

2 December 2012
Dear Gianfranco,

(...) The note about Alice¹ poses a more general problem that has bothered me for some time, to know the degree of Debord's responsibility for what she has done!

Guy foresaw everything, calculated everything, and Alice has only executed – in her way, certainly – what the master planned. He was the one who created the archives and kept copies of the majority of the letters that he'd written: Alice only verified and added the letters that were missing.

(...) Everything has taken place as if he decided to orient all research about the groups that he founded (the LI and the SI) with a view to impose his own version of things. The desire to minimize the role of his companions was his; in her zeal, Alice has understood or arbitrarily and stupidly decided that it would be necessary to erase their traces. That is his crime, probably worsened by his “avida dollars”² side! This does not prevent the making of necessary clarifications! (...)

Mustapha [Khayati]

(A note appended to “The Doge”)

10 December 2012
Dear Mustapha,

I have reflected upon your hypothesis, according to which Guy, starting from a certain moment, “had the desire to minimize the role of his companions,” and that, after his death, Alice has only been the executrix of this last will for effacement. It is not improbable that towards the end of his parabola, Guy had obeyed what one calls in Italian the “annihilation drive” [*pulsion d'anéantissement*], which brought him to annul the reality of the other and make it disappear as if it never existed.

In any case, before then and fortunately so, Guy wasn't at all like that, because I recall how often he had emphasized to me the important role of the first “artistic” period of the SI and, likewise, the considerable role played by

¹ *Translator*: A note to be written about the manner in which Alice Becker-Ho (aka Alice Debord) has been presenting the history of the Situationist International.

² *Translator*: Andre Breton's mocking anagram of Salvador Dali's name.

this or that situationist, by saying – with the modesty of great men – that his merit had been his ability to grasp, solidify and give form to the impulses, thoughts, etc. that came to him from other people. Without minimizing his personal merits, this ability seems normal and unquestionable, because, otherwise, what's the use of a group? But this was the Guy that one loved, the one to whom one will always be grateful, whose works one admires and with whom one has been able to do the most beautiful things, and I in particular was able (and for a long time) to share with him a life together, of a richness that is rarely shared today, in the new conditions of the world. At a certain moment, things changed.

Your letter has caused me to take the effort to search through the correspondence and, moreover, through the documents that support your hypothesis. They exist. I haven't yet found a late letter (to an assistant on one of his films?) that asked him what became of the other situs, and Guy responded something like, "I made them disappear." But I recall reading that in the published correspondence.

In what concerns me personally, it is definite, in any case, that starting from the success of Operation Censor, in which he didn't believe very much, there came upon Guy a somewhat suspicious kind of caution towards me. And then he sought for a longtime a pretext to attack me, not frankly or directly, which was something he could do by writing to me directly, but obliquely, in an undeclared, asymmetrical war, and, a few years later, by spreading (left and right) insinuations and calumnious hypotheses about the Doge, about me, about my conduct in the Moro Affair, etc.³ These practices, to the extent that they were of a calumnious character, called for the only conduct to adopt against calumny: *to ignore it* and especially *not fall into the trap of defending oneself against it*. I did not respond to the manipulator or to those who were manipulated, neither then nor afterwards. This epistolary offensive reached its paroxysm in 1981, after the first two French editions and the editions published in German, Greek and Portuguese of *On Terrorism*, published in Grenoble, Paris, Hamburg, Athens and Lisbon – Dutch, English and Spanish editions were imminent.

Here I am obligated to make a long digression on something that concerns me particularly, which will allow me to better specify the strategy with which Guy proceeded, and what damage he proposed to do, because I have read the letters (many of them for the first time) that he wrote left and right during the summer of '81, when he was violently overtaken by a paranoid and maneuver-heavy crisis. One knows that paranoia is generally

³ See the note on Ariberto Mignoli, "The Doge."

lucid, structured and systematic. With Guy, it filled out a letter addressed to Michel Prigent (dated 22 May 1981), in which, several lines apart, he wrote, “I am thus obligated, so that no one will have the occasion to say that perhaps I would manipulate this or that person, to break off all relations . . .” and then, “The *method of the truth* isn’t a too-difficult application (...) I see a simple and clear example of it in Els van Daele’s postface to *Terrorism*.”⁴ This postface, which was entirely or in part constructed by Guy, and which was imposed upon the Dutch publishers, *isn’t the refutation* of manipulative practices, as he claims, but their *definitive and monumental confirmation*. Likewise for the “Foreword” imposed upon the English edition, which was signed by Lucy Forsyth.⁵ Thus, I take the occasion of the present letter to you to get a few pebbles out of my boots.

