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Worldwide Report

TERRORISM

FOUO 4/82

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

SCRICCIOLO'S ROLE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN BR, BULGARIA

Rome L'ESPRESSO in Italian 23 May 82 pp 16-19

[Article by Maurizio De Luca: "There's a Bulgarian in His Past"]

[Text] The courts contend that Luigi Scricciolo was the link between the Red Brigades and Bulgaria. Here are the charges against him and his replies.

Rome, 3 March 1982--With a considerable display of force during a union meeting in the Convention Hall of Florence, the police arrested Luigi Scricciolo, chief of UIL's international affairs section, and his wife, Paola Elia. The accusations are indeed extremely serious: the couple are members of the Red Brigades and constitute the last Italian link in a chain of contacts between the terrorists who kidnapped NATO General James L. Dozier and an Eastern European country. That country is Bulgaria. The judges are now sure that they have ferreted out one of the BR's international connections. Scricciolo and his wife promptly denied all accusations and pleaded their innocence, while the public followed the case with bewilderment. Labelled a BR member, the highest union leader ever nabbed in an enquiry into terrorism has landed in jail.

The charges are based on testimony given by three "repentants:" Antonio Savasta, his companion Emilia Libera and subsequently Loris Scricciolo, a cousin of Luigi and himself a Red Brigadier. Their three testimonies, however, amount in substance to one, the confessions of Loris, since Savasta and Emilia Libera have repeated what they heard from him. Luigi's lawyers instantly dismissed Loris as a mythomaniac. Luigi and Paola Elia continue to protest their total innocence and avow that they are victims of some obscure intrigue. Both have been in prison now for three months, Luigi in a state of prostration, Paola Elia shattered by the accusations. The judges, however, affirm that they have uncovered fresh evidence which confirms the statements made by Loris. But the accused describe them as irrelevant coincidences and refute them altogether.

In brief, according to the testimony, this is what occurred: between December 1981 and January 1982, while the criminals led by Antonio Savasta held Dozier prisoner, the captors made contact with Luigi through Loris for the purpose of soliciting arms and money from Bulgaria in exchange for the

information, especially concerning NATO, they expected to extract from Dozier during his interrogations to which they subjected him. The contact with an official of the Bulgarian Embassy in Rome was allegedly arranged through Luigi and set for the afternoon of 2 January, the "repentants" explained. The meeting, however, was cancelled at the last moment, and the precipitous events that followed, ending with Dozier's liberation and the arrest of his captors, made any further contact impossible.

The magistrates have investigated (and are still investigating) the relations between Luigi Scricciolo and the Bulgarian Embassy, and gathered new elements, which they consider highly pertinent.

1 -- For a number of days, the Commune of Rome has been examining violations recorded by the police for cars parked illegally in front of the Scricciolo residence and in the neighboring streets. One of the violations involved a car licensed by the Bulgarian Embassy. Was this a mere coincidence that proves nothing, since the occupants did not necessarily visit the Scricciolo couple or, as the judges believe, a damaging piece of evidence which must be thoroughly investigated?

2 -- All the timecards indicating exactly at what hour the Scricciolos began their working day have been sequestered in the UIL headquarters. The result: before the 2 January meeting (subsequently cancelled) between the Bulgarian functionary and the BR, Luigi Scricciolo was in his office with a member of the Bulgarian mission. But that was a chance encounter, says Scricciolo, who has confessed to the circumstance but without giving a precise date. He explained that the two men met when the Bulgarian arrived at UIL headquarters in search of another UIL official to offer him a gift--a calendar and two recordings of folk songs--but did not find him. Scricciolo has testified that he saw the Bulgarian in the corridor and the visitor asked him about his absent colleague. Luigi did no more, he said, than point out his friend's desk to him. "But," they say at UIL, "the Bulgarian Embassy gave gifts also to officials of CISL and CGIL;" in their view, the encounter was accidental, another irrelevant coincidence. The judges, however, suspect that the foreigner had appeared at the last moment to cancel his session with the BR, scheduled for the same afternoon, and even explain why the appointment was annulled: in his year-end message to the Italian people several days before, President of the Republic Sandro Pertini had repeated his firm conviction that foreign agencies were working in league with the Italian terrorists. Alarmed, the Bulgarian cautiously called off the meeting.

3 -- During a dramatic confrontation between the two cousins, the "repentant" Loris spoke of an incident that occurred in November or December of 1981 when he spent the night at Luigi's apartment. In the morning, he said, he was awakened by a stranger, who looked him hard in the face and then departed. Listening to a conversation between Luigi and his wife, Loris understood that the man was a Bulgarian. Luigi retorted that he had absolutely no recollection of the incident, and denied that any Bulgarian had ever set foot in his apartment. Paola Elia also vigorously denied the episode, which involved her directly. All the same, the judges attach particular importance to this

element of Loris' revelations--that a full-time BR (Loris) and a Bulgarian emissary appeared simultaneously in the home of the man entrusted with managing UIL international affairs, and in his presence.

Apart from these evidences and Loris' deposition--which must naturally be confirmed before they can be admitted as probative--the judges declare that they have collected various other data that add up to proof of Luigi's close relations with the Bulgarians.

Scricciolo himself has admitted to long-time relations with the Bulgarians but always, he contends, on a normal basis without any judicial significance. In 1978, when he was active in the Italian Proletarian Democratic party, he alone represented this political group at meetings with delegates of [Bulgaria's] peasants' party. In 1980, he returned to Bulgaria, this time with his new wife, on a suspicious trip; the judges contest the facts he gave in his account of it. Indeed, Giorgio Benvenuto testified that the UIL never authorized him to establish relations with Bulgaria in its name; he was only honeymooning with his bride. Bound for the Greek island of Kalymnos, to save money the bridal couple booked a charter flight to Greece via Sofia, which accounts for their stopover in Bulgaria. And how long did they remain in Bulgaria? Two days, perhaps 3, the couple said at first. But inspecting their passports, the judges discovered that they had in fact spent an entire week in Bulgaria before continuing on to Greece. Why a week? Because, they replied, recalling somewhat tardily a detail the magistrates do not accept as irrelevant, they had missed their charter plane and had to wait for the next one. And what did you do in Bulgaria for a week? Toured around, they answered.

In that summer of 1980, from Sofia the Scricciolo couple went on to Kalymnos, where they found Loris with three friends--all of them subsequently arrested as BR activists--whom Luigi instantly sent away. One of them, also a "repentant," repeated to the judges what Luigi had told them: that he was extremely tired after having worked hard in Bulgaria. Was he tired of touring? No, the "repentant" answered; he spoke of attending long work sessions in Sofia. What work if UIL never delegated him to represent it with the Bulgarians? What work indeed? What sessions? Luigi rebutted when the judges confronted him with the man's testimony. I don't remember saying anything of the sort. If I did then it was a lie--to convince Loris how tired I felt. That was the only reason I threw him out of the house, together with his three friends. Certainly I did not know they were members of the BR, just as I never knew my cousin was a terrorist.

In short, nothing but coincidences. Like the name of a Bulgarian, Chergiev or something similar, scribbled in his address book, together with his telephone number using the heading "Bulgarian Embassy." "I don't remember him," Luigi Scricciolo told the judges. His lawyers discovered this person's signature on an official invitation the Bulgarians extended to the Italian unions, nothing suspicious about it. The magistrates, however, think that Chergiev is the same Bulgarian mentioned in various secret service reports as an international spy.

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

RAF SEEN COOPERATING WITH IRISH TERRORIST GROUPS

Bonn DIE WELT in German 26 May 82 p 5

[Article by Werner Kahl: "Partners for German Terrorists"]

[Text] Given its Marxist-Leninist orientation, the terrorist Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) has become partners with leftwing circles in the FRG. This is the conclusion arrived at by the Federal Criminal Police Bureau (BKA) based on a study of terrorist attacks against British facilities in western and northern Germany and in Berlin.

The INLA, founded as the radical Irish Republican Socialist Party's (IRSP) military arm in 1975, draws a sharp distinction between itself and the traditional IRA on ideological grounds, the BKA background report states. The IRA is more representative of the patriotic, national unity aspect—with its only real program being the call to "get the British out."

Funds Through Robberies

Seamus Costello, the Irish Marxist who was the logistics officer and a high-ranking member of the Official Sinn Fein (OSF), one of the two republican organizations in existence at the start of the present unrest in Northern Ireland, saw to it that the INLA would get the money it needed. In 1976, the terrorists made off with DM 1 million in a mail train robbery in County Kildare. One year later, Costello was shot and killed through the open window of his car in Dublin. The affairs of the INLA were then taken over by a six-man army council which makes the decisions on attacks against security forces and British army strongpoints as well as on the taking of hostages and the execution of bank robberies. Last fall, plans had been laid to kidnap Prime Minister Thatcher's son.

The police base their theory of INLA members cooperating with German groups on attacks carried out against British facilities in Hamburg and in Westphalia among other things. The investigators have come to the conclusion that the attack against the British consulate general in Hamburg on 24 November of last year was not carried out by Irish terrorists but by Germans acting on behalf of the INLA military council. No one was hurt when the explosive charge went off on a terrace on the Alster embankment; but the British ambassador was inside the building. The German helpers, the police believe, are probably closely associated with the "Red Army Fraction" (RAF).

When a 5-liter canister, manufactured in Czechoslovakia, was detonated at the British Mansfield barracks in Herford 24 hours after the Hamburg attack, the INLA again claimed responsibility for it. BKA technical experts found that similar canisters were detonated on 18 August of last year in a British apartment complex in Berlin-Charlottenburg and in front of an American barracks in Berlin-Lichterfelde on the same day. In both instances, Germans were also said to have had a hand in the attacks. These are likely to be Germans who, the BKA report states, identify with the "Irish freedom struggle."

Looking for Contacts

Because of its basic Marxist-Leninist orientation, the INLA works together internationally with other terrorist groups that think along the same lines, taking their cue from Lenin's maxim that the revolution will not succeed until the last vestiges of the capitalist regime have been swept away.

One training center for Germans who were able to escape detection was located in Dublin last year. Many of the materials confiscated in Ireland, the police have reason to believe, provide evidence of close contact between German and Irish terrorists. The number of women used to establish such contacts is inordinately high. This spring, the Dublin police reported that six Germans—all of them women—tried to establish contact with Irish terrorist organizations in March.

While the INLA possesses a network of helpers in Germany, the Swiss federal police have found that the IRA is looking for bases of operation in Switzerland. According to its own pronouncements, the INLA will not end its underground struggle until an authoritarian Irish state modeled after socialist Cuba has been set up—Ireland, a new Cuba in the Irish Sea.

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

RAF PRONOUNCEMENTS

Malmo RAF: TEXTE in German 1977 pp 23-26, 62-74, 334-336, 448-454

[Excerpts] Part IV

It is a fragment of structure, Ulrike actually wanted to say that in Stammheim--to dispel the ringleader theory which the federal prosecution wanted to use to bring the process to a head. Andreas was against it and we wanted to construct it differently.

It is not particularly important, but now I published it anyway because it refutes Buback's dirty accusation--"contradictions"--and because Ulrike was working on it at the very end.

It can only be published as a whole and in conjunction with the two letters to Hanna Krabbe and to the prisoners in Hamburg--11 May 1976--Jan.

Fragment on Structure

What Habermas developed, has a prerequisite, of which we say that it is the form of proletarianization of the class in the metropolitan areas: the isolation through the totality of alienation in a completely socialized production.

Isolation is the condition for manipulation.

Freedom from this apparatus is only possible by completely negating it, i.e. an attack against the apparatus by the fighting collective, which will and must be the guerrillas, if it is to become a strategy, in other words, victory.

Collectivism is a factor in the structure of the guerrillas and--subjectivity is a prerequisite, a condition in each individual, as is his decision to fight--the most important thing. The collective is the group, which thinks, feels and acts as a group.

Leading the guerrillas is the one or are the ones who keep open the collective process of the group and organize it in the process of their practice: anti-imperialist struggle, propelled through self-determination and the decision of

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each individual to be part of the intervention, while each individual realizes that he can only be what he wants to be collectively, which is the group in which everything is in good hands: the military, politics, strategy, the seed of the new society in its process as a group obligated to the anti-imperialist struggle.

The line, i.e. the logic and rationality of the separate tactical steps: actions--is prepared by all of them from the strategy--it is the result of the discussion process, the experiences and knowledge of everybody. Thus it is established collectively and subsequently is binding.

Also: The line is developed through the process of practice and the analysis of its conditions, experience and anticipation--which is possible as a uniform process, because there is agreement on the goal and the will to reach it.

Later, when the line has been prepared and understood, the process of the coordination of the practice of the groups will proceed militarily as a command--its implementation demands absolute discipline and simultaneously absolute independence, i.e. autonomous orientation and decisionmaking abilities in every situation under changed conditions.

What unites the guerrillas at every moment is the will of each individual to fight the battle...

Thus, leadership is a function which it needs for its process, it cannot be usurped, it is the absolute opposite of what those who are conducting the psychological warfare are saying about the RAF leadership: Andreas. If Andreas were the kind of person the federal prosecution makes him to be, there would not be an RAF, there would not be the process of the politics of these 5 years, to say it simply: We would not be there. He is the leader of the RAF because from the beginning he was what the guerrillas needed most: A will, awareness of the goal, determination, collectivism.

When we say: the line is developed through the process of practice and the analysis of its conditions, experience and anticipation, then the leader is the one who has the greatest vision, the most sensitivity and the greatest strength to coordinate the collective process, whose goal is the independence and autonomy of each individual--militarily: the individual fighter...

This process cannot be organized in an authoritarian manner, no gang is capable of that, and a leader in the form of a gang chief is out of the question.

The goal is clear of the federal prosecution's persecution of Andreas: It is preparing the demobilization of public opinion against his murder--it is presenting the whole matter in such a manner as if only this one type had to be eliminated: Andreas; and the problem that the urban guerrillas are causing the state--Maihofer says, it is the only problem which the state does not have under control--would be solved....

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We doubt that. During the process of these 5 years we learned from Andreas-- because he is what we call the example, somebody from whom one can learn--to fight, to fight again and again....

Because nothing of what he does and what we do is irrational, nothing is forced, nothing is tormented....

One of the reasons why the federal prosecution hates Andreas so much is that he actually fights with all weapons--that we learned through him that the bourgeoisie does not have any weapons that cannot be turned around and used against it: the tactical principle which is based on the concept of the process in which capital develops its revolutionary contradiction. And thus, Andreas is the guerrilla of whom Che says that he is the group.

He is the one among us who for a long time and always adopted the function of no possessions--the function of the guerrillas--who anticipates the group and who therefore can lead its process because he understands that he needs the group and because of the fact of total expropriation, the metropolitan form of proletarianization: developed the isolation of the guerrillas, the strength of subjectivity; the will to be a force in the process of building a guerrilla organization in the FRG....

Where, once again, it must be mentioned that at the beginning of all revolutionary initiatives and during the objective natural process--we are thinking of the mass strike movement in Russia in 1905, of the October revolution--gave direction, permanence, coherence, strategy, continuity and political strength, which affected the decisions and willpower of individuals....

For Gramsci the will is the condition without equal: The strong will as a force of the revolutionary process in which subjectivity is practiced.

Part IX--Speech by Ulrike for the Liberation of Andreas, Moabit, 13 September 1974

This trial is a tactical maneuver of the psychological warfare against us by the Federal Criminal Police Bureau, the federal prosecution, the courts--with the purpose of masking the political interest in our trials in West Germany and the strategy of destruction programed into it by the federal prosecution; presenting a picture of dissension among us by separate sentencing; splitting up in the public consciousness the political interrelationship between all the trials against RAF prisoners through separate public displays of some of us to erase from the memory of the people the fact that on the territory of West German imperialism and in West Berlin a revolutionary urban guerrilla movement exists. We--RAF--will not participate in this process.

Anti-Imperialist Struggle

Anti-imperialist struggle, if it is not to be an empty phrase, aims at annihilating, destroying, shattering the imperialist power system--politically, economically, militarily; the cultural institutions through which imperialism produces the homogeneity of the ruling elite and the communications systems which it uses for its ideological control.

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Within the international framework, the military annihilation of imperialism means: military alliances of U.S. imperialism around the world; here: NATO and the Federal Armed Forces; within the national framework: the armed formations of the state apparatus, which embodies the power monopoly of the ruling class and their power within the state--here: police, the Federal Border Police, the Secret Service; economical annihilation means: state and nonstate bureaucracies, organizations and power apparatuses--parties, labor unions, media--all of which are dominating the people.

Proletarian Internationalism

The imperialist struggle here is not and cannot be: a national liberation struggle--not its historical perspective: socialism in a country. Compared to the transnational organization of capital, worldwide military alliances of the U.S. imperialism, the cooperation between police and the Secret Service, the international organization of the ruling elite in the sphere of influence of U.S. imperialism--our side, the side of the proletariat, subscribes to the following: revolutionary class struggles, the liberation struggles of the peoples of the Third World, the urban guerrillas in the metropolitan areas of imperialism: proletarian internationalism.

Since the Paris commune it has been clear that any attempt by any people in any imperialist state within the national framework brings out the revenge, the armed forces, and deadly enmity of the bourgeoisie of all imperialist states; just like NATO which is now establishing a reserve unit for internal disturbances to be stationed in Italy.

"A people that oppresses others cannot emancipate itself," Marx says. The military relevance of the urban guerrillas, the RAF here, the Red Brigade in Italy, the United Peoples Liberation Army in the United States is the fact that within the framework of the liberation struggles of the peoples of the Third World in the solidaric struggle, imperialism can be stabbed in the back here from where it exports its troops, its weapons, its instructors, its technology, its communications systems, its cultural fascism for the oppression and exploitation of the peoples of the Third World. The strategic destiny of the urban guerrillas is: to unleash in the hinterland of imperialism the guerrillas, the armed, anti-imperialist struggle, the people's war in a protracted process. Because the world revolution is definitely not a matter of a few days, weeks, months, not the matter of only a few uprisings by the people, not a short process, not the seizure of power from the state apparatus--something that revisionist parties and prospective parties have in mind or maintain, as long as they have anything in mind at all.

On the Concept of the National State

In the metropolitan areas, the concept of the national state is a fiction which no longer has any basis because of the realities of the ruling classes, their politics and their power structure, which does not even correspond any longer to language borders, since the rich countries of West Europe contain millions of working emigrants. Rather, the internationalization of capital, the new media, the mutual dependencies of economic development, the expansion

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of the European Community, the crisis are also subjectively contributing to the formation of an internationalism of the proletariat in Europe--consequently the labor-union apparatus has been working for years on subjugating controlling, institutionalizing and oppressing the proletariat.

The fiction of the national state, to which the revisionist groups are clinging with their organizational forms, corresponds to its legalistic fetishism, its pacifism, its mass opportunism. We do not reproach the members of these groups because they come from the petty bourgeoisie but because in their political and organizational structure they are reproducing the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie, which has always been at odds with the internationalism of the proletariat and which--and it cannot be otherwise because of its class status and its reproduction conditions--has always been organized in a complementary manner to the national bourgeoisie, the ruling class in the state.

The argument that the masses are not yet ready reminds us--the RAF and imprisoned revolutionaries in isolation, in the tracts, in the artificial brainwashing collectives, in jail and in illegality--only of the arguments of the colonial pigs in Africa and Asia that have been pronounced for 70 years: the blacks, the illiterates, the slaves, the colonized, the hungry, the people suffering under colonialism and imperialism are not yet ready to take over their own administration, industrialization, their school system, their future as human beings. It is the argument of people who are concerned about their own positions of power, who want to dominate the people and who do not want the emancipation and liberation struggle.

The Urban Guerrillas

Our action on 14 May 1970 is and remains the exemplary action of the urban guerrillas, it already contains or contained the elements of the strategy of the armed, anti-imperialist struggle: It was the liberation of a prisoner from the grasp of the state apparatus. It was a guerrilla action, it was the action of a group, which became the military-political nucleus through the resolution to do the action. It was the liberation of a revolutionary, a cadre, who was and is indispensable for the buildup of the urban guerrillas, not only in the manner in which any revolutionary in the ranks of the revolution is indispensable, because he already embodied at that time everything that enables the guerrillas to conduct the military-political offensive against the imperialist state: determination, the will to act, the ability to orient oneself only and exclusively toward the goals, while keeping open the collective learning process of the group, to practice leadership as collective leadership from the beginning, to pass on the learning process of each individual collectively.

The action was exemplary, because the important thing in the anti-imperialist struggle is the liberation of prisoners, from jail, which has always been the system for all the exploited and oppressed classes of the people and without historic perspective as death, terror, fascism and barbarism; from imprisonment of total alienation, self-alienation, from the political and existential state of emergency in which the people are forced to live, in the

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grasp of imperialism, the culture of consumption, the media, the control apparatus of the ruling class, dependent on the market and on the state apparatus.

The guerrillas, not only here, it was the same in Brazil, in Uruguay, in Cuba and for Che in Bolivia, always start with nothing and the first phase of their buildup is the most difficult; as long as the descendants from the bourgeoisie--which has been prostituted by imperialism--and the proletarian class--which has been colonized by the bourgeoisie--are not contributing anything that could be used in this struggle. We are a group of comrades, determined to act, to leave the state of lethargy, of verbal radicalism, strategy discussions that are becoming more and more obsolete, to fight. But everything is still missing--not only all the funds; only now it becomes evident what kind of person one is. The metropolitan individual emerges from the decaying process, the deadly, false, alienated, interconnected living conditions of the system--factory, desk, school, university, revisionist groups, apprenticeship and casual jobs. The effects are becoming apparent of the separation of work and private life, the division of labor into intellectual and physical work, the dehumanization through the hierarchically organized work processes, the psychic deformations of a society. interested in things, a metropolitan society in the process of decay and stagnation.

But that is who we are, that is where we are coming from: the product of the annihilation and destruction processes of the metropolitan society, the war of all against all, the competition of everybody against everybody the system which is dominated by the law of fear, the pressure to perform, the one-at-the-expense-of-the-other-one, the division of the people into men and women, young and old, healthy and sick, foreigners and Germans and the battle for prestige. And that is where we are coming from: the isolation in the row house, in the concrete silos of the suburbs, the cell-jails, asylums and tracts; brainwashing through the media, consumption, corporal punishment, the ideology of nonviolence; depression, sickness, declassification; the insult and humiliation of people, of all the people exploited in imperialism. Until we comprehend the need of each individual among us as a necessity of liberation from imperialism, as a necessity to fight in the anti-imperialist struggle, that there is nothing to be lost with the annihilation of this system but everything is to be gained in the armed struggle: collective liberation, life, humanity, identity; that the cause of the people, the masses, the assembly worker, the destitute, the prisoners, the apprentices, the lowest masses here and the liberation movements of the Third World is our cause. Our cause: armed, anti-imperialist struggle, the cause of the masses and the other way around--even if it can only be realized during a long process of development of the military-political offensive of the guerrillas, the unleashing of the people's war.

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The difference between really revolutionary politics and alleged revolutionary politics is: We are proceeding from the objective situation, objective conditions, from the real situation of the proletariat, the masses in the metropolitan areas--part of it is the fact that the people of all classes and from every angle are in the grasp and under the control of the system. The opportunists proceed from the alienated consciousness of the proletariat--we proceed from the fact of the alienation which gives cause to the necessity for liberation. "There is no reason," Lenin wrote in 1916 against Kautsky, the colonial and renegade swine, "to take seriously the idea that in capitalism the majority of the proletarians could be joined in organizations. Secondly--and that is the main thing--what is important is not so much the number of members in the organization but rather the real, objective meaning of their policies: Do these policies represent the masses, do they serve the masses, i.e. the liberation of the masses from capitalism or do they represent the interests of the minority, their reconciliation with capitalism? We cannot and nobody can determine exactly what part of the proletariat follows and will follow the social chauvinists and opportunists. It will only become apparent during the struggle, it will eventually be decided by the socialist revolution. But it is our duty if we want to remain socialists to go deeper, to the lowest masses, to the real masses: That is the complete meaning of the struggle against opportunism and the total content of this struggle."

The Guerrillas Are the Group

The function of leadership in the guerrilla movement, Andreas' function in the RAF is: orientation--not only to distinguish between major and minor items in every situation but also to consider each situation as a part of the total political connection being aware of the individual factors, never to lose sight of the goal--the revolution--over the details, specific technical, logistic problems, never to lose sight of the class problem in connection with the alliance policy, never to ignore the strategic in connection with the tactical connection, which means: never to fall victim to opportunism. It is "the art of combining the dialectically firm principles with agility of actions, the art of applying the law of development while leading the revolution. It will convert progressive changes into qualitative jumps," Le Duan says. It is also the art of "not shrinking from the enormity of one's own purposes," but to pursue them persistently and imperturbably, the determination to learn from mistakes, to learn in general. Every revolutionary organization, every guerrilla organization knows that the principle of practice demands the development of these abilities--every organization which proceeds from dialectical materialism, whose goals is victory in the people's war and not the establishment of a party bureaucracy, partnership in the power of imperialism.

We are not talking about democratic centralism, because the urban guerrillas cannot have a centralistic apparatus in the metropolitan FRG, it is not a party but a politico-military organization which develops its leadership functions collectively from each individual unit, group--with the tendency of dissolving them within the groups, during the collective learning process.

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The goal is always the independent, tactical orientation of the fighter, the guerrilla, the cadre. The collectivization is a political process which extends to everything, interaction and communication, the process of learning from one another in all work and educational settings. Authoritarian leadership structures have no material basis in the guerrilla movement in part because the real, i.e. the voluntary development of the productive power of each individual is a condition for the effectiveness of the revolutionary guerrillas: using weak forces to intervene revolutionary, unleashing the people's war.

Psychological Warfare

Andreas, because he is and was from the beginning: revolutionary, finds himself in the spiderweb of psychological warfare which the bullies have been conducting against us since 1970, the first appearance of the urban guerrillas and their action of liberating him from jail.

The principle of psychological warfare is to incite the people against the guerrillas, to isolate the guerrillas from the people: to distort through personalization and psychologization, to mystify the material, real goals of the revolution that are sought--liberation from the domination of imperialism, of occupied territories, from colonialism and neocolonialism, from the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, from military dictatorship, exploitation, fascism and imperialism, to make the understood unintelligible, to make the rational appear irrational, the humanity of the revolutionaries as inhumanity. The method is: agitation, lie, dirt, racism, manipulation, mobilization of the unconscious fears of the people, of the reflexes--the result of decades and centuries of colonial and exploiting rulers--of existential fears and superstitions toward incomprehensible forces, the impenetrable power structure.

In their attempt to destroy the cause: revolutionary politics, armed anti-imperialist struggle in the metropolitan FRG and its effects on the consciousness of the people by using personalization and psychologization they present us as what they are, the structure of the RAF as the one which they employ for their domination--the manner in which their power apparatuses are organized and functioning: like the Ku Klux Klan, the Mafia, the CIA and how the character masks of imperialism and its puppets are getting what they want: through oppression, bribery, competition, protectionism, brutality, stopping at nothing.

In their psychological warfare against us, the bullies are banking on the blending of performance pressure and fear which the system has been pounding into everybody who is forced to sell his working energy to be able to live at all. They are banking on the propaganda syndrome which for decades and centuries has been used by the ruling class against the people, expounding anticommunism, anti-Semitism, sexual oppression, oppression through religion, through authoritarian school systems, racism, brainwashing through the consumer culture and imperialistic media, reeducation and the "economic miracle."

