

The State of Spectacle

Guy Debord

ly change into foxes to take prey from traps, into lions who fear no one for as long as they keep their prey, and into sheep so as not to cause the slightest harmful effect to the regime which they pretend to defy. They tell us that they are lucky to be dealing with the most incompetent of police forces, and that, besides, they have been able to infiltrate the highest ranks without a problem. But this explanation is hardly dialectical. A seditious organization that would put some of its members in contact with the State security forces, unless it had infiltrated agents years before in order to make sure of their loyalty when the occasion for their use arose, should expect that sometimes its manipulators be themselves manipulated. Thus they would be deprived of that olympic assurance of impunity which characterizes the Red Brigade's chief of staff. But the Italian State goes further, with the unanimous approval of those who uphold it. Like any other State, it thought of infiltrating agents of its special forces into clandestine terrorist networks, where they could then be assured of a swift and easy passage up to the leadership, first by getting rid of their superiors in the manner of Malinowski, who fooled even the shrewd Lenin for the sake of the tsarist Okrana, or like Azev, who, once at the head of the "combat organization" of the revolutionary socialist party, pushed his mastery to the point of having the prime minister Stoloy Pine himself assassinated. A single unfortunate coincidence came to hinder the good will of the State: its special forces were just then dissolved. But a secret service until now has never been dissolved in the manner of, say, a petroleum tanker's cargo in coastal waters, or a portion of modern industrial production in Seveso. By maintaining its records, its stool pigeons, its working operatives, it simply changed its name. Thus in Italy the S.I.M., or Service of Military Information from the fascist regime, famous for its sabotages and its foreign assassinations, became the S.I.D., or Service of Defense Information under the Christian-Democratic regime. Moreover, when a kind of robot doctrine of the Red Brigade was programmed on a computer, dismal caricature of what one might have thought and done if one had wanted to advocate the disappearance of the State, a slip of the computer — so true is it that these machines depend on the unconscious of those who feed in information — caused the same acronym S.I.M., this time designating the "International Society of Multinationals," to be attributed to the single pseudo-concept repeated automatically by the Red Brigade. This S.I.D., "bathed in Italian blood," must have been dissolved recently because, as the State avows *post festum*, it was the one which since 1969 committed, most often but not always by bombing, that long series of massacres which were attributed, according to the season, to anarchist, neo-fascist, or situationist. Now that the Red Brigade does exactly the same work and for once at least with an operational efficiency which is quite superior, obviously S.I.D. can not combat it, since it is dissolved. In a secret service worthy of its name, its very dissolution is secret. One cannot tell therefore what proportion of the total force was allowed an honorable retirement, what was allotted to the Red Brigade, or perhaps loaned to the Shah of Iran to burn a movie theater in Abadan, and what was discreetly exterminated by a State probably indignant to learn that its instructions were sometimes surpassed. In point of fact we know that the State will never hesitate to kill Brutus' sons to have its own laws respected, since its intransigent refusal to envisage even the most minimal concession to save Moro finally proved that he had all the firm virtues of republican Rome.

Italian capitalism and the government bureaucracy are quite divided on the use of the Stalinists, a vital but highly uncertain question. Certain modern sectors of large private capital are or were resolutely in favor of them; others, supported by many who manage the capital of State supported businesses, are more hostile. Highly ranked State personnel have a wide manoeuvring autonomy, since the decisions of the captain surpass those of the owner when the ship is sinking, but they themselves are divided in opinion. The future of each clique depends on the manner in which it will be able to impose its reasons, by proving them in practice. Moro believed in the Historical Compromise, that is to say, in the capacity of the Stalinists to finally break up the movement of revolutionary workers. Another tendency, the one that is at this moment in a position to command the attention of the commanders of the Red Brigade did not believe in it; or at least deemed that the Stalinists, for the few services that they could render, and that they will

This text, written by one of the leaders of the International Situationists, was published as an introduction to the 4th Italian edition of his book, *The Society of Spectacle*.

It was up to the society of spectacles to add just what I think this book didn't need: more weighty and convincing proofs and examples. We have seen the falsification getting thicker, descending to the fabrication of the most trivial things, like a sticky fog which accumulates at the ground level of all daily life. We have seen a striving for the absolute — as far as "telematic" madness — in the technical and police control of men and natural forces; a control whose errors grow as fast as its methods. We have seen the State lie, develop in itself and for itself, having so completely forgotten its conflicting links with truth and verisimilitude that the very connections themselves can be dropped and replaced from hour to hour. In the recent events surrounding the kidnapping and execution of Aldo Moro, Italy had occasion to reflect upon this technique at its most highly developed point, which, however, will soon be surpassed, either here or elsewhere. The version given by Italian authorities, made worse rather than better by a hundred successive touch-ups, which all commentators have made it their duty to admit in public, has not been believable for one instant. It was not intended to be believed, but to sit alone in a display window, to be forgotten afterwards, exactly like a bad book.

It was a mythological opera with great machinations, where terrorist heroes quick-

1/1 ROP-041906-4/19/78-DUCHESS LAKE, Italy: An army skier probes a hole in the ice covering Duchess Lake with his ski pole 4/19 after detonation squads blasted the frozen lake. Frogmen are dragging the lake where the Red Brigades gang say they dumped the body of ex-Premier Aldo Moro after his "execution". (UPI) (ITALY)

render in any case, should not be spared, that it is necessary to beat them harder, so that they do not become too insolent. We saw that this analysis was not without value since, with Moro kidnapped as an inaugural affront to the Historical Compromise finally made authentic by an act of parliament, the Stalinist party continued to pretend to believe in the independence of the Red Brigade. They kept the prisoner alive as long as they thought they could prolong the humiliation and discomfort of the friends, who had to submit to blackmail while pretending nobly not to understand what these unknown barbarians expected of them. The affair ended anyway as soon as the Stalinists showed their teeth, publicly alluding to obscure manoeuvres and Moro died deceived. But actually, the Red Brigade has another function, of more general interest, which is to disconcert or discredit proletarians who really rise against the State, and perhaps to one day eliminate some of the more dangerous. This function the Stalinists approve, since it helps them in their difficult task. The side injurious to them is restrained by insinuations cryptically made in public at crucial moments, and by precise threats voiced in their constant negotiations in private with the State power. Their arm of dissension is that they could suddenly tell all that they know about the Red Brigade from its inception. But no one is ignorant of the fact that they could not use this weapon without breaking the Historical Compromise, and therefore they hope sincerely that they can remain as discreet on this subject as they were about the doings of the S.I.D. in its time. What would become of the Stalinists in a revolution? We continue to upset them, but not too much. When, ten months after the kidnapping of Moro, the same invincible Red Brigade knocks down a trade-union Stalinist for the first time, the so called Communist Party reacts soon after, but only in the realm of protocol, by threatening its allies to force them thereafter to designate it as a party, always loyal and constructive certainly, but which will be beside the majority and no longer on the side of the majority.

The keg always smells of herring and a Stalinist will always be in his element wherever one smells an odor of secret crime in the State. Why should they be offended by the atmosphere of discussion at the top of the Italian State, with a knife up their sleeves and a bomb under the table? Was it not in the same style that they took care of differences among themselves, for example, in the cases of Kruschev and Beria, Kadar and Nagy, Mao and Lin Piao? And besides, the directors of the Italian Stalinist movement became butchers in their youth at the time of their first Historical Compromise, when they were charged with the other employees of "Komintern" with counter-revolution at the service of the Democratic Spanish Republic in 1937. It was then that their own Red Brigade kidnapped Andres Nin and killed him in another secret prison.

A number of Italians are very familiar with this sad evidence, and many more found out about it right away. But it has not been published anywhere; the former have no reason to, while the latter lack the means. At this stage in the analysis there are grounds for evoking a "spectacular" politics of terrorism, and not, as is repeated by so many journalists and professors with the finesse of the hireling, because terrorists are sometimes moved by the desire to make us speak of them. Italy epitomizes the social contradictions of the whole world, and tries, in a manner we are familiar with, to amalgamate in a single country the repressive Holy Alliance of class power, bureaucratic-totalitarian and bourgeois, which already functions openly across the face of the earth in an economic and police State solidarity; although, of course, not without some discussion and settling of accounts in the Italian manner. As the most advanced country at the moment in its slide toward a proletarian revolution, Italy is also the most modern sort of laboratory for international counter-revolution. Other governments coming out of the old bourgeois democracy, "pre-spectacular" in nature, look on with admiration at the Italian government for the impassiveness which it can maintain at the tumultuous center of its degradation, and for the calm dignity with which it sits in the mud; it is a lesson which they will have to apply in their own countries for a long time to come.

Translated by Wendy Greenberg & John Johnston



Lama Sabachthani

women's commission). There were also the (often stormy) general assemblies, where the Movement decided its policies.

All the gates to the Campus were guarded by comrades, who took it in turns, and everyone who entered was frisked and scrutinised, to guard against provocateurs.

The Government and the ICP decided to send Luciano Lama in.

The day before, the Movement's General Assembly had voted to allow Lama to come in, and to avoid physical violence, but to defeat him "politically" (ie drown him out by booing, whistling, etc).

Lama came in at about 9 am, on a truck which was to be his platform; it was equipped with a powerful loudspeaker system. He was accompanied by his 200 ICP heavies (with Trade Union "stewards" cards pinned to their jackets) and about 2,000 reps. and workers, hastily called to the University by the Unions, to "liberate it from the Fascists".

In the large open area of the Campus where he was to speak, Lama found another platform already rigged up, with a dummy of himself on it (complete with his famous pipe). There was a big red cut-out of a Valentine's heart, with a slogan punning his name— "Nessuno L'Amo" (Lama Nobody . . . or Nobody Loves Him). Around this platform there was a band of Metropolitan Indians. As Lama started to speak, they began chanting: "Sacrifices, Sacrifices, We Want Sacrifices!" (a parody of the State's economic policy upheld by the Communist Party). "Build us More Churches and Fewer Houses!" (Italy has more churches than any other European country, and a chronic housing shortage). "We demand to work harder and earn less!"

This irony aggravated the humourless ICP heavies. About 10,000 comrades and students gathered. The Autonomists started to put on their masks.

It would be hard to say which side threw the first stone. Certainly there was pushing and shoving and exchanges of insults which led up to it. Violence soon broke out. Bricks, stones and bottles flew through the air. Some Communist Party members received treatment (the non-ICP wounded could not go to hospital for fear of arrest).

The vast majority of those present, both workers and students, did not take part in the fighting. They stood around in groups. I met some reps. from an engineering factory. One said that Lama was "asking for it" . . . He had come to the University to 'pour water on the fire'. Another rep. corrected him: 'Not water—gas!' Other workers were complaining that the Unions had been very high-handed in ringing them up and telling them to come to the University, without any explanation or discussion. A cleaning lady, who worked at the University Teaching Hospital (a badly paid and overworked category, also an Autonomist stronghold) was heard to say: "They ought to shoot him in the mouth!"

A woman, a member of the Communist Party, told me: "These Autonomists really are Fascists—they have beaten up workers (ie ICP heavies), and that I can't accept."

After an hour or so, Lama and the heavies retreated outside the University, and all the windows of his truck were smashed. Insults were exchanged over the railings, with each side calling the other: "Fascists! Fascists!" (This is a deadly insult on the Italian Left, and will usually start a fight).

During the afternoon, the riot-police moved into the Campus, and cleared out all the occupiers—who left by a secondary entrance. About 1,000 Communist Party militants stood outside and clapped and cheered. The following day, a young ICP lecturer in sociology at the University remarked: The police were right to clear the University. There weren't any real students in there, only hippies, queers and people from the slum-districts".

The operation was dubbed "Little Prague" by the students.

On February 17, 1977, Luciano Lama, the Communist union leader entered the occupied Rome University to "lecture" the students. He was—none too gloriously—driven off the campus. This is an eyewitness account of the event which broke open the deep-rooted conflict between the "new left" and the Italian Communist Party.

It was the morning of Thursday February 17, 1977. The University campus had been occupied for over a week by students, the unemployed, the comrades. The tall, severe-looking buildings, with their Fascist architecture, had been transformed. The white facade of the Faculty of Letters was covered with slogans and writings. One, which was vertical and many yards high, warned the capitalists and revisionists that they would be "buried by a burst of laughter". It was signed "Godere Operalo" ("Workers' Joy") and "Godimento Studentesco" (Students' Enjoyment)—a pun on the old Potere Operaio ("Workers' Power") and Movimento Studentesco ("Student Movement"). These writings were the work of the Metropolitan Indians, a non-organised cultural movement of young comrades, who turned their biting wit and sarcasm on the Government, the Communist Party, and even on revolutionary "leader-figures" who tried to assert their dominance over the mass. The quality of this new revolutionary movement was, in fact, that the mass refused to be led in the traditional style, from above. It was, to a great extent, self-directing and self-organising.

During the days and nights of the occupation, the entire University seemed to be a continuous people's party and people's forum. There were continuing and endless debates in the various commissions (the counter-information commission, the factory-and-community commission, the teaching-methods commission, the

Painted Politics

Maurizio Torealta

and, despite this omission, doesn't stop robbing, nor in fact engages in any collective practice — such a person is the agent of subversions which have great significance. Every element in the subversion of a system must be of a superior logical order.

Let us try to get an overview of the scene. The industry involved in the transmission and elaboration of signs is ranked third in the world on the basis of sales. Consider a hypothesis: the diffusion of the sign as the general equivalent of all things and the transfer of the productive intelligence to machines may involve some radical innovations in the social forms of language and thought and in the forms of legal and juridical control. Consider this further hypothesis: the creation of a social intelligence which has been rendered useless and polyvalent may have given rise to the social possibility of simulation or, better, to the production of signs beyond the laws governing property and the forms of control incarnated in signs.

We are convinced that this entire situation is connected with the development of the unforeseen, absurd and paradoxical behavior that is improperly called "the phenomenon of the Metropolitan Indians."

Since all the "real contents" (the referents of production, affect, signification) that ballasted the sign with a kind of useful force of gravity are no longer effectively communicated, the signs are now exchanged among themselves without any commerce with some object in reality. For a social subject, on the other hand, a subject that is diffuse and forced into a relation with fluctuating and indeterminate wages (and the question of wages, by definition, is the general referent of all signs), the "pangs of conscience" and discourses on "political economy" are completely useless; one can not struggle against transience and dispersion with the blows of purpose and conscience.

Thus the social conditions of simulation and of the arbitrary come into being: there arises a social subject that is not reducible to one precise identity, that arbitrarily invents one for itself and at the same time hangs on the thin thread of its own precarious language, suspended between absolute power and total absurdity, waiting without fear for some other determination of identity at its ineluctable opening: that of derision.

If we investigate this development, moving from the March, 1977 demonstrations to an interpretive model which succeeds in comprehending them, it will not be difficult for us to trace this semantic openmindedness, these mechanisms of simulation, to the highest levels of formal languages. The nonsense argument is the basis of logical, mathematical reasoning and the constitutive model of music and the game as well. The analysis and introduction of transgressive and uncontrollable variables into collective systems (which are fictional and sympathetic) form part of every good project in the industry of the spectacle.

We hypothesize, then, the coming of an era which replaces the bearers of truth divided unions, political groups with their identifying signs and their banners) with intelligence and shrewdness. This era will be based on the social possibilities of falsehood, on the technological possibilities resulting from the destruction of rules, on the free exchange of products, simulation, the game, the nonsense argument, the dream, music.

If we now want to retrace the steps that legitimize this hypothesis in the events which have already occurred, we must relate a few scenes, as in a film, even if we all know that the best gags can not be related. Let us begin with a title:

"COSSINO ASSASSINO." This slogan was written in Campo dei Fiori, and it attributes the epithet "murderer" (assassino) to Cossiga, the Minister of the Interior. Yet what is anathema here is not the insult, but the anagram. Saussure was right: political economy has its own discourse, and the very mutation that strikes linguistic signs when they lose their referential status also strikes the categories of political economy; the same process occurs in both directions. In writing, an

In the Spring of '77, in the midst of violent demonstrations, nihilistic happenings were staged in various cities, especially Bologna and Rome. Their existence was short-lived but the inventiveness of the Metropolitan Indians, their diffidence of radical rhetoric, their use of simulation and parody as political weapons were not forgotten by the Movement.

The term "Metropolitan Indians" is an invented one. The press describes them as the illegitimate child of a clandestine mother and a traditional Marxist father. The detailed physical description presents them with marks painted on their faces as a group whose decisions are not very trustworthy (more than once they have made arrangements for demonstrations that never occurred) and which is unable to participate in public assemblies with sensible speeches. The press conceals the fact that they habitually break into shops and appropriate useless goods (record albums, liquor, sports clothes). They also frequently appear at the most elegant movie theaters in groups of about thirty people, naturally after visiting the most expensive restaurants where they obviously did not pay.

The press often prefers to occupy itself with the marks on the group's faces, with their songs and dances, with their paradoxical slogans, relegating the "expropriations" to the "semi-clandestine independents" who are on the verge of acquiring the clandestine character of the Bunker.

The press has good reason to invent differences and to be concerned. Whoever paints his face taking the marks as an arbitrary characterization of a future people; whoever appropriates in an exhaustive way all possible terms and treats language as a science of imaginary solutions; whoever refuses to explain himself

anagrammatic sign has dispensed with order: the poetic pleasure comes directly from violating the fundamental laws of human language, from subverting the discipline of their valorization. The anagram in this case is the mark of an antagonistic form, a language without expression, now beyond laws and the poses that linguistics assigns it.

But let us leave the explanation of this anagrammatic title to describe a few scenes which, in their balanced dimensionality and inexplicable silence, allude to feelings so violent that they brush against certainty (as happens in every well-made film).

Imagine the University of Rome, always seen from above, with a periphery wall that detaches it from the neighborhood of San Lorenzo and emphatically characterizes it as a place delegated for institutional functions. Imagine the entrance to the paths that consolidate the power of a huge truck, a portable place delegated for whoever has pretensions to speak, even in unknown languages; in fact, the truck is equipped with powerful loud-speakers, and it is followed by hundreds of union members enlisted to maintain law and order: it is the day for the meeting of the CGL's secretary general¹ at the University of Rome.

War is always anticipated by the visual function of the parade; in fact, war is the coherent development of the parade. In our case, the action was the introduction of "the union line at the university" — terms that are perhaps careless, but undoubtedly consistent.

It is again at the semantic level that the group's provocation organizes the encounter: the dancing Metropolitan Indians actually carry a hanged puppet of the union secretary dangling before them like a destroyed image, and this action unleashes the anger of the union's law-and-order guard. The escalation of weapons is rather singular: the Metropolitan Indians throw bags filled with water; the unionists respond with the sprays of fire extinguishers. The Indians charge, dispersing and terrorizing the union apparatus, literally destroying everything; but they do not take over the platform on the truck, and they do not seize the microphone.

This day will long be remembered in Italian political history; from that day will gush rivers of speeches on the new needs of the youthful strata of the population; on that day hundreds of self-critical and remorseful discourses will be made, yet only the Metropolitan Indians will remain silent.

Many other things happened, the most important of which were the attacks on the armories in March (to steal not merely guns, but tennis racquets and fishing rods as well), the very violent clashes with the crowd, the arrests, and the armed interventions. But the second important scene is not the battle. It lies precisely in the place of discourse.

Every place delegated for political discourse has a structure that is quite similar to the Panopticon described by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*. Such places are designed with a central point situated to maintain the least distance from the other points and, at all events, to preserve the power of controlling with one's gaze every other point of the place in which one is positioned. It is generally a question of high platforms (such as the truck mentioned earlier), located in circular places (squares or halls with sloping tiers of seats).

In September, the Movement of 77² or, if you prefer, the Metropolitan Indians launched a mass meeting in the city of Bologna. More than a hundred thousand people responded to the call. The second part of our screenplay on the Metropolitan Indians is concerned with analyzing the structure of this scene with the hundred thousand extras.

