

Correspondence between Guy Debord and Gianfranco Sanguinetti

Guy Debord to Gianfranco Sanguinetti
21 April 1978¹

Since the bombing in Milan,² the “Red Brigades” have made steady progress in the escalation of the stakes – Moro isn’t Calabrese³ – but not in its methods: they have always known how to kill efficiently, yet the exploitation of their attacks still suffers from the same poor, illogical staging, full of hesitations and contradictions.

Leftists, however stupid their intentions and strategies might be, could *never* have operated in this manner by themselves. To begin with, had they not been acting undercover, they would have acted in a way that minimized the time elapsed since the kidnapping (because of the possibilities that they were already infiltrated or would eventually be exposed at some level, not to mention the risks of committing some blunder or encountering some kind of bad luck, which would surely have occurred to at least one of them). They would have immediately, clearly and with the greatest urgency demanded *something*: the liberation of prisoners (as was the case with Baader),⁴ the distribution of their propaganda, or the exposure of certain recent practices by the semi-Stalinized, Christian Democratic State through confessions extorted from Moro or quite simply *attributed* to him. But they naturally remain indifferent to the fate of the defendants in Turin; they have no discernible political theses; and they have no desire to compromise the State’s personnel, who, for their part, have shown absolutely no fear on that score.

I suppose that the intelligence of the Italian people, who do not express themselves in the *mass media*,⁵ have for the most part understood all of this. From whence come the diverse new developments of the last few days. Moro was “suicided” to better give the impression of a style of terrorism that has been *translated from the German* (and then his body was said to have been found in a lake⁶ that might perhaps have contained another body, though this was subsequently corrected by the claim that this second body was actually found elsewhere, because someone must have realized that such a simple coincidence would appear to be implausible and that news concerning incidents that occur in the most remote areas is more accessible to the Carabinieri than to urban terrorists). In Hollywood one says, “Cut! Let’s do that scene again. It

¹ Published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II* (Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, 1981), pp. 97-100; reprinted in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Volume 5: Janvier 1973 – Décembre 1978* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2005), pp. 455-459.

² At the Piazza Fontana, on 12 December 1969.

³ While Luigi Calabrese was only a police inspector (he was in charge of investigating the Milan bomb, and ended up murdered on 17 May 1972), Aldo Moro (kidnapped on 16 March 1978) was a former prime minister.

⁴ Andreas Baader (1943-1977) was a leader of the militant Communist group the Red Army Faction (Germany) who was imprisoned from 1972 until he was murdered in 1977.

⁵ English in original.

⁶ Here Debord refers to the bizarre events of 19 April 1978, during which the Italian Army, prompted by a false claim attributed to the Red Brigades, searched iced-over Lake Duchessa for the body of Aldo Moro, who was in fact still alive at the time. (He wasn’t killed until 9 May 1978.)

lacked authenticity.” Then Moro will no longer be a suicide, and the demand will be to exchange him [for a political prisoner] in a very short period of time. Etc.

This affair is obviously being conducted by enemies of the Historic Compromise,⁷ not by revolutionary enemies of the State. Leftists are ordinarily so naive, even in Italy, that on occasions such as this they fall quite willingly into purely *theological* discussions of the problems posed by revolutionary violence, like that altar boy⁸ whose anachronistic aestheticization of anarchist attacks once led him to believe that Oswald killed Kennedy. Discussions something like this: “If God existed, would He have kidnapped Moro?” But shouldn’t we ask instead, “Perhaps Censor exists and he has simply changed his politics?”

The Stalinists obviously know who has struck this blow against them. The *fragile* basis of their politics is the idea that all the Christian Democrats are officially their friends. Some of their friends are now placing pressure on other friends of theirs. The Stalinists insist that one must not give in. How could they say anything else? The *omertà*⁹ will govern their relationships until the end. But what will this pressure, pushed to such an extreme, actually yield? The things that are being said are only coded signs of a confrontation that is taking place elsewhere. One has taken great risks to show that the entrance of the Stalinists into the governing majority has not restored order, quite the contrary. One must not forget that, though, *from the point of view of the revolution* and also from the point of view of Agnellian-style capitalism,¹⁰ Stalinist participation absolutely will not change anything in the nature of class society, there are other capitalist sectors whose interests, and even their passions, are completely opposed to the costs of this change in governance and who openly treat it as a *casus belli*.¹¹

The Stalinists are cruelly obstructed (Euro-Communism has already failed, in France as in Spain). But while today’s public might be surprised by such enormities, the Stalinist leaders, and a few other old anti-fascists, have seen all this before, and worse, *in another Spain*, during their youth, when Andrès Nin¹² was kidnapped: that’s when they learned to *say nothing*. And just as they defended the Spanish Republic by keeping quiet within the ranks of the International Brigades, they now defend the Italian Republic by staying silent. And the Republics that they defend in this manner do not last long.

Their obligation to keep quiet about various current crimes, simply *because they remained silent during previous ones*, constitutes a fundamental element of the problem, one that is very well known by their enemies and serves to embolden them. Yet this obligation is not grounded solely in their own Stalinist crimes of a bygone era. Through their silence, they effectively collaborated in the attack of 1969, from which all the rest has come. Because they initially feigned ignorance, then knew the truth without truly acknowledging it, and finally knew it without reaching any conclusion – namely that the State itself had instigated the terrorism in Milan (for who seeking an invitation to one end of the State’s table, despite his own shady past,

⁷ The Historic Compromise was a proposal made by Aldo Moro in 1965 to bring the Italian Communist Party (the Stalinists) into the ruling coalition. It was strongly opposed by anti-Communist elements in both Italy and America (NATO, the CIA and the White House).

⁸ Raoul Vaneigem.

⁹ The code of silence used and enforced by the Mafia.

¹⁰ Umberto Agnelli, the “progressive” president of Fiat Motors.

¹¹ Latin: “reason for war.”

¹² The founder of the Spanish Communist Party, later a leader of the PUOM, who was kidnapped and murdered by the Soviet Union’s secret police in June 1937.

would dare to say aloud that the plates are dirty?) – the Italian political establishment descended into this obvious madness. There wasn't a public "Dreyfus affair,"¹³ not because the scandal itself was of a less magnitude, but because no political party ever demanded that the truth be fully uncovered and the matter brought to a *definitive conclusion*. Thus Italy, which has already experienced a "creeping May" [1968], has worsened its malaise through the suppression of its own "Dreyfus affair."

