and, of course, basically bourgeois. As an example: the count who rings the bell of his palazzo every time he fornicates with his mistress, in order to upset his estranged wife who lives nearby. Or the burning issue of whether the bones of Victor Emmanuel III and his wife should be laid to rest in Rome.

Armstrong lives in Italy. He has contacts among radicals. He knows what is happening to the Left movement. But he chooses not to write about it. One of the most disgusting instances was in March 1981: Armstrong had gone to Padova on the self-same day that Judge Calogero re-arrested 5 comrades from Padova in circumstances that were scandalous and a considerable blow to the movement. His article that day consisted of a minute examination and dissertation on the exhumed remains of Saint Anthony - all couched in folklore and comic nuance. Would this man have served similar fare from Chile, or El Salvador, or Argentina?

### Goodbye George Armstrong

Unfortunately Armstrong's precision-reporting in the matter of counting St Anthony's teeth seems not to apply on the occasions when he deals in political matters. An example: shortly before the release of Judge D'Urso by the Red Brigades in early 1981, the Communist Party organised - according to Armstrong - "a large rally" against terrorism in Rome. It is only when one reads Rome's daily paper *Il Messaggero* that one gets the true picture of what happened. Only 2,000 people turned up for what had been planned as a "historic protest". The whole thing broke up after about 20 minutes and a rather embarrassing contribution of a single speaker. This is what in Italy is commonly called a "fiasco" - a big flop.

Even the *Times* newspaper, which regales us with the society witterings of their salon-correspondent Peter Nichols, recognises Italy as "the laboratory of Europe", in social terms. So why does the *Guardian* insist on feeding its readers this diet of condescending paternalism?

The *Guardian* could do worse than sack George Armstrong and replace him with a responsible journalist. But the *Guardian* is only one among many. The fact is that a constant political pressure needs to be applied on newspapers of both liberal and Left persuasion (and here we include the revolutionary Left) to ensure that this Press blackout is lifted.

There is too much at stake in Italy for this "laboratory of Europe" to be ignored.



# RED NOTES

## Translation

### ● THE CREATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE APRIL 7th DEFENDANTS

Following the Seminar held on 'Marx Beyond Marx' (at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 6-7th June 1980), a meeting was called for the participants to discuss in more detail the juridical and political aspects of the "Negri Affair".

A number of initiatives and positions have already been taken in France following the arrests of April 7th 1979, the extradition of Piperno and Pace, and the enactment in Italy of particularly repressive laws (viz. the Decree of 15th December 1979) in the areas of civil liberties and the right to legal defence. These initiatives laid the ground for a further initiative which has arisen from that Seminar.

Given the deeply disturbing nature of this "judicial process", and given the absurd position of Negri and the others who have been imprisoned, or are wanted, post-April 7th and December 21st 1979, now that the principle charges in the "Negri affair" have been dropped (i.e. the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro), the participants in the Seminar have decided to alert international opinion to this state of affairs.

They have decided to set up a committee. The aims of this committee are as follows:

1. To obtain the immediate release from prison of the April 7th and December 21st defendants, together with a guarantee, after these 14 months of imprisonment since the first arrests, that the charges that still hang over them should be brought to trial as soon as possible - or, if evidence to support them cannot be provided, that they be dropped.

2. To achieve this, the Committee intends to provide more information on the judicial, political and prison situation in Italy, as well as its ramifications at the European level in terms of extradition etc.

The Committee will launch an international appeal, on the basis of numerous international initiatives that have already been developed in France, Britain, Germany, Spain, Holland, Japan, Canada, Australia and the USA.

The Committee will collect and distribute information aimed at illuminating international opinion on one of the particularly emblematic aspects of the workings of the judicial machine in Western Europe.

The Committee will take all possible steps in this direction, by approaching groups, organisations, parties and authorities, particularly in Italy and in Europe. It will undertake political, artistic and fund-raising activities in order to contribute to the eventual release from prison of Negri and his comrades.

International Committee for the  
Liberation of the April 7th Defendants.

# RED NOTES

## Document

### ● INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF PRISONERS

At the Press Conference "Italy 1981" called by the Italy '79 Committee, the following Press Notice was read aloud and distributed by a member of the audience.

#### PRESS NOTICE

While there are now some 3,500 members of autonomous and urban guerrilla groups imprisoned in Italy, the situation in other European countries is very similar. Political prisoners mainly in Spain, Turkey, West Germany, England and Northern Ireland are kept under conditions aimed to crush their political identity. The policy of criminalisation is opposed most fiercely by political prisoners in Northern Ireland and West Germany. Since the beginning of March 4 Republican prisoners are on hunger-strike for the demand of political status at the Maze prison in Long Kesh. In West Germany 26 prisoners of the Red Army Fraction are now in their 10th week of a hunger strike that began February 2nd 1981. In their hunger strike declaration they express their solidarity with the political prisoners of the IRA, INLA, Brigade Rosse and those who are carrying on with their struggle inside the prisons.

The demands of the prisoners of the RAF on hunger strike are:

- The minimal guarantees of the Geneva Convention be applied to the prisoners of the RAF and other anti-imperialist resistance groups; that is to say:-
  - \* THAT THOSE PRISONERS BE ABLE TO ASSOCIATE UNDER CONDITIONS THAT MAKE INTER-ACTION POSSIBLE; THIS MEANS THE ABOLITION OF THE CONTROL OF ALL COMMUNICATIONS ELECTRONICALLY, ACOUSTICALLY AND OPTICALLY WHICH TAKES PLACE WITHIN UNITS OF ISOLATION THAT ARE SOUND/LIGHT/AIR CONDITIONED. (Note 1)
  - \* THAT CONDITIONS OF IMPRISONMENT ARE INDEPENDENTLY CONTROLLED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF PRISONERS AND AGAINST CONDITIONS OF ISOLATION.
  - \* THAT GUNTHER SONNENBURG BE RELEASED AS HIS PHYSICAL RECOVERY FROM BRAIN DAMAGE CANNOT TAKE PLACE UNDER CONDITIONS OF ISOLATION IMPRISONMENT. (Note 2)
  - \* THE RELEASE OF VERENA BECKER WHO WAS DIAGNOSED AS HAVING TB CONTRACTED DURING HER IMPRISONMENT.

Note 1: Article 75 of the Geneva Convention of 1949 lays down the fundamental guarantees to be accorded to "PERSONS WHO ARE IN THE POWER OF A PARTY TO THE CONFLICT" - that is to say Prisoner of War status. The 1949 Convention relates to prisoners who are captured as a result of an international conflict. The additional protocols of 1977 cover armed conflicts which are not of an international character. This means that the combatants of the anti-imperialist resistance movements of national liberation struggles & urban guerrilla warfare being waged in the 3rd World & the metropolitan countries should also be accorded such political status.

Note 2: The West German State applies special programmes of imprisonment only against those prisoners who come from militant anti-imperialist resistance groups. These prisoners are subjected to isolation torture in the silent cells of the new

"High Security Wings" - many for over 4 years. With no association periods at all, some with absolutely no exercise period either. The isolation cells are air-conditioned, sound-proofed, white-walled and constantly lit. Surveillance of the prisoner is total. Cameras and microphones are stationed in each cell, on each wing, and around exercise yards. If prisoners do have association it is behind a partition window of bullet-proof glass. Visits are for 1 hour per month in similar conditions, if permitted at all. Strip searches take place for prisoners and visitors before and after any visit or association. The State has acknowledged the political content of their struggle by the methods it employs to try and crush it.

Note 3: Gunther Sonnenburg was arrested in 1977, and during the arrest was shot in the head. He sustained brain damage, and has been in isolation ever since. He does not get the medical treatment he needs to make a recovery. Since he is not fit to stay in prison he should be released immediately.

■ International Commission for the Protection of Prisoners:

London, April 7th 1981.



## NOTE

The above article makes clear that both the methods of repression adopted by the State and the forms of struggle adopted by prisoners have a lot in common in the Europe of the 1980s. Prison regimes and systems are planned and modelled at an international level - but the resistance to them tends to be confined within national boundaries.

Our book tries to break across these frontiers, with an account of the modes of repression in Italy. In addition, for

readers abroad who may not have followed the campaign, we include the following two items related to the fight for political status in Ireland.

As we go to press, Joe McDonnell has died - the fifth hunger striker to give his life in the new wave of the campaign for Political Status. And still the British Government remains intransigent.

# H BLOCK

Walls smeared with excrement, urine soaked floors,  
H-Block graffiti that relates,  
Waste matter, and we that the system has wasted, so  
neither nostrils nor conscience can tolerate.

Our comments on the ruling class, yes, even in prison  
we fight and condemn you, commitment's cup filled to  
the brim.

Naked, save one stinking blanket, yet dressed in the  
knowledge that you cannot win.

Sitting huddled in cells, surrounded by rank, putrid  
odours, suffocating in its vileness true,

Unable to breathe or escape, any more than we can  
escape the suffering our people are chained to.

Long matted hair, weighing heavily upon our shoulders,  
bearded face, lined, deep hollow cheeks,  
Sunken staring eyes, yet better able to see the root  
cause of our suffering, class oppression reeks.

Wasting away on hunger's pain-filled path, sipping only  
water, pushing back death one day at a time,

For each day we last, burns us into the hearts of Ireland,  
that those who love will not forget what you have done,  
invader slime.

We have killed, yes, we killed. For words do not reach  
or touch you. Thus choice before necessity kneels.

Bullets, those friendless allies, now fight with us, that  
you the ruling class and co. will do the dying and know how  
it feels.

Let your families weep, as Ireland has wept for  
centuries long - your sorrow singular, ours grows and grows.  
Taste that rancid smell of death, feel its cold numbness,  
as a child in the womb of Ireland knows.

That we will die, no doubt, remains in our minds, for  
you the invaders of Ireland have murdered before, and will  
again.

Our deaths will not go unnoticed, instead will highlight  
your inhumanity to Ireland. Our war will not cease, till none  
of you remain.

Partition of Ireland. For us death is a consequence, not a  
choice. Blood flows in continuing streams.

Sham democracy, England's Vietnam, when fighting  
injustice and oppression there are no extremes.

Our bodies carried out of H-Block in coffins, skeltoned  
and cold,

Irish workers' history written in blood, repeated and  
then in blood retold.

Ruling class invaders of Ireland, guilty of division,  
murder and mayhem,

The system is a product of yours; we are the products  
of that system.

BP  
November 1980

This poem, reproduced from Big Flame newspaper, was written  
by a comrade from the Ford-Dagenham factory.



# DOSSIER SUPPORT THE HUNGER STRIKE

□ Bobby Sands, age 27, was first arrested when he was 18. He has spent 6 months in freedom in the last 8 years. He is now on hunger strike for the 5 demands.

Like most of the men in the H-Blocks and the women in Armagh. Bobby Sands was a young teenager when the Civil Rights movement marched out of the ghettos to demand by peaceful means, basic civil rights and an end to sectarianism where all the best jobs and housing went to the loyalist community. They saw these marches attacked by the RUC and in 1972 in Derry witnessed 14 protestors shot dead by the army on a peaceful march.

Bobby was 17 when a policy of imprisoning without trial large numbers of the nationalist community was begun. After a few years, internment had become an international embarrassment, and the Diplock Court system was introduced. This system dealt only with scheduled offences as opposed to ordinary criminal offences.

Sands was arrested in 1976, held for six days in the Castle-reagh interrogation centre and convicted by a Diplock Court. These courts have only one judge and no jury. 80% of the convictions are by confession alone. These confessions are often obtained in conditions of extreme brutality. (Amnesty International Report, Bennet Report, 1979). Prisoners convicted under this system were granted Special Category status in prison. Prisoners were allowed to wear their own clothes, organise their own recreation and education, and were not required to do prison work.

However, special category status was not allowed to prisoners convicted after March 1st 1976. This was as a result of a change in Government policy, which now attempted to deny the political nature of these offences.

Like other prisoners after this date, Bobby Sands refused to wear prison uniform and had only a blanket to wear. In an attempt to break the protest, prison officers began a campaign of harassment and beatings. Prisoners were refused radios, reading or writing material, and were only allowed visits if they put on prison uniform and endured internal body searches.

Protesting against their maltreatment, prisoners in the H-Blocks in 1978 refused to leave their cells. Because the warders refused to empty the slop buckets, the prisoners were forced to live with their own excreta and urine. The brutality was not as consistently severe in Armagh Jail, but in February 1979 the women prisoners were forced into a "dirty protest" of their own.

Despite concern at the extreme conditions the prisoners were forced to live in, the Government refused to make any changes in the prison regime. To break the deadlock 7 prisoners began a hunger strike in October 1980. They were joined by three women prisoners in Armagh Jail. Intense Irish and international support built up during the hunger strike, and the government was forced to come to terms with the prisoners.

In December 1980 when Sean McKenna was at death's door the prisoners were shown a 34-page documents and a statement to be made by Humphrey Atkins in the House of Commons of December 18th. These documents contained the essence of their 5 demands. The agreement between the prisoners and the Home Office was confirmed by verbal assurances of a generous interpretation of the agreement made by a priest acting as an intermediary. The prisoners called off their hunger strike.

## 3 Months of Government Deceit

December 19th: Hunger Strike Ends. H-Block prisoners continue on protest until the demands are implemented.

January: In Armagh Jail Governor Scott refuses to discuss self-education classes, contrary to the agreement. Prisoners remain on protest.

January 10th: The prison authorities met with Bobby Sands, a representative of the prisoners.

January 12/15th: 100 H-Block men move into clean cells and begin slopping out. A Governor's statement was given to them saying that those prepared to wear civilian-type clothing would be given the chance to wear their own clothes.

January 16th: A pilot scheme where 20 prisoners were to go through the step-by-step procedure agreed upon was to be implemented. However, Governor Hilditch asked for a week's grace. As an indication of goodwill the prisoners agreed to this. In Armagh Jail the women who were still on protest were awaiting the results of the pilot scheme before again requesting their own educational facilities.

January 23rd: The pilot scheme begins. 20 men washed, shaved, and slopped out their cells. They were now off the protest, as agreed in the Atkins document. They asked for their clothes, which had been brought by their relatives to the prison. This request was refused, in direct contravention to the Atkins agreement.

January 27th: In H-5 prisoners smash their cell furniture in protest against the increasing harassment from warders. In response they were attacked by the warders, resulting in some serious injuries. Six men were subjected to a brutal anal search which the prisoners claim amounted to "a sexual assault". All prisoners who had come off now reverted to the blanket protest.

February 2nd: Prisoners announce a new Hunger Strike, to commence on March 1st.