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The thing that is so shocking about the guerrillas in their first phase, what was shocking about our first action, is the fact that people act without letting themselves be influenced by the forces of the system, without paying attention to the media, without fear; the fact that people act by proceeding from their own experiences and those of the people. Because the guerrillas proceed from the facts that the people experience themselves: exploitation, terror of the media, insecurity of living conditions in spite of the high level of technicalization and the enormous riches in this country--psychological diseases, suicide, child abuse, school misery, housing shortage. The thing that was so shocking about our action as far as the imperialist state is concerned was the fact: that in the consciousness of the people, the RAF was understood as that which it is: the practice, the matter which results logically and dialectically from the existing conditions--the practice, which is an expression of actual conditions, an expression of the only real possibility to change them, to overturn them, to return dignity to the people, to give new meaning to the struggles, revolutions, uprisings of the past--to give to the people a new consciousness of their history. Because all history is the history of class struggles, because a people that has lost the dimension of revolutionary class struggles is forced to live in a state of loss of history; it is robbed of its self-confidence, i.e. its dignity.

As far as the guerrillas are concerned, everybody can determine for himself where he stands--anyway, he can find out where he stands at all, his place in the class society, in imperialism. Because there are many who think that they are on the side of the people--but as soon as clashes with the police develop, as soon as the people start to fight, they run away, denounce, stop, move over to the side of the police. It is a problem that was discussed by Marx again and again, according to which someone is not what he thinks he is, but what he is when it comes to his functions, his role in the class society. Unless he consciously acts against the system, i.e. arms himself and fights, he is living on the system and a real instrument for the purposes of the system.

With their psychological warfare the bullies are trying to take the facts and turn them upside down again after they had been put on their feet by the actions of the guerrillas--these facts are that the people are not dependent on the state, but the state is dependent on the people, the people do not depend on corporations, multinational companies and factories, but the capitalist pigs depend on the people, the police is not there to protect the people from criminals but to protect the order of the exploiters of imperialism from the people, the people do not depend on the judicial system, but the judicial system depends on the people, we do not depend on the presence of U.S. troops and their facilities here but U.S. imperialism depends on us. Through personalization and psychologization they are projecting onto us what they are, the cliches of the anthropology of capitalism, the reality of their character masks, their judges, prosecutors, their prison pigs, fascists: the pig which enjoys alienation, which lives on tormenting, oppressing and exploiting others, whose basis of existence is career, rising, stopping, living at the expense of others, exploitation, hunger need, the misery of several billion people in the Third World and here.

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What the ruling class hates most about us is the fact that the revolution is lifting its head again in spite of 100 years of repression, fascism, anticommunism, imperialist wars, genocide. During their psychological warfare, the bourgeoisie, the bully state, heaped on us, particularly Andreas, everything that it hates and fears in the people. He--Andreas--is the embodiment of the mob, the street, the enemy; we represent what is threatening to them and will fell them; the commitment to revolution, to revolutionary force, to politico-military action--its own impotence, the limit of its means when the people arm themselves and begin to fight.

In its propaganda against us, the system is not portraying us but itself, just like all the propaganda that is directed against the guerrillas gives information about them who produce it over their potbellies, their goals, ambitions and fears. Even "self-proclaimed avant-garde," for instance, makes no sense. To be avant-garde is a function; one cannot appoint oneself to it nor claim it. It is a function which the people bestow on the guerrillas representing their own consciousness, in the process of their own awakening, the rediscovery of their own role in history, by recognizing themselves in the action of the guerrillas, the necessity "in itself" to destroy the system, recognizing the necessity "by itself" through the actions of the guerrillas, who already made it a necessity by itself. The term of "self-proclaimed avant-garde" expresses a prestige thinking which belongs in the ruling class, is looking for power--it has nothing to do with the function of owning nothing, the proletariat, with dialectical materialism, with the anti-imperialist struggle.

The Dialectic of Revolution and Counterrevolution

It is the dialectic of the strategy of the anti-imperialist struggle: Through the defensive, the reaction of the system, the escalation of the counterrevolution, the change from the political state of emergency to the military state of emergency, the enemy makes itself know, becomes visible--and thus, through its own terror, it arouses the masses against itself, it increases contradictions, makes the revolutionary struggle mandatory.

Marighela: "The basic principle of the revolutionary strategy is to carry out revolutionary actions under the conditions of a permanent, political crisis, in the city as well as in the country, of such massive proportions that the enemy finds itself forced to change the political situation of the country into a military one; the result will be satisfaction in all classes and the military will be the only responsible party for all mistakes."

And A.P. Puyan, a Persian comrade: "The pressure of increasing counter-revolutionary forces on resistance fighters will inevitably lead to more massive repression of all dominated levels and classes of society. As a consequence, the ruling class increases the contradictions between the oppressed classes and itself and by creating such an atmosphere in which it will inevitably find itself, the political consciousness of the masses will progress by leaps and bounds."

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And Marx: "The revolutionary progress breaks ground by producing a powerful, united counterrevolution, by the creation of an enemy; and only during the process of fighting them, the subversive party can mature into a real revolutionary party."

In 1972, when the bullies mobilized a total of 150,000 men in search of the RAF, conducted a public search over television, the chancellor got involved, the entire police force was centralized at the Federal Criminal Police Bureau--at that time, a small group consisting of a small number of revolutionaries already required the use of all material and personnel resources of this state. Materially it became visible that the power monopoly of the state is limited, that its strength can be depleted, that tactically, imperialism is a man-eating monster, that strategically, it is a paper tiger. Materially it became apparent that it is up to us whether oppression remains and it is also up to us whether it is broken.

Now the pigs are in the process, following all the preparations during their psychological warfare against us, of murdering Andreas. We, the political prisoners from the RAF and other anti-imperialist groups, are beginning a hunger strike today. The liquidation search by the bullies against the RAF and the psychological warfare against us corresponds to the fact that most of us have been in solitary confinement for years, in other words: annihilation confinement. But we are determined not to stop thinking and fighting--we are determined to take the stone which the imperialist state lifted against us and drop it on their own feet.

The bullies are in the process--they also tried it during the previous hunger strike in the summer of 1973--of murdering Andreas by withholding liquids from him. At that time the following happened: The attorneys and the public were led to believe that after a few days he was again getting something to drink, in reality he was getting nothing and the pig, the doctor in Schwalmstadt, told him after 9 days without liquids--he was already blind: "Either you will be dead in 10 hours or you will drink milk." In the meantime, Hesse's minister of justice visited his cell to take a look, and Hesse's ancient doctor corps was meeting during that time in Wiesbaden in the Ministry of Justice. There is also a decree, according to which hunger strikes are to be broken by withholding liquids. Complaints against the pig of a doctor, who tried to carry out the murder, were rejected. The enforcement procedure for the complaint has been discontinued.

The following statement is a reply: If the bullies should carry out their intentions and their plans of withholding liquids from Andreas, all the striking prisoners from the RAF will answer by refusing to take any liquids. The same applies to any murder attempt by withholding liquids, no matter where it is carried out or who the striking prisoner is.

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Part XXVI--Pronouncement of the Commando Holger Meins, 24 April 1975

To the governments of the FRG and the Kingdom of Sweden

On 24 April 1975 at 11:50 am, we occupied the FRG embassy in Stockholm and captured 12 embassy employees, among them Ambassador Dieter Stoecker, Military Attache Andreas von Mirbach, Economic Adviser Heinz Hillegaart and Cultural Adviser Anno Elfgen, to obtain the release of 26 political prisoners in the FRG. They are:

Gudrun Ensslin, Stuttgart	Ali Jansen, Berlin
Andreas Baader, Stuttgart	Brigitte Mohnhaupt, Berlin
Ulrike Meinhof, Stuttgart	Bernhard Braun, Berlin
Jan Raspe, Stuttgart	Ingrid Schubert, Berlin
Carmen Roll, Stuttgart	Annerose Reiche, Berlin
Werner Hoppe, Hamburg	Ilse Stachowiak, Hamburg
Helmut Pohl, Hamburg	Irmgard Moeller, Hamburg
Wolfgang Beer, Hamburg	Sigurd Debus, Hamburg
Eberhard Becker, Hamburg	Christa Eckes, Hamburg
Manfred Brashof, Zweibruecken	Wolfgang Stahl, Hamburg
Klaus Juenschke, Zweibruecken	Margrit Schiller, Luebeck
Wolfgang Quante, Bremen	Monika Berberich, Berlin
Ronald Augustin, Bueckeburg	Johannes Weinreich, Karlsruhe

1. Within 6 hours, until 9 pm, the imprisoned comrades will be brought together at Frankfurt's Rhein-Main airport where they will be able to talk to one another and with their attorneys without supervision. They will have an opportunity to inform themselves of the happenings over radio and television.

Communication will be established between us and the prisoners over the telephone, later over radio. It will be maintained until they land in the country which will accept them.

--A Lufthansa, Boeing 707, refueled, with a 3-man crew is to be ready at the Rhein-Main airport.

Within 10 hours, until 1 am

--the prisoners will be flown out of the FRG. They will be accompanied only by the ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden in the FRG--Backlund--and one of their attorneys. We will inform them of their destination during the flight.

--the federal government will give to each prisoner \$20,000.

2. Our pronouncement, statements by prisoners or their attorneys will be relayed immediately to international news agencies and in the FRG they will be broadcast in full over radio and television. During the entire procedure of the action, the government must make public its decision over the mass media. The departure of the comrades will be broadcast live over FRG and Swedish television.

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3. We will not negotiate our demands and not extend the deadlines for their fulfillment. Should the FRG try to delay the release of the prisoners, we will shoot and kill one employee of the FRG Foreign Office at the end of every hour that exceeds the first and/or the second ultimatum. Any attempt to storm the embassy would mean the death of everybody in the house. In case of an attack, we will blow up the embassy with 15 kilograms of TNT which has been placed in the rooms.

After landing, the liberated comrades will confirm to us over the radio that they have been granted permission to stay. We will then release some of the embassy employees and announce the procedure for our withdrawal.

We will be human beings--freedom through armed anti-imperialist struggle.

The police is responsible for the shooting death of Military Attache Andreas von Mirbach. In spite of an extension of the ultimatum, the police did not leave the embassy building.

Stockholm, 24 April 1975
Commando Holger Meins

Part XXX--Commando Pronouncements

Frankfurt:

"On Thursday, 11 May 1972--the day on which the U.S. imperialists began the bomb blockade against North Vietnam--the 'Commando Petra Schelm' was responsible for an explosion of three bombs containing 80 kilograms of TNT--in the Frankfurt headquarters of the Fifth Army Corps of the American Forces in West Germany and West Berlin. West Germany and West Berlin are no longer to be a safe hinterland for the extermination strategy in Vietnam. They must know that their crimes against the Vietnamese people have created for them new, bitter enemies, that there will no longer be any place in the world where they can be safe from attacks by the revolutionary guerrilla units.

We demand the immediate suspension of the mine blockade against North Vietnam.

We demand the immediate suspension of bomb attacks on North Vietnam.

We demand the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Indochina.

For the victory of the Vietcong!
Build up the revolutionary guerrillas!
Have courage to fight and have courage to win!
Create two, three, many Vietnams!
Red Army Faction--14 May 1972."

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Buddenberg:

"On Monday, 16 May 1972, the 'Commando Manfred Grashof' carried out a dynamite blast against the Karlsruhe Federal High Court Judge Buddenberg. Buddenberg is Federal High Court judge in charge of the confinement and investigation of current political proceedings under article 129.

Buddenberg, the pig, was responsible for the transfer of Grashof from the hospital to a cell at a time when the transfer and the danger of infection in prison were still endangering his life. It was the second murder attempt against a defenseless Grashof; the first one by the bullies did not succeed.

Buddenberg, the pig, is responsible for drugging Carmen to make her talk. The foreseeable course of the narcosis was proof that it was a murder attempt.

Buddenberg, the pig, does not care one bit about prevailing laws and conventions. The strict isolation in which the prisoners are kept to finish them psychologically: solitary confinement, solitary walks in the courtyard.

The ban on talks with fellow prisoners, permanent transfers, confinement penalties, observation cells, mail censorship, confiscation of letters, books, periodicals--measures that are used to finish them psychologically: bright lights in the cells at night, frequent awakenings and searches, handcuffs during walks in the courtyard, physical abuse--these are not chicaneries of little, frustrated prison guards, they are Buddenberg's instructions to force the prisoners to talk. It is the fascism of the courts which has already become institutionalized. It is the begining of torture.

We demand the immediate application of the preventive detention ordinance, the Geneva Human Rights Convention, the Charter of the United Nations to the implementation of the preventive detention of the political prisoners. We demand from the courts that the lives and the health of the prisoners no longer be systematically attacked and destroyed.

We will continue to carry out bomb attacks against judges and public prosecutors until they stop committing violations of the rights of political prisoners. These demands are not something that is impossible for these courts. We do not have any other means to force them to do that.

Freedom for political prisoners!
War to the class courts!
War to fascism!
Red Army Faction--20 May 1972

Springer:

"Yesterday, Friday, 18 May 1555 hours, two bombs exploded in the Springer tower in Hamburg. Because the building had not been evacuated in spite of early and urgent warnings, 17 people were injured in the process. At 1529 hours the first warning was given under No 3471 with the request to

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vacate the building within 15 minutes because of a bomb threat. The reply was: Stop the nonsense. The receiver was replaced. The second call came at 1531 hours: If you do not get out immediately, something terrible will happen. But the telephone operators apparently had instructions not to pay attention to such phone calls. The third call, at 1536 hours, went to the bullies: See to it, damn it, that the building is vacated. Because the Springer concern cannot suppress the fact that it was warned, it is twisting the information: There had only been one call and it had been too late. Two telephone operators and the bullies can confirm that the Springer press lied one more time.

Springer preferred to take the risk that his workers and employees might be injured through bombs rather than the risk of losing a few hours of work, in other words to lose profits because of a false alarm. For the capitalists profit is everything; the people who create it are dirt. We regret that workers and employees were injured.

We demand from Springer: that his newspapers stop the anticommunist propaganda against the New Left, against solidaric actions of the working class, like strikes, against communist parties here and in other countries; that the Springer concern stop the propaganda against the freedom movements in the Third World, particularly against the Arab countries which are fighting for the liberation of Palestine; that it stop its propagandistic and material support of Zionism--the imperialist policies of the ruling class in Israel; that the Springer press stop spreading racist lies about the foreign workers here.

We demand that the Springer press print this pronouncement.

--We do not demand anything impossible. We will only stop our actions against the enemies of the people when our demands have been met.

Expropriate Springer!
Expropriate the enemies of the people!
Commando 2 June.

Communique of the Commando Ulrike Meinhof on the Execution of Buback

For 'actors of the system itself' like Buback history always finds a way.

On April 7, 1977, the Commando Ulrike Meinhof executed Siegfried Buback, the federal attorney general.

Buback was directly responsible for the murder of Holger Meins, Siegfried Hausner and Ulrike Meinhof. In his function as federal attorney general--as the central control and coordination facility between the courts and the West German news service, in close cooperation with the CIA and the NATO Security Committee--he stated and oversaw their murder.

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Under Buback's direction, Holger was murdered on 9 November 1974. It was well-planned, using systematic malnutrition and consciously manipulating the transportation time from Wittlich to Stammheim. The calculation of the federal prosecution was to break the hunger strike of the prisoners against the annihilation confinement through the execution of a cadre, after the attempt to kill Andreas by suspending forced feeding failed because of the mobilization of the public.

Under Buback's direction, Siegfried was murdered on 4 May 1975. He had led the Commando Holger Meins and would have been able to prove that the German embassy had been blown up by the West German Mobile Control Units. While he was under the exclusive control of the federal prosecution and the Federal Criminal Police Bureau his extradition to the FRG and the dangerous transfer to the Stuttgart-Stammheim prison was carried out, which meant his certain death.

Under Buback's direction, Ulrike was executed on 7 May 1976 as an action for state security. Her death was staged as suicide to portray as senseless the politics for which Ulrike had fought.

The murder was the escalation following the attempt by the federal prosecution to make an idiot out of her by using neuro-surgery, to be able to introduce her--disturbed--in the Stammheim trial and to be able to denounce armed resistance as a sickness. This project was prevented through international protest. The exact time of the murder was precisely calculated:

Preceding the crucial initiative in the trial, the motions by the defense, which was to use the attacks of the RAF against the U.S. headquarters in Frankfurt and Heidelberg in 1972 to interpret FRG participation in the illegal U.S. aggression in Vietnam--counter to international law:

Before Ulrike's testimony as a witness in the Duesseldorf trial against the Commando Holger Meins, where she could have made authentic statements about the worst form of torture which she had suffered during 8 months on death row:

Before her sentence--because the critical views of the international public which had developed during the show trial in Stammheim and its cynical presentation of imperialist power, had not been without effect on the federal government and its execution organs, because it was in the process of creating difficulties.

More clearly than the stories of many fighters, Ulrike's is the story of the continuity of resistance--for the revolutionary movement it embodies an ideological function of avant-garde, at which Buback's construction of the feigned suicide was aimed: Her death--which propagandistically was exploited by the federal prosecution and called an "insight into the failure" of armed politics--was to annihilate morally the group, its struggle and its traces. The concept of the federal prosecution, which since 1971 has been conducting searches and proceedings against the RAF, operates in accordance with the antisubversion strategy conceived by the NATO Security Committee;

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Criminalization of revolutionary resistance--the tactical steps of which are infiltration, desolidarization and isolation of the guerrillas and elimination of their leaders.

Within the framework of the counterstrategy of the imperialist FRG against the guerrillas, the courts are an instrument of war--by persecuting the guerrillas who are operating illegally and by conducting the annihilation of the prisoners of war. Buback--Schmidt called him "an energetic fighter" for the state--understood and conducted the dispute with us as war: "I survived the war. This is a war with different means."

We will prevent our fighters from being murdered in West German prisons, because the federal prosecution can solve the problem which is the fact that the prisoners will not stop fighting, in no other way except by liquidating them.

We will prevent the federal prosecution and state security organs from taking revenge on the imprisoned fighters for the actions by the guerrillas on the outside.

We will prevent the federal prosecution from using the fourth collective hunger strike by the prisoners for minimal human rights to murder Andreas, Gudrun (Ensslin) and Jan (Raspe), a process which has been propagated by the psychological warfare since Ulrike's death.

Commando Ulrike Meinhof--Red Army Faction

To organized armed resistance and the anti-imperialist front in West Europe.

To conduct the war in the metropolitan areas within the framework of the international war of liberation.

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FRANCE

MIDEAST POLICY JEOPARDIZED OVER SYRIAN TERRORIST TIES

Paris LE POINT in French 3-9 May 82 pp 72-74

[Article by Kosta Christitch: "The Menacing Stakes of Terrorism"]

[Text] France has spoken out strongly against international terrorism, thereby running the risk of harming its traditional Middle East policy.

It is rare that an interior minister publicly announces the names of the countries which he considers responsible for terrorist actions. Usually, he will confine himself to allusions to avoid complicating the task of his foreign affairs colleague, especially when proof is lacking or cannot be revealed to the public. However, Gaston Defferre has intentionally and sharply broken this traditional reserve. Moreover, he has done so not only in his capacity as minister of interior (and secondarily decentralization), but also as acting prime minister, thus adding weight to his accusations against Syria. This complicates France's already uneasy situation in the Middle East.

Interviewed by PARIS-MATCH, the man in command of the French police did not hesitate to identify Syria, South Yemen, and Libya as three countries which, "in disagreement with our policy (...), have chosen to attack our governments, though with their own methods, terrorist methods." Thus, without pulling any punches, he pointed the finger directly at those really responsible, according to him, for international terrorism operating in France, whose most spectacular action, if not the most bloody, was the attack in Rue Marbeuf.

In this interview, Gaston Defferre went even further. He made reference to the suppliers of these three countries in a succinct phrase whose importance was evident to everyone: "The arms are supplied by the Eastern countries." To judge the significance of this statement, we need only recall a virulent article in the PRAVDA of 27 April. Under the name Alexei Petrov (a pseudonym used by the Soviet Central Committee when it wants to make known its position), the article vehemently attacks those "Western politicians who declaim about the complicity of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries with international terrorism, disregarding the most basic facts." Further, to be sure that everything is clear, Petrov recalls that the USSR has always condemned

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terrorism, craftily adding: "Especially since Soviet officials and buildings have also been attacked, specifically in France."

However, the French Interior Ministry's determination expressed on this occasion is no surprise. On 22 April, the smoke from the explosion on Rue Marbeuf had hardly cleared before Gaston Defferre--with the support of the Elysee--had announced two kinds of measures to respond to this random and bloody attack. First, France expelled two members of the Syrian Embassy who were in that country's secret services: Maj Hassan Ali, assistant military attache, and Mikhail Kassouha, third secretary in charge of cultural affairs; secondly, French Ambassador to Damascus Henri Servant was recalled to Paris. This rapid action, which surprised the presidency (in fact the president learned from the minister's statement about the imminent return of his envoy to Syria), had the benefit of demonstrating that there was a French Government and that it was determined not to be reticent about measures to make it respected. According to the explanation given by Claude Cheysson to the Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, even if the two Syrian "diplomats" were not "necessarily connected" with the Rue Marbeuf attack, their activities in France were unacceptable and had to be punished.

In fact, Hassan Ali, who is close to Rifiat al Asad, brother of the Syrian head of state and in charge of special services, worked fulltime on clandestine operations. In this capacity he had led a commando which attacked a demonstration of Syrian opposition members in Paris on 5 March. His activities were so well known that they had become embarrassing even for Syria's ambassador to France, Gen Youssef Chakhour, who had for a long time--but in vain--been asking for the recall of his assistant military attache.

As for Mikhail Kassouha, who was under Hassan Ali's command, he was found to be involved in the unsuccessful attack in December on the offices of the weekly AL WATAN AL ARABI [THE ARAB NATION], where on 22 April the booby-trapped car blew up under the windows.

Gaston Defferre was thus justified in telling PARIS-MATCH that by expelling the two men he was not acting lightly. However, at the same time he publicly held Syria responsible for the Rue Marbeuf attack, more on the basis of presumption than proof, thereby aggravating the already serious argument between Paris and Damascus.

This approach, however legitimate and necessary, will seriously complicate France's role in the Near East. In fact, if France intends to play any role in this part of the world, it has to maintain relations with Syria. This is the view of all diplomats who know the area, regardless of their feelings about Hafiz al Asad's somber regime and his pretentions.

Consider Lebanon. France's objective in this country, with which it has so many ties, is to help the Lebanese regain their sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, this objective conflicts directly with Damascus, because Syria has been treating Lebanon as conquered territory and plans to restore the "Greater Syria" of the past, or at least establish an entity of

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which it would be the federal leader and which might include Lebanon and Jordan. Since France has neither the intention nor the means to drive the Syrians out of Lebanon, it must be satisfied with the possibilities offered by negotiation. Such possibilities do exist, though slight, but on the condition that relations between Paris and Damascus be maintained, even if they are not close.

The same is true of the Middle East issue. If France, as it affirms, wants to have an active role in seeking a solution, it must be in contact with all the parties to the conflict. Accordingly, it cannot ignore Syria, not only because the United Nations continues to demand that Israel return the Golan, which it occupies, to Damascus, but because Syria's influence in the Middle East is far from negligible, despite its apparent isolation. The United States has never been in doubt on this point. Despite its support for Jerusalem and all the issues which separate it from Damascus, the United States has been careful not to break with the Syrians. Recall Ronald Reagan's message of concern to President Asad at the height of the recent Israeli-Syrian crisis. Between Damascus and Tripoli, the two Meccas of the Rejection Front and international terrorism, Washington has chosen the Syrian capital. This is in contrast to the situation in Paris, which has been forced into a falling-out with Syria at a time when it is preparing to renew relations with the Libyans by receiving this month Major Jallud, Colonel Qadhdhafi's closest associate.

Hafiz al Asad's Syria certainly occupies a very special position in the Middle East. It is occupying Lebanon, opposing the PLO to the degree that it is unable to bend the Palestinian organization to its objectives, opposing Iraq, defying Jordan, and causing anxiety in Riyadh and the Gulf. However, the view of the experts is that this situation does not justify any policy gambles by France. Its dispute with Damascus will not win for it other support in the area, with the exception of Baghdad, for--despite the resentment against it--Syria would enjoy the support of Arab solidarity in case of a worsening of the French-Syrian crisis. Moreover, French policy does not have the same prestige among the Arabs since 10 May, particularly after Francois Mitterand's visit to Israel. That Hali al Hassan, one of the most moderate of Yasir Arafat's advisers, would say publicly that "we regard Mitterand's position as virtually hostile to the PLO" is a sure sign which tells a lot about the Arab state of mind, even outside Syria.

The crisis between France and Syria is even more serious today in that it follows a very long disagreement which France had not dared to settle earlier. The best example was the assassination in Beirut on 4 September of French Ambassador Louis Delamare. The French Government knew early on about the Syrian role in this murder, but at no time did it make representations about this tragedy in Damascus. Yet what was at stake was not only the death of an individual, a man who had done his country great service: It was the entire French policy in Lebanon that had been the target. Louis Delamare had been singled out by the killers for having tried to bring together all the parties in Lebanon ultimately to restore its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The French Government had a sad but tailor-made opportunity to talk clearly to the Syrians. It did not take this opportunity. Why? Out of weakness,

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no doubt, and also because it did not know how to reconcile its interests and its honor. That is a mistake in politics, particularly in the Middle East. The Syrians immediately concluded that they could act with impunity.

Another example: The French police had known for some time about the activities of Maj Hassan Ali and Mikhail Kassouha. They had even been informed about the threats to attack the editor of AL WATAN AL ARABI and had taken measures for his protection, but apparently could not prevent an attack of the Rue Marbeuf type. However, it took the 22 April explosion of the booby-trapped car to bring about the expulsion of the two men. The firm determination which Paris is showing today would undoubtedly have been more effective if it had been displayed earlier. The Syrians would have been more cautious, and the French would not have been forced to demonstrate their authority at the risk of harming relations with Damascus.

France now has to face a more difficult situation not only in the Middle East, but also against international terrorism. The delay is a heavy handicap, for, according to Western services, the wave of Syrian attacks in Europe is not happenstance but the execution of a carefully prepared plan. Damascus is concerned to see its refugee opposition in Europe getting financial assistance from the Iraqi services. This aid has enabled them to strengthen the Syrian Liberation Front which they had established and to create a presence in several European countries including Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, and France. What the Syrian Government fears above all is creation of a Syrian government in exile. With the goal of preventing this opposition from achieving its objective, the special services commanded by Rifiat al Asad decided to strike some blows in Europe. They profited from the cooperation with their Libyan counterparts and recruited the famous Carlos, who, if you believe certain sources, has a budget of \$2 million to carry out a number of specific operations.

That is not all. The Syrian secret services are working closely with the South Yemeni Government. The Americans believe that international terrorism's real home base is in that country. At this stage, it is not just a matter of the Syrian opposition. Other objectives have also been set, though the Western services have not yet succeeded in identifying them. They have learned, however, that terrorists were recently trained, under Bulgarian and Soviet experts, in use of very sophisticated weapons. This makes them afraid that new attacks might be carried out with bazookas or portable missile-launchers. France has called for a high-level meeting of Western services, and has decided to send to the United States for this purpose a delegation of the DGSE (formerly SDECE) [Foreign Intelligence and Counterintelligence Service].