Perhaps those who ordered the kidnapping of Moro did not exactly calculate all of its consequences and their interaction with each other, but they have certainly *weighed* those consequences. They are ready to do anything to bring about a change right now, and they are now objectively compelled to obtain it. The people who have done this have shown, by the same token, that they could do even worse. It is the supporters of the Historic Compromise who are now being provoked and *terrorized*. We have already seen how they have reacted. If this pressure doesn't soon succeed in producing some a kind of relief, a forceful blow will be obligatory.

The experimenters who operate in Italy and begin to make Italy into the European laboratory for counter-revolution are used to the general complicity of all those who have a public voice, a complicity that, pushed to such an extreme, gives the country the false appearance of collective imbecility. But one knows very well that there have been one or two exceptions. I once knew a man¹⁴ who spent his time among the *sfacciate donne fiorentine*,¹⁵ and who loved to slum with all the drunkards of the bad neighborhoods. Yet he understood everything that was taking place. He demonstrated this once before. One knows that he could do it again. Thus today he is considered by some people to be the most dangerous man in Italy.

Cavalcanti¹⁶

¹³ Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French Army, was falsely accused of passing secrets to the German government in 1894. He was exonerated in 1906.

¹⁴ Gianfranco Sanguinetti.

¹⁵ The shameless women of Florence.

¹⁶ Guido Cavalcanti was a contemporary and close friend of Dante Alighieri.

Gianfranco Sanguinetti to Guy Debord
I Fagiolini,¹⁷ 1 June 1978
My dear Cavalcanti,¹⁸

If, to ensure that I am not forbidden from reading your words, it was necessary for Moro to be kidnapped, then this kidnapping has at least served this one useful purpose!¹⁹ And if, so that I might speak freely to you once again, it were to take 10 scandals or a revolution, I would ask for nothing better. Unfortunately, only yesterday did I receive the letter dated 21 April and that was sent in care of the Doge,²⁰ who has been abroad for a long time. The preceding silence, which lasted three long seasons, left me so sad that I've been sick all this time. And that idiot Paola told me by telephone that she also had a letter for me, but she still hasn't forwarded it. That girl is so slow in everything she does that she is only now leaving her husband!

On 16 March, the day Moro was kidnapped, I was in Milan, where I had a meeting with the Doge in the afternoon. In the morning, when the news of the event in Rome echoed on all the streets of Italy, chance would have it that I ran into Pietro Valpreda,²¹ who I immediately asked if this time he could come up with a better alibi than the one he had the last time. Since he said that he didn't have one, and I didn't either, I told him that nothing could be better for me if we were seen *together* on that morning, because no one would bother me if I could prove in any situation that could arise that I was with a person who has a completely *burned* reputation, and thus no one would dare to disturb me a second time. He then invited me back to his place to listen to the early news reports, and it was there that I proposed to him, since he is so well known all over the world to have had some connection with the provocation of 1969, that he immediately make a public, printed declaration in a thoroughly sarcastic tone in which he cheerfully "claims responsibility" for this new provocation, since it clearly came from the same people who placed the bomb in the Piazza Fontana. I even wrote a short text for him, but as you know he isn't the boldest man in Milan, nor the most lucid, and thus he refused it in a categorical manner, with the argument that he'd had his fill of prisons, police and provocations. He offered me a small bottle of Barbera, which, beyond an alibi, was the only thing he offered me. And now, several days ago, he was condemned (without the possibility of appeal) to 10 months in prison for having, some time ago, insulted the public prosecutor [Vittorio] Occorsio, who was subsequently killed in Rome, officially by neo-fascists, and who was one of the people who had constructed the case against Valpreda. And so he went back to prison without any glory after

¹⁷ Italian for string beans, this phrase was used by Sanguinetti to indicate his location to Debord.

¹⁸ Written in French and published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II*, op. cit., pp. 100-113.

¹⁹ The last time Debord had written was on 2 August 1977. His remarks were trenchant: "Recall to Niccolò [Sanguinetti's pseudonym], on a more personal level, that I have esteemed him according to his merit (which rarely appears, given his unfortunate conduct), but that he has tired out my benevolence, which has never been unlimited for anyone, due to severe poverties that have too frequently reappeared." *Guy Debord Correspondance*, Volume 5: Janvier 1973 – Décembre 1978, op. cit., p. 430.

²⁰ A reference to Aliberti Mignoli, Sanguinetti's friend and attorney. Cf. Sanguinetti's recollections about "The Doge" (2012).

²¹ An anarchist who was initially (and falsely) accused of perpetrating the 12 December 1969 bombing of the Piazza Fontana.

being released from it without any personal merit, and the fact that he'd had his fill of prison did not save him from this most recent *mockery*²² that our system of "justice" made of him!

As for my own particular situation in these troubled times, I immediately realized that, if it had been quite dangerous to not go underground in 1969, to do so in 1978 would be the most dangerous thing that I could possibly do. In fact, right from the first moment, any hunted person who wasn't *immediately* apprehended would, after Moro's kidnapping, find himself depicted in a large photograph in all the newspapers, with all the consequences that this would inevitably entail. Thus I returned as soon as possible to the country, where I now live in voluntary exile, so to speak, and where nothing can remain truly clandestine because everyone can see everyone else, and I haven't failed to have myself seen every Tuesday at the local market, where the Carabinieri prowl, without otherwise budging from here. In brief, I have "cultivated my garden" and my olive trees, like any *gentleman*,²³ *for fuck's sake*,²⁴ must do when living in the country.

The choice was a good one, and if I have not avoided being harassed, as you will see, I have certainly avoided much worse annoyances. By contrast, many Leftists did go underground, due to stupidity or mythomania concerning the repression, and now they're being hunted down and arrested every day with no other justification for it than their absence.