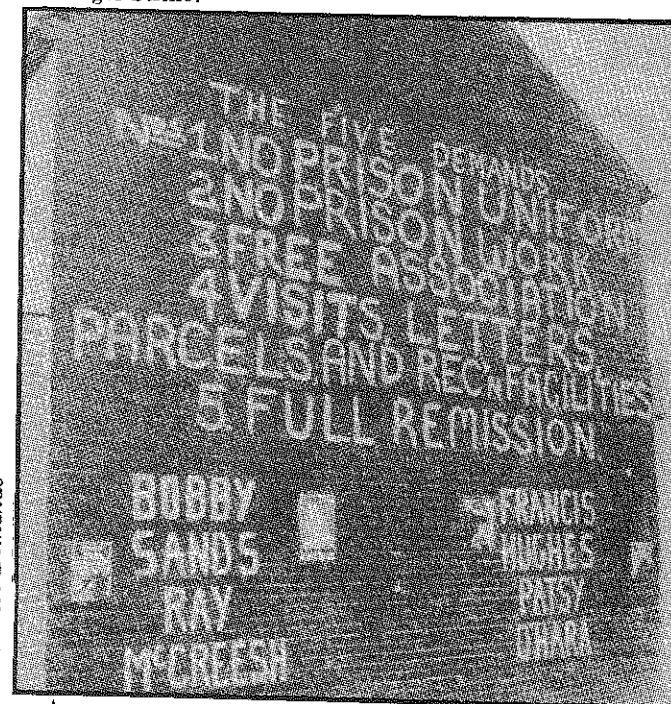
February 13th: Six former hunger-strikers, released from hospital, immediately begin blanket protest.

March 1st: Bobby Sands begins a hunger strike until death.

March 2nd: Prisoners cease "dirty protest" to concentrate attention on the main issue of the protest.

March 15th: Francis Hughes begins Hunger Strike.

March 22nd: Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara join Hunger Strike.



The Five Demands

## ★ CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE 5 DEMANDS ★

The Government has callously attempted to break the prisoners' spirit by reneging on the agreement. By using an almost complete news black-out they are trying to dampen support for the hunger strike. Large marches in Ireland and the choosing of Bobby Sands as a candidate for the Fermanagh/Tyrone by-election have illustrated the feelings of the Irish people. It is up to you to break the wall of silence in this country.

National Demonstration: London, April 26th  
1.30pm, Kilburn Tube Station

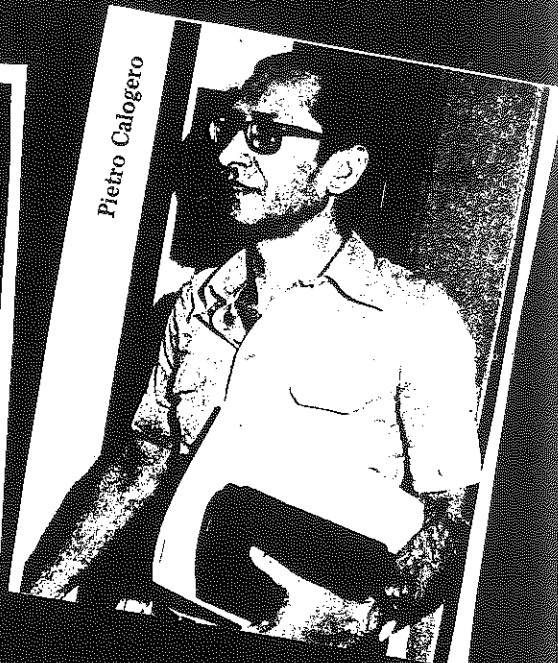
Leaflet produced by H-Block/Armagh Committee, London



Flaminio Piccoli



Pietro Calogero



Carlo Fiorini



Carlo Casirati



General Dalla Chiesa



General Cappuzzo



## • THE HOUSE OF CARDS WITH BARS OF IRON



Enrico Berlinguer



## Reporter arrested after a scoop on Red Brigades

from DAVID WILLEY in Rome

AN ITALIAN journalist who thought he had a world scoop - an interview with the Red Brigades terrorists holding a Rome judge prisoner - has been charged with aiding and abetting the terrorists and giving false evidence to the police.

Mario Scialoja, of the weekly news magazine L'Espresso, was arrested on New Year's Day in Bolzano in the South Tyrol and taken to Rome's Regina Coeli prison, where he has been interrogated for more than 10 hours. Scialoja has denied the charges.

Another journalist who worked on the story has also been arrested. Scialoja claims he was contacted by an emissary from the Red Brigades before Christmas and had several meetings. He drafted a list of questions and the written replies were handed over with a Polaroid colour photograph of the kidnapped judge, Giovanni D'Urso, during a final contact in St Peter's Square.

The case has split the magazine's staff over the ethics of the scoop. The chairman of the editorial board, a leading lawyer, has resigned, denouncing the interview - which the magazine has gone ahead and published - as "improper". The material includes what the Red Brigades claim is a confession by the judge of his "crimes".

A group of journalists on the magazine say they are standing firmly behind their imprisoned colleagues.

The Italian Press in general is making it clear that the journalists' right to pick their sources and publish freely in the public interest does not extend to interviewing enemies of the State who

are continuing to sow panic and disorder.

This is partly sour grapes, as the whole Press has been publishing the recent 'communiqués' of the Red Brigades which are placed in litter bins in the streets, and then picked up by selected journalists alerted by anonymous telephone calls.

It has been an active month for terrorism in Italy, culminating in the Red Brigades' murder of a high-ranking police general at his home on New Year's Eve.

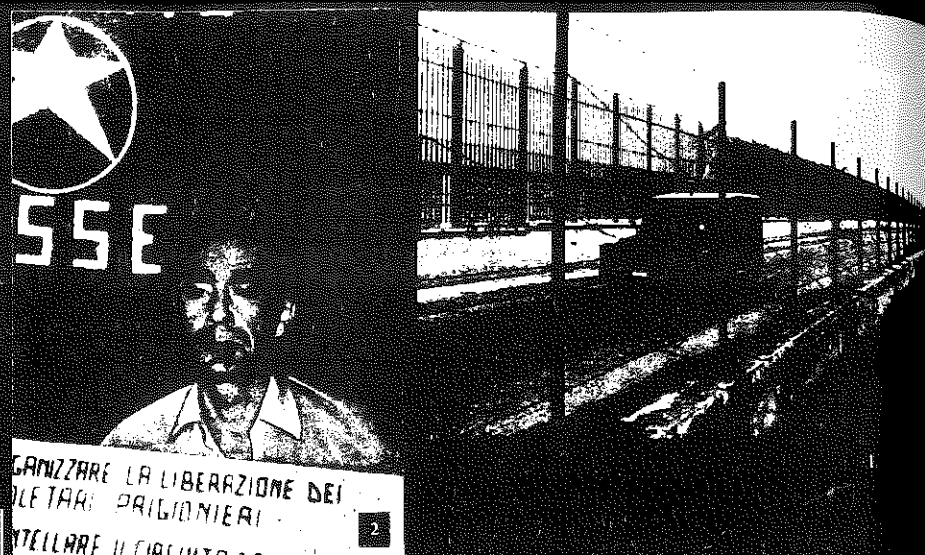
The carabinieri - general Enrico Galvaligi, had just arrived home after attending evening Mass with his wife when he was shot dead by two terrorists disguised as delivery men who had been waiting with a gift package of wine and fruit.

General Enrico Galvaligi was buried with full military honours in an atmosphere of great bitterness after a funeral attended by President Sandro Pertini, who cut short his New Year holiday to return to Rome.

The Government virtually capitulated last month after the kidnapping of Judge D'Urso, to demands by the Red Brigades that the maximum-security wing on the prison island of Asinara, where many terrorists are serving sentences, should be closed for humanitarian reasons.

But the authorities moved swiftly and effectively to quell a revolt last week at Trani prison in southern Italy, organised by a group of convicted and suspected terrorist leaders.

It has still not been explained how the Red Brigades are able to communicate with accomplices inside prison. Destruction of the existing prison system is the declared objective of the Red Brigades.



## • THE REVOLT AT TRANI PRISON DECEMBER 1980



1. An armed jeep outside Trani Prison.
2. Judge D'Urso under interrogation by the Red Brigades.
3. A view of the Press Blackout in Italy [Observer 4.1.81]
4. Policeman with flak jacket, dog and gun, at the prison gates.
5. Paola Negri waits at the prison gates for news of the prisoners.
6. One of the injured prisoners is carried out on a stretcher.
7. Armed Carabinieri prepare for the assault.

# DOSSIER THE PROSECUTION'S CASE COLLAPSES

The translation below has been produced by the Italy '79 Committee in Britain, for publication on April 7th 1981 - the second anniversary of the first wave of "Autonomia" arrests in Italy.

The article is by the lawyer and University lecturer Luigi Ferrajoli. He examines the inconsistencies of the case against the "Autonomy", the confused and contradictory "evidence" regarding the charge of "armed insurrection against the State", and the political use of supergrasses - the "pentiti" - against the defendants.

We hope that the publication of this document will help in breaking the "Press blackout" regarding the prosecution of the Left movement in Italy.

### • THE PROSECUTION'S HOUSE OF CARDS COLLAPSES

An analysis of the judicial proceedings undertaken by Procurator-Substitute Ciampani against the April 7th defendants. A scandalous piece of bluff, a framework of charges wholly different from the original charges under which they were arrested - a framework which is extremely weak at the level of proof and evidence. For how long can the Italian Communist Party, the Press barons and the forces of power continue to keep this corpse alive?

"Two weeks ago Procurator Ciampani published the findings of his judicial inquiry on the April 7th defendants. This document has even been a surprise to those who have had doubts and reservations, who have expressed criticisms of the general outlines of these judicial proceedings. For 22 months Negri and the other defendants have had half the judges in Italy, and the whole of the Italian Press heaping monstrous accusation after monstrous accusation on their heads. It would have been reasonable, at this point, to expect at least some actual evidence to support at least some of these charges. But instead, what do we see? A scandalous piece of bluff, a framework of charges that is entirely different from the original charges - a set of accusations which on the one hand carry even more severe sentences, and on the other hand have very little evidence to back the charges against the majority of the defendants.

### THE POSITION OUTLINED BY JUDGE CALOGERO: THE "CALOGERO THEOREM"

It might be useful to remind those who have commented on Ciampani's document (perhaps without reading it), and who have used phrases like "The Calogero theorem is confirmed" and "the link between Workers' Autonomy and the Red Brigades is proved" etc, what the accusations brought against Negri and his comrades actually were.

The charges brought by Padova Judge Calogero in the arrest warrants issued on April 6th 1979 were:

1) That Negri, Ferrari Bravo, Piperno, Scalzone, Dalmaviva, Vesce, Zagato, Nicotri, Marongiu, Pancino, Roberto Ferrari and Nanni Balestrini were the founders, organisers and leaders of "an organisation going under the name Red Brigades".

2) That, at the same time, they inspired and were the leaders of various "interlinked organisations, going under various names, but constituting the so-called Organised Workers' Autonomy". This was alleged to be the cover organisation for all remaining strands of the Italian terrorist movement which developed alongside the Red Brigades since the period of what the prosecution alleges was the "false" dissolution of Potere Operaio in 1972.

In other words, they were accused of being the secret brain and the equally secret leadership of all Italian terrorism, ranging from organised



and conspiratorial terrorism to the more diffused and localised forms. These were said to be divergent only in appearance, but in reality were inspired by a common motivation, programme and strategy.

On the same day another arrest warrant, issued by the Rome Procurator, and implicating Negri - along with Alunni, Moretti, Morrucci, Gallinari etc - in the Moro assassination served to supplement and support these monstrous accusations. He was also charged with single-handedly promoting an armed insurrection against the State. A few months later a new arrest warrant was issued in Rome, accusing Negri, along with various members of the Red Brigades, of the murder of Riccardo Palma and of the attempted murders of Valerio Traversi, Emilio Rossi, Reno Cacciafesta, Mario Perlini, Publio Fiori, Raffale de Rosa and Girolamo Mechelli, as well as dozens of other crimes.

These, then, were the original elements of the "Calogero theorem". We have been waiting for nearly two years for something else in the way of proof - something other than the constant references to what T. Negri has written. We have been waiting for some indication of the existence of concrete evidence, but what has happened instead is that the charges have been increasingly inflated and made more serious, with a hail of new arrest warrants, substituting for and/or extending one another. At the same time, the original charges, instead of being corroborated, have, one by one, been completely disproved.

This first part of this construction to collapse came about 3 months after 7th April 1979, when the most serious of the charges - that accusing Negri and the others of being the leaders and founders of the Red Brigades - fell. In the new arrest warrant of July 7th, which, as was stated in a footnote, "substituted" the one issued in Padova on April 7th, no mention is made of the Red Brigades. The defendants are accused of having organised something which was rather vaguely defined as "subversive association constituted of armed gangs going under various names". To make up for this, the number of charges was increased: All the defendants were charged with "armed insurrection against the State". In the subsequent warrant of August 29th - hastily thrown together to obtain the extradition of Piperno and Pace from France - the charges against these defendants were extended to implication in the Moro assassination. Negri was also charged with various other crimes (the Palma killing, the attempted killings of Traversi, Cacciafesta etc). All of this, except for two pages on Piperno and Pace, did not include so much as a single line of proof.

The second stage of collapse took place in the first few months of 1980, when, following Peci's testimony (tn: one of the "pentiti", or "repentant terrorists"), the charge against Negri - which had been dragged out for so long, what with overseas research into the famous telephone call to Mrs Moro - of involvement in the Moro assassination, also fell. Lastly, on November 19th 1980, during the judicial inquiry against the Red Brigade members accused of the Moro assassination, the Rome Procurator explicitly recognised that the April 7th defendants had nothing to do with the Red Brigades, and asked for Negri to be released and completely absolved of the Moro assassination and for him to be absolved of all - I repeat, all - the terrorist crimes for which he had previously been charged (Palma, Traversi etc), apart from "subversive association", "formation of an armed band" and "armed insurrection".

At this point, given the fact that not one single wall of the original house of cards remained, it is rather difficult to understand what was this "armed insurrection" which was allegedly promoted by Negri and his comrades. Nevertheless, an extraordinary problem now confronted the judges. The Roman judges realised that, since all of the charges under their jurisdiction (Moro, Palma) had now fallen that of "armed insurrection" - however unlikely - was the only crime that could justify Rome's continued jurisdiction and the extension of the pre-trial detention period. Although the Red Brigades

have never been charged with this offence, yet another arrest warrant issued in July 1979 - in the face of the collapse of all the supposed linkages between the April 7th defendants and the Red Brigades - the various defendants were all lumped together and both sets charged with "armed insurrection platted between them". Naturally, not so much as one word has been offered to explain what this mysterious plot was; maintaining the allegation of a connection between the April 7th defendants and the Red Brigades has meant that the Rome magistrates were able to retain their jurisdiction, even though this was only provisional.