It is likely that the Rue Marbeuf attack was only a bloody prelude.



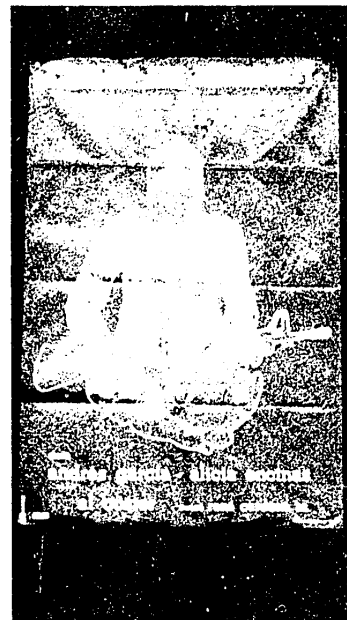
The attack on the rue Marbeuf



Hafiz al-Assad



Rifaat al-Assad



Poster in Beirut: A film titled "Carlos the Terrorist"



Composite portrait of the
rue Marbeuf terrorist

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FRANCE

CARLOS' ACTIVITIES, FRIENDS, KGB TIES EXAMINED

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 14 May 82 pp 51, 52, 74

[Article by Jean Cau: "Carlos, and the High Life"]

[Text] It is beginning to become clear why a bomb exploded on Rue Marbeuf.

The Carlos Mystery

Still dazed from the shock of the Rue Marbeuf explosion, the French are realizing to their horror that their country is caught up in the complicated intricacies of inter-Arab politics. And, since the darkness which descended that morning, they know that now they are the target of killers from the "Mysterious East." Since it is always necessary to find an individual to blame, they think they see behind the smoke of the massacre the mask of a certain Ilitch Ramirez, tragically famous under the name "Carlos." But who is this Carlos and who is providing him weapons so he can attack, in Paris, both a Lebanese newspaper and passers-by? A merciless struggle is taking place in the Middle East; it has split the Arab world in two. On one side there are the Lebanese Shiites, the very special movements which have brought a reign of terror to Syria under the control of Rif'at el Asad, the brother of the president of the Republic and the Iranians. On the other side: the Lebanese nationalists who refuse to be gobbled up by Syria, the Iraqis and the majority of the PLO. WATAN AL ARABI, the Lebanese newspaper on Rue Marbeuf, belongs to the second group. And France is proposing a policy in the Middle East which does not suit Syria's game. That is why the passers-by on Rue Marbeuf were targeted at the same time as the Lebanese weekly. Carlos is one of the close associates of Rif'at el Asad, who wants to poison at any price relations between France and his country. After the assassination of Ambassador Delamare and two French officials in Beirut, the gangrene was exported to France.

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Son of a millionaire, trained in terrorism in Cuba and Moscow, fanatic about revolution, and crazy about girls.

He is never seen. He is feared everywhere. He is thought to be behind every bomb that explodes. He has already killed many people. Perhaps he organized the attack on Rue Marbeuf. He is certainly very dangerous. But he has also become a myth. Who is this stubborn and invisible madman who was named Ilitch by a very wealthy father, a kind of "conservative" of the Revolution, and who, under the name Carlos, today terrifies the whole world?

I. Education

When a child was born into the household of Jose Ramirez and his wife Maria Sanchez, on 10 October 1949, there was a joyous outburst: "It's a boy! We will call him Ilitch, like Lenin," said his father who, after almost having become a priest, during his adolescence, abandoned his faith and adopted another one, Stalinist communism.

How he managed to reconcile this new faith with a sharp business sense in real estate, which made him a millionaire with a prosperous business in his native Venezuela, remains one of the mysteries known only to the dreamy idealists of the Western middle class.

But that is the way it goes: the fathers eat the green grapes of ideological fanaticism and the sons develop an appetite for it and become activists. One day Ilitch Ramirez y Sanchez will be called Carlos. Still, at least his two younger brothers, baptized Vladimir and Lenin, have been better able to cope with their names and have not followed in the footsteps of their older brother....

At 17, Ilitch was sent to school abroad. His father thought this would help him overcome his shyness and would get rid of his complexes. Actually, (O.K. Dr Freud?) this young man was somewhat pudgy, both his features and his body, and suffered from the nickname "muchacho gordo," (the little fat kid). He ended up in Cuba and, as with other "well-born (etc.) souls," here he was in Campo Matanzas, the pupil of Comrade General Victor Simonov (of the KGB) who was instructing his large flock in the art of subversion. In 1967, the Cubans landed small rebel groups on the coast of Venezuela, to stir up trouble in Caracas. Twice Carlos landed. Twice he was arrested by the police. Twice he was released. At that point, his parents got divorced and his mother, accompanied by Lenin and Vladimir, went to live in London and--she was much younger than her husband--to live her own life.

II. The Road to Moscow

Ilitch, however, took the road to Moscow and, more precisely, to Lumumba University (called officially, in all seriousness, "The University of Friendship Among Peoples"...) which accepts students from the Third World and where the KGB selects, as from a fish hatchery, the best students to be trained

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for subversion and its numerous variants, running from terrorism to assassination. But, surprise! Ilitch was expelled, in 1969, for "anti-Soviet provocations and dissipated living." Later, Carlosologists who will go over his career with a fine tooth comb, will wonder if this expulsion was not trumped up with the help of Carlos himself so as to give him the reputation of an unimportant playboy troublemaker with whom the KGB would not want to compromise itself. A mere war strategist. Whatever the case, the wayward student, after being "expelled," went on to East Berlin and then to London to see his mother and then to the Middle East where, according to him, he asked Palestinian groups in Jordan to train him in guerrilla warfare. The proposal was accepted and Carlos studied in the training camps at Mount (Gilead) and Um-(Juraysat) before going into combat. Then, he was once again in London where he killed some time waiting for an assignment.

III. How To Become Carlos

A green light. He returned in 1973 to Beirut where he expressed his impatience. Then he was given a green light to kill Lord Seif (president of Marks and Spencer stores), an outspoken Zionist. He went to his house on 30 November 1973 and fired three shots at him. Lord Seif survived. In an interview with the newspaper AL WATAN AL ARABI, Ilitch calmly explained his failure: "A comrade had given me an old revolver and five rounds of ammunition. Well, to bring off an assassination successfully, you need two pistols, one with a silencer, the other a very powerful one to defend yourself in case of surprise. You also need two grenades and a driver. That is what is considered the strict minimum if you want the operation to succeed. So you can see what a position I was in with only five rounds and a single pistol that I had not even tried out." Put yourself in his place. In any case, on that day Ilitch became Carlos. One month later, once again in London, he tossed a bomb into an Israeli bank. It exploded but only slightly wounded a typist. No luck, he explained, "the bomb had slid over the floor."

Then he hopped over to Beirut. And then on to Paris to dynamite the ORTF [Office of French Broadcasting and Television] (it did not go off) and to conduct an operation against three newspapers: L'ARCHE, MINUTE and L'AURORE, accused of being Zionists and fascists. Another quick trip, to Holland this time, to take hostage the ambassador of France in order to negotiate the release of a member of the Japanese Red Army. That ended in gunfire. Two policemen and one of the terrorists were wounded. Actually, it was only a partial failure, because of poor coordination, and Carlos left hastily for Paris where he learned that the Japanese had succeeded in taking the ambassador ("I don't know why they didn't kill him," he said later) but that the French were refusing to give in to the terrorists' demands. So then Carlos threw two grenades into the Drugstore, at Saint-Germain-des-Pres. That resulted in 2 dead and 30 injured--and he warned the French Government that he would resort to even bloodier acts if the Japanese terrorist was not released. Since the Drugstore incident suggested that these threats not be taken lightly, the slant-eyed comrade was put aboard a Boeing and landed somewhere in the Middle East. "A complete success," claimed Carlos.

IV. A Wild Guy, Full of Fun

This is the most difficult section of the article to write because now I have to come to some conclusions. Who is Carlos? He is nothing like, for example, the Russian anarchists at the beginning of the century, with their drawn faces and wild eyes, slouching along walls, hiding under their coat a bomb which they are planning to toss into the car of a grand duke. He has nothing in common with these passionate mystics. His style, Carlos' style, is rather that of finding in the Revolution a kind of euphoria, a kind of "high." Life, which he considers unimportant for others, he loves. Drinking, eating well, smoking big cigars, strumming the guitar, playing cards, dancing, that is his "Olé" side. This wild guy really loves to kick up his heels and knock someone around with his claws drawn, as if he were only a nice stuffed tiger. Unfortunately, the tiger is made up of real flesh and blood, with claws and fangs. When he strikes, he kills. But what goes on in his head? "I am not a professional killer," he says. "It is not easy to shoot point blank someone who is looking at you...." He fires, however, in the name of the Revolution, as if shaken by a calm orgasm, and the "guy who is full of fun" becomes a cold angel of death. Then, life begins again, between raids, and the girls, lots of girls, comfort the terrorist. There was Angela Otoala, the young waitress at a Spanish restaurant, 23 years old, and pretty, whom he seduced in 1973 in London. There was Maria Romero, also in London, a Colombian lawyer, older (39 years old) and a former member of the Secretariat of the Colombian Communist Party, who fell for his charms. In Paris, there was Nancy Sanchez, a Venezuelan studying anthropology at the Sorbonne, and Angela Armstrong, the very young English girl born in South Africa. On Rue Toulhier, the Fifth Arrondissement, a few steps away from the Pantheon where Nancy was renting an apartment, it was a nonstop party. Everyone had a good time. The students living in the maid's rooms on the sixth floor were always welcome. They were offered a drink and permitted to use the shower or to wash their jeans. Very nice, these Americanos. You couldn't ask for better hospitality. Did the girls know who their boyfriend was? No. Probably not. But why ask questions? Carlos, a virtuoso of fake identities was only for them a Venezuelan friend, funny and cosmopolitan, who was working for an "international company" and had plenty of money. If he was using their studios or apartments as hideouts, he obviously refrained from admitting it to these young women. Other questions: for whom was Carlos working during those years? Officially, if we can use the term, for the Palestinians, alongside the PLO. Unofficially, to find that out you have to zigzag your way through a labyrinth of international terrorism, bumping up against artificial mirrors, having to retrace your steps 10 times, going around in circles, going from the Red Brigades to the ETA [Basque Fatherland and Liberty Group], to the RAF [Red Army Faction, Germany], from the RAF to the Japanese, etc.... If you don't let yourself get caught up in this mare's nest, one fixed point remains, around which are centered the "trips" of Carlos: the services (and among them the most special ones) of the KGB. Thus, and according to the most reliable information, the famous terrorist is said to be in Damascus, in Syria, close to Rif'at el Asad (the brother of President Hafez el Asad), the head of a militia composed of 50,000 men in political police work so serious that it often worries his own brother. And everyone in Damascus knows that Rif'at "is playing for" the Soviets....

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V. Hecatombs

The further adventures of our man. In 1974, the attempt to launch a rocket attack at Orly against a plane belonging to the Israeli airline El Al. A failure. In December 1975, the stakes were raised. In Vienna, during a meeting of OPEC, a terrorist group led by Carlos and made up of two Germans, a Palestinian and two Lebanese, attacked the building where the oil ministers were meeting. Three were left dead and one wounded. And the ministers were held captive. The Austrian Government capitulated and the DC 9 which they boarded as hostages, along with their captors, ended up, after a wild odyssey, landing in Algiers, where the right of asylum was granted the terrorist group in exchange for the hostages. Why this "action," as Carlos called it? So that the rich oil states do not forget, under the shower of dollars they are receiving, that they must serve the Palestinian cause. All right. It's as good an explanation as any.

But it was 5 months earlier, on 27 June 1975, in Paris, that Carlos carried out, if not his bloodiest exploit, at least his boldest. The police, acting on information from an informer, a certain Mokarbel, who was the contact between Carlos' team and the FPLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] raised (unarmed!) Rue Toullier, where the terrorist was living. Mokarbel, had stated to the police that a certain Maya Lara, a Venezuelan, in whom they were interested, was there; the police went in. They were also carrying in their pockets a photograph in which, next to Mokarbel, appeared... another man. He is the one who opened the door. They politely asked him if he knew Mokarbel. He politely answered that he did not know anyone by that name. They politely told him that this man claimed to know him and they showed him the photograph. He politely asked where Mokarbel was. They politely told him that he is over there in a car. He politely asked if he could see him. Of course. The police went to get Mokarbel. When they came back, it was to meet their death. Two were shot dead and a third wounded. Mokarbel, lastly, got a bullet between the eyes and was finished off with a bullet in the temple for good measure. And from one building to the next, Carlos, leaping like a deer, got down to the street and finally made his way to a hideout on Rue Amelie, rented by a friend, Sylvie Masmela. From that hideout, he left, once more, to disappear in the wilds of the other side of the Mediterranean, from which he did not reappear, as we said before, until he showed up in Vienna. Since then....

VI. Fingerprints

Since then the trail of Carlos has become vague and is lost. Did the real man fly off into the heaven of myths to repose in his frightening glory? Is he in Libya, in Yemen, in Lebanon, in the East, in Syria? Everywhere and nowhere at the same time? Has he become a professor or doctor of terrorism, given his vast experience and is he planning acts of terrorism or is he putting a stamp of certification (seriously) on those who are carrying them out? Recently, we know, and this is his most recent sign of life after a long absence, he threatened Mr Deferre, leaving fingerprints to authenticate his message, if two of his terrorist friends arrested in France were not freed. They were not. LE CAPITOLE blew up. Carlos? Not Carlos? Who knows or will know?

VII. A Business and a War

Unquestionably, Ilitch Ramirez has created a famous nickname and has succeeded in raising himself up to terrorism, is highest rung and he is the number one world star. That being said, as the saying goes, one lends only to the rich, which is sometimes a mistake, as Carlos is now being credited for what has been done by someone else. Actually terrorism is not limited to a single man, a kind of bogey man, present everywhere and everywhere invincible. Terrorism is a business. Deliberate. Calculated. Perfected. Terrorism is a war. In the limelight, Carlos is only the most famous footsoldier. It remains to be seen who are the officers who, in the shadows, order the disorder of this army of terror.

And that, more frightening than Carlos, is the real question.



[Photo caption] Behind the tragic smoke on the rue Marbuef emerges the shadowy figure of Carlos, but more than he, it is his "protectors" who have declared war on France.

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ITALY

MEMOIRS FROM THE UNDERGROUND: AN UNREPENTANT TERRORIST TELLS HIS STORY

Milan IL PANE E LE ROSE in Italian Nov 81 pp 1-126

[Memoirs by Giorgio: "Memoirs From the Underground"]

[Text] For the past few months, in the most recent volume of IL PANE E LE ROSE [BREAD AND ROSES] the series editor, Anna Maria Caredio, invited readers to submit their narrative works for a reading. Thus, when a script arrived accompanied by a short vague message simply signed "Giorgio" no particular attention was given to it. It seemed one of the many manuscripts that had come in response to the appeal. But it was not just another script. Certainly the level of the writing and the autobiographical sketch were all within the average limits common to youthful literary production in the 1970's. But the story told was not.

Until now all those events had been described from the outside by sociologists, politicians, and journalists. In the best of cases statements by some penitents had penetrated those dark events, but their abjuration could have marred the credibility of the tale. Instead, this was the first time that, even though anonymously and with the risk of not being authentic, a direct testimony came out into the open in compact form from within the armed struggle.

It was not easy for us to decide upon its publication. The discussion within the publishing house was intense, reflecting positions and attitudes on the question of terrorism that are heard in political debates throughout the country. Even while unanimously condemning terrorist violence, a question of principle was raised. Then, what dissolved our doubts was precisely the passage from abstract debate to a specific assessment of Giorgio's book. We reread it carefully and that dry and unrhetoical style, the minute description of the gray Travet-like [bureaucratic] life of terrorism, the anxiety and the solitude that shone through and was almost declared, brought us back to the specific terms of the problem: It was not a matter of deciding whether or not to publish a political message of the armed party but only whether to publish the tale of a manner of living one's life which, chilling though it might be, was chosen by hundreds of youths in recent years. We could not turn back.
The Editors

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Dear Comrades:

After having read the appeal of Anna Maria Caredio after the end of The Girl of Thousandlire Road [La ragazza di Via Millelire] I decided to send you my manuscript which might interest you. In fact it seems to me that in the flood of disinformation falsification idiocies which surround the world of the armed struggle and its militants, this might be at the very least a useful firsthand testimony of how different things are.

I have nothing to add except that I hope you will publish these pages.

Communist greetings

Giorgio

We used to go to the shore in summer. (Or perhaps it was the mountains, or the country, or the hillside: And I say this to make it immediately clear that the story I have to tell cannot be the truth but only verisimilitude; and to remind many that even telling one's story is a privilege, not a courageous gesture.)

So, we used to go to the shore.

But the shore was always so incredibly distant, and those distant vacations seemed to remind me only of an interminable dusty road and pitiless heat and the repeated sound of my wooden shoes. Of so many wooden shoes, of so many wet bathing suits, of so many packages bumping each other.

And a smell of doughnuts (but perhaps they were kraffen [krapfen: doughnuts] or strudel or tarts or buns): an afternoon smell that still comes back today near a pine grove; an afternoon too blue and too long, says the poet.

But a doughnut every day, I ask myself, isn't that like never having a doughnut?

Then there were the cicadas (or the crickets or the blackbirds or the newts).

Cicadas chirp: That's what they do, isn't it? They do it continuously, they never stop. And the children don't sleep: because it is too warm, they say, but really they are waiting until the cicadas stop. Chirping. And then this is a vacation. The BR [Red Brigades], it is said, give their militants money for a month's vacation. No one pays me for anything.

My vacation will be this: to write my story or one which somehow will resemble us. This also will be an anonymous vacation, one of those that are not recounted because after all it's not worth the trouble. That leaves no trace, not even a picture, of those with so many children covered with black sand and it's so hard to recognize yourself, imagine the others.

While my most ardent desire would be to go away.

To take a trip, a very long one, that would take me with my head, as well as with my body, elsewhere. I am very tired and when you enter this tunnel that is my life, you must give up the idea of a future. Ways out are unknown.

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Certainly, there could be the revolution. Can't you just see it? More likely there is jail or worse. Obviously, you don't think about it but you don't even succeed in imagining that you can go on like this for all your life. I accept both the possible hypotheses: jail or worse. I don't care at all. In the meantime, I take my trip in my head and in my books and the images I have preserved.

It is the world reread through my feelings.

My friendly voyager is, it is useless to hide it, Corto Maltese [comic strip character]. I would like to visit the China of Corto Maltese and the Amazonia [play on the verb to kill and the word Amazon] of Corto Maltese.

Corto Maltese's China is full of paving stones, sketches of dragons and children's shoes. Full of lanterns and butterflies in the rice fields. Red lanterns from when revolution was possible. From when in Russia there were still warlords, and the baronesses traveled in trains with a part of the Tsar's treasure.

It is not the China of manifestos and leveled mountains.

And Amazonia is that of the last headhunters and the last adventurers. Venice is that of the card-reading fortunetellers and of the Masons; America still does not exist. Only the Orient exists. Not the mystic one, but that of ships with masts, of trade and of the oppressors.

I like the world in which something crawls, in which there is something but no one yet knows what.

The world, perhaps, like that in which I feel I really am today.

It can be said that everything began with that demonstration in March 1977. I had been a member of an organization in the autonomist wing for a year and a half. It was an active student organization with many members and our positions were notably eccentric in regard to the traditional culture of Autonomy. No one had yet called it the theory of need, but for us it already was a practice. Our conversations were constantly--almost obsessively--about what we used to call, and what we still call, behavior: The standards of living of the young proletarians, the desires within them, how they are manifested, how they are affirmed, how they attack the system of power. This, this above all, was our political and cultural interest.

All, or almost all of us came with a background of experience in youth clubs and we had done all kinds of things in the clubs. From disputes at concerts to misappropriation to invasion of moviehouses up to expropriation and psychedelic experiences, with drugs, I mean (acid above all).

Everything was born there: My resignation from Lotta Continua [Continuing Struggle] and my membership in Autonomy. At that time I was a strong, but very strong, proponent of spontaneity: I felt that something very big was developing among the proletarian youth and I felt that any speech and organizational structure was too tight and rigid to contain it; and that the needs and behaviors must "explode." I thought just that: explode. Without

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intermediation. And Lotta Continua instead talked about organizing them, the clubs. This seemed unbearable to me. I thought that we clubs must organize the clubs: In substance, we must organize ourselves.

And we began to do it. Here is how. We would make a big speech against "povertyism," against that concept of the workers' movement that provides for the conquest of the least necessary, and that projects an image of itself as austere, ascetic, disciplinarian. On the contrary: We want the extras, we used to say. We want abundance. We don't only want bread. And at that point someone said: We want the roses, too. No, I said once, it is that we want the cake. Marie Therese [as published] was right. The idea was very appealing: and it was thus that we decided to appropriate blue jeans for ourselves.

No, I swear, I had no fear whatever. And not because I am particularly courageous. That is something that is still to be seen. But because, more simply, it happens that way: that I perhaps feel fear at first, a long time before: or afterward, even after a very long time; never during. In brief, for me fear does not accompany reflection or even imagination and the development of fantasy. And then it happens that I feel fear even after 6 months, when I began to think, perhaps by chance, when I touch on a detail, a moment, an episode of an action I took or was about to take: or when a dream, a fantasy, brings back to me an image or a face or a gesture.

If, instead, I am intent on accomplishing it, the action, my feelings are all concentrated on the action itself and there is no time or space for anything else. And that's how it was that time too. I prepared myself in very minute detail: and perhaps I was the only one who did it; for the others it was like playing a game. Not for me; I stayed home a long time preparing it: deciding above all what to wear. For two reasons: because I wanted to wear appropriate clothing--agile, comfortable, swift--and then because of a kind of vanity.

It may seem absurd and ridiculous, it can leave me open to sarcasm, speculation, exploitation. I can already hear them say: Here are the young gentlemen, they dress elegantly to fight the revolution--but that's how it is. I would never attend a proletarian expropriation if I did not feel well even concerning my dress, if I did not feel comfortable: I find absolutely nothing strange in this. Dressing well is not what people believe: dressing well means feeling comfortable and in harmony with one's clothing even with form and color and size. And then, why should I not try to dress well when I do a job, just as I try to dress well when I go to the movies? In fact, it is precisely because the action is necessarily (and fortunately) anonymous that the reason for the choice of this suit and not that is not pure exhibitionism. In any case, I recall that at that time--it was mid-November--I wore a pair of green wide-ribbed corduroy pants and a skiing sweater. And it was strange because instead the others--for the very reason (which was very strange I believed) that we must not be "identified"--all were dressed in what they believed made them anonymous and normal: or perhaps they were, normally, but on them they immediately became eccentric and very eye-catching.

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I, instead, wore an enormous red ski windbreaker over my sweater. And then a green woolen cap. We agreed to meet not far from the boutique, near a telephone booth, and there is where we actually met. I was commander of the action: Even though, to tell the truth, there was very little to command. There were about a dozen of us including four girls, all very young.

The comrades kept the appointment individually and at different times. Except that this, which had been a precaution, risked being transformed into an imprudent act because--either because of a distraction of excessive zeal--there were some who came as much as an hour late, and there we were, like fools, waiting for them. The atmosphere was in any case incredible. Among us there was something like what precedes student trips and mixed with it, the complicity that unites a group of boys who court girls of their own age. And so we were there and there was one who liked to be funny and he said: I want to get myself a white tie and tails; and someone else: Please, let's be sure no one pulls out his wallet by mistake. And a girl said: It will be a problem matching colors, I certainly don't want to take things that I can't wear. Etc.

Finally everyone arrived and I said: Let's go. Thus we entered the boutique: We wandered around a little so as to spread out into the two large rooms of which the shop was composed. There were some people inside, but not many, and about 10 clerks, all young and alert. There were two more, older, at the two cash registers. I walked around a little until I stopped near a pile of jeans: Since I was at it, I selected the Levi's. I began to look at them more attentively, as though I was considering the possibility of buying them, and in the meanwhile I thought: Now. Now. Now.

It was up to me to give the signal. But I couldn't make up my mind; I looked behind me out of the corner of my eye and I said to myself: Just a bit more, just 1 second more and away we go! Then I became aware that the comrades were watching me with some surprise and a little anxiously and that the clerks began to look at us. Surely they could not imagine our intentions, but perhaps they began to become alarmed. And who knew whether there was a warning signal in the shop. Or a security service. Or a closed-circuit television camera. And so I became aware that if I waited a minute more nothing would be done. And I said to myself: Now. I raised up from the pile of pants precisely while the clerk, a very lean fellow with the face of a fool, asked me: "May I help you? What size were you looking for?" In a flash, I lowered the ski cap over my eyes--that was the signal we had decided on, and I started to shout, "Andreotti pays!" The others also began to shout. I pulled out from beneath my windbreaker a hammer that I had in an inside pocket and I turned to the clerk: "Don't move this is an expropriation." The others more or less did the same. The girls pulled out of their handbags large sacks like those used by the garbage collectors and they stuffed them with everything they could grab from the counters. Another fellow and I in the meanwhile had moved toward the cash registers and had immobilized the two persons who were there, evidently the owners of the shop. "We don't want the money," I said, but they continued to watch us desperately. Meanwhile, another three members of our gang were in front of the door, blocking the way so that no new shoppers would enter and in any case it was very clear from outside what was happening within the shop.

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Everything, however, did not last more than 5 minutes. The girls had filled their sacks; all of us had three piles of stuff--as much as they could hold in their arms--and I said: "Let's go; everyone out!" And the girls were the first to head toward the door; then the others left and, I left last. Before moving away, I put on the ground near the door a plastic envelope and in a very loud voice I said: "There is a bomb in here, stay near the wall, there in the back, and nothing will happen to you." Later I learned that they really had stayed close to that wall. And for a quarter of an hour. As soon as we were outside we ran as fast as we could.

Outside there were many people, a real crowd, it could be said, and so we ran off in 12 different directions. Not 12 exactly, but almost. I, with my blue jeans under my arms ran toward a square, not farther away than 500 meters. There, between two parked cars, I had left a plastic athletic bag covered with cardboard. Fortunately, the bag was still there; I opened it and put the jeans in it; then I walked slowly away with it.

That first action was very important: For the first time I had carried out an illegal act not within a mass demonstration. And that's how it was with most of the participants.

Already there was Anna. Present, important.

I am the sort of person who fundamentally is tied to the idea of the family, of a stable situation of affection. The idea of children was never very far from my mind. I have never approved very much--even though I am not scandalized by them--of the situations which in general are called "liberated." They seem to me only a great big madhouse. Just to indulge in a little bit of poor-man's psychoanalysis, it must be true that my family situation left either a model or a regret.

And I had a way of doing things that I liked: Proud and therefore very detached from the others. When anyone succeeded in overcoming her contrariness, which was always exasperated, you felt like the only privileged possessor of something. It was most like what I understood to be a traditional relationship. Because it aroused in me a desire to conquer and possess.

I never tired of that relationship. When we met I never knew whether I would find her distant or affectionate; whether we would make love or not, whether she would lie there immobile, wide-eyed, or whether she would participate. I loved her very much.