It was at this precise time that Guy launched his offensive against me. The principal explication that I found for this murky operation is the success that my book on terrorism enjoyed abroad, where the people who published it or undertook to publish it did so with more impact than his *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of “The Society of the Spectacle”*. Guy thought that *On Terrorism* had more success than it actually had, the success of Censor still being fresh. His second line of attack aimed at eliminating me from the subversive movement by preventively discrediting all that I might still do and write, as well as what he had done with others.

These operations began with the sending of a dismissive letter, signed by [Gerard] Lebovici (12 September 1980), to Philippe Rouyau and Jean-François Labrugère, who were preparing to reprint their translation of my book into French. They continued with the recruitment of a bad soldier, the French translator Jean François Martos, in the spring of 1981, because it is from his translation that, generally speaking, the other editions of *On Terrorism* were made. By having Martos under control, Guy could also control the future editions, as was the case in Holland and England. He imposed a condition upon Martos, an *a priori*, as he called it, if they were to be friends and collaborators: his relations with me had to end. The hostilities subsequently continued with the distribution of four letters from three years before that, at the time of the Moro affair in 1978. They included the one from Guy (21 April 1978) in which he asked me to intervene in the affair

⁴ Cf. Guy Debord, *Correspondance*, vol. 6, p. 121.

⁵ *Translator*: Sanguinetti’s assertion that it was in fact Debord who wrote and imposed both the “Postface” to the Dutch edition and the “Foreword” to the English edition certainly explains the otherwise inexplicable “coincidence” that the two texts share, not only the same ideas, but the same way of phrasing them (as well as the same excerpt from Debord’s letter to Kloosterman dated 23 February 1981).

and go underground (which would have been a very serious error in Italy at that time: anyone not found at his address was condemned in advance), and a letter from me (1 June 1978), in which I got muddled up in opposing hypotheses in order to gainsay the proposed strategy. I was wrong about the precise point, but I knew why, and this was neither serious, “suspect,” “obscure” nor “guilty,” as Guy would say three years later. Then there was another letter from me to Guy (15 August 1978) and the response from Guy (29 August 1978) in which he posed three questions to me.⁶ My response (24 September 1978) to that last letter was not published. We will see why it wasn’t.

Since life is (fortunately) richer and more complicated than Guy’s paranoid simplifications, I will recount for you what I could not say to anyone. I had first-hand information from a German anarchist in the R.A.F. who was close to me at the time. I had previously seen her battle courageously at the barricades in Bologna in September 1977. Shortly afterwards, she immediately denounced the assassination of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Karl Raspe in the prison at Stammheim. She was persecuted and quickly arrested by the Italian police at the behest of the Germans, who wanted to extradite her. She was also in contact with stray Italian terrorists of good faith; she had first-hand news; and thus, in my letter to Guy, I tried to envision things in the perspective of the information that I had come to learn in this fashion, without being able to discern how much of it was true or uncertain, nor was I (obviously cautious) able to cite my sources: in the Moro affair, the authorities had adroitly ensnared sincere terrorists who didn’t know for whom they worked. Furthermore, you know that they had tried to implicate me,⁷ though I’d never been a terrorist.

Thus, this was information that I could not communicate to anyone, and I certainly couldn’t *write it down and send it* to Guy: the German anarchist – thanks to a famous marriage of convenience with the son of her Italian attorney a week before her arrest, which *ipso facto* made her an Italian – wasn’t extradited to Germany, had narrowly avoided incarceration at Stammheim and had survived. I could not nor did I want to write to other people about this, not even in 1981. And especially not to a simple translator of my book who so impertinently demanded an accounting from me.

⁶ These letters were published in Champ Libre’s *Correspondance* (vol. 2) in 1981.

⁷ In the large-scale legal and police-related operation conducted by the anti-terrorist prosecutor Pier Luigi Vigna in November 1979, a few months after the publication of *On Terrorism*.