So we come to the last act of this extraordinary legal process: the instruction-phase document issued by Judge Ciampani, in which the April 7th defendants, following the separation of their status from that of the Red Brigades defendants, are to be tried separately. We discover that the accusations have once again been modified, so that they no longer have anything in common with the original ones. The 150 pages of this document would require careful analysis which, unfortunately, for reasons of space, is not possible here. But we can point out a few essential points.

\*\*\* First, the charges against the defendants have nothing to do with the bloody terrorism that has raged through Italian society in recent years - if nothing else, because none of them relates to crimes occurring since 1975. Out of 78 defendants, at least 45 - in short, the entire April 7th group except Negri - are not accused of any specific action, but only of "crimes of association" (so-called "subversive association" and/or "participation in an armed gang" and/or "armed insurrection") for which one cannot see even the weakest of foundations of proof. The other defendants, starting with Negri (who is still billed as leader, inspiration and organiser of all this) are charged with crimes against property, for the most part committed between 1972 and 1975: 2 thefts (of a painting and of a stamp collection), planning 3 armed robberies (of which only 2 were attempted, both of which failed), 2 cases of receiving stolen goods, the attempted (or only planned?) kidnapping of the industrialist Duina, the arson at ITT-Face Standard, and finally (these are more serious facts, to which we will return later) the attempted Argelato robbery, during which Brigadier Lombardini was killed, and the Saronio kidnapping.

\*\*\* Second, No concrete evidence, no witnesses, no statements from "pentiti", no actual pieces of proof among the many cited in the course of this long drawn-out judicial inquiry had been gathered prior to April 7th 1979. This means that on April 7th, at the moment of the arrests, the inquiring judges (Calogero in Padova, Gallucci in Rome) had no concrete evidence against the defendants... not even evidence worthy of a mention, let alone solidly grounded proofs. All they had was a series of fertile and suggestive political hypotheses. It also means that the judicial inquiry has been constructed around the defendants wholly after their arrest - and that thus their arrest was wholly without foundation. It also means - since both the sources of basic evidence, and the charges, have been utterly altered and transformed - that the defence has been developed along lines which are wholly different to those along which the defendants are now required to defend themselves. And finally, concretely, it means that what has for 2 years been presented as "the brains behind terrorism in Italy", as clandestine organisation, and as the strategic leadership of the armed struggle in our country was a kind of Fred Karno's Army, devoted at most (although even on this we are still seeking the actual proof against the defendants) to small-time thieving and failed bank robberies.

#### Regarding Conspiring to Destroy the State

\*\*\* Third, regarding the responsibility of the majority of the defendants relating to specific concrete crimes: in particular the Saronio kidnap and the Argelato robbery. The judicial inquiry has brought to light no evidence whatsoever - merely allusion and vague hints. The basis for this segment of the trial

consists entirely of the statements of Fioroni and Casirati (tn: two "pentiti") who were the people who carried out a large part of the above crimes. Negri is always accused as the prime mover of these crimes - sometimes by hearsay, sometimes (more often) by a process of "deduction" - by virtue of his stated position as "leader" who knew about everything, and whose word was law regarding everything that happened in the "organisation". In Fioroni's statement regarding the Saronio kidnap, Negri's name is not even mentioned except in connection with a "commission of inquiry" called by him after the event. But this very fact that Negri is not directly cited is seen by the legal authorities as "an indication of Fioroni's honesty. If he had really wanted to implicate his comrades in the crimes in question, he could have stated specifically that they had talked about it - whereas he remains totally silent on the matter."

Now, regarding the crimes of association - and in particular "armed insurrection" - the "evidence" consists wholly of the fact of membership of Potere Operaio, plus the subsequent relationship between Negri, Piperno and Scalzone. Not to mention a rich anthology of the writings of these three, singing the praises of armed revolution. For Luciano Ferrari Bravo the sole evidence for the charge is that he was an editor of Rosso and Autonomia, and that he had made notes in a notebook (taken from him) regarding outlines for articles or general directions for those journals. As for Alberto Magnaghi and Mario Dalmaviva, the "evidence", apart from their long-distant membership of Potere Operaio and their participation in the organisation's conferences, consists entirely of two items: (a) the accusation of having taken part in a meeting the day after the 11th December 1971 demonstration in Milan, during which the failure (!) to use Molotov cocktails on the demonstration was discussed; and (b) the fact that they had been sent a letter from Oreste Scalzone (19th January 1971), inviting them to a meeting on the subject of "organisation, civil war, political revolution and the abolition of the State".

As for Nanni Balestrini, there really is no evidence - unless you count as evidence these 8 lines from the report of the judicial inquiry:

"The accused, resident in Rome at the time, was telephoned by Fioroni and Scalzone, trying to track down Feltrinelli when he was held up and late for an appointment in Genova (end-December 1979). Balestrini's name also figures a number of times in Negri's 1975 diary, in relation to the editorial group of Rosso. The importance of Rosso magazine at the level of armed struggle has already been pointed out. These two elements demonstrate an uninterrupted continuity in Balestrini's presence and activity in the O (tn: "Organisation")."

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Fourth, and finally, "armed insurrection against the powers of the State". Until 2 weeks ago, the "armed insurrection" which the April 7th defendants were charged with was carried out "in conjunction with" Alunni, Moretti, Moruuci, Gallinari etc (ie Red Brigades). Now that the judicial inquiry against the defendants has run its course separately from that against the Red Brigades, the April 7th defendants are still being charged with armed insurrection - but no longer "in conjunction with" the Red Brigades. Thus we are presumably dealing with a different insurrection. We shall not dwell on the judicial absurdity of this modification, as regards proceeding on this specific charge. The problem is - what exactly was that insurrection? Obviously not the Red Brigades' one, but the "April 7th" insurrection - carried out, according to the judges, from 1971 onwards, and particularly between 1973 and 1974, to be evidence (in the absence of other proofs) in the conferences, books, journals, thefts of postage stamps and the attempted robberies. The weapons involved - the prosecution readily admits - were probably few. But the defendants allegedly made up for this shortcoming "by playing the card of incitement and propaganda" through "both a continuous string of conferences and meetings, starting with November 1971 in Rome - and also a

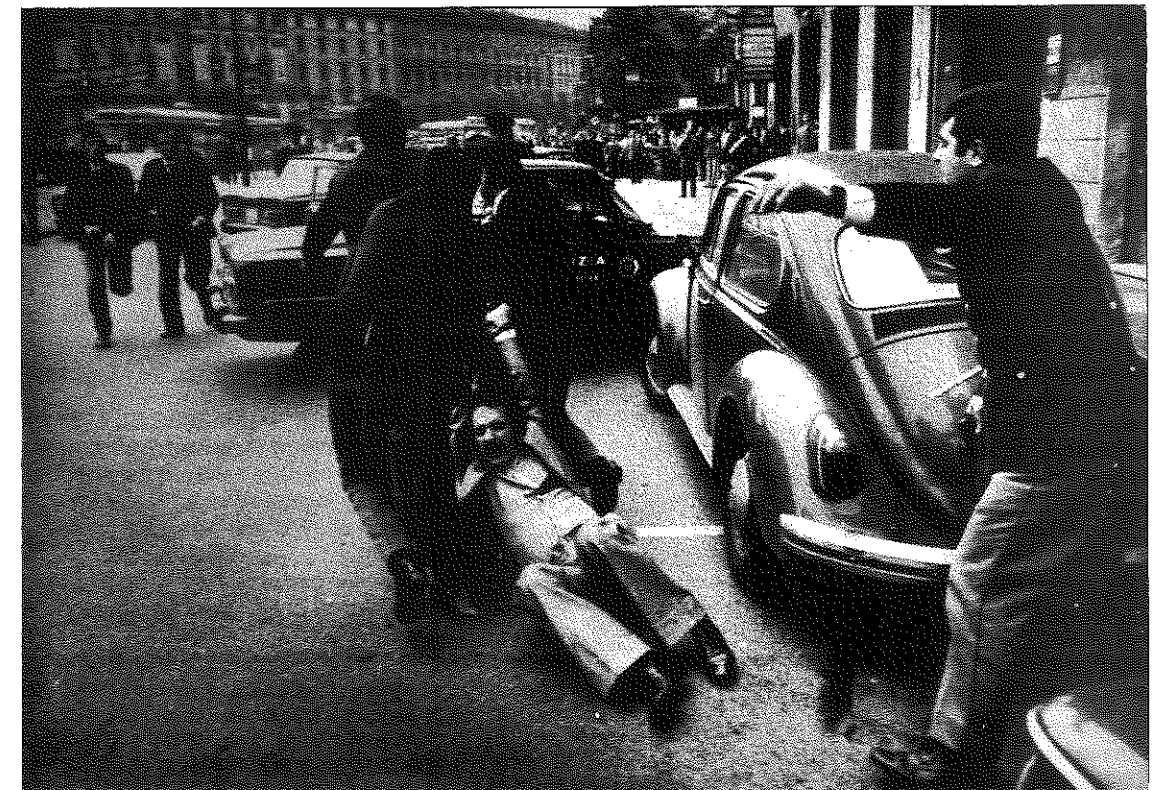
weighty publishing activity in the form of numerous publications."

At any rate, the judges add, it could not be otherwise, since one cannot, even at the level of logic, accept the hypothesis that men of the capacity, the determination and the leadership qualities of Negri, Piperno, Scalzone etc, had, since as early as 1971, begun to discuss armed struggle, and frittered around discussing the armed struggle for around 10 years without making the slightest preparations to bring about the armed crime under examination. Unless it can be shown that Piperno, Negri, Scalzone etc are merely inept word-mongers - contrary to the obvious and enthusiastic opinions of many who have described them".

I would not wish, with these conical quotations, to speak too much ill of the Ciampani inquiry. Regardless of all this, it is still the most honest prosecution document of the whole April 7th affair. While it is true that it contains not the slightest element that could decently be called an "element of proof", it is also true that was even more true of the other inquiries that, in the course of the past 2 years, have heaped these incredible mountains of accusations against the defendants. Compared with all these other arrest warrants, expressed opinions etc of recent months, it has at least the merit of having drastically reshaped the charges, demolishing the previous "house of cards", and making possible - even if very late in the proceedings - a concrete defence.

One burning question remains - a question which will never be completely answered. How did this trial come about in the first place - and how has it been able to survive? And - an even more agonising question - why, how has it been possible for the Italian Communist Party, the Left and the Press to have cultivated it - and to continue to cultivate it - without making any attempt at self-criticism, even now, when the only remaining substance of the case is a skeleton in their respective cupboards?

■ Luigi Ferrajoli  
Translated from:  
Quotidiano dei Lavoratori  
February 6th 1981.



● An Arrest: Scenes of Everyday Life in Italy



# DOSSIER APPEAL FOR A DE-ESCALATION

□ As of April 1981, the final basis of legal charges against the autonomi was published in a 1,000 page document produced by Judge Ciampani. The following account is from the US CARI Bulletin, Spring 1981.

Following the release of the Ciampani document, the judge in charge of the case, Francesco Amato, reviewed the conclusions of the prosecutors and offered a revised statement of the charges. In a document of more than 1,000 pages, Amato made some modifications of the charges relating to specific acts—most importantly, the dropping of more of the kidnapping and murder charges against Negri—and he once again reshuffled the allegations of "crimes of association." Otherwise, the bulk of Ciampani's feeble structure was accepted as the basis for a trial that prosecutors say may begin later this year.

However feeble that structure may turn out to be, it is not all that the April 7th defendants will have to contend with in the coming months and years. The state has been building its case against them through the very fact of keeping them detained in the "Special Prisons" which have been established in the past four years, mainly for political detainees. These prisons—which were created solely on the basis of ministerial decree and never legislated, thus making them unconstitutional—are notorious for their inhuman conditions, including physical abuse and severe restrictions on visits, correspondence, and out-of-cell time. The BR inmates, who consider themselves prisoners of war, have been fighting against these conditions by staging revolts in coordination with attacks on prison and police officials by their members on the outside. By placing many of the April 7th prisoners in the middle of these situations, the state has sought to achieve two aims. First, to once again blur in the public's mind the distinction between April 7th/Autonomia people and the Red Brigades, seeking to place them both under the rubric of "rebellious terrorist prisoners." Second, to force the April 7th people into a position of having either to join forces with the BR or else dissociate themselves from the revolts and face retribution by the other inmates.

These dynamics were exhibited quite clearly at the end of last year at the Special Prison at Trani. On December 28th, imprisoned members of the Red Brigades, following the BR kidnapping two weeks earlier of the magistrate Giovanni D'Urso, joined with some "common prisoners" in overpowering guards and taking control of the jail. Negri and the eight other April 7th defendants at Trani refused to participate in the revolt, expressing some suspicions about its origins and in any event not wanting to collaborate with the BR. Nevertheless, as police were retaking the prison the next day with an overwhelming display of force (despite the fact that the revolting prisoners were not armed), the major newspapers of the country and all Europe were reporting with blaring headlines that Negri had masterminded the uprising. The press simply ignored the fact that the April 7th people at Trani had issued a public statement dissociating themselves from the revolt. Although the press soon withdrew that accusation, the prosecutors did not; Negri and the others were charged along with the BR with organizing the revolt—a charge which could add 20 years to their eventual sentences. In several cases of April 7th people accused of less serious "crimes of association," these new charges will keep them in jail beyond what would have been the expiration of their periods of pre-trial detention this year.

In addition, when the police and guards retook control of the prison they subjected the prisoners—both those who participated in the revolt and those who refused—to severe beatings. After a five-day period in which all communication with relatives and lawyers was cut off, it was discovered that many of the inmates, including the April 7th people, had sustained serious injuries, including many broken limbs.

