

June 5<sup>th</sup> 2011

# The Revolt of the Mediocre: On the Criminology of Terrorism— The Italian Experience

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Submitted on June 2, 2011



*Statement of Originality*

The essay focuses on the psycho-sociological nature of Italian terrorism. In using sociology as an analytical interface between the political and psychological dimensions of the phenomenon, it seeks to obtain an integrated micro-macro portrayal of the “Italian experience of the 1970s” —one in which cultural clime, actors, and collective motions are represented as elements of a coherent whole.

*Word Count*

Total word count + 1 fn — (cover p. + decl. p. + cont. p.)= 18,143 + 14 – 191 = body of the text= **17, 966**

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## Introduction

The social structure of terrorism is the specular image of a given political society: it reflects the contrapositions, the divisions, the intrigues, the weaknesses and the vices of society in general. There exist amongst terrorists the fanatics, the adventurers, but even those who attempt to make use of common sense; there are the natural leaders and their followers; [...as well as] groups born out of career-driven, affective and [...] venal reasons.<sup>1</sup>

In the political turmoil of the 1970s, Italy's experience is extraordinary in that it appears to be the only European country that has leveraged terrorism in a variety of manifestations in order to settle its political fate at a time when the elite had found itself irretrievably divided. As the leadership of Italy's Christian-Democrats came under serious challenge at the end of the 1960s, the establishment fissured into vying factions; and in a decade-long series of lunges, reverses and countermoves, *both* the incumbents and the runners-up sought (the ones) to preserve and (the others) to seize power, also — if not chiefly— by means of terroristic tactics. That this would be so is, first of all, implicit in the very definition of terrorism, which may be defined as “a set of criminal operations, of varying nature and importance, designed to frighten a given population with a view to gaining from it political concessions.”<sup>2</sup> Decisive, then, in this sense was Italy's powerlessness during the Cold War to experience the alternation at the helm between incumbents and opposition, fettered as she had been since Yalta by the “convention” that its Communist Party —Europe's largest, and in hock to the USSR—should not assume power.<sup>3</sup>

The “game” was played out roughly over a decade —the Republic's toughest, and accordingly christened “*gli anni di piombo*” (“the years of lead”); a stretch that went from the spring of 1969 to the early 1980s. Over the length of this “*guerra non ortodossa*” (non-orthodox war), Italy suffered 8 major bomb attacks, 4362 episodes of political violence, 2712 attacks for which terrorist groups claimed responsibility, 768 injured and 351 dead.<sup>4</sup>

The “hot summer” and protests of 1968-69 saw mostly students and industrial workers in the streets—an unlikely combination, which, in fact, did not last. Yet one sufficiently thunderous as to lead many to believe that revolution was at hand. The 1970s represented a transitional period of epochal significance not just for Italy, but for the West at large. This era witnessed a momentous economic breakdown —itself triggered by the suspension of gold convertibility in 1971—, accompanied by a cultural/generational rupture, which shook up what had theretofore been the moral scaffolds of upper- and middle-class (authoritarian) hegemony. Most upsetting in this regard was a conspicuous “reshuffle” and explosion of society's lower echelons (i.e., a pressure of the upper proletariat into the ranks of the *piccola, media borghesia* especially through liberalized

university admissions, though with no professional future to match), which began to push against the fences of privilege precisely at a (bad) time when the pie had ceased to grow.<sup>5</sup>

The lessons to be drawn from Italy's terrorist experience are herein subsumed under a particular template, that of *localized* political fights at a time of uncommon social unrest: there had been, in other words, a "civil war"—or an "Italo-Italian" war,<sup>6</sup> as Neofascist terrorist Pierluigi Concutelli put it— whose factional contours have remained opaque precisely because it had been from the outset "*una questione privata*."<sup>7</sup>

The opening chapter presents the main evidence and the chronology of terrorist activity throughout the relevant historical time-frame (1969-1982). Social protest was ignited in 1968 and terror began to strike in the spring of 1969. In most general terms, Italy's terrorist season may be subdivided into two main phases and a coda: a) 1969-1974, the initial phase of "Black" (i.e. Neo-fascist) terrorism, and the concomitant reaction of Leftist groups; b) the subsequent, overwhelmingly "Red" (i.e. Communist) so-styled "onslaught against the heart of the State," of 1975-1979; c) and the twilight of the "years of lead," 1980-1982, which seals the erasure of the "third wave" of the Red Brigades, as well as the late Neo-Fascist and Communist formations issued from the "Movement of 1977."

On the basis of this chronological account, the two subsequent sections set out to explore the psycho-sociological nature of Italian terrorism. The chapter devoted to the socio-political dynamics breaks down the phenomenon of terrorism in three levels—a) official party, b) mass movement(s)/extra-parliamentarian group, and c) terrorist organization— and follows the progression of the terrorists as they descend from one level to the next, in sync with the pace of political events. It is here argued that these three components, together, formed a unicum and continuum, both in respect of 1) the process of filiation, on the one hand, and 2) the impact on the *dénouement* of the political match, on the other. Which is to say, for the first point, that each terrorist generally initiated his/her militancy if not in the very ranks, certainly within the extended propagandistic radius of a legitimate political party—all three aggregations being, more or less covertly, linked; and, for the second, that the interplay (especially) between terrorist action and party strategy was never left to chance, but seemed rather to be the studied outcome of a game-plan acted out in pursuit of the higher political objectives, which are, by definition, managed by the established parties. Furthermore, a sociological "law" intuited by Ernst Jünger that punctuates the transition from mass protest to deeper-level acts of covert sabotage (such as, indeed, terrorism) seems to be borne out by the phenomenology at hand and will be discussed in this connection.

The analysis of the psychological make-up of the terrorist takes up where the sociology leaves off, and that is by dissecting the "tactical body" of the terrorist organization itself. The defining traits of the organization's three main characters —i.e., the foot soldier, the military commander, and "the partisan" (the typology is, again, Jünger's: the link between terror and deep politics) — are discussed within an expanded version of Thorstein Veblen's economic categorization of individual typologies in a modern society, (bi-dimensionally) defined according to a) spiritual bent and b) degree of tenaciousness. To this schema we add a third dimension —namely, proneness to death and pain— grafting, as it were, Georges Bataille's insights on the sociology of violence,

and obtaining thereby a richer taxonomic space, which enables one to classify coherently not just the components of a terrorist cell, but of the social realm as a whole.

The *cupio dissolvi* is the first of three elements that make up the psychological investigation of the terrorist mindset, the other two being the “concept of the political”—i.e., the person’s “breathing” of an archetypal contraposition pitting him versus a sublimated “foe”— and, finally, the weight of the creedal/propagandistic factor in the sentimental education of the political soldier. These last two elements are closely related, as they both strike their roots into the crucial enigma of so-called “Mass-Man” — in other words, they beg the question of what exactly is, socially speaking, a “modern individual,” and which conditions are needed to shape this self-same individual into, say, a political soldier. More to the point, one wonders if there are ways of assessing the extent of a person’s volitional strength, or whether, instead, no such inherent hinge of morality exists in Man so that, ultimately, the modern subject’s malleability is formidable. Employing the aforementioned expanded taxonomy of modernity’s basic psychosociological typologies, and reviewing the array of ideological catchphrases and the rhetorical vehicles crafted to convey them to the excited units of the politicized crowds, one finds that the suggestiveness of the mythologies thus confected can indeed be — under a particular confluence of environmental, socio-economic, and historical currents— potent.

The story of Italian terrorism is a tale of two hallucinations; it is the tale of a diffuse Red psychosis, whose obstreperous song has been cornering ever since the assizes of Italy’s collective memory, and of a counter-tendential, perhaps less zealous, yet by no means less intriguing Black delusion. The one is seldom, if ever, found without the other; they are not quite two profiles of the same visage, but rather the split manifestations of a single current of violence, which traverses the body social by fueling systematically the far stronger drive of mainstream Red propaganda with the urticant prod of Black provocations.

And a reflection, by way of synthesis. Taking inspiration from Lombroso’s classic analysis of anarchism and sedition, one cannot help rediscovering ever anew in these tales of revolt and subversion—be it in post-revolutionary or post-industrial times— the dismaying mediocrity of it all: of the epoch, the intrigues, and the protagonists —every single one of them, from the prime ministers to the last of the terrorists and delinquents involved; mediocre the whole decade and mediocre all that followed it as well.

## The Story—the Phenomenology

The task of the police is to steer chaos, to rationalize the irrational without ever confining itself to the plane of logical reasoning.

Francesco Cossiga, *Fotti il potere*<sup>8</sup>

### *Phase I: Bombs, Coups and “Black Plots” —Setting the Stage*

This first phase (1969-1974) happens to dovetail with Richard Nixon’s tenure, and Italy’s Leftist scholars and publicists have thereby contended that the string of bomb attacks that went off throughout this period are to be seen as manifest acts of provocation secretly promoted by the regime itself in order to fend off, insulate, and fight back the mounting tide of progressivism sparked by the protests of 1968.<sup>9</sup>

In 1969 alone, 145 dynamite blasts were counted, 96 of which attributed to the extreme Right. Between April and August 1969, trains, commercial fairs, banks, and public edifices of several cities were chosen in central and northern Italy as sites for a total of six major bomb attacks. This sequence of provocations reached its climax on 12/12/69, when four explosions were detonated in Rome and Milan, at a monumental site and in the downtown headquarters of a commercial bank, respectively. Rome reckoned no fatalities, but at Piazza Fontana, in Milan, where the bank had stood, seventeen people were killed. “Piazza Fontana,” many terrorists-in-the making would later reminisce, “changed everything.”<sup>10</sup> In the history of Italian terrorism, the “*strage*” (bomb attack) of Piazza Fontana drew a divide; it was a threshold, the mark of a wild escalation of political violence that would soon follow. In those days, the security staff of the Leftist movements, inhaled the psychosis, and began to arm themselves.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, the government, fastest on its feet, imputed the commission of the *strage* to the irresponsible doings of a bedraggled crew of Milanese anarchists. There followed obscure investigative leads and police interrogations; and on the evening of December 15<sup>th</sup> —no light could ever be shed on the incident— an anarchist leader already in the police’s watch, the train-driver Giuseppe Pinelli, found his death after taking a dive out of the window on the fourth floor of the central police commissariat of Milan. Suicide, said the officials. The following day, the police fished another anarchist, Pietro Valpreda, —a thirty-eight-year-old drifter, working as a part-time “dancer”— and officially indicted him; a witness had allegedly seen him on the scene of the crime. But it was not long, amidst the general bafflement, before a different kind of conspiratorial suggestion was being drummed in the ether of public opinion —the suggestion, rather, that these implausible anarchists had been in fact maneuvered by “specialist infiltrators,” themselves “extracted” by intelligence and police officers from the recesses of Right-wing activism.<sup>12</sup> On the basis of testimonies gleaned from sources somehow tangential to Neofascist extremism, formal inquests were started in 1971. As perplexing characters were flushed from the theretofore virtually unknown underbrush of Italy’s organized



Nazi-Fascist zealotry and presently flung into the limelight of judicial and public scrutiny, the progressive press began from then on to splash “the news” on its front pages: “Italy: fascist coup in the making.”<sup>13</sup>

This, then, was the propagandized setting in the two-year aftermath of Piazza Fontana: the Left —and the Communists more loudly than anybody— thundered that there existed a transversal cabal of ultra-conservative Interests —a clan including the CIA, Christian-Democrats, pro-American Social-Democrats and the reformed fascists of the MSI (the “*missini*”) along with their organic ramifications in the military, intelligence and industrial realms— intent on using any means necessary to thwart a democratic thawing of Italy’s sclerotized Republic. The incumbents, fronted by the *democristiani*, while spitefully rejecting any accusation of wrong-doing in the bombing, however echoed the Left in asseverating, likewise, that the country had indeed risked falling in the clutches of a sinister reactionary phalanx. No details were provided as to what, or whom, that meant, exactly.<sup>14</sup> The MSI was, too, content to blame the anarchists; in point of fact Piazza Fontana had barely grazed it: all those “fascist crazies” exposed in the press had been easily disowned as extra-parliamentarian and thuggish scum, wholly alien to the respectable façade of the party;<sup>15</sup> and, what was more, the *missini* were trending up, approaching in the early seventies the coveted 10 per cent cutoff. Finally, the “missini”, along with the pro-US likes of President Saragat, could also afford to rebut, no less thunderously, that Piazza Fontana was a Red ploy to discredit Italy’s upright conservatives by associating them somehow with these political transvestites of the extreme Right — colorless *provocateurs*, they asserted, with whom they had nothing to do.<sup>16</sup> The strategy of Piazza Fontana, they added, was instead the very opposite: namely, to demonize the Right so as to clear the path “in the center” for a (pro-) Communist take-over.<sup>17</sup>