Martos, with whom I was never a friend, and whom I never considered to be a subversive, came to be – if not because of his vague desires, then because he'd translated *On Terrorism* – recruited for Guy's stable, and thus believed that he'd been admitted into the ranks of international subversion, when he was always nothing but an opportunist. He was commanded to write to me a letter that demanded an explanation for the contradiction there had been between the hypothesis advanced in my letter to Guy dated 1 June 1978 and the thesis supported in my book. Guy took pains to distribute my response to his three hypotheses,⁸ written on 24 September 1978, *between two fire-bombings* of my house in the country. In that letter, I clearly rejected the first two hypotheses and partially admitting the third one. Although truncated, the correspondence made public three years later was made to justify question marks.

Thus Martos sent me his eminently insolent letter (3 June 1981).⁹ I did not respond. And for good reason. He had written his malicious and inquisitorial letter on instructions from Guy and he had written it to please Guy, and it demonstrated especially well that Martos had been recruited like a marionette. The goal of the letter was to set the bases for a subsequent campaign to defame and dishonor me in the poor circle of puppets with which Guy wanted to surround himself, a circle to which this letter was immediately sent. Here it is necessary to make clear that [Jaap] Kloosterman and [Michel] Prigent [who also received copies of Martos' letter] were not properly part of Guy's stable, but Guy was interested in them because each was preparing an edition of *On Terrorism*.

You know as well as I that, in Italy, I had done and risked, alone, what no one else at the time had risked to do in order to denounce *coram populo*¹⁰ modern terrorism – which today one calls *false flag*¹¹ operations – and what I continue to risk every day. In the name of what would I need to satisfy the malicious and aggressive curiosity of parasitic spectators who, while I lived in a state of emergency in Italy, amused themselves by spreading ignoble suspicions against the only person they knew who had fought the enemy on the front lines? I had something other than their insolence, which bordered

⁸ “Thus I would like to know the reason that motivated those analyses, so strange, at the time: a) direct pressure from the authorities? b) indirect pressure from the same origin, but politely presented through the insinuations of the very suspect Doge? c) the pure pleasure of contradicting Cavalcanti, an activity to which you are devoted too often, to the detriment of better activities?” (Letter from Guy dated 29 August 1978).

⁹ Cf. J.-F. Martos, *Correspondance avec Guy Debord*, Paris, 1998, pp. 166-168.

¹⁰ *Translator*: publicly.

¹¹ *Translator*: English in original.

on calumny, to defend myself against. They could fuck themselves! Since I never responded to them, I pulled the carpet out from under their feet, and I am quite happy that I behaved in that fashion. They remained famished; I did not feed their hunger for explanations and gossip. *Never complain, never explain.*¹² They have nothing to be proud of.

In any case, twenty years later, on 11 September 2001, *it was my book that people recalled*, then already amply distributed on the Internet in several languages,¹³ and not theirs, who had inscribed their ignominious suspicions, their insinuations and their names in the infamous column that testified to their cowardice. They have never risked, neither then nor subsequently, producing anything efficacious against the new spectacular terrorism with which they filled their mouths. They preferred to accuse me of having denounced it *a little later* than they had desired. And if they complained of my supposed “lateness,” and if they believed that it was truly urgent, *what the devil prevented them from preceding me?*

Martos was only a spectator and a puppet who has never been arrested or even interrogated by any police officer or judge; he has never experienced attacks, interrogations, trials, searches, or criminal charges – all the things to which I was subjected over the years.

At that time, in Italy as well as in Germany, one didn't have the leisure of masturbating with the spider webs of the French pro-situ opportunists. I had cops and saboteurs at my door, and my friends were arrested. Several died during those years. I had to defend myself against other dangers, quite real ones, imminent and threatening, not the dishonest provocations that came to me from the other side of the Alps. In 1979, Licio Gelli¹⁴ activated the fiancé of one of his daughters, the son of a carabineer, to stage a provocation against me, after which I was indicted for the crime of contraband, and the affair ended with a violent encounter.¹⁵ And it could have turned out worse.

I had neither the time nor the desire to confront a colossus the size of Martos. His correspondence with Guy is a catalogue of gossip. He has since then tried to sell it to the highest bidders and has sold none of it. His use value is identical to his exchange value. For all these reasons, it was wise for

¹² *Translator*: English in original.

¹³ *Translator*: my translations of the prefaces to the French and Italian editions of *On Terrorism* (but not the book itself) have been available on-line since 22 November 1999.