Another dramatic example of the way in which imprisonment in the special jails has been used against the April 7th defendants is the case of Mario Dalmaviva. Although the supposed evidence against Dalmaviva was among the most elusive of the April 7th

cases, he was sent to one of the worst Special Prisons in Italy: Asinara, located on an island off the coast of Sardinia. In October 1979 Dalmaviva refused to participate in a BR revolt, locking himself in a room instead. Nevertheless, after the uprising ended he was, like the April 7th people at Trani a year later, equally charged with participation, as well as attempted murder of several guards. Fearful of what would happen during future revolts (the BR had threatened his life), Dalmaviva demanded transfer to a regular prison. After that request was repeatedly denied, he started a hunger strike on January 12th of this year. Dalmaviva said this was the only way he could dramatize his situation and save himself in the event of a new BR uprising in the wake of the one at Trani. After two weeks of the strike the authorities relented and moved him to a regular prison.

The cases of Trani and Dalmaviva make it clear that the Special Prisons had become the means of last resort for the state in its obsession to punish the April 7th defendants regardless of legal or political obstacles. The charges brought against the defendants for BR revolts they had nothing to do with are designed to make up for the deficiencies in the original criminal case, and they ensure that the April 7th people will remain imprisoned indefinitely.

As a possible beginning of a trial grows nearer, the April 7th defendants and their families and lawyers have called for a renewed effort by support groups in Italy and abroad to publicize the scandalous way in which the case continues to be handled by the prosecutors and judges. The defense group in Paris, the International Committee for the Liberation of the April 7th Defendants, has already issued an appeal for an international commission of inquiry on the April 7th case and the general conditions of political prisoners in Italy. The text of that appeal, which was endorsed by the several hundred participants at an international conference on repression in Italy held in London in early April this year, reads as follows:

## • APPEAL ON ITALY: FOR A DE-ESCALATION OF THE JUDICIAL SITUATION

In the face of the repressive spiral in Italy, which creates the conditions for military escalation and a state terror which we totally condemn, there is an urgent need to open the way to a de-escalation to bring this process to an end.

For this reason we propose:

1) To call for the formation of an international Commission of Inquiry which will have the task of analyzing the general degradation of individual and collective civil rights in the Italian legal and prison system; and in particular to undertake an investigation into the case of those arrested April 7th, 1979, who have been used effectively as the hostages in an operation aimed at changing the political regime in Italy.

2) To call IMMEDIATELY for the CONDITIONAL RELEASE of those imprisoned on April 7th, together with those who have suffered the effect of the same mechanism of amalgamation under the general umbrella of "terrorist" charges. We call for this release immediately, without waiting for the opening of the trial, which has been continually postponed and which is likely to take place in a procedural context as irregular as that of the pre-trial investigation.

3) To orient public opinion, both Italian and international, towards a solution which halts the present military escalation and towards a basis for discussion of a general amnesty for political prisoners in Italy.

# RED NOTES

Translation

RN: 26.4.81 (2)

## • TRANI: A STORY OF STATE BRUTALITY

The following article is translated from "Trani: Basta coi Supercarceri", a pamphlet published by the Comitato Autonomi Operai, via dei Volsci 6, Rome, January 1978. It is an account of the revolt at Trani Special Prison, drawn up immediately after the event, on the basis of conversations with prisoners during visits etc.

"This is Trani, seen through the eyes of Giorgio Baumgartner, Luciano Nieri, Emilio Vesce and Toni Negri, reported via their comrades.

A difficult, fragmented account, drawn up only two weeks after the events, and highlighted by their bruised and swollen faces, by their bitter mood, by the disgusting conditions of prison visits - dividing glass partitions, communication via microphones, the confusion, the twenty short minutes of a prison visit....

## The Background

On December 12th 1980 the Red Brigades kidnapped the magistrate D'Urso, in order to "get Asinara closed" (tn: an antiquated prison island). Some days later at Palmi prison, prisoners held a brief stoppage during their association period. At Fossombrone prison only one section of prisoners backed the kidnap.

At Trani, up until the 28th of December, there was nothing.

In Trani Special Prison, the political geography has developed as follows:

- { a) The Struggle Committee (around the Red Brigades) - an organised structure.
- { b) The Autonomous Collective (around Prima Linea) - an organised structure.
- { c) The April 7th comrades - who do not recognise themselves in any existing organisational structure.
- { d) The comrades of the Policlinico Collective - ditto.
- { c) Other comrades - ditto.

The Special Wing is situated on 3 floors of a separate block. A stairwell divides each floor into two sections.

On the ground floor are "dangerous" criminals.

On the first floor there are Red Brigaders and Prima Linea members.

On the third floor (A-Section) there are single-room cells: these hold a number of Red Brigaders, as well as Toni Negri and others. In B-Section - cells holding 5 people in only 2 rooms - Baumgartner, Nieri, Ferrari Bravo and one other are held. Emilio Vesce is held in a separate cell.

The cells have double doors - an internal door, made of iron bars, which

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is closed all day, and an outer door, of sheet steel with a spy-hole, which is closed at night.

### The Revolt

It is 3-3.30pm on the afternoon of December 12th. Most people have returned from the afternoon exercise period. Luciano, Giorgio and Luciano are already in their cell and the barred door is closed. A short while later our comrades gathered that something was up, because the guards started shouting. They came and locked the cell's outer door, and would not explain what was happening. Luciano manages to use a small mirror to see that masked men are moving around the wing. After an hour and a half their cell-door is forced off its hinges and broken open by the "masked" prisoners.

Prison warder Telesca was taken hostage, after being wounded with a makeshift dagger, by elements of the Struggle Committee. It was not clear whether this had happened during the return from exercise, or after they had returned to their cells (whose bars had previously been sawn through). Then, using his keys, the Struggle Committee released their associates from their cells. The other guards were taken hostage, and the whole wing was soon under their control.

### From 5.00pm to Nightfall

The prison authorities' first act of retaliation is to cut off electricity, water and heating, and the TV. The Struggle Committee negotiates with the Governor via the internal telephone on the first floor. Luciano and the other comrades stay out of the way on the second floor. The guards are then taken up to the second floor and divided up between A-Section and B-Section.

### Guard Telesca's Condition Worsens

The Struggle Committee telephone the authorities to come and take Telesca because his condition is getting worse, and they do not have the medical means to see to him. The authorities reply "Get your doctor to look after him" (referring to Giorgio Baumgartner). Only at this point did the Struggle Committee approach Giorgio. He offered first aid, and himself asked the authorities for antibiotics and other medicaments, along with professional opinion, and sedatives to calm the hostage guard. Giorgio also asked for the electricity to be switched on again so that he could see to the wounds. He received no reply. Our comrades spent the night in their cell.

### The Statement by Scamarcio

This publicity-seeking Socialist Senator has stated various things about Baumgartner and Negri that are entirely false. Not only did Toni not lead the revolt, but he also dissociated himself from it. Furthermore, Giorgio never came down from the second floor, and never took part in any negotiation or delegation - which anyway all took place on the first floor, or the ground floor.

### The Blitz

December 29th - the following day. The Struggle Committee had not foreseen the Blitz, since they felt safe, by reason on holding the hostages. All through the morning, and right up to the last moment, Governor Brunetti was asking the Struggle Committee to release the hostages in order to avoid the worst.

But the worst had already been decided on. The "political situation" required a certain type of response. Brunetti was over-ruled, and lost his job. The political parties put on their khaki!

### 4.30 PM

The sun is about to set. The dull noise of helicopters overhead announced

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to the prisoners that the solution was to be military. A general stampede, and cries of "They'll kill us all". The Struggle Committee withdraw to the first floor, and barricade themselves in their cells. On the second floor the guard-hostages cling to Giorgio, seized with hysteria: "Doctor, save us, we don't want to die". In fact they prevented him from seeking refuge in his cell. He stayed with the guards, and they all sprawled on the floor, sheltering from the grenades and bullets behind tables and washstands.

The air shakes with a tremendous noise of explosions and flying helicopters. The Assault Squad arrived via a trapdoor in the roof of the second floor. There is a blinding, deafening crash as they throw thunderflash bombs. More Assault Squad troops pour through, and shoot like madmen. All you see is their robot-shadows caught in shafts of light as their torches sliced through the dark of the prison cells.

### The Sadism and Violence of the Assault Squad

- Vesce has two ribs broken by a kick.
- Baumgartner - who was sprawled on the floor - has his hand stamped on, breaking his fingers.
- Nieri has his arm dislocated.
- Negri is kicked in the head.

The comrades are in a state of terror. They are deafened by the din, dazzled by the light. When they hesitate in giving their surnames, the troops react even more violently.

### Vesce's Account

"Ribs broken, a stabbing pain, loses his sight, struggles for breath, is sent crashing down the stairs. They pull his hair to raise his head. They ask his name. They make fun of him: "Are you afraid?". After pointing their guns in his face, they fire half an inch over his head. Then, after this mock execution, they send him tumbling down to the Mufti squad".

### Nieri's Account

"Remembers one guard-hostage, who tried to identify himself, but the Assault Squad kicked him down. Nieri was made to get up, hands and face against the wall. They took him to the stairwell and put a gun in his mouth "Coward....are you afraid...". "Yes...I'm afraid" Then they fired a single shot over his head, and lumps of plaster from the wall fell on him. He was pushed and kicked from the second floor to the ground floor, where the Mufti squad were waiting".

### Baumgartner's Account

"Giorgio didn't react. He was stunned by the deafening noise and the pain in his hand. They take him to the stairwell and put a gun in his mouth. Then they fired over his head, as if they were an execution squad. In the dark he was sent tumbling down to the ground floor. He thought he was now out of the "pogrom", but didn't realise that he was now in the hands of the Mufti squad."

### The Mufti Squad Beat the Prisoners

In the corridor that led outside there were two lines of hooded men the Mufti squad, armed with clubs. (The hoods are part of their official equipment). It is thought that they were prison guards, because they knew the prisoners by name and by the case they were involved in.

Emilio Vesce: The Muftis shout "It's the Padovan". Emilio, in agony with his broken ribs, didn't manage to protect himself from the hail of blows. He was clubbed up and down the line twice before being dragged out into the exercise yard.

Nieri and Negri: Got off more lightly, because they were the first ones down.



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Baumgartner: "It's the one with the missiles". He receives an immediate blow to the stomach. His glasses fall off and he falls to the ground. They kick him. Half-fainting he tries to drag himself outside, but they bring him back for a further kicking. He glimpses a Carabinieri saying to the Muftis "That's enough...you're killing him". The Carabinieri try to get him away from the Muftis, but they drag him back, kicking and clubbing him. Then they hurl him bodily towards the cells. Semiconscious, all he feels is two hands dragging him into the cell. This was Negri and Nieri.

But this was not the end of it. In the cells the Muftis would come in to count them. Everyone had to stand up. Vesce and Baumgartner, in a state of agony, are told to stand up. They can't - so they receive a kicking - until an officer calls off the Mufti squad and shouts: "You can thank the hostage-guards...they say you didn't treat them badly...now you can go to the medical wing".

The comrades thought it was a trick, and didn't move. Eventually some put their names down.

The records show:

- 41 people given medical treatment.
- 17 broken limbs.
- 8 of the most severely injured are forced to spend the night in isolation cells: Baumgartner (broken fingers), Jovine (badly beaten up), Ricciardi (teeth smashed), Naria (many stitches) and others.

#### The Screws' Revenge

The prisoners were kept all night in the exercise yard, half naked and freezing. From the wing they heard noises of smashing and laughter. This was the orgiastic ritual of destruction - of the prisoners' personal things, of a large part of the wing. The barbarous war-prize of the victors over the vanquished, the reward for the State's "armed bands".

Everything is reduced to shreds - hardly a stitch of clothing survived the orgy intact. The wing was flooded, radiators were pulled out, toilets were smashed and windows broken, and the shoddy prison furniture destroyed. The prisoners' letters, lovingly kept, their books, their defence documents, were piled onto a bonfire and burned.

#### The Present Situation is Desperate

Since December 31st the prisoners have been transferred to the ground floor. They are being locked up 12-15 to a cell.

Their conditions are horrific. A mattress and one blanket to sleep with. An earth closet as a toilet, in front of everyone. Locked up for 23 out of 24 hours, lying down because they can't stand up. Given these terrible, sub-human hygienic/sanitary conditions they are protesting by throwing their excreta out into the corridors.

The reprisals are continuing. The atmosphere is very tense.

#### Before the Release of Magistrate D'Urso

- Woken at 2 in the morning, half naked and frozen, they were taken off for interrogation under a warrant from Judge Sica.
- A prisoner tried to punch a warder who called him a bastard. Not only was he charged, he was also taken to a basement cell, stripped and beaten by the Muftis. The prisoners had to organise a protest in order to get him back and stop the beating.

#### After D'Urso's release

- The night-search on January 21st, looking for arms, based on an "internal rumour". This was carried out in such a way as to provoke trouble and tension, and so allow further reprisals by the Muftis.

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#### STATEMENTS BY THE PRISONERS' FAMILIES AFTER THE PRISONERS HAD ACCEPTED VISITS "BEHIND GLASS" IN ORDER TO LET THE OUTSIDE WORLD KNOW OF THEIR SITUATION

Gabriella Vesce: "Emilio can hardly breathe, he was in a state of complete exhaustion. He has been within the Special Prison circuit since April 7th 1979: First Rebibbia, then Termini Imerese, Palmi and Trani."

Paola Negri: "This is the second time that I have seen Toni in such a condition. The first was when he came out of solitary confinement 30 days after his arrest. He is really angry, and exhausted. The things that made him most angry were the beatings, and the destruction of their things. They destroyed one of his manuscripts that he had been working on for 5 years, as well as some books from the University of Padova."

Bianca Baumgartner: "Think of the wounds and injuries. Stitches in his head; a gash across his face; fractured finger in his right hand; a splint on his left hand; he's limping visibly, and suffering from dizzy spells. Despite everything he's been through, in two whole weeks he's only been able to send out one message - a telegram saying "I'm well. I hope to hug you soon".

Lili: Luciano was one of the first to leave Trani, for a trial in Rome on January 14th. The national TV made out that there was something sinister in this transfer, and that Luciano was a spokesman in the negotiations over D'Urso. Nothing could be further from the truth. Luciano was very happy to leave Trani and come to Rebibbia. Now the conditions in Trani are subhuman, and he is on the transfer list."

WHY HAS MARINI, THE TRANI PROCURATOR WHO CONTINUES TO LEAVE THE PRISONERS IN THESE APPALLING CONDITIONS, NOT OPENED AN INQUIRY INTO THE BEATINGS AND INTO THIS DESTRUCTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY? AND WHAT IS THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE DOING?

OUR COMRADES' ANSWER TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE PRISON REVOLT HAS BEEN TO BRING A LAWSUIT AGAINST THE WARDERS OF THE "MUFTI SQUAD", AGAINST THE PRISON AUTHORITIES, AND AGAINST THE PEOPLE WHO SENT IN THE ASSAULT SQUADS.