So it was nobody’s fault. Overall, however, the Left carried the day *propaganda-wise*: the electoral gain of the MSI would soon evanesce, and the true players left to face each other off would be, as usual, the *democristiani* on the one hand and the Communists on the other. Pragmatically, what did the immediate political epilogue of piazza Fontana suggest? First and foremost, that this first line of Right-wing agitators, who, indubitably and *obliquely*, had been implicated in this dirty affair, had, de facto, been burnt. The political establishment as a whole had navigated skillfully through this morass; so skillfully, in fact, that not a single faction thereof had emerged in any way diminished from the controversy. It was difficult to say which of the two dominant factions benefited the most from such an atmosphere, whether the Catholics of the *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) or Berlinguer’s Communists. The former, of course, thrived on their candid image of non-belligose moderation: though correctly identified as the odious symbol of Italy’s despairing immobilism and corruption, the DC nonetheless stood to gain from the so-called theory of the “opposed extremisms” —that is, from the belief that the country was being shaken by the agitation of *alien*, violent forces at *both* extremes of the political spectrum.<sup>18</sup> It was instantly appreciable that in such a situation, one in which the Catholic citadel was perceived to be aggressed from the students’ and workers’ protests on the one hand (behind whom, willy-nilly, stood the PCI), and the spectral, bomb-toting Blacks on the other, only the stolidly middle-of-the-road power-brokering arts of the DC could

guarantee stability and a safe return to the haven after the storm. The tactical message of the “opposed extremisms” was indeed efficacious, and all in all, thanks to it, the DC managed during this phase to keep its electoral share more or less intact (ca. 40 per cent). As for the PCI, if it had to be the party of change and renewal —its propagandistic forte— the truth was that it too, like the DC, *was essentially a middle-class party*: the fight between them, electorally speaking, was very much one for the *center*. In this regard, even though the PCI could, unlike its rival, present itself at the hustings as “the party with clean hands,” it was nonetheless true, and problematic, that its moralizing rhetoric was more often than not extremely inflammatory and venomous (especially versus the DC), as well as pro-Soviet.<sup>19</sup> And all such elements played to the advantage of its rivals; and that is why Piazza Fontana represented a unique opportunity for the PCI. So the posture elected by the PCI was to keep its vast audience of party members and sympathizers on perennial alert for fear of a “Neo-fascist” *golpe*. Still to this day, a voluminous production of studies dedicated to the travails of the so-called First Republic maintains that Italy came an inch from a Rightist coup in the early days of December 1970.<sup>20</sup> Until 1974, the chronicles would register five of such putative coups:<sup>21</sup> the news was beamed, speculations abounded, but no coup did ever materialize.<sup>22</sup> What still stirred in the early seventies, however, was the Neo-Fascist front, whose second batch of expendables, after Piazza Fontana, was caught planting or attempting to plant more bombs across Italy and, again, on its trains. Three such sensational attacks have been catalogued in the annals of Italian terrorism as reprisals—i.e. sheer acts of revenge perpetrated by the Blacks of the first hour, who resolved to pay back in kind their secret service masters of yesteryear for duping them into believing that a reactionary coup was within reach.<sup>23</sup> It appeared nevertheless evident that this second bombing drive was signaling the exhaustion of Phase I: by then, most of the early Blacks had been killed, incarcerated, forced into exile, or discreetly “reabsorbed.” The following year, 1975, the terrorist game was about to change dramatically.

### ***Phase I: The Reds***

Many, in what would rise as the violent, revolutionary ranks of the Left, “blamed” Piazza Fontana for transforming them into extremists and terrorists. The first commander of the BR, Renato Curcio, remembered in this connection how immediately after the explosion, he, as a visible radical of the Left, was stalked by the police and thrown in custody for day— a patent provocation by authorities that did not seem as disoriented as they purported to be.<sup>24</sup> Not that the Reds had been “innocent” before then, however; they actually were then as keen on *violence* as they had ever been:<sup>25</sup> Piazza Fontana merely “accelerated things.”<sup>26</sup>

Several were the hotbeds of leftist insubordination, chief amongst them the main *industrial* hubs of the North —in particular, the factories and schools of Milan, Turin, and Genoa—, and the Northeast, where the University of Padua —the base to Toni Negri’s *Operaista* movement— and especially the sociology department of the University Trento, were already beginning to function as incubators of politicized vandals and terrorists. All such antagonizing “compost” was furthermore enriched by the concomitant and non-

casual impact of “fascist” harassment: the northeastern region of Veneto, for instance, had already a solid reputation for being fertile recruiting humus for young fanatics imbued with mythologizing Nazi-fascist conceits.<sup>27</sup> Equally swaggering were the Black upper-bourgeois sluggers (*i picchiatori*) of Rome’s and Milan’s wealthy neighborhoods: the *pariolini* and *sanbabilini*, respectively —the latter being even complemented by a *sub-proletarian* appendix.<sup>28</sup> These ongoing clashes, from north to south, between Reds and Blacks —the Fascists being always massively outnumbered by the Communists throughout the entire duration of the leaden season— kept matters in a chronic state of ebullience and so came to define the setting of Italy’s incipient metropolitan guerrilla warfare.

Despite the towering incumbency of the PCI in the very eye of the protesting storm, the extra-parliamentarian sub-galaxy was, quite obviously, attracting enormous attention and making itself heard: side by side with the FGCI —the federation of young Communists—stood the other “big” mass movements, such as *Lotta Continua* (LC, “ongoing struggle”), *Potere Operaio* (PO, or *Potop*, “working class power”) and *Autonomia Operaia* (AO, “working class autonomy”). A first blush, altogether, these aggregations formed a vast, intimidating and seemingly undifferentiated tide of juvenile disaffection. With the possible exception of *Autonomia Operaia*, these movements (including the FGCI) operated on two levels: the main (“ideological”) level was formed by the bulk of the organization, with its leaders and followers, who comprised the political structure of the group proper; while at the “military,” already semi-clandestine level were arrayed the squads of the *servizio di sicurezza* (“security service”), which attracted the militants keenest on violent confrontation.<sup>29</sup> All such aggregations appeared to have been informed by the libertarian, spontaneous drive of their respective founders to manage things on their own—away, that is, from what all of them deplored and vehemently rejected as the stifling centralism of the PCI’s bureaucratic machine. While this resentful defiance toward the Communist Party was manifest in the rambunctiousness of the magmatic symbiosis between *Potop* and AO, both of which clashed not infrequently with the security patrols of the young Communists, this was not so with *Lotta Continua*. LC was possibly the most blustery and regimented group of the extra-parliamentarian Left, and its security the most redoubted by the Blacks. Much like a satellite, *Lotta Continua* seemed to orbit around the PCI: its deportment was that of a young and unbridled, yet ever deferential vassal vis-à-vis the central authority of the Party.<sup>30</sup> The magma of *Potop/AO*, on the other hand, despite some areas of contiguity with LC, was something else; its professed hostility versus the PCI possessed a tangible concreteness that set it apart from all the other formations, which, more or less overtly, rooted for the PCI in the race for power. Most of LC’s leaders were intellectuals and PCI sympathizers, but the luminaries of the *operaista* movement were different. They formed a triumvirate: Oreste Scalzone, Franco Piperno, and Antonio (“Toni”) Negri. Scalzone was some kind of a post-industrial cross between Harlequin and Diogenes, a full-time articulator of rebellion without particular training, who played the part of the “mystic” of the triad —the rank-and-filers called him “the fakir.” Piperno and Negri, on the other hand, constituted, between the professorial two of them, the duet of *operaismo*’s hyper-charismatic leadership. Scalzone and the ice-eyed seducing Piperno—a physics professor— were

former Communists, who had been expelled from the party for “heresy” before the fire of 1968, whereas Negri, by far the most interesting of the three, had yet another sort of pedigree.

An affirmed professor of political science at the University of Padua, he would emerge from the chronicles of Red terror with the title of “*cattivo maestro*” (“bad teacher”) — as if, before him, Italy had yet to crown the most Mephistophelian of her academic corruptors. Hailing from Veneto —a bastion of Catholic activism—, Negri was himself a queer fruit of this Catholic environment to whose elite, said his detractors, he owed his tenure<sup>31</sup> —and possibly something more, such as protection and, in all probability, the special type of power he would come to wield as one of the Left’s most renowned propagandists. An older brother of his had been executed by the *partigiani* after the war, and for that, it was said, Negri harbored a visceral hatred for Italian Communism. Notwithstanding what would pass for the familial and cultural make-up of an arch-conservative, Negri eventually swung to the radical pole by way of the Socialist Party, and, through a highly obfuscatory manipulation of Marxist rhetoric, began thereafter to preconize the fomentation of an unmitigated clime of unrestrained violence.<sup>32</sup> The object of such violence was to overheat the body social to a degree so feverish as to cleanse it through a meltdown of its elitist incrustations and replace the power apparatus of yesteryear with a disarticulated reticulation of “workers’ councils.” As for the Italian re-edition of such “councils,” Negri initially managed to conjure up a congeries of rebel groups of students, the most representative being *Autonomia Operaia*, which confusedly meshed with *Potop*. The latter, on the other hand, sold itself to students as some kind of hyper-intellectualized and elitist upgrade of *Lotta Continua*; yet the two formations had much in common.<sup>33</sup> In 1973, it was rumored that Negri had a mind to bring the entire Red nebula under his command,<sup>34</sup> and to that effect that he had secretly encountered in the estates of sympathizing millionaires Renato Curcio of the Red Brigades to seal some kind of compact—compact which did not materialize.<sup>35</sup>

The Red Brigades (*Brigate Rosse*, BR) were formed over the biennium of 1969-1970 —its beginnings predating Piazza Fontana— in the wealthy region of Emilia (a traditional Communist, anti-Fascist stronghold) by a miscellaneous formation of exalted youths who claimed to be the generational heirs to WWII’s Communist Resistance fighters. Its ideological lineage was essentially the cross of two strains: middle-class Catholicism, initially embodied in Renato Curcio and his companion, Margherita Cagol, both of whom were hailing from the University of Trento, where they had converted their catechism-instilled aspirations of social justice into the dialectic phraseology of militant communism; and the *maquisard* ethos of the aforementioned post-war breed of self-styled partisans, the majority of them being former disgruntled members of the FGCI, the federation of young Communists—Alberto Franceschini was their point rider. At first, the fledgling organization appeared to have come under the wing of what was then depicted in sensationalist strokes as Italy’s grand corporate elector of Red terror, the *richissime* editor Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. His ties with the Communist bloc and especially with Latin-America’s revolutionists were legendary, and he was said to commute frantically between East and West by way of his vast estate in Austria, which allowed him fluidly to filter through the Iron Curtain across Czechoslovakia.<sup>36</sup> Feltrinelli

had wild plans for Italy: he wanted to be her Che Guevara, and for the task he seemed willing to employ “ethnic” (viz. Sardinian) separatism,<sup>37</sup> and arm cells such as the Red Brigades in view of commencing against fascism redux another civil war, which, the editor brooded, was then inevitable after the harbinger of Piazza Fontana. But it was not to be, for Feltrinelli vanished from the scene early on, killed in 1972 by a mysterious explosion in the outskirts of Milan. Instead, after Feltrinelli’s death, the BR were tentatively monopolized by yet another shadowy ringleader by the name of Corrado Simioni. Simioni had a militant past in the Socialist Party (PSI), from which he had been dishonorably expelled for reasons unrevealed; and very little of him was known aside from suspect pro-US frequentations of the intelligence milieu, outlandish theological studies in Bavaria, and a perfectly un-Communist partiality to fast, expensive cars. Simioni animated the so-called CPM (*Collettivo Politico Metropolitano*) and sought through it to inspire the entire forthcoming strategy of the BR, but his meddlesome impatience was soon challenged by the first commanders of the brigades, Curcio and Franceschini, who forced him and his close associates out, and then into exile in 1972. With one crucial exception: that of Mario Moretti, one of Simioni’s intimates, who managed to re-insinuate himself in the BR after a series of perambulatory maneuvers, and eventually to take over the franchise as the “new” or “second” Red Brigades, shortly after the arrest of Curcio and Franceschini in 1974 (see second section). Simioni & Co found luxurious shelter in Paris: it is anybody’s guess why, of all foreign sanctuaries, it was Pompidou’s Paris that would grant admission to such questionable individuals, and fashion itself thereby for the remainder of the 1970s as Europe’s prime haven of Red terrorist refugees.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, one wanders, in this connection, what could have possibly been the actual function of “Hyperion,” the language school established by Simioni in the French capital with the *placet* of the country’s persnickety secret services and the blessing, to boot, of the abbé Pierre (secular name, Henri Grouès) —France’s most notorious “holy man” at the time.<sup>39</sup>

Unlike the others, the men and (fewer) women of the BR made it their mission, and succeeded, to nest into the factories where they sought to “mobilize” the environment, proselytize the most dedicated sort of workers, and eventually to deploy these as cadres for the forthcoming uprising against the State-protected entrepreneurial pashas of the Republic *democristiana*. Thus the BR set out to win the hearts and minds of the working class meanwhile the FGCI, *Lotta Continua*, the *Movimento Studentesco*, and *Autonomia Operaia* were busy provoking the Blacks *and* the authorities in a variety of engagements, of which the *corteo* or *manifestazione* was the predilected choreodrama. They started out in 1971 with minor feats of arson and vandalism consummated at the expense of Italy’s corporate giants, and eventually escalated (“second *clandestine* phase,” 1972-73)<sup>40</sup> by perpetrating a sequence of theatrical one-day kidnaps against representative “enemies of the proletariat,” i.e. a collection of victims ranging from the Dickensian foreman notoriously hated by his dependents, to right-wing trade-unionists, and the HR executives of the big concerns. Identical *modus operandi* in all cases: seize the target, snap a picture of him with a gun pointed at his head, and release him —preferably in humiliating fashion, say, hair-shaven and chained to the gates of his factory. The Polaroid shots of the flustered “*sgherr*” (goons) and “*padroncini*” (little bosses) would from these

days on become the surreal countermark not just of the BR, but of the leaden season as a whole: captioned by a cardboard sign bearing a Marxist or Maoist caption, the haggard faces of the kidnapped were seen hovering over the soon-to-become-infamous logo of the slightly asymmetrical five-pointed star inscribed in a circle, which was directly ripped-off from the imagery of Uruguay's Tupamaros.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile the implication of three militants of Potop in a case of arson consummated against a rival Black gang, which caused the agonizing death of a young innocent bystander, led to the dissolution of the organization (August 1973). At *Potop's* last congress, Negri, determined by principle to keep violent dissent in a state of mobile excitation, allegedly maneuvered to destroy from the inside any residual structuration of the movement—movement, which, his rivals railed, Negri had always sought to manage solo. The operation succeeded to the effect that of what was once *Potop*, part was reabsorbed in the ranks of “normality,” part flowed into the pool of *Autonomia*, and thus remained under Negri's watch, while commanders of the security corps—which was called “LI” (*lavoro illegale*, “illegal work”)—, such as Valerio Morucci, drifted into the Red Brigades.<sup>42</sup>

1974 was a decisive caesura in the history of Italian terrorism. That year saw the *Democrazia Cristiana* standing its ground by sacrificing the “integralist” faction in the battle for the ratification of the Divorce Law (May 1974), and by outmaneuvering the Right, which had by then lost the momentum it had gained during the “state of emergency” prompted by Piazza Fontana.<sup>43</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, Berlinguer, after the events in Chile, had instead opted for an extremely bold tactic: for the putative sake of national unity, the PCI was then requesting a gentlemanly and progressive entente with the Catholics of the DC to ferry the country through the economic and social hardships of the moment: an unexpected peace offering to the arch-enemy: it was dubbed the “historical compromise.”