¹⁴ *Translator*: born in 1919, Gelli was a fascist and pro-Franco soldier in his youth. As an adult, he worked for the CIA, participated in the failed Borghese coup of 1970, and was a key member of NATO's Operation Gladio and the P2 Masonic Lodge.

¹⁵ At the time, no one knew anything about Licio Gelli or Operation Gladio.

me to let him and the others talk. An old Tuscan proverb says: “*acqua che scorre e gente che parla non si parano.*”¹⁶ And so I let them run on.

Guy’s strategy of attack was then deployed in numerous letters sent to several people, as one learns from his *Correspondance* (vol. 6). Therein he alludes to vague “serious reasons” and “reasons that have remained very obscure to me,” to a “suspect attitude,” to a “damning document” (!) concerning my letter of 1 June 1978, with phrases that push his correspondents to believe in and let them imagine very serious things, but they are always shrouded in mystery (“I believe I have told you *the least possible* and, at the same time, the minimum necessary,” he tells Martos on 24 July 1981) or even contain very hypocritical insinuations (in the same letter, he says, “I have been Gianfranco’s friend. I certainly do not want . . . to discourage those who at the moment are his friends, by revealing to them all that I know,” *but without ever saying what that might be*). A little further down: “I want to warn you about certain dangers; I no longer know if Gianfranco knows about them or refuses to know about them,” without ever indicating *what exactly* they might be, because – beyond a paranoid suspicion (or a pretext for suspicion) about the Doge, in either case *totally unfounded* and, furthermore, not stated in plain language – *there was absolutely nothing to say*. “I have told you to ask him what he thinks about the ‘Doge’ these days. This is a kind of password *to assure your protection*” (letter to Martos dated 24 August 1981). *Porca Madonna!*¹⁷ Protection?! From what? Of whom? In Italy, it is the Mafia that offers protection! If there were dangers that I did not see, wouldn’t I have the right to be immediately and directly informed? But these smoky dangers did not exist.

One could believe just about anything after these insinuations, which were as heavy as they were unfounded, and this was well and truly the reason for their existence, through which paranoia became contagious, as was the case with poor Carlos Ojeda, who indeed became crazy for a moment.¹⁸

To impose his postface (signed by Els van Daele¹⁹) to the Dutch edition of *On Terrorism*, he wrote to Jaap Kloosterman, “One knows very well that Gianfranco *is guilty*” (letter dated 20 August 1981), because Jaap was a bit skeptical about what Guy had evoked so vaguely, and he was about to publish my book in Holland. And to Michel Prigent, who was about to

¹⁶ “You can’t stop water from running or people from talking.”

¹⁷ *Translator*: Holy fuck! (literally “Pig Madonna”).

¹⁸ Cf. Guy’s letter to Carlos Ojeda, dated 29 August 1981.

¹⁹ *Translator*: the person who translated *On Terrorism* into Dutch.

publish an English edition, he wrote, “Sanguinetti has found nothing in the letter from Jeff [Martos] to respond to (...): which proves that Jeff’s letter was strong enough to reduce to silence someone who is *so obviously guilty*” (letter dated 29 August 1981). And then, that same day, in the grips of the same acute crisis, he wrote to Carlos Ojeda: “One knows very well that Gianfranco has been *guilty* for a long time and in the eyes of many people, due to what he hasn’t said and what he has said.” Because he kept himself from saying precisely *what* I was guilty of, one might have well and truly believed oneself to be in Kafka’s novel *In the Penal Colony (In der Strafkolonie)*, in which “the crime is never in doubt.” In any case, one knows quite well that calumny surpasses any demonstration: it is content to be repeated and passed from mouth to ear.

Once again, in the same paranoid attack of the summer of 1981: “Gianfranco hasn’t responded to you (...) This is a terrible verification: even more than what I could have thought” (letter to Martos dated 29 August 1981). Verification of *what*? Not of *the truth*, certainly! What was verified here was only his obsession.