## Police storm Italian prison

F.T.  
30 DEC 1980

ITALY's anti-terrorist forces yesterday scored a spectacular success in storming a top security jail and freeing 18 prison warders who were being held hostage by jailed terrorists.

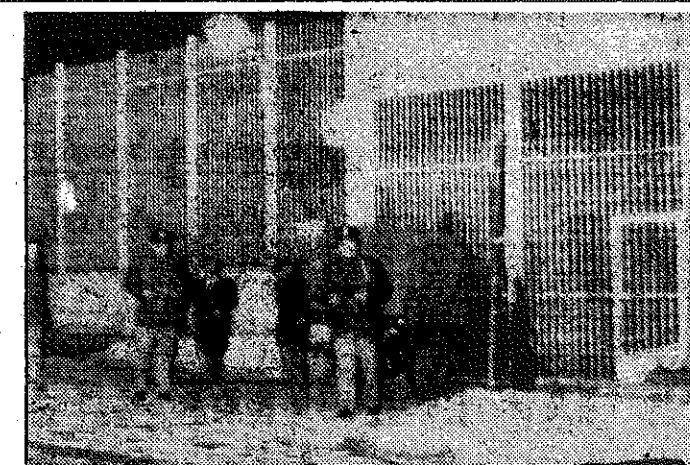
The operation, by the anti-terrorist squad of Carabinieri the paramilitary police, came almost exactly 24 hours after about 70 prisoners, thought to be mainly left-wing terrorists and detained terrorist suspects, seized the warders.

The Carabinieri landed three helicopters at different points on the roof of the modern prison at Trani near Bari in southern Italy, blew up a steel door separating them from where the hostages were being held and liberated all 18 warders.

The surprise assault on the prison ended a day of negotiations between the local state attorney and representatives of the imprisoned terrorists.

The terrorists issued a set of demands closely related to those of the Red Brigades terrorists holding Sig. Giovanni d'Urso, a senior magistrate in charge of terrorist prison arrangements. A communique from the kidnappers themselves, found after the storming of the prison, supported these demands.

The terrorists at Trani asked for the closure of the top security prison at Asinara, off Sardinia; the abolition of all other top security prisons; abolition of the police right of detention of suspected terrorists



Armed police guard the entrance to Trani jail

without trial; and improve humanitarian grounds before the treatment of his seizure.

The transfer of the last imprisoned terrorist from Asinara has been held up by stormy seas. The Red Brigades, in a communication on Sunday night, indicated that they would wait for the closure before making any decision on Sig. d'Urso's future.

# RED NOTES

Translation

Rome 8.2.81

Dear Felix,

I am writing from Rome, where I was transferred after a month of indescribable events at Trani. I am uncertain as to the reasons for the transfer. Events of all kinds: war of captivity, judicial war... ferocious, insensate, sadistic. One day I shall describe them. We shall recount them to the world. Life and death seized on the instant are not very gay. Every moment is problematical. But when the thought of death insinuates itself into the banalities of the everyday — day after day — in a political scenario dominated by the polarity of opposing, extremist initiatives (of resistance, of repression), which has lasted without interruption for a month now, at these moments the entire thing becomes absurd.

In addition, as soon as I arrived in Rome I witnessed a succession of atrocities in the prison. What sort of world is this? The whole story is leaden and absurd. The prison drama is unfolding apace with the judicial proceedings. The charges have been presented by the public prosecutor. Nothing has changed as regards the substance of the accusations which have been hanging over me for two years now. The basis of the accusations is flimsy, but their scope is menacing. They are clearly animated by the will to destroy. This trial is an integral part of a comprehensive political strategy of State repression. The accusation has been elaborated at this level. Which is why it isn't simply a case of a judicial accusation, but rather a public test through which the State is searching for an authoritarian legitimization of its political policies.

You understand very well how difficult it is, perhaps impossible and in any case ineffective, to fight against this over-determination. Personally, I am very, very tired. I don't know today where I am going to spend the months to come, whether in Rome or in another prison. I'm waiting for news. I hope to avoid being shut up in a special security prison. In the special prisons one ends by being crushed. Crushed between the violence of the prison authorities — the very face of the State — and the militarised violence of the resistance. The result is the loss of one's identity and the collapse of all autonomy — personal and political. I don't know how this horrible story is going to finish. But I see less and less clearly.

For the rest, life carries on — in the most dreary fashion. At Trani, after the revolt, all, or almost all, of my work was destroyed. To start over again isn't easy for me. I have always worked on accumulated material. To see it destroyed destroys a little bit of oneself. At the same time as the logic of my progression with research. However, I've been able to resume a certain working rhythm. I'm animated by good, rational intentions, but lack a certain dynamism and vital stimulation.

It's fairly grey today. Excuse me, I'm in bad form. But my temper is no worse than when the sun shines. After two years of prison, it becomes intolerable. One doesn't get used to it.

A propos. My book on Spinoza has come out. I hope that Sylvie has sent a copy to you and to Gilles Deleuze.

Ciao, dear Felix  
Je t'embrasse tres fort,  
Toni.

RN: 3.3.81

• Letter from Toni Negri to Felix Guattari  
After the events of the Trani Prison Revolt.



• THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN ITALY  
• TRIAL OF STRENGTH AT FIAT



# INTERVIEW WITH LISI DEL RE

□ The following interview is with Lisi del Re, of Padova.

I'd been wanting to interview Lisi for some time: more, thinking back now, as a way of telling the story of the direct and physical repression of Left wing intellectuals in Italy than as a feminist thinker or as a way through to events that could have a special relevance for women.

Arrests, imprisonments, house searches and confiscations of documents and books. Probably more than 2,000 people are in jail in Italy now facing charges relating to the political, and with the exception of a handful of Fascists and terrorists, what they are really in jail for is because of their identification with an organisation called *Autonomia Operaia*. Some, including Lisi herself, are awaiting trial on charges under the Rocco penal code, dating back to the suppression of the Left under Fascism: charges like "subversive association" which have not been used for decades and which even the courts are not certain how to interpret.

The near absence of legal precedent adds to the feeling of fear and disorientation. There seems to be no limit to the powers of the State and police, no logic in the choice of who is to be singled out next, no way of knowing what their punishment may be. On the wave of public sympathy for a "tougher line" and wider police powers aroused by the growth of terrorism, and the kidnapping and assassination of Moro in particular, laws have been changed to facilitate "wild-cat" house searches and arrests, and to increase the maximum period in prison awaiting trial to 12 years. And actually, as Lisi pointed out, even this is a false limit, as it is renewed with each fresh accusation: only the word of some "repentant terrorist" is needed to start the whole thing again, with new charges and another 12 years to play with.

In the face of all this it first seemed to me impossible, even mistaken, to write about Lisi's case strictly as a feminist issue. The attack on her was part of a general and violent attack on the Italian Left, and to write about it as a feminist for a feminist journal would seem to make a false separation. Lisi is not only a feminist, unjustly imprisoned. She is also a Marxist under attack with many other men and women because of the role she has played as a Marxist thinker and activist.

Thanks to Lisi and Lucia and the long discussion we had one morning in Lisi's office in the Department of Social and Political Sciences here in Padova, I now do see why what is happening in Italy is an important question for feminists everywhere.

Lisi didn't much want to talk about

her specific experiences during her imprisonment. She feels there's a danger of becoming a special case; of the pathos which may be attached to the idea of a young mother arrested and imprisoned while seriously ill with pneumonia and denied adequate medical attention in prison.

Lisi was arrested along with 15 other autonomist intellectuals on 7th April 1979. The initial charge was "subversive association". On 6th June, to her horror, she found herself facing two further charges of participation in armed robberies: a "repentant terrorist", during his confession to the interrogating judges (his tongue no doubt loosened by the promise of judicial leniency) claimed that his cell-mate had told him that Lisi had been his partner on the robberies. The man was later to commit suicide. This second-hand story, which the principal witness was no longer alive to confirm or refute, was believed against Lisi's word. In October her alibi (she was luckily able to prove



● Lisi del Re with her children

she was somewhere else at the time of the crimes) was finally accredited and the charges were dropped. Lisi remained in jail awaiting trial on the earlier charge until December 1979 when, after 8 months in prison, she was granted "provisional liberty" because of lack of evidence.

Her freedom was still, however, heavily curtailed: her movement limited to the province of Padova, required to be at home every night from midnight to seven the next morning and then to report to the police every day. She also had to live with the knowledge that the "privilege" of liberty might be withdrawn at any moment. Lisi was convinced that she would go inside again before the trial. She laughed and looked brittle when she said that. She was proved right.

It's probably still not very clear to you what is actually going on in Italy, why these people are in jail and how all of this is important for us as women and as feminists.

Let's start with 1977 and the appearance of a loose organisation called *Autonomia Operaia* (Workers' Autonomy) which claimed to represent a "new social majority of the proletariat" and which

denied the continuing validity of traditional Leninist party organisations in Italy. The events of 1977: the occupation of the universities, the demonstrations and festivals ending in riots and shoot-outs with the police, the riots of Bologna and Rome are already well documented elsewhere.[1]

## What Was "The Autonomia"?

Undoubtedly the men and women who saw themselves as in "the area of *autonomia*" made their individual and collective mistakes. There are numerous stories of the clashes between its exponents and the more traditional organisations of the Left, the submergence of various groups into clandestinity and terrorism and even into petty criminality. 1977 was not only a high moment in a completely different form of struggle, it was also a period of political immaturity and disorientation. Both Lisi and Lucia, for example, whilst themselves in sympathy with the movement, agree that the women's movement in Padova has never really recovered from the disorientation of that period. Specifically feminist issues tended to get submerged as many women began to get involved in "the other movement" (for *Autonomia Operaia*, in the conception of its theoreticians, has the sense of otherness, separateness, independence from capitalist hegemony of the new revolutionary subjects.)

But despite its long and painful labour, the birth of *autonomia* is a fact that must be accepted by the traditional Left. Its period of gestation began with the decline of the industrial base and the beginning of large-scale, long-term unemployment. Hundreds and thousands of young people, particularly the young in search of a first job, discovered they were unneeded and practically unheeded by a society which listens only to those with a strong voice. Many young people continued on in further education (the universities here are open to all who successfully complete secondary education) without any hope that their qualifications might secure them a job. In the absence of a systematic welfare state (supplementary benefit for those who have never held a full-time job is unavailable here) they "get by" in an expanding "black" sector of the economy, working for minimal wages without the protection of the trade unions.

These people, abandoned on the margins of society, are the social base, the "new majority of the proletariat" among which *autonomia* developed. The movement of capital overseas to cheaper and more docile labour markets, the decentralisation of the big industrial sectors, the spread of forms of automation, have all combined to turn the largely male productive worker in the big factory and the trade unions which protect him

or her into a minority within the working class.

And this is the nexus of the question, and what makes it so important for feminists everywhere. For if the struggles of the factory proletariat, taking off principally from the question of wages and conditions in the factories, are no longer the central, the vanguard area of class struggle, what is? What can connect the individual oppositions to the capitalist system of those people who live and work outside of the immediate capitalist relations of production?

For Lisi and Lucia and the thousands of other women and men who sympathise with the "area of Autonomy", this had led to a concern with the area of *reproduction*: struggles around the production and utilisation of "services". These struggles which intimately concern women both because of the dominant role they play in the process of the reproduction of society and their strong presence in the service sector as nurses, teachers and so on, become, as Lisi says, a way out of the ghetto in which women find themselves and into the front ranks of the battle lines. In this conception public spending can be seen as a form of "wage" for the reproduction of society, and becomes the point of departure for a new form of class struggle.

The women's movement has long recognised the importance of such struggles: for many years we have been central in campaigns against public spending cuts and for the provision of more and better services.

Since the mid-1970s the women's movement in Padova has been involved in many hard struggles which have made this very clear. Lucia and Lisi described some of these to me to show how the largely 'autonomist' women's collective, the *Coordinamento Donne* (or Women's Combine) developed from a growing understanding of the connection between growing unemployment, the centrality of the service sector and the crucial role women have to play in all this.

## The Sacking of the Marigold Women

In 1976 the local Marigold cosmetics and chemicals factory, which employed a mostly female work-force, closed down and moved its production abroad. The women laid off by the closure united in a long, hard struggle to keep the factory open, occupying the factory for a while and conducting daily picketing at the gates.

In the same period, the "Women of the University" combine (which included cleaning staff, refectory workers, female hospital workers from the teaching hospital, clerical and secretarial workers and a handful of students and lecturers) were engaged in a struggle for the reduction of working hours — a struggle which was conducted very much outside of the control of the male-dominated and often even obstructive trade unions.

Since the reduction of working hours would necessitate taking on new staff,

the "Women of the University" combine decided to launch the demand that the women laid off by Marigold should be given precedence for these posts. They forced the Unions to take up this demand and help in the fight for it. The objective was eventually largely obtained: the Marigold women were given extra "points" (in Italy applicants for public posts are chosen on the basis of a points system) and most of the women were taken on in the refectories. Although the women were not taken on "en masse" (which would have been a public admission of the women's victory), the struggle was an important and encouraging success.

Lucia and Lisi described to me how the largely 'autonomist' women's collective, the *Coordinamento Donne* (or Women's Combine) developed from an understanding of all this.

Formed in Padova in October 1977, the purpose of this loose organisation was to unite and coordinate women in struggle in all areas of the economy. It consisted mostly of women who by now identified themselves with the "area of Autonomy" and who saw their struggles as part of that huge sector "on the margins" of society.

The need to find some means of coordination had become apparent through a series of fights which had been taken up individually by a number of organisations in the years leading up to '77. One struggle was extremely important in uniting the women and giving them a taste of their own strength: that for the re-opening of a state-run centre for single mothers, their children, and children in care as a women's house/meeting place and nursery. Throughout September and October 1976, meetings were held to discuss both the closure and alternative ways in which the centre could be used. On 17th December the Women's Collective moved in with their children to occupy for a day. Lisi told me of the solidarity that developed between the occupiers, the women working at the centre and the single mothers.

The struggle was a success. The centre was in fact closed down and converted to other uses by the local council, but they first agreed to set up nursery schools in three different areas of the city, a promise which was kept. The nurseries are still operating today.

The *Coordinamento Donne* which grew out of this was a larger and more "social" organisation than its predecessors. It met every Wednesday night and was important as a source of solidarity and for the recognition of the community of interests of all the women involved. It included women working in the various hospitals, teachers and students, and fought for the provision of more and better services, particularly in the areas of health and education. For example, some women of the *Coordinamento* occupied the gynaecological clinic at the teaching hospital as part of the fight for free and accessible abortions. It was also

able to coordinate a series of struggles aimed at improving the wages and conditions of female nursing staff in the hospitals.