In the interim, in April 1974, the BR had seemingly made “the leap” by kidnapping a far bigger sort of prey, a magistrate, Mario Sossi— notoriously, a man of the Right, who had persecuted in the early stages of the agitation gangs of Red delinquents. This time, the political stakes of the deed were much higher and after subterranean negotiations, the judge was released after 44 days of captivity with no counterpart (an exchange of political prisoners to be flown to Cuba, as originally demanded by the BR). The bloodless outcome of yet another even more spectacular exploit propelled further aloft the image of the BR. But, four months later, in a subtle operation involving the infiltration of a former Franciscan monk turned Communist *guerrillero* in Bolivia (Silvano Girotto), the anti-terrorist squads of the *Carabinieri* put an end to the ascending curve of the first edition of the BR.<sup>44</sup> Curcio and Franceschini were arrested in September 1974. Curcio would evade in May 1975 to be apprehended, definitively this time, in January 1976. Mario Moretti, Simioni's ex, would take over the organization and transform it.

By the end of 1974, even though the specter of Piazza Fontana had somewhat faded, the political stalemate was far from being solved. Evidently, the Republic had incontrovertibly shown to possess no appetite whatsoever to reform itself.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the tug-of-war between the main contenders—DC and PCI— was about to take place on the

ambiguous platform of the “historical compromise”: in other words, it appeared as though political violence would be used as a determinant means for settling the outcome of a contest to be disputed over what was otherwise publicly tabled as a conciliatory playing field. The Neo-fascist bomb-throwers and the hard-hitters of uptown had either retired, relapsed into the MSI, or drifted into heroin-addiction;<sup>46</sup> *Potop* was no longer; the BR seemed dismantled; and the DC had kept the Right at bay by allying itself, anew, with the Socialists, while the Communists loomed larger, preparing to attack. The mass effusion of 1968-69 had exhausted itself; a new cycle was beginning.

### ***Phase II and Epilogue***

By the mid-1970s, the most pressing matter for the Italian regime was still how to “process” the hulking mass of the Communist Party, which, on the wake of a stridently self-victimizing propaganda conducted since 1969, had emerged greatly reinforced by the terrorist emergency and the economic crisis. For this reason, all eyes on the Left were expectantly pointed on the Communist leadership, especially those of the extra-parliamentarian constellation, whose exponents, barring a few optimists, knew deep down to possess no clout whatsoever wherewith to challenge the power of the DC. The fate of *Lotta Continua* was an eloquent illustration of this development, as its leaders were forced to disband it when, after the political elections of June 1976, they came to the harrowing realization that the PCI could not, or would ever beat the DC: almost 35 per cent of the national vote was an exceptional result for Italy’s Communism, but not nearly enough to seize power any time soon.<sup>47</sup> The erasure of *Lotta Continua* was a replica of *Potop*’s, its violent fringe merging, again, with the BR, and the rest streaming back into the circuits of conventional society, or drugs.<sup>48</sup> To the chagrin of the leftist audience, the stalemate between PCI and DC appeared thenceforth foredoomed to continue with no change in sight, and so it did for nearly three years (June 1976-January 1979) under the deceptive guise of a polite and respectful collaboration, which took on the appellation of “National Solidarity.” To most publicists the “National Solidarity” was a perfect example of a game of temporization, which, considered the distribution of available tactical skills and experience on the field, the *democristiani* were sure to win.<sup>49</sup> Hence, on some quarters, the seething urge to break the stalemate as soon as by any means possible.

The “new” Red Brigades had raged throughout this interlude, bringing the *lotta armata* (“the armed fight”) to a whole new level: the refurbished “columns” of Moretti’s organization had struck with unprecedented bravado so high and so intensely as to impose itself as the one, unchallenged superstar terrorist outfit of the country. Starting in 1976 with the assassination of a magistrate in Genoa, they would go on a rampage of more killings, hold-ups, and kneecappings (*gambizzazioni*) of politicians, judges, policemen and journalists—all of them, with two singular exceptions on the Communist camp, expressions of (Christian-Democrat) conservatism. After 1975, Moretti had brought the fight from the industrial north to Rome, “against the heart of the State,” as proclaimed by the communiqués of his brigades. The rampage of the new BR would culminate in the most spectacular terrorist act of the decade: the rapt and murder of Aldo Moro (March-

May 1978). The only thing certain after that extraordinary event was that the PCI's chances of encroaching upon the Catholic tenure were rapidly dwindling.

By all accounts 1977 had been the *annus horribilis* of the leaden years: 199 political attacks, 29 wounded, and 5 killed amidst an exponentially soaring tide of crime, deaths by tumor, and suicides.<sup>50</sup> Importantly, 1977 had awakened a new wave of protest, 8-9 years after the bonfires of the sixty-eighters: this was the "Movement of 1977." It was animated by unhinged mobs of so-called "metropolitan Indians," disaffected and disorderly youths virtually devoid of the idealist charge that had moved their predecessors.<sup>51</sup> They were products of Italy's educational disarray and unemployment sore, which would have plagued the country ever since. The movement of 1977—in which this time around virtually no industrial workers were present—<sup>52</sup> gave remarkable impulse to the urban war of yesteryear, and in the final impact, on terrorism itself, feeding the BR as well as a new outfit called *Prima Linea* (PL, "Front Line"), which also received between the founding years of 1976- 1977 the lifeblood of *Autonomia*<sup>53</sup> and of the diehards from *Lotta Continua's* security detail.<sup>54</sup> Why a BR clone such as *Prima Linea*, though purportedly less hierarchized and ideologically constrained than the original, came into being at this juncture is a matter in all likelihood linked with the metamorphoses of Negri's subversive nebula. After the dissolution of *Potop*, "the Professor" had launched in 1974, with the logistical support of seasoned criminals, a local operation carved out of *Autonomia*, which became known as the *Collettivi Politici*. The *Collettivi* comprised almost exclusively students, who were the *dauphins* of Padoa's wealthiest upper crust: for the next five years, Negri's posh zealots wreaked havoc, as in that day in May 1975 when, under the exhilarated gaze of the "maestro," an entire quarter of Padoa was held hostage to their vandalizing furor. The *Collettivi* would spawn several other fighting cells—all of them compact and intransigent to a degree of perfection unseen for this species of political organisms— such as the *Fronte Comunista Combattente* (FCC), itself a further conduit into the BR.<sup>55</sup> But as Negri's involvement in the strategic direction of the BR could never be established, it was suspected that PL, via, this intricate skein of cross-militancy, was precisely the sort of derivative that would enable him to influence a like militarized vanguard.<sup>56</sup>

On the Black front, the "1977" novelty was the emergence of the *Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari* (NAR, Armed Revolutionary Nuclei). The *teenagers* animating them had precious little in common with the Neo-fascists of Phase I; not only were they on average ten to fifteen years younger, but they also seemed to be altogether immune to any kind of mythologizing propaganda however constructed. Characterically, Phase II featured among full-time clandestine warriors a gradual effacement of the political tonic (friend/enemy) from the propagandized mix with which they had been previously imbued. In this respect, the BR had been forerunners, bent as they were to impress upon their recruits that the issue of anti-fascism was in their program altogether immaterial, as the chief objective was instead that of "disarticulating the State."<sup>57</sup> Likewise, the last of Phase I's Black terrorist commandos, Pierluigi Concutelli's *Ordine Nuovo*, explicitly shunned Black-Red antagonism to concentrate instead on striking at the symbols of the execrated regime.<sup>58</sup> It was as if the dynamics of terror were caused by a differentiated dosage of tension across two separate sociological levels: at the base of mass agitation and



street warfare (*illegalità di massa*: “mass illegality”), the violent vanguards of the two packs were being systematically sicced on each other by the politicized command words of the friend/enemy-Black/Red basic contraposition; when their mass movement dispersed, the habituation to such rhetoric did drive the most violence/death-prone individuals in the clandestine underworld of terrorism (*lotta armata*: “armed struggle”), where they were, however, re-directed away from the object of their first hate (the Fascist/Communist enemy) and commissioned instead to draw fire on the State. This onslaught against “the heart of the State” thus appeared planned with almost symmetrical coordination from the likes of inured operatives, who had come of political age battling one another at the mass level. The NAR, whose name survives in the criminal heroics of its leading romantic couple (Giusva Fioravanti and Francesca Mambro), condensed this progression from politicized street-fighting to terror into its own five-year history. The originality of the NAR was, beside a complete rejection of hierarchical stratification, the kindred proffer on the market for political subversion (*eversione*) of “the NAR” as a free, open source franchise available to whoever wanted to *rivendicare*, i.e. to claim under its logo a terrorist act. It was then through the disavowal of the Mussolinian mythologems and the subsequent disembodiment of any organizational pretense —never strong to begin with on this side of the violent spectrum— that Black terrorism finished its days in the early eighties on a slime trail of addiction, common crime and delinquency.<sup>59</sup>

All along, Negri’s *Autonomia*, on the other hand, had been the protagonist of such remarkable chaos, civil molestation and public damage —over 700 episodes of violence in the triennium 1977-81—<sup>60</sup> that by 1979 a team of prosecutors in Padua had drafted a “theorem” whereby Negri’s mass organization was arraigned as the coagulant of the entire terrorist movement, as well as the key strategic liaison with the Red Brigades. A massive trial of the *Autonomia* movement ensued. As said, the association to the BR was never substantiated but, charged on several other counts, Negri and many of his former acolytes were nonetheless sent to prison. Then, in the fall of 1978, not long after the Moro assassination, the *Carabinieri* launched a sweeping counterattack against the BR, whose networks they progressively dismantled until the chief himself, Moretti, was apprehended in May 1981. In the interim, and notwithstanding the fanfare surrounding the celebrated anti-terrorism exploits of the *Carabinieri*, the BR had continued to strike at the usual targets repeatedly and no less violently than before. It was not until Moretti was caught that the BR somewhat changed course, surviving for roughly another year, this time under the direction of a personage no less intriguing than his predecessor. A criminologist of middling academic standing with allegedly disquieting connections to military intelligence,<sup>61</sup> Giovanni Senzani, presided over the brutal twilight of the organization. Since 1980, disillusioned terrorists had begun defecting in prison and revealing to the authorities the type of secrets that were enabling the latter to dismantle one at the time the columns of the organization. And as the political fight seemed all but lost, the BR focused their action on what seemed the last trumps in their deck: to push for prison reform, antagonize the DC in the South (i.e. Naples), and commit reprisals against (the family of the) defectors. It was such a dispersive master-plan that brought the BR for a certain period of time in 1981, amidst a further spree of killing and maiming, to detain three kidnapped individuals at once, one for each area of their late strategy: among them,

the brother of the first “*pentito*” (“repentant”) in the history of terrorism, Patrizio Peci, Roberto, who was subjected to a mock trial and executed in a dilapidated edifice in the outskirts of Rome. The entire ordeal was filmed and the snuff tape defiantly delivered to the inquiring magistrates. Senzani was arrested in January 1982. The timing was, indeed, uncanny: for it was exactly in those days, after martial law was imposed in Poland, that Enrico Berlinguer allegedly broke with the Soviet block for good; his party had been out of the National Solidarity for two years, but it was not until late 1981 that he appeared to have really given up on the hope of seeing Communism playing some kind of truly hegemonic role in Italy.<sup>62</sup> On the Left, it was patent, fortune was on the side of Euro-Socialism: the election of Mitterrand hinted that much. So it was that the Socialist leader Bettino Craxi was hailed as the man of the hour, bringing a semblance of order in the coalition play of the Christian-Democrats opposite a Communist Party presently on the wane. This came to pass in the biennium of 1983-84. In 1984 Berlinguer died. By the mid-eighties the BR were nothing but a bad dream, and gone with them, were the dismal “years of lead.”

## The Socio-political Dynamics of Mass Movements

Party Member A: [the financing of our organization by the Conservative Party] has allowed us only to act like gangsters; *they* win! At this rate [...], we'll end up like the filthy extra-parliamentarian rump of the Conservative Party, and our business will be to fix its dirty play! [...] I hate the strings attached. If it's only about mauling the Left [...], aren't the cops enough?  
Kenzaburō Ōe, *Death of a Young Militant*<sup>63</sup>

In order to draft a psycho-sociological theory of Italian terrorism, one may construe society as a physical system through which exceptional and cyclical spurts of violence may burst when essentially two sets of institutional barriers are weak and unstable. We assume that this critical pair of prophylactic devices against the onset of uncontrollable violence is constituted by the economic and political systems. One may think of these as “backstops” or alternatively as “diffusers,” depending on whether their protective functionality is active or failing. Moreover, to account for the exceptionality of the phenomenon a special generational timeline is needed, whereby historical happenings may be obtained as the periodical markers of successive waves of cohorts that bring with them change according to various sets of patterns (as in Ortega's scheme<sup>64</sup> of cumulative or polemical generations).<sup>65</sup>

This is to say that over the course of the *two* generations that followed WWII, at a time when the economy began to malfunction severely and the political establishment was dramatically sundered as a result, the pent-up acrimony accompanying the unsettled scores of Fascism and the war exploded with ruinously far-reaching effects. Italy's leaden

decade could thus be interpreted as the joint result of the impetus of *Zeitgeist* —1968 as the conspicuous postwar quake— coupled with the approaching end of Bretton Woods and Italy's unpreparedness in the face of it, and the collapse of the post-war political truce.

