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ITALY 1977-8

'Living with an Earthquake'

a RED NOTES pamphlet
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"The only unexpected feature in the Spanish situation - and outside Spain it has caused an immense amount of misunderstanding - is that among the parties on the Government side, the Communists stood not upon the extreme Left, but upon the extreme Right. In reality this should cause no surprise, because the tactics of the Communist Party elsewhere, especially in France, have made it clear that Official Communism must be regarded, at any rate for the time being, as an anti-revolutionary force."

George Orwell, writing about the Communist Party in Homage to Catalonia, 1937

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A Slogan of the Movement:
"LET'S BUILD A NEW LIFE!"
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● "ITALY 1977-8: LIVING WITH AN EARTHQUAKE". (ISBN 0 906305 00 4)

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The Slogan of Bologna, March 1977:
"WE WANT TO SPEAK!
WE WANT TO BE HEARD!"
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PREFACE.

We have called our pamphlet "Living With An Earthquake". This earthquake is not just the crisis at Government level - it is a quite new political upheaval affecting the whole of Italian society.

We have produced this pamphlet because it is vitally important that the outside world should know about what thousands of ordinary people are doing in Italy today. A new opposition is developing, against the Christian Democrats and against the Communist Party, in their 'Historic Compromise'.

This opposition is a new, revolutionary, mass movement. Italy is the only country of the West today that has such a movement.

In recent years other countries have seen single-issue movements (the anti-nuclear movement, the gay liberation movement, the women's movement, etc). But so far, only Italy has produced a mass movement that consciously tries to take an overall revolutionary stance on a whole range of problems that the 1970s have forced us to confront - on the one hand the traditional Left issues of wages, unemployment etc, and on the other,questions of sexuality, of drugs, of personal life, of ecology, music, culture etc.

We say this movement is a <u>mass</u> revolutionary movement, because it involves large numbers of people - tens of thousands in the big cities take part in street demonstrations....a couple of thousand turn up as a matter of course at assemblies held at Rome University...tens of thousands tune in regularly to each of the dozens of revolutionary Free Radio stations, and regularly read the revolutionary daily newspapers.

This movement is also "mass" because it's not just "left-wing intellectuals". It consists of definite layers of society. A fair number, mostly in the North, are factory workers. But the majority are members of what has been called the "second society" - ie proletarians, often students, mostly young, who can't find jobs, or only find precarious jobs with no social security, below-standard wages and no guarantees of any kind. These people (and they are a growing number) find that there are no established political forces to represent their interests. They are "shut out" of official society, socially and politically. They react by organising and rebelling, in a politically conscious manner.

We say this movement is <u>new</u> because up till now the models for revolution have usually been China, Vietnam, Cuba etc, socialist revolutions in basically peasant/feudal-colonial societies, usually led by Marxist-Leninist parties. Revolutionaries in the Western, industrial countries have tended to try and apply these models to their own countries. But the movement in Italy seems to be moving away from those models, in order to try and test a whole new way of developing a revolutionary process in an advanced capitalist industrialised country. In particular it is incorporating some of the lessons and understandings that have come from the recent development of the movement of women.

Our pamphlet is not about "the workers", or "the students", or "the women". It is about an incredible complex, uncertain, fast-moving development of a new force in the revolutionary struggle. This force is hard to define - but at the same time is made up of definite people. The revolutionary groups are having to rack their brains and rethink their theories to adjust to this new reality. The situation is at times hopeful and at times very worrying, sometimes up and sometimes down. No clear lines have yet emerged.

That's why we've printed this pamphlet: in order to show the nature of the upheaval, the nature of the problems that are being raised, the nature of some of the solutions proposed. The revolutionary movement in Britain also faces acute problems of reorganisation in the coming period: the lessons of Italy are extremely valuable.

<u>March 11th 1978</u>

INTRODUCTION

In this pamphlet we have included a range of articles, most of which speak for themselves. However, for the reader who is not familiar with Italian politics, we are including here some background notes.

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Italy is one of the countries that is hardest-hit by the international economic crisis. The effects of this crisis have been made worse by the particular structure of the Italian economy. Italy, until recently, was coupled together with Britain as being the two "weak links" of capitalism - low growth, dependence on the IMF, and a strong inclination towards Socialism.

The North is industrialised. The South is only partly so - and the remaining agriculture has been largely ruined (partly by large-scale land development plans). Over recent decades small peasants have been forced to leave the land and look for work in the towns (in Italy, and further North into Europe). However, planned recession and slackening of economic growth in countries like Germany, Switzerland etc have blocked many of these emigration outlets.

The State has aided a programme of industrial development in the South in recent years (pressured by the Unions, to ease the social problems caused by Northwards migrations). However, this development has been mostly capital-intensive (in order to be profitable and competitive in international markets), and a lot of the money for investment remained stuck to the fingers of corrupt administrators - so that fewer jobs have been created in industry than have been lost in agriculture and other traditional activities.

Keynesian deficit-spending economic policies have been applied in Italy not to providing efficient public services, subsistence-level unemployment benefits etc (public services, including health services, notoriously do not work - or hardly at all - and unemployment benefits are about 60p a day flat-rate for 6 months - and then only after 2 years continuous employment), but instead to swell the ranks of an elephantine State bureaucracy, with practically-sinecure jobs: jobs are exchanged for votes, on a patronage basis.

Direct taxes are notoriously levied only on the pay-packets of regularly employed workers. Business and professional people are protected from the tax authorities by the Bank Secrecy laws (which not even the Communist Party proposes to abolish), and they make voluntary 'declarations of income' which are only a fraction of their real incomes. They also indulge in large-scale illegal exportation of capital, with the connivance of the banks.

Unemployment stands officially at about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million, but is probably twice that, because few people bother to register. In many cases, employment is not much better - being of the part-time, casual or moonlighting variety, with many people taking on 2 or 3 jobs. Inflation is over 20 per cent.

Italy, along with other developed countries, experienced a boom in higher education in the 1960s. But as the crisis restricted the number of available job openings, this boom was not equally restricted. In fact, thousands of young people enrol at University while trying to find work at the same time (among other things, fees are relatively inexpensive).

The University of Rome, for instance, was built to house 20,000 students. It is now having to cope with about 150,000. These facts have led to a big change in the student body (and this is important for understanding the events described in our pamphlet): they are now more proletarian; they live in conditions of extreme economic hardship, making money through odd jobs like babysitting, bar-tending etc; and they have little or no prospect of improving their circumstances even if they do get their degrees. Practically for the first time in history, **vast** numbers of young people have been given access to education and culture - but they have been denied the material privileges which once upon a time would have tied them to the values of the ruling class. This obviously produces an explosive situation. One attempted solution has been the reform recently proposed by Education Minister Malfatti - an attempt to introduce selection, to restrict access to universities (up till now a simple high-school diploma has been enough to get you in).

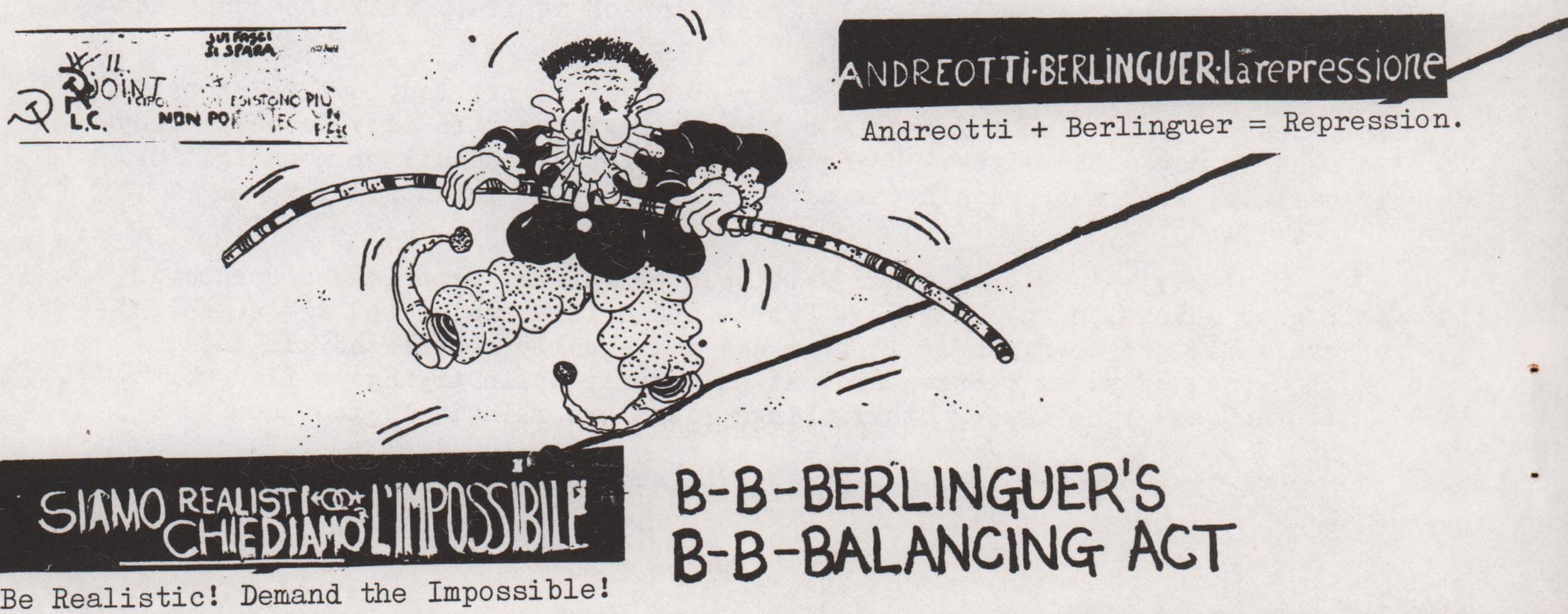
THE REPRESSIVE INSTITUTIONS

The police, carabinieri, finance-guards and other professional military personnel comprise roughly a quarter of a million men in a country of 55 million inhabitants. Their repressive role against the working class movement is documented elsewhere in this pamphlet. The regular Army, on the other hand, could not be counted on, in a confrontation with the people. It is a conscript-based Army, and in many barracks there are semi-underground organisations of democratic and revolutionary soldiers, who have proved able to organise minor mass struggles (such as refusals to eat; one minutes silences in mess when comrades are shot by police in the street etc). For these reasons it can be stated fairly safely that a Chile-style coup d'etat is not on the cards in the near future, for such an attempt would lead most probably to a protracted and bloody civil war which would be severely detrimental to the world capitalist economy. However, there are ongoing attempts by the authorities to re-structure the Army along more professional lines.

THE POSITIONS OF THE POLITICAL FORCES IN ITALY

In the crucial General Election of June 20th 1976, the PCI (Italian Communist Party) obtained 34.4% of the vote, as against 38.8% for the DC (Christian Democrat Party, in power ever since the War). Together with the PSI (Italian Socialist Party), the PR (Radical Party - a civil rights movement) and the DP (Proletarian Democracy - the revolutionary Left), the Left as a whole obtained 48%. However, the PCI made a decisive step.....

Instead of using this new muscle in forceful opposition, the PCI, abandoning its former talk of "reforms", applied its "Historic Compromise" policy by abstaining from Parliamentary votes, and thus effectively propping up Mr Andreotti's minority DC government. In exchange for this, the workers have not got much - only talk from Labour Union (PCI-dominated) leaders like Lama on the need for austerity and making sacrifices - and from the Government, measures that actually eroded living standards still further.



Andreotti + Berlinguer = Repression.

Be Realistic! Demand the Impossible!

The Communist Party also has its own repressive apparatus of strong-arm heavies, intervening directly against the Movement. On occasions it has criticised the Government for not being firm enough in closing down revolutionary office premises, radio stations. It has shown its solidarity with the police on all occasions when the police have clashed with movement demonstrations, and has attempted to smear the movement by equating it with the Fascist movement of 1919 in Italy. Our pamphlet demonstrates this amply.

The Democrazia Proletaria (DP) coalition of small revolutionary parties, after disappointingly meagre results in the June 20th 1976 elections (getting 6 deputies and only 1.5% of the vote) has entered a crisis. This can be traced to many causes: the way the PCI has succeeded in blocking the workers' struggles (bringing about a certain organisational stagnation); the rejection by many militants of the "sacrificial" style of militancy; the disheartenment of militants in general; the problems caused by the militarisation of some areas of the struggle, and the increasing State repression (eg the Special Laws); and, perhaps most important, the fact that the traditional leadership methods of these organisations are being heavily contested from within - particularly by feminist women.

Lotta Continua ("Fight On"), who only got one deputy in the share-out of the DP's vote, is the principal organisation left with a nationally distributed daily newspaper (sold in all news-stands), continuing to give whole-hearted support to all struggles and movements of opposition to the Andreotti Government, and to denounce unhesitatingly the reactionary stance taken by the PCI (the other main organisations in DP tend to try to "draw the PCI back to left-wing policies"). But Lotta Continua's organisational structures are also in a state of crisis, and so are functioning very little. Its militants have practically "dissolved" into the movement, and it is very unclear what the future holds.

As regards The Movement, it would be inexact to call this a "student movement" (as some have), because, as well as students, it also includes factory workers, voluntary and involuntary drop-outs, part-time workers and workers dispersed in the service sector. The Movement is not politically united or homogeneous, although so far it has managed to close its ranks in the face of repression. One component of the Movement is Autonomia Operaia ("Workers' Autonomy") - the hard-line wing, which aims at "raising the level of conflict within the State apparatus". Autonomia Operaia operates in the Movement as an organised fraction, and has been criticised for heavy-handed tactics in attempts to get their proposals accepted at mass meetings of the movement. It has also been criticised for its political line, for many consider it to be premature and suicidal to seek out a head-on conflict with the State apparatus while the bulk of the working class is still being kept inert by the PCI and the Labour Unions (this criticism is made by Lotta Continua's daily newspaper). Other components of the Movement are the revolutionary feminists, and the Metropolitan Indians, a colourful and creative group who have been dressing up in warpaint, and who use hard-hitting irony to unmask the absurdities of the Government and the PCI revisionists.

One notable characteristic distinguishes the Movement from the student movement of 1968: it lacks charismatic leader-figures; it appears to be self-organising.

A NOTE ON CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Everybody is agreed that the Left movement in Italy - the strongest in the whole of Europe - is in profound crisis, with many things changing all at once. A fundamental part of this change is a re-appraisal of the styles and modes of revolutionary politics. The old ways just are not

being accepted: they are being deeply challenged. The startling developments at Lotta Continua's Rimini Conference showed this (see the material later in this pamphlet)

There is a strong feeling (especially fostered by the women's movement) that revolutionary groups who face the problems of fighting for and building communism, should not be internally organised in ways that are not even bourgeois-democratic, but hierarchical and almost feudal.