The *Coordinamento* was to disintegrate with the right-wing backlash of 1979, signalled by the arrest and imprisonment on 7th April of 15 people — virtually the entire teaching staff of the Department of Social and Political Sciences of Padova University, including Lisi and Toni Negri. Since then too many comrades to be counted have been arrested or had warrants served on them.

## The Women's Movement: Organisation in Padova

The Left, including the women's movement, is in disarray. The imprisonment of such a large number of its important theorists and activists, the closure of many of its mouthpieces (free radios, newspapers and journals), the fear of attracting the attentions of the State, all contribute to the general failure of *autonomia* and the Left to organise to defend themselves against the backlash. Just watching Lisi's face when she talks about her own experiences of arrest and imprisonment were enough to tell me why.

The women's movement in Padova has been able to sustain some — albeit limited — levels of resistance against the heavy physical and psychological battering the Autonomous Movement has received. Women from the old *Coordinamento* joined with those from the bookshops, the counter-information centre and various feminist collectives and groups to organise and mobilise against the movement for the abrogation of Law 194, which permits legal and welfare-assisted abortions.

Profiting from the new climate of reaction and the weakness of the Movement, the Church and State had combined in an attempt to take back that little which had been gained through the years of women's struggle. Lisi came out of prison to take her place by our sides in the months of debate and initiatives climaxing last November (1980) in a demonstration of 3,000 women for free abortion on demand (no mean feat for a town of around 300,000).

But now Lisi is back in prison. The prosecution's appeal against her release and that of four other comrades from Padova was successful, and on Friday 23rd January 1981 they were re-arrested. Lisi was taken to the women's prison of Giudecca in Venice, where she remains today — still awaiting trial.

## NOTES:

- 1 See, for example, *Italy 1977-78 — Living with an Earthquake*, published by Red Notes. For an introduction to some of the theories of Autonomy, see *Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis* from Red Notes/CSE, and the special Autonomy issue of the New York magazine *Semiotexte*.

■ Reprinted from Leveller February 1981



# REVIEW A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

□ For some time now, in Italy, the Women's Movement has played an important part in holding back the tide of reaction in the country. This was particularly true in the case of the Abortion Referendum of May 1981. Here we reprint three articles that give the background, and the final results, of the Referendum - a battle in which the Catholic Church initiative was defeated.

In June 1978 in Italy, the "194" was passed, for the first time legalising abortions (although with a series of conditions) and making them available on the National Health.

In the Summer of 1980 the "Movement for Life" (the Italian equivalent of SPUC) launched a campaign for referendums for the abrogation of the "194". Only one will reach the public on May 17th: the so-called "minimum" proposal which, if passed, will permit abortion only in cases of extreme physical danger to the mother if the pregnancy is continued.

Profiting from the wave of repression which has filled Italian jails with more than 3,000 political prisoners and made all forms of political struggle extremely difficult for the Left, the forces of the Right, orchestrated by the Church, have thrown themselves wholeheartedly behind this attempt to take away the fruit of more than 5 years of struggle of the Women's Movement.

In every church the priests and bishops - powerful figures in this country with its dominating Catholic ideology - tremulously preach against "the carnage of the innocent", and from every street corner the Movement for Life hand out leaflets

which graphically "describe" fantastic horrors of abortion and paint ghastly pictures of screaming infants torn from the womb. Stuff for strong stomachs.

And what is the situation to which they would have us return?

Every year in Italy about 3 million backstreet abortions took place in conditions which ranged from the atrocious to the "merely" humiliating. Every year some 20,000 women lost their lives in consequence. Every year millions of women, on finding themselves pregnant, were faced with the "choice" between bearing and bringing up a child they were not ready for - with all the compromises and sacrifices this implies; travelling to England or some other country with more liberal abortion laws for those who were able to scrape together the money; or leaving their blood, and sometimes their lives, on some backstreet kitchen table.

## The Struggle for Abortion

When the first feminist groups sprang up in the early 1970s they were faced immediately with a first, and fundamental battle to fight: for the right to children when they chose - for the right, in other words, to information on and access to free, safe contraception, and the right to free, safe, painless abortion on the Welfare State.

As a first step, the women realised abortion would have to be brought out of the obituary pages of the local newspapers and into the light of day. An opportunity to do just this soon arose.

In Padova, in Spring 1973, Gigliola Pierobon was arrested and charged with having procured herself an abortion.

Gigliola was not quite 17 years old when she "chose" to undergo the operation, which took place without anaesthetic or medical assistance on a kitchen table. She nearly died from an infection resulting from the abortion - and now risked paying again, this time with from 2 to 5 years in jail. The new-born feminist movement rallied behind Gigliola, deciding, with her approval, to turn the trial upside down - converting it into a condemnation of the State and Church for all the women's blood that had been spilt on the altars of Christian and civil morality.

In the months preceding the trial the few hundred women who made up the feminist movement at the time quickly learnt how to organise themselves - producing leaflets and documents and calling meetings and assemblies to publicise the case and the basic demand for a women's right to control her own fertility.

On June 5th 1973, the day before Gigliola's trial, women from all over Italy arrived in Padova to participate in a non-authorized march through the city. The following day the court room was crowded with women, shouting slogans such as "We have all had abortions", even as they were being dragged out by the carabinieri.

Despite her lack of penitence for her "crime" Gigliola was acquitted.

The next important engagement in the battle for abortion took place in Trento - the city where the famous Diet had, many centuries previously, pronounced women to lack a soul. Here, on February 15th 1974, 273 women who had all passed through the same backstreet practice - which had been discovered after the death of a woman - were

arrested; the charge, once again, abortion. The feminist movement, strengthened by the experience of Padova, reacted immediately. Although defence committees were set up and defence lawyers sought, the defendants and the feminists together decided this time to contest the trial itself: to deny that abortion is a crime.

In the meantime Italian women were showing themselves increasingly ready to publicise their growing rage at the pre-

## Some Important Dates of the Movement

On December 6th 1975 20,000 women invaded Rome, paralysing the traffic and shouting feminist slogans and songs and at the same time combatting those of the male comrades present who wanted to "show the women how to do it".



● Demonstration: February 1980

sumption of the male politicians and priests who were denying them the fundamental right to self-determination, and at a situation which was causing the deaths of so many women (in ironic memory of the Church's anti-abortion propaganda the women referred to this as the "carnage of the innocent"). On January 12th 1975, for example, 5,000 women marched through the streets of Florence after 40 women there had been taken in for questioning by the police, suspected of abortion.

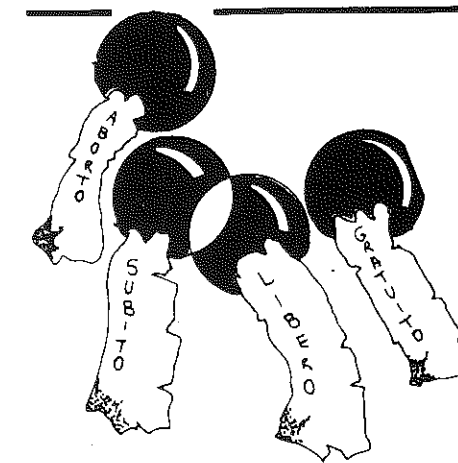
Little more than a month later, on the occasion of the "big trial", thousands of women from all walks of life poured into Trento for a national demonstration in solidarity with the 273 women on trial, and for a woman's right to choose. Refusing the back alley route which had been conceded to them, the chanting, singing, shouting women marched "straight as an arrow" to the court rooms. Here the loudspeaker van was driven right up to the doors blasting out feminist songs; and posters with a wording which matched the violence which could stand by while so many women died from back street abortions, were attached to the doors. A brief rally was held, and then the demonstration proceeded to the Curia. The walls of this edifice were covered in painted slogans like: SATANA, LUCIFERO, BELZEBU - PAOLO VI, IL DIAVOLO SEI TU (Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub - Pope Paul VI, you're the real Devil) and: "If priests could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament".

Over the 1½ years since Gigliola's trial the Women's Movement had grown enormously. The parties of the State were becoming aware of the "feminist peril" and in Parliament talk of reform was now beginning. Even within the Left parties women were beginning, independently from the men, to take a strong line on the demand for abortion. The women's movement went on growing and organising.

On January 6th 1976 (Epiphany - the night when, in Italy, a sort of female Father Christmas on a broomstick is supposed to ride the night, distributing presents to good children) the feminists of Padova left another sort of present: feminist slogans and posters appeared on church walls, in the university departments, the hospitals and gynaecological clinics.

On January 18th 1976, again in Padova, women demonstrating outside the Cathedral, where a vigil against abortion was being held, were charged by the carabinieri. Two women and a man were arrested. Six days later 4,000 women were marching through the streets in protest, and for the right to choose how many children to have.

On March 8th 1976, International Women's Day, women marched through the Political Sciences department at Padova University, demanding that the professors should publicly declare their position on abortion, following which they occupied the Aula Magna (ceremonial hall) for an assembly.



On April 3rd 1976 in Rome a demonstration for the Right to Choose brought 50,000 women onto the streets, including women from the Left parties and the Unione Donne Italiana (Italian Union

of Women - close to the Communist Party).

On April 11th 1976 in Milan about 5,000 women demonstrated on the abortion issue. During the demonstration the windows of a bookshop selling religious publications were shattered.

On May 1st 1976 in Naples for the first time the women of the South joined in mass in the struggles of the Women's Movement, with a crowded demonstration through the centre of the city.

These were just some of the moments of organisation of the 5 years of women's struggle which led up to the passage through Parliament of Law No. 194.

The victory was great, especially given the strength of the opposition in a country where the Vatican wields not only an enormous ideological/religious power, but also more or less direct political power through the Catholic Party, the Christian Democrats (the majority party in Parliament).

## The Defects of the Law

However, the law is still very unsatisfactory. Its most obvious defect is that doctors and "para-medical" personnel may declare themselves "conscientious objectors" and therefore refuse to facilitate abortions in any way. Since 72% of those concerned have used this loophole, it is often extremely difficult, even in the North of Italy, to find doctors and other personnel prepared to furnish the necessary certificates, do the various analyses and to perform the operation. For women in the South this is normally impossible. For this reason, backstreet abortions and abortions in private "golden spoon" clinics - which are often run by the "conscientious objectors" themselves - continue, and in fact are on the increase. (According to data provided by the World Health Organisation, out of the 800,000 abortions practised each year in Italy, 600,000 are illegal).

## The Referendums

On May 17th 1981 the Italian electorate is being called to the ballot to vote on 2 referendums - amongst others - which if passed will change the law on abortion.

The referendum called by the Movement for Life would abrogate the law in such a way as to make legal abortion almost impossible.

The referendum called by the Radical Party would "improve" the law in a fairly minor way, but still leave intact gaping holes - such as conscientious objection; and would tend to produce a "free market" situation with the growth of a plethora of authorised private clinics.

## The Impossible Compromise

The following, translated from *Quotidiana Donne*, a feminist newspaper, is a letter from a group of sisters from Padova illustrating the "impossible" situation in which the Women's Movement now finds itself.



# DOSSIER THE IMPOSSIBLE COMPROMISE

□ This letter was written by women of the women's movement in Padova. It outlines some of the positions adopted by the autonomia in regard to the Abortion Referendum. From *Quotidiano Donne*.

Dear Sisters,

We are taking advantage of the space opened in *Quotidiana Donne* to continue the discussion on the question of abortion, a discussion started in various large meetings held in Padova both before and after the mass demonstration of 3,000 women called on November 15th 1980 for the following demands: free abortion on demand; safe contraceptive methods; money for the determination of our own lives and to be able to decide to be mothers when and as we want; less work inside and outside the home; and the re-opening of political space as a necessary step in our response to the criminalisation of the class struggle.

During this debate, as far as the two referendums on abortion are concerned, a consensus emerged that:

(a) the political terrain of the referendum, just as the whole terrain of politics and legislation, is completely foreign to the directions, forms of organisation and mobilisation expressed by the feminist movement;

(b) an attempt is being made to oblige us to choose between the "blind alley" imposed on us by the Left (whether to vote yes or no at the Radical Party's referendum) and the provocation of the "declared" Right (having to vote no at the referendum promoted by the Movement for Life).

That is, we are being forced to choose between the defence — as the PCI would have us do — of a law which is backward, repressive, and anyway largely ignored, and a "mini-reform" — as the Radicals want — of this law, which would still leave our real needs largely unsatisfied. The State responded to our struggles — for free abortion on demand as a minimum aim, for safe contraceptives so as not to have to abort, for the right to choose to have the children we want, for the right to live out our sexuality free from any form of work discipline — with the "194", a law which is repressive and punitive, limited to the single issue of abortion, and anyway not even enforced.

The State continues to be elusive on the question of the realisation of Family Planning Clinics and nurseries, on the question of the promotion of research into safe contraception, and the provision of information on and distribution of such methods (after all their bleatings about the violence of abortion) and on the question of income for women (after all their bleatings on the social value of maternity they recognise it with such provisions as cuts in public spending etc).

It must by now be clear to all of us that these referendums on abortion do not constitute a possible terrain of mediation for the interests and struggles of

women which have made themselves felt over the last ten years. It is not enough to say that the party-state is playing the game of qualitative and quantitative decline. The referendum manoeuvre — not to mention the present situation of abortion at the level of both legislation and health care — is a travesty of our real needs and a demonstration of an inability to mediate our struggles politically. This referendum is a failed attempt at massacre: failed, because the feminist movement has responded to the proposal by deserting the battlefield.

The insoluble contradiction that all the men of the realm have been called on to vote on an issue which they are even less familiar with than the use of a pressure cooker, should also be underlined. This pretence of "democracy" is used to deny us publicly our autonomy from men — and through men — from the State.

These referendums on abortion are anyway taking place in a general political climate of reaction and repression, in which the various political forces precipitate into the arena just in order to secure adherence to one or other of the political programmes; programmes in all cases of violence and death, (not only, obviously, in relation to women). What the governmental political forces have been and are conducting is a general action of the suffocation and defeat of all the gains won in the last years of class struggle.

From real wage cuts to layoffs (both of which affect first and foremost women), to the attack on material living conditions — an attack which includes not only price rises but also the attack on prostitutes, the increase in the incidence of rape and so on — to the closure of the political space for autonomous struggle, to the criminalisation of all forms of dissent which step outside the boundaries of the institutional channels — this at the same time that ample space is being given to the Catholic crusades — to the reorganisation of the fascists around the collections of signatures for the referendum to bring back the death penalty, to the abolition of the fascists and of the state apparatus implicated in the bombing of Piazza Fontana. These are just the most obvious articulations of the present capitalist counter-attack.