Admittedly, this was an occurrence that could have been predicted and dissected satisfactorily on the basis of the analytical implements already listed by Cesare Lombroso eighty years previously. First of all, if social upheavals are to be classed according to two exclusive categories, that is, either as “revolutions” or “seditions” (or “revolts”), the *anni di piombo* would indubitably fall within the latter, for they were merely the occasion — even if bloody, involved, and protracted— for a “localized” fight for power, and certainly not a drawn-out process tending toward a momentous institutional transformation. Seditions, said Lombroso, are “the fruit of an artificial incubation at an exaggerated temperature of embryos predestined to certain death.”<sup>66</sup> More specifically, revolts are rife in warm climates and within “senile peoples” that have come to grips with newfangled constitutional makeshifts; they are rife in such green, yet already fatigued societies, whose youths find themselves distempered by the overwhelming pressure put upon them to absorb an impossible cultural load wherewith to perform in a creased, impermeable economy mismanaged by a gerontocracy out of touch with everything. In this sense, seditions are the not infrequent harvest of industrial and financial crises, and, as a consequence, they tend to engross especially the (bourgeois-mass) elite, which may be counted on to avail itself of the support of the lower, delinquent strata: therefore, because they are the strategic affair of *one* class alone —in this story, of the upper and median bourgeoisie— and because this class's motives are foreign to any idealism, Lombroso saw seditions as utterly pernicious and *criminal* enterprises destined to abort or, at best, to succeed on by half.<sup>67</sup>

Otherwise, the Italian experience of the 1970s may be catalogued as a classic instance of Durkheimian anomie, featuring a *modern* collectivity coming unglued under the strain of technological and institutional change in concomitance with a perverse inflection of the moral order and of the Republic's wished-for sublimated sense of belonging —sense of belonging, which, in postwar Italy, however, had always been rather frail on account of the country's history of “geo-spiritual” divisiveness, so to speak. According to Durkheim, the conspicuous symptoms of this degenerate condition are the joint surge of homicides and suicides,<sup>68</sup> along with other forms of crime —both common and political—, all of which unfailingly occurred in Italy throughout this time.

The joust at the top, essentially between the Christian-Democrats and Communists (although it was presumably far more complex than a simple bipartite contest, and characterized by a greater number of transversal factions, whose composition mutated in keeping with the three phases of the leaden decade), generated the tension that animated concentric circles of political activity —from the upper bourgeoisie to the proletariat, and occasionally intersecting with the peripheral recesses of common delinquency and organized crime. This point of tangency with the “scum” of the underworld is obligatory to the extent that terrorism needs weapons and not all weapons may be had by robbing (private or military) armories:<sup>69</sup> this is an incidental confirmation of the institutionalized instrumentality of the *pègre* (the “gutter”) —as argued originally

by Georges Bataille and more notoriously in Foucault's Bataillean re-elaboration—,<sup>70</sup> which is deputized to serve in the Liberal system as provider of “dirty” services for the exigencies of the upper, “powerful” strata: namely, sex slavery, drugs traffic, illegal gambling, and logistics for political intrigue.<sup>71</sup>

The fight at the top, as said, is the affair of industrial and financial elites —“*i poteri forti*” (power's hardcore), as they are conventionally referred to by Italian publicists—, and it morphs into sedition when it percolates down to the wider concentric gears of the body social: the three levels of the dynamics of sedition are 1) the political Party, 2) the mass movement, and 3) the terrorist cell. The fermentation of revolt is effected chiefly in the second level, that of mass agitation. As it goes, the parties conduct the fight in complete *omertà*, acting as curators of the *poteri forti*, and, as is their profession, hiding their strategy behind the customary affectation of petty invective, placid body language, and ecumenical discourse. The role of the mass movement, as a whole, is crucial in this regard for it performs a twofold function: on the one hand, it obviously amplifies, in simple, coarse phraseology, the propagandistic platform of the party; and, on the other, it enhances the legitimacy and presentability of the Party itself the more aggressive and unrulier the deportment of its most extremist fringes. This effect is not counter-intuitive if it is borne in mind that the peculiar spectacle of the most frenzied sectarians of a movement intent on vilifying the institutional leadership of a *challenger* party for not being radical or revolutionary enough, is, in fact, produced for the almost exclusive consumption of this very party's potential electorate. In other words, it behooved the Communist Party —and even the MSI, for that matter— to “have” at the further end of its extra-parliamentarian appendages a recalcitrant and violent edge, which, in repeated public confrontations, the party organs and mouthpieces could disown in the most reprobative and condemning fashion. For a party de facto owned by Moscow, and thus instinctively suspected of duplicity by the conservative middle strata of society, the relentless browbeating of the thugs to its furthestmost Left in the name of national decorum and orderly conduct was an *ingratiating means to win votes at the center*.<sup>72</sup> The same approach, for a brief moment, had been tried with moderate success by the reformed fascists of the MSI after Piazza Fontana. They too, like the Communists, though on a much reduced scale, labored against a handicap —in their case that of the Fascist legacy— and like the Communists, hoped to play the card of intransigent integrity to boost their share at the booths: scourging the Neo-fascists putatively implicated in the bombing, and dismissing them as common delinquents and the desecrators of traditional values served the same polling objective. The PCI, as opposition party, possessed a logical advantage in reaping the electoral yield of a season of protest such as “1968,” but the disquieting shadow of the USSR, on one side, and the unwritten dictate of the Cold War —whereby the PCI was to be kept out of the governmental sphere of an American ally— on the other made the prospect of a bid to power by way of electoral success positively forbidding. Forbidding, but not impossible: the subsequent progression of the PCI should be sufficient evidence for hypothesizing that a policy of mollification of the USA (if not the direct interest of certain American factions themselves)<sup>73</sup> could have indeed smoothed the terrain for the contingent attainment of this goal in the mid- to late 1970s. Be that as it may, one may envision a large portion of these leftist mass movements “working,” for

the most part unknowingly, for the benefit of the Communist Party in the second intendment hereby exposed—i.e., again, by pushing the mother organization to the center, where it hoped to fish the votes of a disoriented middle-electorate. The incumbents, the Christian-Democrats, had no mass movement worthy of the name; they could muster crowds, but not in the regimented, para-militarized fashion in which the Left (and, for its limited part, the Right) could, and did. Nonetheless, given the patent difficulty with which the *democristiani* were seen steering through the crisis, they, too, profited considerably from the joint existence of truculent Red and Black radicals, whose “opposed extremisms,” as stated earlier, allowed the DC to push through by the strength of its appeal to moderation. And as this was the exclusive fight of the bourgeoisie, all the attention was perforce focused on the reaction of the middle-electorate to the shocks of the ongoing sedition. The more insidious question in this regard is whether it was not too risky to entrust a variable so vital as electoral share to the vagaries of a mass movement, especially to its violent vanguards, and more pointedly, whether there was not something strategically amiss in having, say, the *same* group of irreducible Reds inadvertently agitate for the benefit of the PCI —i.e., by pushing it to the center—, *as well as* of the DC —i.e., by scaring its traditional voters into corroborating their allegiance to the party of the Church. Possibly, if we assume that the evolution of such mass aggregations was too important to be left to their own exclusive and aleatory devices, this might be the factor that accounted for the ambiguous progression of Negri’s organization: his could have been “the movement on the Left” that indirectly facilitated the pro-government rally at the center, in combination, as ever, with the counter-heat of the Blacks, *and* that of Red competitors. And risky all of this certainly was, in every sense of the word, also considering that the propagandistic vicinity of these several segments of the Red protest with one another could eventuate, as it did, into the mobility of maverick units from one type of clan to the other and eventually into terror cells, thus escaping overhead tactical control when the offensive potential was highest.

From the mid-1970s on, the youths of [Negri’s newer groups], and a few of the veterans were founding new armed groups like pinballs, zinging and bouncing from *Prima Linea* into the BR, and fro. And this would go on repeating itself in a sort of infinite franchise.<sup>74</sup>

In 1978, the authorities counted 209 different groups on the extreme Left.<sup>75</sup>

The “Phase Transition” from mass agitation to terrorism is a critical passage with a micro-macro valence; this is to say more specifically that, after the time of protest has run its two-year course or so, the political and environmental setting (the macro dimension) is ripe for a *qualitatively different* progression of the fight, which necessitates the induction of an elite of former mass-radicals into the columns of terrorists groups. This switch represents a transition phase in that the respective status of each variable changes dramatically: as the Che Guevarist, Maoist or the Mussolinian street demonstrator turned into a full-time, salaried political assassin, yesteryear’s tumultuous *cortei* appeared to recede so as to allow the bombs to go off. At the individual level, one may gather the impression from the memoirs of several protagonists of this story that terrorist cells are

potentiated with a fresh inflow of political recruits whenever the latter feel that the participation in their respective mass movements is no longer meaningful, or that the “apprenticeship” is somehow concluded. But, in fact, the militant’s leap to the higher level of political commitment generally occurs *when his mass movement ceases to exist altogether*: it is the compulsion of *timing* —itself dictated by political exigency— that functions as the decisive trigger at this stage, and that thereby precipitates what could seem the outcome of a slow and intimate process of maturation.<sup>76</sup> The erasure of the original politicized group is what prompts the individual to face the fateful dilemma; whether he or she will go all the way or withdraw —by falling back upon private life, mainstream politics, or drifting into heroin addiction—<sup>77</sup> is a question that revolves on the person’s psychological characteristics (next section). What is here of interest is the link of this particular moment of personal choice with the circumambient sociological dimension of the sedition-in-the-making, i.e. the macro dimension. Ernst Jünger captured the essence of the mechanism:

Bakunin was right to consider [the sub-proletariat (*das Lumpenproletariat*)] a revolutionary entity far more efficacious [than the mass]. Its greater substantiality is also betokened by the fact that it avails itself of a genuine fighting style, which is that of the wolf-pack. Moreover, its rapport to pain, though negative, is nonetheless more poignant. The mass kills mechanically. The mass is swayed by moral impulses, forming itself in a clime of arousal and indignation, and it perforce needs to be convinced that the enemy is evil and that it is legitimate to aggress it. The sub-proletariat, instead, is intimately acquainted with the indulgence of torture. The sub-proletariat stands squarely outside the domain of moral valuations, and it is everywhere and at all times poised to strike as soon as the constituted order is, for whatever reason, shaken up. Therefore, it is also alien to the political sphere. One should rather construe it as some kind of subterranean reservoir at the perennial disposal of the events [...]. The short days, during which the mass eliminates its adversary, fill the cities with noise, but what comes after is something different, and more dangerous, and at such a time silence rules.<sup>78</sup>

This was written in 1934, yet it is remarkable to note how sensitively Jünger captured almost verbatim the troubled expectancy with which Italian militants would sense the coming of terror four decades later:

There was a diffuse sensation that the first phase of the movement —the creative and joyous phase of “students and workers united in the fight” [...] — was coming to an end. In the distance, the dust rose up as military machinery was set in gear; there was an air of vigil.<sup>79</sup>

Jünger’s sketch contains three important conceptual elements. First is the very individuation of the “sub-proletariat.” This is not to be derivatively understood in terms of the “class struggle,” but rather as a basic vital, or rather *violent* force —drawn indeed to a significant extent from the lower classes by but no means exclusively therefrom—,

which appears to be systematically factored into the tactical considerations of the political fight at an advanced stage. Sociologically, is it is the same construct as the Bataille/Foucauldian notion of “the rabble.” The individual embodiment of this collective force is the figure of the “*partisan*,” which will be dealt with in the next section. Second is the clear discrimination between the mindset of the mass, which is “moral” and obtusely “mechanical,” versus the subtler brutality of what is de facto a description of terrorist tactics. Notice how “the political,” i.e. the propagandistic centrality of the “friend/foe” contraposition, vanishes entirely in this transition from staged mass commotion to terrorism. This, again, is construed as a “refinement” of the preliminary, *yet by no means random*, maneuvers of street demonstration and factional invective: i.e. from “*coordinated*” rioting to silence —where the “coordination” is the tactical responsibility of the political leadership of the extra-parliamentarian Left, as was surmised by Carlo Casalegno, the vice-director of *La Stampa*, gunned down by the BR in 1977:

I have never believed that youth movements [...] were genuinely spontaneous, even if based on a genuinely spontaneous malaise: the geographical coordination, the tactical guerrilla warfare, the synchronized motion of the movements on one side, and an efficient paramilitary organization on the other; the flowing of militants from the extra-parliamentarian fringe (in fractious ebullience) into the spontaneous groups —all of this leads one to suspect the existence of cadres, fomenters, and coordinators [...]. [The spokespersons of the official mass movements] may disown the *autonomi* in word, and sometimes in deed; [yet for all that, they perfectly] know that the mobs of the *autonomi* have an alibi in their processions, a cover, a defense [...]; they know [how violent they are. Meanwhile, the judicial repression of the State is] rare, indulgent and slow.<sup>80</sup>