In order to understand why this has been so, it's worth looking at some of the cultural background in which the present generation of Italians - including revolutionary Italians - has grown up:-

The Vatican: For centuries Katholic Kulture has reigned unopposed over Italy. Among other things Katholic Kulture prohibits its followers from reasoning with their own minds on matters of doctrine - the faithful are expected simply to "believe and obey". Unlike certain other countries, Italy did not have a Protestant Reformation which, if nothing else, at least produced a certain religious freedom, as a first step towards relative freedom of thought. The continuation of the suffocating Katholic doctrine is still seen in the teaching programme in Italian schools, where the critical spirit is strongly discouraged.

The Fascist Inheritance: Twenty years of Fascist dictatorship meant that the parents of today's young generation were themselves brought up in a climate of total non-freedom and rigid family authoritarianism. Much of this climate has lived on in today's families - and in these families it is exceptional to find democratic values applied. The typical father, even today, often exercises his "paternal rights" with the strap, and with no remorse or guilt. In fact he feels within his rights, because that is his cultural tradition.

The Peasant Inheritance: The Italian industrial revolution has been a recent phenomenon. This means that the majority of proletarians (and students too) are the children or grandchildren of peasants. And the peasant world - especially that of the smallholding property - is a world based on individualism, conservatism, closedness to innovation, and rigid authoritarianism in family life (which is strongly patriarchal).

All these components have combined to produce a cultural tradition, which the Left also shares, in many of its organisational aspects. But this cultural tradition is coming under fire nowadays - both in the society at large, and in the Left groups - and perhaps the aspect most under attack is the aspect common to all three of the above traditions: namely the oppression of women. Patriarchy and the oppression of women are common to all those traditions - and it has been the late (but nonetheless explosive) emergence of the women's movement which has brought about the profoundest crisis in the Italian Left groups. It has tried to end the split between the personal and the political spheres. It has opened the way for a new form of politics whose shape is, as yet, unclear.

The "Communist" Inheritance: The weight of the PCI on the Left movement has also been heavy. In Italy, since the War, the Russian-inspired Third Internationalist component of the working class movement has prevailed, rather than the Socialist or Social-Democratic component that has prevailed in

Germany, France, Britain, Scandinavia etc. Now, although the revolutionary groups have criticised many aspects of the PCI's strategy (eg the Reforms, and now the Historic Compromise), they have never criticised its organisational structure. Instead they seem to have had a sneaking admiration for its party cells, branches, congresses, central committees, secretariats, local federations, politburos etc - which most of them have adopted wholesale. In general not only are the structures the same, but also the underlying principles of operation:- Monolithism (everyone must agree about everything, and if there are internal quarrels, they should not be made known outside the organisation); Hierarchy (the lower bodies must accept and do what they are told by the higher bodies, with no rights guaranteed or safeguarded for dissent); and the Rigid Separation between Personal and Political ("We are not here to solve your personal problems").

In case our readers suppose that we have suddenly been smitten with hippy disease, we would point out that precisely these issues have been at the base of the utter crisis of the revolutionary Left in Italy. We would also direct you to the speech by Adriano Sofri, General Secretary (ex) of Lotta Continua, reprinted later in this pamphlet. (See page 93).

o-o-x-XOX-x-o-o

We can say that the revisionist organisations, the PCI and the Unions have no hope of regaining hegemony over the students and marginal workers in the movement, in the short or medium term. A whole new anti-revisionist ethos (home-grown, this time, and not "made in China") has emerged, and only severe military violence will be able to destroy it in the near future. This ethos includes anti-male-chauvinist values (which are only just beginning to seep into the heads of male comrades) and a refusal of authority in practically any form - including the so-called "revolutionary authority" of vertically-structured Leninist-type parties (which may explain why, although Lotta Continua's newspaper represents the majority line and opinion in the Movement, and has increased its sales considerably - currently 30,000 copies a day and rising - Lotta Continua as an organisation is still very weak).

Judging by recent publications of the Left in Britain, our revolutionaries either do not care about, or utterly misunderstand, these developments in Italy. We feel this is a grave mistake, for the lessons of Italy are very rich and fruitful for Britain too.

o-o-x-XOX-x-o-o

The first part of our pamphlet is a brief Chronology of events in Italy.

This is followed by a detailed account and analysis of the events of Bologna, March 1977.

Then comes an account of various important events that took place in Rome - the March 12th demo, the movement for Claudia Caputi and the killing of Giorgiana Masi.

And finally a survey of the revolutionary Left in Italy.

A CHRONOLOGY

A CHRONOLOGY OF RECENTS EVENTS IN ITALY.

• This chronology runs from February 1st to May 1st 1977. Later events are dealt with in the section 'Events in Rome'.

February 1st: 100 Fascists invade the campus of Rome University and shoot at comrades who are meeting to protest against Malfatti's Education Reform bill. Two comrades are wounded - one seriously, with a bullet in his head. The Faculty of Letters is occupied.

February 2nd: Thousands of students respond, with a demonstration outside the branch office of the MSI (neo-fascist party) near Termini station. The police open fire with sub-machine guns. No Fascists had been arrested for the previous day's attack. One cop was wounded by police cross-fire, as were 4 comrades (two seriously).

February 3rd: University faculties are occupied in Rome, Milan, Monza, Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Bari, Trieste and Cagliari. Subsequent events at Rome University are documented later in this pamphlet. (See pages 49-78).

February 9th: 15-20,000 students demonstrate in the streets of Rome.

February 10th: Three big demonstrations in Milan.

February 15th: Communist Party militants provoke a scuffle with the students guarding the gates of the occupied campus at Rome University.

February 17th: Lama, the top boss in the CGIL union confederation, and a CP member) enters Rome University to "talk sense" into the students - accompanied by a couple of hundred PCI strong-arm heavies and many shop stewards hastily summoned from the factories at the last minute to "defend the University, which is occupied by Fascists". There are clashes between the PCI heavies and some of the students (sticks, stones and a fire extinguisher are used). Few of the shop stewards rallied to "defend" Lama. Most just stood talking to the students and expressing disapproval of Lama's initiative. Lama retreats outside the University campus, unable to finish his speech.

In the afternoon the police invade the campus and clear out the students - applauded by PCI militants. The operation was dubbed "Little Prague" by the students, and revealed the repressive (and no longer reformist) face of PCI revisionism.

February 19th: Over 30,000 students demonstrate in Rome, against the PCI attacks, against Malfatti's bill, and against the police.

February 22nd: In Naples 30,000 workers, students and unemployed demonstrate against unemployment.

February 25th: Meeting of the National Coordination Assembly of 5,000 students from all over Italy, meeting in Rome.

March 1st: In Rome, Fascists shoot and wound two comrades, one of them (a Lotta Continua militant) seriously. The police do not act.

March 2nd: A local demonstration in Rome; anti-Fascists protest. 5,000 demonstrate in Turin.

March 3rd: 300 PCI bureaucrats assault students at Turin University (see photo later in our pamphlet - page 48).

March 4th: Fabrizio Panzieri, an anti-Fascist student, is sentenced to over 9 years prison, after waiting trial for 2 years in jail, on a charge of "moral complicity" in the killing of a Greek Fascist who was shot in a

demonstration two years previously. The police baton-charge the comrades present at the trial and massed outside the court-room.

Police invade the Rome University campus again, to forestall the demonstration called to protest against the Panzieri sentence. A pitched battle with the comrades - baton-charges and hundreds of tear-gas grenades fired. Barricades were put up by the students, but nevertheless the protest march through the centre of Rome did take place.

March 8th: Women's Day. Mass demonstrations of feminists in Rome, Milan, Turin, Bari and Lecce.

March 9th: High-school students start to mobilise, occupying schools, and holding 'self-management weeks'. 4,000 march in Palermo. 15 schools hold a joint mass assembly in Rome.

March 11th: In Bologna police shoot and kill Francesco Lorusso (aged 25), a Lotta Continua militant. They are intervening in a scuffle between comrades and 'Communion & Liberation' (a far-right militant Catholic group). Prime Minister Andreotti says, on TV, that this killing is "normal and inevitable".



Francesco's funeral.

March 12th: In Rome, 100,000 comrades from all over Italy demonstrate, under pouring rain. Parts of the demo, which is several kilometres long, clash with the police, but the march does not break up. Some demonstrators burn cars, and a gunshop is raided. But other demonstrators force the looters to throw the guns in the Tiber. Police atrocities include arresting and beating anyone who is wet from rain; stopping city buses and dragging down anyone who "looks suspicious"; firing wildly against the demonstrators with sub-machine guns (some of the demonstrators fired back with pistols). What was taken to be a Fascist terror-squad raided Termini railway station, firing wildly. They were later discovered to be a plain-clothes "special squad" from the police anti-terrorist department.

March 14th: In Bologna the authorities forbid the lying-in-state (traditional Italian funeral custom) of Francesco Lorusso's body.

During the weekend armed cops close down a private radio transmitter (Radio Alice) and destroy its equipment. During the invasion of Bologna University by cops and armoured vehicles, Radio Alice had broadcast 'live' phone calls from comrades and citizens, who called in from public phone boxes to report what was going on in the town. This closure had no legal justification, but the PCI had demanded it in the name of 'law and order'. In addition the PCI wrote in their magazine 'Vie Nuove' that the Bologna demonstrators were "just common delinquents, organised Fascists, and misled youth".

March 16th: In Bologna the PCI organises a mass demonstration in the central Piazza Maggiore, to protest against "violence". They refuse to let Lorusso's brother speak to the crowd, but let a Christian Democrat representative speak instead. Their appeal against generic "violence and hooliganism" does not, of course, include the violence of the Right and the police. Students went to the meeting en masse, and organise a huge sit-down. Many participants from the PCI meeting sympathise, and join them in a march through the town. Zangheri, Communist mayor of Bologna states:-

"One cannot blame the police - after all, they are at war."

March 17th: Ferocious sentences by Bologna magistrates on those arrested during the police invasion of the University. For instance, Renzo Resca, aged 19, sentenced to 2 years 8 months in prison for "possession of weapons". The "weapon" in question was a chain he used to lock up his moped. He appeared in court on a stretcher, unable to walk, after police "interrogation". (His record was not clean....he had a previous conviction....for driving without a licence!)

Trigger-happy police in Turin: Bruno Cecchetti, aged 20, is shot dead by police after he had stopped his car at a police road-block. He put his hand into his glove-compartment to take out his.....spectacles. The cop who shot him dead confided: "He had no gun. I can tell you that, because in any case nothing is going to happen to me."

March 18th: There is a labour Union general strike for employment, investment programmes etc - except in Rome, where public demonstrations have been forbidden by Cossiga, Minister of the Interior (with Union approval). Students strike too. Many Union leaders are given a rough ride (eg Lama is booed and hissed in Naples).

March 20th: The newspapers start to debate the International Monetary Funds's loan of half a billion dollars to Italy. The conditions attached to this loan are that Italy's labour costs must be reduced.

March 21st: In Padua there are dawn raids by police on the homes of comrades, including University teachers. 12 are arrested. The PCI paper 'L'Unità' supports the police action.

March 23rd: 100,000 attend the demonstration called by the labour Unions during a general strike, in Rome, postponed from March 18th. There is a simultaneous march by 25,000 students, who pass through the square where the Unions are massed. Heavy cordons of Union and PCI officials prevent direct contact between workers and students.

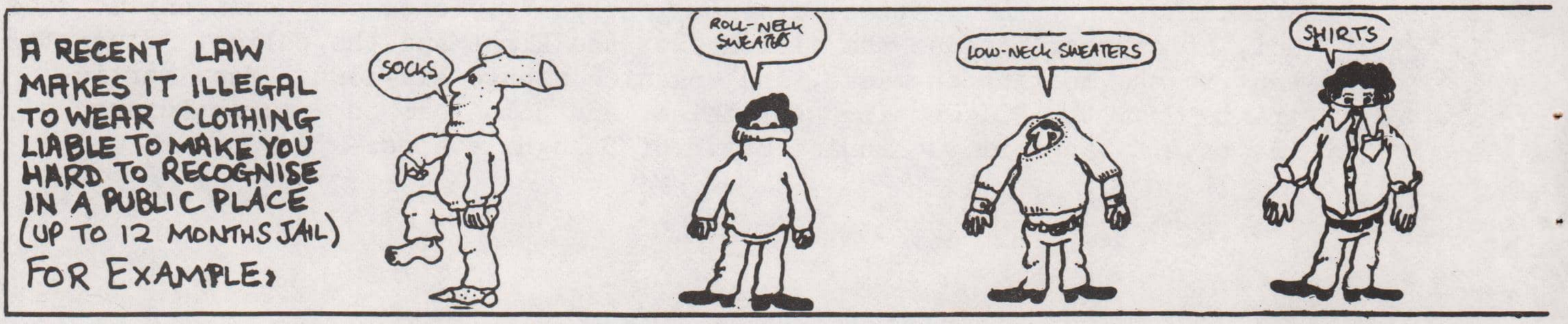
March 24-25th: The "sliding-scale" threshold payments, which increase together with rises in the cost-of-living index, have been included by law in all wage packets for many years. Today's agreement between Union leaders and Government (a sort of Social Contract) modifies the sliding scale, to the workers' detriment, in order to meet the IMF's loan terms imposed on Italy. Workers start to protest at the base, especially at not having been consulted beforehand, and at the fact that the Union leaders had publicly promised in January that the sliding scale "would not be touched".

March 26th: 5,000 demonstrate in Padua to protest against the arrests.

March 31st: In Rome. Claudia Caputi, aged 17, had been gang-raped by 18 men a year ago. She denounced her assailants, who are on trial today. She is raped again, and razored all over her body, as a "warning" to shut her mouth. 10,000 women mobilise in 6 hours and demonstrate in her neighbourhood.

April 1st: Paolino dell'Anno, public prosecutor at the trial of Claudia's rapers, formally accuses Claudia of having faked this second episode of violence against herself!

April 4th: 5,000 women demonstrate in solidarity with Claudia outside the Court-house, which is defended by riot cops in full battle gear.



April 6th: In Milan, 3,000 workers, including representatives from 450 shop stewards factory committees, meet in the Lirico Theatre (the 'Lirico Assembly') to discuss, independently from the Union organisations, what is to be done about the cost-of-living sell-out by the Union leaders. The meeting is ferociously criticised by the Communist Party paper 'L'Unità'. Lotta Continua proposes that the protest take the form of strike action, but the proposal does not gain a majority.

In Naples, Guido de Martino, son of the Socialist Party leader, is kidnapped. All sorts of claims, from far Right to far Left, purporting to have done it, are made by phone, but none can prove it. The two ultra-Left armed clandestine groups NAP and BR send written disclaimers condemning the action - these disclaimers are said to be genuine by police experts.