The disposition of men and things is always the result of strategies for war and control. Most European cities maintain the architectonic structure of military

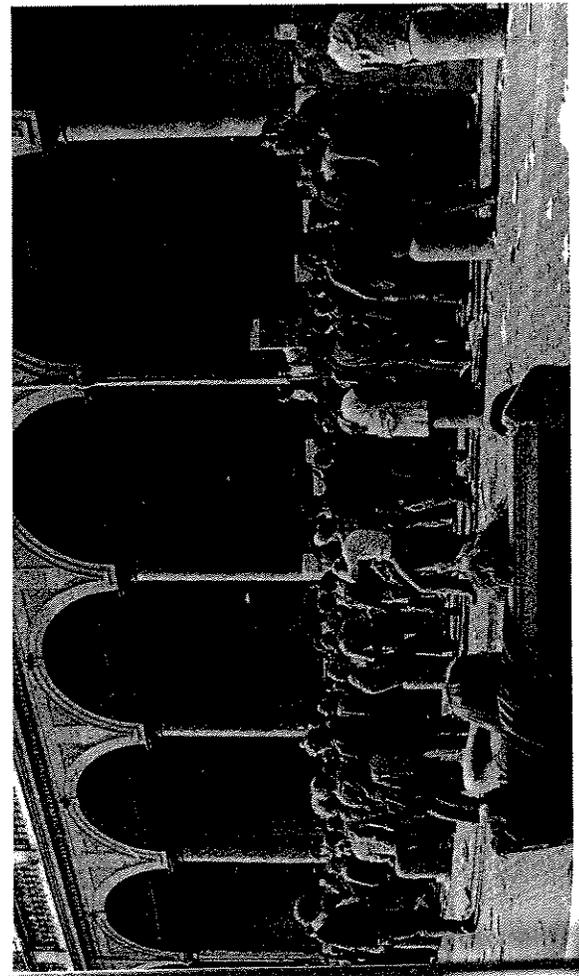
camps and medieval fortresses.

At the meeting in September against repression, there was a superimposition of two groups of people and two different cities of language. One part of the Movement chose as its own territory a circular location with sloping seats that surrounded a central platform. It was a sports arena, a place designated for athletic (*agonistic*) events (*agonism* etymologically derives from *agon*, the war song that Greek combatants sang dedicating themselves to death). This part of the Movement, about 8000 people, was divided and clashed among themselves, smashing chairs over one another's heads and failing to arrive at any solution (generally, a political solution is represented by a written motion approved by a majority).

Another part of the Movement, the majority, entered the city, sleeping anywhere in the streets, under porticoes, creating an enormous curtain, exploiting a few upright sculptures in a small square, conveying furniture and chairs outdoors, conducting discussions and seminars in thousands of small groups, passing out the little illegalities that had been produced for the occasion (fake train tickets, drugs, keys to open telephone coin boxes and traffic lights, etc.).

Thus a very interesting situation was created. One part of the Movement sought the establishment — in the order of signs and discourse — of a city fortress (the sports arena), the "new" bastion of the future people, in reality the mark of an old passion for collecting imported practices. The majority or, rather, the remaining part of the Movement chose not to establish a city; they decided to continue being nomads, but at the same time enter the city of the enemy's language — a city that is always strengthening its fortifications — even if only to remain silent, sitting around, smoking, sleeping. We have termed them nomads, but perhaps it is more correct to call them sophists, in a position to simulate, to enter and leave the walls, to master diverse languages as the situation demands, in a position to play-act, falsify, create paradoxes, sabotage, and disappear once again. This type of sophist is a figure who can intervene in languages with an exact and distinct action, without taking them as a despotic and unyielding totality. This gift is of course not innate; it is a consequence of the relation to wages (wages' general equivalence with the rest of things, exactly like language).

The Metropolitan Indians have stopped using the metaphor of wages, because their enterprise is no longer producing metaphors for institutions, but rather effecting the metamorphosis of them. They wanted to compel Italian youth to reckon with wages, but also to force them all to realize that the Movement is tired of reckoning merely with money. And this break in the scope of the struggle is at once a break in language and the forms of the encounter.



For a brief time, the irreality, the displacement, the revolution of existing relations is no longer the prerogative of capital and its accumulated intelligence. An unforeseen variable has been created in the Italian political scene: a social sector which is illegal more in its behavior than in its relation to wages, and which is at the same time not clandestine, even though clandestine groups can float around within it. This sector is not reduced and not reducible to the productive order; it is intersected and made labyrinthine so as to be rendered indefinable, but even before this, it is subjectively not obligated to any determination of identity.

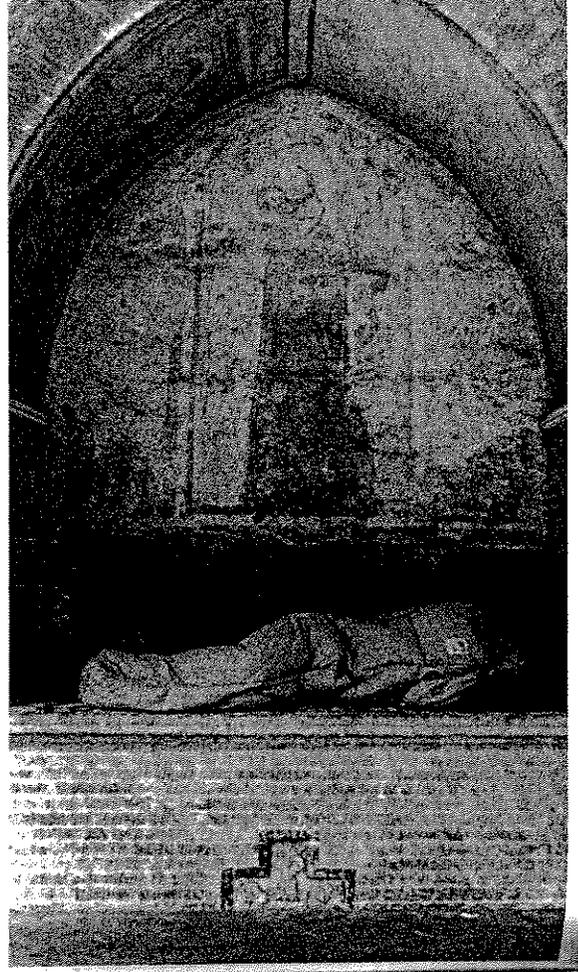
We can foresee that the forms of the organization, corresponding to whoever leaves his own distinctive marks, will not be precisely symbolic. Rather, they will be and are formations which can be constructed as the need arises and dissolved immediately after, not bound to the criteria of professionalism, notwithstanding all the Leninism of those who bide their time. The immediate steps to be taken by those the press has dubbed the Metropolitan Indians is the production of projects in the field of simulation, falsification, and paradox. The program which guides and will guide the Movement aims at giving their projects the same precision as a knitted work, the same collective participation as a common home, the same rhythmic breathing as that we find in our own lives and in the phases of our collective study, the same range as our journeys, the same organization as our emotional relations, as always illegal but never clandestine.

What is left for us to do before concluding is finally to forget about the Metropolitan Indians and once again prevent a Movement from becoming a fetish, a hypostasis, shortcircuited by the media's diffusion. There will always be animal reserves and Indian reservations to conceal the fact that the animals are dead, and that we are all Indians. There will always be factories to conceal the fact that production is dead, and that it is everywhere and nowhere. We follow the momentum of our projects with our song and occupy ourselves with other things.

Translated by Lawrence Venuti

I. Luciano Lama is the secretary of the General Confederation of Workers, close to the ICP

III-2 Photos: Marion Scemama



The Proliferation of Margins

Felix Guattari

Felix Guattari, the author, together with Gilles Deleuze, of *Anti-Oedipus* (Richard Seaver Books, 1977), has taken an active part in the defense of the imprisoned Italian intellectuals.

— Integrated world capitalism does not aim at a systematic and generalized repression of the workers, women, youth, minorities. . . . The means of production on which it rests will indeed call for a flexibility in relationships of production and in social relations, and a minimal capacity to adapt to the new forms of sensibility and to the new types of human relationships which are "mutating" here and there (i.e. exploitation by advertising of the "discoveries" of the marginals, relative tolerance with regard to the zones of *laissez-faire*. . . .) Under these conditions, a semi-tolerated, semi-encouraged, and co-opted protest could well be an intrinsic part of the system.

— Other forms of protest prove, on the other hand, to be much more dangerous to the extent that they threaten the essential relationships on which this system is based (the respect for work, for hierarchy, for State power, for the religion of consumption. . . .) It is impossible to trace a clear and definite boundary between the recuperable marginals and other types of marginalities on the way to truly "molecular revolutions." The frontiers actually remain blurred and unstable both in time and in space. The real question is whether this phenomenon finally will remain on the outskirts of society — whatever its scope — or whether it will put it

radically into question. What characterizes the "molecular" here is the fact that the lines of flight merge with the objective lines of deterritorialization of the system and create an irreversible aspiration for new spaces of liberty. (An example of one of these lines of flight: the Free Radios. The technological evolution, in particular the miniaturization of transmitters and the fact that they can be "inkered with" by amateurs, meets a collective aspiration for a new means of expression.)

— Numerous factors must be considered both "objectively" and on the level of new social practices, in order to appreciate the possibilities for revolutionary transformations during the period to come.

— Will integrated world capitalism succeed in founding a social order accepted by the greatest number of people and implying an accentuation of social segregation? Capital, in the West as in the East, is nothing more than the capital of power, that is, a mode of semiotization, of homogenization, and of transmission of various forms of power. (Power over goods, over territories, power over work, over subordinates, the "inferiors," power over relatives, over the family, etc. . . .) Only the appearance of new ways of relating to the world and to society will alter the individual's "bifidinal fixation" to capital and to its various crystallizations of power. This power can prevail only to the extent that an overwhelming majority of individuals not only participate in it, but also unconsciously adhere to it. The reversal of modern capitalism involves not only the struggle against material bondage and visible forms of repression, but also, from the outset, the creation of many alternative set-ups.

— For the last decade "battlegrounds" widely different from those which previously characterized the traditional workers' movement have not ceased to multiply: (immigrant workers, skilled workers unhappy with the kind of work imposed on them, the unemployed, over-exploited women, ecologists, nationalists, mental patients, homosexuals, the elderly, the young etc.). But will their objectives become just another "demand" acceptable to the system? Or will vectors of molecular revolution begin to proliferate behind them? (Unlocatable on the dominant coordinates, they produce their own axes of reference, establish underground, transversal connections among themselves, and thus undermine older relationships to production, society, the family, the body, sex, the cosmos. . . .)

— Will these micro-revolutions, these profound examinations of the relationships within society only remain divided into limited spheres of the social arena? Or will a new "social segmentation" manage to connect them without imposing hierarchy and segregation? In short, will all these micro-revolutions finally initiate a real revolution? Will they be able to take charge of not only local problems, but also administrative larger economic configurations?

— All this amounts to asking whether we will be able to go beyond the various utopias of "return to": Return to the sources, to nature, to transcendence. . . . The "objective" lines of deterritorialization are irreversible. We must make the best of "progress" in science and technology, or nothing will be possible, and world capitalism will always remain in the upper hand. For instance, it is clear that, in the next few years, the struggle for self-determination in Corsica, Brittany, etc., will not cease to gain momentum. Isn't this a case of "return to"? But what is at issue here is the promotion of a new Corsica, a new Brittany, as well as a new Sarcelles: a new Yvelines. . . . Shamelessly rewriting the past on the plot of an open future. The demands of the minorities, for example, as well as those of the nationalists, can be carriers of a certain type of State Power, a power of subjugation, that is, a capitalist virus.

— What will be the form of resistance of the more traditional sectors which find themselves squeezed by the present evolution of integrated world capitalism? Will the union and the traditional leftist parties allow themselves to be manipulated and co-opted indefinitely by modern capitalism, or will they undergo profound transformations?

Under these conditions, the perspective of revolutionary transformations, the collective re-appropriation of daily life, and a full acknowledgement of desires on all levels of society have become inseparable.

Translated by Richard Gardner & Sybil Walker

Ill'1 Felix Guattari in "Indeces" Video/photo: Seth Tillet

— It is impossible to predict what forms of struggle and organization the revolution just beginning will assume in the future. All answers remain equally open now . . .

— They will not be focused on quantitative objectives; they will again put into question the goals of work and therefore of leisure time and of culture. They will again put into question the environment, daily life, domestic life, male-female and child-adult relationships, the conception of time, the meaning of life. . . .

— They will not be focused solely on the working-industrial-qualified-white-male-adult classes. (End of the myth of the Poutifol factory revolutionaries, 1917.) Production today can in no way be identified with heavy industry. It makes use of tool-machines as well as computers, social set ups as well as technico-scientific know-how. It is inseparable from the moulding of the work-force, beginning with child "labor" from its earliest years. It likewise implies the maintenance, reproduction, and formation capsule constituted by the family and its administration, which is in the present oppressive conditions, essentially the burden of women. . . .

— They will not be focused only on an avant-garde party conceived of as the thinking-subject of the struggle and the means by which the whole "of mass movements" will be oriented. They will be multi-centered. Their different components will in no way be required to agree on everything, or to speak the same stereotypical language. Contradictions, even irreducible antagonisms, will be allowed to co-exist. (For example, the specific point of view of women with regard to the male-dominated movements.) Here contradiction does not paralyze action, but proves that a singular position, a specific desire, is put in question.

— They will not be focused on national frameworks. Close to the most quotidian reality, they will involve social groups which overflow all national boundaries. Today every perspective of struggle formulated only within a national framework annuls its efficacy in advance. The most reformist as well as the most revolutionary parties and splinter groups (*groupuscule*) who specify their objective unilaterally as the "seizure of State political power" condemn themselves to powerlessness. For instance, the solution to the Italian problem does not belong to the socialists, communists, or autonomists! It implies a movement of struggle developing in a minimum of four or five European countries.

— They will not be focused on a single theoretical body. Its different components will each elaborate, on their own level, in their own rhythm, their own modes of semiotization in order to define and orient their action. Here again we find the withering away of oppositions between productive, scientific, and cultural labor, between manual and intellectual labor.

— They will refuse to separate exchange value, use value and desire value. These separations constitute an essential support for power formations closed in upon themselves and forming hierarchies upon which capitalism and social segregation are based.

— Social production, under the control of capitalist and technocratic "elites," is more and more cut off from the interests and desires of individuals, and leads:

— to a systematic over-valorization of industries which compromise the very future of the human species (armaments race, nuclear reactions. . .),

— to an under-estimation of the essential use-values (hunger in the world, saving the environment. . .),

— to the flattening out and repression of desires in their singularity, that is, to the loss of the meaning of life.



Dreamers of a Successful Life

Paolo Virno

modified—makes of use value, of physicality, a criterion for understanding which is not at all retrograde, but rather, in the end, "post-Galilean", that is to say, more significant than the quantification and the equivalent-assigning which prevail in exchange systems.

Men and women, factory workers and marginal workers of every species, the partly employed and the partly unemployed, all derive from their articulated presence within the system of production a welter of insights, techniques, and tastes that are antagonistic to the assigning of value. Dreamers of a successful life perceive in the process of labor the means to escape from their dreamland; in the tangible—yet blocked and incomplete—separation between production and the assigning of value, they perceive the principal route for a dialectic of liberation. However, it happens—and here one may think of the parabola traced by the "great disorder" of 1977—that the new level attained by the socialization of labor may not come to be manifested in the milieu from which it sprang, that is, in the production of material goods and in the scientific apparatus needed for such production; labor agitation has not affected the forms of the production process, and has not been able to attack in a wide-ranging and significant way the link between the functioning of capitalist management and the functioning of coordination as exercised by the "generalized intellect". One finds—and one will doubtless find for a long time to come—a striking gap between a movement which re-produces itself daily in the process of labor and the self-expression of that movement, which quite often is situated "elsewhere".

"OUT OF DELICACY I HAVE FORFEITED MY LIFE" OR: THE PAINFUL MYTH OF A "PURE SOCIALIZATION"

The consequence of this "impasse" is that the rethinking for purposes of emancipation of the relationship between labor and socialization, instead of arriving at a transformed and enriched conception of production, gives rise to an extraordinary burgeoning of ideology, the principal characteristic of which is a pining for a "pure" socialization, detached from the sphere of material activity and by design not related to the historical forms by which nature is appropriated. If bodies continue to be measured, their equivalents determined, if they continue to be mortified by the capital-labor exchange, then the possibility of reaching a non-mutilated socialization seems to lie in an indefinite expansion of interpersonal relationships, brought about through interaction: agitation, behavior, needs, languages.

Work and interaction, or "instrumental action" and "communicative action", are seen—in this confused pot of ideology—as two totally separated poles, without any reciprocal connection: on the one hand the praxis of labor, divided down the middle but conceived under a single heading as the imparting of value (and thus—as far as the activity of the individual is concerned—totally devoid of relationships, operating as monolog); on the other hand, free relationships based on dialog between people who grant each other "reciprocal recognition" as bearers of petitions for emancipation. In short: in the realm of production, a sanctioning of the uncontested hegemony of exchange value; in the realm of distribution only, a rediscovery of use value.

In fact, the distinctive aspect of this fantasy-land socialization is a sort of "struggle for recognition" on the part of unhappy minds: unrepressed individuality must be embraced with all needs and desires by other individualities, if only on the letters-to-the-editor page of the newspaper. Antagonism is de-materialized and constantly reduced to the pastime of critical reflection on the inauthenticity of daily life; in the background looms the all-powerful category of commodity-form (the crisis of which is not perceived in the realm of production), which constrains and inhibits reciprocal recognition in relationships based on domination. What is required for interaction between individuals to flow freely is, in reality, the maintenance of that universality and equivalence of values promised by the system of equivalent exchange—but these promises are always betrayed by the essential inequity of the selling and buying relationship which prevails between capital and the labor force. In short, "pure" socialization, which is irrelevant or inadequate in defining the praxis of labor, boils down to the demand for a "fair exchange", or one which will not make the warm-blooded interior space of in-

Paolo Virno, a member of *Metropoli*, was arrested in June, 1979.

The practices and the languages adopted by the Movement seem to suggest an alternate type of socialization, different than that based on the exchange of equivalent values. The "technical-scientific intellect", "off-the-books" labor, the feminist movement, young proletarians, etc. may be seen as parts—not reducible to any whole—of a composite praxis in which production and emancipation are intertwined. This praxis cannot be understood through an identity principle founded on categories of commodity. As far as social change is concerned, what counts more and more is not the commonly accepted definition of labor force, but rather all the aspects of the activity of these individuals who find themselves in opposition to that definition. What counts is the qualitative consistency, profoundly varied, of their "doing". To understand this proliferation of the concrete and the different within socialized labor requires a constellation of materialistic concepts which are totally detached from that universality characteristic of the "general equivalent" and which are not used as the bases or synthesizing elements for the actual processes of liberation. Thus it is the empirical-perceptible determinateness of human labor, the specific qualitative richness of labor's use value, which constitutes an autonomous and powerful means for understanding the totality of the production process. The directly social dimension of labor—within which dimension there is no further distinction between "complex" and "simple" labor, though the concept of immediate production is

individuals seem worthless.

The point is this: if one cannot detect in the fabric of agitation the ready possibility for a socialization which is no longer regulated by the marketplace, but instead based directly on labor, taken as the possession of the power and the skill to produce, or labor "as subjectivity"—then it is inevitable that the relationship between labor and socialization should continue to be mediated by the distribution aspect. A "just" exchange thus represents a final, twisted illusion that the abstract form in which wealth is produced is being reconciled to the disparate natures of individuals, who aspire to a communication-circulation freed from domination relationships. So there is no reason to be astonished that this version of socialization does not contemplate the use of violence: given that such socialization comes into being already "separate"—with agitation and liberation campaigns constituting an autonomous universe—it does not even conceive a need to define—precisely by means of violence—the separation between antinomical elements present in production.

The ideology of liberation, frozen in the purity of those guarantees which have been given to workers, is not capable of envisaging the degree of liberty which can result from the use of violence as a function specific to the further socialization of labor.

Also entwined in the distribution perspective appear to be "theories of needs", variously construed within the movement. What is almost always ignored is the more or less complete lack of autonomy of the "system of needs", that is the dependence of the system on the historical form of labor. This oversight is found even in the most penetrating authors.

Ms. Heller, for example—and the example is significant because of the weight which her theses have carried with our comrades—has detected, in the various connotations with which Marx employs the term "need", the clear presence of a "judgemental" approach in economic critiques: according to Heller, actual "determinations of value" are at the bottom of the principal Marxian categories. "In his works," Heller writes, "the principal tendency is to consider concepts of need as extra-economic, historical-philosophical categories, that is, as anthropological categories of value, and as such, not susceptible to definition within the economic system." These needs, then, precisely because they burst out of and transcend the narrow boundaries of those concepts found in political economics, constitute the foundations necessary for a superior organization of production.