And third, the suggestion that because mass and sub-proletariat are two unalloyed and immiscible elements, the former must retreat whenever the latter is called into action. This seems to be confirmed by the experience of those militants (formerly “mass” elements) that adhered to all-consuming political soldiering: once in the “organization,” they never seemed capable, indeed, of reaching any position of true command, as this command always seemed to hang suspended above their heads, juggled by an elusive “Roman central”<sup>81</sup> or “Strategic Directorate” (BR),<sup>82</sup> which imparted orders with the oracular haughtiness of a veritable *État-major*. Indeed, seldom —if ever, had they all been candid enough to admit it in hindsight— did the foot-soldiers know or understand who their targets were and why exactly they were taking them down.<sup>83</sup>

As far as full-time political soldiering is concerned, it was by and large prompted, as mentioned above, by the dismantling of the mass militant’s movement: for instance when *Potop* was finished in 1973 and *Lotta Continua* in mid-1976, those willing to go on were the strong-arms of the security squads, and they happened to find the road to the BR, or later on to *Prima Linea*, paved right before them.<sup>84</sup> Likewise on the Right, Pierluigi Concutelli “resolved” to join the clandestine network shortly after the Ministry of the Interior denounced *Ordine Nuovo* as an overt reconstitution of the Fascist Party, and outlawed in 1973.<sup>85</sup>

In all such episodes, one may appreciate the periodicity with which the Jüngerian binary pattern—from mass outcry to organized terror— punctuates the several phases of the leaden season. In the *autunno caldo* (“the hot summer”) of 1968-69, the mass protesters had marched to slogans such as “*Uccidere un fascista non è reato*” (“To kill a fascist is no crime!”), and that season eventually elicited the terrorist machinations of 1969-74. As recalled by Giovanni Tamburino, one of the leading magistrates assigned to investigate Black subversion, looking into Piazza Fontana had been like taking the lid off Pandora’s Box: the inquest into the complexities of subversion, with its tangle of criminal brutality, intelligence chicane and governmental collusion, had, he said, afforded him a “glimpse into hell, which had left him petrified with horror.”<sup>86</sup> Analogously, the mass commotions of 1977 were followed by a four-year wave of intensified terrorist violence, which was dissipated in an effusion of murderous discharges—in society at large, amongst jailed terrorists settling scores, and in the lower depths of organized crime.

## Organization and Psycho-Sociology

### *The “Tactical Body”*

What is attempted in this section is a psycho-sociological cross-section of terrorism, and by that we intend, on the one hand, the joint description of 1) the emplacement of the terrorist cell within the body social and of 2) the cell’s individual composition (the “tactical body”); and the analysis of the socio-economic, attitudinal, and propagandized make-up of the “terrorist type,” on the other (“the profile of the political soldier”).

The terrorist organization is an organism generally wedged between the power elite and the masses. It is osmotically connected to these two bodies by three different sets of agents, two of them relaying it to the sphere of politics and the other to the “territory.” The liaisons with “power” are handled by “fiduciary lawyers” as far as judiciary procedure and the interface of *semi*-public relations are concerned, and by one or more “*partisan(s)*” for all matters of a clandestine nature. Logistically, on the other hand, the organization must rely on a network of sympathizers.

As hinted above, the “partisan” is the individual expression of the “sub-proletariat.” It is not Jünger’s literary invention, but a peculiar typology inspired by countless historical personages (e.g., the “infernal” Jevgenij F. Asev of “Nihilist Russia” comes to mind)<sup>87</sup>; it is an entity of crucial significance in the physics of power—one awaiting proper scientific appraisal.

Nowadays [the sub-proletariat] has taken to manifest itself in new forms, tentatively assuming the shape of political and military movements [...]. We cite in this connection especially the phenomenon of the partisan, which, presently, has shed to a large extent any residual social connotation. In keeping with his nature, the partisan is deployed for operations lying outside the remit of legal rules. He appears in the wake



of invading armies, assigned to the specific duties of espionage, sabotage and psyops. In the scenario of civil war, he fulfills analogous tasks. [...] That is why partisan fights are characterized by a singular ferocity [...]. Accordingly, the allegiance of the partisan is ever uncertain: it will always be impossible to establish whether he belongs to one party or its opposite, to the intelligence or the counterintelligence, to the police or [organized crime], or to all of these at the same time.<sup>88</sup>

For the survival of a terrorist cell, it is not difficult to see why the type of combat practiced by partisans in the arena of “non-orthodox” civil conflicts would need to be complemented by the mediatory services (communication, recruitment, penal counsel, etc.) of trusted lawyers on the boundaries of civil society. In this sort of environment and political match, the sanctioned screen of *confidentiality* afforded by the “lawyer-client” relationship is of the essence as it allows a high degree of shielded permeability between the clandestine and the official level: permeability of information, if not of physical movement in and out of the organization, or even recruitment,<sup>89</sup> in which case the premises of the firm may serve as the dispatching bureau. Designed as it is to protect, as well as to guarantee the sustenance of the terror cell on the procedural, institutional plane, the role of the lawyer is said to be complementary (as a rearguard with clearly delimited assignments) because any unwarranted overstepping of the advocatorial remit (i.e. by getting in too deep) would vitiate the legalistic pretense of his office, and thereby expose the organization. It is a fine (organizational) line, and crossing it may lead to dramatic outcomes, such as having to take one’s life, as did the Red lawyer, Edoardo Arnaldi after being exposed by the confessions of the first defector of the BR, Patrizio Peci.<sup>90</sup>

On the Left, personages such as Feltrinelli and especially Simioni seem to fit the profile of the partisan satisfactorily. On the Right, where the intoxicating presence of military intelligence was proverbial, the known operatives implicated in the bomb-season of 1969-1974 —officers, bureaucrats, ideologues, activists and publicists— may all be catalogued as partisans of one shade or another. The most famous of the lot is Stefano delle Chiaie,<sup>91</sup> Concutelli’s boss.<sup>92</sup> Retracing his time in prison, Concutelli (a ferocious assassin himself) offered a poignant glimpse of another such lesser, disquieting partisan:

There was with us even Bruno Cesca, an ex-cop who was locked up for train robberies—somebody to avoid like the plague: duplicitous, he belonged to that grey zone (in which State and anti-State went cheek-by-jowl). [Cesca] was a former member of the *Banda del Drago Nero* (Gang of the Black Dragon), an outfit made up of police officers. They were implicated in shady deals, in intox and covert operations, which were then systematically passed off as terrorist acts almost always imputed to Neo-fascist groups.<sup>93</sup>

Between the foot-soldiers and the partisan(s) stand the “military commanders,” all of whom, owing to their dangerous propinquity to the partisan depths, are perforce brought, to a significant degree, into the secret: an example on the Right is, again, Concutelli, and on the Left, the figures of Curcio, Moretti and Senzani are emblematic. In

fact, all three *brigatisti* —the consecutive leaders of the “three waves” of the BR— bear the mark of this highly compromising subalternity, as may be evinced by their respective implication in obscure episodes, perceptions and declarations surrounding their tenure: Curcio, for the egregious oath of secrecy he swore after his arrest as to the nature of his relationship with certain segments of the government,<sup>94</sup> and for the dubious underside to his 1975 escape from prison;<sup>95</sup> Moretti, for the Hyperion/international terrorist connection via Simioni,<sup>96</sup> and, of course, the hidden political jockeying<sup>97</sup> behind the exorbitant “*Operazione Moro*”; and Senzani, for the BR’s uncharacteristic incursion into the politics of the South (viz. the “Affaire Cirillo,” a kidnap and turbid shenanigan, which gave a piece of the action to local politicians, Mafiosi and spies),<sup>98</sup> and his unfathomed personal association with military intelligence. As for Negri, could he have been the partisan of “the Whites” — i.e., the schemer in professorial disguise, who, by fomenting the loosest forms of youthful wrath among his Red-clad patrician pupils, and thereby triggering systematically the unbridled response of the State, helped to prop up somehow the relative majority of the *democristiani* versus the onslaughts of the organized Left? Difficult to say: what is certain, however, is that to be defended and reckoned a most admired “friend,” as Negri was, by no less a personality than Francesco Cossiga<sup>99</sup> —an Anglophile pillar of the *democrazia cristiana* who was Minister of the Interior during the heaviest of the leaden years (1976-78) — is not exactly the sort of testimonial a true “Red radical” wishes to reap. As the Minister of the Interior who prided himself on instructing his forces to beat students “hard and proper,” Cossiga followed a basic method when it came to the mechanics of mass movements. This method bears out Casalegno’s idea that street riots are the coordinated installments of a coordinated fight with the State, which, as a rule, routinely backs off and affects leniency with a tactical view to counter-striking eventually. Cossiga himself would later expound:

First of all, leave high schools students alone [: too young. But let college students go on a rampage, instead]. Withdraw police forces from the streets and campuses, infiltrate the movement with agents provocateurs ready to employ any means and let the protesters run amok for a dozen days, ravaging stores, setting cars aflame and laying waste to the cities [...]. Thereafter, backed by public opinion, police forces should have no qualms in dispatching all [the militants] to the hospital —not arresting them, since the judge would let them out anyway, but beating them, and beating those lecturers that foment them.<sup>100</sup>

Negri was never touched, though he spent a spell in prison (1979-83), where he came to fear for his life when, at one point, he shared the premises with the *nucleo storico* (the founding members) of the BR, who confronted him threateningly. The *brigatista* Enrico Fenzi, a former academic and Dante scholar, witnessed all this, and recalled in his memoirs how impressed he was, not by Negri’s mastery of Anglo-saxon sociology, but by his command of an extraordinary mass of information, that is to say, by the very knowledge that infused the vast network from which he ultimately derived his power and prestige.<sup>101</sup>

In sum, the “tactical body” (the expression is Ortega’s)<sup>102</sup> of the terrorist cell is composed of 1) the fiduciary lawyers and partisans, whose liminal activity is filtered through 2) the commanders into 3) the military structure proper: the sergeants and foot soldiers. Individuals militating full-time in the BR, e.g., were referred to as “regulars,” who, in turn, might have been “clandestine” —i.e. living under false identity— or not. 4) As no terrorist activity is possible without sympathizers in the society at large, the BR, for its part, came to rely on a réseau of supporters —known as the “irregulars”<sup>103</sup> — for hideouts, supplies, and communication (roughly ten irregulars to each regular).<sup>104</sup> Rich patrons seemed to have been abundant in this sort of milieu, in fact. *Autonomia Organizzata* could likewise depend on the protection of elements of the crème —“*gli insospettabili*” (“those above suspicion”), they called them: intellectuals, lawyers, and doctors, and even the scion of a famous orchestra conductor or the rector of Milan’s Università Cattolica (!).<sup>105</sup>

### ***Profile of the Political Soldier***

Should I become a Left-winger and join the Communist Party? Would that solve my loneliness?

The way we pour our ideology into you is like pouring saké into a ready bottle.

Kenzaburō Ōe, *Seventeen*.<sup>106</sup>

The most pressing concern in the academic treatment of the psychology of terrorism seems to revolve around the assessment of a terrorist’s level of “normality.”<sup>107</sup> Confined as it is in the strictures of rational choice theory<sup>108</sup> and the inconclusiveness of the psychiatric incursions into this type of criminal domain,<sup>109</sup> what mainstream analysis seems to lack in this regard is a set of conceptual instruments that may give relief to the singular typology of the political soldier, especially one that does so by composing the various elements of the social environment in which terrorism is bred. For the task, we propose, therefore, to approach the issue of the psycho-sociological profile of the terrorist by looking in turn into his/her socio-economic base, spiritual make-up, and consequent mental, ideological structuration.

#### *Socio-economics*

Overall, a recent survey on Italian terrorism has accounted for the existence of 47 full-fledged armed organizations, 24 major and 23 minor ones. As a result, 4087 individuals were tried for subversive activities, 911 of whom as BR effectives. Eighty per cent of the whole were males, all of them very young: 45 per cent were below 25 years of age, and an additional 30 per cent below 30. Their level of instruction was mid-level: 75 per cent had a diploma, either from junior high, high school or college. It was mostly a phenomenon of the (industrialized) north.<sup>110</sup> And of the 911 members of the BR, 23.5 per cent were found to be industrial workers; 12.2 students; 2.9 unemployed; and 24.9 a mix

of skilled office and service employees, and teachers. Most interestingly, the working status of a group comprising 26.4 percent of the cohort proved to be unclassifiable.<sup>111</sup>

Therefore, socio-economically speaking, it appears that, barring a few eloquent quasi-exceptions (see below the cases of A. Casimirri and A. Donat-Cattin) —and, in particular, the highly privileged recruits from Negri’s entourage, whose impact was essentially confined to the preliminary, mass dynamics of political violence— *the class composition of Italian terrorism fell by and large within the middle and lower-middle range*. It is, therefore, misleading to insist as is frequently done in the literature, either on the predominance of proletarians<sup>112</sup> or on the sheer disparateness of social conditions<sup>113</sup> across the ranks of the Reds. As noted by Jünger in his discussion of partisan and sub-proletariat, these are entities that modernity has gradually de-saturated of any class connotation. In the final analysis, to state that terrorism is overwhelmingly a *mass*-phenomenon gestated “in the social mean” is tantamount to saying that class as an explanatory variable is insignificant. And that is, again, a vindication of Lombroso’s resection of the revolt, as the political spectacle of the “years of lead” was indeed the outward projection of a feud amongst bourgeois, which drew the soldiers of the terrorist escalation predominantly from the lower middling rungs of the mass protest.