April 10th: Naples is surrounded by armed cops who intimidate the population but can find no trace of De Martino. Lotta Continua denounces the kidnappings as serving the aims of the DC - to confuse the ideas of the proletariat with a new "strategy of tension".

April 14th: In Rome 15,000 Catholics meet to protest against the Abortion Bill which is going through Parliament.

April 15th: It is discovered that the Government had promised the IMF to reduce the sliding-scale even more in the near future - and that the Union leaders knew about this, but kept quiet. This proves them to have lied when they said they would surrender no more after the recent modifications.

April 16th: Malfatti, the Education Minister, reproposes his University "Reform" Bill - which would end by practically denying access to working class kids.

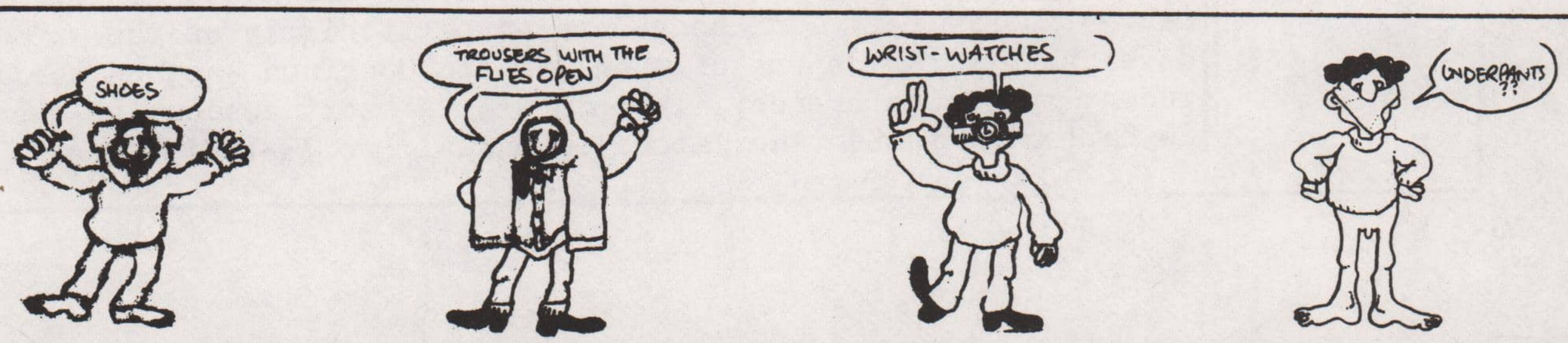
April 19th: Bologna University is occupied by students again.

April 21st: In Rome a General Assembly of the students decides to demand the expulsion of the cops who have been patrolling the campus since February. During the morning some faculties are occupied by students. The rector, Prof. Ruberti, with PCI backing, calls in the cops to clear the students out. The cops invade the campus, using teargas and firearms. They shoot teargas into the students' canteen during lunch, and start to shoot their way into the nearby proletarian quarter of San Lorenzo. Students use buses as barricades. Bullet marks from police fire-arms pock-mark the walls of neighbourhood streets. Teargas enters many homes. At a certain point someone - nobody knows who - started shooting back. One policeman is shot dead. The cops retreat.

In the afternoon the San Lorenzo branch of the PCI holds a demonstration demanding the closure by police of the headquarters of the "Workers' Autonomy" (Autonomia Operaia) committee in Via dei Volsci. During the police search of the Autonomists' offices that same evening, 4 comrades found there are arrested. A passing car with a couple in it (nothing to do with the scene) is machine-gunned by nervous police. (See pages 71-2).

April 22nd: In Rome there are scuffles between PCI and Autonomy militants in San Lorenzo. Police intervene, applauded by the PCI militants, and shoot off teargas indiscriminately all over the neighbourhood, hitting a cinema.

Cossiga prohibits all demonstrations in Rome until May 31st. He gives standing orders to police to open fire on any demonstrations which are considered to be "armed attacks on the State". This prohibition period includes April 25th



(the anniversary of the liberation from Fascism) and May 1st (the workers' traditional Mayday) - both of which are traditional dates for Left-wing proletarian demonstrations. The PCI and the Unions, in order to comply with the Order, self-dissolve an open-air meeting of their own that had begun before the Order was known to the public.

April 25th: In Rome a few hundred comrades assemble at the Fosse Ardeatine, scene of SS German wartime massacres of innocent citizens, defying Cossiga's ban on demonstrations.

April 30th: Lotta Continua condemns the strong-arm tactics by the Autonomists, breaking up a movement assembly on the evening of April 28th. LC says it will no longer tolerate this.

May 1st: Mayday. In Rome the Labour Union Confederations obtain special permission to hold a mass, open-air meeting. The movement splits. Most of the comrades decide to go to the Union meeting, in a body. The Autonomy militants gather in a different square, where they are attacked by police with helicopter support. Revolutionary free radio reports that 350-400 people are held by police for questioning, and that the Union "heavy squad" protective cordons beat up comrades who are carrying revolutionary newspapers, and hand over two comrades to the police.

This split, between the "official labour movement", dominated by the PCI and the Unions, and the unofficial "Movement", is the theme that will dominate the contents of this pamphlet.

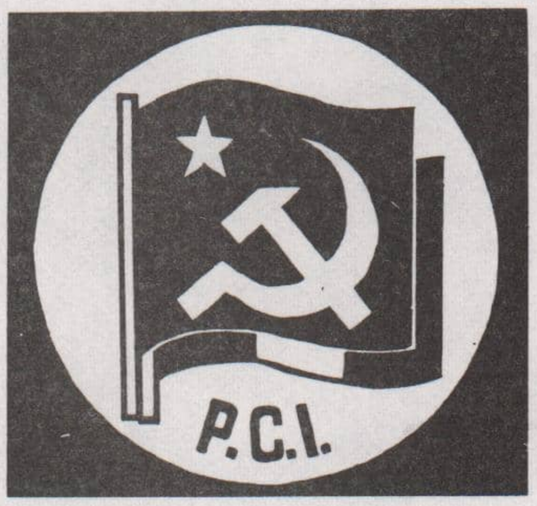
This pamphlet is now divided into 3 sections:-

- The first section (pp.11-48) deals with the stormy events of Bologna, March 1977. It tells what happened, and outlines a broad analysis of the forces in play in Italy today: particularly the Communist Party and the broad revolutionary movement which opposes it.

  The second section describes some major events that have taken place in Italy in 1977 - events which happened in Rome, but were of national significance. The strength of the growing Movement is outlined, together with the strength of the growing repression. (pp.51-78)

  The third section gives a short outline of the state of the revolutionary Left, and concentrates particularly on the developments inside one of them - Lotta Continua - since their recent major Conference. It ends with a short account of what is happening inside the labour movement. (pp.79-122)

STATE OF SIEGE
Bologna
March 1977





Tap, tap

The Italian Communists politely knocking at the door of power—how they've been doing in running some of Italy's cities, and their claim to be democratic converts examined.



● Armoured cars and troops take over the streets of Bologna. March 12th-19th 1977

● The material that we print in this section is translated mainly from the book: "Bologna - Fatti Nostri", published in 1977. The publisher of the book, Bertani, became the target for police repression - including the raids mentioned on page 40. Much of his material was seized by the police, as evidence for future trials.


AUSTRIA
SWITZERLAND
GENEVA
Lausanne
Bern
Luzern
Zurich
Chur
Davos
St Moritz
Bellinzona
Lugano
Locarno
Como
Bergamo
Brescia
MILANO (MILANO)
Novara
Vercelli
Biella
Busto Arsizio
Varese
Lecco
Sondrio
Valtellina
TRENTINO ALTO ADIGE
Trento
Bolzano
Merano
Bressanone
Brenner P.
Innsbruck
Landeck
Arlberg P.
Wild Spitze
Dolomites
Carnic Alps
Villach
Klagenfurt
St. Veit
Lienz
Sachsenburg
Wolfsberg
Graz
STYRIA
Maribor
Karawanken
Julian Alps
Bled
Ljubljana
Kranj
Zagreb
YUGOS
Karlovac
Kupa
Rijeka
Croatia
Istra
Gulf of Venice
Pula (Pola)
Cres
Krk
Senj
Ogulin
Gospić
Lošinj
Pag
Olibo
Zadar
Dugiotok
Kornat
Sibenik
Zirije
Jabuka
Vis
Sv. Andrija
Palagruza
Pianosa
Tremiti Is.
Pescara
Ortona
Chieti
Aquila
ABRUZZI
Velino 8150
Sulmona
MOLISE
Larino
S. Severo
Castel di Sangio
Ascoli Piceno
Giulianova
Teramo
Gran Sasso 9560
Rieti
Terni
Spoleto
Norcia
Foligno
Assisi
Perugia
Fabriano
Macerata
Civitanova
Loreto
Porto Recanati
Ancona
Senigallia
Urbino
Metauro
Fano
Pesaro
SAN MARINO
Rimini
Uso (Rubicone)
Cesena
Forlì
Faenza
Imola
Ravenna
Lugo
Budrio
BOLOGNA
Castel S. Pietro
Modena
Ferrara
Reno
Comacchio
Po di Volano
Iolanda
Maestra Pt.
Rovigo
Chioggia
Venice
Lido
VENICE (VENEZIA)
Padua
Treviso
Oderzo
Monfalcone
Gradisca
Gorizia
Udine
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA
Pordenone
Cividale
Belluno
Feltre
Vittorio
Piave
Tagliamento
Cortina
Pieve
Pontebba
Tarvisio
Triglav 9395
Bled
Kobarid
Caporetto
Cerknica
Metlika
Kočevje
Kupa
Trieste
Koper
Pirano
Poreč
Pazin
Novi
Ogulin
Cazin
Bihać
Unac
Petrinja
Kostajnica
Velebit Planina
Novigrad
Zadar
Knin
Trc
Sibenik
Peškov
Sulet
Vis
Biševc
Ca
Lissa
Ortona
Pescara
Chieti
Sangro
Trigno
Fortore
Biferno
Mte Mare
Manfredonia
Gargano
Foggia
Lucera
Termoli
Campobasso
Isernia
Volturno
Benevento
Caserta
Capua
Gaeta
Garigliano
Formia
Latina
Anagni
Albani
Tivoli
ROME
Civitavecchia
Bracciano
L. Vico
Viterbo
Orte
Sabine Mts
Mte Argentar
Fiora
Marta
Bolsena
Orvieto
Orbetello
Grosseto
Amiata 5680
Follonica
Piombino
Capraja
Elba
I. Monte Cristo
Pianosa
Castiglione
Massa Marittima
Montepulciano
Montalcino
Chiusi
Citta della Pieve
Cortona
Arezzo
Siena
TOSCANA
Gubbio
Cagli
Iesi
Loreto
Macerata
Camerino
Fermo
Amandola
Monti Sibillini
Norcia
Spoleto
Terni
Rieti
Aquila
Sulmona
Avezzano
Velino 8150
Tiber
Arno
Pisa
Lucca
Prato
Pistoia
Empoli
Vallombrosa
FLORENCE (FIRENZE)
S. Sepolcro
Borgo S. Lorenzo
Pontremoli
Mte Cimone 7701
Porreta P.
Imola
Faenza
Forlì
Cesena
Rimini
Uso (Rubicone)
Ravenna
Comacchio
Ferrara
Modena
Reggio nell Emilia
Parma
Guastalla
Casalmaggiore
Cremona
Mantua (Mantova)
Legnago
Este
Adige
Villafranca (Padova)
Verona
Vicenza
Caprino
Garda
Riva
Rovereto
Ala
Schio
Bassano
Oglio
Adda
Lodi
Pavia
Piacenza
Tortona
Voghera
Salo
Iseo
L. of Como
Lecco
Lovere
L. Iseo
Arona
L. Orta
L. Maggiore
Stresa
Pallanza
Luino
Domo d'Ossola
Simplon P.
Bellinzona
Locarno
Lugano
Como
Varese
Gemmi P.
St Gotthard P.
Montreux
Leuk
Brieg
Sion
Martigny
Rhone
Ticino
Spluigen P.
Bernina 13330
Stelvio P.
Ortler
Tonale P.
Tirano
Adamello 11,663
Aprica P.
Mortirolo P.
Gavia P.
Stelvio
Resia P.
Reschen Scheideck P.
Brenner P.
Innsbruck
Landeck
Arlberg P.
Wild Spitze
Dreisprachenspitze
Gr. Glockner
Lienz
Sachsenburg
Wolfsberg
Graz
Zeltweg
Mur
Drave
Sava
Kranj
Ljubljana
Zagreb
Karlovac
Kupa
Rijeka
Krk
Senj
Cazin
Bihać
Unac
Petrinja
Kostajnica
Novi
Ogulin
Gospić
Lošinj
Pag
Olibo
Zadar
Dugiotok
Kornat
Sibenik
Zirije
Jabuka
Vis
Sv. Andrija
Palagruza
Pianosa
Tremiti Is.
Pescara
Ortona
Chieti
Aquila

WHAT IS 'RED EMILIA'?

Before going into an account of what happened in Bologna in March 1977, some historical background is necessary to explain the nature of the region, and the control exerted there by the Italian Communist Party. The following article was published 8 years ago in the revolutionary left-wing news paper 'Potere Operaio' (Workers' Power).

"The following quotation appeared last week in the Right wing newspaper 'Il Resto del Carlino (Nov.13th 1969):

> "During this Hot Autumn, it has been a comfort to be able to visit Emilia. As you travel round, thinking of the troubles in our house, and the wars and troubles in other countries, you feel almost as if you were on an island - bustling and typically chaotic as far as traffic jams are concerned, but a far cry from revolt and physical violence. Bloody events like the riots of Pisa seem improbable here. The wars and guerrillas of the Middle East, the Kafkan drama of Czechoslovakia, the collapse of the Christian Democrat majority, and even the "maoist" upheavals in Piedmont and neighbouring Tuscany don't prevent the people of Emilia from going about their business and maintaining a notable degree of self-control."

The Communist Party takes up the refrain:

> "Without doubt, Emilia is the most advanced and democratic society in the whole of Italy".

It has often been hard, even for comrades, to escape from an image of an Emilia that has been pacified by socialism. But in fact this image is only a propaganda illusion - something that the two bourgeoisies (the white and the red) would like to be true. The Emilia where "nothing ever happens" does not exist. Moreover, the "social peace" that they lay claim to will never exist either.

The only reality here is the enormous confidence that the bourgeoisie of Emilia has in the Communist Party (a faith won by the Party through years of honest, patient administration of the "general interest"). The Party, after all, discovered 20 years ago something which social capital is only discovering just now: how to compel workers' struggles to function within the further development of capitalism.