Even if the "constructive" examination of laws and bills is not our terrain, because the logic of the amendment and administration of their lagidly progressive improvement is foreign to us, we are moving on to this terrain in relation to the "194" and the Radical Party proposal because the information provided around this in the run-up to the referendum has

been particularly distorted. As far as the "194" is concerned, this is a law which does not affirm a woman's right to choose, but regulates in a heavily repressive way how, when and where she can abort; which does not permit minors to abort (how many father-bosses does a young woman have? Parents... doctor... magistrates...); which imposes a bureaucratic formula designed exclusively to control and intimidate, in which: a) the doctor assumes the role of authority able to determine and influence the woman's choice, denying her the certificate and making her feel guilty; b) operations such as the scrape — which in every other case imply hospitalisation for only one day — imply at least 3 days in hospital for an abortion.

Above all, the "194" is a law which is technically "illegal", because it contains its own contrary, given that its application is delegated to the doctors, who have the privilege of deciding if they are or are not in agreement with a state law (the effects of which can be summarised by saying that it is a law which functions only where the doctors are "good"). The Radical Party proposal, in fact, does not even call "conscientious objection" into question, even in terms of the way in which it is applied. (This "loophole" is so wide that for example a porter can refuse to push the stretcher for a woman going for an abortion, and the lack of non-objecting anaesthetists, operating theatre nurses or even laboratory analysts blocks the operation.)

Furthermore the Radical Party proposals could have the effect of deresponsabilising the public health service by enlarging the free market for abortion (which is anyway alive and well at a clandestine level because of the deficiencies of the "194", to the disadvantage of minors and women who are unable to spend 3 days in hospital, and because of "conscientious objection", which is widespread in the public sector, but not in the private, where a lot of money can be made) with the proliferation of private clinics — a tendency which is anyway being realised throughout the health care sector thanks to the new health reforms.

It remains to be said, however, that the abrogations proposed in the Radical Party referendum might prevent the negotiation of the worsening of the law between the Catholic and the lay parties who take the position of a defence of the "194" with the "double no".

The real problem around which the struggle must be continued now, however, is to guarantee everywhere free safe abortion and a woman's right to choose, and at the same time to continue the struggle at all the various levels of our political programme.

# DOSSIER THE ABORTION REFERENDUM

□ This article brings our account up to date as of our time of going to press. It deals with the Abortion Referendum, and the Freemason Scandal that felled the Government in May 1981.

Under Italian law a referendum is held, to repeal a law or parts of a law on the statute book, if over 5,000 legally-authenticated signatures of citizens requesting a referendum are gathered in 3 months. It was under this procedure that the Catholic church and the "movement for Life" had moved to severely curtail women's right to abortion in Italy.

The result of the referendum, on an 80% turn-out, was that 68% openly flouted directives from the Church hierarchy on a central matter of faith and morals: the abortion law (unsatisfactory as it is) will stay. This victory, or rather holding-the-line, was mostly thanks to the efforts of the women's movement, for which abortion has been one of the main issues since the mid-1970s.

In 1974 there had been a referendum, also promoted by the obscurantist party (the Christian Democrats) to abolish the recently-instituted right to divorce. This ended in a 59-41% defeat for the Catholics, Christian Democrats and MSI (neo-Fascists) who had supported the initiative. In the wake of the victory came the big electoral advances of the Italian Communist Party in 1975 and 1976, and the mass burgeoning of Italian feminism. In 1975 signatures were collected to hold a referendum to repeal the then existing Fascist law which forbade abortion completely. The present law was a result of a Parliamentary compromise reached by both the DC and PCI, in order to avoid that referendum, and to placate mounting street demonstrations by tens of thousands of women.

The political consequences of the abortion referendum are likely to be just as important: whereas in 1974 the Christian Democrat (DC) party had led the crusade to abolish divorce, suffering a humiliating defeat, this time they had left the Church to bear the brunt of the campaign, hoping thus not to have to pay the political consequences of a defeat, but to be in a position to profit from a victory. However, despite these precautions, the post-war equilibrium on which Italian capitalism rests is now seriously endangered.

Since the fall of Fascism, Italian capitalist interests have always clustered around the DC party, since it represented the only ideology (Catholicism) that was both suitable to capitalism and which had a mass appeal. In fact the DC has been uninterruptedly in the government ever since the War. And women have traditionally made up two thirds of its electorate. Italian voting patterns have always been very stable, although referenda can

upset them. In fact the fragility of this political equilibrium is now revealed in the results of the abortion referendum.

## The Freemason Scandal

Moreover, the credibility of the present ruling-class personnel is now at an all-time low. A secret society — the Freemasons' Lodge "P22", constituting a virtual State within the State — has been uncovered. The heads of the secret services, two ministers in the present Government, top financiers and publishing magnates, the national secretary of the Social Democrats, Centre, Right-wing and Socialist politicians and MPs, Carabinieri, army and air-force generals, admirals and police chiefs, newspaper editors, top civil servants, diplomats, bankers, TV chiefs and University barons have all been disclosed to be among the membership of this conspiracy. According to the handbook provided with the membership card, the aim of this conspiracy is "to obtain more power", and members are all sworn to secrecy and to

## RESULTS OF THE OTHER REFERENDA

Together with the Catholic-promoted referendum on abortion, 4 other referenda (all promoted by the small, civil-rights Radical Party) were voted at the same time:

● A referendum to liberalise even further the existing abortion law, in particular to remove the present ban on private abortions. This proposal did not, however, alter the provisions for conscientious objection by doctors, which renders the present law inoperant in many hospitals and indeed in whole regions of the South. In view of the fact that this referendum was only supported by the Radical Party in total isolation (who have very limited access to the media) and was hotly opposed by all the others — especially by the PCI, who called for a "double No" vote on the abortion proposals — it did not do too badly, gaining 11% of the votes (which is treble the Radical Party's own vote).

● A referendum to abolish life imprisonment (which in Italy really does mean life). This referendum was supported by the PCI and PSI, and yet did rather poorly, gaining 22% of the vote.

● A referendum to abolish gun licences (and thus prohibit private citizens from bearing arms). This one was opposed by virtually all the parties, and gained only 14% approximately.

● A referendum to abolish the "Cossiga Law", which entails police powers to hold people on suspicion for 48 hours; to search "adjacent blocks of apart-

"blind obedience" to the Grand Master, one Licio Gelli, a Right-wing Italo-Argentinian businessman who is now in hiding abroad.

This octopus-like organisation is heavily involved in most of the scandals of the past decade, including that of the fraudulent billionaire banker Sindona, and is strongly suspected of being behind the "strategy of tension" which resulted in the many Fascist killings from 1969 to the Bologna bomb of last year.

Prime Minister Forlani reluctantly disclosed the list of 953 names of members at the request of the Milanese judges who are investigating this ruling-class clandestine network. One ramification of this "scandal of scandals" is the arrest of top Milanese financiers of international renown at dawn on May 20th, on a charge of illegal export of capital. The Milanese Stock Exchange trembled.

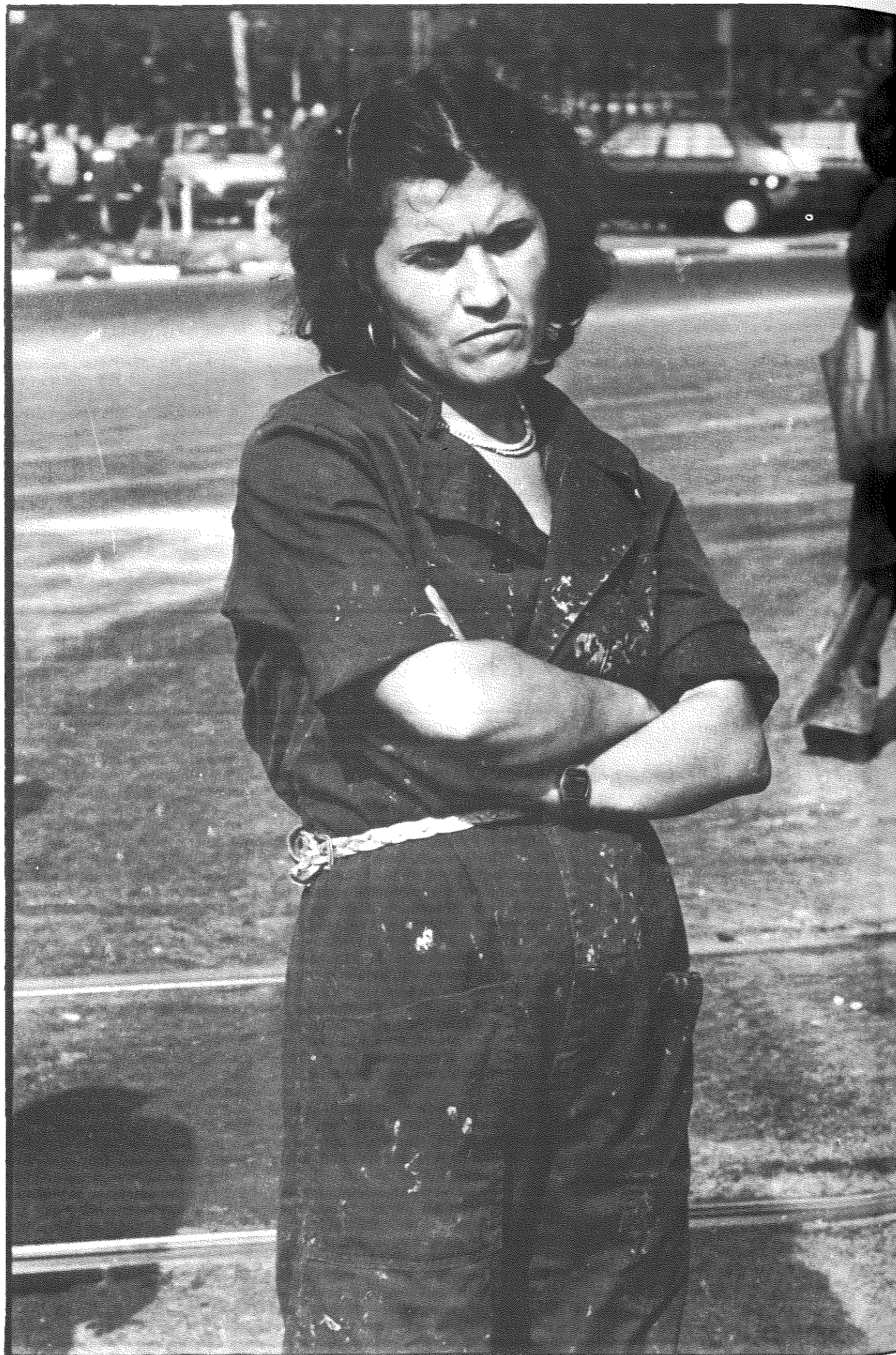
All of this points to political upheaval in the near future. The forthcoming local elections on June 21st will provide a good thermometer of the mood of the country.

ments" without warrant when hunting terrorists; the possibility that people accused of terrorism (like the April 7th group) may be kept in jail awaiting a definitive sentence for up to 12 years; and remittance of sentences for repentant terrorists. This referendum was opposed by all the parties with the exception of the Radicals, DP and PdUP to the Left of the PCI, and the MSI on the far Right. It polled about 15%.

The disappointing results of these civil liberties referenda may have many reasons. These include: a popular mood of "law and order"; the fact that the supporters of these referenda had almost no access to the media to explain their case; the fact that gun laws, life imprisonment and the Cossiga law are all issues that do not directly influence the average Italian's life; the media, the political parties, the Church and the people polarised all attention on the Catholic abortion referendum, which was seen by all sides as the only one with any chance of winning, and the only one with far-reaching political consequences; and the fact that the questions, as printed on the ballot sheets were so worded as to be totally unintelligible to anyone who was not a trained lawyer... in the resulting confusion many may have voted No on all 5 referenda just to be on the safe side!

□ Information supplied from *Leveller* magazine.





# DOSSIER FIAT: A HISTORIC TRIAL OF STRENGTH

□ The accounts contained in this pamphlet make no sense, except in the general class context. For this reason we include the following account of the September 1980 struggle against mass sackings at the FIAT motor company. The events raised many questions — and few answers.

In September/October 1980 all eyes in Italy were focussed on a crucial workers' struggle, whose outcome will define the future balance of class power in Italy. The FIAT motor company announced their intention to sack 14,500 workers. Their intention was to immobilise, to destroy a class vanguard.

## The Vanguard Role of the FIAT Workers

FIAT represents something very special in the history of the working-class revolutionary communist movement. It means the Factory Occupations of the 1920s, the work of Antonio Gramsci and *Ordine Nuovo*, and the founding core of Italy's Communist Party. It means the anti-Nazi and anti-capitalist Resistance movement of World War II and after (the radical workplace organisation, the purging of the factories). It means the reality of France's "May '68" drawn out and spread into a political and revolutionary movement that has lasted for 10 years. It means the "Hot Autumn" of 1969-70, with its revolutionary demands for *equal wage rises for all, not linked to productivity; immediate reductions of working hours; abolition of compulsory overtime; moves to the abolition of all grading divisions; complete parity with white collar workers; and the development of a ground-level shop steward structure (delegati), which partially transformed and democratised the Trade Unions from below.*

In books, tracts, leaflets, theses and pamphlets the FIAT working class has been studied and understood better than any other industrial/political reality in the world today. Groups like *Lotta Continua* and *Potere Operaio* were born there, and developed years of mass political work. Based on FIAT and the associated engineering industry, Turin has a radical and interventionist Trade Union structure, with big printing presses, educational courses, reams of educational handbooks for workers, and officers for culture, study and factory liaison.

In ten years the composition of that working class has changed. The explosive, volatile intake of raw labour from rural Southern Italy in the late '60s led to the spontaneous forms of action of the Hot Autumn. That raw labour was slowly integrated into factory life, while also providing many of the long-term militants. Then, the nature of the new labour-intake of the 1970s: this has been dictated by Italy's labour laws — the

FIAT Foundry workers remember their Resistance history



young unemployed of the North, the women, the second-generation immigrants — all with a far higher degree of education than their predecessors in the factory, and many with experience of the communist, feminist and youth movements behind them.