But this transcendental conception of needs, which became the true privileged seat of subjectivity regained, cannot help but pay the price of its ethical and anthropological origins. The system of basic needs, precisely because it is situated in a space structurally different than that occupied by the "real abstractions" of capitalist society, becomes rather ineffective as a means of critiquing from within the full weight of economic categories, and instead is limited to coexistence with these categories, bringing no substantial changes to them.

Heller, unlike many of her readers, carefully refrains from confining the new needs to some unspecified expansion of consumerism and instead strives to read them in relation to a reconsidered appreciation of the goal- and planning-oriented nature of labor. Nevertheless, she cannot help feeling that the "counter-economy", to which her writings implicitly refer, in no way undermines the universally prevailing system of wage-earning labor; rather, she limits herself to defining marginal spaces within which a renewed "system of ethical conduct" can be cultured. Ethical Marxism, even in the most up-to-date versions, cannot avoid papering over the relationship which exists between critiques of capitalist economic forms and the composition of subjectivity, preferring to consign the latter to a "theory of values". More generally, the pretense of deducing the transformed form of labor in a "society of confederated producers" through studying the articulation and the quality of social needs amounts to repeating the point of view found in the great bourgeois ideologies and applying it to the

NEEDS AND IDEOLOGY. THE HELLER CASE

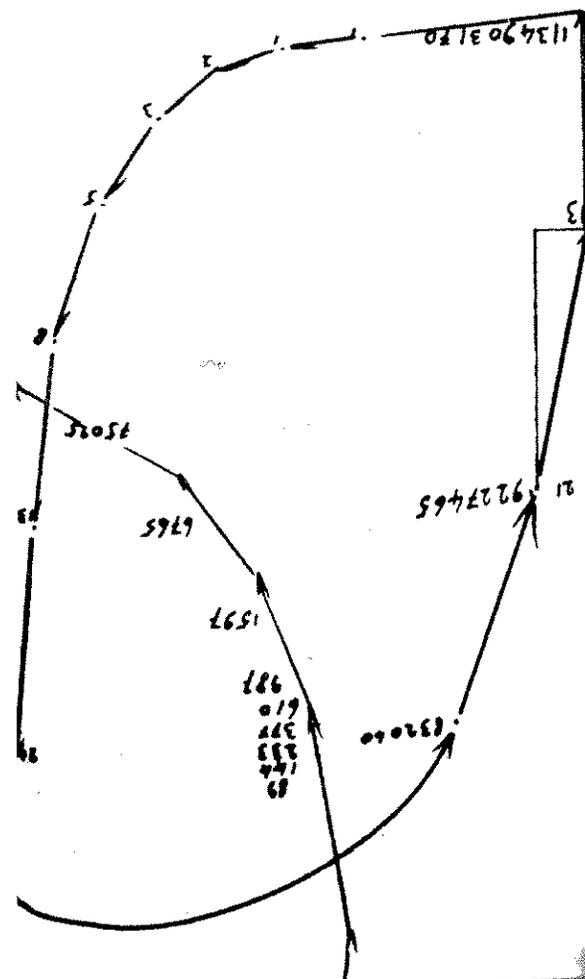
specific theme of the transition to communism. Quite early, Hegel and Smith pointed unhesitatingly to the infinite multiplication and specification of needs as the distinctive trait of post-feudal society. Thus they turned from the marketplace to labor: the omnipresent exchange of products is such that the individual no longer works for his own concrete need, but for the abstraction of a generalized need; consequently labor too becomes abstract and generalized. The quality of the need conditions the quality of the labor; the abstraction of need is precursor to the abstraction of labor; the modern form taken by the distribution of wealth determines, for Hegel and Smith, the form of the production of wealth.

From the beginning, the anthropology of need has celebrated its rites in the domain of distribution: this fate has befallen Heller as well, for she limits herself to creating a mirror image of the classical figure of "homo oeconomicus", replacing this character with the equally anthropological model of an individual rich in radical needs.

Marx, in fixing the relationship between needs and labor, reverses the order of the sequence and locates the genesis of needs within the structure of abstract labor: "Inasmuch as labor is labor to earn wages and its immediate goal is money, a general wealth is set as its object and aim ... Money as goal here becomes the means for the general laboriousness. People produce general wealth so that they can gain possessions of its token." If the immediate goal of abstract labor is not this or that particular product but rather "the general form of wealth" (money), then it is clear that social needs no longer represent either the point of departure or the point of arrival for the process of production; instead they constitute a "middle term" in the route traveled by "money as capital". Needs themselves are seen as needs for a general equivalent. And, given that this general equivalent is the specific product of paid labor, the "system of needs" necessarily tends to reproduce that particular link between individuals and general wealth which is established precisely by the capitalist form of labor. Therefore: *the needs of paid labor consist in the reproduction of paid labor.*

When the accent is placed emphatically on the antagonistic immediacy of needs, one loses sight precisely of that "expanded reproduction" of the prevailing social relationships, of the labor force taken as goods, which is implicit in the "system of needs" that has evolved from the abstraction of value. Thus one neglects the "coercion to repeat" which is inherent in the general equivalent. Then the smug and unanalytical adoption of one's own existential radicalness—silent or vociferous, it hardly matters—as a pole of inevitable conflict comes near to being a labor of Sisyphus, a flight which "always amounts to a forced repetition of the

LABOR AND NEEDS: TOWARD A CRITIQUE OF THE MOVE-MENT



state from which one fled."

In the same way, as far as collective processes are concerned, the "Americanization" of the behavior of non-working class labor and the extremist struggles opposing industrial reform and defending the old class organization can be seen as two from among the many possible examples of a "radical needing" in which is inscribed *a priori* the reproduction of domination. Other examples: the forms of agitation by which needs are manifested come under discussion as a matter of course. Is it necessary to repeat that Carniti's hard-nosed brand of labor unionism is a hand-me-down from the ruling class? And that even the most extreme forms of agitation cannot redeem a content that is subaltern? That one can prepare oneself for full employment, while still being less advanced than the young proletarian who has many jobs, all precarious, all interchangeable, and who wants nothing to do with a permanent position?

To represent the collection of needs which the movement exhibits as a pluralistic, evenly-weighted set of elements without hierarchy is an illusion that has no sense: there is always hierarchy, and one must find what the principle is that regulates and classifies. To this end, Marxian arguments show clearly the necessity of discussing the theme of needs in terms of the all-important form which labor activity assumes. This necessity prevails whether the perpetuation of capitalistic relationships of production or the exact opposite is being considered. Either one or the other: either needs are ordered by money and abstract labor, or they are filtered and arranged in a hierarchy in accordance with all the ramifications of the social aspect of the labor process, which is no longer measurable in terms of the law of value. Obviously, to take the productivity of the "social individual" as a critical parameter for needs does not mean resorting to any very idealistic "regulatory idea"; on the contrary, what organizes the chain of needs here, elevating some and pushing others into the margin, is not the future of the utopian society, but the present reality of a *divided production* in which there exists, on the material level, a different and highly efficacious coalition of the forces of production, amounting to a new principle of synthesis. *In short: from the reality of a broadened concept of labor stems a hierarchy of needs oriented toward emancipation, a hierarchy which is antithetical to the one mandated by the general equivalent.*

E SOCIAL WORK-DAY, THE INDIVIDUAL, THE DY.

In the composite structure of the social work-day, in its inhomogeneous and fragmented articulation, time does not pass evenly. Time is not always the empty and abstract index for assigning value, a unit of measure in itself. The simultaneous presence—and the rather haphazard combination—of work as "coordination" and "supervision", together with embryonic elements of counter-economy, submission to the machine or nomadism among many and various precarious activities, establishes a pluralistic perception of time, a diversified perception deeply marked by the "space" of the experience. Unremunerated social cooperation, or what little of it is found today—and that seeming something of a fetish—as a potent aspect of human labor, restores to production time body and quality, feeling and relationships, the pleasure of understanding and the desire to organize with the greatest possible tactical intelligence one's own hatred. Within this "diachronic zone" of the work-day is also situated the problem of hedonism, of realized happiness, of the restored power of the category of the individual, beyond any ideological parody of the self.

In the experience of production—as rich as it is conflict-ridden—of a young worker or a young engineer, in that externalness of the particular assigned task, in that internalness where the consciousness of cooperation lies, the potential "full significance" of the individual no longer appears as an effect of the poverty of social relationships—as in precapitalistic economic organizations—but rather the result of the acknowledged universality of these relationships. Hatred and scorn at "working under the boss" express the potential for an immediate correspondence between the production activity of the individual and that of the species; thus the possibility for an automatized appropriation in the external realm and a full appreciation of "internal nature", that is, precisely of the in-

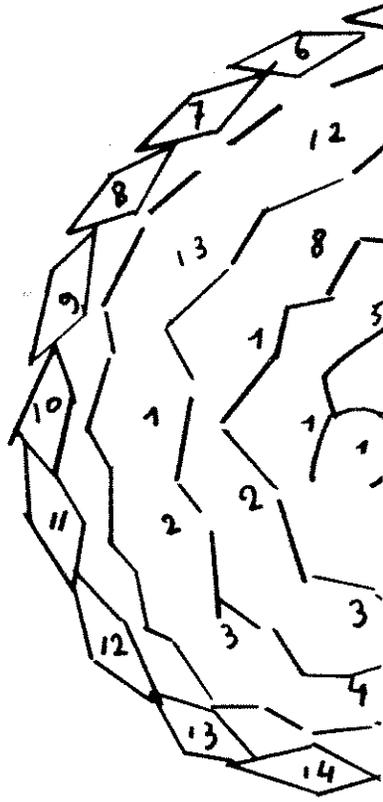
dividual and his or her body. If capitalistic society conceals the connection between labor and nature ("The bourgeoisie has good reason to attribute a super-natural creative force to labor", as Marx said)—subsuming the connection beneath the rubric of productive labor, in which productivity is something purely social—on the other hand the connection is rehabilitated in "qualitative" time, which infiltrates the work-day, pointing to the contradictions in it.

The natural corporeal reality of individual, his or her socially enriched senses, instead of constituting the tedious and superfluous empirical zone in which value is produced, suggest a different criterion of productivity, no longer based on the blind necessity of self-preservation or "time-saving", but rather on the variegated time of conscious planning activities.

Which, after all, is what Marx alluded to when he spoke of the composer of music and the work of art as anticipations in terms of form of production without domination.

Translated by Jared Becker

#1/1-2 "Fibonacci 1202" Mario Merz, 1970. Sperone editore, Turin



Hegel and the Wobblies

Eric Alliez

blies in the '20's amount to thousands upon thousands of mobile workers who move from one part of the continent to the other. An experience which totally escapes the traditional ideological and organizational schemes of the Marxists, Leninists, Linkskommunisten, and in-factory unions. The Hegelian categories of dialectics cannot deal with the reality of a social organization of labor, the disappearance of the laboring individual, nor the practices of a movement which refuses to be reduced to the territorialization of a party or program. It is true that the American rebellions have never produced a form of consciousness of social reality as all-encompassing as the Hegelian-Marxist dialectics, nor a form of political planning as all-encompassing as the insurrection to conquer Power. A weakness of the American movement, as is explained by traditional Marxism, which in fact disregards the history of this unorthodox movement; or is it rather that a real society in movement cannot be reduced to the formal schemes of an all-encompassing design?

It is not by chance if today we pose this question. The end of the factory as a central place of exploitation; breaking up of leisure time, reassembled only in the abstract continuum of Value: in Italy the CENSIS' discovers that the economically sound sectors are those where the irregulars and the marginals are employed. The factory becomes a sort of social welfare for unproductive workers. It is evident that the form of organization of America's working class can only function as a driving belt between the State and ranks of unproductive workers who are always aided, insured, and become, paradoxically, parasites. The parasites, such as extremists, drug addicts, marginals, and degenerates are the motor of a productive up-swing. We declare this without the haughty attitude of an employer, but recognize it simply as a political defeat. We were not able to organize the movement of the non-guaranteed workers into a movement of freedom, that is, making intelligence autonomous as a productive force. We were not able to make an autonomous force of the mobility of labor and, especially, of intelligence, the inventive power of the young proletariat and of the educated young, who are the carriers of technical-scientific know-how. Here lies the problem, and we should begin anew.

The experience of the Italian Movement has thrown a new light on one of the most original forms of organization developed within the American proletarian movement at the beginning of this century. The Wobblies (International Workers of the World) were mobile militants who tried to organize immigrant workers throughout the country.

The State has been reduced to a senseless machine that nevertheless works; a center-less machine that absorbs value-time and speaks the abstract language of mobility of labor, of work spread through space and through daily life. The marginals are at the center: at the center of the assigning of value, at the center of socialized production. The Wobbly figure re-emerges in the form of the fragmented worker. An experience long-removed from institutionalized worker movements appears to us as the present-day form of organization. The hobo. Hegel, at one point, can no longer explain or understand the fact that the lack of territoriality (of Power and of the subordinate class) is not equivalent to the territoriality of the individual, the State, Politics, and the Political Party. At that point, perhaps, one may begin to grasp what route freedom and autonomy take within the urban society.

The process of assigning value comes out of the factory, expands everywhere: in the city, in urban space, in the home, and in the existence of millions of workers and non-working workers such as the unemployed, marginals, drug-addicts, in the proliferation of part-time and "off-the-books" work, and in the infinite forms by which time assigns value. What is the proletarian individual like? Labor force mobility, the lack of proletarian territoriality, the historical experience of the Wob-

Translated by William Pagnotta

1. CENSIS: Center for Socio-economic Studies (Rome).

Let's do Justice to our Comrade P.38

the other.

We should clarify one point: while, in semiautomatic pistols, the ejection of the shell occurs at the moment one fires, in revolvers, the shell remains in the cylinder.

This is the reason that the discovery of shells from 38-special cartridges fired by assassin extremists, as we have often the opportunity to read about, seems to us completely impossible.

It must be added that if revolvers that can be loaded with 38-special cartridges are on sale in gun stores, and thus offered for the use of the Movement, as in Rome or Bologna, the same is not true of pistols like the Walther P. 38, which is loaded only with 7.65 and 9 caliber automatic cartridges, since the sale of these weapons is prohibited in Italy; they are only found on the international markets. It is enough to say that pistols are certainly unobtainable for the modern proletariat bands, which, unfortunately, have not yet achieved enough mobility to permit them to cross the borders and roam through the capitals of Europe.

If, in autonomous demonstrations, the "comrade P.38" is mentioned, it is certainly not because we are hiding P.38's under our coats; but we must observe that there is a symbolic aspect to this, the admission that today it is necessary and just to carry arms. What is obvious is that those who consider arming themselves in view of relatively close prospects do not envision equipping themselves with a 6.35 Bernardelli.

During the last war, the P.38 was the best perfected and most modern handgun (the introduction of the double-action mechanism was significant in this regard). That's where it gets its prestige. It performed satisfactorily on all fronts and the Afrika Korps was the only one to complain of some jamming because of the sand; with this in mind, they slightly increased the space between the stock, the hammer, and the barrel. The safety mechanism proved exceptionally solid.

The German Army adopted the P.38, perfected Waffenfabrik Carl Walther, as the standard issue pistol beginning in 1938 (whence the pistol's name, 1938 = P.38). They decided to use the Walther at the same time as the P.08 (better known as the Luger), then to replace the Luger with the P.38, because the latter was a weapon better adapted to mass production and less likely to break down in combat.

The manufacture of the P.38 began again after the war, and today this weapon still represents the best mechanical system among double-action pistols, with a cylinder which can even take high-power cartridges.

Thanks to the double-action firing mechanism, when the lock is deactivated, the gun is cocked while it is still in a rest position; which enables the cartridge to be brought into the barrel with precision as soon as the hammer is pulled back; the first shot can thus be fired with the greatest speed, exactly as in a revolver. For further explanations, we advise journalists and all interested parties to address themselves to the Chief of Security Services¹ Emilio Santillo, who has a reputation as an expert in the field and as an infallible marksman: beyond clarification of a general nature, he can explain the operation of the Colt Python 357 caliber Magnum, which he always carries on him.

Translated by Richard Gardner

1. The SDS, ex-reserve affairs, ex-anti-terrorism, is a kind of Italian political anti-gang brigade; a socialist Italian deputy accused it, in August 1977, of having participated in the "strategy of tension": assassination attempts, attempted government overthrows.

In April of 1977, a new element surfaced onto the political scene: comrade P.38. It appeared at the time of the violent clashes with the police in Bologna and Rome. Its introduction was intended to challenge the clandestine nature of the Red Brigade's operations and encourage illegal, but collective, forms of action.

There was a great need for this, considering the confusion reigning among the zealous directors of the disinformation newspapers. Lately, on several occasions, we have heard talk of a phantom "38 special". Well, this weapon no longer exists. It is the product of the perverse imagination of journalists who confuse the trademark of a particular weapon (the Walther 38, the number 38 referring to the year of manufacture) with the 38 special, which is not a particular weapon or model, but a caliber, and, moreover, not a caliber used in semiautomatic pistols (like the Walther), but in revolvers.

Let us clarify the difference between revolvers, semiautomatic pistols, and automatic weapons:

The revolver is comprised of a fixed barrel, mounted on a mechanism, and a revolving cylinder which has different breeches for the cartridges.

Automatic weapons (machine guns) are those whose firing, when one keeps one's finger pressed on the lock, is only interrupted when there are no more cartridges.

For semi-automatic weapons, the cartridges, in an automatic loader, fire one after

Nonviolence in Bologna

Judith Malina

The police received all the information along with the *compagni* — that is, it was always *public* information — if anything was inciting, it was the actions of the police which were being reported; of course, there's a deeper problem, of which we're all a part — and there's no sense for the people in jail to be the scapegoats for our collective failure to provide peaceful revolutionary tactics that work. In a corner under the *portici* at the doorway of the Municipal Building, they are lying on the sidewalk on blankets and sleeping bags. Posters around them, their chains visible around their ankles. . . . We greet each other. I promise we'll return. But for now, we must go with the Functionaries and the Officials, the Police, the Church.

The offices of the *Comune* are in a palazzo of sumptuous murals, works of art, vases, statuary, the great hall, with splendid walls, ceiling, marble floor has a stairway leading to it that is made so that the horses, too, can enter, for in the old days, even the horses were *Nobilii* and the pompous beasts entered the halls of their masters' houses. The *assessore* is friendly, bearded, young. . . . willing, but worried. We must go the *Questura*. . . .

Across from the *bello* palazzo is the white marble fascist-style building of the *Questura*. The captain receives us amidst his trophies. He's a sleek man. It's not for him to decide what can happen on the grounds of the property of the *Carabinieri*. . . . or the Church. . . . We must go and ask them. Julian says, "My Aunt Miriam would say, 'They're giving you the run-around.'"

Mario remains in the outer office — his political relationship — that is to say, the political relationship of the *Comune* with the police, is too delicate to disturb.

On the way to the *Carabinieri*'s offices we talk, he and I, of the practical aspects of the Historic Compromise. Such as we now confront. Mario explains how difficult it is — to keep the balance with a police force that's politically hostile. . . . "Until. . . for now. . ." The young people are too anxious to move too quickly. . . .

The *Carabinieri* are in a palazzo. The colonel in his army khaki officer's outfit, is not hiding behind any modern art. He's got the framed photo of the President of the Republic and the *capo* of the *Carabinieri*. . . . He knows we'll never get an ok from Rome as well as we do — and we don't want/need to stir up the problems that will ensue if our dossier is reexamined — our two expulsions from Italy, our many *denunce*. . . .

We go then with Mario to the *quartiere* San Ruffiello and walk around the *caserma*. We find a parking lot behind it, but choose rather a spot in front of some stores down the street. We settle for it, though the '*funzionario*', as he calls himself still has trepidations.

In the evening we rehearse in the writing salon of our hotel — a dark room with desks and an air shaft. There's a note from the *compagni* on the hunger strike delivered to the hotel to me and Julian.

"We are the comrades of Radio Alice and the Student Movement. We are on a hunger strike and are chained in Piazza Maggiore for the liberation of our comrades imprisoned for the March events. We would like to see you and speak with you. Come and see us tonight, or better we will come to your hotel. When? Where? Kisses. (The Chained)

The fasters are asleep. We walk among their sleeping bags to read the posters they have written:

3rd Day of Fasting.
Those in jail are on their 12th!

At noon in the Piazza Maggiore we meet with the hungerers. One of their placards reads,

JUNE 12, 1977
BOLOGNA

Now based in Rome, the "Living Theater", animated by Julian Beck and Judith Malina, has been touring Italy for the last few years. These are fragments from Malina's unpublished journal.