This notion of 'comforting Emilia' is not only the CP's promise to capitalism. It is also a warning to the working class, for this is the image that the Party wants to present, of a workers' struggle that is dormant, controlled. In fact this is a sham, a pretence, so that they can hide the reality of this "socialism" - namely that Emilia today shares the struggles that are going on in Milan, Turin and Porto Marghera (the struggles of the Hot Autumn). They don't want people to see that in Bologna, too, the workers' struggle is no longer recuperable within capitalist development. In fact the workers of Bologna have followed the same stages of struggle as the workers in Milan, Turin and Porto Marghera - spontaneous struggle, struggle for autonomy, and struggle for organisation."

The next article is also taken - slightly edited - from Potere Operaio, February 22nd 1970. It gives a more detailed analysis of the economy, and the class composition, of Emilia. It identifies trends which today are reality.

THE WORKING CLASS IN EMILIA. THE CYCLE OF PRODUCTION. AGRICULTURE. AND THE ROLE OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

Agriculture is not something that stands by itself, as an independent sector of "consumer" production. It also provides a market, for the producers of machinery, fertilisers and so on. This is fundamental to the economy of Emilia.

According to figures quoted by the EEC in 1960, Emilia contained about 85% of Italian tractor production (half of which derived from FIAT's cycle of production, with the rest being made up from 4 firms filling the gaps in the market left by FIAT).

FIAT's massive presence and spider-like extension in Emilia explains why the percentage of artisans and very small firms is higher than elsewhere in Italy. Emilia has a higher percentage of firms with fewer than 10 employees than any other region in the North and Centre of Italy. In fact, from 1950 to 1969 the number of these small artisan units has actually doubled in Emilia. But the most dramatic figure is that firms with fewer than 100 employees (artisan units, small firms and cooperatives together) make up more than 99% of firms in Emilia, with more than 65% of the workers.

The overwhelming majority of their production is on commission, with FIAT handing out the orders either directly or indirectly. At the same time, the profits that come from the increasing productivity of agriculture are almost all spent on mechanisation - or at least in technical capital to increase productivity. We can summarise the process of Emilia's economic development as follows: an increase in the productivity of agriculture brings about mechanisation; the industry related to this mechanisation develops only by exploiting the mobility of the labour force that has been driven off the land by the mechanisation; that industry pays low wages, which allows capital goods to be produced without having to turn (at any rate, at the start) to the financial market. In other words, money costs nothing...

It's a similar situation for the MONTEDISON chemical cycle of production, producing agricultural chemicals. Through this cycle the "green factory" is integrated into the overall capitalist cycle.

Just by the way, analysis of this sector turns on its head the traditional theory that the development of agriculture controls the development of chemicals. In fact, this was never the case anyway. It is the development of chemicals - like the development of the railways in the United States at the end of the last century - that determines the development of agriculture.

You have only to look at a farmer's budget to see that - particularly where agriculture has reached a certain level of development - the money he spends is already predetermined. All the increases that are now taking place in agriculture are constantly absorbed into a greater consumption of means of production, which is thus translated into an increase of the FIAT and MONTEDISON cycles of production.

"Red Emilia" is one of the strongholds of the Italian Communist Party. It provides a fine example of the way in which having a "socialist apparatus" means an easy life for capital's development. The reality of "Red Emilia" is that it controls and organises the transfer of the workforce from the countryside to the town; it develops a growing productivity and a growing mechanisation of agriculture; and it develops a tightly-knit network of small and medium firms and cooperatives that are integrated into the FIAT and MONTEDISON cycles of production, not to mention the cycle of the State-run ANIC petrochemical combine.

In this way, Emilia has become a <u>model</u>, an essential point of reference

for the development of capital. Red Emilia shows that reform and participation, although basically incompatible with the growth of capital, are practicable and possible.....It is no accident that in the late 1960s the calls to include the CP in a governing majority (on the basis of its proven ability to manage a process of capitalist transformation) should have originated and matured in Emilia.

THE STRATEGY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party's strategy in Emilia started with capital's defeat of the working class in the 1950s. The Party's political choices were governed by 4 major factors:- industry was being dismantled; mass redundancies were taking place; the agricultural workforce was being driven off the land; and there was an absence of investment capital. The Party's strategy, therefore, was to develop the activity of artisans and cooperatives, because of the low wages and fairly small capital outlay they need. The development of the cooperatives was an essential first phase, because the "workers' self-exploitation" then provides the basis for self-financing and accumulation of capital. Later on the function of the cooperatives was to provide the minimum collective capital needed to start the transformation of agriculture. And, by a policy of "balancing the budget", cheap public and social services were provided in the CP-controlled local authorities.

The defeat of the workers during the 1950s gave the Party plenty of room for manoeuvre in this process of capitalistic "reconstruction". The Party handed out ideology, and at the same time guaranteed industrial peace in the small and medium firms that were springing up. Although the Trade Unions turned out for the demonstrations against Eisenhower when he came to Italy, this was not repaid with the Party's active participation in the workers struggles for higher wages....

The strategy of the Party was to pick on Monopoly Capital as the sole enemy of the people. This gave it the chance to make its alliance with the middle class. This has not been, as some people claim, a mistake, or a weakness in the CP's ideological apparatus. It expresses a clear awareness of the lines of thought along which the CP has managed things in Emilia - not least the way the CP has guaranteed a fair profit for the small-time Communist bosses.

The attack on monopoly capital also relates to the attempt within the capitalist system, to break up and disperse large concentrations of the working class. This has a two-fold political advantage:

a) the decomposition of working class concentrations means that you can control their struggles, and their passivity, to the full;

b) individual firms are generally small, and together they form a capitalistic whole which is subordinate to the choices and the decisions made by the social capital which is overwhelmingly controlled by the CP.

This strategy of dispersal, which FIAT has also adopted in order to break the working class, was borrowed from the way the big US car manufacturers dispersed their Detroit factories. During the last 15 years this dispersal has been reflected in a vast development of transport and the technology of how to move things - from planes, super-highways and massive container ships to computer time-sharing.

Now, the process of integrating agriculture into the cycle of capital, and developing the model of "dispersed" production, raises the problem of how to harmonise the productivity of the individual firm with the average productivity of the society. This is where the idea of the plan was born. The plan of Italian capitalism aimed to use the wage as a stabiliser for

investment; it integrates the Unions into the factory, so that they operate as the workers' self-management of exploitation. This plan goes under the name of "development through participation" - ie, the integration of the exploited through the idea of 'progress'.

The Communist Party becomes a partner in capital's plan, a partner which is able to manage and control the various elements of political control on which the plan is based - unions, local authorities, cooperatives, organs of mass participation etc.

THE REVIVAL OF WORKING CLASS AUTONOMY

The thesis of a new governing majority, containing the CP, was born from practical experience in "Red Emilia". It is now being taken up outside the region, as a model of capitalist management at a national level. But this project for a new ruling majority containing the CP has been undercut by the offensive of the working class during the last two years. The new struggles of 1968 and 1969 have launched a general process of recomposition in the working class.

The revival of working class autonomy in Emilia can be dated from 1966-69, when the old Communist cadres were replaced by young workers. The recomposition of the class began through the struggle for the wage, against piece-work, against the imposition of new grading systems. First inside individual firms, and then extending to the struggles over the national agreements.

This cycle of struggles has radicalised the situation. The CP has become aware of the dangers of the workers' attack, and its effects (both actual and potential) in the social stability that, until now, has permitted the CP a role in managing power.

What is capital's strategy for a counter-attack in the medium and short-term? .....The bosses' attack through a proliferation of FIAT's cycle of production, through the introduction of new machinery, and a general organisation of work-control methods, will take place on three levels:-

1) The whole grading system will be restructured. The struggle against gradings and against job-evaluation has created a unification among workers. The bosses now seek to break up this unity by developing a new system of job-evaluation which can knock out the types of discontent that the old systems provoked (particularly among technicians and white collar workers, who were increasingly tending to unify their struggles with those of manual workers). It will be a new system, based on "objective" criteria, with a career structure, and possibly managed by the trade unions;

2) Employment levels will come under attack. The education system, and particularly the University, is tending increasingly to become a pocket of unemployed, a parking-orbit before entry into the factory.

3) There will be a massive use of mobility in the workforce, not only from one section of a plant to another, but also between factories, in an attempt to fight against all attempts at workers' organisation.

The situation requires that workers' struggles take a step forward, from a clash with capital, to a clash with social capital, through the objective of the political wage. Outside the factory what we mean by the political wage is the struggle against the cost of living. It involves non-payment of the social services (canteens, rent, transport etc); it involves attacking the costs of education (books, school taxes); and it involves a struggle against the political use of unemployment. The students must be guaranteed a wage in their double function as a workforce under training and a reserve army of unemployed."

All of that brings us, 7 years later, to the struggle sparked by the students in Bologna, a city of ½ million people, in the heart of "Red Emilia".

THE EVENTS OF MARCH

Friday March 11th

● DEATH OF A COMRADE

● The reaction of the comrades in Bologna when they heard that Francesco Lorusso, a militant of Lotta Continua, had been shot dead by the police. They make preparations to come out onto the streets.

We didn't sleep long. We all heard Paola's voice, scared, as if in a dream. Outside it was raining.

"Francesco who? Lorusso?"

"They shot him in the back. He couldn't speak. Blood was coming out of his mouth. It was the Carabinieri who did it."

"The bastards....."

"The comrades asked me to call you. Watch out - there's a FIAT 127 full of them outside."

"Let's go out quickly, in small groups. Give me some socks, mine are all wet."

On the way to the University I start thinking of the discussion I had with Francesco about street-fighting tactics. His argument had been spot-on. Sometimes, on the way, I imagine I see his face....and then I shake my head and say I'm crazy. I remember him, sweating, with his shirt wringing-wet and his jacket open, when we were running away from the police together.

In Via Zamboni there are barricades, one after another, all shiny-wet from the rain. I recognise the tables from the University canteen, the benches from the Faculty of Literature, the flower pots from Piazza Scaravilli.

There are hundreds of students and comrades, in complete silence, with their hair wet. Someone lines up dozens of empty, clinking bottles of different sizes, which are filled with petrol out of a huge container taken from the canteen. Every now and then someone complains that the fuse-ribbon is coming to an end, that we must go get more wind-proof matches etc.

Francesco is dead, and from everyone's faces you can see that they all know it.

There are lots of red eyes everywhere. One bloke is crying by himself in front of a wall. Some are walking up and down in the square, as if they were trying to talk...but there's no need. They're all thinking the same thing.



****
The spot where Francesco was killed by a carefully aimed shot by a police-man.
****

Key to Map (below)

1. Anatomy Institute.
2. Spot where Francesco Lorusso was murdered.
3. Barricades set up here to stop police entering the University.
4. C&L's bookshop "The Promised Land" destroyed.
5. Christian Democrat HQ. Here the first clashes take place.
6. Restaurant El Cantunzein.

●HOW DID IT ALL START?

The events of March 11th-19th in Bologna began with a meeting, called by "Communion and Liberation" (a neo-mediaeval fanatical Catholic youth group), and attended by about 400 people at 10 o'clock in the morning. Five comrades from the Faculty of Medicine at Bologna arrived at the door to see what was going on. They were roughed up and thrown out. The news spread around the University, and about 30 comrades gathered outside the meeting. They were faced by a hundred or so heavies from C&L.

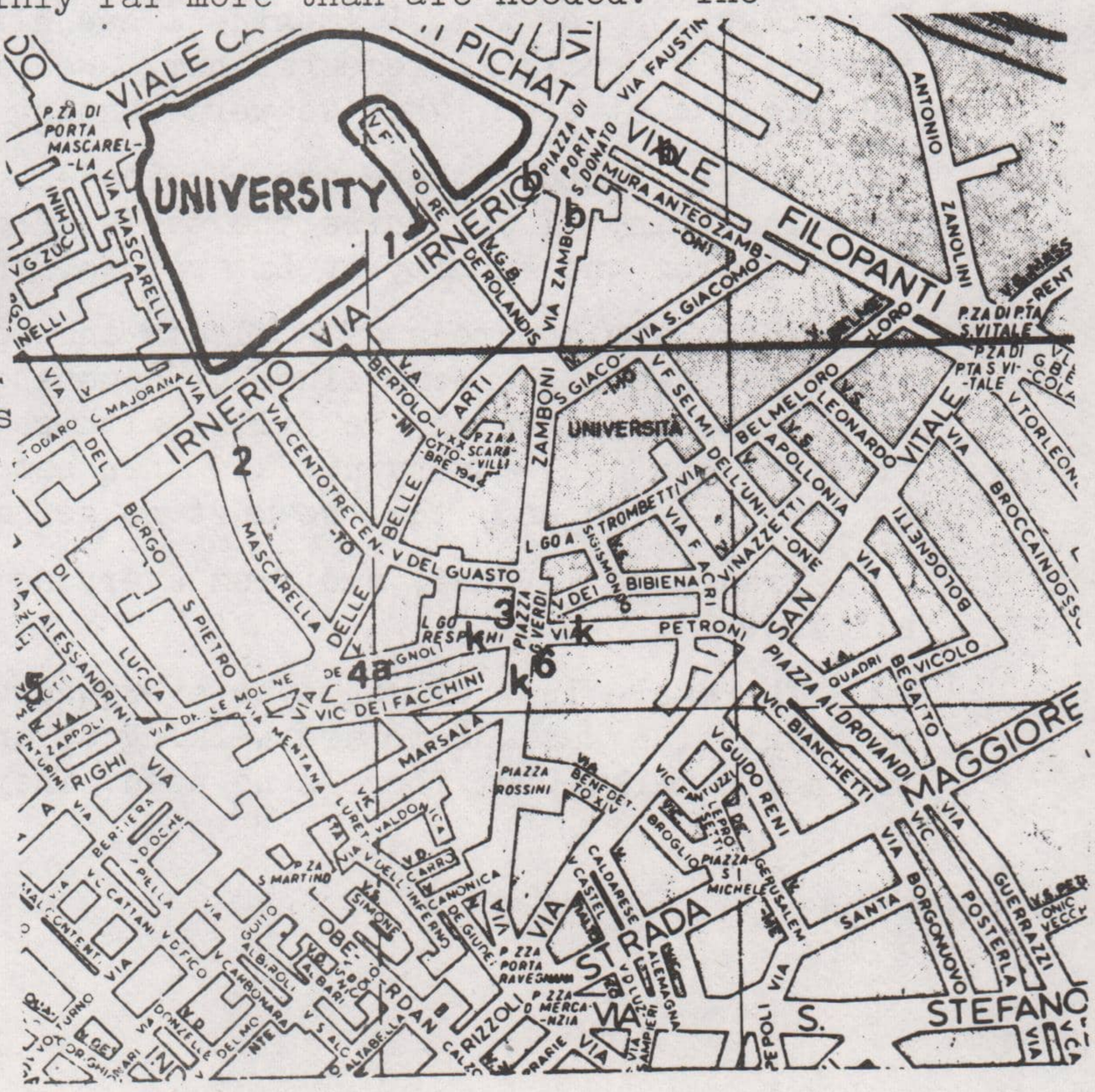
In the meantime, outside the Anatomy Institute, a hundred or so comrades group together. They tried to break into the meeting hall. The comrades demand that those responsible for the assault be identified, and that the rest of the Communion & Liberation meeting leaves quietly. When they see that these attempts are useless, the comrades gather and shout slogans against C&L.