Your analysis of 21 April most resembles the famous letter that Messer Niccolò [Machiavelli] wrote from Marignano, I believe, to Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, and perfectly corresponds to the text that I would have written and actually started to write, although in a less concise fashion, in the form of a short pamphlet, with the title "*Ultimo Avvertimento al signor Giulio Andreotti sul terrorismo - ovvero contributo al disintossicare l'opinione del pubblico circa il rapimento di Aldo Moro, e gli attentati che seguiranno.*"²⁵ For a variety reasons, I have not been able to publish or even complete it. Among others, I gave this "proof": that if it truly was the Leftists who kidnapped Moro, this would signify that, *for the very first time*, the Italian State isn't lying to us in the matter of terrorism, but this, being incredible, must be excluded. And in any case, I would say that, even if Andreotti or Berlinguer had proof that this attack had been carried out, what do I know?! by the Mafia or by German skinheads? how would what they'd say be any different from what they have said? Etc. And, as for the Stalinists, since they speak in counter-truths, always evoking a "conspiracy hatched by reactionary trade unions" when it is actually a question of a spontaneous and general proletarian revolt, as it is in Rome and Bologna in 1977, it is completely normal that they never speak of this particular conspiracy, exactly when it is a question of artificial provocations like those of 1969 or those attributed to and claimed by the Red Brigades [RBs]. And concerning the RBs, which is quite capable of shooting the legs of the bosses, if not killing them, at one time or another, they are incapable of pulling off such attacks and also incapable *of even imagining them*. Etc., etc. As announced by its title, my short pamphlet would have ended with an *intimidating warning* (*avvertimento*²⁶ is a word from the *underworld*) addressed to Andreotti, a vague threat but so much more lugubrious for that, if he doesn't stop the [State's] terrorist practices. Presenting itself as *upside-down terrorism* or an

²² Italian in original.

²³ English in original.

²⁴ Italian in original.

²⁵ *Final Warning to Mr. Giulio Andreotti about Terrorism or, Rather, a Contribution to the Detoxification of Public Opinion on the Abduction of Aldo Moro and the Attacks that Followed It*, never published.

²⁶ Italian in original.

anti-terrorism, much more disturbing than routine terrorism, this pamphlet would certainly have created a scandal, all the more because I would have been busted three hours after it was published, *at least* for threatening the President of the Council, for calumny, for diffusion of *di notizie false e tendenziose atte a turbare l'ordine pubblico*,²⁷ and for perhaps even kidnapping Moro. It is truly a shame that I didn't put it together, but when I say that I've been sick, this isn't a rhetorical flourish.

After that, things got complicated. The Doge, coming to find me during Moro's captivity, recalled to me the remark that you'd previously made to him in Florence, namely, "*in Italy today, everything is possible*," and he added to this idea that we other Italians are good for nothing, but we are capable of anything. Thus, the rest of the story of Moro and his death has led me to not exclude any hypothesis. And although what you wrote to me is completely plausible and rational, [and though] it is as true as what I also thought, I will try here to envision this story in an inverted perspective: you will see that everything truly is possible. Nevertheless, I will not do this as an academic exercise, as did the sophist who eulogized Helen despite what every Greek thought of that whore, or as an aesthetician, like the altar boy did with respect to Kennedy from his tranquil little corner of Brussels. I am in all senses of the word right in the middle of this field of obscure battle, and perhaps this fact allows me to see better or pushes me to deceive myself more. But since I live in this Italy, which is *serva e pericolosa*,²⁸ for me there is the greatest urgency in not deceiving myself, not believing something false about it, nor excluding something a priori: a *questione di vita di morte*,²⁹ as one says here.

Thus, here is my reasoning and my hypothesis. You will pardon me, I hope, for the length, but I would need even more time to express myself better. The Italian Leftists are very stupid, obviously. But this same stupidity, on the one hand, isn't completely sufficient to render them all incapable of doing anything at all and, on the other hand, is quite sufficient to convince them that terrorism can be a good thing. And you know that the Italian Leftist, unlike the French one, isn't a contemplator of theory, but a contemplator of practice, [that is to say,] more Edouardian than Salvadorian,³⁰ and where the Frenchman contemplates theory (and thus creates an ideological monster), the Italian contemplates practice (creating a terrorist monster). Goethe's remark, "nothing is worse than active mediocrity," seems to have been tailor-made for the Italian Leftists. In fact, the same stupidity that had for a long time prevented them from understanding *from whence* came the attack of 1969 could very well have subsequently manifested itself when the provenance of the attack became *confusedly* clear to them and allowed them "theorize" that one naturally responds to State terrorism with "proletarian" terrorism. It is an unquestionable fact that there are many Leftists in Italy who have become terrorists in the last few years, and among them there are quite a few young workers (there are a hundred known groups). It remains to be seen if a blow like the Piazza Fontana is beyond their reach or not. One knows, for example, that German and Spanish leftists have been successful in their attacks against Schleyer and Carrero Blanco.³¹ I will concede that the Spanish have had much more

²⁷ Italian in original: "false news and tendentious acts that disturb the public order."

²⁸ Italian in original: "servile and dangerous."

²⁹ Italian in original: "question of life and death."

³⁰ More like the ex-situationist Eduoardo Rothe than the ex-situationist Paolo Salvadori.

³¹ Hanns-Martin Schleyer was a former Nazi, a businessman and a Christian Democrat who was kidnapped by the Red Army Faction and murdered on 19 October 1977 in retribution for the

experience with clandestinity and guerilla activities, and that the Germans are probably better organized. But in my hypothesis, this isn't the problem, but seeing *against whom* they have struck: the "advantages" of the Germans and Spaniards over the Italian terrorists are balanced by the advantages constituted by the incompetent stupidity of Italy's police forces, which are always in competition amongst themselves to see which one wins the award for the most imbecilic. Italy's terrorists are not geniuses, but its secret services are *nonexistent* (crushed under the weight of their 1969 attack, the arrests in Catanzaro,³² and the [subsequent] dismantling undertaken by Andreotti himself), and, as for the efficiency of Italy's police and Carabinieri, "posing the question is already a response to it," to make use of your phrase.