Here Guy comported himself in a dishonorable manner, one worthy of some politician: he knew me better than anyone since 1969, and he knew well that I always comported myself in an inflexible, courageous, adroit and irreproachable manner with all the authorities, police officers, members of the army, judges, ministers, provocateurs, and jailers, and this in all the different countries in which I had to deal with them. It was this very comportment that always saved me. And it was thanks to my comportment in such dramatic situations that I was able to save many people from even worse consequences.²⁰ Guy didn’t even fear to write as one might chronicle diverse facts in a newspaper for the plebs: “. . . since Gianfranco, in whom this genre of detestable acumen hardly surprises me, has managed to not respond [to Carlos Ojeda] on all the burning questions (...) what consequences shouldn’t one fear?” (letter to Martos, 29 August 1981).

Here I note in passing that the Dutch and English editions of *On Terrorism*, both published in 1982, are the most striking examples of schizophrenia in the history of publishing since *Anti-Machiavel* by Frederic

²⁰ Where this is concerned, the comportment of the French Minister of the Interior (Raymond Marcellin) – always well informed by his cops – seems to me more astute and realistic when he declared the day before my expulsion from France (and thus tried to justify it), “It is a very poor tactic to pretend to propitiate an irreducible adversary by increasing one’s concessions to him (...) To come to terms with him is to add shame to an assured defeat.” (*Le Monde*, 27 July 1971).

II and Voltaire.²¹ Both of these editions publish my text and, at the same time, launch an attack against my person (under the signatures of Els van Daele and Lucy Forsyth). This gives the impression that the book was only published so that their suspicions about and censures of its author could be spread.²²

The height of the hypocrisy and false consciousness was only reached two months later, when Guy, feigning scandalized innocence, wrote the following to Lebovici on 18 October 1981: “Do you know the most recent book by [Jean-Pierre] Voyer? In it he incites [the reader to] the murder of Sanguinetti by insinuating that he has deliberately worked for the Italian police.” Voyer, who had always been crazy, had published a manifesto in which he said, among other things, “The question that is justly posed with respect to Sanguinetti is: how is it that he is still alive and free? After all, he is perhaps an agent of the secret services. But one has seen that such an affiliation is no longer a guarantee of security in Italy today.” But despite his madness, Voyer honestly added: “It is necessary that the author of the ‘*Protest*’ applies to himself the method that he applies to Sanguinetti. One must grant Sanguinetti the merit of having denounced the spectacular usage of Stalinist terrorism in Italy that is made by the Italian State” (Jean Pierre Voyer, *Response to the Author of ‘Protest to the Libertarians of the Present and the Future Concerning the Capitulations of 1980’*,²³ Paris, 7 October 1981).

²¹ *Translator*: a chapter-by-chapter rebuttal of *The Prince* published in 1740.

²² *Translator*: in the words of the text signed by Els van Daele: “When Moro was kidnapped, Sanguinetti failed to intervene. And, in its turn, the fact of keeping his error hidden determined the course of all his subsequent actions. (...) It is certainly not by keeping such secrets that one obtains the position of fundamental superiority from which one ‘can attack and successfully combat all the forces of thoughtlessness’ [and] *vanquish* them. And it is not by passing over in silence the fact that *someone else* had known these things, and known them so well, that one prevents the revelation of a truth of which one is ashamed. (...) We can only congratulate ourselves with what will henceforth be available to all those people who read Dutch and, besides, with what – thanks to this Postface – are not only revealed State secrets, but also the secret of their revelation.”

²³ The pastiche called *Protestation devant les libertaires du present et du futur sur les capitulations de 1980*, which caused so much ink and suspicions to flow among Guy and the others in his circle, was in reality written anonymously by someone named Jean-Claude Lutanie, who died in 2006. It was reprinted in 2011. [*Translator*: in the words of the editors of the 2011 edition: “The *Protest* above all testifies to a disappointment with respect to situationist thought and its ‘youthful, unkept promises.’ Lutanie essentially takes aim at Debord, accusing him, if not of jealousy for a radicalism of which he was quite incapable, although he claimed it, then at least bad faith in his affirmation that the group [Action directe] was manipulated by the State.” Cf. Debord’s letter to Kloosterman

Faced with Guy's ingenuous, outraged innocence concerning Voyer's poster, one must wonder: *what had he himself insinuated that was different just the day before*, but with more authority and emphasis? Wasn't he the first one to have appealed for a kind of virtual semi-public lynching of me? After seeing Voyer's manifesto, had he finally perceived the effects of and reactions to his calumnious allusions, only two months after making and spreading them around?