Early in the morning, we go to the offices of the Bologna Comune — to the cultural wing of the communist municipal government.

Mario, who guides us through the bureaucratic maze, comes to get us at our hotel. He tells us that the *Questura* is refusing permits for the sites for The House of War in front of the *Carabinieri*, and The House of Death in front of the church. He's an amiable man of about 45, handsome in that natty Italian manner, in formal suit and tie, and altogether in the old-fashioned style.

As we cross the *piazza* to the offices, we pass the corner under the *portici* where the hunger-strikers have chained themselves together — in support of those arrested at the closing of *Radio Alice* — where we had been made very welcome and promised return. The cause of the closure and arrests: they reported the recent street events, with minute to minute news reporting where and when the actions were taking place. Telephone calls received from the sites of police confrontations were transmitted directly onto the air. This made it possible for the demonstrators to be in close communications with each other, and for sympathizers to aid them, or to rally support. They are charged, however, with inciting to the actions.

JUNE 11, 1977
BOLOGNA

JUNE 13, 1977
BOLOGNA

Much ado this morning for the preparation of the play.

We enter the police car and drive the whole route, pointing out each spot where we'll perform. Only the Church presents problems. They want us away in a hidden parking space; we want the Church as a backdrop. We settle for the side entrance, where a working class high-rise with perfect balconies for a new audience adds to the utility.

Standing in their chains, they gather round us and tell us of the complex encounters they have had in their defiance of the police.

We go into a nervous rehearsal.

Maria Rosa and Billy fear that the police here may follow the recent awful precedent of attacking without warning and using tear gas at minimum, or worse, clubbing and breaking heads — or worst, at the extreme, using guns without warning. The dead in several cities attest to this custom. . .

The latest news arrives hour by hour: the strikers are moving to the *Due Torri* to avoid a conflict with the Church, which doesn't want them in the path of today's *Corpus Domini* procession. They don't want to rouse hostility of "the community" and they rather reluctantly make the concession. Julian's praise of their willingness to use such "strategy" relieves their sense of compromise.

It's strange that they haven't won the support of "the community," but as one looks at the vast Piazza Maggiore at night, and sees the hundreds (maybe 1500-2000 tonight!) or thousands of young people sitting on the steps, gathering round guitars, discussion groups, idlers, talkers — and all more or less Freaks. These aren't "The Community," in fact, what we mean by community is just that: All the people who aren't these people — who aren't students, politicals, freaks, flowerkids, idlers, tea heads, new worlders. . .

And the prejudice isn't, I think, against the *incatenati* and their cause, but against the whole spirit of the New World, which seems to endanger their dearest concepts of how and what we are and should be.

The latest news: the *incatenati* returned to the piazza, they were taken in by the police, who took away their chains. Tomorrow there will be a demonstration in Piazza Maggiore. The police have given permission for it to go on from six o'clock till nine o'clock. And they have decided definitely to clear the piazza at midnight.

The demonstration is, of course, at the same hour as our Public Acts. I suggest that at the end of the Love House the Time Shaman announce that it is now time to proceed to Piazza Maggiore to participate in the demonstration in solidarity with the people of Radio Alice who are in jail, and that we then proceed in procession, perhaps singing.

Cos'è Radio Alice?
Cos'è la libertà d'espressione?
Cos'è la prigione?
Cos'è la libertà?

This brings up a terrific wave of fear. . . We'll be shot in the streets, without even being told to stop. . . they fear. . . Leroy and Annie and I say we won't be in the piazza at midnight under threat of a police attack. . .

In Memory of Francesco LoRusso. . .

Late at night we hear: the police agree to allow the demonstration to continue till just before midnight — then they may take action. The Living Theatre, however, is not to perform in the piazza — if we attempt to, they will make arrests. I'm personally prepared to do the House of the State with new blood lines for some of us.

We return to the hotel. When we emerge from the car on Piazza Franklin Roosevelt, where we normally park, we see an armed force of extraordinary proportions. The men are not only armed, but holding machine guns and rifles alert, carrying helmets and gas masks (?) and seeming to be mustered for action. I think there are 5000 men; Annie guesses 10,000 — in any case it's formidable. Isha whispers, "I want to go home," and clings to me. The way home is through the army. We walk in a group, talking together, as though we don't see them.

It's eleven thirty as we enter the piazza walking between lines of heavily armed men into a scene of innocent pleasures. There are only a few police scattered in the piazza, only as many as one would see on a normal night in summer.

The rest of the scene is almost Paradisiacal. There are people singing, talking, dancing, playing ball. . . A large white ball like a peace dove keeps flitting in a huge arc over the piazza. The women tend again towards soft summer clothes, and Indian cloths, linens, flowered skirts brighten the scene. We are stepping out of jeans. . . yet I notice sadly how many women are cutting off their lovely hair — yes, it's just and right that I notice it here, in the little circle of light surrounded by an armed force that could, that might, that stands ready to destroy their felicity at any moment.

Sing, dance and think of summer dresses: this is not the death dance of Antigone's city, this is the dance of *viva*. . . yes. We go up on the platform — Julian, Pierre, Annie, Tom and I. . .

I look out across the piazza — from where we are it seems full, even to the portals of the Cathedral. The church is half-renewed, and the cleaned marble gleams pinkish white like infant's skin, and the dark part seems like an evil mirror of its sinister. . . This polarity is especially keen here, because of this confrontation, and I can't imagine that the hearts of at least a few of the grim-faced soldiers weren't moved by the image of good and evil that the contrast between the two groups spelled out.



I'll remember the Piazza Maggiore in this particular light.

Looking into the faces of thousands of people who wanted to defy evil without violence... Julian praises them and tells them their theatre is better than ours — and yet they express disappointment that we're not going to perform — Pierre spoke his dramatic designation

... this piazza as the House of Violence
this piazza as the House of Hope
this is the House of Our Brothers the police...
this is the House of Our Brothers in carcere...

I didn't get to hear the rest because a young woman said to me, ingenuously horrified by Pierre's implications: "But they aren't our brothers when they shoot at us..." How could I say it succinctly? How can I answer her surely enough and quickly enough, the loudspeakers blaring, standing on the platform in the light. Everyone hearing the Martial Music.

The Martial Music — Silently Waiting. Drowning out all our sound. Annie takes the microphone and says some fiery words... There's a great *orologio* that's lit till midnight in decorative floodlights. Everyone's eyes travel up to it once in a while.

When our speeches are over, it's a quarter to 12. I promised Isha, when she was full of fears, seeing the fire-ready cops and hearing paranoid stories, that I'd return at 5 or 10 to midnight... So I begin to make my way toward the *orologio* where the steet to our hotel is connected to the piazza by a sort of *piazzetta* where the Carabinieri are mustered. Here we spend a few minutes — Julian says: They say they are all leaving at midnight, but I think everyone wants to stay around as long as possible.

A woman from the *Partito Radicale* is talking about nonviolence. I'm glad to hear it proclaimed so loudly. "*Stanno faremo Cenerentola!*" (Tonight we'll play Cinderella) cry the *ex-incatenati*... We sit on a little stoop behind the police.

At 5 to 12 the police leave the *piazzetta*, except for one who stays to guard some official's car... The others retreat away from the piazza.

I return to the hotel. We stand in the window and hear at midnight: a countdown, and at zero — no police, no attack. A shout, as of victory, went up among those who remained in the piazza.

But the hunger strike and the chaining action, that's all over — they've wiped out the street theatre, and the people of Radio Alice are still in jails — in different jails, in fact, to separate one from the other.

Show enough guns and you won't need to fire a shot... How many burned for that false pretext? I'm sorry we didn't perform.

No matter, it's all part of a somewhat laggard but unflinching cultural revolution. In the evening we hie us to Radio Alice. It looks quite the same as when we went there last, despite the dramatic events that have taken place there since.

The published tapes that record the entry of the armed police into the station while the broadcast continues live on the air, "They are pointing machine guns at us... Our hands are in the air; they are..." make drama of the little rooms.

Here are the *ex-incatenati* in their own environment. The only technician left among them fled Bologna yesterday, in fear of the police terror, and none of those present are familiar enough with the technology to run the sound efficiently, but they bravely muddle through.

The talk is long and moving. Moving because we are talking with people whose

peaceful attitudes and mentality is evident in all they say — more than that, even in how they move, their expressions, their language, their Reichian postures — non-aggressive people — but they are at the end of their tether... The murder of Francesco LoRusso, the incarceration of their fellow workers, the police fears that are tangible in the air, visible in the streets, evident in the bittering of the sweet faces...

All that we say — and we say all that we know — seems abstract to them in their concrete situation.

Long after we are off the air — after more than an hour of talk — we go on, the same as when it was public — searching for the possibility that we all want, but that they can no longer believe in.

It was a good show in the Palazzo dello Sport. The police were obviously pretty uptight at the outset — frisking everyone that came in and searching all handbags — thus creating the atmosphere of fear and the insecurity/distrust... terror that later led to the fracas... Even the *Assessore alla Cultura* was frisked, feeling rather strange that this should happen to him at a cultural event that he was sponsoring, but... I sat, as usual, in the circle, facing the door and the agitation of the uniformed police was almost distracting.

Great consternation in the Torture scene among them...

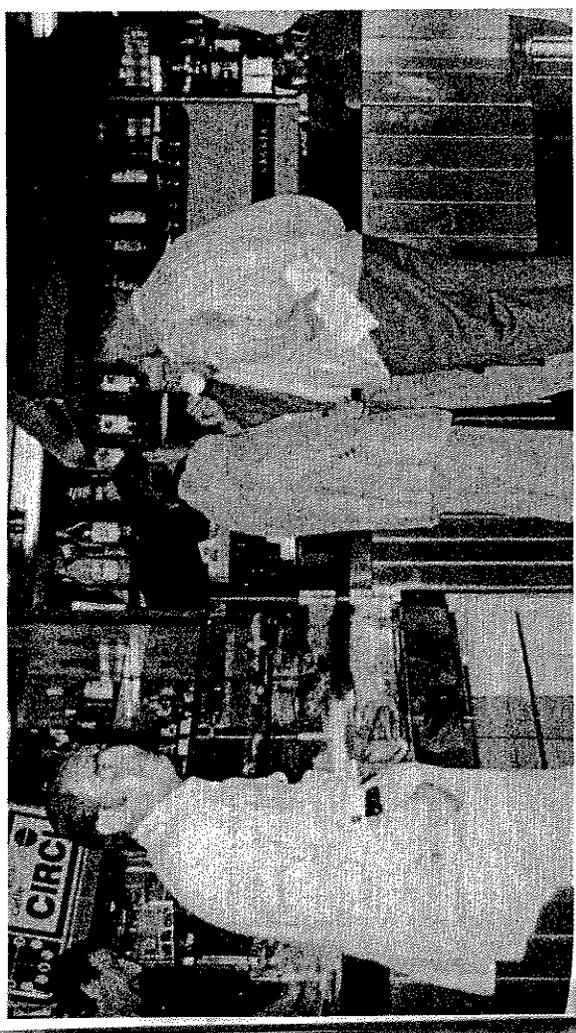
But all went well and I was in a good talk with two people interested in studying autogestion within a state-controlled school... I noticed Chris Creatore sitting at the exit/entrance rapping with soldiers and the police... I hear Sibilla suddenly shrieking... we look up — she's screaming with Malcolm in her arms — a circle of police around Chris; they are lifting him rather brutally and carrying him off...

I see Isha run towards them — soon all of us come running...

At first, we only demand to know what's happening, but get no civil answer. A plainclothes *capo* is directing the activity of the police, who respond like marionettes. A general shouting and confusion of protest results, and the more we are noisy, the more aggressively the police handle Chris...

We learn later that the origin of the difficulty was a demand by the police that Chris identify himself and he didn't do that, perhaps in the mistaken belief that our identity is part of our right of privacy in the face of the police...

**JUNE 15, 1977
BOLOGNA**



**JUNE 14, 1977
BOLOGNA**

Alas and alack! Our identity belongs to them and we must give it them when they demand it.

They carry him a-ways and then put him down. He squirms under the heavy grasp, and the strength of his Tai-Chi-trained body, and his youthful vigor that defies curtailment makes it very hard for them to carry him.

And he shouts. And I shout and Julian shouts.

The capo orders him picked up again. We proceed another few feet from the stadium into the hallway that encircles it. Julian loudly demands from the capo what has happened — the capo says he wouldn't give his name and adds aggressively, "And what's your name?" And Julian shouts back, "My name is Julian Beck, and I am asking you what happened here." The capo orders the men to take Chris up again. We go down the hall; I'm shouting little moral lectures about the nature of violence that nobody wants to hear. . .

Isha comes shrieking along the hallway to Julian, into his arms — then out again, and to me, crying I want to go home. . .

Out in the rain, our bare feet in the puddles, I stand there with the LOVE and ANARCHISM texts in my hands. . . Trying to take Isha to the dressing room, running back into the fray after her.

They brusquely throw Chris into a police car. . .

Tom tries to get in to him (why do we do such things?) and then madly throws himself on top of the car — twice, he does this. . . And I shout at the police for being a bad example for Isha who screams when a second contingent arrives with shields and helmets and cocks their rifles, "They're putting bullets in their guns!" The cops drive away with Chris. All the police leave. We're standing there to our ankles in rainwater on a dark street.

Rehash. Blame. Plans. Self-reproach. Speculations. Not yet analysis. Chris will have to stay in overnight for an "interrogatorio" in the morning. . .

Julian and I feel we should have handled it better. It could have gone down calmer. I think it was only because we were on the high wave of the performance, our theatrical energy still potent.

Chris can't be "interrogated" — heard — till tomorrow. We try, but it's "No" all the way.

We perform without Chris. Leroy's the Victim. There are no police visible at the Sports Palace at all.

I had asked the Mayor if it were in their power to stop the police from frisking everyone as they came in, a practice we had never encountered anywhere and which set up an atmosphere of terror and bellicosity. But not even one cop tonight. . . Plainclothesmen everywhere.

Radio Alice opens the play, with a flute solo, entering the opening meditation, followed by a letter from Alice to the Living, which is a love letter. Read aloud in the concentration of the opening meditation it's very moving and sets a sad, sweet ambience for the performance which goes well.

Chris is still inside. We hear he's been beaten up.

We have one of those intense company talks, the kind that almost always follows group action in which there are arrests. Questions: Were our actions nonviolent? What is, in practice, nonviolent resistance?

On the street we are stopped several times and asked about Chris. Late in the day we hear that he was, in fact, pretty badly beaten. After the arrest, he was taken to the hospital — stitches in his head — the police say that he beat his own head against the wall! And the *Resto del Carlino* prints this! *L'Unita* assumes that he was violent. *Manifesto* and *Lotta Continua* support us. . .

In the afternoon we go to the Quartiere Mazzini, where we meet with a group for an "animation;" even as we try to set dates, the man from the Party tries to put up obstacles that are irritatingly stupid — and we're frustrated by his flak — but Julian says everyone saw this dumb tactic (I'm not sure).

A meeting on the piazza — a woman speaking ardently, but blurred by a fierce sound system. It's a Partito Radicale meeting about abortion, and it has called out truckloads of the different armed forces who are parked at each entrance to the piazza — the army, the Carabinieri, the Vigili Urbani, the Questura. . .

We sip our *caffè freddo* in the sun, calmly surrounded by this armed might, hearing the voice of a woman, telling passersby the news of our jailed *compagno*.

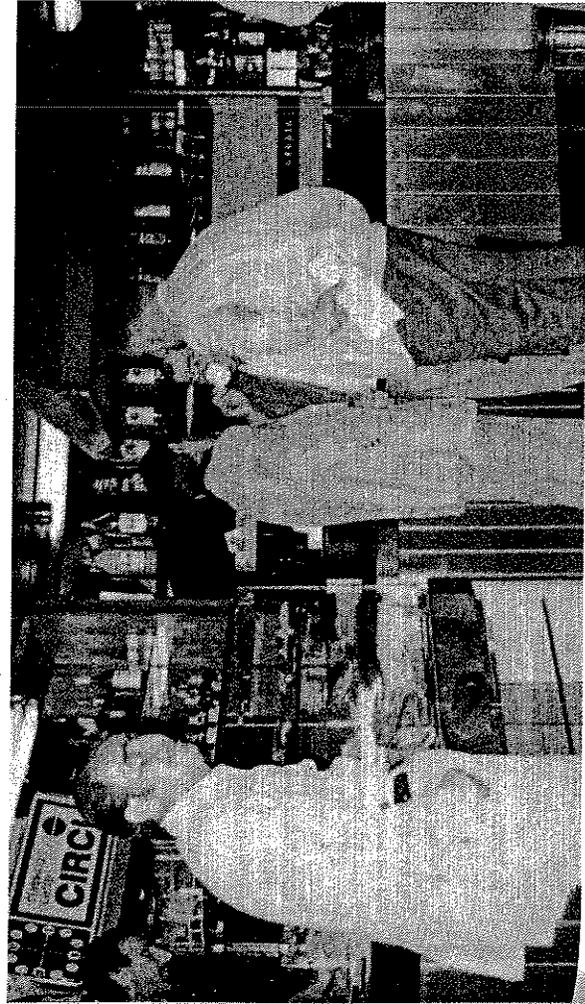
JUNE 20, 1979
BOLOGNA

Much consternation in the company that Chris is not released this morning, and they're saying tomorrow, maybe — maybe a few days — Ugh!

Everyone suggests different tactics. Fears of a bust if we act dramatically. Fears of Expulsion if there's a bust. There'll be a meeting about it tonight, after the Public Acts.

A good performance in sunshine in the Mazzini *quartiere*. Pierre makes a fantastic Blood Speech about Kim Sek Jong — orphaned by the American Army, adopted by Americans who re-named him Chris Creatore, imprisoned by the Bolognese police. . .

III/1-3 Photo: Matthew Geller, 1979



JUNE 16, 1977
BOLOGNA

JUNE 17, 1979
BOLOGNA

Radio Alice— Free Radio Collective A/Traverso

THE VOICE
OF THOSE
PUSHED ASIDE

All the "unstated" is emerging: from the *Chants de Maitodor* to the struggles for reducing the work-day. It speaks in the Paris Commune and in Artaud's poetry, it speaks in Surrealism and in the French May, in the Italian Autumn and in immediate liberation; it speaks across the separate orders of the language of rebellion. Desire is given a voice, and for them, it is obscene.

Alice looks around, plays, jumps, wastes time in the midst of papers illuminated by the sun, runs ahead, settles down elsewhere.

And yet everything functions in the order of discourse.

Discourse connects, explains, allows no interruptions, organizes, participates, reprimands. . . .

Like an invitation to talk with you about your work where they don't give you anything to eat.

Silence.

The subject has changed.

Pant, hiss, don't think you're right.

The silence, the uncanny, the "unstated," that which remains to be said, frightens.

In the program, so many dense headings, as dense as in a newspaper. . . . A half-hour with your Carlo. . . . Cheek to cheek with folks. . . . All that Jazz. . . 1, 2, 3 o'clock bulletin.

Alice hisses, yells, contemplates, interrupts herself, pulls.

Go tell him that it's spring.

We have received a telephone call from the Technological Institute: "We have occupied the president's office and we are calling from his phone, listen how he yells. . . . He wanted to impose upon us a vote by a show of hands and then he'd shove it up our ass."

It's better that way.

The discourse of order's desire for power

or the power of desire against the order of discourse.

Radio for the participants

or radio for the uncanny?

In the first case the language is univocal: the announcer's, who announces that the event has happened. They talk about something which means something else and can therefore never be captured because it is over.

A mirror.

In this sense, attempts at imitation are pathetically ridiculous: dialects and accents are not tolerated. In the second case something continues to flee from language. This is manifest in outbursts of laughter, words in suspension, the word which cannot be found and which refuses to change into another one, stammering, silence.

Well, "let's talk about the uncanny."

After the events of March 1977, *Radio Alice* became the symbol of the free radios. It was emitted from Bologna, one of the strongholds of the ICP and the explicit showcase for the Historical Compromise.

When the accusation of obscenity was flung at us, we were a little disconcerted. We had thought about many possible accusations: pirate station, underminers, communists, subversives, but we did not anticipate this one. But that's natural and proper. Language, when it is freed from the sublimations which reduce it to the code and makes desire and the body speak, is obscene (literally: obscene).