Half an hour later the police arrived, with the carabinieri, together with Black Marias, jeeps and lorries - certainly far more than are needed. The comrades gather on the pavement by the main gate. A group of carabinieri attacks them and clubs them for no reason at all

●THE POLICE ATTACK

The comrades flee towards Porta Zamboni. The first volley of tear-gas grenades is fired. Returning towards Via Irnerio, the comrades are blocked by a motorised column of police and carabinieri, and it is at this point that the carabinieri start firing repeatedly.

As a defence against this, a Molotov is thrown, setting fire to a jeep. Then, in Via Mascarella, a group of comrades returning to the University runs into a column of carabinieri coming from the


UNIVERSITY
VIALE
FILOPANTI
IRNERIO
VIA
PICHAT
VIA FAUSTIN
ANTONIO
ZANOLINI
PIAZZA DI PORTA MASCARELLA
VIA MASCARELLA
VG ZUCCHINI
VIA ZAMBONI
VIA S.GIACOMO
UNIVERSITA
VIA SELMI
BELMELORO
LEONARDO
APOLLONIA
VITALE
P.ZA DI PTA S.VITALE
VIA BERTOLONI
VIA CENTOTRECENTO
VIA DEL GUASTO
VIA DEI BIBIENA
PETRONI
SAN
PIAZZA ALDROVANDI
VIA QUADRI
VIC BIANCHETTI
VIA BENEDETTO XIV
VIA MARSALA
VIA DEL FACCHINI
VIA DELLE MOLINE
VIA MENTANA
VIA DELLE BELLE ARTI
VIA ZAMBONI
VIA DE ROLANDIS
VIA DELLE LAME
VIA DEL PRATELLO
VIA DEL PARADISO
VIA DELLE CASETTE ROSSE
VIA DEL CARRO
VIA DELL'INFERNO
VIA DELLA CANONICA
VIA DEL LUCCHETTO
VIA DEL CASTELLO
VIA DELLA GUARDIA
VIA DELLA CROCE
VIA DELLA CHIESA
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Via Irnerio direction. At this point, comrade Francesco Lorusso (a Lotta Continua militant) was killed in cold blood. He had been studying until 12.30, and only then had he gone into the street.

A Calibre 9 pistol was aimed at the comrades. 6 or 7 shots were fired in rapid succession. The gunman (as the workers in nearby Zanichelli's have testified) was wearing a uniform, without the white sash, and a helmet with a visor. He had taken aim carefully, resting his arm on a parked car. When Francesco heard the first shots, he turned round, as he ran with the others. He was hit through the side. An ambulance took him to hospital. He was dead on arrival.

●GETTING ORGANISED

In the meantime, after the police had dispersed the comrades in Via Irnerio, they withdrew to the Police Station.

The news that a comrade had been killed spread rapidly. Radio Alice broadcast it at about 1.30pm. From then on there was a continual flow of comrades coming into the University area. Incredulity and disorientation were followed by sorrow and anger.

The University organised itself to avoid further provocations by the police. All the incoming roads and main entrances were closed off. Each Faculty held meetings. All the lecture halls, the Canteen, every available space was filled with comrades discussing and organising. It soon became clear that Francesco's murder was no "accident". A demonstration was called.

Phone calls were made to the various factory councils in the area, and a delegation was sent to the main Trade Union offices to ask for support for the march. The anger and the sorrow were growing. Communion & Liberation's bookshop was the first target: it was wrecked.

After the Assemblies were over, stewards were organised in order to ensure the march could defend itself. From all sides the cry goes up that our target should be the offices of the Christian Democrat Party. An impressive demonstration of 8,000 comrades set off through the streets.

●THE DEMO

By that time it was 5.30pm. The march was passing through Via Rizzoli. Plush shops. Some comrades left the march and smashed shop windows in the main street. The demonstration then marched through Piazza Maggiore, picking up more comrades from there. The representatives from the Factory councils did not turn up. The march entered Via Ugo Bassi, where more shop windows were broken.

Near the Christian Democrat offices, the police clashed with the head of the march. The comrades managed to stay intact. Meanwhile, the rear was attacked with heavy volleys of tear-gas grenades. The march broke up and dispersed into the narrow side-streets. One lot of comrades regrouped in Via Indipendenza and marched to the railway station, where they occupied some of the tracks.

The fighting began in the station. The police attacked with teargas. The comrades fought back, and were able to escape through a side exit. In the meantime, the rest of the march had arrived in the University area, where a mass meeting was held, to draw conclusions from the day's events, and to organise for the next day's national demonstration in Rome (see the Rome section of this pamphlet - page 59).

At the same time comrades broke into the "Cantunzein" luxury restaurant and liberated food so that hundreds of comrades could eat.

During the night the police carried out many house-searches, and arrested many people.

●WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

● Radio Alice, among other things, broadcast this statement from a comrade who had been involved in the fighting. This statement was one of the texts used to charge the arrested Radio Alice workers, and was the reason why they were refused bail.

".....The question is, who takes responsibility for today's events in Bologna. Let's remember them - all the things the radio and TV have concentrated on. Like the fires in the offices of "Il Resto del Carlino" (a local right-wing daily); the fires in the two police stations; the fire in the FIAT agency office; the fire in the Luisa Spagnoli shop, which lives off the sweat of women prisoners, making them make high fashion products. For all these things, for the fights in Via Ugo Bassi which the comrades did not start, for the fights which happened because the cops tried to clear out the railway station, <u>for all this, all the comrades assume full responsibility</u>.

Our action squads were decided collectively. Everyone took part, all together in the University today. All together preparing the Molotov bottles. All together tearing up the grounds of the University to get cobble-stones. All of us together had Molotovs and cobble-stones in our pockets, because today was a violent demonstration, because we had chosen to make it violent, and we were all together, able to defend ourselves without stewards etc, without any isolated groups of provocateurs, or autonomists, doing things, because <u>all</u> the comrades took part in <u>all</u> the things that were done today."



● The police advance down Via Zamboni.

● The comrades withdraw from Piazza Verdi, and the police come up from Via Respighi. The ground is littered with cobblestones. The barricade is one of several set up to stop a police invasion.



● Still Life: Police and Cobblestones.



Saturday March 12th

●A DAY OF STREET FIGHTING

The next morning, at 8.00am, many comrades boarded coaches to go to Rome for the national demonstration (see the Rome section of this pamphlet).

At 9.00am the remaining comrades gathered in Piazza Verdi, for the Bologna demo. They marched off, about 4,000 strong, towards Piazza Maggiore. Here the official, Trade Union sponsored demonstration over the killing of comrade Lorusso was under way.



The square was surrounded by a cordon of CP heavies, who try to prevent the march from entering the square. From behind the CP cordons people are shouting: ""Let Francesco's comrades in!"

After some arguing and pushing, about half the march managed to enter the square. But Giovanni Lorusso, Francesco's brother, who was supposed to speak on behalf of the whole movement, was not allowed to address the crowd.

Then, at 2.00pm, a Press Conference was held with the journalists and production-collectives of the Free Radio stations of Bologna. But it was interrupted by the news that the police had attacked the University.

The comrades abandoned the conference, and left the Faculty building. The object now was to stop the police from getting into the University, and to make sure that no isolated groups of comrades got caught up in skirmishes with the police. The police were starting sporadic attacks throughout the City Centre and in the area around the University.

●THE BARRICADES

In order to achieve these objectives, barricades were set up in the streets (marked 'k' on our map). By this time the police were firing teargas grenades and baton-charging passers-by in Via Rizzoli and Piazza Maggiore. This provoked an instant reaction from the people, who spontaneously grouped together into a big crowd that forced the police to retreat back as far as the Two Towers.

Suddenly the police started firing tear gas again. But this did not intimidate the people. In fact a lot of people stayed in the streets there for hours and hours, as a protest against the provocatory presence of the police.

Meantime, an old comrade was calling people to regroup after each volley of teargas grenades, by playing the Red Flag on his mouth organ.

From 8.30 to 9.15pm the police withdrew from the University area. This enabled the students to hold meetings to discuss what to do. It was decided that they would leave the University (under the threats from the police) and go en masse to Piazza Maggiore, where they would debate with the people there.

Shortly after this decision, a gun shop was broken into not far from the

University ('a' on our map). This action took place outside of the direct control of the movement, after the students had left the University.

● ALICE IS CLOSED DOWN

At 10.25pm the police occupied the street where Radio Alice had its transmitter, in an area that had not so far been touched by the fighting. They closed down the bars and cafes, fired teargas grenades at both ends of the street, and moved in on the "hive of subversive activity" wearing bullet-proof jackets and machine-guns at the ready. (See our section on Radio Alice).

Over the radio Alice transmitted the noise of the door being broken down and the microphone being torn away. The police arrest 8 people, who were then held for "association and instigation to commit crimes".

It's important to note, among Saturday's events, the mysterious and worrying article that was printed on Saturday morning by "Il Resto del Carlino" (the local right-wing paper). It reported that Friday's events included the attack and looting of a gun shop. Well just watch this: the event did in fact happen....but on Saturday evening, many hours after the paper was printed. How could Il Resto foresee what was to happen 24 hours later!!?

(Report from the Counter-Info Collective).

● PHONE CALLS TO RADIO ALICE

● The street-fighting went on all evening, up till midnight. By that time the town was in a State of Siege. The University was finally evacuated, under police threat that they would launch a heavy attack at 1.00am. Heavy police reinforcements had been brought in from other towns.

We could not hope to summarise the days events. So we've limited ourselves to reprinting two phone calls that were made to Radio Alice (which was monitoring the street-fighting throughout). The first call was incriminated by the police.

PHONE CALL No.1

- Hello....Radio Alice here. Don't worry. We are still broadcasting the news reports that we're getting.

- OK. Well, here at the end of Via Rizzoli the demonstrators have hemmed in the police. They've begun to hem them in near the Two Towers. It was great...because they came forward and just sat down and made fun of the police, who didn't know what to do. Anyway, about 15 seconds ago they just let off....Just a second....this is important....Shit....are you still there? I dropped the phone. Can you still hear me? OK. Look, I'm Bonvi, the cartoon-ist...In any case, this was the situation....the comrades, they've been sitting down in the Square. They've started a pretty powerful struggle. The police have just now fired the tear-gas grenades. Via Rizzoli is full of gas....My studio here is full of people who have come in from the side streets looking for shelter. So...the situation's still very fluid, but it's some-thing very good, and I have the impression that the Town is responding to this provocation very well. I'll hand you over to Gabriele now.....

- So, they've opened fire here in Via Rizzoli. For no reason - because there weren't any comrades here. And now the townspeople are making very harsh comments about the police, because right here they've done things that were completely uncalled for. Invaded houses with tear-gas for no reason at all. They just want to create chaos - that's it. That's all there is to it. Anyway, up till 5 minutes ago you could still hear the odd tear-gas grenade being fired off here. Nothing important for the moment. Bye for now.....

PHONE CALL No.2.

- Well, here's the situation in Piazza Verdi. The police have succeeded in occupying the square. The comrades are grouped behind the barricade near the Faculty of Letters, and they're also behind the University canteen. Both sides are firing guns. Tear-gas grenades are being fired at chest-height. This is the situation as far as we can make out.

- Just a second...I didn't get that....What do you mean "gunfire from both sides"?

- I mean they're shooting from both sides. Or at least, you can hear pistol shots from both sides, with Molotov cocktails being thrown etc. By the way, I think the Law Faculty is on fire. I can't tell for sure, but we can see a lot of smoke coming up near the Law Faculty. That's all for now.

MORE PHONE CALLS.

At this point Radio Alice started to receive some rather odd calls. The first was a string of insults. The next two announced non-existent marches of workers coming in from the outskirts of town. When news is given over the radio 'live', this sort of thing can happen. But the comrades working on the station always made it clear that any such 'live' news was transmitted subject to confirmation. In this case, there was no further confirmation of the "marching columns of workers", and so the radio declared them to be a false rumour intended to confuse the situation.

●A POEM!

● Saturday's fighting died down, late in the night. It was not clear what the next day's activities would bring. A comrade wrote a poem, describing the feeling.

Saturday.

It's already dark. Piazza Verdi and Via Zamboni are covered with rubble with the burnt-out shells of tear-gas grenades and granite cobble-stones strewn.

The police have gone away.

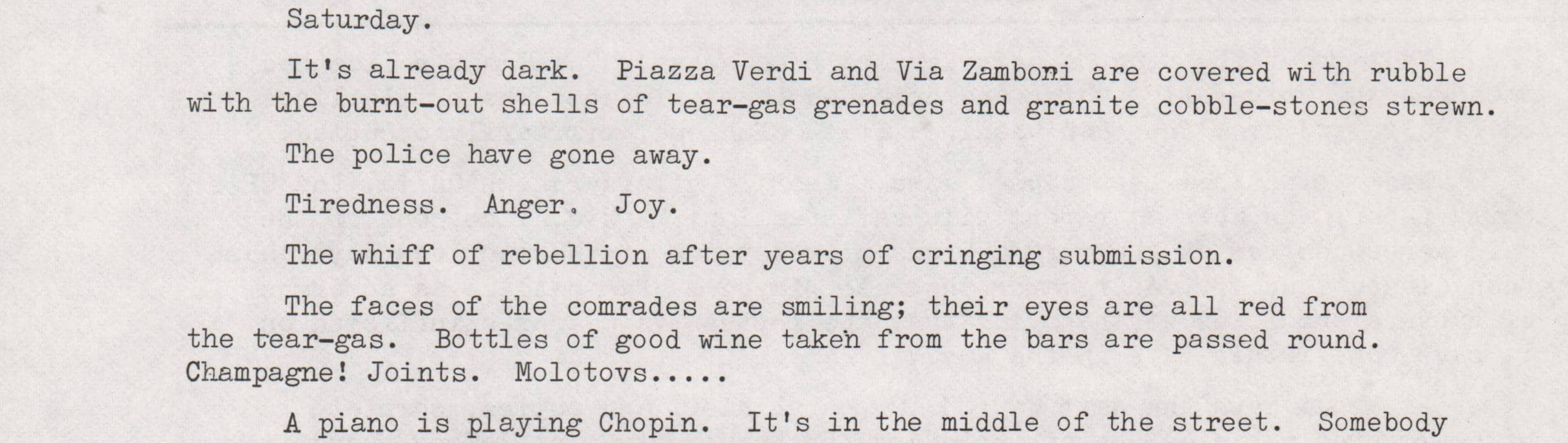
Tiredness. Anger. Joy.