#### *Spiritual countenance*

So who were the Reds? From what sort of families did they come, these soldiers? To say that terrorism was, socially speaking, virtually faceless, is not to imply, however, that these youths were all deviant expressions of maldigested privilege; quite the opposite, in truth: the degree of professional “de-qualification” and uprootedness was very high among them,<sup>114</sup> as was the concomitant alienation, which took the form of a hyper-sensitive revulsion for what they saw as the spiritual decrepitude of the Italian Republic. Though the pattern is by no means consistent, it appears that the chief mythological currents that accompanied their first steps toward the armed struggle were the radical anarchism of Christ and the legends of anti-fascist Resistance:<sup>115</sup> i.e., an aberrant variant of the mix, typically Latin, of Catholic devoutness and Leftist militancy. Within the sub-culture of the mass movements, these elements, said one former militant, would be regurgitated as “ideals worthy of a paleo-Christian community, soon seasoned with inordinate pot-smoking.” “But, at least” he added, “we were innocent folk, naïve: losers (*sfigati*), jackasses (*casinisti*), halfway between political activism and radical-chic posing.”<sup>116</sup> Or consider the original line-up of *Lotta Continua*’s security division, which, in the terse description of a recruiter, consisted of “a few students, a few pissed-off workers, three female comrades, a young anarchist thief.”<sup>117</sup> And then there were the “sons of.” Marco-Donat Cattin was a former member of *Lotta Continua* who joined *Prima Linea*; Carlo, his father, was one of the Republic’s most powerful politicians, and several times minister. Alessio Casimirri, instead, is known to have been one of the men in the BR commando that carried out the kidnap of Aldo Moro; he came from *Potop*, and was the son of the PR chief of the Vatican.<sup>118</sup> Pondering over these extraordinary instances of filial betrayal, a publicist wondered: “[as sons of high-ranking figures of the Republic], would it not have been possible for them, in the shadow of their father, to become ambassadors, politicians [...]; or, poets, clowns, hermits? Why terrorists?”<sup>119</sup> Why, indeed.

These testimonial fragments are not merely illustrative and the last question is not rhetorical: there looms behind this jumble of odd, yet not so disparate characters a precise sociological manifestation that may be outlined by means of a simple typology of society's main forms of spiritual make-up. The categorization is based on Thorstein Veblen's classic distinction between the "peaceable" (workmanlike) and the "predatory" (barbarous) spiritual drifts on the one hand, and "tenacity of purpose" on the other. In other words, individuals may be respectively divided into two main groups: those in whom dominates "the instinct of group solidarity" (i.e. "conscience," and "peaceability"), "including the sense of [...] equity"; and those in whom dominates, instead, "unremitting emulation and antagonism between classes and between individuals." When this dimension —the spiritual drift— is combined with that of "tenacity of purpose," we obtain four basic types: i.e., conscientious/tenacious, conscientious/non-tenacious (CnT), barbarous/tenacious, and barbarous/non-tenacious. Instances of these types are respectively: the enlightened engineer, the "indolent, good-for-nothing fellow," the corporate raider or the politico, and the "lower-class delinquent."<sup>120</sup>

Now, one can see that all the epithets and stock characters — viz. "naïve," "young anarchist thief," "losers," "de-qualified," "hermit" versus "politician," etc. — evoked thus far to convey the particular atmosphere of the space inhabited by the activist/terrorist unmistakably converge toward one category, that of the CnT. Terrorists are not common delinquents for they have ideals and a strong sense of "conscience," but they share with lower-class criminals a low level of tenacity, or low "consistency of aim," which precipitates in them an overpowering rush for resolute action. Yet this characterization is still not discriminating enough for "clowns" and "hermits," indeed, are also peaceable non-tenacious types. Again, the question remains what brings a subject of an indolent and conscientious cast to commit murder. At least one additional dimension, beside spiritual drift and tenacity of purpose, is therefore required to map the spiritual make-up of the terrorist. And Lombroso, in a splendid portrayal of the average rebel, whom he labelled the "occasional transgressor" (*reo per occasione*), brought the features of this protagonist into sharper focus, offering a hint, moreover, that the decisive psychological spring prompting the subject to action might be lurking precisely behind the deceptive veil of his "normality":

[Occasional transgressors] are honest citizens, forced to contravene laws that are impossible to obey, or led on to revolt by the wiles of capable leaders and by vain hopes. [...] However, neither the wiles of the leaders, nor the influence of the environment or of the occasion, would be so efficacious as to shatter in these occasional criminals the [conservative attachment to life] that is so potent in [the mass-individual] and so duly lubricated by the Draconian laws of governments, especially if despotic, if their organism had not been already predisposed. These are, in fact, men that have, to a faint degree, the [revolutionary élan] of geniuses and the altruism of saints (*i passionati*), without the ingenuity of either. They are special personalities, whose principal psychological trait is the inadaptability to the social environment — inadaptability fuelled by a frantic desire for the better, a slight hyperesthesia that magnifies to their eyes the true evils, and [...] by a craving for adventure [and] for danger, which impels them into the most reckless

of stunts. Their strength resides in their moderate intelligence. The salient physical feature of the occasional political criminal is *normality*, the absence of any degenerative factor.<sup>121</sup>

The profile of the would-be terrorist thus emerges in clearer detail. It is undoubtedly a CnT type —“honest,” idealistic and emotive— highly susceptible to charismatic appeal, inclined to adventurism, and, overall, remarkably average, ordinary. But there is more; beyond the run-of-the-mill mediocrity of this grouping, Lombroso detected an emotional tug-of-war between an instinctive life-conserving recoil on one side and the pull of some kind of *dissipative* bent on the other. And it is within this tension that the third dimension is to be found: it is a *proneness to self-sacrifice*, hence to death —and murder. As known, Georges Bataille erected a rich sociological system on the very notion of sacrifice, which he cast as the ultimate discriminant of humanity: it was for him the desire of “gifting oneself without compensation” that, more than anything, sets humans apart from animals, and that, in times of religious and/or bellicose upheaval, dredges up from theretofore “quiet” communities (political) soldiers and martyrs (Lombroso’s *“passionati”*), ready to pour their life-blood on the altars of conflict in view of victory or ultramundane glory. The tug-of-war corresponds to what Bataille’s designated as the “law of coincidences”: i.e., the loss of blood in exchange for the gain of victory —a meeting of two opposite forms of “avidity,” or conversely of “prodigality.”<sup>122</sup> Such prodigality, in fine, may expend itself in murder, as it happens for the terrorist, who knows his criminal trajectory to be but a circuitous way to find death at the hands of the enemy (the State) repeatedly provoked. Hence Lombroso’s further characterization of political criminals as “indirect suicides”: men possessed of a “morbid, exaggerated altruistic sense,” which distinguishes them, on the other hand, from “the saddest of all selfish people in the world,” i.e., common delinquents.<sup>123</sup>

The grafting of the self-sacrificing pulsion (or death-instinct) to Veblen’s economic model yields eight different types:

- 1) Barbarous/Tenacious/Life-conserving: the “Captain of Finance”/ Politician;
- 2) Barbarous/ Tenacious /Death-prone: *Condottiere*-like Leader;
- 3) Barbarous/ Non-tenacious /Life-conserving: Low-class Delinquent;
- 4) Barbarous/ Non-tenacious /Death-Prone: “the Bandit”;
- 5) Conscientious/ Tenacious/Life-conserving: “the Enlightened Scientist”;
- 6) Conscientious / Tenacious/Death-Prone: the Martyr, the Saint;
- 7) Conscientious / Non-tenacious/Life-Conserving: “the Drop-out”;
- 8) Conscientious/Non-tenacious/Death-prone: the “Political Soldier,” the Terrorist.

Drawn as he was, by temperament, to the sacrificial/self-sacrificing type, Bataille occupied himself extensively with the psychological realm of mystics, murderers, and sanguinary knights: men of “transgression,” he dubbed them, men of “tragedy.”<sup>124</sup> It is fascinating in this regard to hear in retrospect a Black assassin like Concutelli speak of himself as a “transgressive,” formerly part of an exiguous minority called on to make “tragic choices”: in the heat of the endless street fights, “I convinced myself,” he recounted, “that my fate was to die.”<sup>125</sup> Even more forthright was Mario Tuti, Concutelli’s

erstwhile brother-in-arms, and co-designated henchman for the execution in prison of two Black “traitors” (that, too, Concutelli would later ruminated, “the outcome of a tragic mentality”): “among ourselves,” Tuti affirmed, “we talked about revolution, but it was a pretext. In reality, what we wanted was just to die. We wanted to immolate ourselves, but this was a notion that was hard to convey.”<sup>126</sup> There seems to be little doubt that among Blacks, possibly in light of their ideological insubstantiality (see next subsection), the appetite for blood and the preoccupation with death seemed to have been more acute. With its beckoning emphasis on physical prowess, martial arts, and imperial hierarchy, the Neo-fascist nest was a logical attractor for a kind of perturbed youthful exuberance (Bataille’s “*le trop-plein juvénile*”) that tends to be strongly related to an anguished rapport with one’s own sexual appetite. It is this inner tumult that Kenzaburō Ōe attempted to anatomize in his *éducation sentimentale* of a Right-wing terrorist, *Seventeen*. This *Instinct de Mort*—thus was entitled the first autobiography of France’s most famous “bandit” of the 1970s, Jacques Mesrine—had to be very much alive in all those (especially Black) droves of hard-hitting youths that became sadly famous throughout the 1970s; and in some of them, it was so acuminate as to discharge itself masochistically with manifest, underlying suicidal intent.<sup>127</sup>

What of these far fewer Blacks, then? Who were *they*?

Pitted against the subverters of the status quo—subverters of family values above and beyond all political stakes—stand the custodians of tradition, the paladins of the return to order. The sinews of this radical Right are made up of a few hundreds of men between 25 and 35 years of age: too young to have fought in the RSI and too old to be dazzled by the utopias of the sixty-eighters; they see themselves as the heirs to paganism, the spiritual offspring of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. As aristocrats of the spirit, they are sensitive to the ancestral call of blood rites [...], and they consider hierarchy the cornerstone of the State.<sup>128</sup>

Despite the esoteric, high-principled, and agathological pretensions in their midst, it seems evident that the Blacks, in light of their somewhat more unhinged rapport with cruelty (though the Reds could act no less savagely), are in a league of their own. Although they may be, preliminarily and without undue strain, classed into the same peaceable/non-tenacious/death-prone category as the Reds, their aggressive machismo and hierarchical fixation (which disappears in the NAR, however) is nonetheless somewhat at variance with the instinct of group solidarity and the sense of equity that originally informed the Red aggregations. The differentiation between Blacks and Reds in point of spiritual drift is especially noticeable in the instinctive reaction of both to the eventuality of having to break the so-called “barrier of the extra-legality,” i.e., of becoming “criminals,” by robbing banks or killing. Concutelli averred that he crossed the barrier with enormous recalcitrance,<sup>129</sup> which is believable yet puzzling considering how fairly contiguous Black subversion has traditionally been to organized crime.<sup>130</sup> Both, in

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<sup>126</sup> *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Mussolini’s pro-German regime created in the aftermath of the Armistice, 23/9/1943.

fact, are extra-legal outfits committed to the violence-driven imposition of hierarchized order —the Mafia serving as the State’s full-time arbiter/enforcer in the pauperized areas, Black terrorists, on the other hand, as the manipulable phalanx of loyalist expendables in times of sedition. Concutelli’s highly deferential deportment in prison vis-à-vis Mafia bosses<sup>131</sup> bears out unambiguously the greater spiritual affinity, and thus vicinity of the Blacks to the “barbarous” divide of the model, which is not at all to signify, however, that Blacks and Mafiosi are sociologically identical: Concutelli, stressed how he, too, was a “sworn man” but not to the *onorata società*, yet to *Ordine Nuovo* —and, obviously, that allegiance meant for him that there existed a clear, possibly not unbridgeable yet nonetheless concrete spiritual demarcation between his clan and *cosa nostra*.<sup>132</sup>

The Reds, for their part, appeared far more uncomfortable not with the commission of crime per se but with being *perceived* as, i.e. mixed up as a result with, either common criminals or mobsters:<sup>133</sup> it was as if they feared that “the public,” the “masses” should forget that they, the Reds, were the ones with lofty aspirations. At first, when he came in close contact with *mafiosi* in prison, Patrizio Peci of the BR, fully disapproving of those comrades who had set out to conceive outlandish plans to “politicize” ordinary delinquents,<sup>134</sup> sought to enforce a spiritual apartheid between himself and the convicts issued from lower-class delinquency: “I was convinced that we had nothing to share with them,” he wrote in his memoirs, “that we shouldn’t confuse *roles*.” Peci was nonplussed that a southern don of the Milanese Mob, whom he eventually befriended, regarded crime as a perfectly legitimate instrument of personal emancipation, and thought thereby the “politicals,” as he was wont to deride them, an absurd and therefore positively inferior criminal breed to his own: his “world [was] upside down,” mused Peci.<sup>135</sup> In any event, for all the trumpeted values of Communism and despite what Peci might have believed about the complete equality of male and female terrorists in the BR,<sup>136</sup> machismo and a masculine predilection for hierarchy seemed to have been prevalent also among the Reds (starting at the mass movement level):<sup>137</sup> indeed, a great many of the women who became terrorists did so for love, by following “their man” in the organization,<sup>138</sup> as had done the most famous and inspiring of such “*passionate*,” Margherita (“Mara”) Cagol, Curcio’s wife, killed in an ambush by the *Carabinieri* in June 1975.