The body, sexuality, the desire to sleep in the morning, the liberation from labor, the possibility to be overwhelmed, to make oneself unproductive and open to tacit, uncoded communication: all this has for centuries been hidden, submerged, denied, unstated. *Vade Retro, Satanas.*

The blackmail of poverty, the discipline of labor, hierarchical order, sacrifice, fatherland, family, general interests, socialist blackmail, participation: all that stifled the voice of the body. All our time, forever and always, devoted to labor. Eight hours of work, two hours of travel, and, afterward, rest, television, and dinner with the family.

Everything which is not confined within the limits of that order is obscene. Outside it smells like shit.

One cannot pass from one discourse to another (from inside Italian Radio to outside Italian Radio).

The subject changes? The new subject is collective and does not speak.

Or speaks when it wants to.

Silence: a hole.

Let's allow holes to grow, let's not fear orifices, let's fall into them and pass on elsewhere.

Wonderland.

Another direct phone call:

"We are workers on strike, we want you to play some music and we want to talk to you about the 35 hour week, it's time they talked about that in contracts."

Another direct phone call:

"Dirty communists, we're going to make you pay dearly for this radio station, we know who you are."

Another direct one:

"We are from the anti-fascist committee of the Rizzoli Hospital, don't worry about anything, and call us if something happens, we are here night and day."

Break the cycle of the valorization of capital in the process of circulation of the sign-value (no more appropriation of merchandise to interrupt the A-M-A' cycle, but a savage strike in the circulation of the single sign-value A-A').

Interrupt the language of machines, of the work-ethic, of productivity.

"An invitation not to get up this morning, to stay in bed with someone, to make musical instruments and war devices for yourself."

Gray are the coats of the cops who have imprisoned comrade Bifo, gray are their instruments of death. Gray is the prison where he has been locked up, gray are the bedroom communities, gray are the streets of the business district. Obtuse is the constable who holds in his hand the hoods of his colleagues who rummage through the comrade's effects, obtuse are the police who for three months recorded the phone calls (what are we having for dinner today? let's get together on this), obtuse is television. Dangerous are the organs of repression, dangerous because of the latest submachine gun model, dangerous is the judge who arrests first then looks for proof. Dangerous are the roads and squares infested with the angels of death of a system always more minoritarian, dangerous are the factories and the shipyards, dangerous to decide whether or not to let a child see the light of day.

Gray, obtuse, dangerous, they want to impose their scale on the world: gray, obtuse, dangerous.

The totalitarian society of capital lives on the monotonous repetition of the existent. It serves the owners, the cops, the judges. None of them are indispensable to the structure they serve.

They make a life of shit the only model of life possible.

But communism is young and beautiful.

COMMUNIQUE No. 2 — from the San Giovanni in Monte Prison, 3/20/76. They ar-

rested me on the fifteenth, submachine guns in hand, in the house where I was sleeping with my comrades. First they accused me of belonging to the Red Brigades. In the space of two days this accusation became so ridiculous that they had to invent another one. So they accused me of being the ideological organizer of an incredible series of criminal plots committed in Bologna in the last few months.

Not the slightest bit of proof of these subversive activities that were supposed to have been mine exists. They are trying to give a recognizable appearance to the incomprehensible (for Power) course of liberation located in the space of separi>Action, of ignori>Action which constructs liberating spaces and moments of collective transformation of existence.

But then let them say it clearly:

The practice of happiness is subversive when it becomes collective.

Our will for happiness and liberation is their terror, and they react by terrorizing us with prison, when the repression of work, of the patriarchal family, and of sexism is not enough.

But then let them say it clearly:

To conspire means to breathe together.

And that is what we are accused of, they want to prevent us from breathing because we have refused to breathe in isolation, in their asphyxiating places of work, in their individuating familial relationships, in their atomizing houses.

There is a crime I confess I have committed:

It is the attack against the separation of life and desire, against sexism in inter-individual relationships, against the reduction of life to the payment of a salary.

But then let them say it clearly:

It is dada that terrorizes the gray, the obtuse, the dangerous.

Guardians of order and of the exploitation of poverty — for them, the transversal writing which runs through the separate orders and reunites isolated behaviors is not just obscene, any more, it is a crime.



**THE UNCANNY IS
WHAT MAKES ME
CRAZY**

What makes me crazy is the uncanny. Bifo, Fontana, and Marchi are in prison.² Bifo, Fontana, and Marchi are still in prison; Bifo, Fontana, and Marchi are always in prison. There isn't a single comrade who does not ask me, "And what do we do now?" Silence. And they take advantage of our silence. A month has already passed. But it was like a month in the mind of someone who isn't thinking: an instant. A month has already passed since the arrest of Bifo and we have not gotten him out of there. There is no proof, it's all a plot, we know it. And now what do we do? And now what do we do? We must do something, I want to do something, it isn't true that we are powerless before the monsters, the angels of death, the gray, the obtuse, the dangerous, I cannot keep quiet much longer.

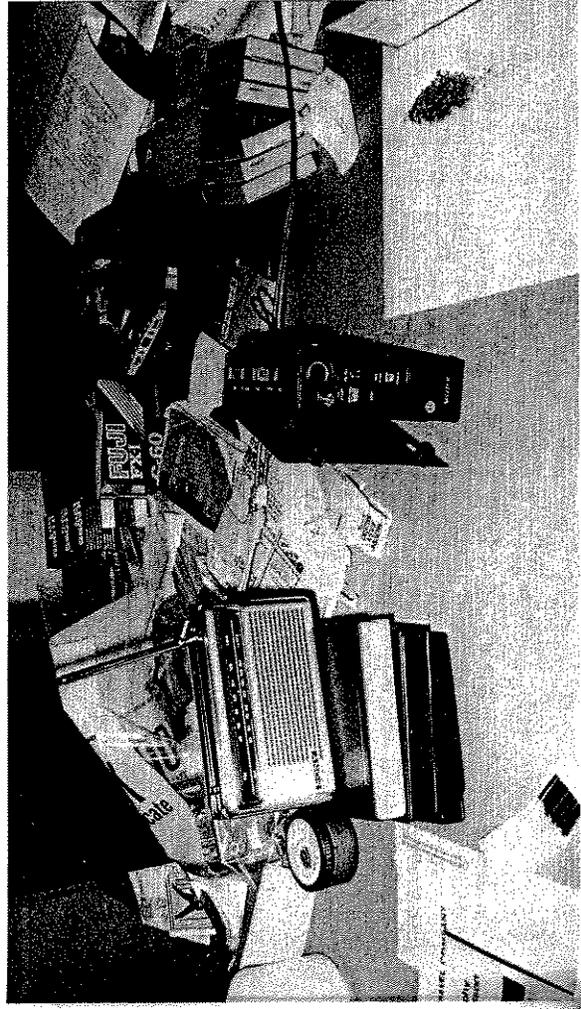
They have killed Mario Salvii in Rome. Silence.

Either the prison must explode or my head must explode. Radio Alice is quiet, the comrades are quiet, they invent words, the habitual masks. They don't speak and they don't even have any ideas. Lethargy. We are already creating the little ghetto: we are or we are not wild cats running through the town. Let's not give free rein to our jailers, strike the tiger's heart every day, in every way, according to our differences, against the sadness and the solitude of cells of confinement, 24 hours of air. This is an invitation to speak and to think, and invitation to be always present in the situations in the town the neighborhoods the schools the barracks the factories the roads, let's exhaust the enemy, let's wear out the giant monster by beating it all over its body. Let's not talk about desires anymore, let's desire: we are desiring machines, machines of war.

*Translated by Richard Gardner
& Sybil Walker*

1. San Vittore: a prison in Milan. San Giovanni in Monte: a prison in Bologna.
2. Fontana, Marchi: Bolognese students thrown in jail.
3. Mario Salvi was killed in the vicinity of the judiciary prison in Rome after a motorcyclist launched a Molotov cocktail against the prison.

iii/1 Felix Guattari with staff of Radio Alice Sept. 1977 Photo Marion Scemama
iii/2 Photo: D. Cortez



The City in the Female Gender

Lia Magale

Suspension of sexuality. Seduction in words, meaning, speech and then finally, why not, self-disclosure.

All this required the creation of another time. It has been said: "Woman's time is woman's time." Tautological, or maybe another dimension, where the production of meaning does not consist of the production of exchange value, but primarily of the experimentation on oneself.

READING ONESELF IN MUSIC

On the cover of an issue of *Differences*, the magazine of the Roman collectives, there is a score by Schönberg.

"The idea came up almost by chance. We were pondering over time, on the many types of woman's time: on work time and love time, on "free" time and "liberated" time, on research time. One of us put forward the idea of having an hourglass on the cover, an ancient instrument of timekeeping. Then musical time came to mind, perhaps just by playing on words. Someone else suggested putting the score of a Schönberg piece on the cover, a piece called "All in due time." Later, we were not able to trace that score. In the meantime we had started discussing Schönberg, whom some of us loved, some did not, and others knew little about. It seemed that the contrasting readings offered on Schönberg were relevant to us: the drama of dissolution of tonality and the ultimate failure in the attempt to construct a new musical norm, said somebody. Others did not agree. Atonality and 12-tone music, breakdown of the old order and the impossibility of a "spontaneous" and non-painful journey towards a new order of things..."

(The women of the Center Collective).

A time that invokes multiplicity...

BEING IN TOUCH WITH THE UNCONSCIOUS

"The subjugation of the feminine (in woman, naturally, but also in man) has produced a body that is no longer possessed by desires, but by the laws of marketing, by a desire that does not enter the body but is bartered in a game that reduces life to economic laws with death as its end. The destruction of the feminine is the thread that runs through and accompanies the destruction of humanity, its disintegration through inhuman role constraints, the colonization of existence, the parcelization of time and space, the upholding of the purported objectivity of consciousness over the flux of the unconscious. The progressive separation-estrangement of the masculine from the feminine, and of the feminine from itself results in the fictional appearance of woman on the scene; results in the disappearance of pleasure, which is seen as feminine and nonproductive, rather than economic and productive. Woman becomes the opposite of something else, the opposite of a man, therefore a being that cannot exist by herself. A move to help us go beyond the stage of not-being-fully-realized yet no-longer-lacking-something must be the rejection of the vision of ourselves as women-holes, women separated from our livable feminine, and therefore condemned to the nonlivable. This entails disrupting the usual manner of speaking, narrating, by means of incisive, forceful fragments of desires, dreams, unconscious states. It entails refraining from the whining accounts of one's misery, attacking the mechanism that not only produces repression in the unconscious, but that represses the unconscious itself. This calls for a project to research the diversity of women, not their identity. It entails capsizing the reality principle and considering desires the true reality..."

(Marilina)

But desire, such a magic word, sometimes expresses itself in a strange manner, as a "suspension" of desire.

"It is not easy to talk about sexuality; however, we stubbornly switch from the psychosomatic code to the linguistic one hoping to compare a greater number of experiences. The opposition woman-man, the ancient root of our disfranchisement, of our obstructed self-assertion, impinges on our workaday reality, forcing us to make painful choices, and, often, approximate ones, causing the separation

Lia Magale is a Roman feminist writer.

This personal and subjective reading of some writings by women is not, let it be clear, a mini-history of "feminist thought," nor the attempt to propose an analysis of the different theories circulating in the Movement. Nor is it the reconstruction, through the words of other women, of a speech of mine on Roman feminism. What is it then?

Nothing more than statements, impressions, itineraries which are, together with so many others, memories, in the memory of feminism, in the memory of women who have lived through splendid and tiring years of revolt, rigor, intransigence, weakness. They are also my memories.

And the difficulty of clarifying a work that revealed itself only in action, only when concretely experienced, during which "a lot" and its opposite have been experienced: self-control inspired by the desire for an identity, a constant loss in the absence of desires. Committing the sin of speaking under the influence of cultural reminiscences, a synthesis reached by forgetting any language. A body loved and hated in its incessant presence. Differences put into practice, similarities loved. Power refused, fought even in its minimal creation-recreation; attraction for power. Guilty feelings, loss of inhibitions. Sexuality. Sexuality.

to appear hard and problematic. In my life, as a woman who long ago rejected the role of reproducer of the species, the alienation of motherhood, who chose to be separated from man even sexually, the sense of oppression continues, leaving me with rare moments of lucidity, when I realize that my negative relationship with the world derives from the fact that I introjected the law of "do ut des," in producing, if even just an image of myself, in order to show to myself that I exist.

So while the drive to produce still lingers within me in the form of a necessity to create, the annoyance and the futility of a quantifying test of myself drive me into a state of sexual "suspension," apparently devoid of needs and desires, but critical and active nonetheless.

I do not know how one comes out of such a quantitative abstraction of life. The certainty of a theory or the acquisition of practice does not reassure me. I only know that every time I move away from this "suspension," my emotions wane and I become more aware of my oppression.

(Bianca)

Then one looks for a way beyond, for stepping beyond oneself, for ways to use the body as a bridge.

"The pleasure I am talking about is something more than pleasure; it is something in excess of it, not the satisfaction of a desire, but something that exceeds the possibilities that desire had foreseen. Something that, starting from totality, ends up exceeding it: a totality without remainder, a sum without exclusion, a place with no limits. A sense of *comblement*, probably, a sense of fullness that goes beyond that of a cup already full to the brim. The copresence of all the fullness and emptiness I am able to feel. I am. A relationship with myself that works perfectly. Ecstasy. One in tune with the whole, without the need of explanation. To get in touch with the whole without feeling overpowered. My body occupies a space that feels right. I am my body. It is a duration, time disappears. Death is no longer measurable. I do not wonder any more if I am realized, fulfilled, if I correspond to what I think I should be. I am not any more at the planning stage. Not an abstract identity, but existence, not a focusing but a diffusion. Everything within everything else, everywhere, always at the same time. *Comblement* is not planned any more, it is not a goal to reach, it is an excess, an extra."

(The women of Studio Ripetta)

One may object: "What narcissism!" Why not! Since representation is history, and women have never been history, but just "le repos du guerrier," a warm lap to come back to, then why not start creating a character out of ourselves!

Little comedy in one act:

"To Be or Not to Be"

After a whole day spent at the television center, pushed from the first floor to the second, then back again to the first, going around in circles and getting nothing accomplished, Antonella and I drove back downtown.

Since Antonella is angry, and when she is, she usually goes and lets it out through exercise, she doesn't come along to our meeting. She drops me off, not at the bus stop, but on the opposite side of the street, even though it's raining cats and dogs. So I say to her: "Watch. I'm going to act out our depression." I get off, cross the street calmly, then I stand under the stop sign, erect, at attention, with my head high, like a heroine, amidst the amazement of the bystanders, who are huddling around their umbrellas, and those without one, who stand flat against a building to find shelter. I feel beautiful, standing on the curb, as though on a ship's upper deck. Out of the corner of my eye, I see Antonella laugh, go into first gear, and drive away.

When I arrive at the meeting, soaking wet, Marinella is frightened: "What happen-

ed?" I tell her, she laughs. I try to represent myself, act out the inconsistencies, contradictions, how I play, desire, labor. It's not enough for me just to give an account of myself. Behind that pointing finger, raised to accuse, I want to hear not only "I heard you!" but also "I saw you!" Yes, this character of mine is positively political."

(Alessandra)

TO GEORGIANA

In Rome the Feminist Movement has always been given a political label, appropriately so for a Movement that negotiates for women. Rome has been the place of the great demonstrations, of the occupation of the Women's House, of the organized struggle in the hospitals to guarantee the right to abort. The debates within the Movement have always taken into account the problem of the "outside," the "outside" meaning the "institutions," "male politics," "the relationship with the other oppressed." And in Rome, more than everywhere else, women brought about the eruption of major contradictions within the parties of the extreme and institutional left. It is here they participated in the Movement's meeting of 1977. It is in Rome Giorgiana Masi, at seventeen, died on March 12, 1977, assassinated during a protest march. Her feminist comrades could just write poetic words in her memory, but they covered every wall with them, to keep the memory alive.

... IF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

HAD BEEN IN MAY

IF YOU WERE STILL ALIVE

IF I WERE NOT IMPOTENT IN THE FACE OF YOUR ASSASSINATION

IF MY PEN WERE A VICTOR'S WEAPON

IF MY FEAR EXPLODED IN THE SQUARES

A COURAGE BORN OF THE ANGER STRANGLING IN MY THROAT

IF HAVING KNOWN YOU WOULD BECOME OUR STRENGTH

IF THE FLOWERS WE GAVE

TO YOUR COURAGEOUS LIFE IN OUR DEATH

WOULD AT LEAST BECOME WREATHS

IN THE STRUGGLE OF ALL US WOMEN

IF...



IT WERE NOT WORDS TRYING TO AFFIRM LIFE
BUT LIFE ITSELF, WITHOUT ADDING MORE.

**N POWER,
S REFUSAL,
S VULGARITIES**

We were talking about politics, which also implies organization. Consequently, the big problem of power came in. The power of the opposition man/woman and woman/woman.

"What bothered me most was the continuous repetition of "we are half, we are half, we are half." Are we half or do we want half? Are we half of the clear, beautiful, wild, but never conventional sky, or do we want to eat our half of the cake here on earth. I do not want half of what there is today, of those values I refuse and fight. I want the unity of the sky, even though I am only half the sky. I do not refuse anything, I want everything. But I do not want what exists already, I want what I create, what is created through struggle."

(Lia)

"If one grants the inevitable distortions faced in talking about the vast theoretical, practical aspects of the Movement, one can then summarize in three fundamental points all the themes on power: 1) analysis of power and of the powers of the male society divided in classes; 2) analysis of the power relations created within the Women's Movement; 3) the elaboration of a liberation plan with regard to power. In other words, in accordance with the feminist attention paid to the known dynamic forces intrinsic in every human aggregation, and to its usual repetition of the Oedipal triangle, women are slowly investigating the power wielded by the father-mother side, and the prospect, now still utopian, of a social collective independent from the rules of the Oedipal game.

From the streets, theoretical and strategic problems are transferred to the small space of little groups and collectives. Does the women's revolt aim at a greater acquisition of power or at its total refusal? Will the obdurate search for "identity," the "new subjectivism," bring about new independence, male and female, and lead to the consequent disappearance of sexual roles, because they will prove useless? Or, on the contrary, will it become the social basis for a new female power?

An analysis of the subjective intentions of the Movement will reveal its anti-reformist character: individual emancipation and emancipation as a political program are rejected because considered an expression of integrationist subordination and a source of division among women.

Within political collectives, and also in small consciousness-raising or depth-analysis groups, the masculine and feminine roles, the maternal and paternal roles recreate themselves through the intricate inter-relationships of leadership and delegation, complicity and discomfort that emerge from the progressive discovery of individual differences. As soon as the political definition of "identity against" collapses and the male *qua* opposition fuses with a hypothetical "outside," it is the inside of the collective that is threatened by a reflection of the male-female bipolarity, under the guise of aggression-passivity. The woman who is able to take the floor more easily becomes, in the Movement, a typical figure of male power. Power, in fact, takes the form of a tendency to exclude someone different from oneself and to solidify a collective usage into linguistic and ideologic norm. Word power is therefore exerted by women who appear to be sexually repressed and with dependency needs.

Since the exercise of power always refers to a relationship of seduction and therefore to reciprocal dependency, the reverse of "word power" is "silence power," springing from old feminine seductive guiles (beauty, sweetness, emotionality, instinctivity). Anyway, what feminism intuitively is that the first type of domination, which is considered the more dangerous because more introjected and omnipresent, is not less real than the second, since it too is a distorted and

partial reflection of the real relationships of power active in the so-called "outside."