The whiff of rebellion after years of cringing submission.

The faces of the comrades are smiling; their eyes are all red from the tear-gas. Bottles of good wine taken from the bars are passed round. Champagne! Joints. Molotovs.....

A piano is playing Chopin. It's in the middle of the street. Somebody brought it out of a bar. Right behind a barricade.

We are drunk. Nobody's giving orders today. Tomorrow? Tomorrow they'll come with tanks. They'll crush us again. But today, for a few hours, this land is free. Chopin. Wine. Anger and Joy.





****
Police raid the 'Collectives for Proletarian Autonomy'.
****

Sunday March 13th

● State of Siege!

The street fighting on Saturday had been heavy. Cossiga's police had attacked the University, which was defended by barricades. The battle lines shifted to and fro. The town was in a State of Siege, militarily occupied.

Radio Alice had been closed down. Shortly afterwards, L'Unità, the CP's daily paper, was able to report with satisfaction: "Radio Alice, one of the main nerve centres of the very serious provocations of the last few days, has been closed down.....As regards the role played by Radio Alice as an organ of subversion, it is worth saying that the repressive measures inflicted on it have come rather late in the day."

At about dawn the next day, 3,000 carabinieri and police, complete with armoured vehicles, began to occupy the University area. They found it completely deserted. Among other things, they broke down the doors of the main building, and they vandalised the office of the CPS (Students' Political Committee) - Fascist graffiti were found here when the University was re-opened.

News spread among the students that there was to be a meeting in San Donat,one of the areas where barricades had gone up the day before. Also, during the morning, Radio Alica started transmitting again, under the name "March 12th Collective". But the broadcast was jammed by someone transmitting a continuous whistling sound on the same wave-length.

In the afternoon, the mass assembly was held, as planned. It decided to send a delegation to the Town Hall, and to the town's main Trade Union

office, to demand the resignation of the University rector(for his part in the attack on the movement) and the de-militarisation of the town.

During the evening the police continued to keep up their climate of tension. Even if small groups of 5-6 people gathered in the town centre, the police were firing tear-gas to break them up.

Meantime, during the afternoon the authorities had traced the new location of "Radio March 12th Collective". The police shut off the electrical power supply to half the neighbourhood - but then the radio started broadcasting again on batteries, on a slightly different wavelength from the interfering whistle. At this point the police moved in - but they found the door barred and bolted. The comrades had time to make their getaway

PRESS RELEASE BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Sunday March 13th:

- "The situation in the town is still serious and worrying after the fighting that took place yesterday in the University area and in certain other areas of the town centre, due to the continuing presence of armed groups of provocateurs.
  We are facing an explicit attack on the democratic institutions, an attack against civil order in the town.
  It is necessary for the entire citizenry to be aware of the dangers of the situation and of the need to isolate the provocateurs, against whom the security forces must intervene in order to re-establish democratic liberties and civil order.....
  As from this moment, the PCI will act so as to be a point of reference for all democratic forces, and for all citizens who want to play their part against the violence and the provocation."

This Press Release accurately sums up the position taken by the Communist Party during the movement of March. Elsewhere we continue this outrageous account/distortion/pack of lies from the CP.....One of the reasons why Alice was chosen as the name of the radio station was that CP-controlled Bologna is a sort of weird Wonderland, where things are not what they seem to be.

Monday March 14th



Francesco's funeral

●FRANCESCO'S FUNERAL

Comrade Lorusso's funeral was fixed for 10 o'clock in the morning on Monday the 14th. The Prefect had issued a ban, forbidding any type of demonstration in the City Centre. This meant that the traditional lying-in-state custom of Italian funerals could not be observed. As a result the funeral was held in the suburbs, in Piazza della Pace.

The Communist Party refused to attend the funeral. The Socialists sent only a delegation. The Trade Unions called a one-hour strike, with mass meetings to be held in the factories at precisely the same time as the funeral. The students sent delegations to the bigger factories, to explain the truth of what had been happening, and to ask for an extension of the one-hour strike. In the event, a lot of workers, students and townspeople were able to come to the funeral, despite difficulties, like a bus-strike in town.



In the afternoon the students gathered again in the San Donato neighbourhood, to hold a mass meeting. This meeting was prevented from happening, by the police. The police sealed off the bridge and surrounded the neighbourhood. The students then divided up into delegations, to go to the factories. All the while, their movements were closely followed by police helicopters. The coaches that went back to the City Centre were stopped by the police, who made the students get out at gun-point, frisking them, and taking into custody anyone without identification papers, or anyone carrying lemons (considered to be subversive equipment - lemon-juice is an antidote to tear-gas).

When the mass meetings in the factories were over, the students met in the Minerva Cinema to weigh up the outcome of the day's events. It was felt by everyone that the workers were very ill-informed about what had been happening in the preceding days.

Tuesday March 15th

For Wednesday a demonstration had been called in Bologna, by the political parties of the "constitutional arc" (including the CP and the Unions). The demonstration was as much an affirmation of law and order as anything else.

During Tuesday morning, a delegation of 10 comrades went to the Aldini - but they found it closed, by order of the City Council. The Council had spread a rumour that a "horde of autonomists" was coming to invade the school. As a result SASIB workers went on strike, and turned out to picket and defend the school, preventing the delegation from explaining why it had come.

The meeting place was shifted to Piazza dell'Unità, and afterwards the Assembly was held in the Ca' dei Fiori Cinema - where it was decided that certain things needed to be done for the following day's demonstration. Counter-information work had to be done in the factories and working class neighbourhoods, to break through the barrier of silence, and to explain

that the student movement was not going to support a demonstration that was openly directed against the movement itself - a demonstration which was to include the Christian Democrats, who were mainly responsible for the murder of Francesco.

The movement would only agree to enter Piazza Maggiore if Giovanni Lorusso (Francesco's brother) was allowed to speak from the platform and explain the positions and the aims of the movement.

Wednesday March 16th

● THE BIG SIT-DOWN

On Wednesday the students got organised, and went to carry out blanket-leafletting of the townspeople of Bologna, in the various neighbourhoods and factories.

At 2.00pm the comrades gathered in Via Rizzoli. The last-minute negotiations about whether to allow comrade Giovanni to speak at the official demonstration were breaking down.

The Trade Union and Communist Party stewards blocked off the entrances to the square, at the same time as police sealed off the sidestreets. We started a massive sit-down in Via Rizzoli. During the sit-down, Giovanni Lorusso read the speech that he should have read from the official platform. There were about 10,000 of us in Via Rizzoli - all shouting slogans and singing revolutionary songs. At the end of the demonstration in Piazza Maggiore, the students set off on a march, and many townspeople and workers who had been staying in the Square up till then, came out and joined them. The march, about 15,000 strong, headed for Piazza dei Martiri, where Giovanni Lorusso read his speech again.



The Sit-Down

● LETTER FROM A SHOPWORKER

"I DON'T WANT TO GO ON A DEMONSTRATION.
TOGETHER WITH MY BOSSES!"

The following letter from a shop worker was published in Lotta Continua on March 23rd.

Dear Comrades,

I work as a shop assistant in a high-class shop in Bologna's historic city centre. I didn't want to go on the demonstration on March 16th in Bologna. Why not? Because all the parties and the trade union organisations were united together on the platform in Piazza Maggiore, "against the violence of hooligans and provocateurs who break shop windows" and "to show the deepest solidarity with the forces of law and order."

I felt sick when Francesco was killed. But afterwards I felt even worse. My bosses are self-avowed Fascists (they go and have dinner with Almirante, the fascist party national secretary, when he's passing through Bologna), and recently they sacked a girl because she had taken part in a strike.....Well, on Wednesday afternoon my bosses closed the shop and went on the demonstration!

When I suggested timidly that they students would beat them up if they recognised them, they replied: "We've got nothing to worry about, the trade union stewards will look after us!"

I phoned Radio Città, which is a democratic radio station, to say how angry and ashamed I was to see bosses like mine together in a demonstration with all the parties, including the Communist and the Socialists, against the students.

While I was speaking to them, I started crying, because I didn't know what to do about this horrible situation (by the way, they didn't put me on the air, because they were afraid the police might do something to them).

Then I heard about the Sit-Down...and about the big march. In spite of the Trade Unions trying to block the thing, thousands of workers came into Via Rizzoli, and this gave me the courage to join the march along with the others.

I don't belong to any political organisation, but I'm enclosing some money for the Lotta Continua newspaper, because I don't want to go on demonstrations with my bosses. They just defend their shop windows, their millions, and their police....but I don't want students and workers to be killed any more just because they are struggling for their rights.

Franco.



● Here is Bruno Trentin, Communist Party member of the CGIL Union, thundering at the workers.

THE REAL BOLOGNA

This speech was made at a public reception to launch a book called Bologna - a Different City. The book contains an interview with Communist mayor Zangheri. Present at the reception were the literary critics, members of the public, and all the intellectual "high society" of Bologna.

The speaker is a member of one of the proletarian youth collectives involved in organising in Bologna in the recent period.

THE RECENT STRUGGLES IN BOLOGNA.
BOLOGNA IS NOT AN ISLAND OF SOCIALIST "CIVILISATION".

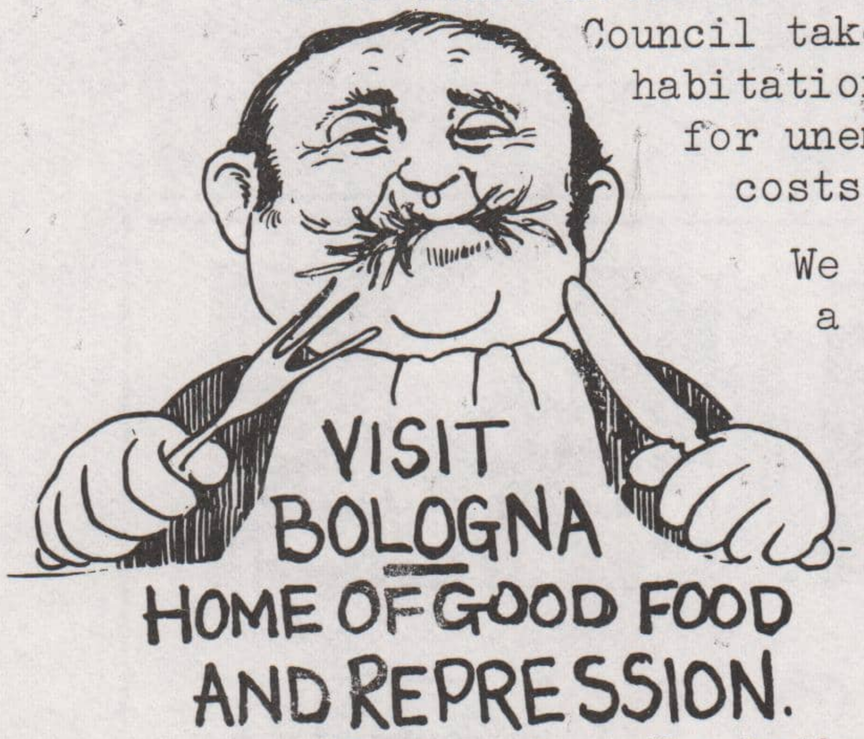
This reception is an attempt to make Bologna look like an idyllic sort of place. As if this town is quite untouched by social tension and class struggle. A place where everything can be resolved with a cosy chat over a good meal. The previous speakers see Bologna as a town that's "different", a happy island, uncontaminated by the "ghettoisation" of marginal sections of the population etc.

The reality is very different. The ghettoised minority groups, the homeless, the unemployed and those condemned to work as precarious, casual labour - these people not only exist in Bologna, but they are also organising and fighting back.

I want to explain to you what is wrong in Bologna.

For a start, the housing problem. For example, for the last 6 months a group of unemployed workers, Sardinian immigrants, and out-of-town students who usually sleep in the Via Sabbatucci hostel or in the waiting room at the main railway station, has been getting organised in the COSC (Homeless People Organising Committee). This group also includes families who are forced to live in the inhuman bad conditions that exist in parts of Bologne.

COSC started its struggle by occupying the Hotel Bologna, which had been bought up by a multinational company to demolish it and build a five-start hotel on the site. COSC demanded that the Prefect and the city Council take over the building, which was still perfectly fit for habitation, and turn it into a hostel for out-of-town students, for unemployed and immigrant workers. A bed to sleep in costs up to £10 a week in Bologna these days.



We are demanding housing at a price people can afford - a 'political price'. We put this demand to the authorities, but they gave us no answer. They just sent in the carabinieri to clear everyone out.

After the Hotal Bologna episode, the fight for housing continued with other occupations. A building in Via Galliera was occupied - 20 flats for sale at £1,000 per square metre. A worker said: "If I scrimped for a lifetime, I could only just about afford to buy the bathroom!" Once again the authorities' only reply to the need for housing was repression. The police went in and the (Communist Party-controlled) Local Authorities didn't say a word.

They did say something, however, when the building in Viale Vicini was occupied. This time the Provincial Council went so far as to ask the police to intervene against the occupiers, who, according to them, were not just demanding a basic right like housing, but were "setting up a centre of active provocation".

They've always tried to hush up all the autonomous struggles of the Bolognese workers and young people - or to bury them under a heap of lies. For example the only way they react to the problem of so-called drug-addiction is to slam home with public order and repression.

The shop-keepers and the business community carry out hate campaigns against young people with long hair, who, they say, infest the City centre and besmirch the artistic scenery (and, above all, annoy the customers). Zangheri (mayor of Bologna, CP) supports them; the Flying Squad "does its duty", and all those resident outside Bologna are repatriated to their own towns, on police orders ("We shall not allow the underpass in Via Rizzoli to become a bivouac for layabouts".)

Then, in December 1976, parents and workers from three Day Nurseries in San Vitale started a struggle, because the service has been getting worse, the opening hours have been reduced, and the child-care workers were faced with longer working hours and up to 20 children apiece to look after (the best ratio, from an educational point of view, is one to five). The response of the Council and the Communist Party was not to take on more staff and increase the workforce, but on the contrary, to increase the amount of work in each job and to worsen the service provided.