(Here's a relevant anecdote, but I could cite a thousand other more instructive ones that personally concern me less. The authorities only came to get me on 12 May [1978], when Moro's body was already quite cold, but did so after having ransacked my sister's home in Rome, as well as that of my other sister. As if this wasn't sufficient to put me on my guard, the day before their arrival they thought it would be good to come in a group of four, in civilian clothes and in a regular van, to inspect the place, feigning to be hunters though the hunting season had ended here as everywhere else. Since I was strolling on my *podere*,³³ I did not see them, but they were recognized by the Sardinian shepherd, who they waved at, and he recognized one of them. Ten minutes later I was informed. The next morning, at 7:30, eighteen (*sic!*) Carabinieri arrived in several military and civilian vans. Expecting them for two full hours, I knew, thanks to a peasant, that one of their vans (with Carabinieri and a military radio inside) had been surveilling my house from afar since 6 o'clock. They were armed to the teeth, with bullet-proof vests, and descended all at once from their vans with their submachine guns pointed at my house. It seemed to me that I was watching a film, and I believe that they believed that they were in one. The captain who commanded the operation was completely inept, because, if he had made such a show of force and had the radioman ready to call in reinforcements, he had to believe that he was confronted with a terrorist or several of them, but, if he had been, he at least should not have arrived (with 18 officers) from the side same of the hill upon which my house sits! What was the use of the surveillance conducted the day before? And even if I didn't expect their visit (which was impossible), they woke me up with the noise from their five vans, and if I was a terrorist, with two bombs in hand at the window, I would have killed 18 people in the blink of an eye. Then this valiant captain lost five long minutes surrounding my house with 10 of his men in a very iconographic, even choreographic maneuver that was also very stupid because the door facing them was *wide open*. I'd left it open precisely to de-escalate the situation that I'd expected, but since they didn't know that I'd expected them, they should have taken advantage of this fact. This ridiculous operation at least had the result of cleansing me of the suspicion of being a terrorist, [at least] according to what the captain said afterwards, and here we reached the heights of idiocy, because, if I *was* a terrorist, and if I'd wanted to not appear to be one, I'd had 15 hours to remove or hide anything incriminating I had in my possession. Then, although they remained here a long time, they completely forgot to search my large cowsheds,

murder in prison of Andreas Baader. Luis Carrero Blanco was a Spanish Admiral and Francoist who was killed by the ETA on 20 December 1973.

³² In 1974, Vito Miceli, the head of Italys Military Intelligence and Security Service, was arrested in Catanzaro and charged with political conspiracy for his role in the failed *Golpe Borghese* of 1970.

³³ Italian in original: "family homestead."

which they didn't even open up, or the cellar. And one cannot even say that they came here for some other reason, because the judge's warrant, which authorized their search even during the night, said that I was suspected of having committed crimes *contro la personalità dello Stato*,³⁴ *id est*³⁵ Moro. In every other instance, the police also comported themselves in an equally maladroit fashion. I end this parenthesis by saying that the only result of this operation has been that the local peasants are very excited by what took place here, expanding upon and distorting the story, with word of mouth of the affair reaching as far as the suburbs of Arezzo. I've heard from people who do not know me that they finally found the leader of the RBs and from others that I myself had been "discovered" and arrested.)

The Italian secret services have been *sure of being the only ones* to orchestrate terrorist attacks for such a long time that, when real terrorism takes place, they've been taken completely by surprise. And as for Italy's police, who are only trained for maintaining public order and, from the investigative point of view, are especially inept (80% of all crimes committed go unpunished), they have been, ever since the days of Calabresi,³⁶ so well instructed in the fabrication of false evidence against false suspects that, when it comes to a *real* deed and a concrete crime, they are routinely paralyzed. In the inquest into the Moro affair, they didn't even seek to find false suspects, which could demonstrate that they believed that if they looked, they might actually find the real ones. If they still haven't found any, this again proves their inability, but also that the task isn't easy. (Moreover, the Germans still haven't managed to find Schleyer's kidnapers, and their prisons, [apparently] so secure, weren't sufficient to prevent two good women from springing a terrorist, although here one might suspect that this escape was teleguided by the security services so that they could follow the escapees back to Schleyer's kidnapers, but, if this was the case, we will soon see.)

In Italian society, where the only stable thing is society's very instability, where nothing is solid and nothing functions, one wouldn't be surprised if very small terrorist groups could, over time, profit from the fragility of the system. By doing so, they could appear to be the only solid things within the very inverted social and political panorama of which they themselves are the product, which thereby assures them of success. But one can also say that such successes against the system *don't truly harm it*.

The fact that terrorism brings fuel to the spectacle's fire doesn't prove that the followers of the spectacle are always the ones who orchestrate terrorism, nor does it prove that the Red Brigades are black,³⁷ as the Stalinists say. What it proves is that the followers of the spectacle are still in a position to exploit what their police forces cannot manage to repress, and it also proves the thoughtlessness and impotence of the choice to orchestrate terrorism. It furthermore proves that the system is incomparably more capable of absorbing these attacks than preventing them. When applied to terrorism in the society of the spectacle, the argument *cui prodest?*³⁸ isn't of any utility, because one sees that terrorism (or at least its stated intentions) are officially opposed by those who actually might profit from them, but without achieving significant results, and that terrorism is perpetrated by those who are ultimately harmed by it, with significant immediate

³⁴ Italian in original: "against the personhood of the State."

³⁵ Latin for "that is to say."

³⁶ Police Commissioner Luigi Calabresi was the lead investigator into the bombing of the Piazza Fontana.

³⁷ Anarchist rather than Communist.

³⁸ Latin for "who profits?"

effects. In fact, we have seen that Italian capitalism is quite capable of harming itself, on its own, much better than the Leftists can, and, conversely, that Italian Leftists can also harm themselves, on their own, by devoting themselves to terrorism *à bischero sciolto*.³⁹

And even in this apparent madness there must be a hidden rationality, since what is real is rational (and *Corriere della Sera* was almost theoretical on 27 April [1978] when apropos of the Moro affair it demonstrated its own theoretical impotence: “All forms of rationality seem be drowning in emotionalism and spectacle. The *mass media*⁴⁰ thoughtlessly aids this process . . .” And *L’Espresso*, believing itself to be more refined, titled an article “*Les Brigate rosse fanno proprie certe strategie della ‘società dello spettacolo’*”).⁴¹ The hidden rationality in this reality is that, in its apparent madness, Italian capitalism, like Italian Leftism, condemns itself by its own movement. And the historical utility of terrorism will be that it convinced all revolutionaries that terrorism is useless and all capitalists that it can be dangerous. Because I wonder to what extent it will be useful for the State to let this phenomenon continue while losing all control over it.