(Blancamaria)

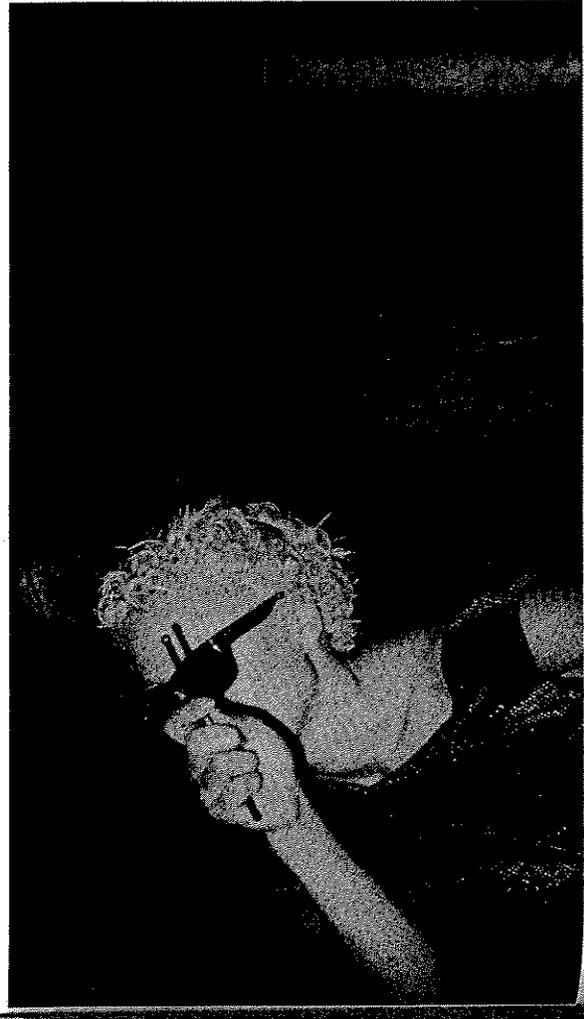
A special date was November 1976. For the first time Roman women would take to the streets, not to claim something, but to make a direct affirmation of their presence. Together they would claim the night for themselves. This demonstration followed three days of debates, when the discovered unity of Roman feminism became manifest as a practical possibility of collective work. In short: a high point of the Movement. From that moment on, we would be facing new problems, but let's go back to the demonstration.

"Roman feminists marched at night against violence. Many were heavily made up. The group went through the neighborhood of Stazione Termini, Rome's train terminal, a place frequented by the poorest prostitutes, a place of the most profound and public submission. Mimicking prostitution, the visceral and nightly feminine, cut off from the awareness of itself, enacted, behind the screen of upturned signification, under its own eyes and those of the men waiting in ambush on the sidewalks, the usual ceremony of the come-on. In so doing, the Roman feminists experienced prostitution, 'retravelling' the condition of the harem.

A march in the night. The women hollered Third-World come-ons, pressing close, huddling, bearing torches. Clothes were used as a sexual signal, a negative one for the men who watched on the sidewalks, a positive one for the women. Repossessing, claiming prostitution, 'retravelling' our condition of sexual signals, facing the provocation coming from the sidewalk, from the 'outside', meant facing collectively, politically the tunnel of regression. Being with other women, experiencing again the condition of imprisonment, the intimacy that blinds and divides, the impossible communication of contact; going beyond the historical ritualism, the oblique expression (Achilles' slaves mourn 'using Patroclus as a pretext/ each her own sorrow'; penetrating deliberately the aphasia that tries to remedy its shortcomings through body language; all this means experimenting, in a conscious and explicit way, the inevitable, non-programmatic solidarity of the regressive condition. It is regression with a progressive value that the Women's Movement introduces in the political universe."

(Elisabetta)

As we were saying, something had to change. It is the beginning of the clash between the women for the Movement and those who gravitate toward Autonomy. The problem of violence, the handling of women's violence, the use of force



become divisive issues at every meeting. The Movement loses its homogeneity with regard to the "outside." The new debate must deal with terrorism, the armed struggle.

ICELESS S

"I would like to begin by paraphrasing Artaud, by saying that never more than today has there been so much talk about the State and politics, when it is life itself that escapes us. There is a strange parallelism between the generalized collapse of life which is at the core of the present discouragement, and the problem of a political course of action that never harmonized with life, and that is imposed on it. Two years ago, when we came out, almost en masse, of the new-leftist organizations, we more or less said the same things. Today we still say that we must talk about life, perhaps not aiming at discovering in the midst of the day-to-day reality the existence of that "feminine identity" that we carried/carry glued to our skin, which, one day, in different times, we defined as "woman is beautiful."

But I do not think that to proceed straight, to have, if we only want, hopes, we must prefigure something: our identity, the state, life. After all, I do not think that it is even necessary to program them. I do not think that our future planned/planable identity is a set of mosaic pieces, a series of assembled little victories. I do not believe in any form of survival one is able to come up when the need arises. Yet, most certainly, I constantly live with the forms of survival I make up as I go along. Hopeless? No, hope is the last to die, but I must admit that these hopes of mine are faceless, and why not, timeless.

Nothing is more attached to the past than our imagination. My past, everybody's past, I only accept it as a learning process. I categorically reject it as nostalgia. The nostalgia of those who would rouse our affection for the state and enclose us in organizations, as women, workers, young people, families, etc. The nostalgia of those who would muster us for an armed struggle and organize us in brigades, nuclei, lines.

A geometry that, to be sure, rejects a self-transparency made up of truths and certainties over that achieved through the effort to know oneself, the difficulty to endure the discovery of the nonlinearity of ourselves, the discovery of our multiplicity, the effort exerted not to kill any part of ourselves.

The destructuring of thought concerned with finality, i.e. planning, projection, world view, seems to me an obligatory step to remove from ourselves the weight of ideology, a necessary step to arrive at the process of creation. For this reason, we must live with our continuous inventions of survival, without strongly believing in them, but, at the same time, without the negativity of letting ourselves merely exist. Our faceless hopes are the only possibility to know, love, acknowledge ourselves and to be able to love. Maybe I am only speaking of my life, but I want to speak of my life. Going back to Artaud, I want to add that today it is unthinkable for us who have undertaken a physical and cognitive journey that took us through factories, neighborhoods, local and national meetings; a journey that went on inside us, in the unmasking of our personal relationships; we who concerned ourselves with the politics of the great systems down to the politics of dish-washing; we who analyzed dynamic forces and the subconscious, as I was saying, it is unthinkable for us not to place at the center of our analysis life itself, and not any longer "what is the right identity in order to live." Around us we see heroin addicts, to those who practice "the refusal of work," to those who choose to be Communist fighters. In the face of these Choices, all with capital 'c', because, in the end, they kill all other possible choices, how can we talk about the political crisis without talking about our ideas on life?"

Even a debate on terrorism is organized.

"First I would like to analyze the "political" side of terrorist action, which comes within that category of political strategies rejected by us women: loss of control on the lower levels, absolute delegation, total and absolute spilt of the political

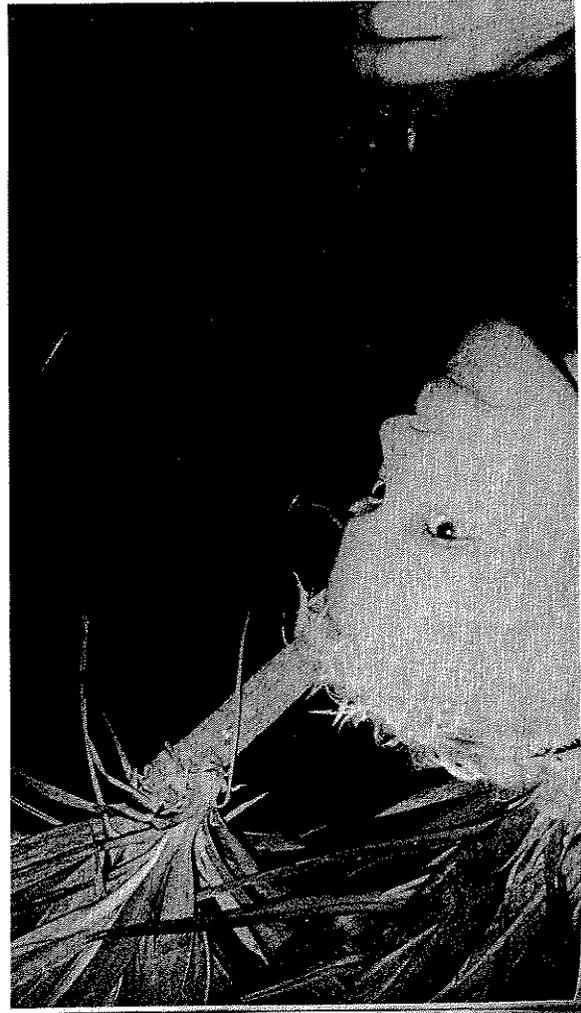
from the private; a political course of action that forces one to an either/or situation—with us or against us. On violence, I would like to hear more concrete discussions, without lapsing in such abstractions as 'everything is violence,' 'everybody practices it.' Nor do I consider it right that those who reject the planned and specific type of violence must right away be labeled pacifists. I am not a pacifist, but I believe that political choices must be made in the present, now. From a general historical point of view, there is an enormous difference between homicides and the political violence practiced now, and a situation of revolutionary mass violence. We are forced to the usual modes of survival: either total emancipation, total identification with man or becoming super-emancipated terrorists or super-emancipated women within State institutions, in the midst of the usual forms of 'emargination.' I think, therefore, that it is vital not to remain silent, but to denounce, as we have always done, even this form of physical and political violence. Since political violence is denounced nowadays by those in power in a generic and 'instrumentalized' manner, to serve their political aims, only we women can reiterate the condemnation of the various levels of violence of which the physical type is just the tip of the iceberg. Just as we have learned that rape is a repressive weapon turned against women, since it keeps fear alive, and with it high levels of moral and psychological violence practiced on women.

Let us go back, therefore, we women, to denounce the levels of violence one wants to hide, and our complicity, too. Let's denounce all that through the centuries has kept us divided and incapable of rebelling; the present attempt to assert ourselves on the level of emancipation, a level for which we don't possess yet a plan and a fight strategy. In fact we are, on the subject of emancipation, still divided and subordinate to man. In the Movement we condemned emancipation as a simple request of equality to man, an equality that proves to be false, because it forces us to be equal to him in work, sexuality, choice of values, robbing us of our identity. However criticism of emancipation has only remained theoretical, because it is still to be translated in a practice that would help handle our individual relationship with work, politics, man.

(Michi)

One more statement.

"To give an example, I will say that I have asked myself what I would do if I met an ex-terrorist along the way and if she needed help, i.e. a house, a little affection, someone to trust, that is. Well, I think I would help her with great fear to 'make a new start,' as the expression goes. Fear of what? To become part of the political persecution that hits anyone suspected of being a fellow traveller. The fact is that, because of this fear, I would fall into a pattern of behavior, that as a



woman I know well, the one used by mothers with their daughters when they cover up for them with father: 'I will help you, but you must guarantee that you won't get me in trouble.' That amounts to being a kind of father substitute, which in this case is the State. Worse, one becomes a moral and guilt-producing figure. Fine result after so many years of struggle when I proclaimed with others the respect for diversity. The fact is that, in the hypothetical case I put forth, the diversity would be reduced to nil, if not by me or the woman in question, by the logic of terrorism itself: 'with me or against me.' Undoubtedly terrorism must be rejected through words and actions because it does not propose but impose. But I have many doubts about the fact that the female presence in terrorist organizations is totally to be ascribed to the subordinate character of the women who made that choice. Behind it, I believe, there is a subjective and objective situation. If I just go back two years, the memory emerges of the big break among women. Feminists clearly split from the supporters of Autonomy, a break that marked a division not only between two ways of understanding women's politics, but also between two generations. What has happened since then? We have talked so much between emancipation and liberation. To be emphatic, between the two words we put a dash, useful visually but too vague practically; perhaps we have to start from here to understand what is happening among women now.

Emancipation, in our country, implies going through a political organization much more than the job world. The 'double militancy' has been a specifically Italian phenomenon, because in the opposition between emancipation and liberation, the political militancy in the organizations has been for many of us the only thing that saved us from dangling in the abyss that divided us from liberation, in the absence of a bridge. Now the question arises if, in the last two years, we have gone all out to develop a plan of action that will not systematically exclude many women different from us because of age and social level. I firmly believe that feminism has transformed society, and I would add, all women in an irreversible manner; however, I do not believe that our political strategies have been sufficiently modified by the coming on the scene of different feminist levels. For this reason nowadays it is no longer possible to define a woman as being more feminist than another. The same phenomenon of feminist terrorism, in fact, goes back, in part, to the radical way in which we disassociated ourselves from every kind of institutional politics during the last years.

When political disintegration is great, it is hard to single out the enemy with precision, so that one turns to the most symbolic and eternal enemy there is: the State. I believe instead that feminism has still a lot to say about the nature of the opposition, and I also believe that it can be defined in more present terms behind what disguise the eternal enemy is hiding. According to me, this must be done quickly, because it is an illusion that the thousand streams that form feminism at this time will automatically become a single great river. Some of these streams are already becoming big lakes where the consciousness of many women stagnates.

(Manuela)

At this point my memory becomes presence. And if one must talk about presence, one must do so in a different manner. The right side and the reverse of our history are mixed, and if one remembers the right side any more, one speaks about it more easily, as these writings bear out. Without doubt, it is the reverse—the changes, the sensibilities, the dynamic forces—that sets the pace, the return of possibility. So then of the presence one will speak some other time.

Translated by Vincenzo Buonocore

11/1-4 Leisa Stroud Photos: D. Cortez



Anatomy of Autonomy Bifo

FIRST: The crisis of Capitalism and of the Italian State subsequent to the workers' struggle during the Sixties.

SECOND: The Historical Compromise, an attempt to get beyond this crisis and to defeat the revolutionary movement.

THIRD: The novelty of the revolutionary movement for Autonomy with respect to the historical Socialist and Marxist Workers' Movement; its theoretical originality and its political praxis, as seen in 1977.

FOURTH: The problem of the civil war, and of the Red Brigades.

The experience of the revolutionary movement in Italy, from 1968 to 1979, is unquestionably the richest and the most meaningful within the capitalist West. To comprehend the novel elements that this experience contains we have to look at the theoretical and organizational currents that come to a head in *Potere Operaio*—until 1973—and are then dispersed and articulated in various organizational forms within "Workers' Autonomy" (*Autonomia Operaia*).

It is precisely because the progress of the workers and of Autonomy constitutes the most interesting and essential element of the entire revolutionary movement in Italy during these 12 years that we should consider the repressive initiative on the part of the judiciary in Padua. It is the Paduan court which was responsible for the arrest of most of the militants and intellectuals who took part in the movement. And the court's action must be seen as a real attempt at a final solution, an attack directed toward the elimination of those forces that constitute the elements of continuity in the history of the revolutionary movement, those forces that have provided the catalyst for very significant theoretical departures.

I. In order to understand the history of the last 10 years in Italy, we must start with the wave of conflicts begun in 1968 at universities and at some factories (Montedison in Portomarghera, FATME in Rome, FIAT in Torino). Spreading then, throughout the following year, in the "troubled autumn" of 1969, the conflict eventually involved all the Italian working class in strikes, demonstrations, take-overs, and acts of sabotage. During those two years of struggle a division occurred between the Left and the Workers' Movement. And in the following years this division produced a variety of organizations to the left of the Italian Communist Party—outside the official Workers' Movement, at the local level, and in the factories and schools.

During the same period, the group Workers' Power (*Potere Operaio*) was formed at the national level; it was composed of smaller groups already in existence: the Workers' Committee at Portomarghera, groups for workers' power in Padua and Emilia, and a part of the student movements at Rome and Florence. In September, 1969, the PO consolidated itself and began publishing a newspaper by the same name.

But to understand the political and theoretical ferment underlying the creation of the PO, we should first of all say more about the new organizational experiments of 1968 and 1969, made by the working class in the larger factories of the North.

For the present we seek to identify the consequences which the class struggle during those years had for the country's economic and institutional equilibrium.

The struggles of 1968 had their greatest effects in the university, where they were waged hand-to-hand by the students and the young (as in most of the world, the West in particular). These struggles forced a definitive crisis for the politics of the Center-Left (an alliance among the Christian Democrats and Socialists) which throughout the 60's had made possible a government founded on the policy of vague reform.

The anti-authoritarian assault by the Movement of '68 made problems and ten-

Franco Berardi, alias "Bifo", was one of the main figures of the Movement of '77 in Bologna. He was arrested at that time under the charge of "subversive association". We asked Bifo to write the following presentation on the context in which the Movement developed and the problems it had to confront up to, and after, the April 7 arrests.

On April 7, twenty-two militants and intellectuals from Padua, Rome, Milano and Torino were arrested. What they have in common is their participation, until 1973, in the group Workers' Power (*Potere Operaio*) which then dissolved and became an element in the movement of *Autonomia*. They were arrested on the charge of leading the Red Brigades, the strongest of terrorist organizations in Italy. And in particular, they are accused of directing the kidnapping and execution of Aldo Moro, head of the governing Christian Democratic party. There are no grounds and no proof whatsoever for these charges. And practically everyone in Italy who has read a newspaper knows it. It is not only false that the militants of Autonomy and the intellectuals arrested on April 7 directed the Red Brigades, but, in fact, the political and theoretical lines of the Red Brigades diverge drastically from those of the individuals arrested. Essentially what is clear in all this operation is that the prosecution—and thus its sponsoring agency, the government—has decided to make this group of intellectuals pay for the last 10 years of mass revolutionary struggle in Italy. The government thinks it can succeed, and that the balance of power may be shifted decisively to its advantage. But we can make no sense at all of the actions taken by the government during these past months if we do not understand at least some things about the political situation in Italy, and about the Italian revolutionary movement:

sions emerge which the Center-Left could not absolutely control. And in a general way the Movement brought the politics of the D.C. under accusation—for being partly responsible for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in Italian society and for the nation's dependency on the Church and authoritarian elements.

The Italian Communist Party, meanwhile, maintained an essentially ambiguous link to the movement of the students and the young. While disapproving of their radicalism, and despite the claim to Autonomy from which the movement never wavered, the PCI nonetheless saw an opportunity, in the events of 1968, for breaking the Christian Democratic hegemony and pushing for a displacement of the political balance to the left.

Naturally enough, the vanguard of workers who were organizing in the factories had quite different aims. During those years, in fact, the worker's cause tended increasingly toward bargaining for equality (equally increased salaries for everyone; abolition of piece-work and salary differences; abolition of job classifications and against the interests of production (abolition of promotion by merit, of production bonuses; rejection of accelerated production, etc.). The cumulative effect of the workers' demands provoked a crisis in the economic balance on which industrial development, until then, had depended: that is, the balance between low salaries and intensive exploitation of the labor force, a balance maintained by high unemployment and a large labor supply. An important element in the social scene of that period was the initiation of an organizational campaign among migrant workers from the South. Until then these workers had provided the mass-base for controlling union pressures in the large labor centers; however, between '68 and '69, especially in Torino, they became the mass-base at the forefront of the union struggle (and the base, too, for organized political revolution).

Unquestionably the crisis over political control of the production cycle, and thus the economic crisis of 1970 as well, have their roots in the strength and continuity of this workers' struggle, and in the considerable results achieved by it (across-the-board salary hikes which in 1969 alone, increased labor costs by more than 20%, with continued wage pressures in the following years).

The dominant political class revealed its inability to deal with this struggle. Thus there arose in those years a policy—directed and supported by the D.C.—called the strategy of tension (*strategia della tensione*). This policy amounts to the artificial creation of moments of extreme tension through such means as incidents provoked by fascist groups or by agents that often have direct links to the government's Secret Service. The first large-scale act resulting from this strategy was the assault on the Agricultural Bank of Milano that killed 14 persons on Dec. 12, 1969—at the culmination of the Workers' struggle begun in the "troubled autumn." The bombs were placed (the deed was discovered and denounced by democratic forces, by groups on the extreme left, and by a large number of militant groups engaged in counter-intelligence) by a group of fascists connected to the Secret Service and protected by powerful Christian Democrats. But anarchists were accused of the bombing, and the revolutionary movement came under violent attack from the press and the courts. In the following years, these acts were frequently repeated: in every instance fascist crimes were used as an occasion to accuse the left of violence and to institute repressive counter-measures.

But the Movement was neither broken nor driven back by the "strategia della tensione." In the years following 1970, it grew in new sectors, among the youth and students. And the Movement gained continuity through the formation of revolutionary organizations which arose throughout the country. These quickly acquired the capacity to mobilize people, gathering the remnants of the student movement of 1968, and a segment of the workers reorganized during the struggles of 1969. The strongest of these groups were "Lotta Continua" (particularly among Fiat workers), "Avanguardia Operaia" (entrenched in Milan among workers in large factories and among students), and finally "Potere Operaio" — which was a major presence at Padua, in the factories of Portomarghera, and at the University of Rome.