In sum, this discussion has dealt with the expanded axis of “non-tenaciousness,” which comprises four subdivisions: the terrorist, the low-class delinquent, the bandit and the drop-out. By further splitting the terrorist type into Red and Black we obtain, along this axis, a spiritual progression from the blandest non-belligerence of the drop-out to the militant violence of the Red terrorist; and from the suicidal rage of the Black soldier to the blinkered greed of the low-class criminal (ghetto- and organized crime), by way of the dreams of *grandeur* of the metropolitan “bandit.” It is a continuum; and it is intriguing to observe how —as they crossed paths in jail—<sup>139</sup> one segment of this continuum sized up and judged the other, quibbling on ideology, “roles,” or one’s putative “superiority,” all of them being, however, “very similar.” And no cameo can illustrate more vividly this common thread of non-tenacity running through an extremely diverse (spirit-wise) yet coherent collection of criminological specimens than that scene from Fenzi’s diary, in which he, the educated one, right before bedtime, narrates aloud



translating from the French the fantastic attack on the Canadian jail in Jacques Mesrine's autobiographical *Instinct de Mort* to his fellow-BR cell-mate Vannino Chiti, who listens transfixed, dazzled by the superhuman courage of the "great" French bandit.<sup>140</sup>

### *Vocation, Propaganda, Enmity*

In his memoirs, titled *Io l'infame* ("I, the Rat") —one of the central texts in the history of Italian terrorism—Patrizio Peci lists the four factors that in his opinion made him into a terrorist: *clime*, i.e., the political post-1968 mass-polarization of Red vs. Black; (fanatical) *belief* in communism; *environment*, i.e. the metropolitan battlefield of Milan, the industrial capital of the country; and *economics*, i.e., either unemployment of the intolerable prospect of a sub-human existence at the assembly line. This is the macro-setting; what is needed, eventually, to ignite within a temperamentally receptive character the passion that would push him or her into the armed struggle is a series of inciting political incidents, such as those caesuras in the stream of mass-level violence described by Jünger. Once underground, the prospect of the clandestine fighter changes into a full-scale strategy tri-articulated into: armed propaganda, military deployment, and revolution.<sup>141</sup> This broad picture accords with the sociological outline that we have presented above by composing concepts by Ortega, Lombroso and Durkheim. In the domain of individual typologies, we have shown how the political foot soldier originates in a specific zone (CnT) within the psycho-sociological space defined by tenacity, spirit and sacrificial bent. And we also know that the soldier is invariably *young* —e.g., the late post-1977 wave of Black terrorism was manned by 18-year olds (the so-called "*magnifici pazzi*,"<sup>142</sup> "the magnificent crazies"): any 30-plus year old commander looked old, "positively ancient" to the average recruit.<sup>143</sup> There remains, then, to explore the *mind-set* of this youthful specimen of a morbidly non-tenacious and conscientious human-type — i.e., his thought-process from fiery inception to disillusioned maturity. The logical facet of the terrorist personality is here introduced by tapping the guiding notions of "averageness" and the early sentiment of "devoutness."

Devoutness in the sense of "belief in an inscrutable propensity"<sup>144</sup> (which for the Reds was "revolution") is a discursive by-product of the sacrificial instinct stressed by Bataille, and one of the key marks of affinity between revolutionists and religious agitators: several *brigatisti* drew the comparison themselves, speaking, as would seminarians<sup>145</sup> and nuns, of their "monastic,"<sup>146</sup> "shitty"<sup>147</sup> lifestyle, and of their "taking vows."<sup>148</sup> Again, it was not a "process" that made them terrorists, but a *calling*, which through a particular process —from student activism to mass-movement —finally led them to terrorism.<sup>149</sup> It seems to have been a matter of vocation: Fenzi, for instance, spoke of self-discovery,<sup>150</sup> Concutelli of some kind of epiphany while gazing upon a pro-Fascist graffito,<sup>151</sup> Peci of having "the knack for it" ("*mi sentivo portato*"),<sup>152</sup> and Susanna Ronconi (BR and then PL) of discovering "the staggering sensation of siding with the weak," but with "force."<sup>153</sup>

Yet, deep down, despite the alluring similitude with the sacred precinct of religious sentiment, there was inside the organization an air of inauthenticity, of bureaucratized factuality that voided the terrorist militancy of any heroic idealism: Peci reckoned he was happy not to have made it into "the executive," considering in retrospect

the “mediocrity and baseness” of the leading commanders.<sup>154</sup> But if the BR leaders were mediocre, the rank-and-filers were no better: they, too, were all “normal” people of “average intelligence.” If there was anything, Peci concluded, that set terrorists apart from the rest of their mediocre equals in society it was a common “spirit of adventure.”<sup>155</sup> And so we return to Lombroso’s depiction of the “occasional criminal,” with his spiritual and intellectual modesty, craving for adventure, and impressionability by devious and charismatic chieftains, such as, say, Renato Curcio, who passed off as a “mystic,”<sup>156</sup> but was in truth only a travesty thereof. And such manifest lack of “genius” among clandestine commanders is for Lombroso the unmistakable symptom of the *sedition* nature of the conflict at hand, because in revolts it is the environment that fashions its leaders, by accident (“*per occasione*”), as it were, and not the other way around (i.e. the mark of genius).<sup>157</sup>

What emerges from this generalized state of mediocrity seems a confirmation of Ortega’s thesis of the *Revolt of the Masses*: namely, that the modern individual is a homogenized and profoundly uncultured being, possessed nonetheless of an achieved sense of moral faultlessness and a degree of self-confidence, unparalleled in history, which derives from a prehensile mastery of the technological apparatus. Sociologically, a teeming collectivity of such mass-units takes the form of a “hyper-democracy” (or Pareto’s “ochlocracy”).<sup>158</sup> In hyper-democracy, mass-men are entitled to “intervene” into everything, and convey their will accordingly by means of an elusive wave-live force — the “public opinion” — whose raw vector is “violence.” The daunting question, as ever, is that of defining what public opinion is, and how it exactly comes about—that is, explanations tend to oscillate between three positions: either public opinion is entirely shaped by (external) propagandists; or it forms through an idiosyncratic, collective digestion of information from outside; or, rather, by a mere coalescence of individual viewpoints. Though Ortega wished to fashion a combination of all three propositions, he leaves the issue unsolved, opting in the final analysis for the first one, and claiming that in our contemporary setting opinion is perforce “pumped into” mass-man.<sup>159</sup> Jacques Ellul in his landmark opus, *Propaganda*, refined the answer by stressing how propaganda no longer plays the discursive, manipulative role it did in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. It is something altogether different, and presently far more ominous; one could say it is the very language of modernity. Yet not a “language” in the acceptance of an evolved idiom, but rather a self-contained speechifying set designed to *prompt mass-men to action*. Its use, therefore, is no longer centered on altering the imaginal perception of (one or more) groups guided by characteristic and traditional thought-forms, but on swaying, instead, swarms of mass-individuals, who have been disconnected from all communal or clan ties. Contents and their articulation have become virtually irrelevant; what matters is the *suggestiveness* of the propagandistic themes themselves. Hence propaganda’s obsessive insistence on “freedom” and “individualism”: as a mass society comprises by definition spiritually uprooted subjects—i.e., *individuals*—, the message must cater to their sense of existential alienation. These “individuals, on the other hand, because they feel entitled to “deliberate” on everything (politics, economics, science, foreign policy, etc.), but are apprehensively aware of understanding nothing thereof, are all the more *keen* to receive the message (preferably in pseudo-scientific garb) and *act* upon it.<sup>160</sup>

The individual who burns with desire for action but does not know what to do is a common type in our society.<sup>161</sup>

For propaganda to take effect, it must be prefaced by a constant work of “sub-propaganda” that takes the twofold form of “conditioning” (i.e. habituation through buzzwords, slogans, sound-bites, etc.) and mythologizing, i.e. the provision of surrogates that appeal to the yearning for the “sacred” of the disoriented mass-man —surrogates such as totems, religion, (aesthetic) ideals, cult-personalities, progress, revolution, etc. But such myths always come in antagonistic pairs; the speechifying flow systematically bifurcates into the foe/friend contraposition, revealing thereby the *political* essence of propaganda.<sup>162</sup> Black vs. Red, East vs. West, Christian vs. Muslim, etc. The partisan engagement, therefore, reveals how power may organize itself through a polarization of society by providing the masses with a parlance designed to sublimate their feeling of impotence into a form of militant earnestness. The repetitious suggestion of *freedom’s* superlative merits works to this effect as an emboldening, fanaticizing push for masses consumed by impatience to believe they are joining a grassroots movement through their own exclusive volition.<sup>163</sup> In our story, the more artificial template was that of “Fascism” —with its accompanying myths of “Imperium” and *Romanitas*— against which the multitudinous movement of the *antifascist* Reds could sculpt itself, no less propagandistically, as the standard-bearers of equality, freedom, and peace. This system of hate-inducing Esperanto effects a tacit legitimation of political violence and, via the self-reinforcing mechanism of “devout” allegiance, readies the terrain for a clash of durable length: once embarked on it, no there is no going back. It is indeed, curious to observe that in 1961, a year before Ellul aphorized that “Propaganda is the true remedy for loneliness,”<sup>164</sup> the protagonist of Kenzaburō Ōe’s *Seventeen*, wonders whether joining the Communists would cure him of his loneliness and *mal-de-vivre*. But he doesn’t, as some kind of indefinable, archetypal attraction to the “Self-Defence-Force” gradually pulls him, instead, to the other side of the fence, among the nostalgics of Japan’s Imperial era. It is understood that propaganda “must be tailored to the type of man to be reached,”<sup>165</sup> but there remains to explain why, wherever sedition raged in the 1970s, the majority rallied to the Reds and only a sparse minority to the Blacks; what made a “ready bottle” different from the other?

The source of this dualistic split is a mystery. Political philosophers such as Carl Schmitt,<sup>166</sup> and Julien Freund after him,<sup>167</sup> perceived this basic bellicose, clannish appetite as something so elemental as to invest it with aprioristic dignity: the aboriginal friend/foe antagonism is to them the very essence of “*the political*.” It is a given, and it seems to work on several different, interconnected levels, of which the physical clashing of young, politicized “thugs” is, for all intents and purposes, the lowest. Whatever its psycho-physiological fount, the antagonistic pulsion appears to be awakened, and thereafter stimulated by the formulaic lingo of propaganda, whose particular dynamics, in the final analysis, entails two orders of effects. First, propaganda is diffused and structured in such a way as to take full possession of the discursive space, which can only be done by crowding out entirely the sphere of individual thinking.<sup>168</sup> In the case of Italian terrorists,

judging from the testimonies of, say, Concutelli (“in those days, we shot first, and thought afterwards,”)<sup>169</sup> and Susanna Ronconi (“I [didn’t] think much; I organize[d] and work[ed] hard”),<sup>170</sup> this labor of brain-stilling seems to have been accomplished effectively. Second, because temperamental differences at the individual level are far too many, public opinion must operate “on a plane of unreality,”<sup>171</sup> which is to say that propaganda perforce feeds it symbolisms, mythologized history, and rhetorical imagery that are entirely assembled with the syntax of make-believe. Propaganda comes out as a series of screenwriting instalments.

The politicized fight of post-1968, pitting Reds against Blacks is a poignant illustration of these principles. Former Reds recall that polarization, the catechismal hatred for the “Black, fascist pig” as a sort of “initiation rite,”<sup>172</sup> as a “pedagogical”<sup>173</sup> induction: inebriated with the anti-fascist myths of the Communist Resistance, the bruisers came of violent age, reading and thinking little yet trouncing much in the maneuvers of the *cortei* and of the security patrols.<sup>174</sup> Giusva Fioravanti of the NAR wondered in this regard whether the Neo-fascist scare had not been, in fact, wholly fabricated to offer the Left a “monstrous” foil of choice, which the Communist Party could demonize in order to boost its electoral strategy.<sup>175</sup> Fabricated or not, each time they were provoked, the Blacks “stupidly” fell for it, Concutelli noted: thus it was, that “enmity” in Italy’s “private war” was exacerbated to a pathological degree.<sup>176</sup> The State, for its part, fuelled a propitious clime of tension by *provoking* both camps, especially the Reds, as seen with the unwarranted arrest of Curcio immediately after Piazza Fontana, and by resorting to the traditional technique, cited by Lombroso, of arousing the hyperesthesia of the “occasional criminals” with outrageous tales of persecution, such as the “legend of the anarchist martyrdom”<sup>177</sup> —which was exactly what was served to the audiences with the framing of Valpreda and the mysterious, “accidental” death of Pinelli, again, in the aftermath of Piazza Fontana.