At certain points in FIAT's recent history, both Left and Right have been able to claim that "non-productivity rules at FIAT". The employers' Press has talked of "The Ungovernable Factory", of workers' insubordination and absenteeism at a mass level (at least up until the defeat of September 1980). At the same time, violence has played a role in the struggle. Inside the factory, individual hard-line foremen have been beaten up by groups of workers, or chained to railings, or marched round the factory at the head of workers' "internal demonstrations" (*cortei*). Outside the factory, armed political groups like *Prima Linea* and the Red Brigades have been involved — up to 1980 — in kneecappings, shootings and killings of FIAT management personnel: a campaign to strike fear into management. From subsequent arrests it appears that the armed political groups had members among the FIAT workforce.

Faced with abuse and violence inside and outside the factory, management was losing its will to manage. Perhaps with a "social truce", a "social contract" with the Unions, FIAT might have found the will to struggle on. But in 1980 the bottom dropped out of the car market. Their much hoped-for European market share plummeted. Their sales campaign in the UK, for instance, tried repeatedly to undercut the opposition, but with little success. Drawing a deep breath, and almost certainly (but not documentably) following Michael Edwardes' model of action at British Leyland, the Company

launched their attack.

At the moment of writing it appears that the FIAT working class has suffered a historic defeat; bastions of working-class power in the North of Italy, such as Turin, have been dealt a severe blow.

FIAT's aim, in short, both for their own sake and for the Italian employing class as a whole, was to dismantle the structural and economic base which had underpinned the working-class political vanguards of Northern Italy, in the same way that the industrial and political heartlands of the British Midlands and America's Detroit have been dismantled and decentralised in the past 5 years.

## An Outline of Developments: September/October 1980

*To summarise:* In late 1979 FIAT had sacked 61 workers for moral behaviour not consistent with the well-being of the Company. The Trade Unions were slow and divided in their reaction — not least because some of the workers were accused of using violence and abuse during strikes, and the PCI and the Unions were as concerned as FIAT management that they should be disciplined.

The way was thus opened for further moves. After the 1980 Summer shutdown, FIAT went for the big one: 14,500 workers were to be sacked from the car factories of the North. The biggest mass sackings in Italian history. There was uproar — but also great confusion. Tactics from the top, from the national Trade Union leadership were virtually non-existent. The initiative was left to the shop-floor worker, with old-time rank and file PCI members playing a mobilising role. Strikes and protests began at all FIAT plants in Turin (and there are many).

This rolling advance fast developed into all-out strikes. The massive 58,000-



strong FIAT-Mirafiori plant and others were picketed day and night, with mass pickets (sometimes weak, but sometimes up to 300 strong), with music, food, dancing, political meetings and discussion. The factories had red flags flying at the gates. Delegations of workers went to other factories — and direct to the citizens of Turin — to seek their support. The planned sackings at FIAT would cut into the economic heart of Turin, in a cumulative series of secondary effects. Support began to build. On September 24th, three mass demonstrations of workers, townspeople and students marched from the factories down the long boulevards into Turin's city centre, for a huge public rally. Again the red flags flew, and thousands sang the Red Flag and the Internationale. More and more insistently the call was spreading for the factories to be occupied — a direct challenge to the Government, to employers' property rights, to civil authority, and a direct recall of the revolutionary movement of the 1920s. In the local offices of the Engineering Union, seminars were organised on "The Factory Occupations of the 1920s". And, in answer to the workers of Poland's shipyards (with their factory-gate pictures of the Pope), the FIAT factory gates were hung with huge portraits of Karl Marx, Che Guevara and Antonio Gramsci.

Two days later, in a move pregnant with historical meaning, Communist Party Secretary Enrico Berlinguer came to Turin for a whistle-stop tour of factory-gate meetings with FIAT workers, organised by the local CP. The Party, after the dismal failure of the "Historic Compromise", was putting on a new oppositional face. The PCI knows that the balance of power within the FIAT factories is crucial for more general political calculations. Historically FIAT, and the historic role of engineering workers, has provided a base for the Party's membership and credibility. In the present case, said Berlinguer, the Party's intention was to get the sackings withdrawn, and to bring down the corrupt and inefficient Cossiga Government. The next day, for reasons not unconnected, the Government fell.

FIAT withdrew the sackings. Negotiations also began for a new Government formula. The Communist Party was temporarily in jubilant mood. But a fear and uncertainty hung in the air.

### The Silent Majority Moves

The State, the judiciary, the Press, the employers and the "silent majority" of foremen, lower management and "moderates" among the workforce, all began to move. FIAT replaced the 14,500 sackings with layoffs (on 80% of pay for 18 months) for 24,000 workers... a list drawn up by FIAT's Personnel Department, and highly politically selective. (Eg most of the CP's cell in the Press Shop... many, many shop stewards, etc). The newspapers printed FIAT-financed adverts appealing to public opinion. Police and armed Carabinieri began to

appear in front of picket lines. The "silent majority" began legal proceedings in the law courts, for their "right to work" to be upheld. There were isolated incidents in which foremen, scabs and right-wingers tried to break the picket lines.

Then, in early October, an estimated 40,000 foremen, supervisors, middle management, "moderate" workers and scabs marched through Turin in a completely unexpected show of force. Their strength was undeniable — and the great fear was for a violent showdown on the picket lines, backed by armed police, and with the legal sanctions of the law courts. To the disgust of the FIAT workers who had carried through this struggle, the Unions, running scared, signed a deal that gave the workers not an ounce more

than what FIAT had already demanded weeks previously in their programme of mass, politically selective, non-rotating layoffs.

In short, the political movement of the FIAT workers had been defeated in the field of tactics. The Unions and the Communist Party, in a moment of (not unjustified) fear, had run up the white flag on what may prove to be a "heroic last stand". In a "return of the repressed", the various forces of counter-revolution had found a point of unity, a moment of joint response to the growing working class autonomy of the past decade. Sociologists are already talking of the organised industrial worker as being "relegated now to minoritarian status in society". And we are left with a mass of vital political questions.

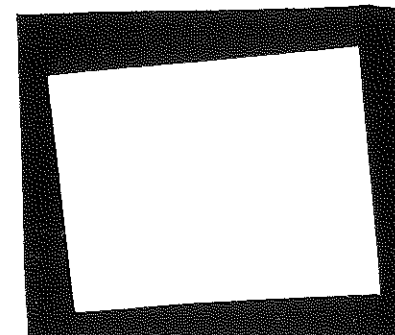
## SOME QUESTIONS ARISING

The crisis is a result of, and a response to, an accumulation of working class power. It is capital's attempt to redress the class/power balance. Thus it was at FIAT. Many points need to be examined. We shall shortly be publishing *The Book of FIAT*. This will be a collection of articles, leaflets, interviews, analyses, maps and photographs documenting the workers' struggle at FIAT from 1912 to the present day. The book will examine in detail questions and problems of class composition and class organisation in the present phase of the crisis. For the moment here are a number of "points arising" that we shall be examining in more detail later:-

1. Given that FIAT car production will presumably continue to exist as a major industrial sector, what are the Company's present strategic choices in terms of relocation of production, decentralisation of plant, restructuring of model ranges, transformation of product technologies and reorganisation of the workforce?
2. The "FIAT events" seemed like the heroic "last stand" of that historical militant vanguard, the "mass worker" of the motor industries. That vanguard has been a major political force in Western capitalism for the past 50 years. Is it now historically in decline? What are the signs one way or another, in relation to FIAT?
3. One model of workers' organisation is to advance, through participation and democratic processes, towards workers' control of the place and the means of production. This as a prelude to socialist revolution. Another is to refuse to cooperate with capital's mechanisms of planning and production, to reject work under capitalism, to pursue the material and other needs of the working class without work (the autonomists' idea of the "refusal of work"), and to bring about a structural crisis of capitalism. This also as a prelude to (communist) revolution. How have both of these options operated in the strategy of the political groups at FIAT?
4. The redundancies at FIAT were in part attributable to capital's use of the new-wave technologies against the working class. Some groups have proposed means to make the new technologies inoperable, both politically and mechanically. In what context has this sabotage been formulated and/or put into effect? In what sense does this strengthen or weaken the power of the working class in the present crisis?
5. Violence has played an important part in recent FIAT struggles, as practised by FIAT management on the one hand, and by workers' groups on the other — with the added dimension of intervention by external groups. How has this violence shown itself, on the part of management; in the programmes of the political groups; and in the everyday actions of the working class?
6. In the "FIAT events" the Communist Party opportunistically invoked the forms of militancy of the Polish workers — direct action; solidarity and communication; occupation of workplaces etc — to back its own model of organisation. What is the present relation of the Party to the working class, in the light of the Historic Compromise and later developments?
7. 24,000 FIAT workers are now laid off on 80% of pay for 18 months. What are the effects of this purge on workers' organisations inside the factory? And outside the factory, are new forms of class organisation being developed to meet the needs of those laid off and unemployed?
8. Further: the changing relation of the State; the effects of the crisis in the sphere of reproduction of labour; alterations in the nature of family and social relations; transformations in the sexual division of labour; the social force of needs and desires.

## Other RED NOTES publications

### ● ITALY 1977-78: LIVING WITH AN EARTHQUAKE

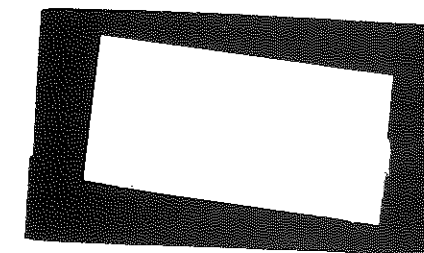


ISBN 0 906305 00 4  
Italy in the late 1970s was the highest point of a struggle which is crucially important in every country of Europe, the struggle between the revolutionary, communist forces in society, and the repressive power of Social Democracy and Eurocommunism. Our pamphlet was the first major English language publication about the Left in Italy to have appeared in 5 years. It dealt, in detail, with the "Movement" of 1977 — the events of Bologna and Rome, the Free Radio movement, the final conference of Lotta Continua, the Women's movement — the emergence of a new social subject of the struggle. 128 pages, printed A4, plentifully illustrated with cartoons and photographs. 2-colour board cover. The second edition also contains a detailed account of the Moro kidnap. Price £1, plus 24p postage.

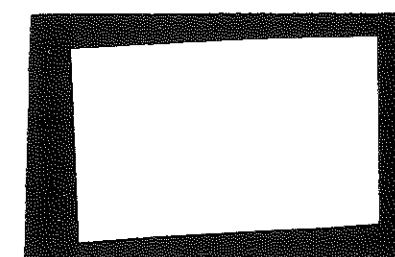
### ISBN 0 906305 03 9

A collection of 100 revolutionary and working class songs from Britain and abroad, fully illustrated. Includes sections of Women's songs, Irish songs, Prison songs, Army songs and many others. Contains guitar-chord notations, a chart of guitar chords, and a further reading list. The best revolutionary song-book in the English-speaking world (we think)! The new edition also contains printed music for the songs. Printed A4 size, plenty of cartoons and photos, 2-colour board cover. Price £1.25 plus 24p postage.

### ● A SONGBOOK (OF REVOLUTIONARY SONGS AND OTHER ITEMS)



### ● FIGHTING THE LAYOFFS AT FORDS ("The Little Red Blue Book")

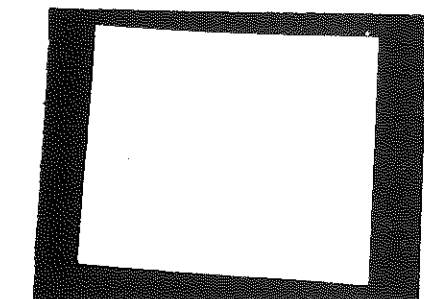


ISBN 0 906305 01 2  
68-page fully illustrated history of the Ford workers' fight for the Guaranteed Week — against the layoffs, for 40 Hours Pay, Work or No Work. Special reference to the 3-week blockade of Ford Dagenham in Summer 1977. A wealth of experience, drawn from the files of the Ford Workers' Group at Dagenham, and a historical analysis of the whole question of decasualisation of the motor industry. Printed A4 size, with many photographs of the Ford struggle, plus reprinted leaflets and interview material. Colour board cover. Price 65p plus 24p postage.

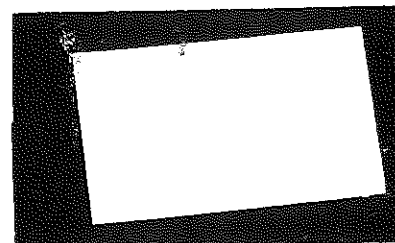
### ISBN 0 58035 031 X

A 240-page Dossier. Articles include chronologies, month by month, of the struggle in Britain; a Chronology of Women and Struggles in the Community; a Chronology of Ireland; a Chronology of Spain; detailed analysis of the Class Struggle in Italy; analysis and Chronology of the Oil Crisis; Notes on Agriculture; Notes on America 1964-74. Each section has an analytical Introduction. Maps; over 150 photographs; and an Index. Shortly to be republished jointly by Red Notes and Stage 1 Books. Price £3.95 paperback and £10 hardback.

### ● A DOSSIER OF CLASS STRUGGLE IN BRITAIN AND ABROAD — 1974



### ● WORKING CLASS AUTONOMY AND THE CRISIS



ISBN 0 906305 05 5  
A 206-page book dealing with the development of the ideas and practice of Working Class Autonomy in Italy. Contents include articles by Mario Tronti, Sergio Bologna and Toni Negri, documents of Potere Operaio, and a Dossier of the arrests on April 7th 1979. This book, unfortunately, is out of print — but we are looking for a publisher interested in doing a joint reprint. Sooner, rather than later, we hope.

○ For copies of any of these publications, or for information regarding our other activities, write to Red Notes at:  
Red Notes, BP15, 2a St Paul's Road, London N.1.

After the Moro kidnap... the most terrifying campaign of repression we have ever known was set into motion. 3,000 comrades have been thrown into jail in these last two years.

The repressive forces of the bourgeoisie, with the cooperation of those of the trade unions and the PCI, have swept the board clean of an entire generation of militants. The movement's political space has been enormously restricted. Practically all of its papers and journals have been banned. The space held by the comrades of autonomia inside the universities and factories has been closed. In the name of stamping out terrorism a great proletarian movement of an entirely new sort, a movement of young workers and metropolitan proletarians, a movement of resistance to work, has been struck a severely weakening blow.

I don't know if recovery will come about quickly. I rather doubt it. What is certain, though, is that the movement still exists, that it has not yet been beaten. Today the problem is the revival of mass struggle together with the reconquest of political space and the release of the comrades from prison.

Toni Negri, Trani Prison, November 1980