She watched everything and spoke little. She watched in a serious and distant way: "All this is very difficult to understand," was always her phrase. She repeated it slowly perhaps after hours and hours of intense listening to speeches at a meeting, hours and hours of marching that would pain the feet. "I never really understood why." But she was never cynical. The next time she would start from the beginning: Hours and hours of meetings, much cold along the way, doing what had to be done; without any emotion, with an exasperating lucidity. I loved her very much.

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When we met with the others at the club, we talked for a long time and immediately we became aware that that action had to some extent marked the border between two different phases of our activity.

Meanwhile the newspapers: The news they gave was very clear. They spoke of us as hippies and criminals and this was no little thing. We were no longer the run-of-the-mill extremists: We were irresponsible and violent political militants, but always political militants. Not here; here we were no more or less than crooks. And we still didn't clearly understand the reactions of the others in the club and of all those who had some contact with the club: the proletarian youth of the neighborhood first of all. We decided to print a leaflet. The choice was between printing a leaflet in the name of a youth club--and in that case, we could have spoken only in general about the action without taking credit for it (to do otherwise would have meant openly stating our criminal responsibility and exposing ourselves to repression)--and claiming the action secretly.

We chose the latter course. Immediately the problem of a mimeograph machine had to be solved: We could not mimeograph a leaflet and then leave the mimeograph machine available to the police who would easily identify the origin. Thus, since no other mimeograph machine was available, we decided to use the club's and to hide it later. I made that proposal and added, very clearly, that to do something like that in some way meant "going underground." That is, it meant having an outlaw organization. At that moment no one worried about it very much. We decided that we would hide the mimeograph machine in a closet in the basement of a member's house. And so we printed the leaflet: It was very attractive and was very successful in the neighborhood, among the boys, naturally; we even drew sketches and the style, in general, was full of sarcasm. The result was that many boys in the neighborhood came to us and asked to buy the clothing at a discount price; and we, just barely taking some precautions, would give them away. The incredible thing was that despite our caution, we avoided being identified. By a hair. The mimeograph machine was supposed to have been hidden right away, but then (as always happens) a little problem arose--the key to the closet could not be found or something like that--and so, 2 days after we circulated the leaflet, the mimeograph machine was still on the club premises. On the third night to be exact, we moved it away and the police search took place exactly the next morning: Just barely 6 hours after the mimeograph machine had changed residence. The fact is that I thought a lot about the progress of that story; I minutely examined the entire action; the most minor details, the errors committed and the things that went well. And I scrupulously thought again about all my movements; I even took notes and discussed them with those I considered to be most trustworthy and determined among the comrades. And I believe that it was precisely on that occasion that I thought that I would never turn back again. I, under those circumstances, had carried with me a compressed-air pistol, a Flobert. I kept it in the pocket of the windbreaker just in case something unexpected happened: An unforeseen reaction, a security man, or someone who might try to stop us. The Flobert was not even a pistol, it can be said; or better, it is, but it is a pistol for young boys and girls. It can neither kill nor seriously injure, so much so that a license is not required to buy it: You go to a gun store, you buy it, you give a name and everything ends there; you can even give a false name since no one will check it.

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With that Flobert, Piero and I went to the shore two or three times; and we tried to shoot until we became expert in it and could hit any target, even at high speed. At short distances, because the Flobert tends to become very inaccurate beyond 20 meters. Then we bought another pistol, also an air pistol, and that's how it happened that we were armed when we went to some demonstrations. Armed in a manner of speaking, but armed. This thing seemed like an enormous undertaking for us. We moved about together, from the first moment to the last, with the pistols inside the jacket pockets and our hands on the butts, but--for one reason or another--we never had the opportunity to use them. And perhaps deep down we were glad of that. Then we decided to "raise our sights."

We said it just that way, "raise our sights," with some seriousness because in our heads this meant moving forward, continuing, becoming radicalized. It meant just that "raise our sights." It meant using real pistols. And we did that very soon.

Anything but, "Step forward a moment, you unknown ones, with the hidden faces." That was undoubtedly something for other times, other men.

Not that there was no longer any need for hidden faces.
(And why otherwise would I be among them?)
but it is that to say it thus evokes only a little pain

and a little laughter.
Like some ancient thing
or like the Unita Festival at Bovisa.
Or it pains the heart, the hands and the sex organs.

Because your heart and hands and sex organs hurt,
and a lot, if you always deny them and hide them
like absurd habits you want to forget:
because there is and always has been plenty of time to
hide them and you finally would want them to breathe
the open air.

That's what I would want, I who was not quick enough,
it can be said,
to pass from when I covered my face
to hide acne and pimples,
and I covered my hands
to hide fears and clumsiness,
and I covered my sex to hide blushing and fears:
and today, when I cover body and face to hide what...

The blue jeans were useful. We had hidden a large number in Piero's house, not even knowing ourselves what we might do with them, and also the sweaters, the shirts, the shoes.

We collected them together in two packages and we went to the Senigallia Fair. We sold everything at the first stall we came to for 100,000 lire. And we decided that we would buy a real pistol. But 100,000 lire wasn't very much.

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I performed the second act. Piero was, is, the son of rich people; not very rich, but rich. We decided that the easiest thing to do was to break open a dresser-drawer containing cash in his parent's room.

And that's what we did. One Sunday morning, Piero had to leave with his parents for Camogli, where they own a house. When they were already in the car and about to leave, he said he had forgotten one of his schoolbooks in the house. He went back in, picked up the book and left the front door open. This for two reasons: because it was already Saturday afternoon when we learned of the departure of the entire family for Camogli and it was not possible to have a duplicate key made; and on the other hand, as a precaution, we did not want to use his key. In fact, during the day, Piero was to let it be known that he still had the key. So it was that I, an hour after the departure, was at his apartment building and when the front door opened to let in an elderly lady who obviously was returning from church, I sneaked inside. I climbed slowly to the third floor and as expected, I found the door open. I wandered about the rooms until I stopped in the bedroom of Piero's parents. In the dresser only one drawer was locked. From a closet near the kitchen I had taken a large screwdriver and with that it was really easy to open the drawer. It was enough to insert the point into the top of the lock and push. In a matter of seconds it opened.

I recall having had a strange feeling when I opened the drawer. Clearly it was reserved for the mother's things and in it were little bottles of women's perfume whose fragrances spread through the room as though they had been miraculously liberated from my hands. Something like a magic casket, I thought, or like Aladdin's Lamp.

Under a pile of white handkerchiefs which also had been [illegible] a wallet. I opened it and inside found five 100,000 lire notes. Then one of those strange things happened to me that I had experienced occasionally before. I gave no thought to putting everything in its place, or of escaping or of checking to be sure I had left no trace. I simply and avidly began to search through the drawer. Packages of letters held together with a rubber band, pictures of various periods and places, vital statistics documents. I began to open the letters almost as though I had been seized by an insane curiosity. I repeat: It is something that happens to me frequently, perhaps while I am involved in shadowing someone or in an on-the-spot investigation. Or even during the course of an operation. It happens that--in a silly way--I become distracted; but in a way that is alienating and excludes everything. Or my energies and my nerves up until that time had been entirely concentrated on a man or a place or an action, move somewhere else and they concentrate on that somewhere-else without reservation. And that somewhere-else can be a woman, shopwindow, or when I am in a particular mood, even a monument, an architectural detail, the facade of a church. But let us return to the letters: They all began with "Dear Sandra" and the recipient evidently was Piero's mother, and they were love letters; I immediately was aware that they were not all in the same handwriting and, grotesquely, this amused me; almost as though it was obscene to discover that Mrs Sandra, the mother of Piero, had had several finances. Then I saw other envelopes with notes on them: for Piero, for Letizia and then the other names of his brothers and sisters. I did

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not hesitate to open them also: They were sorts of testaments, messages for future memory. The one for Piero was the most ridiculous: it contained phrases like "you who are the most rebellious of my children," "you who remind me of my poor brother." At first I was amused by reading them; then I was a little ashamed: It seemed to me that search among the perfumes, the letters, the papers and photographs was something indecent. However, I thought that it was in some way useful to cover my tracks and I created even more disorder in the drawer, pulling all the letters out of the envelopes, uncovering dozens of boxes of every shape and form and color, and also opening other drawers. Then I ran about the room upsetting everything in order to simulate a hurried search. I created some superficial disorder in the bookcases, in the closets, on the shelves. Then, with a screwdriver, I forced the entry door near the lock in order to simulate a nonexistent break-in and I left after being careful to close the shutter so that the damage would not be noticed earlier than necessary. At this point the second absurd thing happened to me: Who knows why, I took the elevator.

It was absurd because I had not taken it to go up, and absurd because I clearly recall that I did not do it intentionally--how do I know?--to avoid being seen.

Then, as I descended, everything suddenly went dark and I felt the elevator stop. Oh God, I thought, just like in "Elevator to the Gallows." I was in the dark for several minutes and in the meantime I thought about where to hide, if necessary, the 100,000 lire notes. I carefully poked at the ceiling of the elevator and I became aware of the existence of a sort of hollow space that created a useful hiding place. I decided I would use it if the need and the opportunity arose. After some minutes more, the elevator was still stuck, the dark was still complete and I began to feel a subtle uneasiness. I decided to push the various buttons and I imagined that the alarm button must be the last. I thought to myself that if I were to be interrogated, I would say that I was Piero's friend who, after finding the building's main door open, I had uselessly gone to the floor where his apartment was located. I rang the alarm. There was the long sound of a bell. In a split second I heard a voice that shouted: "What floor are you on?" After some minutes, someone opened the door with some keys. Then I had to hoist myself up to the level of the first floor, helped by a very fat man in a tee shirt--undoubtedly he was the porter. He was very upset because he had been disturbed on his day of rest and he didn't even ask me who I was. Thus I left unconcerned.

Now we had 600,000 lire. And with that, at the Senigallia Fair, we thought we could buy two pistols. Then actually it did not work out exactly that way.

At the fair they took us for fools or for plainclothes detectives and they offered us either antique pistols or toy pistols: Real toy-pistols--for children, I mean. But through an independent person--with whom we had had meetings when we wanted to coordinate the youth clubs--we succeeded in taking possession of two pistols. Small revolvers. And it was that same independent person--one who is politically close to the anarchists, a pawnbroker or something of the kind--who offered to teach us how to use them.

We went with him twice along the road toward Pavia, along the canals: It was not at all difficult.

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That was the first time we went to a demonstration carrying arms. The demonstration was different from all the others, even different from the toughest Autonomy demonstrations. We understood it when we became aware that quite a few of us were armed. In reality, we did not have a clear idea what to do. We knew that if the police fired, we would answer their fire. We had decided upon this and we firmly intended to do it.

That's all there was, and it was not insignificant. The slogans were of the most violent and radical. Thus it was that when we arrived near San Vittore, I understood that something was bound to happen, that something was about to happen and, to tell the truth, it was not so difficult after all to understand that. We had decided without any consultation and without any predetermined plan that we would not yield to any demand: And it was clear that demands would be made on us. The order not to go close to San Vittore was, for example, plainly taken for granted. So when we saw the police cordon facing us I looked at Piero and it was as though we were telling each other: This is it. However we still did not dare take out our pistols.

In a certain sense, we did not dare ever to take them out. In a sense that I do not recall even now--yet I continue ever so often, but only ever so often, to think about it--when the "moment" arrived. It was the recognition of a fact more than a decision. I became aware that others, like myself, carried a pistol. Like myself, in fact, who had pulled it out. I did not even have time to look at Piero. I know for certain, even then I knew it, that he was doing the same things I did. And he felt like I felt. The action was resolved in a flash: A leap to the center of the road, a very short pause, shoot, run. That's all. I noticed that further on someone, like myself, was moving rapidly. I was already running away with Piero at my side.

Via Darducci is long and broad, and while we were running it was still broader and wider. Now almost dark. I did not feel the slightest fear. I ran effortlessly; no anxiety. There was something behind me from which I was escaping, but it was not fear. My only thought was to reach the rest of the demonstrators. But while I ran, one step after the other, a secret, private feeling clutched my throat: I wanted to laugh, to smile, to leap.

"Piero, Piero, Piero wait for me," I began to yell in order to suppress my feelings. I was almost ashamed of the sort of contentment that was spreading throughout my being. Hell, it was nothing, absolutely nothing: Only something that resembled calm, and a profound sigh with open lungs.

Anna studied medicine by choice and with intensity. The night following the demonstration while I was still in a stupor and happy, I telephoned her.

"When will I see you?"

"Right away, stop by my house." She answered with no hesitation at all.

She knew what my political positions were, she followed me closely. Yet that evening we arrived at a ridiculous settling of accounts, which was very irritating. We had an aperitif in the most expensive bar in the city. The waiter brought canapes, small onions, potatoes, olives. Anna was dressed up and she

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was chatting about various things: I shifted about in my chair out of boredom. I believed she did it purposely.

I interrupted "The young ladies from good families of the city always dress in blue. But you forgot to put on a collar."

"The collar and something else I think. The shoes too are also not the right color. I don't have blue ones. I don't approve of what happened today. Were you there?"

"And you?"

"I certainly was."

"They why do you ask me if I was there or not?"

"Because I didn't see you and I looked for you."

"You were with the wrong people." I could no longer restrain my irritation with that young aspiring doctor.

"Or maybe it was you who was among the wrong people. Someone died."

"A cop?"

"Someone. Or better a person. These things are revolting to me and they scare me. Where were you? I didn't see you, Gianni or even Piero. You were among those who left the main group, otherwise I would have met you later. But I don't know what you did. What did you do?"

"Would you like to have a discussion on proletarian violence? Would you like to know what the newspapers will say tomorrow...?"

"Don't always drag out this story about the newspapers...."

"Do you want me to tell you whether I agree with firing weapons? What does your good-family attitude need to know?" My voice rose and fell. Occasionally, my voice would crack under the charge of tension within me. But I could never have accepted her tone of voice. That was what I actually hated in her: When her detachment was merely the good-family attitude of someone who has always lived in the center of the city.

"And even if I had done something, would it matter to you what? Would you tell me whether you have ever posed for yourself the problem of understanding, in addition to judging?"

She interrupted, "If you don't lower your voice everyone will look at us and if you really were among them today I advise you to begin to watch out for some possible witnesses. If you really want to continue, I advise you to learn some additional skills. Or do you do it, like always, in order to be able to tell yourself about what you are doing? If this is the only reason, I give you a

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last bit of advice: Get friendly with those who go to the bar in your neighborhood. They discovered long ago that things can be talked about without necessarily doing them." She rose, "In any case, I am absolutely uninterested in anything concerning this affair. I don't want to hear any ideological preaching from you. I've had it up to here with preaching from all those who were close to me over the years. And if instead you don't want to talk, it is useless to ask you to continue. Perhaps in a few years perhaps I will make you pay for what you say."

In her own style she arose, left 2,000 lire and walked out with her blue dress worn by a girl from a good family.

News of the death of the policeman spread very rapidly. We held no meetings. Not because there had been a decision. Rather the reverse. We all showed off a great confidence in our judgment. The police had initiated the provocation. The order to stop was intolerable.

In Rome, the government held the entire nation under siege. And then, we were much angrier about those turds of the MIs [expansion unknown], who that morning had beaten with wrenches everyone suspected of having participated in the demonstration. Confident judgments, in brief, ran like water. But deep down, there was a slight fear of holding a meeting. I don't know whether it was only because of the possibility of a search or of police intervention. Today I am led to think that there might also be fear of something else: for example fear of having to reason a little better. This however, is something I hazard only now. At that time, in reality, I was only very tired. I only wanted to talk with Piero.

"Where did you put it?"

"I didn't hide it. Why, was it necessary?"

"No, actually not."

"Were you afraid?"

"No, at least it doesn't seem so."

The moist grass was squashed under the feet like in March, in the evening, at Milan. Piero was almost embarrassed. Almost like myself.

"Are you all right?"

"Never better." Piero continued to answer peevishly.

"Never better. In fact, I'm worried because I feel so well." He turned.

"That does it. I am not even a bit sorry. What about you?"

How I felt the city was mine, at that moment, in that park, with that friend; it never happened again. Not even later when I had learned to know it entirely, in my infinite days of shadowing, as a student of unknown itineraries of as many known persons.

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The story of those first pistol shots really began the next day. Naturally it was on the front page. And the headline in the Milan edition of CORRIERE was "Autonomists also use sawed-off shotguns to attack riot police." There was a picture of a fire. The picture of some of the demonstration [words illegible]

I had never seen the events of those months from that point of view. As seen by me, what I did took other names. For me they were the names of the neighborhood club, of that sort of anger and delusion that for some time had been circulating among official political groups, and the names of my friends. For me, everything had other names and other times. The time, above all, was different. Within me, I had felt no gap between the club, that shop, the purchase of the gun and yesterday's demonstration. But yesterday something certainly happened, because now I was there splashed on the front page as a terrorist.

I continued to hold IL CORRIERE open in my hands as I stood in front of the newsstand. It was a newsstand far away from the one I usually went to. Unconsciously, I had implemented something that I would later consider one of the minimum rules of underground security. I held in my hands IL CORRIERE which angrily described episodes which, for me, had been those thoughts, that footrace and that half mile that had come to my lips against my will. I felt split in two: Me on paper and me as I was yesterday. I folded the newspaper and again went over the events of the preceding day street by street, corner by corner.

The warning not to go to San Vittore was certain. Proletarian Democracy and the others had earlier decided that the demonstration must be "peaceful and of the masses," as they used to say in those days. That formula was a message to the authorities but above all to us. We, naturally, had ignored the warning that time and at other times in the past. The remaining groups had a strange way of being members of the movement: A way that was a bit cannibalistic, it seemed to us. They had all resurfaced, big chiefs and little chiefs, trying to direct a thing in which you were present and not present. Because the problem was, in the end, that of doing or not doing, not that of deciding on behalf of others. But they had not understood this. And so, with a little feeling of shame, trying as much as possible to mask that way of measuring up to themselves, they continually tried again. No one any longer held group meetings, but nevertheless agreements, priorities little or big old leaders circulated.

To us, therefore, nothing mattered.

To us, who, then? I don't know. The "Autonomists," as far as I was concerned, consisted of myself and those I knew. There were also others. I suppose it was all there, more or less like myself, without any prior agreement to be there. Others, too, had arrived, but I had always stayed close to Piero. Even this, I learned later, is a fundamental rule of armed struggle: You must function with someone in perfect agreement, as if with your other self. That morning IL CORRIERE said that we numbered 300. In reality there were many more of us. This numbers game is an old habit of old political groups: they were always counting others and themselves. I didn't give a damn. But it comes back to me once in a while, automatically, because within it there is a kind

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of pride. Yesterday, therefore, we were here. We stood in line, in the midst of general antipathy. I stayed farther back. Also among us had sprung forth many holy men, the venerable recognized chiefs of Autonomy, who walked in front, who formed the link between two parts of the parade. Oreste moved forward and backward. He was always active, very active, to the point of being annoying. Continuously moving he always made organizational suggestions. The pistol was heavy in my pocket. My first pistol in a demonstration. Here, in Via Carducci, we separated. The Avenue Porta Vercellina. Papiniano Boulevard. Sant' Agostino Square. Yesterday I did not look at the street signs. Every moment I expected an obstacle, a problem. How would I have reacted? Olono Street.

I read that the conductor of No 97 was Lino Baracchi, 37 years old. That turd, I didn't quite understand what he wanted to do yesterday. To tell the truth, I didn't even understand what the others wanted to do. The 97 arrived practically in front of us. A group darted off and stopped it. I followed the wave. I climbed aboard and I did not need to push anyone because everyone had withdrawn. With two other men, I went to Lino Baracchi who was screaming. A short distance in front of the streetcar bottles exploded. Among the flashes and a movement at the end of the street, it was a question of a second. Oreste had gone to the head of the column shortly before, arms spread, when we left the group, shouting: "Continue the parade; continue comrades." But what did he want? This was where we had to arrive. The police were a dark mass at the end of the street. I heard gunshots and then other shots. I also heard my own. Standing in the middle of the street, I fired.

The newspapers published a picture that shocked everyone: Two Autonomists who were firing in the middle of a deserted street. One is bent over holding his arm in order to take aim, the other had already turned in full flight while he looked behind him. That's how I must have looked. That's how Piero looked: white trousers and pullover. Once again that picture of me, stolen from me and projected outside. Immobilized in an action that I had taken and that somehow I didn't recognize in this picture. That action was natural, obvious for me, already decided upon inside myself a long time ago. That action now is there, immobilized forever: gigantic, while instead it is an infinitely small act. And, large and immobile, it remains with a different name: "terrorism."

Very well, a definite void has been dug between myself and them.

Admission into the organization had been extremely easy. It is funny now to think how and how much one fantasizes and mystifies the subject: How many inventions and exaggerations are resorted to in order to picture an act which, on the contrary, is among the simplest. Almost banal. Spurring the imagination once again is probably lack of experience and ignorance. Ignorance about what Milan was 3, 4, 5 years ago. Yet, it is not an exaggeration to say that then in Milan there were many who carried arms when they went to a restaurant in the evening; or who after leaving the restaurant, decided to go and arm themselves. In the sense of procuring weapons. And it was an incredibly easy thing. Almost ridiculous. A saying circulated among us: Get your weapons where you can. And someone, with a greater sense of humor, picked up a recurring phrase in the newspapers and in the mouths of politicians, saying "There are too many weapons around.... Fortunately."

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And so, people went to buy these weapons. The time selected was habitually that which by tradition is indicated as the most propitious, at 4 o'clock in the morning, too late for the night people, too early for the morning people. There were usually two targets: the railway police and private police agents.

One evening we went to Pavia, we ate in a stupendous restaurant on the other side of the Po (I remember as though it were yesterday: We ate snails and drank an incredible quantity of wine). Returning, we stopped the car in a country road and it was so hot we decided to cool off a bit. We stretched out in a grassy plot and 5 minutes later we were peacefully asleep. I awoke and saw that it was 2:30; I felt chilly. I awakened the other two and we decided to return to the city. We reached Milan 4 hours later.

But Piero, who was driving, evidently had no desire to sleep; he started to tour the city. Once again we were back in the suburbs. The streets were completely deserted. Even the watermelon stands were closed. And there was absolutely no one on the street. It was I who saw him. He was a private police agent and he was curiously different from his usual colleagues: He was elderly. Perhaps he was not 50 years old but certainly he was over 40. He walked slowly along one of those pretentious little streets that are also found in the suburbs, where all the "richer" shops are lined up one after another: jewelry, the fur shop, up to the grocery store with caviar in the window.

The man stopped in front of the metal window guards and stuck a night watchman's card in each one. At his side he carried a beautiful white holster, which was enormously bright on his dark uniform. Once again, it was I who said: Disarming that fellow is like stealing ice cream from a baby. I said it just like that, without thinking too much about it; and without thinking that what I said might be a suggestion. It was Andrea who said: Okay. Andrea was at least 3 years older than I and was undoubtedly the best trained of us: Not only of us three but probably of all the persons he associated with at that time. More than once I thought that very probably Andrea had something to do with an underground organization and his reservations about a part of his life confirmed it for me and made me appreciate him even more. The car by now was one-half kilometer away from the man when we decided.

We moved in a broad circle, and we turned back on a parallel street and we stopped. We decided that it was better if someone remained at the wheel and it was Piero who did so. Andrea and I walked along the street taken by the man. The plan was elementary. Andrea hid in a semiclosed doorway almost at the corner of another street, and I was behind the corner. I was supposed to let the guard see me only when he reached the end of the street in order to increase the surprise.

Everything went smoothly. Smooth as oil. Nothing went wrong. I hid behind the corner, I heard his footsteps approaching. When I thought that he was 2 meters away--and therefore 1 meter beyond the door where Andrea was hidden-- I emerged from behind the corner and walked toward him. I said something foolish: Do you know where Garibaldi Street is (which was many kilometers from

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where we were), in a very relaxed and happy tone. He was startled by the sudden voice and my sudden appearance, but not to the point of becoming alarmed and putting his hand on his gun. And on the other hand, he did not seem to be too agile and able a man and in any case the holster was kept shut by a button. I saw Andrea behind him: He had a wrench in his hand and shoved it in his back: "Put up your hands, or I'll shoot," he said, and the man obeyed immediately. It was I who approached him and put out my hand to loosen the holster, to take the large revolver. Andrea ordered: "Inside" and I pushed the man toward the doorway where he [Andrea] had hidden until then. He did it all without letting his face be seen and without showing his fictitious weapon. Once inside the doorway, we tied him up in a manner of speaking: because we bound his wrists with a handkerchief and we shoved another into his mouth. Actually, it was enough if he remained quiet for one-half minute. We made him sit on the ground. When we emerged from the doorway and turned the corner, the car was there with Piero at the wheel. We jumped aboard and after 2 minutes were very far away, and we were full of excitement and happiness. At least, Piero and I. Andrea seemed calmer and perhaps more preoccupied. But he denied it when I asked him. The revolver was big and shiny and I had no desire to go to sleep. Again it was Andrea who insisted: We can't wander around the city with a revolver we just stole, he said. We went to sleep.

In the morning, Andrea sought me out. We went toward Ticinese, then along the Grand Canal. It was the first time that Andrea had sought me out and I, still very excited, immediately said to him: "Well? When is the next one?" He answered brusquely: "This isn't a game." I understood he wasn't kidding. He began to talk and he told me to listen carefully to him. He minutely described everything we had done the previous night, listing all the errors we made (the damnfoolishness, he said) and the incredible luck we had had: that things of that sort could not be improvised, that they cannot be done with a car with the right license plate; that it was really by luck that the guard was alone, that habitually there are two and they have an automobile which they use even for moving very short distances, that usually they are young robust and even courageous people and at times even imprudent; that you can't bluff with a wrench. I didn't understand clearly. Or rather, slowly I began to understand and to see intuitively how it might have ended. And that's exactly how it ended: Andrea asked me if I was willing to do things seriously. And he told me textually: "Are you willing to join our organization?" He added immediately: "You don't have to answer now; think about it for 3 days, then let me know." And he wouldn't answer my questions.

Not even the elementary one that I asked him immediately: "What organization are you talking about?"

I continued to believe that it was the Red Brigades and I was very perplexed. Thus it was that 3 days later, the talk we had was different from what could be foreseen. I said that I was willing to do things, to make radical choices, but that I was not convinced by their point of view.

"Our point of view?" Andrea asked. "Ours, whose?" When I said "the Red Brigades" he laughed out loud (he was one who did not laugh much; he was almost melancholy). He explained things to me from the beginning and 3 days later I entered the organization.

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In general there are two ways of resolving the problem of one's woman when going underground: either to decide on a course together, or to break it up. With a person like Anna, the first solution was unthinkable. Unaffected by any kind of excitement, she could not have followed me in an affair that in any case required a moment of enthusiasm if not of confidence. Churning inside me was also the residue of the traditional reasoning men make on these things: I lived through my entire affair like something in which a woman must not be involved. It was, rather, a relationship of solidarity among men, a story of secret complicity that only men can develop. With her I would in any case have had to wear a mask, so as to interpose between her and reality at least a possible protection, or a mediation. This, however, would have meant having no fear, not to show oneself anxious, and not even in doubt. Instead, I was in a completely different mental situation. In any case, I still am not too clear about it. After all is said and done, it was perhaps a matter only of what I said earlier: That her eyes were opened too wide, and I lived instead, much more than she, in a situation of desire for something. I was, in brief, if not more fanatic, more tense than she was.