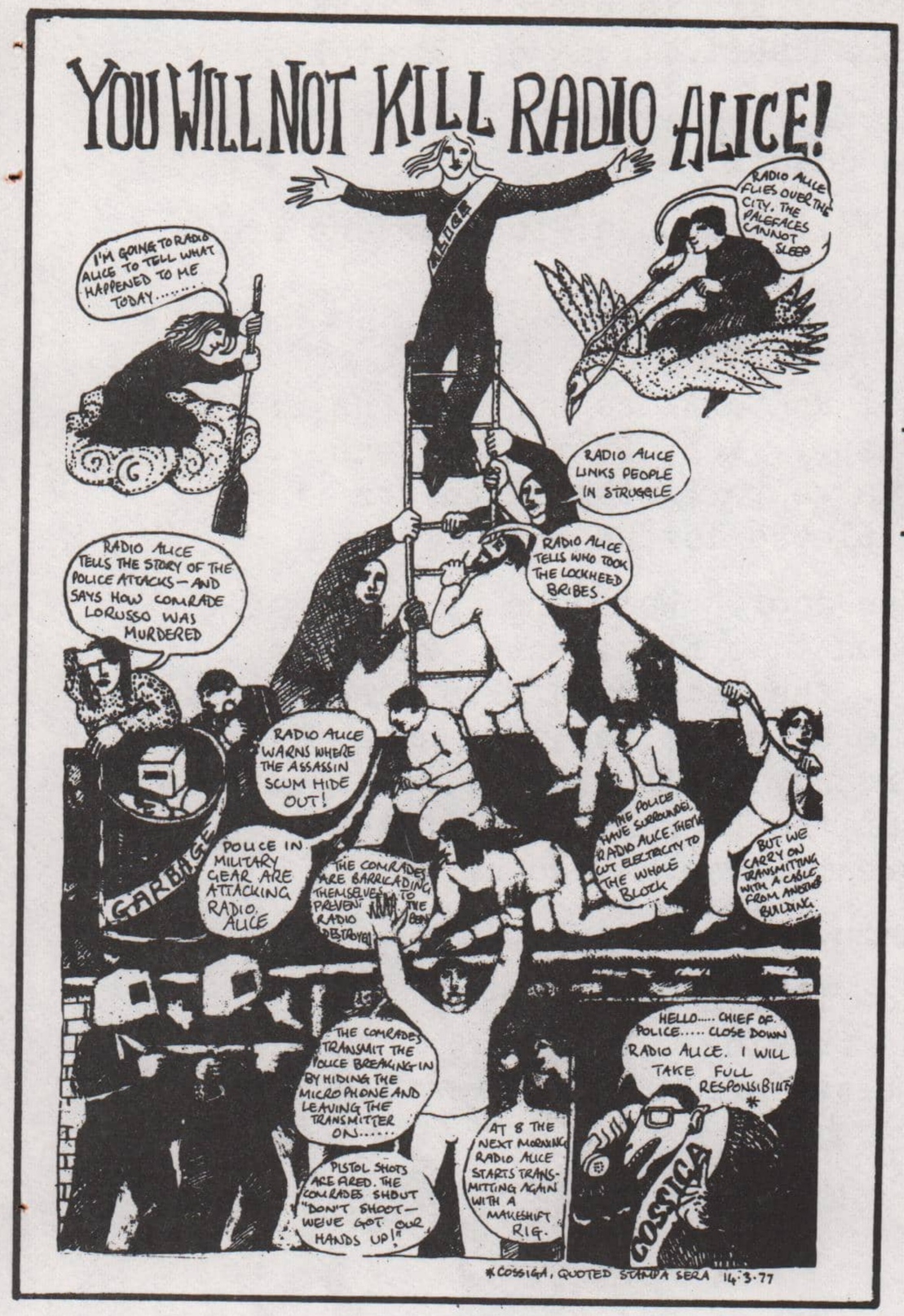
The (Communist) Council has adopted lock stock and barrel the logic of the public spending cuts, the "sacrifices" that have been decided by the (Christian Democrat) government.

The same treatment has been given to the struggles of young people. The young people want to fight against the ghettoisation that leads to individualism, to seeking refuge in heroin etc. They want to struggle against the wastage perpetrated by the rich bourgeois who eat in luxury restaurants while out-of-town students and casual workers have to line up in hour-long queues that cross Piazza Verdi and reach as far as the Municipal Theatre like some sort of unauthorised street demonstration. But all these struggles are also met with slanderous accusations, and the attempt to turn political protest into something criminal.

Our intention has been to bring the voice of dissent here into this gathering. We have no intention of being suffocated with hypocrisy. If there are sincere democrats here, we want them to know the truth about Bologna. Besides the Bologna that has been talked about, there is another one - the Bologna made up of ghettoised people who have been squeezed out to the fringes of society."



REVOLUTIONARY RADIO



We've already printed some of the phone calls that were transmitted over Radio Alice. The revolutionary possibilities of the station were clear. It was for this reason that Interior Minister Kossiga ordered it to be closed down.

Now we're printing 2 articles: first, a translated account of the police raiding and closing Radio Alice. And second, an article about the growth of free radio ('radio libera') in Italy.

● RAID ON RADIO ALICE

During the street clashes of Saturday March 12th in Bologna, the free radio station Radio Alice had transmitted phone calls from comrades reporting the latest state of things. That night, at 11.15pm, the police raided the station and closed it. First they cut off the electricity to the whole building - but the comrades continued broadcasting via a cable from another building. Then the police broke in - but the comrades had hidden a microphone, and left the transmitter on. The whole episode was broadcast live.

This account comes from a tape-recording that was made at the time. However, it was not only comrades who tape-recorded the station. The police also made their own tapes - and on the basis of those tapes, comrades from Radio Alice have been charged with various offences.

-o-X-o-

(Background noises. Big confusion. Chairs being moved, people walking about. A phone rings.)

Hello - Radio Alice?

Comrade A. Get off the line. The police are here. We need the phone.

Comrade B. Let's go upstairs....let's get out of here....

Comrade C. Try to keep calm, everyone.

(The phone rings again.)

Hello....Alice?

A: Yes, the police are here. If you find anyone from the Legal Defence Cllective, send them here at once.

No...look, don't go getting out of the windows, PLEASE! (Chaotic noises). Listen, this is very important. Will you please get off the line. Here is a message for all lawyers, for all comrades who are tuned in. Will they please get in touch with the lawyers.....

(Voice in the background: The police are shooting...they're firing at us).

B: Listen, the police are at the door. They're trying to break it down. Their waving pistols - and I'm refusing to open. I've told them I'm not going to open until they put away their pistols and show me their warrant. And since they won't put them away, I've told them we're not opening until the lawyer gets here.

(Phone rings.)

A: Listen, can you please come at once. This is urgent. Please.... they've got pistols and flak-jackets and all that shit....via del Pratello 14, OK.....we're waiting for you.

B: Tell him....Mauro! Keep your head down!!!

(A comrade shouts to the police: The lawyers. Wait a minute, the lawyers are coming!)

(Doorbell rings non-stop.)

B: Radio Città....will you please call Radio Alice and tell us if you are receiving us and relaying this broadcast.....oh, by radio please... we're listening. We just can't tell if it's us we're listening to, or if it's you relaying us. Radio Città, could you please let us know. Thanks.

B: They've said they'll break down the door. We're being besieged by the police. I don't know if you've ever seen that film, shit, what the hell was the title....that one about Germany....the Katherina Blum case, that's it.....Well here we've got the very same helmets, the very same bullet-proof jackets, waving their Berettas around. It's ridiculous....it's incredible....it's just like a film. (Voices in the background). If they weren't right here banging on our door, I'd swear I was at the cinema!

C: Let's have a bit of background music. (The music plays).

A: I dunno....Listen, I don't even know if I'm going to get a night's sleep tonight....What a fucking lousy situation! (Confused noises and heavy blows off).



B: Now the police have started banging on the door again. They're shouting "Open up! Open up!" They're coming....Watch out.....Keep down!

(Police: Goddamn it, open up...open up!)

C: The lawyers are on their way. Just wait 5 minutes...they're already in the street outside.

(Police: We're coming in. Get ready..!)

(A comrade answers the phone: Hello, Radio Alice here.....)

Police: Put your hands up. HANDS UP! Right up...

A: No, I don't know anyone called Alberto...I'm Matteo...Listen, we've got the police at the door....

(General confusion.)

C: They're inside.....They're here!!!

B: They're here....They've broken in!!! We've all got our hands up... The've come inside now...we've got our hands up...

C: There, they've torn away the mike...

Police: Hands up there!

B: We've got our hands up. They're telling us that this is a "hive of subversive activity".....

<u>Transmission is interrupted</u>.



****
Alice ducked as the pack of cards sprang into life and started flying at her from all sides.
****

●THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREE RADIO

So, the police had seized Radio Alice, on a charge of having "directed" guerrilla warfare in the streets of Bologna. Was this legal, to close down a station because of an alleged offence by its members? The case of Radio Alice looks likely to become a test case for Free Radio all over Italy. The outcome will be very important.

Here we're printing an edited excerpt from an article about the history and background of the development of Free Radio in Italy. It comes from an article by Mark Grimshaw and Carl Gardner in Wedge No 1, Summer 1977.

In Italy there are three national stations, each with their own news programmes. These stations are carved up between the political parties sharing power in the present coalition Government. A monolithic "status quo" which needed cracking.

How, then, was this status quo cracked? One of the crucial test cases was that of Onde Rosse (Red Airwaves) which took to the air (illegally) in Piedmont in July 1975. Its signature tune was the famous Chilean freedom song 'El Pueblo Unido' (The People United). During the week that followed, it was possible to hear interviews on the radio, with prominent Communists, Radicals and anarchists, interspersed with 'The Internationale', 'Bandiera Rossa' etc. Every morning, too, one could hear salutations and best wishes for a speedy release of Giovan Battista Fossano, under suspicion of being the guiding inspiration of the armed guerrilla group 'Red Brigade'.



Channel 96 in Milan.

The transmitter had been set up in a second-floor apartment by a group of 30 people whose politics were broadly those of the PDUP/Manifesto group. Transmission lasted just one week before a somewhat embarassed cohort of ten carabinieri knocked at the door with a confiscation order. After respectfully waiting for the last notes of 'Bandiera Rossa', they walked off with the equipment.

Amazingly, later court action against Onde Rosse and others found such State confiscations unconstitutional, by the end of 1975. In this way, certain decisions of the State legislature made the State's monopoly of broadcasting illegal, just at a time when you would have thought the State would be trying to consolidate its monopoly.

THE STATIONS GROW AND SPREAD

This 'liberation' of the airwaves led immediately to a vast and unfinished explosion of Free Radio stations - numbering over 800 within a year, all over the country. There are also about 100 Free TV stations.

Many of the small stations have been set up for between £3,000-£4,000. Running costs for radio stations are, in addition, very low, compared to newspapers. Staffing costs are minimal, the stations being run by voluntary labour. And, unlike newspapers, listening is free!

But finances are still a problem. These come from basically 3 sources: First, by public subscriptions, for which the stations broadcast appeals. Second, through some limited advertising (though many stations refuse to allow any commercial penetration). And third, through being sponsored by political

groups or parties, and other interested organisations (though here again, most stations try to stay independent of such funding).

For the time being, about 50-60% of the "free" stations are commercially sponsored, happy to guarantee a 24-hour service of rock music. Another 30% or so consists of a mixed bag of low-budget ventures mounted by radio hams or minority groups. And finally there is that 20% or so which might properly be called the socialist section of independent radio.

The attitude of the Communist Party in particular to these developments is worth mentioning. The CP have had nothing to do with the stations, at a formal level. They appear to be convinced that with the "Historic Compromise" their forthcoming entry into government will give them access to the State broadcasting network.

HOW THE STATIONS OPERATE, AND THE MOVES BEING MADE AGAINST THEM.

To take one example: Radio Città Futura was set up in Rome with funds put up by the extra-parliamentary revolutionary parties AO and PDUP (Avanguardia Operaio and Partito di Unità Proletaria). There is no precise political control of the station, however. It is organised as a forum for the fullest expression of ideas by the revolutionary Left and the workers' movement as a whole.

A typical day's broadcasting at Radio 'Future City' runs something like this:

6.30: Morning call for the workers. News & political songs.
7.30: Analysis of the day's Press coverage of economic, political, trade union and cultural affairs.
8.30: Domestic review. Food prices, home economics etc.
9.30: Music, varying from avant-garde to rock
10.00 Transmission by Radio Donna, an independent women's liberation unit.
11.00 Student news (in their morning break).
11.15 Music
12.00 First of the "current affairs" specials, with an interview or discussion on economics or politics.
1.00: Music
2.00: Regional news from Rome.
3.00: From the Base: trade unions, women, soldiers, tenants groups etc.
5.00: Second programme by the women's movement.
6.00: Second 'special', with discussion on one specific topic
7.00: News of the Day.
8.00: Music.
10.00 The major discussion of the day, with a phone-in link.
12.00 Music.
1.00: "Comrades Night-Spot" where each staff member in rotation broadcasts what she/he wants.
3.00: Summary of the day's news headlines.
3.30 - 6.00 am Programme for night workers (taxi drivers, police, hospital workers etc) A previously-taped interview with a worker is broadcast, and people are free to phone in.

Now, the State is beginning to move against these stations and the danger they represent. There are two basic methods: economic sanctions and open physical repression. Proposals are afoot to demand the sum of £30 per day from each radio station - supposedly for the equivalent of record royalties. This would apply even to those stations who do not broadcast music. This move is designed to drive a wedge between the commercial stations (with rich advertising), who could afford the money, and the Left-wing stations, who could not.

These moves are being resisted. But if the economic sanctions should fail, the State can also use physical repression, as in the case of Radio Alice. During the March riots and demonstrations in Bologna, the radio station was being used in a quite new way. It was used as a directly offensive weapon, monitoring police movements during the demonstrations and relaying them to demonstrators. The police immediately moved in to close it.

In the past 18 months, Free Radio in Italy has expanded enormously. The question now is whether that expansion can be consolidated. In particular this will depend on whether the Italian Left is able to solve some of the more difficult organisational and political problems it faces at this/ moment. But the essential breakthrough has been made, presenting the Left with new resources - and also new problems. Leftwing propaganda and agitation can never be the same again. The Left has entered the electronic age with a vengeance!

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16 1977

THE FIREMEN'S strike began to turn nasty today in a series of clashes between strikers, soldiers and the fire brigade.

As a £70 million fire raged unchecked at a Tilbury power station, tempers began to rise in the dispute.

Fire brigade chiefs ordered telephone lines to be cut off at all 114 London stations after reports of misuse of the exchanges. It is understood that lines were being used by firemen to organise anti-strike-breaking measures.

About 50 men occupying Battersea fire station set up a pirate radio station to spread strike news—and threatened to stay on the air until arrested.

They were using the spare radio channel on the fire brigade's radio network.

So the fire brigade made attempts to force the pirates off the air by jamming techniques.

Angry scenes broke out on the picket lines at Sunbury fire station near Staines when a returning fire engine manned by strike breakers was kicked and punched amid cries of "Scabs" and "Blacklegs" from pickets outside.

At the Tilbury outbreak, police and "pickets played "cops and robbers" over a foam tender.