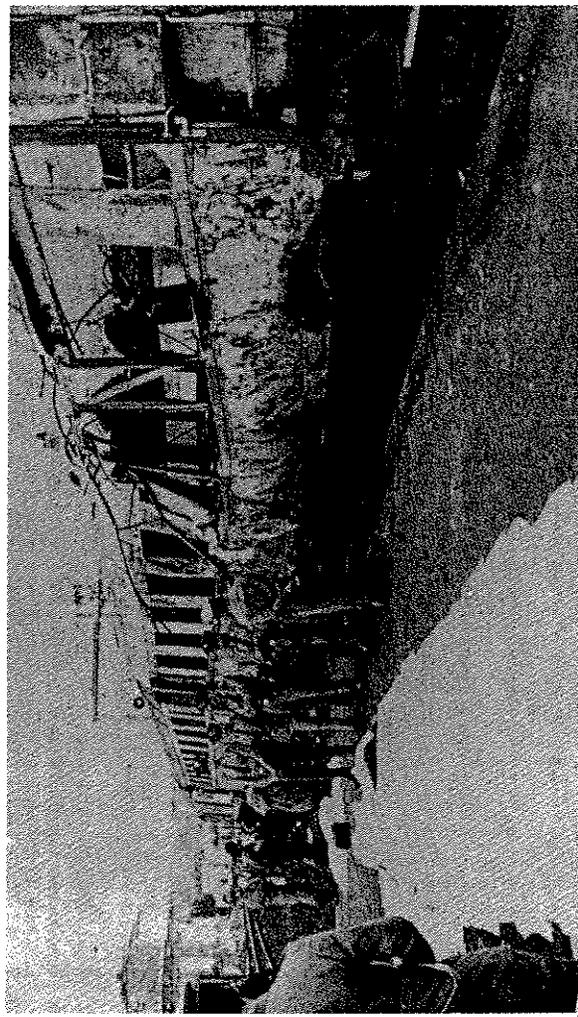
These groups organized in factories, schools, and at the local level (promoting political strikes, the occupation of schools, student demonstrations against the government, and occupation of vacant houses by homeless proletarians — in Rome and Milan especially). They assumed a position of opposition to the Italian Communist Party, which, after decades of Stalinist loyalty, was taking on the characteristics of a social-democratic party and was condemning the most radical working-class and student demonstrations in the name of unity with the middle classes and in the name of a policy of legality and respect for the fundamental rule of the capitalist order.

This position of opposition had already been manifest in 1968, when the PCI had been criticized and superseded by the student movement. And again, in 1969, the methods of the decisive struggle in the factories had been resisted by the PCI. But the antagonism grew more acute and became an open break when, in 1973, the PCI arrived at its choice of a Historical Compromise, that is, of an alliance with the Christian Democrats, and of subordination to the will of Big Capital in the name of economic revival.

Meanwhile other significant events took place that same year. The first was the occupation of FIAT by thousands of young workers. Acting with complete autonomy from union decision-making, they decided to occupy the factory and set up barricades in order to impose their demands for significant wage increases and reduced work loads. Revolutionary groups such as "Lotta Continua" and "Potere Operaio" were a marginal presence in this occupation. Thus within the takeover itself was contained the possibility of transcending those vanguard organizations that had come near to assuming the role traditionally played by the workers' movement: a role of authoritarian leadership, of bureaucratic intransigence in the face of the passions and the new types of needs expressed, above all, by the young.

The workers had learned only too well to fend for themselves, and they began organizing autonomously. At the same time, the first armed cells began to be formed inside the factories (first in Milano and then in Torino and Genoa). They organized sabotage against machinery, disciplined foremen and guards, besieged the rotten bosses — in short, they brought into being embryonic stages of a workers' counter-power.

All of Italian society was affected by this extremely vast network of counter-insurgency. After it had broken owner's control, in the "troubled autumn" of 1969, and assaulted the rule of low wages and intensive exploitation, it began to deal



directly with political problems — problems of power. But it is also true that the problem of power remained an indissoluble knot in Italy, on the theoretical even more than on the political level.

What the struggles during all those years actually amounted to was a rejection of the wage-earning system, and a rejection of that exploitation which transforms human life into a working death on credit, forcing people to sell their own lives in exchange for their wages. And this rejection which entered into the social thinking of a culturally advanced proletariat continually better educated and endowed with an ever increasing technical and scientific expertise — evolved into the very real issues of power and liberation.

Labor's rejection of work expressed itself in many ways: the reduction of the work week to 40 hours; the right to rest periods and control over production time; the imposition of a counter-power inside factories; the rejection of the ideology of production; and criticism of the methodology of exploitation. But a more pressing need exerted itself within the struggle; that of transforming these objections into a program for the liberation of existing energies, into a program of self-organization of the production process and of the entire social cycle of production and consumption. In this lay the possibility for a liberation of repressed workers.

During those years the utopia of workers' liberation was a massive driving force, a power for organization and for calls to action. But the ideological baggage of traditional Marxism continues to be borne not only by the official Workers' Movement (primarily that of the PCI) but by the newer groups of the revolutionary left as well. As an ideology based on socialism—and thus on a form of organized social exploitation that is all the more rigid in its domination of working life—traditional Marxism could not contain the forceful energy and, above all, the radicalism which the movement displayed.

At this point, the groups on the revolutionary left itself entered a critical period of their own, and their forms of organization, from the bottom up, began to divest themselves of their own trappings. As a new radicalism expressed itself among the proletariat, especially among the young, these groups began an inexorable process of bureaucratization by which they became the small appendages of the official reform-oriented Workers Movement. They participated in elections, distancing themselves from tactics that could not be reconciled with the old modes of making policy. This new process of radicalization in which Power itself was brought under discussion, was already at work in the occupation of *Mirafiori* (FIAT) which took place in March and April of 1973. It is undeniable that the only ones to take cognizance of the course of this transformation on both the theoretical and political levels, were the militants of Workers' Power. In fact, the PO decided, in May of '73, to dissolve, diffusing itself throughout the committees, collectives and base structures which constitute the extensive network of Autonomy.

It was in 1973 that the PCI, guided by the lessons of the Chilean experience, worked out its so-called policy of Historical Compromise. The policy was based on the hypothesis that Italy cannot be governed except by an institutionalized political accord between Communists and Christian Democrats. This political "about-face" was already implied at every point along the Italian road to socialism and represented less a radical break with the tradition of Togliatti's PCI than a logical development of it. Yet the consequence of the "about-face" was the further exacerbation of the rupture between the official Workers' Movement (PCI and Union) and the new groups in the factories and large cities, who were organizing at the ground level, consolidating themselves and working together for the social and political realization of Autonomy.

The disputes between the PCI and the Movement toward Autonomy became increasingly more violent during the following years, and in 1975 particularly, when Autonomy emerged as a true mass movement which united young workers, the

unemployed, students, and others living on the margins of society. In Spring of 1975, Autonomy was put to its first test as committee members took on fascists and police in a confrontation in Rome. The conflict spread to Milan, where, in mid-April, a young fascist was killed, as well as a member of the "carabinieri." Thousands of young workers, mainly from small factories, joined with students and unemployed youth and put the inner city under siege, demonstrating and rioting. Other organized demonstrations occurred in Bologna, Florence (where a man was killed by police), Torino, (where a worker at FIAT was killed by an armed guard), and in Naples. These were heated days, in which Autonomy had its first experiences among the masses.

The State recognized, at that point, its principal enemy: Autonomy represented a new level of social organization which no longer accepted the union as a mediating agent, no longer accepted the line of the PCI and its strategy of compromise and acquiescence.

The State replied to Autonomy's efforts during that week in the severest manner: repression, the legalization of police violence, and the systematic use of arms in public confrontations. In May of 1975, the Christian Democrats and their allies in the government passed a *Parliamentary act called the Reale Law (Legge Reale)*. Its terms provide that police can shoot any time public order is felt to be threatened. Furthermore, jail sentences would be more severe for anyone found in possession of defensive weapons, such as bottles, molotov cocktails or handkerchiefs, ski masks and helmets that could mask faces in demonstrations. The law was explicitly directed against the youthful proletariat who were organizing within the ranks of Autonomy. And it was supported by every party, with the exception of the PCI, which feebly abstained from voting. But the Communists would not oppose the law and thereby endanger their intended accord with the Christian Democrats.

The day the law was passed marked the beginning of the most violent and bloody phase of the class struggle in Italy. Demonstrators, or the marginal and delinquent elements in general, began to be wounded or killed by police firearms. Citizens who did not come to a halt at police blockades, chance passersby who found themselves in the press of a demonstration—they too met their deaths by virtue of a law "for the public order."

The revolutionary left and Autonomy had to pay the price for the increased violence of the State and of the police. The casualty list within the Movement is endless. It is enough to mention here Pietro Bruno (18 years old, militant member



THE ORIGINALITY OF AUTONOMY

of "Lotta Continua", who died in the spring of '75; Giannino Zibecchi (antifascist committee, killed in May 1975); Mario Salvi (worker for Autonomy, 21 years old, killed at San Basilio, Rome, during a housing occupation in October 1976); Francesco Loruzzo (23, "Lotta Continua", killed at Bologna, March 11, 1977); Giugliana Masi (killed in Rome, May 12, 1977, a feminist linked to "Lotta Continua"). But these are only the most notable. It is estimated that the victims of the "Legge Reale" numbered 150 in the period between May '75 and December '76.

If we wish to understand the rise of "terrorism", the formation of militant organizations, the choice of clandestine armed warfare by an ever growing number of proletarian youth, then we cannot forget the role played by the "Legge Reale". Nor can we forget the role of that aggravated and general violence perpetrated by the State from the moment Autonomy appeared in the factories and streets of the country, as a socially diffuse and politically organized Movement.

We also need to remember the other side, the policy of the official Workers' Movement (chiefly, the PCI): a policy that was first of all dependent on the decisions of the Christian Democrats, and subordinate to the movement of repression. In addition, this policy sought to isolate the youthful elements of Autonomy, causing a division within the working class and the proletarian movement. The PCI became a sort of political police made up of enforcers, spies and stooges.

In the following years, rather than being resolved through the accord between the Communists and the Christian Democrats, the institutional crisis in Italy assumed an increasingly dramatic character. The impossibility of governing the country was highlighted. The basic reason for the crisis was the growing distance between representative political institutions (parties, the Parliament, and other structures of participation) and a population of hopeless young people. Autonomy was at once a symptom and a cause of this distance.

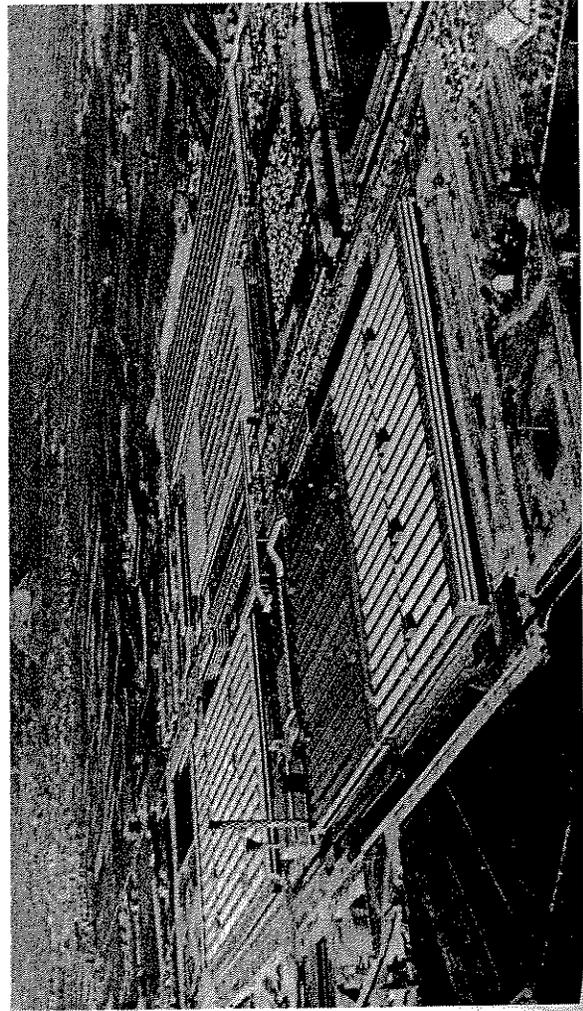
In the political elections of 1976 the PCI considerably increased its voting strength, posing a threat to Christian-Democratic power: the DC was no longer guaranteed a parliamentary majority with its traditional allies (centrist parties) without either the agreement or the neutrality of the Communists. On the other hand, Christian-Democratic rule could not be substantiated by a Leftist majority either, because the Left simply did not have the strength. Convinced that it needed to quicken the pace of an alliance with the DC, the PCI began in 1976, to press for the Historical Compromise. It supported the Christian-Democratic government without, however, entering into that government. The situation, then, was paradoxical: while the masses had supported the PCI, believing this was the best way to promote a policy of radical change, the policy of the Historical Compromise ended up bolstering the tottering forces of the DC.

In terms of Italian society at large, this meant that workers had to pay for the economic crisis (which continued to grow worse between 1973 and 1976, as a result of the oil crisis). The PCI and the unions explicitly assumed the task of forcing the working class to accept a policy of sacrifice, consumer restrictions, and reduced public spending. In the autumn of 1976, a few months after the elections, the Andreotti government instigated an economic offensive against workers' salaries, increasing the prices of the most essential goods—gasoline, bread, pasta, and services. The PCI and the unions were used in order to deliver this blow. Workers in the large industrial centers of the North reacted in a wave of furious protests, launched autonomously and against the will and intentions of the unions: at Alfa-Romeo, at FIAT, at ITALISIDER, and elsewhere, they waged independent strikes. But the "crunch" passed: living conditions worsened notably for workers; their faith in the unions collapsed. And from that time, rejection of the forms and directions of union organization increased. What is more, the policy of "sacrifice" which cut consumption and public spending and promoted worker lay-offs, rebounded back on those who were employed. It produced a constantly growing unemployment rate, which at the beginning of 1977 reached an unprecedented figure (1,700,000 officially; in reality more than 2 million).

III. Finally we arrive at 1977. The point of arrival, in many respects, of ten years of class struggle. The point of arrival for the student struggle begun in '68, for the workers' struggle of '69. It is the moment at which all the fundamental contradictions accumulate and explode, provoking a profound crisis for State control over society, for party and union control over the masses of youth. But at the same time, the revolutionary movement produced its most mature form of expression, in which a fully articulated need is expressed for a communism that is the direct translation of proletarian society, without any necessity for external or ideological organization. The Movement of '77 represents, in all its aspects—social, political and cultural—the moment of culmination in the ascending phase of the class struggle in Italy. But for the very reason that it is fraught with contradictions, and for the very reason that it poses with unrelenting urgency the question of the transition to communism, the year 1977 is, for everyone, a definitive test. Italian society has been tested by ten years of uninterrupted social conflict. The masses are disillusioned and tired of the politics of the official Workers' Movement, of reforms and of compromise. Now they await a radically new perspective that will abandon and surpass the old categories of political institutions, a perspective that will at the same time produce a workable program for superseding capitalism. Such a program would have to be innovative compared with the Soviet type of socialist experience, which is authoritarian, bureaucratic, and based on a new socialized form of labor exploitation. The innovation is awaited everywhere, but the hopeful expectation can easily turn into passivity and disillusionment if signs of something new do not emerge.

The Movement of '77 gathers together the new proletarian strata: young proletarians in the big cities who refuse to devote their whole lives to salaried labor, who refuse any kind of work at all. The unemployed who issue from the schools or universities as possessors of a high level of technical-scientific knowledge, are compelled to waste their productive potential, or not use it at all. The forms of social behavior, of cultural identity that these strata produce isolate them from the political tradition; rather than speak of marginal living (*emarginazione*), we can talk at this point of self-directed marginal living. The cultural revolution of 1968, which upset forms of behavior, values, human relationships, sexual relationships, the relationship to country and to the home, has ended by creating a social stratum that is recalcitrant before the notions of salaried work, fixed residence, and fixed position of work.

Moreover, the enormous technical-scientific and intellectual potential that the education of the masses has produced—a potential which fermented on contact with the process of mass self-education that the revolutionary movement has represented for 10 years—all this renders even more insupportable that contradic-



tion of capitalism, according to which, as technological and scientific capacities increase, intellectual and creative energies are wasted, while the possibilities for innovations in production are suppressed so that the existing labor organization and the organization of knowledge crucial to labor's functioning are not disturbed. Cultural transformation, mass creativity, and refusal of work are the dominant themes of the Movement of '77. But only with difficulty could the Movement succeed in organizing all that potential constituted by the intellectual energy, technical-scientific expertise and innovative energy that the young-proletarian strata possess. The enormous richness that the Movement of '77 expresses could not succeed in finding a formal program and positive organization. This is because of capitalist repression, but also because of the inability of the revolutionary movement to adjust with rapidity its interpretive categories and its practices to the reality of a mature, post-socialist proletariat.

All during 1976, new forms of organizations—connected with Autonomy, but related to all aspects of collective life and cultural identity—were being established. The rejection of the family and of individualism had found a form of organization in the experience of proletarian youth associations. These associations were communes set up by squatters in certain neighborhoods of big cities; young proletarians thus organized territorially and experimented with forms of collective-life-in-transformation.

The storm that the feminist movement provoked in male-female relations and the subsequent explosion of homosexual collectives thus found a territory in which to consolidate, in which to transform the customs of living, sleeping, eating, smoking. In the same period, the movement for free radio spread widely. In every city, neighborhood and village the young proletarians, together with students and communications workers, used the occasion of a legislative vacuum (the result of which was that the State monopoly on information lapsed and was not replaced by any other sort of regulation) to give life to a network of small "wildcat" stations. The radio stations were operated with luck and very little money, but they could cover a territorial space adequate for the organizational forms and communication needs of the emerging proletarian strata. This was a truly revolutionary fact: with free radio it was possible to communicate rapidly the decisions and appointments of revolutionary organizations or base organizations. Through this channel circulated an uninterrupted flood of music and words, a flood of transformations on the symbolic, perceptible and imaginative planes. This flood entered every house, and anyone could intervene in the flow, telephoning, interrupting, adding, correcting. The design, the dream of the artistic avant-garde—to bridge the separation between artistic communication and revolutionary transformation or subversive practice—became in this experience a reality. The brief, happy experience of Radio Alice—which from February 1976 to March 1977 transmitted from Bologna—remains the symbol of this period, of that unforgettable year of experimentation and accumulation of intellectual, organizational, political, and creative energies.

The year 1976 is also the year of the great concert-festivals of proletarian youth: a last wave of pop music, which arrived in Italy five or six years later than in the U.S. or Great Britain, but which found here an extremely fertile cultural terrain. The sweet sound of pop immediately combined with a certain dimension of mass cultural transformation. It became the constituent element in a vision of the "soft" cultural and social revolution.

The harshness of organizational life in the Workers' Autonomy was united and merged with the sweet experiences of cultural transformation and the easy flow of information. Lambro Park, 1976, in Milano: 18,000 proletarian youths performed a gigantic sun dance, the likes of which had never been seen before—then fought with police for several hours.

The autumn of 1976 saw an explosion in the movement toward "autonomous price-setting" (*autoreduzione*). Tens of thousands of young people, organized in associations of proletarian youth, came in from the suburbs of Milano, Rome and

Bologna, laid siege to the city centers, confiscated merchandise from luxury shops, "autonomously reduced" the prices of movies, theaters and restaurants (that is, they paid what their politics required—a third or a fourth of the usual price). But the final test of the movement toward "autonomous price-setting" was a violent clash, a forerunner of the violence that would explode in 1977: the battle of La Scala, on December 7, 1976.

La Scala is the bourgeois theater of Milano. December 7 marks the inauguration of the new season, the "opening night" gala. But young Milanese proletarians said that they would not permit the Milan bourgeois to stage this yearly provocation with its pomp, finery and 80,000-lire tickets. They declared war on the Milan bourgeois and their festival. The government accepted the challenge, and thousands of police in battle formation defended La Scala. Hours and hours of conflict, 300 imprisoned, dozens arrested, 7 gravely wounded. The youth movement reflected for a month on this battle and on its catastrophic outcome. But only in order to be better prepared the next time.

The next time was in February of 1977.