Thus going underground was also a slow crisis for the two of us. All couples suffer them. This is what happened to us. For some time we did not contact each other. Also because my new "work" took a lot of my time. Of course, for some time nothing extraordinary happened. In addition to Andrea I knew only one other militant, my immediate "superior" in the section to which I had been assigned. I continued to live at home: I was only told about an apartment in which I was to keep papers and documents; but it was not a "safehouse" (a very attractive term that surprisingly reflects the "typical" culture of the bourgeois journalist and makes him ridiculous. That newspaperman is halfway between a coal worker and Diabolik [comic strip character]). Rather it was the normal apartment of a normal comrade, not a member of the organization and perhaps not even aware that I was a member.

But the "work" in itself was very burdensome. I had been assigned--not by choice--to the "factory section" (let's call it that); and at first I was supposed to limit myself to a profound study of a given industrial sector; or better--and I was told this--to make a deep study of the "analysis of the class and capital composition" of that sector.

Specifically this meant to consume and digest an untold quantity (or at least so it seemed to me) of books, magazines, newspapers. Mark, make notes, synthesize, rework, condense. And what is more, I did it with an almost obsessive diligence proportionate to my preceding disinterest--and consequent ignorance--concerning that entire cultural area. At the beginning obvious psychological elements played a role in determining my stubborn perseverance: The desire to look good, to attract esteem and the confidence of this organization about which I still knew very little. But it was also true that slowly I achieved a real respect (even though it was never love and passion) for that "culture," whose importance and meaning I discovered to be incomparably greater than anything I had formerly considered culture.

Let it be clear: There was no lack of moments of discouragement. One of these moments that occurred daily, came from reading newspapers. I was already in the habit of considering books and magazines boring, or at least potentially

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so. But I had had a full-blown love affair with the newspapers. Until then, reading them daily had been one of the unconditionally pleasurable moments of my day. Yet that moment was rapidly reduced, and almost exclusively, for reasons of time, to the reading (and certainly not the usual rapid and distracted attention with which a newspaper is read) of economic, financial and trade union sections (I always skipped the first) of some of the major dailies; and above all the intense reading of the pages of SOLE 24 ORE.

I discovered later that reading SOLE 24 ORE was not an isolated fixation of my section or of my organization, but rather a collective mania of groups like ours; not, after a while, did the significance and justification of this escape me.

But at first, I confess, when after shaving and having my coffee, I opened the pages--well--I could almost cry.

So: If I have succeeded, at least partially, in giving an idea of how I lived during that first underground period, it will perhaps be understood why many of the questions people want to ask me do not make much sense.

What did you feel? What did you think? Why did you take the "leap?"

That's it: The point is that there was no "leap" except that of no longer reading LOTTA CONTINUA and of instead reading SOLE 24 ORE. Or of having little time for friends or girls: But, if I had been studying medicine, it would have been the same thing.

At the same time, the "banal" and "boring" activities of that period undoubtedly were preparing me for others, those to which reference is made when "the leap" is mentioned. And not because of some subtle linking mechanism, of a progressive entanglement and involvement from which I could never escape; but because only by that road (I understood this later, obviously) could I have understood whether hatred, anger, rebellion, grew mainly out of reason, whether they possessed a rationale that could guide and consolidate them.

To the point of killing or crippling, certainly: but as a choice of reason and humanity.

Yes, said with no joy:

The meaning of the death of an oppressor is written in the pages of SOLE 24 ORE.

It was Anna who called me first. At that time I had begun to alternate evenings spent at home with those spent outside. I needed my house: it was still the situation of tranquillity as well as of "normality." No one asked me for anything at home. I would drop a few hints so as to let it be understood that I was out with Anna. My parents had met her. I was out when she called; I didn't bother to call back. So, when she found me, more time and more suspicion had passed. New distances were interposed between us. She told me to go to her house, because her parents had gone to the shore for the weekend.

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I don't think I will ever forget that Saturday and Sunday stolen from her parents. She was somewhat reassured by those pieces of furniture, those walls, those certainties and she loosened up with me. She assumed the soft tone of the master of the house, but behind that manner of meeting me there was also the tacit reference to a possible life together which it was unthinkable to mention except with ironic allusions.

I have always loved Saturday. Something--on Saturday--is calmed down within me. On Saturday it is all right not to work. Saturday is just to be lazy. The mental void that torments you like a sense of guilt all the other days is even obligatory on Saturday. The air is rarefied. Noise decreases and therefore something returns that is adequate to the measure of your spirit. You can illude yourself that there is no need, day by day, to do something. At such a slow pace, in such a beautiful city, in these streets that are so empty, you could even have time to study, to find a house with a garden. In the center of the city, perhaps, so that you won't need to take long trolley car trips. Or, why not? Why not even choose more? Why do I need to put up with this shit everyday? It could be Saturday everyday for me if only I would decide to leave, to drop everything and do like Michael does who is in the country.

In the country, but without the damnfoolishness of a new ideology. In the country, because I want to live as people have always lived, finding time for things, and life and death can be a part of a natural cycle; to live like one among the others.

But thoughts about other days came back to me, even if they were more distant, on the sun-sweetened Saturday mornings. To go to the country to be turds. Like those who then are willing to be journalists, intellectuals, and travelers. In the country to do what? And where? Where has this countryside survived where living and dying are part of the natural cycle of life?

When Anna opened the door to me that Saturday, the burden of these thoughts had already become too much. After a week spent in a sort of sensorial deprivation made up of an artificial ability to feel everything to excess.

Only Anna, standing before me, was made of flesh and bone, only she. She opened the door, I embraced her, I closed the door holding her tightly, I let her fall slowly to the floor beneath me on the parquet. Without undressing and without undressing her. I sought the heat of her legs, of her abdomen, her breasts, searching her and embracing her, with not even the need to make love. And she, so well-behaved, made no move to stop me.

That's also how Anna was, she who always understood everything.

But that new life did not only take me further away from Anna.

Almost inadvertently, that entire thick and mobile fabric of sociality in which I had been immersed in recent years began to fall apart. Here again, without any "leap": And this perhaps is bad because there is the lack of a symbolic moment in which a community, no matter how informal, is dissolved and each of its members enters into another, something like the dinner at the end of the school term.

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So, there was no mourning for those lost friends. Perhaps this is why they are more ghosts than dead.

A short time ago I met Mario, in a restaurant.

Just the fact of meeting him in a restaurant so surprised me that it left me dumbfounded, and made this strange conversation possible.

Yes, because from the time I began this life, and it has become important--essential--to avoid meeting former acquaintances, I dedicated special attention to the restaurants. I mean to their choice. Because they are the most dangerous places, undoubtedly. On entering a bar, one glances around first and even if someone should enter later, it is in any case a matter of a few minutes that are easily occupied with a few formal phrases. At the movies, it is enough to sit somewhere toward the front and to bury oneself in a newspaper during the intermissions. On a trolley car, instead, it is a big problem because "what a shame, I get off at the next stop" is the only solution. It is even more complicated in a train: "The next stop" could be 300 kilometers; thus one chooses a train with many stops, ready to get off if all the rest ("baggage in another compartment," or "the men's room") doesn't work. Even if being stranded like a turd at Chiusi-Terontola is certainly not amusing.

On the street instead, a hasty greeting and the air of someone who is in a hurry is enough. And it is incredible how often you happen to meet someone. So long as you have no reason to want to avoid him, you are not bothered: The world is really small, say the fools, and it is not that they are exactly wrong, the idiots.

However, as I said, the worst places are the restaurants.

Naturally, there too you must glance around before entering; but if after you have been seated and perhaps have ordered the first and second dish and side dishes and fruit, someone enters, you're screwed. You can't slip away: Not so much for the restaurant owner and the annoyance he would express, as because the people "of before" are people that can guess, understand intuitively, suspect: And a precipitous escape from a steaming dish would practically be a confession.

On the other hand, when you live alone you can't avoid going to restaurants. A meal out once in a while is necessary: It almost becomes a physical need. Anyone who thinks that it is sad to eat alone in a restaurant does not know how sad is a long succession of canned goods and fried eggs. I know friends who, in situations like mine, developed the hobby of cooking; not I: Perhaps a fault in my education and of a bourgeois home in which cooking was always the mother's job; the place in front of the stove was hers and hers alone.

And so it was necessary to go to restaurants.

I thought for a long time about the restaurants that were the least "dangerous" or not "dangerous" at all. And I arrived at this conclusion: That--from my point of view--the absolutely secure ones were the restaurants to which you could attach no possible adjective, those that are so anonymous that they can't be defined in any way.

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The "comradely" restaurants are the first to avoid for obvious reasons. Also the notoriously "good" restaurants: Once it would have been enough to stay clear of the "good and cheap" restaurants but now I seem to understand that many comrades are disposed, perhaps once in a while, to spend a lot of money to eat well. Or perhaps it means that the so-called comrades, nowadays, also have money to spend: or it could also be that this is a kind of reflux. The consequence is that--even having the money to go there--you must avoid the "good and expensive." You can't trust the "exotic" restaurants: There are times when they are considered tourist traps or for damn fools; at other times there is a fashionable outburst for the "Chinese," the "Vietnamese," the "Arab." Or even the "Greek." And when, like me, you're out of touch it is difficult to know what period you are in.

It may seem strange, but even the "family restaurants" and the "neighborhood" restaurants are dangerous; the comrades would never go there with a girlfriend or with male friends, but they would go there once in a while with their parents, for example, for a Sunday dinner (Sunday is a very, very dangerous day to eat in a restaurant: with shops closed people can go anywhere).

In short, the secure restaurants are those that are absolutely and totally anonymous. It can be said that the comrades never go there.

And do you know what is discovered? That there are many such restaurants. Another aspect of reality which, under normal conditions, escapes one completely: If you think of a neighborhood you know very well and you try to remember the restaurants, you can recall 3, 4, 10 for each of which you could find one adjective, or many adjectives. And instead, there are twice, three times that many: and before you had never even seen them. Yes, but who goes to those restaurants? At times I think that when everything is finished, I would like to take a degree in sociology, and write a thesis on "anonymous restaurants and their patrons" it would be an interesting study because it is obvious who some of those patrons are: soldiers, travelers without money, or people who are in a hurry to eat something; others are mysterious and alarming, persons you can't describe no matter how hard you try. And then there are couples: Who could they be, and why are they there? Secret lovers? In a neighborhood where they won't be recognized? To tell the truth, I don't know why I spent so much time on restaurants: to explain the surprise of that meeting, yes, but also because--in loneliness--one develops strange fixations, marbles in the head in short; and for me, restaurants, or rather "the theory of restaurants," is one of these. In any case that restaurant was absolutely anonymous; yet, I had just barely attacked the spaghetti when I heard:

"Hey, look who's here! May I sit?"

It was Mario and I was screwed.

I raised my eyes and he was there; the same face, the same calm and just a hint of ironic air, those eyes "that look through you," but with no evil intent.

"Ugh..." I answered, a last vain attempt to keep him away; or perhaps only to salve my conscience, and to be able to say--above all to myself--"I did everything I could to avoid this meeting."

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His next phrase should have been "May I sit?" He did not say it: he just sat. Right then I didn't understand, I continued to be fearful and anxious concerning the imminent conversation: But then, on thinking it over, I saw the signal he wanted to send me: You don't ask an old friend, a comrade "May I sit?" Even after 2 or 3 years, because surely nothing has changed, right?

Yes, a signal. Because he knew: I mean he understood intuitively, he suspected, and something more. But he also knew he must not know. He understood that in order to speak with me we had to--we damn well had to--both pretend, he that he did not know, I not knowing that he knew, the penalty--at least in theory--his life or mine. And perhaps he wanted to speak with me; and I, perhaps with him.

He asked, "What do you advise me to do?"

I had no advice. It was the first time I had eaten in that place and surely the last. And then, in such a place....

He continued, "I was thinking of you recently when I saw that film, what's the name of it, you know that about the aircraft carrier that disappears and goes back into time and comes out at Pearl Harbor and the story could change. A funny film; maybe a turkey, but funny. Well, then, who knows why, I began to think of us, about old times; and to fantasize about what we would have done had we been transposed--but us, just as we are--to a time 100 years ago or 50 years in the future. Fifty years ahead is a madhouse, it becomes fantasy science. But 100 years ago.... Let's say, at the time of the first leagues, the first socialists. I mean, would we have understood that at least 100 years were lacking, and then what? Or would we not have wanted to, or been able to, understand it; and considering that loneliness, the fact that we were so desperately few, what would we have thought of doing...."

I could only listen. What could I say about such a pointless discussion? He really had not changed. The same reasoning that was as deep as it was meaningless, often concerning distant events or unimportant facts, the same curiosity--that was almost morbid--for the 1,000 rivulets of the possible beside a poorly disguised scorn for reality.

Perhaps I had stopped listening to him when he asked:

"What do you think?"

And perhaps this was why, because even for an instant I had lost control of the situation, and had wandered off for a second in fantasy and memories, I had a great desire to tell him what I really thought; that I didn't give a damn about all that bullshit, that the socialists and he could shove the socialists and the aircraft carriers you know where, and as far as I was concerned, it was enough to eat alone in an anonymous restaurant without throwing other shit onto the fire. But fortunately he didn't give me time.

"Have you ever seen the TV show, around 7, 'The Smith Family,' I think it's called? It's not on anymore, but there are many like it. I mean normal families

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that do normal things with a normal pinch of adventure, at times drama. Well, that stuff has a strange effect on me: I mean, even knowing that it's all crap, I am taken in, I participate; and they make me anxious....Because you can't help asking yourself all the time, 'But, by God, what are they living for, for what purpose'; except that you no longer have the pretext--I mean I don't have it--that the question is only about them, why they are like this and not like that...."

He was off; even the arrival of the pasta could not stop him: He spoke while he ate, and he ate while he spoke. And I was torn between the pleasure of having avoided a difficult choice of calibrated words, and anger against his pointless chatter; it seemed almost as though he was doing it to me purposely.

"It is like certain days that have a particular taste smell, I don't know whether you understand what I mean, and it reminds you of when you experienced them for the first time, and of yourself, and then you say: What happened in between, what has changed, perhaps nothing, and the children of today feel the same things and that won't protect them from becoming adults, like us, don't you think?"

But they were all rhetorical questions much less did they wait for answer. So I was free to think: Like about that story of the smells and tastes, which for me instead were old songs heard on the radio, each an era, and often a moment; that one: 16 years old and a vacation at Rimini (even though, obviously, it is not Rimini); that other: still a few years and then nursery school--or was it already elementary school?--etc. But my anger grew: What use was it to talk about such things, after we had not seen each other for years and after all that had happened? When one does all he can to avoid thinking about them, I say.

"Everything going well?" he asked suddenly in the middle of an endless speech.

"Well, the usual life..." I began. He didn't let me finish.

"No, I meant your main dish, was it good?"

It was really sickening.

Later when I was alone, wandering about that neighborhood semi-unknown and with a Sunday sadness, his chattering suddenly seemed to me--who knows why--important and I tried to remember what he had said.

But everything had been so confused, so pointless. Only at the end, when we were saying goodbye, did he seem to emerge from that kind of delirium, and to speak seriously. "Will we see each other again," he had said, just because it was the thing to do. A ghost.

It wasn't too long before my activity in the organization changed for the first time. They believed (at that time I didn't know who they were) that I had acquired sufficient expertise in the sector entrusted to me and that I could move on to the study of a specific reality, in short a large plant, concentrating on details of relations between the organization of labor and the hierarchical organization.

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To achieve this, I was put into contact with another comrade of the organization, a worker in that plant. I worked with him for some months.

I must say--that perhaps for generational reasons--I had never experienced my relations with the working class in terms that put any great emphasis on their problems; I had never made it that dark desire that it was, and often is, for many comrades whose backgrounds are the events of 1968.

What I considered "my" working class were the youths who attended the youth clubs in the area and in Autonomy, who in addition to everything else were indistinguishable from the students, from the "do nothings," from the "drug users" (also because often they also were drugged, do nothing students), which entirely fitted them (except for their hands, my grandmother would say).

This comrade, let us call him Fabio, was something else again. He certainly wasn't the mythical worker with a communist heart but in need of guidance and of awareness; undoubtedly he had a better background than I in that new "culture" that by now I also considered my own; in my eyes he drew further authoritativeness from the long underground militancy entirely "in the field" and at great personal risk. But at the same time I was aware of a "difference"--against which I fought for a long time before I resigned myself to accepting it--that I had never noticed. Perhaps for reasons of age (he was an "adult") and therefore, perhaps, because of the different personal roads we had traveled, the point of arrival was the only thing we had in common.

What struck me most was his absolute unwillingness to engage in so-called personal discussions; an attitude that was not common to underground militants, and which was not even--at that time--a prudent way to act toward a "new" person: After some time, I learned where he lived, and it happened that I would speak on the telephone with his wife and children; but never to speak with him about his wife and children.

However, he was extraordinary in his work. He knew the factory brick by brick, machine by machine, man by man; and if from our common work emerged the need for a bit of information that he did not already possess, he was willing to get it with a speed and accuracy that for me, today like then, was amazing.

The plan of that factory gradually began to take shape in my head, in all its infinite (and monstrous) aspects; in the end, I knew all. All all all. But I had never seen it except from a distance. But I had never observed it well from closeup. Nor, as long as I continued in that work, was I to approach it. And now that I think of it, I did not even do it afterward.

Fabio, my "eyes in that work, fell not long ago.

It was one of those fates for which they will have to pay. Even though, basically, I did not like him very much. But he was really "a good comrade": a description probably made precisely for those who are not too likeable.

Sometime after that Saturday at her parent's house, I went to the shore with Anna. But it was not something serious.

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I had to go to a meeting, for the first time outside the limits of those three or four persons I knew: nothing important, I was merely to deliver an envelope.

In any case, to go about with a girl was "safer," and that's the explanation I gave to the organization for my going about with her.

I began to feel, through hints and words dropped, how this strange and irregular relationship with Anna was not acceptable at all to the organization.

The alternative became increasingly clear: Either she became involved or we had to break it off. It was not possible to involve her; I preferred not to think of leaving her entirely. That vacation could be a way to solve the problem.

Her parents have a house by the sea on the western shore. It was a house I liked very much because it was lacking in ostentation, one of those houses that speaks of the well-being of many generations. An old house, almost a cottage, small and flat, but with a very dense garden near the sea. You see immediately that it is one of those gardens that has not been developed meter by meter for speculation. It expands in a normal way, following the terrain with its hills and valleys; while the other gardens are flat or terraced, organized in order to exploit every millimeter of land bought at a high price.

When we were younger, we had worked in that garden on our final exams, with the house officially and pompously made available to us by these democratic parents. Democratic but not to the point of letting us go there alone: three other friends had come with us and an aunt came down from Genoa every other day. But in that garden I had read Tolstoy, and for me that garden had become the scene of a Russia revisited. I had the impression that somewhere I had already heard the Kreutzer Sonata, during my life, exactly under the bougainvilleas. I knew that there are no bougainvilleas in Russia, but a garden is something more than just a collection of plants. It is a place that has disappeared from our life. I had never had a garden in my life as a child. So I borrowed Anna's garden for my memories, which were not my own.

I want to try to tell about that garden because I sometimes think about it even today. The thing that fascinated me most was the fact that it was fenced in by a net, a net that I have often seen in the country, with rhomboid links, stretched on wooden poles and held by bent nails. That fence made me think of foxes. A fox could easily have dug under it enough to lift it and then enter. The characteristic of these fences is in fact that of having borders that stretch. You could grab the bottom of it and lift: That's how foxes get into the chicken coop, I thought.

But the borders are all so loose on the top. And above it had another effect typical of fences: It would become undone under the weight of the bluebells and the heather and all those climbing plants that grow in gardens. The bluebells are my favorite. These too are in fact ancient and rural, like the foxes in the chicken coops. Then, they have this strange way of living. They need water, a lot: They close at night and they become a sort of dried-up little tube; the morning after, when it is cool, they open up again, the very same ones, not new ones, with a rose-tinted violet or an intense blue that fades

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toward the base of the calyx. They are bothered by someone touching them, they are bothered by too much sun, they become painfully limp if they don't have enough water. Everything seems to make them a delicate and languid plant. Instead, you later discover that it is a flower that you cannot uproot. They grow if they just barely go to seed. And they grow with a frightful voracity. Every seed a branch. Every branch becomes other branches, other flowers, they grow by centimeters daily, you can see them grow. And within a few days they become a hedge, a mass, a web that cannot be untangled, and that attaches itself to everything it sees including other plants, even the roses.

Fascinated, I watched them grow before my eyes, so perfidious in their voracious splendor, in their faithless delicacy. Yet I loved them. Their duplicity fascinated me. One day I provoked them, with a pair of scissors I cut them all down at the root.

And I stood watching that empty fence for a little time. Only a little. Until I saw the first new growth. Then I resigned myself laughing. It seemed to me a sign of good luck, for my life and for my choices.

Therefore, that weekend vacation was for me a happy desire fulfilled. The time of our examinations and of that struggle with the [blue] bells seem so far back in time to me.

But when a thing changes, it is no longer possible to recover it.

My business appointment was for Sunday morning in a bar, in one of those horrible marbled squares that are typical of that city. I had tried to change the time of the appointment because it would have been difficult for me to leave Anna on Sunday morning in a place where all our common friends were and on a day when all the shops were closed. But it was impossible to change the appointment.

The thought of what I would tell her never left me, not even for a minute during the entire 2 hours on the road that was between us and the sea, with Guccini's latest record constantly repeated.

Anna was very happy. She, too, evidently had decided to put aside those last weeks that were so strange, so syncopated, nervous. Conversation without politics. The latest book by Roth, *Le Carre's*, "The Honorable Schoolboy!" She said, "What I like is that in reality there are no enemies in the book. What is an enemy if not someone you create inside yourself? Or at least it is true that the materiality of a conflicting presence is not enough to make that presence an enemy.

"With a conflicting presence you can choose to measure yourself in many ways. You can wish to dominate it by concentrating on something else, for example, and thus creating the conditions that will cancel out the negative weight; for example, you could create a vacuum around it. Or you could love it. Sometimes love is in fact a conciliation that grows out of conflict. As happens, for example, between a man and a woman. Or you can submit and wait on the bank of the river because it is true that often conditions of history change...." Slowly, I began to feel within me a sense of discomfort that

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already began to become irritation. "...An enemy, to be such, also needs to have an active declaration to that effect from you. An enemy, I mean to say, is an enemy only if you decide that you must fight him." I felt, I felt that she was preaching to me. Nervousness, and the desire that basically came from wanting to be with her began to turn against her. But what did she want; what did she want? Why didn't she leave me in peace? Was she acting like my mother, who talked about my hair in order to talk about how I would get to school? What did she want? But she was implacable as always. "Otherwise, why have we had 20 years of fascism, why did it take so long for an active resistance to begin. An enemy is something more than an enemy presence. Within itself it also has your obsessions, your fantasies."

"But what the hell do you want, become a member of the PCI, or of the Christian Democracy? You want us to sit here and think that we must create a vacuum around whom? Or do you believe that if the communists are admitted to the government they can affect the power of the Christian Democrats? And since you're at it, why don't you drag out those fucking opinions on data control and science, that we must all study in order to be able to control production." I shouted at her suddenly perhaps only to contain my feelings of insecurity, my anger because she didn't understand my mood. But what could I have told her? Join me in the underground? Fight with us? But even she, what right did she have to repeat all that fucking drivel to me? I continued to speak in an increasingly louder voice with increasingly less control on my anger and my scorn. "And what about the police who fire their weapons, and the comrades who die and the blackmarket work? Is that a fantasy of mine? One of my creations as you women say?" But once again I failed to get her off her high horse.

She didn't answer, I continued to shout until I too felt I was being ridiculous by repeating all those cliches, and I stopped talking. Until we reached the shore, we just listened to Guccini many many times. We didn't make love that night; but we did the next morning, a habit we had acquired on waking up in the same bed, in a house for us alone; and the habit of having breakfast in bed, together, helped us find some peace.

But the worst was yet to come.

The tense atmosphere of the preceding day prevented me from finding an excuse. So that morning there weren't many alternatives: I suggested to Anna that we take a ride through the city and there I could enter the bar and find a way to talk with the person pretending that I had met him there by chance.

"And why not the shore?" That was Anna's reply. Very irritating as always. By now I had begun to see a hidden meaning regardless of what she said. We got in the car and I began an absurd itinerary in an attempt to remain calm. I passed the bar several times. There was no parking space free because that bar on Sunday was the bar for young prostitutes. I parked the car farther away and Anna started to get out with me. "No, please, I'll run quickly," I said sharply. "But why? I'll come too, I'll have a cup of coffee." And I, increasingly childish and nervous: "But so much coffee is no good for you."

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"Excuse me, but why should it bother you?"

"Just wait for me a second I've got to make a phonecall."

"But what telephone call? We decided not to see anyone." Anna insisted with a very serious face. I was increasingly certain that now she would begin to suspect. On my feet, with the door open, I trembled. "It is a long distance call; must I tell you all my business?" Very well. In any case, I want a cup of coffee. I'll go for a spin and I'll return. You'll be able to do everything you have to do."

We left, she in one direction, I in another.

I turned for an instant. I tried to call her, "Anna."

She must have heard, but she didn't turn around.

There was nothing more to do. If I still needed proof, those 2 days had been sufficient. It could not continue this way. Total complicity was needed. And Anna could not give me that.

When we had learned everything there was to know about that factory, really everything, the moment came for a new direction in my work. This time it was substantial. To know everything about a factory means also being able to identify the key men, that limited number of persons who function as pivots, nerve centers in the complex command structure. They are possible objectives: because it makes sense to attack them. Certainly I was able to understand this too gradually. The choice of an objective in reality is a very complex process, with distant beginnings, from politics. There is a reason why one sector of production is concentrated on rather than another, on factories instead of on the universities or the army, that factory rather than another, on certain individuals in that factory in preference to others. All this, naturally, in addition to the relationship between the choice of an objective and the "state of the organization": so that there will be objectives "of ordinary administration," objectives "of a qualitative leap," objectives "for defense" etc. But now I also know that factors that occur entirely by chance also count.

Thus it happens that in the end you choose a target--specifically a person--because you remember his face perhaps after an initial rapid survey. Sometimes, instead, it is a recollection that surfaces; or a hierarchy that has become introverted over a long period of time: so that your hatred is stronger, for example, for those who wear certain suits, for the first factory where you distributed flyers, for that place near the place where they killed that comrade. Are these chance motivations? And why? Why, after all is hatred not political? Many tell us this. Many say it with a certain meaning outside of the area of combat: the damn fools of human life and of pacification in its most diverse variants, from the humanism of Lotta Continua to the politicians of Potere Operaio but I don't even count these. In my judgment, it is ridiculous that there are so many even within our own area of action who maintain hatred must not be felt for the person being attacked, because

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we don't act for "personal" reasons, but we attack because of a necessary and obligatory rebellion against the state of things as they are. These are the various "machinegun professors." And I who, personally, quit my career as a civilian and university student, feel hatred above all for the professors no matter how they are served up.

Thus, I participate emotionally in a very strong way in whatever I do. And I want, absolutely want to be right in a way that echoes inside of me, if I prepare to attack someone, or to rob a bank. Because I live only once. I'm not signing any promissory notes for eternity. My gun is something that I hope will serve everyone. But, in the meanwhile, this is also my revolt, my hatred, my revolution just as it was my road that led me to acquire this gun.