Whatever the case may be, all this is pitiful, and borders on ignominy, or at least an explanation in terms of pathology. In an extremely virtuous declaration, made hardly a year prior to that, in a letter to Diego Camacho (written by Guy but signed by Lebovici) that criticizes Camacho for his insinuations about the death of Durruti, Guy proclaims: "Champ Libre never publishes authors who insinuate, whatever the political necessities they support!"²⁴ And he wrote to Lebovici on 3 July 1980: "Obviously you cannot publish Camacho, who *insinuates* (...). He even insinuates with a poisonous caution (...) He boasts that he 'insinuates'..."

Thus, using his own insinuations and aiming at his own particular goals, Guy positively (and vainly)²⁵ tried to make me disappear by defaming me. But *he failed* because he never succeeded in convincing anyone other than his sycophants, and he also didn't succeed in breaking up [*franchir*] the bigger circle of the revolutionaries, in Italy and elsewhere, who knew me, that is to say, those who [in his eyes] merited the title "fanatical, inept Sanguinettists."²⁶ The actions against me taken by the judges, police officers, provocateurs, Stalinists and fascists at least had a justification in the damage that I had done them and would continue to do them.

It is certain that, for the man who wanted to be a strategist, who admired Clausewitz and invented *Kriegspiel*,²⁷ the campaign against me in the summer of 1981 essentially ended in a single result: the precious acquisition of an authorized "historian" of the SI.²⁸ I believe that Guy must have realized this, because this campaign was very quickly ended and abandoned, and no one spoke of it any more, as if nothing had happened,

dated 13 July 1981: "I have asked Gérard [Lebovici] to send you a copy of a short, very shady pamphlet (...) which, it seems to me, must be read with great attention."

²⁴ Cf. Champ Libre, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, p. 63, letter dated 4 August 1980.

²⁵ *Translator*: both due to his vanity and unsuccessfully.

²⁶ Cf. Debord's letter to Martos dated 25 February 1982.

²⁷ *Translator*: a cabinet game marketed by a company formed by Debord and Lebovici in 1976.

²⁸ *Translator*: Martos' *Histoire de l'Internationale Situationniste* was published Editions Gérard Lebovici in 1989.

which is also quite strange. His serious and quickly forgotten suspicions sounded false and became suspect.

One can circle around this problem as much as one wants: it remains that, from the strategic point of view, this campaign was a failure and even a reversal: neither the English, the Dutch, the Germans, the Greeks, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Italians, nor (later on) the Americans joined the small French pro-situ sycophantic herd that was thus reduced to Martos alone, who was unanimously scorned. But the greatest defeat for Guy was for once in his life being cut down to the role of a manipulating and maneuvering politician. I am happy that I didn't have any role in this low-down game, that I didn't feed it, and that I remained impassive in the face of the calumny.

It is true that, in 1981, I didn't have all the documents that are available today. In them, one can even learn that one of the Frenchmen who came to my place in the country reported to Guy, either directly or by way of [indirect] gossip. But even if I had known all of the hidden agendas [*les dessous*] of these dealings, my quite anti-politician character would have prevented me from standing up in such an arena. In any case, I knew enough about them at the time to choose to let the enemy fleet, which was so badly piloted, run aground against the reefs that broke its reputation, without lowering me to their depths.

In that climate of poison, disinformation and hostile and dishonest intoxication, Guy still dared to complain that I'd never cited his *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of "The Society of the Spectacle"*. He wrote the following to Lebovici on 25 June 1980: "Thank you . . . for the French edition of Gianfranco . . . The preface for the French edition is, in any case, better than the rest of it. It is true that the author doesn't cite me, but who ever cites me?" Perhaps that was my real capital crime! But, moreover, the question itself was badly posed: *it was him* who should have cited and even supported me – knowing [as he did] that I was fighting behind enemy lines, in extreme conditions – because, when he wrote his *Preface* (January 1979), he had already read the manuscript of *On Terrorism* (October 1978),²⁹ which had been written well before his text. It is also true that, in May 1981, he felt the necessity of defending himself against a suspicion *that no one had raised* when he noted the following in his postface (signed by Els van Daele) to the Dutch edition of *On Terrorism*: "Since there are a great number of concordances between the two writings, from the choices of historical

²⁹ *Translator*: cf. Debord's letter to Paolo Salvadori dated 12 November 1978: "I have read Gianfranco's manuscript."