The struggles that exploded in 1977 were completely out of proportion to what occasioned them: they began with a small university campaign against a Christian-Democratic "reform". On February 3, the fascists wounded a student in Rome, and the university was subsequently occupied. First in Rome, Palermo, and Naples, then in Florence and Torino, finally in Bologna. The occupation of the universities was a pretext: the academic institutions were occupied not only by students, but by young workers who worked in small factories, and had no other possibility for organization and concerted action. Then there were the unemployed, those who lived in the city outskirts, the juvenile delinquents, the disenfranchised. . . . University communities became general quarters for a wave of social struggle that had as a fundamental theme the refusal of the capitalist organization of work, the rejection of that system which generates exploitation and unemployment as the two poles of socialized work. "All work for less [time]" became the watchword for this wave of struggle of young proletarians—a group heterogeneous from the point of view of productivity, but homogeneous from the point of view of culture. "All work for less" is a watchword which has nothing to do with questions such as "the right to a job", or the right to a full-time position. Work is necessary evil—or at least remains so for a historical period that we wish eventually to surpass and extinguish with collective force. What we want is to apply, totally and coherently, the energies and the potential that exist for a socialized intelligence, for a general intellect. We want to make possible a general reduc-

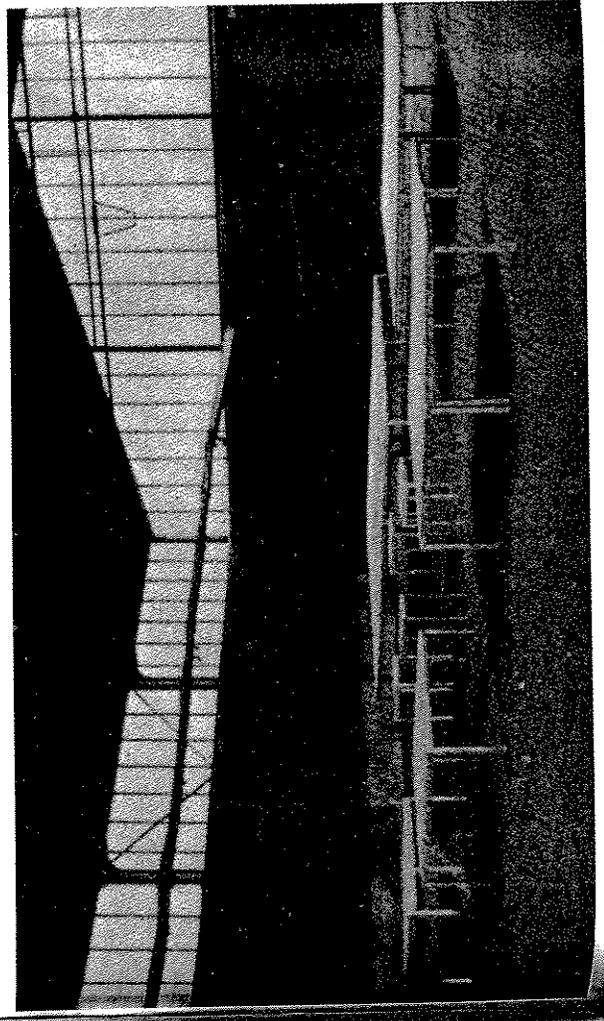


order had been undermined. Consequently, the PCI lost credibility both as the governing party, and because it had let control of so vast a movement slip away from it. The State was forced to resort to brutal repression: hundreds of arrests in Bologna, and then the unleashing of a campaign of repression all over Italy that struck most heavily at groups that worked on the cultural level: radios, journals, publishing houses, and bookstores were closed and searched.

But the Movement was not broken: in Milano, Turin, and then once more in Rome the mass demonstrations continued. The summer began with a violent polemic—inspired by an appeal launched by French intellectuals against the repression—on the repressive nature of the Historical Compromise as an institutional design for the elimination of all dissent.

Also at that time, there began in Italy (and here the Movement was behind the times) a critical analysis of socialism of the Stalinist type (of which, in the last analysis, the PCI is only a variant). On the strength of theoretical reflections developed in France by those such as Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari (a more critical and doubtful reception was given to the Nouveaux Philosophes, who were too removed from any concrete experience with the critique of institutions and with class struggle), and a new front was opened in the struggle against the State. Thus new forms of totalitarianism were seen developing as the historical left was assimilated by the apparatus of power. And so the critique of the institutionalized Workers' Movement acquired a new connotation: according to the PCI, all the years after '68 had been marked by gains for social democracy and reformist causes. But now one began to discover that social democracy, even though introducing new elements into the communist worker movement tradition of the Third International, was not necessarily in contradiction with totalitarian, violent and Stalinist trends. In fact, the two aspects were mixed in the PCI, which had become a component of bourgeois democracy by abandoning every type of violence against the existing order and at the same time a violent force of totalitarianism against the revolutionary movement.

Confronted with the wave of repression that followed the events of March, and mindful of the discussion that had developed on the nature of the State after the Historical Compromise, the Bologna movement set forth a proposal for a Convention to be held at the end of September. At the Convention, all components of the Movement in Italy could come together, along with all the European intellectuals or political groups that were interested in the Italian revolution as a forerunner of things to come. The September Convention was the great opportunity—missed, however—for the Movement to overcome its purely negative, destructive connotations, and formulate a programmatic position for the autonomous organization of



tion in working time and we want to transform the organization of work in such a way that an autonomous organization of sectors of productive experimental organization may become possible. These sectors would give rise to experimental forms of production in which the object of worker cooperation would not be profit, but the reduction of necessary work, the intelligent application of technical and scientific knowledge, and innovation.

This program actually existed among the young proletarian social strata that in February 1977 filled the cities with their demonstrations.

The cultural transformation and the rejection of prevailing values that the cultural experience of '76 (radio stations, associations, journals, "grass roots poetry") had accumulated, exploded with a wave of anti-institutional creativity. The critique of power is the critique of the language of power. On the 17th of February, the critique of power, the critique of representative institutions, and the critique of institutional language were united in a unique action. 7000 young proletarians who (a fact without precedent in the Movement's history in Italy) expelled, with uncontrollable rage and fury, the most important figure among Italian labor leaders, Luciano Lama, secretary of CGIL and exponent of PCI, from a lecture hall at the University of Rome, where he was delivering a policy statement. The PCI accused the young proletarians of being "enemies of the working class" and tried to divide them from factory workers. But this move did not succeed; no factory supported the great union leader. Instead, the young workers of the Northern factories expressed sympathy for the young proletarians of Rome who had expelled Lama. The split between the PCI and the Movement reached its apex at this period, and will likely never be repaired. On the 17th of February a mass sector of the Italian proletariat was liberated with violence from socialist traditions, both Stalinist and reformist. The autonomy of the movement had been assured, in the consciousness and in the organization of ever-growing strata. And the stage was being set for the insurrection of March.

March of 1977 was the moment of greatest intensity in the explosion of the struggle for autonomy. The social strata that were mobilized in this month were the young unemployed intellectuals, together with "off-the-books labor and seasonal workers"—that is, all sectors of irregular or marginal workers. At the same time, March was the moment of the greatest tension and distance between the new movement for autonomy and the Communist Party. The act of expelling Lama from the University of Rome established a precedent from which the people at the University of Bologna proceeded in the days of March. The occupation of the entire university zone by huge numbers of young proletarians coming from every area was transformed into a true insurrection when on March 2, a youth was killed by police. But Bologna is also the city in which the PCI has always been strong; the local government is a leftist coalition and bosses and organizations of the Workers' Movement collaborate to ensure social peace. The exploitation of young workers in Bologna is controlled by a network of little bosses and bureaucrats, often linked with the Communist Party. In brief: Bologna is the city of the realized Historical Compromise. And for that reason (as well as for the reasons of the Movements' extraordinary creative vitality) the Bologna experience marked a moment of absolutely central political importance.

The extraordinary violence of the days in March, the mass following attracted by the Movement, and the radical nature of its objectives created a crisis for the city's Historical Compromise by offering evidence of the government's inability to function as an instrument of control over vast proletarian sectors.

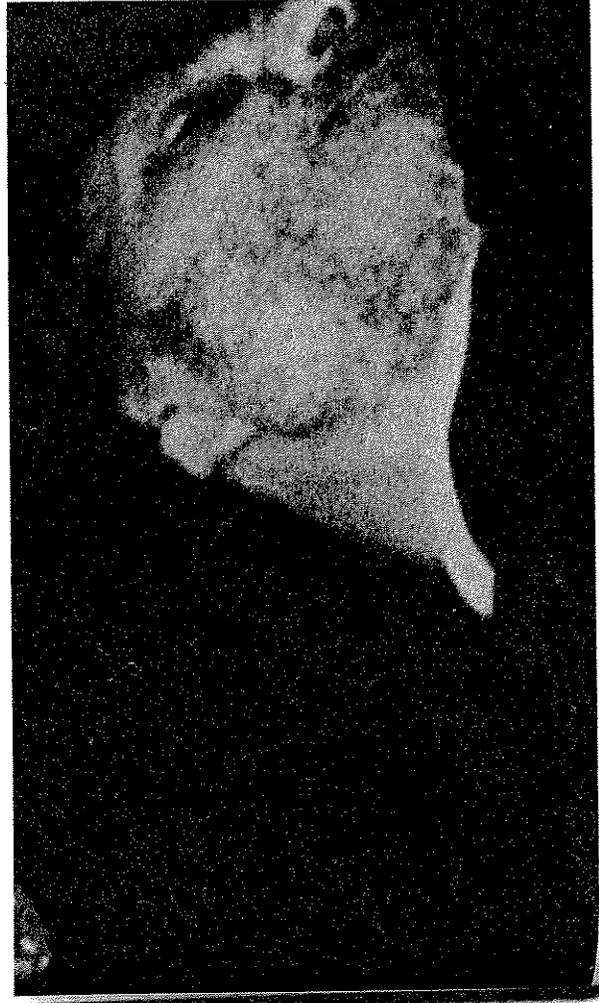
For ten days, two large cities (Bologna and Rome) were in the hands of the Movement—in very violent conflict in Rome on March 7; on the 2nd and the 12th of March in Bologna. On the 12th, Rome was the theater for a six-hour battle in which tens of thousands of youths were engaged, while 100,000 filed by in demonstrations. And then in the following days at Bologna the Movement invaded the city. The Italian bourgeoisie recognized at this time the serious danger that its design for institutional order faced, and saw that the PCI's ability to guarantee

struggles (acts of sabotage, burning of employment offices), while the actions of the Red Brigades had an effect almost exclusively political, directed as they were at the DC or at the headquarters of the majority party.

The question of the "armed struggle" gave birth in these years to a number of dubious theses, whether within the Movement, in the press, or in propaganda emitted by the forces of the regime. Terrorism came to be considered a direct expression of the forms of struggle of the Movement. The Movement has certainly expressed and practiced forms of violent struggle, when violence represented a necessary means for the defense of organizational levels (taking to the streets, occupying buildings, picketing), but it has always refused to see the military organization as an autonomous political body, or as an "armed party." The strength of the Red Brigades is thus directly proportional to the weakness of the Movement. And so, as the repression of the regime weighs more heavily on the Movement, the power of the armed organization increases. On the other hand, we must also recognize that, beginning in the Spring of '77, when the strength of the mass movement brought about a crisis for institutional equilibrium and the Historical Compromise, the State undertook to reconstruct its stability and institutional equilibrium on the basis of the opposition to terrorism. The policy of "national unity" — amounting to a reinforcement of the Christian-Democratic government (always a fragile majority) with uncritical support from the PCI — was adopted as an emergency measure in the face of the Red Brigades' assault. And on the same day that Moro was kidnapped the PCI decided to support a DC government that was completely unacceptable. For this strategy the PCI paid, with its electoral losses in June, 1979. But this is of little interest. What is interesting is that terrorism created a situation of crisis for the revolutionary movement, or rather inserted itself into a pre-existing crisis of the Movement. And thus inserting itself, it accentuated and consolidated the crisis, reinforcing the repression from the one side and, on the other side, restricting the revolutionary process to a pathway without egress, without alternative routes.

This said, then, we have to recognize that the extension of the armed struggle and the great impact of armed terrorist action (to be differentiated from a practice of mass violence justified by the needs of the proletariat) are directly linked to that crisis in the Movement which evolved after '77. We can say that armed terrorist action is a symptom of the revolutionary movement's inability to put a program into effect, as well as a symptom of the Movement's cultural impoverishment.

After '77, and especially after the Moro affair, sectors of Autonomy began to



a real society against the State, an autonomous organization of social, intellectual, and productive energies that might make possible a progressive liberation of lives from salaried work. Unfortunately, the Convention turned into a reunion against repression, and this greatly reduced the theoretical importance and the possibilities of this period. Nonetheless, 70,000 people were present at the convention and the attention of the whole Italian proletariat (as well as that of vast numbers of intellectuals all over Europe) was directed toward the Convention. But the gathering concluded without producing any direction for the future, any new program, and without advancing the Movement. Instead it was restricted to hearing tales of repression and then defining, in negative terms, its reaction. A long phase of crisis had begun for the Movement, a crisis that involved dispersion, disorganization and above all, the lack of prospects.

IV. Up to this point, we have completely ignored the problem — absolutely central to the analysis of class struggle in Italy — of terrorism. Armed struggle was a form of agitation that grew ever larger after a certain point, and finally became preponderant in September 1977. The problem of terrorism probably cannot be dissociated from the whole complex of experiences connected with the Movement's organization in factories and in society.

On the other hand it is also true that the entire rapid analysis we have made of the most significant moments of the class struggle in this decade remains incomplete and spotty. We have neglected, on purpose, an analysis of the relationship between the mass movement and clandestine organizations or armed actions. The reason for this omission is that we would like, within the framework of our necessarily simplified "history", to view the experiences of the armed struggle as a symptomatic fact, as a symptom of the problems not resolved by the mass movement.

This is certainly a valid enough viewpoint today. In recent years, the armed struggle has more and more assumed a "terrorist" connotation; no longer within the mass movement, it has completely replaced the Movement and occupies all the available space.

The first and most important armed organization in Italy — the Red Brigades — was born out of the workers' struggle in the first years of the 70's. The militants of the Red Brigades come from the large factories in Milan, Turin, and Genoa. The first armed actions (the kidnapping of managers of factories, together with acts of sabotage) were linked to the workers' struggle against the factory hierarchy. But after these first actions (1971, 1972), the Red Brigades evolved rapidly toward a strategy of frontal, "political" — in the worst, most abstract sense of the term — opposition to the State. From this point they began to behave like an actual party, whose actions and objectives are neither related to, nor dependent on, the times and on the forms of the mass struggle. In this new phase the Brigades reached a critical point, at which the extreme "ML" (Marxist-Leninist in the most dogmatic and avant-garde sense) types of thinking prevailed in the fighting organization. Moreover, the theoretical-political grounding of the militants in the Brigades is distinctly Stalinist. Part of their background, especially their social context (the factories) comes from the "hard" Stalinist base of the Communist Party. The social contexts of the Brigades — even more than their selection of a Party. The *modus operandi* — set them apart from others even as early as 1974; by 1977, the differences between the evolving Movement for Autonomy and the Brigades had become even greater.

The highest point in the career of the Red Brigades was the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, President of the DC. These events took place at a time when the Movement found itself in a state of crisis and immobilization, largely because of the "failure" of the September Convention. It was precisely the immobilization induced by the Convention that led ever larger sectors of the Movement, especially those harassed by repressive measures, to choose a clandestine life. Many other fighting organizations smaller than the Red Brigades were formed. These smaller organizations had objectives that were closely linked to social

realize all this. And here our study must become more complex, if we wish to comprehend the most recent period of Italian history, that is, the events of April 7, 1979.

In '77 the positions taken by the Movement on the armed struggle were imprecise. The entire Movement had rightly refused to condemn (as the bourgeois regime and its parties requested) mass violence. The March insurrection had been a virtual explosion involving tens of thousands of proletarians and young people, and that level of violence was an inevitable stage which gave to the Movement the maneuvering room always denied it by the institutions. But on the subject of terrorist action the debate was always more confused. All the components of the Movement recognized the proletarian and revolutionary origins of the fighting formations (a few idiots actually sought to excommunicate the armed formations, or to declare them agents of foreign secret services or of reactionary groups—but everyone knows that the militants in these formations are comrades who come out of agitation in factories or in the slums, out of experiences we all had in those years). So the problem was put in terms of "legitimatization."

Within the Movement, there are two opinions on this question of "legitimacy". One faction considers armed clandestine action as a simple "extension" of mass violence, an "extension" of proletarian restiveness at the legal limits imposed by capitalism. But others demur, claiming that this outlook underestimates (in the name of spontaneous sympathy) the radical contradiction between autonomous behavior on the part of proletarian strata (who are the bearers of a potential for liberation) and the Stalinist politics, or even State-like behavior, of the B.R.

Positions on the legitimacy of terrorism differ within the various components of the Movement. The Bologna movement (the so-called "creative wing") recognized without hesitation the contradiction between terrorism and the mass movement. The committees of Autonomous Workers (*Autonomia Operaia*) at Rome (the "Volsci") forcefully criticized the politics of the Red Brigades, while other groups maintained more problematic positions in order to avoid lumping together terrorism and the most radical practices of the Movement. But while the "ideological" discussion of terrorism continued, people lost sight of terrorism as spectacle, of its capacity to occupy progressively more space on the stage-set of class struggle. And when this aspect of terrorism was considered (after the Moro kidnapping) a new operation began: one did not attempt to condemn or exorcise terrorism (as the great bourgeois journalists did, and behind them the little journalists of *Lotta Continua*), nor even to support it in order to gain something from it. Instead, one sought to supersede it. Superseding terrorism became the true problem for the revolutionary movement. Given that combat formations represented a product of a faction which the Movement had not been able to supersede, it was necessary to supersede this faction and its terrorist manifestations. It was necessary to engage oneself in this effort. We can say that the intellectual and militant segments of Autonomy were concerned after the death of Moro with finding methods of superseding terrorism. Superseding terrorism did not mean becoming involved in the Nazi extermination that the super-policemen (like General Dalla Chiesa, plenipotentiary of the anti-terrorists) tried to effect with dragnets, with indiscriminate arrests, with corruption and stool pigeons, with torture and internment camps. Instead, superseding terrorism meant creating a foundation for pacification and for the reconstruction of conditions needed for the class struggle. To pacify obviously meant to remove the obstacle constituted by the more than one thousand political prisoners. Liberation, then, of the political detainees, along with amnesty, elimination of the camps, and dismissal of Dalla Chiesa. All these are objectives of pacification originating within the Movement, objectives that the political planners of Autonomy want to make into the aims of a mass initiative capable of setting up the conditions for a resumption of the class struggle in a strategically autonomous form, no longer determined by the difficult straits of a civil war.

But suddenly, just when the possibility of superseding terrorism began to be perceived and began to mature, State repression intervened with all the power that it could put into the field. We have reached the events of April 7.

The desire of the State to eliminate every attempt at superseding terrorism became yet clearer when the editors of *Metropoli* were arrested and the publication suppressed. *Metropoli* in fact is a journal devoted specifically to the goal of surpassing terrorism and reconstructing autonomous conditions for the class struggle.

THE SEVENTH OF APRIL ARRESTS

For quite some time to come, the revolutionary movement will have to deal with the actions taken by the State on April 7. Even beyond the question of liberating the comrades who were arrested, some fundamental doubts have been raised, and the possibility of making a transition to a new epoch in the process of liberation from capitalist domination has been jeopardized in a dramatic way.

To divest oneself of these last ten years and at the same time to uncover the continuity inherent in the process of liberation—these are two apparently contradictory moves, but moves which must be effected simultaneously. This is the problem facing us at the moment. But the actions of the government were aimed at rendering any transition impossible.

THE SIMULATION OF POWER, THE POWER OF SIMULATION

In the campaign which the power structure has launched against Autonomy, everything is false: not this or that detail, not this or that assertion, but everything—the evidence, the proof, the circumstances. Everything is false, and the power structure knows it, even declares it, it is of no importance to the power structures whether something is true or not. This is the spirit behind the government operation. The deterrent power of the operation lies in its capacity to unleash a violent campaign of immense proportions, a campaign based on SIMULATION. The real operatives of the offensive are not the judges, but the press, the TV, and the Performance. Thus the offensive is beyond politics, freed finally from any remaining link to truth, liberated from any correspondence with actuality. Simulate an infinite number of war scenarios and project them on the screen of the mass imagination—this is the strategy. For in truth it is in that territory of the imagination that the real war is being fought. On one side of the battle is Dissuasion (the infinite power of the State, the all-seeing eye, the all-knowing brain, the all-imagining mind), on the other is Liberation of the creative energies of a proletariat whose intellectual potential is immense, but whose conditions of material existence are cramped and miserable. This is the real contradiction, the real war.

So; the Performance of April 7 has shown that the power structure can win the war today by invading the realm of the imagination. And, having conquered the realm of the imagination, the power structures now run rampant, demonstrating a violence that has no precedents, and arrogance that is totalitarian.