This attitude does not make me a professional, a model militant, a professional revolutionary. I am not cold-blooded enough or confident enough. Understand me: I never did anything that was not fully "professional" during these years; I never made mistakes. Yet something of all that always comes to the surface. There is nothing more transparent than the underground. It is an unnatural habitat, rigidly regulated and always obligated to contain a meaning; one winds up being reduced to the bone in terms of experience. Nothing flows naturally, therefore, there is nothing that does not have some weight, because there is no room for things to grind away by themselves. Everything in some way is chosen. And this is why some don't trust me (I speak of a hint of differentiation, not of confidence or anything else). But this is also why I never joined the "Soviet wing" (that's how I referred to it) of the armed struggle. My sense of what life is and theirs, my desire to be fully myself in everything, these things make us different. And after all, this too, is the root of my culture and of my choice of armed struggle: the thread that goes from the youth club to what I am today, and this process has never been interrupted.

I am aware that I strayed from the subject--to use a scholastic term. At one time, the only thing that counted was to take action. It has been decided that one of the possible targets would be entrusted to me. Not only that: I would have to move temporarily to another city. There it is, I am aware that it is difficult to understand for anyone who has not read SOLE 24 ORE everyday for a long time, yet that is how it is: Our analysis of that factory had led us to single out one of the possible targets as a man who worked somewhere else.

Therefore, I was to leave, and I was happy about it. And my role in the organization was becoming more solid and more significant. I met other comrades, from my own city and from the one where I was supposed to work; and for the first time I acted really as an underground operative, for the first time I was armed, even if only out of caution. I left, therefore and my strange life with engineer Caretto began.

Our victims, as they are called, often do not lead a blameless life. The most normal thing we discover--in our surveillance--is if they have a mistress.

A surveillance is very exciting from certain points of view. It is the true violation of the rules of civil coexistence. Slowly a person no longer exists privately. Slowly everything about him is known without that person even

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knowing about it. You wind up by knowing, for example, all his suits, all his neckties, his briefcases, the different expression on his face in the morning.

Not all the persons kept under surveillance become victims. Surveillance is a form of knowledge and learning.

Engineer Caretto, for example, never became a victim. Among other things thanks precisely to his private life.

The city to which I was assigned was very beautiful and for me completely unknown. No cars, no streets. The water that follows you everywhere.

Before I went there I would never have visited it. But as an underground operative I had a very nice time there.

I moved into an apartment with a very tiny terrace, attached to all the nearby roofs. Inside the luxury was unimaginable for me: the pile carpet, a large television set, shelves full of science fiction and detective stories.

It was the house of an American who had unknowingly sublet it to us. In exchange, I was supposed to water the flowers every evening and feed a cat who, however, lived his own life and made an appearance only once a day, on the roof near the edge of the terrace. I was living in a large album of Corto Maltese comic strip characters.

For the benefit of the neighbors, I had selected the role of a student, I left the house early every morning and returned in the evening. I spent the day in a complicated itinerary, but very complicated, but very pleasant, itinerary.

Engineer Caretto lived in Mestre but we thought that it might be better if I lived in Venice, which was more complicated and crowded. Thus every morning I went to Mestre and began work a few minutes before the engineer.

He was a very likeable person. I believe he was about 35 years old, and he had all the affectations of a 35-year-old: the Clarks [translation unknown] twill jackets, corduroy pants. But he was especially likeable because he had a large head of black hair, smooth, heavy, without the usual incipient bald spots, a bit fastidious. I knew he had a wife and two small children. In the morning he sometimes accompanied the little girl to the corner where the elementary school was and then he would turn back, take his car and go off. At other times he left early and the girl went to school alone.

Sometimes I saw his wife, sometimes I didn't because she took the baby to nursery school at different times, probably because she later went to a teaching job. The link between the schedules, the children, made the business of leaving the house in the morning a very casual affair.

So it was a lengthy affair.

But I did not dislike that at all. The longer I stayed there the happier I was. At first, I waited for him while he worked, in view of possible movements

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during the day. But the engineer was very methodical, he always left at the same time.

Thus I got into the habit of returning to Venice and spending my time going about or reading a book on the steps of the many churches of the many squares of the city.

I had also made friends. If that's what you can call the sellers of nuts and souvenirs and the owners of the stands. We exchanged a few words on the weather, politics, and the Japanese tourists. During one of the vagabond days I literally had a fit. I was sitting in a little bar drinking a martini. The sidewalk umbrellas had been pulled out and I sat there enjoying the canal and the bridge and the boats, when on the opposite bank I was certain I saw engineer Caretto passing. He was walking fast, he immediately turned the corner. I jumped up, left some money and hastened to follow him. When I reached the corner where he turned I saw nothing. I was very upset and uncertain. I could have been mistaken because I know thousands of people dressed like him. Yet that big head of black hair seemed to me something I could not make a mistake about. I was seized by terrible anxiety and guilt feelings. Damn me, the martini and this stinking city in which I had relaxed like an everyday tourist, I ran to the ferry and went to Mestre near the engineer's house. If he had been the man I saw, he would have returned from work early. Instead the house was empty and the windows closed. There was no sign of life. An hour later Mrs Caretto returned with the reddened sweaty children, evidently they were returning from the park; and punctually, as always, at the usual time, the engineer returned.

I wanted to convince myself that I had been mistaken. Yet I was very certain.

The next day I approached my work more carefully, and I remained on watch outside the factory.

For an entire week nothing at all happened. I resumed a more relaxed pace. Then an event again aroused my sense of alarm.

The Carettos spent Saturdays like all other families.

They lazed about the house, then they all left together: shopping at the supermarket, spending the afternoon with the children, sometimes they went to the home of the engineer's parents for lunch; sometimes on Sunday they went to the wife's family that lived in another city.

That Saturday the wife and the children left the house very late around 10 o'clock. They got in the car and left.

And what about the engineer? I waited all day. He returned at 5 o'clock, with the air of someone who had gone to his job.

The event struck me. The engineer had gone to the factory on Saturday, something he never did. I decided I would not let him get away from me and I would extend my surveillance to the evenings.

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In general, the Carettos went out twice a week, in the evening, without the children. They visited people in Venice where they went by car. They left the car in the big public parking lot, and they generally walked to the homes of their friends. Nothing very worldly from what I was able to understand. They were in everyday dress, they went to friends who lived in nice, but not luxurious, sections.

To follow a couple seemed to me to be an almost ridiculous affair. The two were young, they did what everyone did. At times they quarreled, at times they were very affectionate. That lady, so attractive and, in my eyes, absolutely innocent.

To tell the truth, it bothered me to have to follow them on their evenings out. Venice in the evening is a city that is capable of arousing even the stones. In the spring evenings there is some humidity that makes a halo around the streetlights and the absence of usual noise in other cities makes space more meaningful. Sometimes I was able to understand the words and the laughter of those two. It bothered me some because my task was not to spy on their intimacies. From the gardens behind the walls in the evening there arises an odor between rotteness and the sharp perfume of flowers that was unknown to me. They are umbrella flowers, white, whose name I never knew. But I know they are what give off that special perfume because once I passed very close to one and I touched it. It smelled something like the perfume of a cemetery, but so intense as almost to resemble a pain during those evenings I spent following a couple, and what am I doing here? I asked myself that question with increasing frequency.

All fantasies. The task of this engineer was a fantasy, my spying on this couple was a fantasy, these pains, during these evenings, were fantasies.

What the hell am I doing here like a fool? I had to bring this affair to an end. It was all the fault of this city. It's not a great quote, but Corto Maltese is right. "You enter these courtyards and you can never free yourself again."

My footsteps were like theirs. Step after step. I listened to my footsteps; how strange. I follow them and they are together.

But, again, one Saturday the engineer did not leave the house with his family. I decided I would not lose the trail. I know how to be very obstinate, and furthermore, I had become completely involved in that affair. This man was like so many of my friends and acquaintances. His woman also put on those faces that are recognizable, shoes always with a low heel.

And I was in that city which I was to leave as soon as everything was finished.

I became increasingly obstinate in continuing my surveillance.

One evening, the engineer went alone to Venice.

I hoped that finally I would get a substantial signal. Instead, he went to one of the addresses he went to with his wife, a house on the corner almost on the

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Grand Canal. Another blind alley. I was leaving and I was finally resigned to forget all my ramblings. I waited out of a pure sense of duty, and I saw him leave from a small door, that by now I had come to know well, with a woman. A slim blond woman with low heeled shoes.

They started walking and I followed. It was a normal pace. The usual sounds of footsteps in the evening. Someone passes, the usual haze around the lamp-light, the usual flowers with the cemetery odor. A bridge, two bridges, three bridges. A somewhat twisted itinerary, but in Venice you can never say. All the streets continue to turn back on themselves. On one of those bridges he stretched out his arm and pulled her to him. She pressed against him. It was a quick but intimate embrace, hers most of all, so ready and a little desperate.

What a prick, What a prick I continued to repeat to myself, and everything immediately became clear, double damnation on me. It was all very simple. He had a mistress. Something so idiotic, so banal, so imbecilic.

And then: That pig, that idiot. I uttered a string of imprecations against him. I wanted to kick those stupid iron gates along the canal just to get it off my chest. Damnation on him and on me. That's all. He has a mistress. This is what the weekend trips were all about, these were the sudden disappearances. Certainly, everything was clear. They worked together, they are also family friends. Everything is normal, in the usual way; and I, with all my political fixations, imagined who knows what.

They continued to walk ahead of me, they disappeared together, then, into a house. After a while a light appeared on the top floor, and it was put out a short time later. Two hours later the prick emerged. I waited for him the last time. I was cold, and I did not want to waste another minute on him. I wanted to leave him there, with this stupid regular life, full of wives, mistresses, babies, stolen weekends and stolen meetings.

This time I did not follow him and then the most imbecilic thing anyone can do who takes a mistress is to select someone like his wife. Foolish, mediocre, stinking and lacking in magnificence even in this. If he had only loved a redhead with a split skirt, or a brunette, or a girl or an old woman. Nothing, a friend of the family just like his wife.

But perhaps it was she who saved him. When I reported my information, it was decided that engineer Caretto was decidedly a man whose habits were too irregular and unforeseeable. This lost him many points in the classification of possible targets. So my work was ended and I returned home.

Having decided to leave Anna I began to put my decision into practice. The silliest thing, in these cases, is to let her believe you have another woman. This creates a somewhat literary situation, a sort of sacrifice for love.

I began to telephone less frequently. But we continued to see each other. Once in a while, instead of whenever we could, as we did before. On these occasions we did all the things that lovers do and which really, we rarely did earlier considering that I was so involved with politics and friends.

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We would go to the park, we bought food for the pigeons; then to the movies and to places frequented by friends to hear some music and to eat.

There were also other reasons why I had to do all this. I could not, in fact disappear suddenly; instead I had to recite a sort of progressive loosening of ties with politics. Those less-committed situations, that way of seeing each other in calmer circumstances progressed perfectly.

Except that, at times, seeing each other in that way generated some misunderstandings in Anna and in me, too. Instead of abandonments, I risked creating a different situation, but just as difficult to break.

I said it before. Anna is a very serious person. She always sees things for what they are. During those months I also discovered in her the ability to be obstinate and to fight for her own things. It was precisely during those months--when I was maneuvering to put a distance between us--that we perhaps had the most adult relationship in our lives together.

Contrary to what I expected, my gradual loosening of the ties of our relationship did not provoke irate and proud reactions in Anna. It merely changed our relationship. The first time she asked me questions I was evasive. Then, if I did not answer the phone, she let it drop, and would wait until I called. And when I showed up, without a question, with nothing, she spoke to me as though we had left each other only the day before. She was on time for dates and always had something new, spoke uninterruptedly about herself and about her work, about her friends.

I, for the first time, would answer in the same way because I needed to pretend I was slowly changing my ties with politics.

Thus we would become engulfed in splendid discussions that seemed to me a little bit too gratuitous, but which in reality fascinated me. Her parents' house, what a turd that professor is, the problem of the little brother, the most recent happenings among our friends. And 15 days later we would pick up where we had left off. And she had a whole pile of amusing gossip.

She never said one word about my absences.

But there were other pressing problems. When I went to Venice I told her that I was moving to another city for some time. But I did not get in touch with her on my return. Also because my situation had changed. I had to begin a sort of full-time work. And to live in a secret apartment that was my own. I did not succeed in bringing about a break nor in finding other solutions. I thought of one, that was very dangerous for me. I gave her an address in Rome to which she could write, telling her that there was no telephone in the house and that I would call. A friend in Rome would forward the letters; my letters would take the same path.

It was a very dangerous solution my organization never learned about. Even though the real problem of security is that of working with your own brains. To continue somehow with Anna for me was more "secure" than to break suddenly with her and to "go crazy," by uprooting myself completely.

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I have her letters. I don't read them often. Rather, I don't ever read them, but it gives me pleasure to think that they are there. Sooner or later I must destroy them to avoid exposing her to risks.

So a new period began, a life that was really clandestine. And not without problems. I was leaving home, definitively: The same lie used with Anna functioned very well with my parents. I needed to separate myself more fully and drastically from my earlier environment. And then there were personal and political problems. This time there was some sort of a "leap"; also because it was entirely obvious that the new arrangement was a prelude to new tasks.

First there was a political classification. I met other people in the organization on higher levels, and I discussed my future placement with them. Or perhaps it was, somehow, a final check. I had no doubts or perplexities. Perhaps a vague subterranean anxiety. But the decision was firm.

Among other things, I was put on "salary." It was very very little. And the occasional gifts from my parents always were the difference between a poor life and a miserable life.

But as far as work was concerned, I was supposed to continue to be involved in the same project, but I was also supposed to be available for actions by other "sections."

Despite this, my knowledge of the organization remained very slight. By now I had come to know a considerable number of people, but, for example no place except the house where I lived. If I had to meet someone, the meeting took place there, or much more often, outside in a public place. It was always others who contacted me and who set appointments. There was no advance warning: You would meet someone "casually" on the street who would tell you: "Go to such and such bar," or "go to that garden"; and at times, when you got there, they would tell you to go somewhere else.

To live underground. To live underground is burdensome. Often, very often, it is a terrible work. And it's no use: It is terrible work precisely because of social contacts and relationships. Rather, to speak of social relationships is already exaggerated: Everything seems ideological, even though I know very well that ideology is not involved, but something specific, something very specific. It is a question of a body and of skin, of nerves and tears. And of yearning and of desire.

One immediately thinks of the subject of women, but it is not only a question of women and not even primarily a question of women.

What it is, it can be said, is a separate problem, and if I feel like it, I will discuss it separately. Here we are dealing with a more general problem: of life and of social ties. And it is worth telling the story of the bartender to better explain what I want to say.

Well, near where I lived there was a small bar. One of the thousand small bars of Milan and the province: It looked like a very traditional bar: a little bit of space with tables and a pooltable, a jukebox and a flipper, a telephone and

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the door to the washrooms. I went to the place very often. It can be said that it was the place, except for my home, where I spent most of my time. There was a telephone and it was a very precious and indispensable thing, if you knew how to use it. There was a jukebox, and for someone like me who is a fanatic for music, this was a very beautiful situation. There was a pool-table, and I will speak about that. There was the flipper, and with no exaggeration, I am a world champion flipper. Well, I began to go to this bar as anyone normally goes to a bar near his house, to take a cup of coffee in the morning and a little eau-de-vie when it was cold. Then, it was not as though I was always in the bar: That is, I was not earlier, and later it was different as I will explain.

At first no, I was not one of those, as many of my friends and comrades are, who even spend many hours closed in their little bar, and later perhaps they say that there is nowhere to "aggregate" (as they say in Rome [in Roman dialect]) and so it is just as well to meet in the bar. For me, the bar is always so crowded that if you turn you have to elbow the man near you, where there is always the stink of dirty dishes and--sometimes--of piss, a stink of piss that comes from the little door in the back (that never closes tight); and where there are so many people that have nothing better to do in the world, that you, too, appear to have nothing better to do in the world. And then, it may be--I wish it were so--that I am still affected by the manners I was taught at home and that the idea of hanging out in a bar is tied to an image of a somewhat habitual wastrel, a lazybones (but also somewhat corrupt) that so obsessed my mother. The fact is that I began to go to that bar only to have my coffee in the morning, then, as I said, to telephone. This happened in the first phase of my underground life, when I thought (I was kidding myself) that it might be possible to organize a life that--even though it was separate from others--would neither be secret nor separate and that therefore I would move between a rich activity of study and reflection (thus, of political and intellectual growth) and relationships with the masses.

This led me to think that going to the bar was not necessarily wasting time or "being a revolutionary bum," as I used to say then. That, therefore, I was not really "required" to go to the bar. Then I had to reverse myself on this too and I began to go to the bar frequently and to spend many hours of the day there. I played pool just to study the players. It was something I had always liked to do, this business of studying people, and to try to understand their personality and their life, their hopes and their frustrations--and it is something that perhaps merits a longer discussion because it very directly affects important aspects of my life and work. Playing at the flipper, no, that was not of "sociological" interest: it is really an ancient passion. It may be that, as the psychologists say, a playful activity with a strong erotic component because of the basic body movements that are similar to the act of embracing (and God knows how much I need substitutes for erotic activity): or it may be only because the flipper was a sort of forbidden fruit"--referred to in my mother's lectures and prohibitions--and therefore my first transgressive choices were to go to the meetings of Potere Operaio (Workers Power) and to play the pinball machine in a game room. [words illegible]

The fact is that finding that pinball machine close to my house and having a lot of time on my hands gave me the chance to amply resume my role as a

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professional player. Certainly it is not the Rolling Stones pinball machine I read about in some newspaper, which it appears was the most complicated and fastest among all the world's pinball machines and that I believe they even put on exhibition during a conference. Maybe it isn't the Rolling Stones, but nevertheless it holds its own, and how it holds its own. And so day after day I began to increase the amount of time I spent at the bar attached to that machine. And it was there that I became friendly with a bartender. And that is how the story I want to tell came about.

So, that day I had just barely finished a game and had a very high score, 800,000 or 900,000 points, which was almost the maximum for that machine, and somewhat carelessly, and somewhat because of a conditioned reflex, I pulled out a little pen and I wrote my score alongside the other names and the other scores. And I wrote: P.L. 800,000; or however much it was. P.L. stood for Paolo Lotito which was my first cover name.

Right now I could not say whether it was a smart move or carelessness. A smart move because naturally using my cover name in order to get friendly with him, to become used to the sounds and the handwriting; an imprudent act because on the other hand, it is a good rule not to abuse use of a false name because indiscriminate use attracts attention and curiosity just because it is false. The fact is that I decided to write P.L. 800,000, and I did it.

In reality, what probably happened was that over everything had prevailed an infantile desire to show off my success, thus, a burst of elementary exhibitionism. But I certainly could not have imagined what those initials on the flipper would suggest. The bartender was beside me--at that moment we were alone in the bar--and he'd followed all my movements. He looked at me for a moment, then he asked for my pen, I gave it to him and without saying a word he crossed out the P.L.; he asked me: "What is your first name?" I said, "Paolo," and he wrote Paolo 800,000 lire. I didn't understand: It was as though he had intuitively guessed something, but I didn't know what and I asked him: "Why?" He answered, "Well, to write P.L., as in Prima Linea [Front Line; communist splinter group] you run the risk of someone taking it the wrong way." He said it just that way, take it the wrong way, and I wanted to laugh. Then I thought, that I must laugh, that is that it would be the prudent thing to do, that it would be a good cover, and I laughed. I laughed in an exaggerated and excessive way. And I became aware that the laughter had a false ring to it. He--he told me later his name was Giorgio--stared at me, appearing perplexed. He seemed to be embarrassed; he moved away grumbling: "It's better, I tell you its better." I left the bar and strolling to the nearby park I began to think about what had happened. There were three possibilities: Chance. That bartender was an obsessively prudent type; perhaps a maniac, perhaps a pathological liar, a madman. And he had luckily found me to tell his manias, his obsessions to. Or a joke, he was a type with a sense of humor who like many liked to joke about recurring things. This time, terrorism; next time, the national soccer play-offs, third hypothesis: he knew something. Who knows what and how, but he knew something. Therefore, I said to myself, [lines illegible].

The possibilities and the percentages, primary and secondary ways out. A joke. No, it did not seem to me that he wanted to be funny; he looked very

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serious to me: in fact he had a dark look. And then, the few times I had noticed him, or that we had exchanged a few words, there had never been any hint of friendliness or kidding.

Maybe he was a pathological liar. There are many types like that, and they are numerous; you find them in the most unlikely places and with the least suspicious faces. And it is easy to be deceived. They say strange and unexpected things, in a trolley car or in a train or while they're standing in line to send a telegram. In a low and cautious voice they confide enormous and fearful mysteries, exclusive secrets and apocalyptic propositions. And you're there listening and you don't know what to say. Sometimes, it was explained to me, they are also ambiguous persons: liars, but also cunning, and at times they are paid, or exploited because they are cunning liars. Who knows, something told me that this was not the case with the bartender. Third hypothesis: He knew something. No, this was impossible. I lived in that house and I went to that bar for several months and until that moment I had been extremely cautious. I had never allowed myself to be seen with organization comrades, I had never made telephone calls that were not in very strict code, and I had never forgotten either a newspaper or an appointment that could compromise me somehow. What then? Could he know me from before? Damn my weakness that made me forget faces! I returned to the bar and sat in a chair from which I could observe him easily. His age then, he was older than I. Perhaps even by many years. He was between 30 and 35, perhaps 40. His face was the typical one of many Milanese proletarians: you can't tell whether are more surly because of their intelligence or their anger; rich in intuition or in a desire for revenge.

It was the face of many organization comrades. A face that you want to have yourself, or you want to embrace someone who has the luck of having it. That was his face, which up until that time, to tell the truth, I had never even noticed. And now he was there watching me distractedly while he washed coffee cups. Meanwhile, I made an effort to recall. I closed my eyes and tried to imagine his face in other places and other times and other circumstances. A meeting of Potere Operaio or of Lotta Continua, or a mass meeting; or the bar of the neighborhood where I had formerly lived, or a social club: or the gym. Nothing. That was the method. I tried hard, but it didn't work at all.

Then, suddenly, with a flash, an image crossed my mind and I saw him, just like in a film, beside me. Yes, beside me. In Via De Amicis, that 14 May. Certainly, at that time he did not have a white shirt and the white apron he had now: he wore dark clothing and it seemed to me he had a beard, at least a little bit of beard, if I remembered well. So, things had developed like this: When we had run away, my friend and I, around the first corner, I had run into a man; I still had a gun in my hand and on bumping into him, I had immediately and instinctively tried to hide the weapon. We had delayed for some seconds, as happens in this case, tripping over each other, and I immediately became aware that he had clearly seen the gun, but without causing the least reaction from him. I had held my breath for a second, uncertain as to what to do. Threaten him? Pretend nothing had happened? Run away as fast as I could? He had looked at me attentively, as though he were studying me, and

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I too--without making a rational decision, but only because that's what my legs had decided for me--stood there looking at him.

Then too, in those few fractions of a second, I had wildly thought: But who is he? A comrade? A plainclothes policeman? An agitator? A passerby?

Thinking about it afterward at home, I continued to be perplexed: The attention with which he had observed me, the calm with which he had reacted, made me think that he was one who "was involved in some way": So, a comrade (but strange that I had never seen him, not even in passing) or a police informer. A plainclothes policeman, no: he would have reacted differently. Not a chance passerby: he would have been frightened and alarmed.

Then, when--at other times--I had happened to think about that episode again, the fact that I had never seen that face in any other place--much less, in places frequented by the comrades--had persuaded me that he had been an informer. And now, there he was, laconic, taciturn washing coffee cups. I began to think of what I should do. There was no doubt about the fact that he had recognized me and, very probably, there was no doubt that he knew where I lived. The door to the building I lived in was too close to the bar to make going somewhere else for my coffee a guarantee of some kind.

Now, the rules of underground life would at this point have demanded a single choice: move to another apartment. But even the most rigid rules must take reality into account and one's resources; resources that are often absolutely inferior to the needs and possibilities. And this explains the many errors, the many careless acts, the many limits seen in the armed struggle; then to delight the various Pecchiolis they then say: They talk and talk and then are not even able to do anything. We did, in our day....

It was as if we were studying history and the history of the armed struggle and did not know what a mountain of errors had been made by the anti-Fascists and the partisans during the underground struggle.

The fact is that I absolutely did not have the means to move to another apartment because this would have involved an expenditure of several million lire. In this case, then, the only possibility that remained me was to watch my man carefully.

At that time, I read Conrad a lot, and I recall that in my notebook I had copied a sentence that had seemed very beautiful to me.

It said: "'You must be a good swimmer.' 'Yes. I have been in the water since 9 o'clock. The problem for me now is whether I should let go of this ladder and continue swimming until I go down with exhaustion, or whether I should come aboard.' I felt that this was not a mere formula for desperate conversation, but a real alternative faced by someone with a strong character. I should have deduced from this that he was young; in fact it is only the young who face up to such radical solutions."

This seemed to me a very beautiful passage. And not because I felt I was in a position of having to choose between drowning or climbing aboard. Or that

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kind of foolishness. No: Perhaps it was that reference to youth and to radical solutions. Or who knows what else; perhaps the sound of the words, the images. Or perhaps I liked anything Conrad wrote. On the other hand, I had read that passage in a short story with the fascinating title of the "The Secret Co-tenant" and so it was almost instinctive that I should link the title to the new situation I was creating. And so he, that bartender, became my secret co-tenant. Thinking back on it now, already that reversal of roles between me and him in the image I had of our relationship was probably significant. In the short story, in fact, the secret co-tenant is a person who--having killed a man--is protected and "favored" by the captain of the ship. Here, in some way, he was the captain of the ship and I was the secret co-tenant.... But let us not carry psychologism to an extreme. So, I decided to be on the alert, and above all to understand. The thing turned out to be anything but easy. He was a really taciturn type--entirely the contrary, therefore, of the traditional informer--who seemed to have no intention whatever of becoming friendly with me. This, in some way, disconcerted me: I was prepared, in fact, to remove myself from his attentions, rather than let him know what mine were. I was ready to be evasive and reticent and instead it was he who turned out to be entirely impenetrable. And it was this that convinced me in the long run that he just could not be an informer: He was too careful to be a comrade, too reserved and discreet and at the same time too anonymous and indifferent; a comrade who might find himself in my situation always reveals his ideas: if nothing else his tastes, his views, his attitudes. And, I thought, on the other hand why continue to believe that enemies are all ball-breakers. There also could have been a change in police tactics, greater care in using their instruments. Why believe that agitators must all be like Brother Mitra [machinegun]?

And so I continued to keep our exchanges to a minimum; I continued going to the bar, but I became far more cautious; no telephone calls at all from the bar unless they were the most innocuous. No more appointments at the bar, not even the most innocuous. And so I sometimes had to walk kilometers before finding a telephone that I could use safely; I always had to make appointments far from home and, if I was with someone, very rigorously avoid passing in front of the bar or to be in a position that made me visible from inside. That's how it went for many months. Then I had a chance to move away; a couple of comrades, tied to the organization but not fighters, could live in my apartment in an absolutely clean way. I made the move in one night. And I breathed a sigh of relief when the next morning I went down for coffee and entered the nearest bar. This too was a small bar. With two telephones and an excellent pinball machine. And behind the counter a peaceful, easygoing old couple.