This State was the first to begin the terrorist game, knowing well that, up to the present, no terrorism of this kind has ever brought down a State. But if there is someone in Italy lucid enough to continue to make casual use of it, I would be surprised if he also doesn’t have the intelligence or historical knowledge to recognize that the history of provocations ever since the adventures of the parish priest named Gapone,⁴² who helped to provoke nothing less than the Revolution of 1905, is full of very dangerous examples of missteps. And if the terrorist phenomenon is no longer mastered by the State, which will cause its personnel to live perpetually in fear (as a sort of purgatory in which one only nourishes oneself on hope), then I strongly doubt that this or that governmental minister, industrialist or powerful person has the stoic lucidity to console himself with the realization that no one, in the final analysis, is indispensable to the State. And living continually surrounded by cops who, if official, are incompetent and, if private, are costly – well, *questa non è vita!*⁴³ Indeed, the only message that Moro left to Italy and his friends in a number of letters that were written in his tortuous and unmistakable style is, finally, that *it isn’t worth dying for this State*. And who could say that he was wrong? Certainly not his friends, for whom the State is only good insofar as it assures them of a livelihood and a very *comfortable* one at that, as everyone knows.

And since every act of terrorism has its *fans*⁴⁴ among the very Leftists who, before becoming Leftists, applauded their soccer teams, without wondering too much from whence this terrorism came or could come, or to what it might lead, it is normal that terrorism also produces recruits, and then the *fan*⁴⁵ sometimes become a soccer player. Thus does the phenomenon grow like a cancer that feeds upon itself ever-more rapidly until it strikes ever-more higher targets, which have never been reached before, due more to the fact that they weren’t supposed to be reachable than for any other reason.

³⁹ Italian in original: “without reflection and casually.”

⁴⁰ English in original.

⁴¹ Italian in original: “The Red Brigades adopt certain strategies of the ‘society of the spectacle.’”

⁴² Georgy Gapon, a police agent who organized a procession on 22 January 1905 that led to a massacre, which in turn greatly undermined working class support for the Czarist regime.

⁴³ Italian in original: “that isn’t living.”

⁴⁴ English in original.

⁴⁵ English in original.

I would even say that, for a while now, in Italy as in Germany, the terrorists have been technically successful in all of the attacks they've perpetrated, which demonstrates the extreme fragility of these systems with respect to this phenomenon. (Nor is it by chance that terrorism strikes these two countries in particular: both have never known revolutions comparable to the ones that took place in France, Spain and England; both combated the revolutions that broke out in 1919-1920 with fascist terrorism; both lost the Second World War; and for both "democracy" was imposed upon them as the price for that defeat.) From the military point of view, about which you know more than I, it seems to me that terrorist acts in those instances where one can't respond to them with general reprisals are quite easy to commit: they have the advantage of surprise and do not have the disadvantage of classical attacks, in which the attacking forces must be quite superior, because the terrorists don't need to occupy and hold a country, but to occupy the territory of the spectacle without, moreover, knowing how or being able to master it. Furthermore, one has seen that the Germans and Israelis obtained excellent results by adopting terrorist tactics at Mogadishu and Entebbe, respectively.⁴⁶ To fail at operations of this type, it appears to me, one must be quite idiotic, as the Egyptians were at Cyprus,⁴⁷ an easily avoidable blunder. And this facility of execution can very well suggest to the terrorists that they should undertake increasingly risky operations.

As for those who began terrorism and provocation in Italy, the least one can say is that they didn't heed Seneca's remark, according to which "it is easier not to begin than it is to stop" once one has embarked upon such a route and, nevertheless, one knows that Seneca (as Nero's advisor) knew something about provocations and terrorist tactics. Thus, if these types of attacks can, as we know, be of service to certain State forces, the chain reaction started after 1969 might, at least initially, have relieved these forces of the necessity of organizing it directly. But when everything proceeds automatically, these forces face a new problem that they cannot manage to master thereafter, in a second stage. And in my opinion, we have already arrived at that second stage.

It is impossible to understand this *new* phenomenon, because it takes places in a new context, that is, if one doesn't know the theory of the spectacle, and the new proofs of this fact are that even the bourgeois, when they speak of terrorism in Italy, speak of the spectacle, and that (according to what *Panorama* said last week) your book (of which a new pirate edition was made several weeks ago for purely *speculative* reasons, I believe, in the crudely economic meaning of the word) is one of the biggest sellers in Italy. Never has a book been pirated so often during the life of its author and, for various reasons, as yours has been in Italy over the course of the last 10 years! (This would certainly be the moment to produce a veritable *first Italian edition*, one that is

⁴⁶ On 18 October 1977, in Mogadishu, Somalia, a German counter-terrorist squad stormed and rescued all the passengers from an airplane that had been hijacked five days earlier by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. On 4 July 1976, in Entebbe, Uganda, a squad of commandos from the Israeli Defense Forces stormed and rescued over a hundred passengers from an airplane that had been hijacked seven days earlier by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and a German group called the Revolutionary Cells.

⁴⁷ On 19 February 1978, at the Larnaca International Airport in Cyprus, Egyptian troops attempted to intervene in a stand-off with hijackers, but, due to a lack of coordination with the Cypriot authorities, they ended up fighting a battle with the Cypriot military in which more than 20 Egyptian soldiers were killed.

accurate and perhaps augmented by a preface that explains this phenomenon.)⁴⁸ It seems to me that there have been a few rare periods in history in which the greatest and most important ideas and theories are spread with as much speed as the greatest events themselves, and this is due to the simple fact that *these periods understand and believe these theories are events of the greatest magnitude*, which, as Gondi⁴⁹ would say, are capable, after a sufficient amount of time, of producing events *grandissimi*.⁵⁰

You can't even remotely imagine the precise point to which things in Italy have come: the *escalation* of madness, on the one hand, and the general degradation of everything, on the other. And even what I've advanced concerning the terrorist phenomenon is not raving that has no support in reality. Perhaps you recall that slut from Naples or Rome who one day came to Caldaie⁵¹ and showed so much pleasure when you stroked her cunt with both hands. Perhaps you also recall that she had a brother who was hardly better than her where morality was concerned, because they were both equally incestuous and didn't even hide it. Anyway, it turned out that this brother had met a known terrorist whose name he didn't want to tell me and, furthermore, I do not even recall his name or that of his slut sister. And this brother told me that, despite his own dubious morality, he was surprised by the casual nonchalance that reigned in that ready-for-anything milieu, which is capable of many things, all of them useless to us and too spectacular, so much so that one could believe that we'd returned to the times of Nechaev and Dostoevsky. In any case, it would be better for us, who still believe in certain principles, to not get mixed up with sluts, incestuous couples and terrorists!

Do you know Alfieri's remark about Italy, which Stendhal quoted?