*In the sweep of modern propaganda, ideology no longer plays any role.*<sup>178</sup> There exists no clash of worldviews, or of convictions: the political match is played, instead, by appealing to primal instincts via a montage of fictive narratives and iconographic material drawn from a selective parsing of the annals. Negri’s movement offers a blatant case in point. His “autonomous” nebula took on a slew of appellations, all them marked with the Leftist stamp, in which the “the worker” was given symbolic centrality (*operaio*, *operaismo*, etc.). Yet the movement had *no* workers,<sup>179</sup> except a handful, who used to fall asleep whenever the “ideologues” talked theory.<sup>180</sup> The situation was so incongruous that Negri had to tweak the orthodox letter of his “Marxist” exegeses by coining the socially-stretched category of the “*operaio-massa*”<sup>181</sup> or “*operaio-sociale*,”<sup>182</sup> which he sketched to make (theoretical) room for his hate-mongering, upper- and middle-class proselytes: this was propaganda-in-progress. *Potop*’s proselytes, on the other hand, thought their maestro an exalted genius and a “rockstar,”<sup>183</sup> and the message they received, though couched in the wilfully muddled<sup>184</sup> palaver of Neo-Marxian glossology, had nothing to do with class struggle, or Marxism for that matter.<sup>185</sup> What lay encoded under the verbiage of Negri’s books or of Guattari’s and Deleuze’s *Anti-Œdipe*,<sup>186</sup> another of *operaismo*’s bibles, was the (then and still) fashionable Bataille/Foucauldian incitation to destructive play and obstreperous recalcitrance for their own sake. This sort of gospel —which Michel

Foucault was then publicizing in France also through his conspicuous activism on behalf of asylum and prison inmates—<sup>187</sup> was taken seriously by the terrorists of *Prima Linea*. These wished to “live solely in the present,” and in a state of “perennial warfare,” whereby they could dispense their curative form of “sensible violence” versus the “senseless” violence that courses everyday through society.<sup>188</sup> This is exactly the type of propagandized jargon one would expect to hear from a death-prone CnT type. Such a stance explains moreover how the men and women of PL distinguished themselves from those of the BR, whose politics and “strict Marxist line” the former rated rigid, obsolete, and “absolutely idiotic.”<sup>189</sup>

When it was all over —and as they had outgrown their youthful political stupor— virtually all terrorists of all hues admitted complete defeat. The Reds acknowledged that at no point was there ever such a thing as the revolutionary potential of the working class (an “illusion”), for this very proletariat was part and parcel of the same obtuse and self-seeking mass-assemblage of modernity.<sup>190</sup> The Blacks, on the other hand, confessed that they had cheated, never having believed for an instant they could revolutionize anything:<sup>191</sup> it had been their “jealousy”<sup>192</sup> for the “soldierly sacrifice” of the late *Repubblichini* that had thrown them into this insane death-wishing scrimmage.<sup>193</sup> And, in the final analysis, all of them came to recognize *how so very alike they were*. Beset by a chronic complex of inferiority, the Blacks could not help admiring the flamboyance of the Reds,<sup>194</sup> and especially of the BR: Concutelli was in awe of Moretti, and remains convinced to this day that they, like the Communist fighters, wanted, as youths, “the same things,” namely the violent toppling of a regime that had disgraced “identity, values and ideas.” Had history allowed it, the Fascist Concutelli would have even contemplated offering military support to the BR for the final push against the Republic (!).<sup>195</sup> And this whole business of thrashing their Red equals in neighbourhood scuffles for the propagandistic sake of “anti-communism” had been for Delle Chiaie “an idiocy,” “a ridiculous stratagem to keep [them] busy and scramble what, [in his opinion] should have been the true objectives.”<sup>196</sup> It was not surprising, therefore, that at various times during the decade (especially after 1977) timid advances were attempted (without results, however) from both banks of the torrent to seal “scandalous pacts,” “weird alliances with the others.”<sup>197</sup> That it should have been so is a logical consequence of the pervasive, barbarizing homogenization of society: in it, all vestigial forms of traditional civilization perish as simulacra, inorganic replicas, whose effects evidently wear off as soon as macro climactic conditions (politics and *Zeitgeist*) and particular micro psycho-physiological faculties (the youthful susceptibility to self-sacrificing action) cease to operate. It is, in sum, one of the many strange expressions of mass society, as pointed out by Ortega:

Conservative and radical are nonetheless mass, and the difference between them —which at every period has been very superficial— does not in the least prevent them both being one and the same man —the common man in rebellion.<sup>198</sup>

More specifically, the “common man/[woman] in rebellion” is, we have said it, a dead-prone CnT type. Once incarcerated, many such types “matured”: not few of them became intimate with their former persecutors (police and *Carabinieri* officers, and jailers), and, more significantly, they did so, too, with ex-terrorists from the opposite side when destiny placed them in close contact with one another. Thus, true companionships between former enemies did bloom in prison. A public still frazzled by the propagandistic din of the 1970s could not quite comprehend how Francesca Mambro (NAR) and Nadia Mantovani (BR) could have bonded so strongly as to have become inseparable.<sup>199</sup> Similarly, Patrizio Peci took a strong liking to the Neo-fascist Aldo Tisei, who had been one of Concutelli’s men. Peci averred that there were indeed “unpleasant commonalities” between their respective experiences: the Reds, he recapitulated, believed in collectivism and wanted to educate the masses; the Blacks, instead, worshipped hierarchy and were bent on toppling the State. The ones had been pawns of the PCI, the others, of the secret services. But now it was all done with, and they were friends —although truth be feistily told, these Blacks, politically speaking, always “seemed to us,” concluded Peci, a pack of “far out” “cretins.”<sup>200</sup>

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- <sup>71</sup> Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 282.
- <sup>72</sup> Amedeo Lanucara, *Berlinguer segreto. Carriera e lotta interna al PCI* (Roma: Telesio, 1978), 149.
- <sup>73</sup> Flamigni, *Le Idi di Marzo*, 37.
- <sup>74</sup> Calogero, Fumian and Sartori, 48.
- <sup>75</sup> Tessandori, 101.
- <sup>76</sup> John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 80 and ff.
- <sup>77</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 199.
- <sup>78</sup> Ernst Jünger, "Über den Schmerz," in *Blätter und Steine* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlaganstalt, 1934), 187-188.
- <sup>79</sup> Grandi, *Insurrezione armata*, 179.
- <sup>80</sup> Vecchio, 103-104.
- <sup>81</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 83.
- <sup>82</sup> Tessandori, 290.
- <sup>83</sup> Peci, 91.
- <sup>84</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 14-15.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid, 72.
- <sup>86</sup> Giovanni Barbacetto, *Il grande vecchio. Dodici giudici raccontano le loro inchieste sui grandi misteri d'Italia, da Piazza Fontana a Gladio* (Milano: Baldini & Castoldi, 1993), 73.
- <sup>87</sup> Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Dreamers of the Absolute. Essays on Politics, Crime and Culture* (London: Radius, 1988 [1964]), 171-193.
- <sup>88</sup> Jünger, 189-190.
- <sup>89</sup> Girotto, 373.
- <sup>90</sup> Tessandori, 220-221.
- <sup>91</sup> Stuart Christie, *Stefano Delle Chiaie. Portrait of a Black Terrorist* (London: Refract Publications, 1984).
- <sup>92</sup> Caprara and Semprini, 103.
- <sup>93</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 170.

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- <sup>94</sup> Fasanella and Franceschini, 11.
- <sup>95</sup> Galli, *Il Partito Armato*, 109.
- <sup>96</sup> Giuseppe De Lutiis, *Il golpe di Via Fani: protezioni occulte e connivenze internazionali dietro il delitto Moro* (Milano: Sperling & Kupfer, 2007), 47-60.
- <sup>97</sup> Sergio Flamigni, *La Sfinge delle BR. Delitti, segreti e bugie del capo terrorista Mario Moretti* (Milano: Kaos Edizioni, 2004); Clementi, 143.
- <sup>98</sup> Tessandori, 404-471.
- <sup>99</sup> Cossiga and Cangini, 149-150, 182.
- <sup>100</sup> Antonella Beccaria, *Piccone di Stato. Francesco Cossiga e i segreti della Repubblica* (Roma: Nutrimenti, 2010), 111, 158-159.
- <sup>101</sup> Fenzi, 156.
- <sup>102</sup> José Ortega y Gasset, “La Interpretación Bélica de la Historia,” in *Obras Completas*, Vol. II (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966 [1927]), 530.
- <sup>103</sup> Scarrano and De luca, 162.
- <sup>104</sup> Peci, 181.
- <sup>105</sup> Calogero, Fumian, and Sartori, 22.
- <sup>106</sup> Kenzaburō Ōe, *Two Novels: Seventeen, J* (New York: Foxrock Books, 1996 [1961]), 26, 62.
- <sup>107</sup> Horgan, 45-65.
- <sup>108</sup> See. e.g., Dipak K. Gupta, “Explaining the Roots of Terrorism” in Tore Bjørgo (Ed.) *Root Causes of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2005).
- <sup>109</sup> Sam Mullins, “Parallels between Crime and Terrorism: a Social Psychological Perspective” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 32 (6) 2009: 811-830.
- <sup>110</sup> Massimo Mastrogregori, *I due prigionieri: Gramsci, Moro e la storia del novecento italiano* (Genova-Roma: Marietti, 2008), 144-145.
- <sup>111</sup> Aldo Grandi, *L'ultimo brigatista* (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 2007), 23; incidentally, nearly 10 per cent of the sample appears to be wholly unaccounted for.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>113</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 97.
- <sup>114</sup> Manzini, 110.
- <sup>115</sup> Bianconi, 7; and Manzini, 52.
- <sup>116</sup> Grandi, *Insurrezione armata*, 14-15.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid, 33.
- <sup>118</sup> Grandi, *L'ultimo brigatista*, 150.
- <sup>119</sup> Stajano, 7.
- <sup>120</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class. An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 319-337.
- <sup>121</sup> Lombroso and Laschi, *Il delitto politico*, 337-338 (emphasis added).
- <sup>122</sup> Georges Bataille, “La limite de l’utile” in *Œuvres Complètes Tome VII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976 [1939]), 238-242, 264.
- <sup>123</sup> Lombroso, *Gli anarchici*, 47, 71-72.

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- <sup>124</sup> Georges Bataille, “Collège de Sociologie” in *Œuvres Complètes Tome II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970 [1938]), 334-351.
- <sup>125</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 19, 70, 80.
- <sup>126</sup> Caprara and Semprini, 91.
- <sup>127</sup> Franzinelli, 96.
- <sup>128</sup> Ibid, 14-15.
- <sup>129</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 77-78.
- <sup>130</sup> Franzinelli, 90, 94; Caprara and Semprini, 136.
- <sup>131</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 199-200.
- <sup>132</sup> Caprara and Semprini, 123.
- <sup>133</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 293, 311; Grandi, *Insurrezione armata*, 31; Bianconi, 19, 233.
- <sup>134</sup> See also Concutelli and Ardica, 147.
- <sup>135</sup> Peci, 251-252.
- <sup>136</sup> Peci, 93.
- <sup>137</sup> Grandi, *Insurrezione armata*, 290; Stajano, 35.
- <sup>138</sup> Garibaldi, 102.
- <sup>139</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 157.
- <sup>140</sup> Fenzi, 174-175.
- <sup>141</sup> Peci, 50-54.
- <sup>142</sup> Caprara and Semprini, 161.
- <sup>143</sup> Peci, 75.
- <sup>144</sup> Veblen, 295.
- <sup>145</sup> Guadalupe J. Carney, *To Be a Revolutionary. An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 71-121 (“The Formation of a Jesuit”).
- <sup>146</sup> Peci, 20; Concutelli and Ardica, 77-78.
- <sup>147</sup> Fenzi, 228.
- <sup>148</sup> Bianconi, 72.
- <sup>149</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 14-15.
- <sup>150</sup> Fenzi, 32.
- <sup>151</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 24.
- <sup>152</sup> Peci, 50.
- <sup>153</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 74-75.
- <sup>154</sup> Peci, 174.
- <sup>155</sup> Ibid, 50-51.
- <sup>156</sup> Giroto, 374.
- <sup>157</sup> Lombroso and Laschi, 375.
- <sup>158</sup> Vifredo Pareto, *Sistemi socialisti* (Torino: UTET, 1974 [1902]), p. 153.
- <sup>159</sup> José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993 [1930]), 17, 18, 51, 69, 71, 74, 97, 128-129.
- <sup>160</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda. The Formation of Men’s Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965 [1962]), 25, 31-32, 90, 121-125, 138.
- <sup>161</sup> Ibid, 209.

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- <sup>162</sup> Ibid, 213.
- <sup>163</sup> Ibid, 29, 150, 152.
- <sup>164</sup> Ibid, 150.
- <sup>165</sup> Ibid, 32.
- <sup>166</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen, Text von 1932 mit einmen Vorwort and drei Corollarien* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2002 [1932-1963]), 27-33.
- <sup>167</sup> Julien Freund, *L'essence du politique* (Paris: Dalloz, 2004 [1986]).
- <sup>168</sup> Ellul, 180.
- <sup>169</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 91.
- <sup>170</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 124.
- <sup>171</sup> Ellul, 101.
- <sup>172</sup> Peci, 31.
- <sup>173</sup> Manzini, 111.
- <sup>174</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 150, 206, 243.
- <sup>175</sup> Caprara and Semprini, 145.
- <sup>176</sup> Garibaldi, 45.
- <sup>177</sup> Lombroso, *Gli anarchici*, 97-98.
- <sup>178</sup> Ellul, 196.
- <sup>179</sup> Grandi, *Insurrezione armata*, 10-11, 220.
- <sup>180</sup> Ibid, 215-219.
- <sup>181</sup> Vecchio, 160.
- <sup>182</sup> Garibaldi, 97.
- <sup>183</sup> Grandi, *Insurrezione armata*, 18, 159.
- <sup>184</sup> Ibid, 103, 191.
- <sup>185</sup> See, e.g., Antonio Negri, *Marx au-delà de Marx* (Paris: Christian Bourgois Éditeur, 1979).
- <sup>186</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Œdipe. Capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1973).
- <sup>187</sup> Preparata, 81-107.
- <sup>188</sup> Novelli and Tranfaglia, 236-238, 269.
- <sup>189</sup> Ibid, 124, 318.
- <sup>190</sup> Peci, 200; Grandi, *Insurrezione armata*, 224; Grandi, *L'ultimo brigatista*, 49; Fenzi, 208.
- <sup>191</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 80.
- <sup>192</sup> Kenzaburō Ōe, *Seventeen*, 69.
- <sup>193</sup> Caprara and Semprini, 86.
- <sup>194</sup> Ibid, 172.
- <sup>195</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 48-49, 80.
- <sup>196</sup> Caprara and Semprini, 28, 105.
- <sup>197</sup> Concutelli and Ardica, 134; Caprara and Semprini, 65.
- <sup>198</sup> Ortega, *Revolt of the Masses*, 96.
- <sup>199</sup> Caprara and Semprini, 173.
- <sup>200</sup> Peci, 219.