But I had not forgotten my "secret co-tenant." I smile occasionally thinking what a risk I would have run and from what a risk I had fortunately escaped. But his strange face--the face that was so little like that of a policeman--continued to bother me. And so in reality it did not surprise me very much--perhaps it did not surprise me at all--when one morning reading the Milan edition of CORRIERE DELLA SERA, I saw his picture. Beneath it was the caption: Suspected Front Line Militant Arrested Yesterday at Baggio.

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I continued my desk work; at the same time I had been assigned a new target. Yet, the first time I went into action was in support of another section. And it was a failure, and my personal failure.

Contrary to what is thought, it is not difficult to attack a person in a bus. In fact, the bus offers certain specific advantages. It is entirely normal to board one and furthermore so many people use it that in the confusion that explodes immediately after the action you can peacefully go away: Thus, no automobile problem, no parking, no switching cars and possible tag identification.

I want to open a short parenthesis: Have you ever thought about how many people memorize tags and automobiles? I, obviously, had never given it any thought, then it happened to me often to have to admit that sometimes witnesses had good memories. Who the people are who remember automobiles I don't know. I think this affair is not of secondary importance. It seems to me, in fact, that it demonstrates in reality how people don't think of anything by walking along, but they look around with empty eyes and automatically register things they see. If not, what should I think? That fear has made everyone watchful and vigilant? Frankly, it doesn't seem possible to me. Also because habitually nothing calls attention to us, specially in the early morning which is the most usual hour for this kind of action.

So, Mario agreed to meet me on bus No 27. No 27 makes exactly 40 stops. We boarded two stops later: two stops before that of the person in question I boarded and paid for my ticket, stopping in the corner at the far end of the entrance platform, careful not to allow myself to be pushed so far back as to hem me in. Mario boarded shortly after me, at the other stop, about 100 meters farther away and he came very close to me. He wore a blue jacket like that of the workers; I wore the loden [Tyrolean jacket]. Neither of us wore any particular identifying mark. Neither glasses nor mustaches, nor beard. The person boarded two stops later.

He was a southerner. He boarded with that somewhat breathless air of a person who has eaten too much and too eagerly.

It happens often with policemen. Especially if they are southerners, and almost all are; they never lose that air of someone who is still surprised that he succeeded in leaving his village.

It is almost automatic for them to use their elbows. In a metaphoric and in a real sense. Have you ever noticed how policemen are inclined to shove? It is an activity of slight importance, but it is tenacious, and above all constant: They shove those of lower rank and newspapermen, those who ask them something and those arrested, colleagues and the poorest devil. They push even when it is not necessary and they always succeed, and always casually, in being on the trajectory of someone. On the bus, this instinctive activity finally finds its full application. A policeman on a bus, does not board and move on. No, he--literally--fights the crowd: even while he shows no anxiety; he is simply making space for himself.

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My man was no exception that day and, in the crowded bus, he stopped in front of me. Face to face. Automatically, I moved aside with a measured movement that was neither exaggerated nor too brusque. I put myself in a position that was just barely lateral: so, simply to avoid having to stay face to face with him. Mario began to move closer. So close so soon was not at all good. We were the ones who had to take a position, to find the right distance and moment. But he had conducted his damned activity of elbowing, like a poor southerner, right in front of me in a very poor position. Now I should have slowly moved away: but if I moved away, it would have been noticeable that after a few minutes I moved back again. He might have noticed, he might have had, as happens--and after all he had reason to be careful, some intuition. And at that point, in case the plan didn't work, the bus would become a deathtrap. Death for you and the others, because at that point you must do really foolish things: threaten a crowd of people with a gun, or even make the ticket taker or the driver do as you wished. In brief, it is not like changing the course of a plane: someone can shout out the windows or start a riot in some other way. Always assuming that it is not he, the policeman, who shoots. It has already happened in Rome. And it didn't go very well for the people involved.

Mario moved close, thinking of this. We did not look at each other, but we succeeded in following him anyway. I thought rapidly about what to do: The simplest thing was to wait for the next stop, and on the wave of the new arrivals, let myself be pushed a little farther forward, not too far. From the position I was in I was able to see him almost as though it were under a magnifying glass. Every once in a while the bouncing of the bus, would make us waver and we would be pushed toward each other. I felt the need to stand more solidly on my feet. I did not want to touch him. I did not want him to escape me. That, no: that was just what was not to happen.

And it seemed to me I could smell the perfume of his aftershave, that Floid perfume that the barbers use abundantly and generously. Actually it was just my impression. There was no smell, but I really seemed to smell his aftershave, and I did not want, I absolutely did not want, that smell to transport me into the toilet of his house, where he had washed, shaved, taken off his pajamas. It struck me like a feeling of fear, while he, calmly and corpulently, let himself be bounced around automatically following the bumping of the bus. Thus, I stood firm, but I could not more than just so much. I held myself with my left hand. The right covered the gun in my pocket. That position was no longer any good: or, better, was no longer reassuring to me. I too bounced around like a damn fool. Or at least so it seemed to me. And, with every bump, I would interrupt the gradual movement toward him, stopping myself with a quick movement of my back. I no longer watched Mario. I waited rigidly only for another stop in order to finally move freely. In effect, I could have acted right then, but it was as though I was in a trance for a moment; or at least, that's what it seemed like after I recalled that sensation of repulsion over possible contact with his body.

Finally he turned. As sometimes happens, I saw that quick look in his eyes of one who brings the person in front of him into focus. Visual processes in trains, in elevators, in buses. He looked at me for a second to register me, then he fell back into that look of someone who's going somewhere else. The slight movement he made however had liberated me from the obsession of contact.

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Instead, his brief look unleashed within me the irritation and an unreasonable desire to quarrel. His foolish look, his belly that was a little tight in the gray suit, the tension of a short while before was transformed into fury.

I fixed my eyes on his face and continued to look at him intensely, like bullies looking for a fight. I looked at him intensely, without being able to attract his bovine eyes. A string of swearwords rose to my lips. Nothing that had anything to do with the gun I had ready: I repeat, only a quarrelsome and irritated feeling about his gray suit and his round face.

I had the urge to say, "But how dare you? How dare you? We know every phase of your work, your dirty activity as a spy and a tyrant. And you are such an ass that you don't have any presentiment, a flash, a hint."

Everyone boarded. They pushed him. They pushed me, too. It was the moment to move. Instead I moved closer to him, I pushed him, I sank against his stomach. I murmured, "Excuse me," looking at him intently right in the eyes: Finally. Finally, yes; but meanwhile something had happened. He had been able to look me square in the face; I had wound up in a position totally different from the one planned; Mario had remained completely disoriented by my behavior and by my movements, and I saw him look at me out of the corner of my eye: He had a questioning and perplexed air. And then, that Florid perfume, that soft belly, those bovine eyes, that dirty suit.... Heavens above! It was too much: I felt him on me, as though he had his arm through mine, as though we were closed in a crowded elevator.... I suddenly turned and moved to one side. Just then the doors opened and I jumped down amid the curses of the people who were trying to board the trolley car through those same doors. Mario got off at the next stop, from the right door. He, the policeman, was killed months later--perhaps by mistake--by others of another group. On the same bus.

The beauty of it is that that time I was not supposed to fire. I was only supposed to protect Mario from the rear, together--perhaps with someone else I did not know. And the result was that I had created a big problem: In short, it was almost a disaster. Even if the thing certainly was not appreciated--on the contrary--I must say that the organization was not excessively severe with me. There was another meeting; where it was discussed and particularly I was asked insistently whether I felt able to participate in armed actions. In all sincerity, I felt I was, and I said so. There was also a certain self-criticism by the organization for having assigned me the first action in a sector that was not mine, regarding a target about whom I knew little. I was to concentrate therefore on my own sector, and there I was to take part in the next armed action.

The question I asked myself most often is not whether or not I did well to choose this road. The question that is foremost in my mind, even though I rarely formulate it, is whether and how much I have changed. I have been a part of this life for several years. And it is an unnatural and special life. Did my personality change; have my mental processes changed; has my body changed?

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Unfortunately, I cannot say. I have only intuitions about myself. I really feel the lack of someone with whom I can discuss it. Perhaps in the life I left behind speaking of oneself happens so spontaneously, so closely linked to daily communication that you speak about yourself, you analyze yourself, you have scales of measurement even without having to pose the problem to yourself.

But now, what to do? I have friends in this situation, but I see them little, and then our meetings have by now become infused with that activist and technical jargon linked to "what to do" and to all the infinite daily care for security, survival and political work. Personal affairs are hidden behind a sort of modesty.

So I have no points of comparison.

Yet, I think I have changed.

I think that inside herself my mother knows something. She has no specific fact which would lead her to know anything about anything. But my version stands up. I am in Rome. I live by occasional work, but I cultivate grand projects of an artistic type. It is not exactly what she would want, but in some way it is better today than when, a few years ago, she knew I was involved in the affairs of the club. She is somewhat reassured, she says. She asks me questions about money, about my home; once in a while she gets me angry by asking whether I take drugs. She asks me these questions by telephone. When I saw her again, however, I intuitively felt an uneasiness in her that I had not known her to have, and that in any case I would not have understood years ago.

Today I understand her, I feel her very close, present, getting inside me.

Here it is. One of the changes that happened to me is this. I have more feelings, I understand more things. Within me there is space to feel things that I would never have noticed before. But there's more.

Now I feel myself.

In the solitude, in the work, in the doubt about everything I live through in these years, I have developed a capacity to "feel myself," to follow myself as I live and therefore, also, to have a greater feeling for other things and other people.

I have developed my sensitivity. In some way, this is a professional deformation, tied to a permanent status of alert.

But it is not only this. Today I have a different "memory," more capable of storing things, and also of having feelings about them.

I have never loved my mother much. Some of the things she does bothered me and still bother me. I don't know precisely how old she is today. A little more than 50. She is a little like all 50-year-olds of her background. Little more than housewives, because they went to a university and they

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worked. But with that way of having been emancipated in a family fashion, by being teachers. She has become fat, but she has not fallen apart. She goes to the hairdresser but she continues to have her hair done in that style like a small cupola like all women from good families who are antiquated. She wears suits. From as far back as I remember they are all the same: gray with a pleat in front, black when it is parents' day at school. Black with a white blouse.

How I hated her, a house where everything has always been the same as thousands of other houses like it: The living room, the bedroom, the kitchen, a maid who comes twice a week to help "the Signora," and my room where nothing was ever to be thrown around, not even the stuffed duck I got for Christmas who knows when.

Everything was as it should be. We even have a small vacation house. Or better, an apartment which I think they are still paying for: three rooms in a mini-condominium of four apartments.

We went--rather they went--every August. It is full, naturally, of pictures made up of dried alpine flowers, of pictures of me as a boy and in the garden there is a wooden donkey from whose mane geraniums fall.

Once I went there to visit them. I arrived by bus. I descended in the village square and I walked up the hill that led to the house. I had noticed that I had passed there before, but without being able to say precisely when. I really had to become detached a little, and I also had to reassure my parents.

"I will come for a week Mom. We will meet there," I had telephoned.

"Very well, When?"

"Mom, I told you I don't know. Please, what difference does it make to you? You're there, and at some point I will arrive."

"Sure, sure. Very well. It was only so that I could fix something for you that you like. Have your room aired out...."

"Mom don't start with that crap, otherwise I won't come anymore. I'm calling long distance and you want to know what I want to eat...."

"Okay, okay. Then don't complain...."

"You should live so long...."

"You want to talk with your father?"

"No leave him alone. Say hello for me. I don't have any more coins."

"Okay, kisses. Please, take care of yourself."

"Okay, Mom. Ciao."

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"Oh, just a minute. Bring something for your aunt when you come. She is staying with us this year because she is a little old and she hasn't recovered from her fall...."

"But Mom, I know. I'm out of coins. We'll talk about it there. Ciao."

That, exactly; that, exasperatingly, is my mother. I telephone her and she asks me useless things: How are you coming? Do you prefer the bus? What's the weather like in Rome? Did you buy the coat with the money I sent you? But for some time now her voice carried something like respect for me. Looking at me, or better, listening to me with perplexity. For example, why didn't she any longer ask me the usual questions that had bothered me so much for so long? The questions about women, for example. This question can be asked in an infinite number of formulations, as I had learned in my brief family life. "Where are you going this evening?" Or, "Who do you see when you go out?" And, after having answered the telephone: "But this friend of yours calls often." Always dropped there, between handling one pot and another, one chore and another, the afternoons that I spent (really very few) at home. Or, again, the question about "What do you want to be when you grow up?" This, too, is an indiscreet question. Above all because it is part of those questions which more or less modern parents think they can provoke a reaction. I would read it in her face. On the one hand she wanted to "know": You want to become a doctor? A physician? A lawyer? What the hell did this beloved son want to do who apparently didn't like anything? But with anxiety and curiosity there is also fear. What if my question irritates him--she thinks--and I thus obtain the opposite effect of making him still more pigheaded in his positions of rejecting everything?

Thus there arose long circumlocutions which were her way of letting me understand something. I saw that she suffered. I knew I could help her, for example by cutting it short and saying "Mom, don't break...." Or, "Speak clearly, what do you want to know?" And instead, I left her in her embarrassment. And the more I was quiet, the more she wrapped herself up in long phrases that never added up to anything. Praise, in general, for my cousins who were so young yet who had gotten such a good start in life.

Now she doesn't ask me questions like that anymore. Yet, she can't deceive herself that in Rome, as I told her, I am doing who knows what.

And she knows that I don't see Anna anymore. Anna herself told her since she telephones her greetings every Christmas.

And so, here I am on this hilly road thinking about all these things. When did I ever in the past think so much about my family? Isn't this, I ask myself, a sign of how different I am today? The little donkey is there. In the garden there is also a pingpong table. There are some children I do not know and my aunt. Really, my aunt, my father's sister, is really old. My God, I don't even recognize her. I absolutely did not remember her that way.

Not my mother. She hasn't aged. That mask will last her throughout her life. Dad, yes, he has aged. But, on the other hand, why measure so many normal things?

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The opportunity to go back into action was not long in coming. Among the possible candidates initially identified, the right selection was made quickly. It was right in so many ways, obviously, in addition to the strictly political and the more banal practical considerations. It was not the person I had "taken care of" recently, but in any case it was someone whose position I knew about, and whose role in the company structure I could see clearly; and in short he was--unlike the man on the bus--not only possible but even easy to consider as an enemy also and above all by a rational process.

Because in reality it is not easy to answer the apparently banal question, "Who is the enemy?" The partisan answered this question easily. The Enemy is the Oppressor. The line between Him and the Others was clear. The difference is even a question of language, German for the Italians; French for the Algerians; or a fact made physical by a suit, a black shirt or uniform. Many, in many countries, know who the enemy is today. He is not the Oppressor, no. But he is in any case recognizable.

But who is the enemy in Italy, in a so-called democracy consisting of an iron pact among all the parties, that is, with the entire weight and will of the strongest workers' movement in the West?

Who is the enemy, if very often he is dressed in the clothes of a department worker? And more often, what if he went to school with you and today manages, as the leftist leader, the reorganization of the factory on international levels?

Very well, who is the enemy? Our documents are ugly, worn-out and badly written. Often they make us appear like little professors. Or like little engineers. But they are written like that out of necessity. The discussion, the analysis, the debate are not merely even for us, or at least not even for me. So, in reality, there are not only more doubts but also very different scenarios. Tactics of preparation, I dare say, more homemade, more obvious, more normal. Just as the enemy often is no longer referred to in a capital letter and no longer has the trappings of power, so our actions are not in the least spectacular or adventurous. As we carry out armed struggle, preparation for an attack, here and now in Italy, consists much more of the art of the scrupulous bookkeeper than that of the warrior. It is made up much more of precision than audacity; more calculation than courage. As is obvious, I have been reading much during this period; if I were to think of something similar to what I do I would point to George Smiley, the head of the secret service in Le Carre novels, rather than to the agents of Ian Fleming. About George Smiley, I think of anonymity, of his great talent for camouflage, and his ability to memorize, to file, to collect: above all details. And so, our scenarios, our preparatory plans have nothing in common with the attacks against the armored cars nor with the audacious plans to blow up secret hiding places or entire military contingents.

An attack is prepared above all with good, solid shoes and a good overcoat. For the rest, the preparation for an attack is a long series of names of streets like: Via Rossi, at the corner of Via Pontaccio, with Via Vittorio Emanuele following, the bar at the gates, 81, 83, 85b, apartment 12, time 1:45 a.m. or 5:01 p.m. I believe that few wars or guerrilla actions or armed attacks--call them what you will--have required these bureaucratic talents as much as ours.

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No heroes, no heroism; no brilliant lifestyles. I could be mistaken but--I repeat--no other armed experience seems similar to that of ours today. We even allow the police to beat us, in a dull sort of way. At least they can promise "Join and see the world." Here we just travel a lot, a lot in the suburbs.

And I did a lot of traveling that time too. After selecting the target, we all were assigned to him, each with different tasks. Until, once more, we knew everything about him, all there was to know. At that point, establishing a plan, deciding how and when we would attack was the easiest part.

I sleep little.

And it is something that makes me think. Because it is not a question of anxiety, fear or insomnia. At times that certainly can happen, but only when it is logical and normal; and then increasingly less, by habit, out of defense.

What makes me think is something else. How one can change habits, ideas, behaviors, lifestyles--radically, drastically; and how instead areas remain--those that straddle the mind and the body, it appears--apparently unchangeable, stopped at different times, archaeological residues of a very remote past, that are useless, a burden: but there they are. Like this business of staying up late at night: an attitude that was formed during times of sleeping during the morning, and spending the night in discussions and drinking, friends, girls, but the morning is still there and it is necessary to arise early and the days are burdensome--and above all--in the evening you have nothing whatever to do.

Yet every evening I begin by saying I will go to bed early, and it seems to me that I need to and want to; I may even go to bed. Then nothing: a newspaper, a cigarette, a mystery story, songs on the radio, some sparse and inconclusive thoughts, another cigarette and so on until it is late again, like the evening before like the next evening.

The limits of consciousness raising, of the choices of fields...they are all here, in the body's rhythms. Conservative.

It is an annoying fact. Not so much for tiredness during the day, of that feeling--at times--of not being able physically to travel around--here and there. This is then overcome.

It is because of the dreams that I am bothered. I succeed in dreaming only after a few hours of sleep, during that light morning sleep. At least: They are the only dreams I remember.

And I discovered that dreaming makes me feel better. Relaxes me, empties me. In brief, the rare times that I succeed in having a nice dream--but nice not in the sense of pleasant, happy; just long, substantial--I get up in a good humor, more or less. Not that I think much about them later, the dreams, analyze them or things of sort; among other things I wouldn't understand anything about them; yes, years ago I read something by Freud on psychoanalysis, like everyone, but nothing more.

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It is as though it were a safety valve, nothing more. I'm not speaking of sex dreams, that can be pleasant, but also sad in one way; and in any case they don't serve that purpose.

While some of them are very ugly, almost nightmares, that nevertheless make me feel well in the morning.

For example, this. A few days ago.

I was at the house of a couple of friends, with a small child, around a year old. We were talking. I mean: I understood, I knew--how it happens in dreams, in short--that something had happened to him so that the air he breathed in could not be released; and I saw him swell up more and more, the body and face were deformed; and I thought he would explode. The parents and I were extremely disturbed; but I above all because I believed that in order to save him I would have to puncture him with a big needle, in order to let the air out; that it was my job to do it--I don't know why--but I wasn't certain I would be able to and I hesitated. The only one who tried to do something was the mother. She approached the baby and took its skin off, it was very shocking: as though she were peeling it, that's how it came away. But that didn't help: It continued to swell. And then it stopped: by itself it returned to normal. But I thought that it might begin again and that something must be done. Then I awoke; or it ended there.

Instead I never dream of the state police, the regular police or things of that kind.

This, too, seems strange because I remember from times long ago when someone spoke of dreams and told about them, that even people who were in normal, calm situations often had that kind of dream. I don't know why: perhaps because of the fear of punishment that everyone in this stinking society has in him; and certainly those in uniform are a good way to represent them to oneself.

Not I. Only once, that I recall; I was in a car and a policeman stopped me, pulling out his club; but the incredible thing was that I had not the slightest fear in the dream, and I thought to myself, there is no problem, I'm all right, I'm in the clear.

Instead I often dream of physicians, who knows why. However, there is also something strange here, that I never dream of violent situations, blood, injuries, operations, surgeons; nor instruments that might hurt.

At most, the films, the X rays. One time, and that was really a "nice" dream, I recall having dreamed that I was traveling in a bus, but there was something different from the usual, because instead of the mechanism that received tickets, there was a machine for making X-ray film. One of those in which you stand inside and can see yourself in front.

Inside there was a small boy, around 10 years old, more or less, and looking at that sort of screen there were three or four doctors, all in white coats. After a while the one who seemed to be the most important, the "head man," said yes, he will improve, perhaps he will be all right. It ended there.

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We waited for him at the corner of the street, each in his disguise; and despite their banality they seemed to me to be strangely funny disguises. (Because, actually, they were not actual disguises: camouflages, it might be said, but the fact is that they seemed to me to be really funny.)

Everything worked as planned, and this time it could not be otherwise. Yet everything happened so fast, simply, almost mechanically, that I really could not say what I was thinking at that moment and perhaps I wasn't thinking about anything, absolutely nothing.

Certainly there was a lot of fear, but earlier, while we waited. And it was a fear that was not unlike what one feels about an important examination, nervously walking back and forth in the school corridor. And, like that, this fear too dissolves by magic at the moment of action; or it does not dissolve, but then there is panic, flight. And then, afterward, a great tiredness, a sudden emptiness and relaxation: wanting to stay in bed for an entire day.

In between, nothing or almost nothing.

He fell without a word, nor did we say anything.

Then we rapidly went away.

Since then, I have participated in other armed actions: But honestly, if something has changed in me in the meantime, if I am no longer the same person, if I have rethought many things about myself, of my life and my ideas it is not due to this kind of experience. Which, if we are talking about violence, is much less violent, for you yourself than for the victim--for you yourself facing the "victim"--compared with many other experiences.

But shooting is no fun; no, it is not exciting as some think and say; perhaps it was at the time of that first demonstration, now it is no more. It is only somehow, logical, inevitable, clean. And rational.

The story of those who speak give me much to think about. Not about the political judgment, naturally: That is obvious, taken for granted, indisputable. As are the operational choices, the treatment of these people, the time and the place.

But this does not discount the fact--or it should not discount it--that the damned defect of these situations is that the obvious masks what is difficult to understand, certainty obscures doubts; what must be done prevents reflection. And instead, I think there should be much thinking, and good thinking.

But as far as I am concerned, I often ask myself "Why do they speak?" But I know very well that the real problem is "What would I do?"

Let it be clear, there is no lack of replies: Rather, the true problem is perhaps that there are too many replies.

Violence, torture are certainly the first thing; and there frankly--aside from rhetoric--it is difficult to say what I would do, and therefore judge or condemn. But yes, what do I know about it? No one can know about it in advance;

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and only in films, thank God, do they torture as a part of training, to put people to the test. I can imagine--if it were to happen to me, touch wood--that I would try to kill myself, I believe; and certainly not say anything; but then, who knows.

And in fact--as far as I'm concerned--I certainly don't feel like condemning anyone who talks, who yields, who crumbles and lets it go at that. In short, it is not the "confession" that makes me indignant. It is the story of "repentance," of talking while demanding it or defending it that disgusts me; but it also makes me uneasy. I think it is clear that it disgusts me: It is even too obvious that "repentance" is a part of an affair that cannot be renounced, that in order to give you something in exchange it is not enough for them that you talk; they might get that anyhow--they want you to seem spontaneous, willing; they want you to betray.

What makes me uneasy is that some--and not just the most recent--accept; is that the deal could for some--there--seem to be really a deal. I want to say this: To me, and not only to me, it seems evident that the moment they take you you're finished. But finished--finished; in short, with your life. But there are exceptions: escape, revolution, a miracle; but so exceptional that only hoping--not to speak of counting on them--would be, would lead to folly.

However--and here I become angry--that's how it is in any case, and I don't understand how this is not seen, not known. In short, I don't understand what the difference could be between living one's life at the Asinara, and instead living it "free," but in Argentina or in some other place like that, all the time--I say all, minute by minute--looking over your shoulder, waiting for the bill to come, the final account. Would that be life? Then why? Or, once there, does everything change and you no longer reason like that? But why?

One of the things that I believe has changed me in recent years is realizing that relations among us are very bad. This life does not encourage solidarity, but tension, resentment, continual conflict. Even my friendship with Piero has changed. Now it seems that there is between him and me a very complicated affair made up of discomfort and also of much competition.

Piero took a different road than mine. We entered the organization more or less together, but he immediately was transferred to another city and there he somehow had more contact than I with the area of comrades that it was more possible to associate with. In that provincial city there was in fact, in recent years, a process of continuous overturning and exchange from certain political zones and ourselves.

Piero's underground life had always been semi-clandestine. That is, he had not lived a life, like I did, exclusively absorbed by military activity or as solitary and harsh as mine had been. He had outside contacts, the kind of covers that would prevent him from being alone and he participated in broader and more open political activities. He had his women, his friends, his evenings. His schedule had not been completely overturned. And basically, I had never forgiven him his "privilege." However what he is today is the reverse of what I am. The more he remained sidelined, the more he became rigid and poisonous. I could not find other terms for his state of mind of permanent mental erection. It has become difficult to talk with him. He talks as though holding

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a meeting, he gets excited, he makes vibrant speeches, he knows everything and defines everything. Precisely one of those, therefore, who breaks my balls. We lived together for a long time to prepare a big operation, which many participated and for which we moved to another city for a long time. The thing was not simple. And therefore we all lived in a situation that psychologically was not easy. It could not be said there were no fears and doubts. But faced by certain complications one needs a climate of calm and perhaps affection which instead is not there. In fact, the more time passes the more is lost.

Four of us set up in a single house: And thus, for me, began one of the saddest periods of recent times. It is not easy for four people to live together. In addition to Piero, a Milanese like myself, of my own circle, of my own age, there were Beppe, from the deep south, who moved to Rome many years ago, also an ex-university student and Giovanna who ran the house. Giovanna was the eldest: She was a serious and very silent teacher. She was considered very trustworthy, but I believe she was preparing for her first important operation.

Piero and I arrived before Beppe. It was up to us to do the initial scouting and the first surveillances and plan the operation. Beppe arrived one evening. He was always swearing (I was to become used to it): up the madonna's ass.

In the evening we had dinner at home. Giovanna did the marketing to avoid excessive contact with the local business people. And the shopping was in any case spread out among various stores to avoid making it too obvious that the amount of food she bought had increased. The night Beppe arrived, he telephoned just as we were about to eat our spaghetti. We decided to save some spaghetti for him and to begin eating without waiting for him.

"Up the madonna's ass, what a torture that hill is. Lucky you saved me something to eat because I'm dying of hunger." He threw his bag on the floor and sat down. I was the only one who did not know him. But he made no fuss about greeting me. Even Piero who knew him well got just barely a nod, and a kind of kiss for Giovanna; and then: "Glue, always stinking glue that's all you know how to make up north. This spaghetti is really disgusting."