“Finally, what can I say? Modern Italy, which has reached the very heights of nullity and abasement, still shows me (good God! must I say it?) by the execrable and yet sublime crimes that one sees committed every day that, even today, it, more so than any other country in Europe, abounds in raging souls who are above all fears and for whom only a battlefield and the means to act are lacking to make them immortal.”

Since 1786, when Alfieri wrote this, there have been five revolutions, five republics, and two empires in France, while in Italy there have been the *Cinque giornate* in Milan, the miserable *Risorgimento*, a *sciammannato* monarchial reign,⁵² Mussolini, and the epic *Resistenza*⁵³ from which our first amazing *Republic*⁵⁴ was born! But Italy hasn't had a real

⁴⁸ Just a few months later, in January 1979, Champ Libre would publish Debord's *Préface a la quatrième édition italienne de "La Société du Spectacle."*

⁴⁹ Guy Debord.

⁵⁰ Italian in original: "on a grand scale."

⁵¹ The street in Florence where Sanguinetti maintained his residence.

⁵² The Five Days (*Cinque giornate*) refers to the war for independence fought between 18 and 22 March 1848. The Resurgence (*Risorgimento*) was the period from 1815 to 1871, during which Italy was unified into a single nation. The disordered or untidy (*sciammannato*) monarchial reign was in power around the time of World War I.

⁵³ Italian in original.

⁵⁴ Italian in original.

battlefield or any real means to act. This, too, can explain the current suicidal activism of Italy's terrorists.

The departure point for each of these Leftists is a lack of money. Thus they begin with several *hold ups*,⁵⁵ they kidnap a rich bourgeois, then they have plenty of money that they don't know how to use "for the cause," so they start preparing the infrastructure for terrorism properly speaking (apartments, cars, weapons, radios, etc.). And they use this simple reasoning: "What I've done so far was quite easy, but no one has spoken of it; so let's do something about which everyone will be obligated to speak and that will strike a blow against the class adversary." And among all the things of which everyone is obligated to speak, on the field of class struggle, terrorist acts are obviously the ones that obtain this result at the least cost. Yet in the vast majority of cases, that is the only result that it produces. The mindset of the modern terrorist is not practical in the sense that it isn't the mindset of someone who executes an attack to enjoy the advantages that can be derived from it or to trigger specific, concrete effects; it is, rather, the mindset of a voyeur who places a mirror on the ceiling so as to watch himself fucking someone or, failing that, to watch himself getting fucked. Everything that he does he does to see it deformed and exaggerated in the mirror of the spectacle. Because today killing someone like Moro or Giscard makes more noise than stabbing Caesar in person did in the past, anyone can believe that he is greater and more formidable than Brutus. This fact, added to the fact that today there are far more Moros than Caesars in the world, places the role of Brutus within everyone's grasp.

The risk of spending one's entire life in prison doesn't even bother the young terrorists because they all think that they will outlive this State (and who could, *a priori*, prove that they are wrong on this point, given that Italy is constantly on the point of collapse?), and, in any case, they hope to not be arrested or, if so, to escape from custody and, in the worst-case scenario, the fact of remaining in jail for several years doesn't mean shit to those who only have a choice between the certain risk of spending their lives in a factory and the uncertain risks of alternating between periods spent underground and periods spent in jail. That's quite precisely what they think. Certainly they are very backwards in matters of historical awareness, knowing neither art nor the art of living, and they don't even manage to grasp the simple truth that, when people who present themselves as revolutionaries act in the same manner in which the secret services act, their condemnation has already been pronounced. But this derives from the fact, which you yourself mentioned, that in Italy after the [bombing of the] Piazza Fontana, there was no "Dreyfus affair," and that no one, and especially not those self-avowed revolutionaries, were able to draw definitive *conclusions* about State terrorism. And the perpetual *state of terrorism* (six terrorist acts per day in 1977) into which Italy has plunged is the logical consequence of that failure, and contemporary terrorism appears to me to be the exact compensation that this State has earned for having done everything to prevent a "Dreyfus affair" from breaking out with respect to the attack in 1969. What's worse is that one doesn't see how all this can end up, if not in a social revolution, which would be the only remedy to the alienated violence of terrorism, as well as all the rest. The fact that the group that abducted Moro did not make him spit out the truth concerning the attack of 1969 isn't as surprising as it might first appear: it is another consequence of the suppressed Dreyfus affair. The question of 1969 *didn't interest them* because, if it did, they wouldn't be who they are. These ideologues of clandestinity are, above all, *the underground figures of ideology*, and they are the worst ones, if in this matter it is possible to

⁵⁵ English in original.

have a preference. They almost never speak of ideology because the majority of them are Stalinists and they aren't ashamed to declare it. The Stalinism of the Red Brigades constitutes, as it were, the last bloody surge of the disappointed illusions of a bloodthirsty Stalinism that is in a state of total disarray, and the bearers of this ideology believe that they are vindicated by the failures of the Stalinism that has become "democratic," as much in Italy as in France or Spain.

There are also other groups with different ideologies, and they only have terrorist practices in common. One of these groups is even pro-situ, and I froze when I read the beginning of the only document that, to my knowledge, this group has produced: Debord was right when he said . . . etc.! This group, *Azione Rivoluzionaria*,⁵⁶ has also been the only one, up to now, to shoot at a Stalinist from *L'Unità*.⁵⁷ I live in a municipality of 20,000 inhabitants run by the Stalinists, and I view with some anxiety the possibility of petty police harassment and summary justice [that could take place] if this continues and positions the situationists as the authorities that justify terrorism against Stalinists.

As for the political prospects in Italy, about which I have not spoken, what you have said appears completely sufficient to me, [that is to say,] about the weakening of the Stalinists, even from the electoral point of view; about the prevailing *omertà* (but at a terrible cost!); and about the very possibility of a coup d'état, given the incredible disorder in which Italy currently finds itself. Perhaps I am too optimistic if I, while not wanting to neglect the role that the stupidity of those in power plays in Italy's fate, repeat again that, since everything is possible, *ci sarà guerra, e presto, e malgrado la sciocchezza di codeste bande*,⁵⁸ provided, of course, that those who can profit from it do not seize the opportunity to do so sooner rather than later.

Afterwards, it will be too late. I still plan to write *Rimedio a tutto*,⁵⁹ but I would like to speak to you about it. Otherwise, it will be difficult for me to do it on my own, and yet I feel that I must write it immediately or never. I'm missing I-don't-know-what, rather, I do know: I'm missing your advice and encouragement.