examples to certain stylistic details (...), the pages of the *Preface* (...) appear to the reader as a summary of *On Terrorism*.” This clarification has the air of an *excusatio non petita*.³⁰

Why did Guy place himself on a slope that was so slippery for him, when there was no necessity to do so? That’s the question. In his politician-paranoid downward slide [*dérive*], there was – as is often the case in paranoia – a method; in any case, there was a paralogic that satisfied itself with the pseudo-reality that it itself had created in order to combat *an effigy* of a pseudo-enemy. *False flag*³¹ terrorism, or religion, functions in the same manner, as one knows. On the one hand, Guy recognized the arguments I made in *On Terrorism*; on the other hand, he wanted to create an emptiness around me, and he tried to stop any influence that I might have in the subversive milieu of the time, not because he thought that my influence was harmful, but, on the contrary, because he recognized that my book “is very true, and [it would be] very good to have it be known, as soon as possible, for its exact analysis of the Red Brigade” (cf. his letter to the Greek Mikis Anastasiadis dated 25 June 1981). And, as he wrote to Kloosterman on 23 February 1981, “I think that it is a very good thing to publish *On Terrorism*, which is exactly true on the central question that it concerns, and full of very valuable arguments about it.” A year before that, in a letter to Anastasiadis dated 5 August 1980, he wrote, “You no doubt know that [to answer the demand for it] Gianfranco’s book has already had a second French edition. Thus pseudo-terrorism begins to find its antidote . . .” Guy’s contradiction was thus between the affirmed utility that he recognized in my book and his desire to diminish its importance or to make me disappear.

Did Guy believe that it was my influence or that of the other situationists that was diminishing? Or quite simply, did he not want me, as one says in Italian, scratching around and going through his henhouse?³² And this was a man who knew very well that Retz had already established that, in matters of calumny, everything that doesn’t do harm works in favor of not against the one who is attacked.

This attitude, reinforced by the “annihilation drive” of which I spoke at the beginning of this letter, naturally was extended to all those who had contributed the most to the subversion of which the SI was the bearer. He wanted to remain alone. Thus it is not an exaggeration to say that, from that

³⁰ *Translator*: Latin for “an unprovoked excuse.” Usually this phrase precedes the words *accusatio manifesta*, with the entire sentence meaning “an excuse that has not been sought [is] an obvious accusation” (against oneself).

³¹ *Translator*: English in original.

³² *Translator*: *gratter et fouiller dans son poulailler*.

moment on, he began to systematically minimize the role played by all the [other] members of the group. As a result, there was only room around Guy for mediocrities and opportunists, whom he launched, in an adventurist manner, against those who had been excellent. This has had obvious consequences, even after his death, in the great work done by Alice (I say “great” in the sense of volume). One of the consequences of this degradation are all the pathetic books written to the glory of Guy: the sycophantic biographies and the supervised pseudo-histories of the SI by a multitude of revisionist “historians” and by impecunious “philosophers,” professors, journalists, etc., who have allowed themselves to be shamelessly herded, flogged and censured by Alice. There has also been a proliferation of publications by essayists, archivists, and laborious and impoverished opportunists seeking the misplaced vanity of the backseat driver. None of this has happened by chance: it has been desired and promoted by Alice, but, before that, by Guy himself.

Among the apologists one can find real pearls: for example, the book by Apostolidès, which, in the fury of making me disappear, reaches philological summits never attained even by the KGB. After having claimed that the French version of the *Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy*³³ was more “elegant” than the Italian original (!), and in order to complete his demonstration that Censor was not Sanguinetti, but Debord, he removes all doubt with the following wise lesson: “One remarks the affinities between the two names, Censor and Debord: they each possess two syllables; the vowels are identical, as are the number of letters.”³⁴ The “affinity” for which I chose the pseudonym *Censor* is, on the contrary, with *Bancor*, the supranational currency invented by Keynes; it was also the penname of Guido Carli, who was the governor of the Bank of Italy at the time. That is quite far away from the furious demonstrative keenness of Apostolidès, the unfortunate orphan of Pope Pius XII,³⁵ Mao and Lenin who only demonstrated that his spastic research was part of a spectacular cult of personality.