I was to learn later that that's how Beppe was. Always complaining and always starved. About everything. About women and spaghetti and the newspapers and the weather. He was bitter against everything. Particularly against those of us from the north, "You who always think that everything is owed you. Certainly not. This is the first thing that has to be reestablished. Fiat has been sucking our blood from Cassino to Sicily. That's what they've always done. And we don't even have the right to say so, almost. Even the comrades, even the militants, don't think it isn't so. The usual bullshit about the South. Revolutionary vacations and theorizing. But who, after all, is there? Who goes there? Who remains?" Within 20 minutes he was already involved in a real public meeting.

I noticed that he really had something against Piero. Piero who gave himself intellectual airs. Giovanna continued to do everything in her usual silence. Only that at the end of dinner she said in a sharp voice: "Kids, you left your mother at home. Beginning today we are all here. And I do the marketing only because it is better that I do it. But this is the first and last time that I

prepare meals for everyone, not to speak of doing the dishes and cleaning. I have no intention of letting this house become a pigsty."

And she left. The dishes remained on the table until the next day. The matter of running the house at that time became a permanent opportunity for quarreling among us. I was annoyed by this atmosphere of a student commune. If I was required to do anything, at most I would have done only what concerned me and what I was required to do directly. In short, I had no wish whatever to remove someone else's beard from the washbasin. Beppe instead theorized that there was no need to be so finicky about things. "I lived in those pigstys of the students' houses. They got me used to living in filth." Piero said he would do things, and then he would say he forgot, and that he would do them tomorrow. This irritated me: Somehow I felt he was unloading the chores on me. It was as though he were trying to create a relationship with me in which the old balances were reversed: It was he who knew more, who could say more, who counted more. Subtly he bothered me with his presumptuousness. Giovanna tended to greatly limit relations with the rest of us, and was somewhat torn between feeling herself put upon and feeling herself a friend.

Giovanna, for me, continued to be a real mystery. She was from a good family and very timid, she was ruled by habit in her looks and in her way of doing things; she was reserved and apparently very sensible. Thus a new routine began. The preparation for the operation. The discussions about the operation. The division of tasks.

In everything we did, each one accentuated his own way of doing things. Piero held public meetings, I was constantly irritated, Beppe complained, Giovanna kept quiet. Yet, we spent a lot of time together. When I say there was no solidarity among us, perhaps I exaggerate a bit. Because there was a feeling of sharing something just in the fact that we were there together.

I say however that all that did not in any way become a more intimate feeling.

Beppe was decisively a ballbreaker. And did I still like Piero? I don't know. We still had a considerable reciprocal affection. But the moments of real communication between us were very few. We spoke prevalently about politics and what was to be done. We were happy among ourselves. At times his moving around as he slept awakened me. But there was never any mention of it.

"Do you like Giovanna?" I asked him one evening when he had turned out the lights early, but remained more or less awake.

"No, I don't like her at all. She's there with that air of a beaten dog. No, I don't like her. Then, I'm against these things that make it like a small community, that we screw among ourselves. When I was constantly moving from one apartment to another it was a really happy period. There is no woman who will turn down a fugitive," in his voice, lightly, laughter.

That's it, I thought, that's what Piero had become, fixated. "I went to a whole bunch of whores," I told him.

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There are two ways of speaking about weapons. There are those who adore them, and those who use them and that's all. There are those who talk about them always and those who never mention them. There are those who are great experts, and those who just barely know how to use them, only in case of emergency. Beppe talked about it and he considered himself a great expert; most of all, he seemed to be fanatic about it. And weapons soon became the subject of a great argument between Beppe and Piero.

It was obvious we had to keep our weapons in working order. But they almost made a ritual of it every evening.

And while we all watched television, he told about his past exploits.

One of those evenings Piero turned to him and said very sharply: "You've broken my balls, you, with your weapons and your crap. Are you going to decide to take this seriously or are you going to continue your mental masturbation all your life?"

I was just barely able to see a move when Beppe had already sprung against Piero like a wolf, pointing his pistol in his face.

"Dirty turd, son of a bitch. Now take everything back and stop acting like a professor or I'll split your head with this! And thank God I can't make any noise."

Ferocious hatred was written on his face. A hatred that was blind to everything: that moment, that situation, that house. Piero didn't move "Okay, I take it back. Let's not forget why we're here."

There was scorn in him, but fear too. I felt it. And Beppe also made me uncomfortable. Beppe continued to look at him.

"You know very well that sooner or later we will have a showdown. And you'd better be there. You know very well what I am talking about. And you know very well that nice little boys like you would do well to keep quiet, instead of causing trouble. I have no intention of tolerating any more ruined comrades. And I don't need a lot of talk. Okay? Huh? Okay?"

I was alarmed. What did Beppe mean? He, however, turned and went out, leaving us mute and tense. No one commented. But Piero seemed calm. Not Giovanna. Nor I. But it was not possible to speak in that situation.

That evening Beppe and Piero said nothing to each other, except what was absolutely necessary. And I now saw Beppe in another way. His hatred had seemed ferocious and authentic, and in that moment all his complaining and bragging air had disappeared. The hatred was a real feeling, deeply felt, with deep roots. He had moved like an animal and he had attacked like an animal. I was fascinated by his inner energy which had exploded like a bomb. Well, I would never have been capable of that. And in this I felt his southern nature, more militant, more involved, older than I. Or, better, than us. Piero had seemed, compared with him, vacuous and transparent, with his words that were so measured and precise.

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I felt this difference between them. And also between myself and Beppe. He had something real, spontaneous, rooted inside him; something I did not have and much less did Piero.

And in the meanwhile, Piero no longer slept in the same bedroom with me. He slept with Giovanna, but I did not hear them make love, and I felt lonely, completely, far from Piero and from his words and his gestures. Increasingly, further away. Giovanna fluttered around him discreetly, but assiduously. A diaphragm of separateness divided us. Now, sometimes, Giovanna would prepare a meal: As everyone was required to do however.

Our operation went very well. The only thing that happened was that Piero fired too soon, but Beppe quickly corrected the error. I did my part.

Immediately afterward we separated, according to the agreement.

Later I found out what Beppe was talking about when he attacked Piero. He had been accused of having damaged some comrades by his thoughtless behavior in some situations. But in reality I am still convinced that there was something else. Beppe and Piero would have hated each other in any case. They represented two different ways, completely opposed, of making this choice and accepting this life. I, now, felt different from both.

The worst thing in life is loneliness. And the lack of a woman. So that the most natural thing in the world is to go to a whore. At first I felt scorn for myself, then I was ashamed. And instead today I think that to go to a whore is one of the few activities that can make you feel equal to the others, like a person among people, like a proletarian among proletarians. And it even helps you to make some sense out of your choices. Because what is one's own choice if not to once more feel the anger that made you definitively different? In the daily routine of the underground, you can lose that anger, a little because you commiserate with yourself because of those very conditions as an employee. The only time you feel like a poor devil is just then, when you go to a whore.

Naturally, you don't tell yourself you're going to visit a whore. You begin to make rather large circles around it, without a precise direction. The evening walk is one of my outlets: Loneliness makes one thoughtful and sensitive. Everything you find lacking in your relationships with others you load onto your relationship with things: keeping the house clean, the objects you use in learning new manual activities that were heretofore unknown--electric wires, locks--relationship with the climate, the weather, the temperature, the landscapes and the stones of the city.

This relationship with the city is a natural thing for someone in the underground: It is, one can say, a working tool. I had the good luck of maintaining in this relationship a gratuitous, happy, sincerely interested part, always in the things that happened around me. Thus, despite the long walks to which surveillance is reduced, I often go out again at night, this time like someone with nothing to do, and I start bumming around again. I like the boulevards of the suburbs with the rows of plantain trees. After all, they are

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the same places enjoyed by the whores and by the automobiles of those who are alone and are seeking company. I think that neither the former nor the latter pay any attention to the plantains, and after all, I don't either, very much: even if I may happen to think the opposite. Or I like to think the opposite.

Under the plantains, between one tree and another, the fires, and the naked legs; and the light laughter. They are the only ones with whom it is possible to meet. They are nothing and no one and therefore that place was the only one that was good for me, I thought. And it was also a way of telling myself (with that morbid complacency which is one of my characteristics): "How low I have fallen." Not for the whores, naturally, but for my becoming involved in a situation that I felt was lacking air, space, freedom.

Then, however, I would return.

There is a very busy life around there. I never stayed very long because I always feared a police net. So I walked around, and in passing, I would look around.

One evening I went to the movies. Afterward (the weather was very mild) I went to the left and walked the last bit between my house and the avenue. I walked more slowly, and I was also in a good mood. In brief, it didn't seem at all to me that all this was too sad. And I heard the happy laughter, some from very young people. And there was music. Two girls in very short miniskirts had a taperecorder and they were dancing in the street, shaking their hips. It wasn't very much like a belly dance. But it was happy. And it was really so, not that false happiness that you can detect from a mile away. Both the girls were southerners. A crowd of people--if it can be called a crowd considering the hour and the place--followed them. And a pack of automobiles with half-open doors and lowered windows, with up to four or five men in each car who banged on the side of the door or slid back and forth on the seats inciting them with shouts and laughter. I really liked them. If it had not been for the men I would have made a pass.

But I realized that I had a spasmodic desire to make love, a desire to hurt myself in the gut. The next night, without so much circling, I went back to them. The crowd was no longer there, and there were two more whores; or perhaps they were the same ones with different dresses and this time, without the effect of the music.

But it was going well: I had only a desire to screw. I made almost a chance choice, no negotiation. We went behind the tree and I took her standing up, dressed, and I came immediately; without even looking at her, but feeling her in my hands, as I had never felt anyone, ever. At times I masturbate at home, and I read many pornographic magazines. I put some pictures on the wall: and periodically I replace them with others. So I feel a little like a truck driver and a little like a seducer. Once I fell in love, a love that was not mutual, with a comrade. It happened more or less a year ago. The meeting with Elena was decisive and the first interruption in this solitary and neurotic underground experience.

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With Anna, I had always played the traditional role of a male. With Elena it (finally?) happened the other way around.

The past spring we were involved in a complicated action; and furthermore it was boring. Among other things, it was something about which no one was very convinced. Then something happened that should never happen: We attempted an attack and at the last moment, a route error made by the car that was supposed to wait for us, resulted in total failure. Under the circumstances, we had all become a bit nervous. We asked for a meeting: Of the two who had come from outside, one was Elena, a big girl with a strong southern accent, of proletarian origin, hard and determined. Or at least that's how it seems and that's what she makes people believe. Elena is her code name; even now I don't know her real name. She smoked, worked, smoked some more. One, two packs a day. She settled down in my house, the only place available. She hid the photos of nude women which I, partly for fun, partly in order to provoke her, regularly would put up again. But her feminine presence began to be felt in the home.

I don't believe that I liked Elena physically. Actually my type has remained Anna. What I liked about her was that subtle air of a well-mannered person and her serious, but elegant dresses. Elena, instead, was one who limited herself to carrying her body. It is a way of stressing, I believe, that she is--must be-- what she does.

Then when we go into action, something changes in her. She becomes very cold and determined and her face becomes very intense. I never saw her hands shake. She never speaks about her life, of her past, of her feelings. Inside her is something that cannot be grasped.

So, we lived together. I heard her very quietly going about the house. It was a daily presence that I could not define but which I was happy to accept. Very slowly I became attached to that situation. I sought an opportunity to talk with her, moving about with her as she went about the house. I started by talking about nothing very much, and she responded in the same way. She gave me her time, yes, but it was a concession. I wanted a relationship, not a gift. Then I tried talking about politics and this interested her more. But I found myself engulfed in long discussions from which I could not escape.

In this Elena was absolutely unbearable. She knew everything, she knew everything and everyone. But this too went well for me. After so much loneliness this strong presence of hers permitted me to avoid thinking about myself. That's how it began. Very slowly.

The house I had rented was, rather is, very small. Just my room and the other room which was to serve for everything: living room, kitchen, dining room, den. Neither I at first, nor Elena later furnished it. I had taken there some furniture from UPIIM [inexpensive chain store], an Indian blanket, posters, a round table of fake crystal bought at a sale. Just enough to make it a decent normal looking apartment if someone happened to visit. But I had never done anything more, nor did I have the desire to do it.

Not did Elena. However, her presence made the house more lively, only because it was more lived-in. I began to do the marketing for two. Once in a while we would cook rice. In the morning, I left early. She remained to do some desk

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work: inventories, newspaper clippings, filing, reading. In fact, we had become a couple. With her, I felt as though I were in one of those stories lacking in drive and passion which, according to how you see them, seem dead inside; or seen another way, are capable of producing a feeling of serenity and tranquillity. Elena and I had established a real independent base operation. After all, she had been transferred precisely in order to consolidate and strengthen our group and she worked obstinately at this.

The end of this singular relationship and the awareness of being in love came at the same moment. There was a plenary meeting in another city. We took the train together in a habitual way that already bore the mark of coexistence. At the end of the meeting Elena calmly went somewhere else to sleep. It is understood that one must not ask the where or the how or the why of these choices. But it was not difficult for me to understand, without much discussion, that in reality Elena did not have any political motivation, but a simple personal reason.

Elena had no intention whatever of having a husband.

I see her once in a while. We greet each other affectionately.

It is true. She was right. I could not refuse to take a walk in the country with her. Mother woke me up this morning with a caress.

"Hello, dear, coffee's ready." Her voice trembled with that sort of emotion she feels when she pretends with herself that I am still a child. The worse thing about my mother is that she is obvious. I can tell minute by minute what she is thinking. But not because I know her well; but because she always thinks in a banal way. So that, if she comes to wake me and run her fingers through my hair I can be sure that she is thinking "This is my baby." Along the street she says, "Look how beautiful that baby is." She is thinking "One day I too will have a grandchild"; and if she brings me my coffee she will repeat to herself "How does he manage when I am not there?"

After all, it is her good side, perhaps. Automobiles too are mass-produced and in general they are considered good-looking.

"What do you plan to do this morning?"

"I don't know, Mom. I'm not awake yet."

"You're right, dear. Drink your coffee and wash up. I'll make breakfast for you."

"Mom, this must be the millionth time I tell you I never have breakfast. I just drink coffee."

"But here you're on vacation and...."

"Mom, we go through this thing every year."

"All right, excuse me, I'll see you later."

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She is the usual irritating woman. Yet I'm bothered by something in her way of treating me. But what?

Now she wants me to go shopping with her in the village. She'll show me off to her friends, and will make me meet shopkeepers: "Mr Mario do you remember my son?" "Certainly, Signora. We haven't seen each other for quite a while," says Mario extending his hand, "And what are you doing, what are you doing?" he continues. Mother answers for me: "Now he is in Rome, you know."

"In Rome? My God, Signora, these boys. To think that I've never been there."

But after all, why not? I'm here on vacation. I must be here for them and to fend off their suspicions. I must be what sons are on vacation. And then what do I care? Now I no longer need to refuse these things, almost as though I were a litigant. My choice is much, much further away.

So we started out.

My mother wore a sleeveless flowered dress. Her arms were tanned except for the upper part which showed a little bit of cellulitis.

"Mom how long have we been coming here?"

As soon as I asked the question I regretted it. My mother almost jumped, so used is she to my mute and irritable presence. And now, I even go so far as to ask her a question that shows I still have some memories.

"But dear, since you were 8 years old. Don't you remember? We came here the first time in your grandfather's car, your grandfather was still living...."

Her eyes brighten up over this opportunity she has to dump on me all that phony honey that she has within her. Her stereotyped eyes return, that "dear" so often repeated. It's impossible. Just be resigned to it and forget it. Don't offer her any chance, any excuse.

And to hell with her old lady's cellulitis.

"At that time your father had business troubles because his company had been closed down. This, before the creditors' meeting. But perhaps you don't remember the creditors' meeting. In any case, at that time we were financially dependent on your grandfather...."

Her chirping accompanied us on the entire downward path.

I thought of other things. I felt well however. I have always liked this mountain air. This one particularly perhaps not: too many geraniums in these houses, too many smooth lawns as though they were made of plastic; but it is a quiet place. I even had some nice times here. This is where I began to skate, where I looked for wild strawberries in the woods. Here I had my dog, which I could not keep in the city. At her house, my mother's house. Always with her list of things that could and could not be done. Always the usual professor.

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She continued to be a professor. "Your aunt has never recovered from her bad fall. In reality, since grandfather died so many years ago she never quite knew what to do. She tried to dedicate herself to your father. But you know how independent your father is...." Independent was a euphemism to say that no one ever dared challenge his supremacy in the home.

"And as years go by, your father becomes more independent. He has always had a pretty rough character, but now you should see him. Knowing that he is nearing a pension, he always finds excuses to stay out. He goes to the club often. At times we go together, at times not. He says he must make the friends he has never had throughout his life...."

It's true. My father is about to retire. What will he do afterward, and who might these friends be? During my entire life I never saw him when he was not with my mother. My father's friends. Ridiculous. Maybe he will also have a girlfriend. Or he will play bocce.

Suddenly I recalled my father. It was in a veterans' club with an arbor, beneath which there were tables side-by-side, and beside them, in the sun, two bocce lanes. My father took me there sometimes. It may have been when my mother went to the hairdresser. He would leave me with something to read and some orangeade at a table, and he would play in the nearby lane. The bocce players yelled when they threw the ball.

My father, too. With his silence, but after all am I not like him?

"So, sometimes I really don't know what to tell him. Because with advancing age, you know, feelings can be hidden very well. He expected that promotion and I still think he is waiting for it today. But, if it comes, it will come as an opportunity to retire him. And I think that he, basically, still feels very young, full of energy."

Young, full of energy. I never applied those terms to those two. Yet there must have been a time when they screwed. The two of them, always so overloaded with bathrobes, pajamas, locked doors. And yet they must have had sex.

I have a sort of feeling I'm missing something, "Mom, please let's stop for a moment." Now she will be alarmed, I know it. But I really don't feel well. "What's the matter? Let's go to the bar. Don't worry. Do you want me to go get the car so that you won't have to go back up on foot?" "But no, Mom, don't worry: It's the effect of the altitude. You know that, don't you?"

In the square there are the very beautiful trees that I recall very well. sits tranquilly in their shade. Mother sat me down here, she ordered me a strawberry crush. "Now I will finish shopping alone and I will pick you up later." she told me. However, she didn't make a nuisance of herself. She did not hasten to cover me with honey.

She was really worried.

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My father, my mother, my aunt, me: What does all this have to do with me, now, now, right now?

I've been here for 3 days and, as always, it seems to me that I have been here much longer. It really is an effect of the mountains. The hours become longer out of proportion, and the days stretch out within this possibility of having all the time one wants.

I wake up early in the morning, unlike my habit in the city, because I go to bed early. What can you do in a place like this after having drunk three beers?

I sleep well. I sleep as I have never slept for a long time. I feel calm and secure in this house. Unfortunately that's how it is. I say unfortunately because this way I realize how much of what I describe as routine in my life is really full of tension. I even feel a tranquillizing effect from those stupid little things my mother continues to keep in my room.

I am awakened by the light that enters from the window in the roof, I turn over on the mattress (a woolen mattress, what luxury) and I open one eye on the fringe of a little flag. Even the smell in this room is familiar to me. Maybe it's the smell of my body.

Yesterday morning I played cards with my aunt on a table in the garden. The sun seemed to have broken my neck. It drained me of strength. But what a pleasure not to have strength and not to feel the need of it.

My aunt is really some character. I always liked her. But yesterday she made a terrible remark about the neighbor and almost told her to her face, and seeing me embarrassed: "Don't worry, dear; people with skins like that are born once a year."

It is useless to hide it. I like it here. And I am curious about my family. I'm a little ashamed of it: Not so much because of the curiosity now, as because of the superficiality in the past.

They still irritate me as a child, but they are also people among people. People who are not even stupid, with their difficulties and their few possessions. When I say that I have changed, I refer to these thoughts that come to me and which I never had before. Now I enjoy remembering, I enjoy having a place to go. I like the sun on the back of my neck and today I will even go play volleyball.

Regarding my relatives; I still have a question.

They have few possessions. I have more than they. I am certain of this. But perhaps not. And what if, instead, the life I have chosen has aspects of equal poverty that I am not even aware of?

I'm going to play volleyball.

My mother continues to inquire only about stupid things.

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What happens?

Yesterday I accompanied her on her shopping trip for the third time. It was the last time. Tomorrow I will leave. These tours, after the first day, became an implied way of talking to each other, even though little was said.

But there; there is something like an understanding between us: I would not like to speak of complicity but it is a situation very much like it.

But whatever can she imagine? Certainly I am very suspect but I certainly don't think I am making a mistake in this case. In the calmest possible way she shows her enthusiasm for having me here; she is less of a nuisance. In short, she treats me with an attitude between perplexity and protectiveness. But with the tone of someone who is faced with an important problem. If I had a fever she would go out of her mind. At least that's what I remember. Now instead she talks vaguely, pretends she is a happy-go-lucky type, but carefully avoids asking me anything whatever about my life. Yesterday morning, while she told me she was selecting the kind of apples I like and was speaking about another aunt who is never content, not even of her famous son, the cousin who constantly came up in all sorts of comparisons to my disadvantage, the one who always did everything well in life, commented thus: "Then, you know, I believe that at a certain point the children grow and this fact must be accepted. I don't know whether I was lucky or unlucky with you, I don't even know whether I did everything I could for you. But now I don't ask myself anymore. Now, what you do is only your business. All we can do is try to be sure that you always have a place where you can be comfortable whenever you want."

Then she changed the subject, calmly starting to talk ill again about the other aunt, "She who is never happy." I interpreted the discussion in the only way possible. And maybe I made a mistake: Maybe they are all fantasies.

Arriving in the mountains is as attractive as it is unpleasant to leave them. The curves in the road up are traveled slowly, they don't cause nausea and one can always see the mountains ahead. Going back down, in these buses, you always risk arriving banged up, or reduced to a rag with the feeling that you are surrounded by an air that becomes dirtier and denser. I will sleep until we arrive in Milan. Tomorrow we will begin again.

The letters between me and Anna were like our last meetings: slow and distracted. She wrote me in big round letters: "I am well, I am studying." Then she would pick up the stories. George said, Lucia did. The other night all of us from school went to the concert. They asked me about you and they want me to tell you to visit us. Then, only at the end, that phrase that was really her own: I think of you more than you imagine." It seemed to me it was her phrase and it seemed to me to contain many messages.

I would write her things that were equally vague. Once I sent her a book; once in a while I called her. Only one letter was fundamental, to the point that I almost memorized it.

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"In reality, but this was a common silent choice, it is so long since we talked to each other. I had many doubts at the beginning about our new way of being together. It is true, there has been some distance between us. I felt you were more distant and that you voluntarily were running away. Don't believe that I did not understand what you wanted. After all, we came from a period that was not happy, that weekend in Genoa that I had hoped would be an opportunity to recover from nervousness, went badly and I was very much hurt by it. We had a very good time in that house. And you know how much I like that house. So I thought that you needed a little freedom, more time to yourself. After all we were together too much. We know each other since school days, forever, practically. I suspected you might have another woman or other women. And I had to decide rapidly what to do. That made me realize that in reality you were very important to me and that therefore I could also live with your desire for freedom. That's how I discovered how much I loved you. Even if now I am writing a letter that's really ridiculous. And so? Have I interpreted your life right? Or is there something that despite everything I did not understand?

"I write you these things only now for a very simple reason. Despite everything, this period has been important for me. Perhaps I needed to see you, as always, make the first break. This is my usual dependency on you. Yet after I had to face your desire for freedom for better or for worse, I had also to face my own desire for freedom.

"Do you realize, actually, how much time we spent together, how our political activities actually kept us in a cage, trapped in a way of life based entirely on ourselves and our friends, and on our certainties?

"There is one thing among many that I blame you for. You really never wanted to put any importance on the work I chose. When I chose a curriculum for which I would have to study, you ridiculed me. This passed, but you always had hundreds of subtle ways to oppose what I was doing. Above all you scorned.

"When ties between us were not as close anymore, I began slowly to rediscover my own life. I suffered for you, it is true, but my day gradually became filled with other things.

"I begin to feel that I am something, someone, a concrete existence.

"I go to the hospital, I only give shots but there I meet real people, only old people, useless things, but for whom I have affection because they begin to think that I may be able to do something for them. Then, I have my friends. Doctors like myself. Some were never involved in politics. They are only 'democrats,' in quotes as you would say. But we enjoy going to the movies, and we talk about specific things. While, instead, for some time past I have not been able to bear other discussions. Sometimes I am so happy that I feel guilty about you. Somehow, in order to exist you had to disappear.

"That's why I am writing you. Now I feel that we are really entering into a different situation. So far the tie between us was enough to keep you near me. But now I am changing. And you are not here. Where and how will we meet again? And will we ever meet again? Now we can stop our childishness. Can

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we put an end to this desire for freedom lived in a savage and egotistic way and find each other again by respecting each other?

"It is a long time since you have given me any serious news of your existence. What are you really doing? Who have you become in the meantime?"

"It is time we meet again. It is time. We risk not recognizing each other anymore."

Naturally I answered with a postcard. It was the right time to break.

"Who says we won't see each other again? You're funny, you and your so-serious statements."

By return mail I received another very short letter.

"I can't add very much."

I telephoned her. Big greetings. Feelings I could not hide.

"Are you coming? Shall we meet in my people's house on the coast? Now, you know, they let me have it much more easily. My father says hello, and my mother too. How is everything in Rome. Do you have enough money?"

"Yes, sure we'll see each other. But I don't know when. I'll write you, okay? I've got to end this because I don't have any coins."

"Okay," she agreed shortly.

I hung up the receiver, then I put in another coin for the periodical telephone call of reassurance to my mother, and I went back home.

Now I was deeply involved in work. I could not and I did not want to turn back any longer. I didn't write her anymore and she didn't write me either.

Milan is a city unique in the world
where you can be great modest someone and no one,
and where time gives you patience you cannot find
elsewhere.

Milan is the city of parades and funerals,
funerals that seem parades and parades that seem to
be carnivals

and the carnivals seem like riots in the square.

When you go to Milan at night
and enter those streets metropolitan houses
and there a chill that makes you warm
and warmth in houses like churches.

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Milan is the city of mornings at dawn
with brave workers who ride their bikes
and young workers who ride the streetcar
and packs of GAZZETTA beside unopened kiosks.

Milan is a city to be walked through
to smell its odors and noises and pains
to shadow footsteps and labors.
To follow enemies and accomplices.

And I am here following my father
greydressed and whitefaced
singing of opera and old warriors
and he is there tailing his boss
two or three villas and a certain passion for windsurf
and he is there following his porter
who has many mistresses and a great big thing.
And then there is someone who follows me
I have never seen him but I know he is there
I have never seen his face but I guess which it is.

I feel him behind me in the gallery and in the suburban movie
among students in a night school.
and in a community library and in a crazy discoteque.

Be he my father or my informer
my policeman or my guardian angel
my labor and my tiredness
my hatred and my bitterness.
Be they my comrades of today or those of yesterday,
my teachers or my priests
or my infinite thoughts.
Be they my worn-out ideas or my hallucinations
my dreams or my passions,
or perhaps these tight shoes and that collar I can't close.
Be this desire for all and fear of nothing
this will this desire and sleepy hatred.
Whether it be or not
there is always one in the back of the pizzeria
who eats with phony cheer who pretends he is sad
who intuitively knows I am mad.

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END