I will send you a great many press clippings and documents, some of which I've cited above, but I do not know where you will be. And, as you know, above all else in the world, I would love to see you, but it appears almost impossible for me to cross the border into France, which surely is well guarded against Italians, and I have broken off my relations with the trucker with whom you are familiar. Can you not come to *enslaved Italy, not mistress of provinces, but a brothel*?⁶⁰ 1977 was an exceptional year for Chianti. And I still have two *demijohns*,⁶¹ thus a total of more than 100 liters, which I haven't dared touch since 1975, hoping, as the peasants of Auvergne say, to celebrate [*arroser*] our meeting in the best conditions.

⁵⁶ Founded in Tuscany in 1977 by Gianfranco Faina, who died of advanced lung cancer in February 1980, and Salvatore Cinieri, who was killed in prison in 1979. Revolutionary Action mostly attacked the media and Christian Democratic politicians.

⁵⁷ The official newspaper of the Italian Communist Party.

⁵⁸ Italian in original: "there will be war here, and soon, despite the nonsense uttered by these groups."

⁵⁹ In 1979, Sanguinetti would in fact write his *Remedy for Everything*, of which *On Terrorism and the State* would form a part.

⁶⁰ Italian in original. A quotation from Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, op. cit., *Purgatory*, VI, 76-78, p. 222.

⁶¹ Italian in original.

And to conclude, these are the lyrics of a madrigal from the *16th century*,⁶² the music of which is very beautiful, to dedicate to the workers in your next film.

« Io non compro più speranza,
ch'egli è falsa mercanzia.
A dar solo attendo via
quella poca che m'avanza.

« Cara un tempo la compri
hor la vendo a buon mercato.
E consiglio ben che mai
non ne compri un venturato... »

I buy hope no longer,
Because it is false merchandise.
I only seek to give away
The little that remains for me.

Once I bought it dearly,
Now I sell it cheaply.
And I strongly advise that never
should a fortunate soul buy any.⁶³

I embrace you, Alice and you.

Niccolò⁶⁴

⁶² Italian in original.

⁶³ Italian in original. From a song by Marchetto Cara (1465-1525) called *Hor vendutho la speranza*. I have located and translated another verse (perhaps the song's chorus?): "Hope is like a dream that passes into nothing / Hope is the demand that can be weighed in the wind / Hope often destroys those who dance its dance."

⁶⁴ Debord did not respond to this letter.

Gianfranco Sanguinetti to Guy Debord
15 August 1978⁶⁵

Cavalcanti used to say that there has never been a Dreyfus affair here [in Italy]. But if such a thing invariably entails unpleasant consequences, it nevertheless is not without remedy: an international Dreyfus case, foisted on this poor country, could be engineered. In short, here is a project to be clarified, Niccolò having received remarkable material concerning many historical examples of provocations, material that is hardly accessible and too little known, which could be printed without any problems (thanks to very trustworthy bad workers) as a kind of short manual, conceived as follows.

Title: *Technical Solutions to Political and Social Questions*.⁶⁶ Subtitle: *Practical Manual for Internal Use, With Historical References and Useful Examples, Examined in the Light of Recent Italian Experiences*.⁶⁷ Author: *Army Chief of Staff*.⁶⁸ Graphics would be identical with the official publications of the *E.M.*⁶⁹ Colophon: “75 copies of this manual have been printed in collaboration with the London Higher Institute for Strategic Studies”⁷⁰ (for example). Thanks to the very useful collaboration of certain persons, the celebrated Admiral, etc. Date: just *before* the latest Italian scandal.

Since it is here in Italy that one experiments with counter-revolutionary strategies, as Cavalcanti says, it seems to me that it is necessary to launch a *counter-attack* here, by once again taking up the good habits of Mr. Niccolò, to say the unspeakable about the State.⁷¹

*R. a T.*⁷² is finally *completed*. It must still be proofread and typed up. Attached is the definitive index (around 200 printed pages, I believe). The book appears to me to be well conceived, and I would like to believe it is executed to the best of my ability.

I can announce to Cavalcanti that the first Strasbourg scandal in the factories⁷³ *has taken place* in Milan, with the greatest success imaginable, thanks to a group of situ-inspired workers. Two factories, Motta and Alemagna, united under the name UNIDAL after being purchased by the State, have gone bankrupt. They produced foodstuffs and cakes, which had been popular, by employing more than 5,000 workers, which isn't a few.

It took two years, but the result was obtained. I was informed of it by one of those workers, who came to find me. In Chapter XIII [of *Remedy for Everything*] (On Sabotage Considered as One of the Fine Arts), I will make this scandal public. In fact, the story of this bankruptcy was already a scandal, but all the details were distorted because the story was

⁶⁵ Written in French and published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II*, op. cit., pp. 113-117.

⁶⁶ Italian in original.

⁶⁷ Italian in original.

⁶⁸ Italian in original.

⁶⁹ Short for *Esercizio Militare*, i.e., the Italian Armed Forces.

⁷⁰ The International Institute for Strategic Studies is located in London.

⁷¹ A reference to the precedent established by Sanguinetti when he used a fictitious person (Censor) to tell the truth about the bombing of the Piazza Fontana in Milan on 12 December 1969.

⁷² *Remedy for Everything*.

⁷³ A scandal analogous to the publication of *On the Poverty of Student Life* at the expense of the student union at the University of Strasbourg, November 1966.

reported by the *Corriere [della Sera]* through a barrage of fake editorials, which hushed up the crucial detail, which was that this bankruptcy was the determined and premeditated work of conscious, situationist-inspired workers who quoted *La Soc. del la S.*, etc. It would take me 30 pages to recount to you the truly scandalous aspects of this story; I will limit myself here to a very short summary. In addition to wildcat strikes, these workers bankrupted the factory principally by declaring to the entire country what its products *actually* contained. Having stolen the list of all the Italian distributors of the factory's foodstuffs from the management, they first warned and then challenged these distributors to continue to sell poisoned things. Naturally, this caused a great scandal, but it wasn't enough to convince the managers to change their methods of production, nor to bankrupt the factory, the deficits of which had been paid off by the State for two years running. Then, in various but very effective ways, the workers declared to the public that, starting on a certain day, they would begin to spit and piss into the [already] poisoned foodstuffs, which were dangerous to their producers as well as their consumers. This, coupled with certain quite new means of sabotage, *was sufficient*.