To tell the truth, I must confess to you that I wasted very little of my time documenting the above (except for the book by Jappe,³⁶ which, at the time it was published in Italy, I warmly recommended to Alice that she publish in France: but it too, if I recall correctly, was published with some

³³ *Translator*: it was Debord who translated the book from the Italian into French.

³⁴ Jean-Marie Apostolidès, *Les Tombeaux de Guy Debord*, Paris, 1999, cf. 99-104.

³⁵ *Translator*: the infamous pope who reigned during World War II.

³⁶ *Translator*: Anselm Jappe, *Debord* (Pescara: Tracce, 1992).

ensorship or arrangements). The fact is that reading such works immediately bored me; they have no historical value because they are all stale products due to servility or Alice's directives. The real struggle *is completely absent from them*, to the profit of a mythological and laughable combat that is designed, after the making of historical revisions, to have this or that individual appear or, rather, disappear (preferably to make all of them disappear) so as "to certify that he (Debord) remains the Unique One."³⁷ I have been contacted several times, fortunately bashfully, by these almanac salesmen, to whom I have never given anything to nibble upon. There would have been much to discuss about these productions, if I didn't have anything better to do, or if I instituted a pricing structure for the most boorish of these authors: Bourseiller,³⁸ Martos, Kaufmann, Apostolidès or another seller of Bordeaux wine.³⁹ They will be quickly forgotten. Thus, let us move on.

The most surprising thing is that the practices cooked up by Guy for his sycophants, in addition to his arbitrary [*occasionnelle*] versions of things, have been blindly taken up, without any verification or documentary research, by these alleged historians. This crude and simple-minded ideological vision allows these brave militants of history to share and propagate a mythological and weak-willed version of the facts. It is passably comic to ascertain their quasi-unanimity on the idea that Guy's departure from Italy (among other things) was caused by a shadowy persecution or expulsion of which he had [supposedly] been the victim in 1977. In fact, his departure, which took place before the Censor project, was the consequence of a series of prosaic facts: disappointments with Florentine girls; irritation with the fact that he had cut off the gas-heating in Florence in mid-winter; someone had stolen the wine from the cellar of the priest of Pieve de San Cresci, where he'd been staying; banal monetary problems that I had had,

³⁷ Apostolidès, *Les Tombeaux de Guy Debord*, p. 103. Another official falsifier, even more mean-spirited (if that is possible), is Vincent Kaufmann, who concludes, "The SI is to be considered as the work (in all the meanings of the word), or as one of the works, of Debord alone" (*Guy Debord: La Révolution au service de la Poésie*, Paris, 2001, p. 278). This judgment is repeated again, on p. 285, to better convince the reader. On p. 277, Kaufmann writes, "The Italian Gianfranco Sanguinetti (...) was nothing in it . . . he was truly not in the loop [*dans le coup*] during the final debates that shook the SI." One hundred pages later, he continues, "Behind Censor, there was indeed Sanguinetti, but behind Sanguinetti was Debord, or at least his style, in all the senses of the term (...) Is it so surprising that he hastened to translate the book by Censor into French?"

³⁸ Bourseiller succeeded in the brazen enterprise (among others) of writing an essay titled "L'IS face au Terrorisme," without citing me, if only to state that the *Truthful Report* was written by Guy (cf. *Archives et Documents Situationnistes*, 2, Denoël, Paris, 2002).

³⁹ *Translator*: an allusion to Philippe Sollers.

etc. Thus, there are a crowd of errors of this sort in the tombstones⁴⁰ and monuments erected to his glory, all of them working upon the fabrication of a legend and myth.

The first wave of makeshift “historians” has been merrily burned and sacrificed upon the altar of sycophantic praise, which – Guy, quoting [Jonathan] Swift, liked to recall – is the daughter of existing power. If he got wind of these tombstones, I believe that he would rather have concluded with the words of Schopenhauer: “That soon the worms will nibble on my body, this is a thought that I can tolerate; but the idea that the professors will do it with my philosophy, that horrifies me.”

I hope, Mustapha, that this letter will serve to throw a little light on the self-interested confusion that surrounds the distribution of my book on terrorism.

Best wishes,
Gianfranco⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Translator*: rendered into English, the title of Apostolidès’ book is *The Tombstones of Guy Debord*.

⁴¹ *Translator*: translated from the French by Bill Brown and approved by Gianfranco Sanguinetti on 20 February 2013.