During these two years, these workers amused themselves, as they said, like crazy people. At the beginning, the *situs* [among them] were a very small group, but the illness quickly spread to the others. Three months after the arrival of my friend, he and several other workers were laid off, but supported by their comrades they appealed to the courts, where they demonstrated with the most advanced facility that they had only acted in the interests of the factory's good name and the consumers [good] health. The court then condemned the firm to take those workers back and pay them damages and interest. This example then spread, and several other workers, emboldened by that first success, filled complaints against the factory's management, pleading that they'd experienced nervous troubles due to the noise and a thousand other things, always winning their cases and thus monetary damages. Thus, a young worker continued to be paid, but on the condition that *she no longer had to show up at the factory*, etc.

The funniest part of the story is that several workers, including my friend, got themselves laid off just before the bankruptcy, for which they received extravagant compensations, *which they themselves had calculated with management, after a precise accounting of the damages that, if they had remained on the job, they would have sustained during the subsequent three months*. And since they were always the winners on the terrain of the *détournement* of the justice system, management granted them what they demanded, or almost all of it. My friend, for example, who had sworn to me that he had only really worked two weeks over the course of two years (although he almost always came to work, though, alas! to do *other things* while there), received over six million lira as compensation. And the ringleader of this game, who was the first [among them] to read *Spectacle* and put it to good use, received 13 million lire. If all this isn't scandalous, then I don't know what is!

Some of these workers are now in South America or touring the world in search of a new base of operations, thus taking literally the famous advertising slogan of an American airline company that, underneath a photo of an exploding *cocktail*,⁷⁴ asked, "How can you change the world if you still don't know it yet?"

My friend is in Greece, with his wife. I hardly delude myself when I say that with such workers, and such politicians, *managers*⁷⁵ and courts, Italy will not last long!
Best wishes,

⁷⁴ English in original.

⁷⁵ English in original.

Guicciardini⁷⁶

[P.S.] Have you received the books I sent to Chateau-Boujoum?⁷⁷

⁷⁶ One of Gianfranco Sanguinetti's pseudonyms. Francesco Guicciardini was a friend and critic of Niccolò Machiavelli.

⁷⁷ The domicile of an Afghani friend of Alice Becker-Ho.

Guy Debord to Gianfranco Sanguinetti
29 August 1978⁷⁸

Dear Friend,

I completely approve of the projects mentioned in your letter of 15 August.

Nevertheless, I note that they are, without the least attempt at an explanation, in perfect contradiction with the theses that you inopportunately put forth in your letter of 1 June.

Thus I would like to know the reasoning that motivated those analyses, which were so disparate:

- (a) direct pressure from the authorities?
- (b) indirect pressure from the authorities, but politely presented through the insinuations of the very suspect Doge?
- (c) the pure pleasure of contradicting Cavalcanti, an activity to which you have too often been devoted, to the detriment of better activities?

In the expectation of reading a response to this remarkable problem,
Cavalcanti

P.S. I have just received the books. Thank you. I would love to have a copy of the 1977 pirate edition of [*The Society of the*] *Spectacle*.

⁷⁸ Written in French and published in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II*, op. cit., p. 118; reprinted in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 5: Janvier 1973-Décembre 1978*, op. cit., p. 473.

Guicciardini to Cavalcanti
24 September 1978⁷⁹

Dear Cavalcanti,

Occupied as he is by what I will describe, Niccolò belatedly responds through me to your letter, which only arrived 10 days ago. He asks me to convey the following: there is in fact a significant contradiction between the two letters in question, just as there was a contradiction between what he thought before writing what must be said on the subject and what he thought while writing it. Of the hypotheses that you have advanced, he rules out the first two, and does not judge himself to be in the best position to judge the third one, which in my opinion cannot be ruled out. He maintains that sometimes having to deal with someone who, on certain delicate subjects, does not make mistakes, actually serves as a sort of catalyst for him to make mistakes. Though I find this explanation to be a preposterous, it seems to me that he is like that, even if I cannot find the precise reason for it, and it seems to me that, for Niccolò, who is habituated by a poor education to constantly run up debts, it is easier to continue to incur them than to settle up or even to stop himself. Deplorable though such an attitude is, I know him well enough to know that, as a rule, he is far more adept at recognizing stupidity in a fool than at recognizing reason where it actually resides. His initial, spontaneous his judgment is invariably sound, but afterwards, through the very act of reasoning, he distances himself from it and he takes off on a tangent, armed with his baggage of sophisms, in which he would not so completely wallow if he were not so *sfacciato*.⁸⁰ [...]

Author's note dated 29 April 2013: this is the first part of my letter of 24 September 1978, in which I responded to Guy's three questions. My letter is signed Guicciardini. It is four pages long. I could not speak of the German anarchist in this letter,⁸¹ and this explains its convoluted structure. Later on, I touched upon *Remedy for Everything*, which was in the process of being typed up, and the risks that I was running, not only where the police were concerned, but also with respect to the Stalinists: the strangers who were wandering around my house and who had cut the chain that blocked entrance to my private road; the fire that had been set at my house on the previous Sunday; other provocateurs who had cut down the two oak trees in my fields and who had threatened me with another fire; the fact that I perhaps needed to distance myself from the place; the very suspect mail carrier who was a stoolpigeon for the cops (he lived next door to my property);⁸² the letters from Guy that arrived open; the new vineyards that I was preparing; how the publication of *Remedy to Everything* would be accompanied by a scandal perpetrated by the wildcat workers and friends at the Motta and Alemagna factories in Milan, plus a postscript in which I announced the occurrence of another fire (previously threatened) set on my property just before I sent off the letter, on 27 September.

⁷⁹ Not included in *Éditions Champ Libre, Correspondence, Volume II*.

⁸⁰ Italian in original: "impudent or cheeky."

⁸¹ See Sanguinetti's letter to Mustapha Khayati dated 10 December 2012.

⁸² *Note by Gianfranco Sanguinetti, 29 April 2013: nota bene* [note well] that three weeks ago, on 8 April 2013, the newspapers in Florence announced that this very mail carrier, who had an arsenal in his house, had blown himself up trying to get rid of the TNT that he possessed by exploding it in the fields next to my house, and that he is now in a coma.