Army and fire officers drove the foam tender out of the abandoned station at Grays.

Angry firemen claimed they were called to Tilbury to save lives by police but said they found no lives at risk. So one fireman climbed into the foam tender cab and drove it back to the station.

The Army later returned to Grays and snatched it back.

A picket at Grays, Mr Graham Spring, said: "It is disgusting what the authorities have done. They have tried to get firemen on strike here under false pretences by saying that firemen already at the scene had their lives at risk."

Soldiers booed

Twenty-four soldiers were booed by pickets at Greenwich when they sped to a fire at a hairdressing salon. And a fire officer had the keys of his car stolen at the same fire.

"It was a pretty diabolical trick. It is sick that people can stoop to this sort of thing," said a police officer.

●In Britain too, radio has its part to play in communication of the struggle. Evening Standard, November 16th 1977.

THE APPEAL BY J.P.SARTRE

The events of Bologna provided a golden opportunity for the authorities to launch a campaign of raids and arrests against the Left - in particular against its channels of communication and expression. Following on the arrest (in Paris) of Bifo, a member of Radio Alice's production collective, a group of French intellectuals have produced this appeal. Bifo, by the way, has been accused by the Bologna magistrate, Catalanotti, of being one of the "plotters" behind the demonstrations there.....that old "conspiracy" theory again!

APPEAL BY J.P.SARTRE AND OTHER FRENCH INTELLECTUALS
ON BEHALF OF THE COMRADES WHO HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED.

Now that the second East-West Conference is to be held in Belgrade, we wish to draw people's attention to the very serious events that are taking place in Italy at the present time. In particular we must stress the heavy repressive measures that are being used against working class militants and dissident intellectuals who take up positions against the Historic Compromise (the agreement by which the Communist Party, with 34% of the popular vote, undertakes to support the minority government of the Christian Democrats, who hold 38% of the popular vote).

These are the conditions - so what does the "Historic Compromise" mean in Italy today? The so-called "socialism with a human face" has revealed its true face. On the one hand it is developing a system of repressive control over the working class and the young proletarians who are refusing to carry the costs of the Crisis. On the other hand it plans to share out the State apparatus with the Christian Democrats (the Christian Democrats would get the banks and the Army; the Communist Party would get the police, and social and territorial control). All this within what is in reality a "one-party" system. It is this state of affairs that has provoked the rebellion of young proletarians and dissident intellectuals in Italy in recent months.

What has led to this situation? What has happened?

Since February, Italy has been shaken by a revolt - a revolt of young proletarians, the unemployed, students, and those who have been forgotten in the politicking of the Historic Compromise. Faced with a policy of austerity and sacrifices, they have replied by occupying the universities, by mass demonstrations, by fighting casual labour, by wildcat strikes, sabotage and absenteeism in the factories. They have used all the savage irony and creativity of those who, ignored by the powers that be, have nothing more to lose. "Sacrifices! Sacrifices!", they shout. "Lama, whip us!" (Lama is a top Union bureaucrat, and a CP member). "The Christian Democrat crooks are innocent....WE are the real delinquents!" (Ministers exposed for swindling public funds are protected by parliamentary immunity from prosecution). "Build more churches...And fewer houses!"

The response of the police, the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party to all this has been absolutely clear: the prohibition of all demonstrations, open-air meetings and mass meetings in Rome; a permanent state of siege in Bologna, with armoured cars in the streets; and police using guns against the crowds.

Faced with this ongoing provocation, the movement has had to defend

itself. When they are accused of plotting and conspiring, and of being financed by the CIA and the KGB, those whom the Historic Compromise has excluded reply: "Our plot is our intelligence; your plot is to use our rebellion to step up your terror campaign".

We must remember that:-

**** Three hundred militants, including many workers, are at present in jail in Italy;

**** The lawyers who defend them are systematically persecuted; the arrests of the lawyers Cappelli, Senese, Spazzali and nine other militants of Soccorso Rosso (Red Help, the legal defence group for arrested comrades) are forms of repression that are inspired by the methods used in Germany;

****Criminalisation of professors and students at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Padua. 12 of them are accused of "subversive association": Guido Bianchini, Luciano Ferrari Bravo, Antonio Negri and others;

****Police searches of the Area, Erba Voglio and Bertani publishing houses, and the arrest of Bertani. In an unprecedented development, evidence for arrests is gathered from a book on the Bologna leftist movement. The homes of the writers Nanni Balestrini and Elvio Fachinelli have also been searched. Angelo Pasquini, member of the editorial collective of the literary magazine ZUT has also been arrested.

**** The broadcasting station Radio Alice in Bologna has been closed down. Their material has been confiscated. 12 Radio Alice radio producers have been arrested.

**** The Press has launched a campaign tending to: show up the struggles of the movement, and its cultural expressions, as a plot; and incite the State to organise a full-scale witch hunt.

We, the undersigned, demand the immediate freeing of all the militants arrested; an end to the persecution and the smear campaign against the movement and its cultural activity. We proclaim our solidarity with all dissidents who are at present being "investigated".

<u>Signed:</u> J.P.Sartre, Michel Foucault, F.Guattari, G.Deleuze, Roland Barthes, F.Vahl, P.Sollers, D.Roche, P.Gavi, M.A.Macciocchi, C.Guillerme, and others.

<u>July 8th 1977</u>

This Appeal created a big stir in the Italian Press. The Communist Party papers said the French intellectuals were ill-informed, and suggested that Sartre was not very well. F.Cossiga, Minister of the Interior, told the Italian Senate that Italian terrorists have "pseudo-political and pseudo-cultural backings, squalidly and indecorously manifested in bizarre cultural manifestations in countries near to Italy". P.Spriano, the PCI's official historian, said that Italy "....is the freest country in the capitalist West". Il Manifesto (the group that broke from the PCI in 1970) said Sartre and the others were "exaggerating". Il Corriere della Sera tried to link up the cultural background of the signatories with that of the anti-Marxist "new philosophers" in France. Renato Zangheri, Communist mayor of Bologna, said in an interview with Le Monde, that the French intellectuals should come to Bologna to see for themselves if there was any repression going on.

This is precisely what they have done. A European <u>Conference on Political Dissent</u> took place in Bologna on September 23-5th 1977.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Italian Communist Party is the "strongest partner" of the European Communist movement. Its actions are important indications for CPs elsewhere to follow. If that is so, the events of Bologna bode ill. The following article is a summary of arguments presented in the facsimile publication of L'Unitá, prepared by Lotta Continua.

Bologna, with its Communist-controlled Town Council, is a test-bed of the new policy of Historic Compromise (the attempted coalition with the Right-wing parties like the Christian Democrats). Here the Communist Party, in order to gain entry to national Government, has to prove itself capable of running an efficient State machine at local level. It also has to show itself able to repress any movement that challenges the established order of things. It proved this during the events of March 1977 in Bologna.

....The 'forces of order' imposed a State of Siege in Bologna during the street-fighting that followed the murder of Francesco Lorusso. Armoured cars in the streets; helicopters in the air; police shooting at will; demonstrators and passers-by beaten; comrades whisked off the streets into passing police cars; and TV cameras concealed in strategic positions all over town, by which the Chief of Police could sit in his HQ and monitor the main streets and squares.

....The CP attempted to mobilise its members - and the workers (local authority etc) whom it controlled - into a kind of self-policing law and order force, to attack the Movement that had emerged during those days. The CP "goon squads" (servizi d'ordine) virtually replaced the police in some situations of conflict - until they were laughed off the streets by the comrades. However, since March there have been many reports of comrades clashing with these CP goon squads.

....The CP systematically published lies and distortions in the pages of its daily paper, L'Unitá. These lies were so blatant that Lotta Continua has made up a full-size newspaper by reprinting only the L'Unitá articles about Bologna - a great joke, a public humiliation even for the thick-skinned CP, and a great education to all. However, the CP understands the control of mass media. It was for this reason that it encouraged and applauded the closure of the revolutionary radio station Radio Alice - and made haste to scrub all revolutionary slogans off thé walls of the City. (The slogans, by the way, showed a humour and imagination not seen in Europe since the flowering of Paris, May '68).

....The CP began by propagandising the whole course of events as a PLOT by extremists, hooligans, foreigners, fascists, 'marginal elements' etc etc, to discredit the "socialism in practice" of Red Bologna. They went to extraordinary lengths to laud the 'honest' police and the 'honest' judiciary. Anything that disturbed law and order was seen virtually as the "forces of Evil" and was described as such in the CP Press. This even extended to the ban on the funeral of Lorusso taking place in the City.

....The CP gave its fullest possible support to the police raids that

shut down Radio Alice and ransacked the homes and offices of many Left publishers and bookshops. "Not before time", they said. These raids led to the arrest and beating of many comrades.

....Any attempt by the new Movement to communicate with rank and file workers in the factories, in those heated days of March, were blocked by the solid wall of trade union bureaucrats, convenors, Party officials etc. These, following the line of the Bologna CP, sent no official delegates to Lorusso's funeral. This was the extent of the CP's control of the "institutions" in the Bologna area.(It is rumoured that every second adult in Bologna is a card-carrying CP member: you have to be, to get a job.)

....The CP in Bologna actively discouraged card-carrying doctor and lawyer members from representing the 216 comrades who were arrested in those days - particularly in the case of comrade Minnella, who wanted a doctor to testify to his beatings at the police station.

....The CP, built now on an ideology of conservatism, of 'law and order', of the "producers of wealth" against the "non-productive sectors", has tried to whip up a sort of racism among "responsible citizens" against the young unemployed, the students, the foreigners, who are a large part of the make-up of a University city like Bologna. Bologna is becoming a "forbidden city" as far as public expression of dissent and an alternative life-style is concerned. Rigid Red-Bourgeois orthodoxy rules - and is all tempered with calls for 'austerity' and 'sacrifices' to 'save the national economy'.

....When the owners of the (often luxury) shops in the centre of Bologna had their windows smashed by demonstrators, the CP was hurriedly there to solidarise and comfort them. The Red Council handed out large sums of compensation to these bourgeois, as an earnest of its good intentions. Headlines in L'Unitá read: "Communist Parliamentarians Meet the Tradesmen Hit by the Hooligans" - an elaborate publicity exercise.

All the above contentions (and more besides) are amply documented in Italy. You need read no further than the CP's editorials, as reprinted by Lotta Continua - because it's there in black and white, including the vile insinuation that Lorusso was not shot by the police, but by provocateurs inside the Left. (In fact there are solid witnesses of the fact that it was a uniformed policeman who shot him).

Finally, the CP, in its eagerness to silence its critics on the Left, has ignored the basic fact of the events of Bologna - that it was <u>a wholly unwarranted escalation of violence by the forces of law and order</u> which sparked the events, and which prevailed during the following weeks. The pattern is already familiar in Italy: in order to cancel the gains made by the working class movement, the Right and the military intervene with <u>planned violence</u> designed to destabilise the situation, restrict civil rights even further, and consolidate their power.

Meantime, a group of French intellectuals, including J.P.Sartre, have called a Public Inquiry into the repression in Italy - particularly the role which the Communist Party is playing in that repression. (See page 37).

LEFT PRESS RAIDS

The police and judiciary provoked the battles in Bologna. They then seized the opportunity to launch a massive raid on left-wing and counter-culture publications. Fundamental issues of freedom of expression are at stake here. The comrades concerned issued the following statement on the day of the raids. We print a short version.

Today, May 7th 1977, the police forces (ie the Security Service, the Public Security and the Carabinieri) acted on the initiative of Catalanotti, the "democratic" magistrate of the Bologna tribunal.

They have launched a large-scale and widespread operation of intimidation and repression against magazines, newspapers, counter-information bulletins of the movement, bookshops, alternative distribution centres, publishing houses, and the homes of comrades who are linked, whether in their theory or in their practice, with the area of opposition media.

In particular, the following were raided:

The "Il Picchio" bookshop in Bologna
The "Calusca" bookshop in Milan
The "Porto di Mare" bookshop in Milan
The "Rosso" editorial office in Milan
The "Bertani" publishing house in Verona
The offices of L'Erba Voglio in Milan
The offices of publishing houses linked to the "Area" publishing co-op in Milan
The homes of editors of "Senza Tregua".
The "Punti Rossi" cooperative in Milan
The "Ottaviano" publishing house in Milan.
EDB, publishing representatives, in Verona.
The homes of editors of "Primo Maggio" in Milan.

There have been innumerable raids on the homes of comrades, men and women, who have been connected, even remotely, with the distribution and production centres listed above.

There have also been raids in Mestre and Rome. In particular, the editors of Lotta Continua have been subject to intimidation.

We must emphasise that we are facing (for the first time, in such a coordinated and "comprehensive" way) something we can only describe as a project to criminalise the opposition media and their distribution circuits.

We are thus facing the most original and effective forms of censorship since the War. We have experienced the bigoted and ecclesiastical censorship by the Christian Democrats on the Right. We have also had Togliatti's scissors from the Left (Communist Party). What was lacking was the UNIFICATION of these two historical traditions to give birth to the censorship of intentions by confiscating materials before they can be published.

.....In the present situation it is quite logical for our very "democratic" magistrate Catalanotti to try to re-establish order by trying to silence the production and distribution of the Opposition Media. All he wants is to rub us out, eliminate us, make it impossible for us to exist....But he should be reminded: the revolution cannot be rubbed out or eliminated, for it is invisible!

May 7th 1977

SOME CONCLUSIONS

This article is translated from the magazine Primo Maggio (1st May), No.8, Spring 1977. It analyses the struggles that took place in Bologna in February and March 1977. In particular it looks at the relationship between the movement and the official labour movement (Communist Party and Trade Unions.) It examines the way those organisations reacted to the political demands that arose in the day to day movements of the struggle.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY, THE REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS AND THE NEW MOVEMENT IN BOLOGNA.

The Communist Party in Bologna had been increasing its membership all through 1976 - drawing in a considerable number of militants from the revolutionary groups (which had been in crisis for some time). However, the Party was no longer able to pull together meetings of any significant numbers of the youth of Bologna.

Ever since 1969, the new militants entering the struggle in Bologna had received their training in active community politics, in demonstrations etc - a far cry from the political centres of power In fact, in the big mass meetings in February, it was clear that they had no pre-established organisational networks: they were immersed in their own situations of struggle, struggling to change their lives, in a jungle where the formal party-system could not reach.

So, by the end of 1976 the formal political organisations appeared to have taken over and controlled every situation of struggle in the city. But the reality was that the city was running alive with housing occupations, auto-reduction struggles, spontaneous unauthorised demonstrations, and "Mao-Dada" provocations at official ceremonies and demonstrations etc.

Bologna had shared the experience of the break-up of the Left groups (in fact it was more advanced here, because in Bologna it's easier for intellectuals to become involved in the running of community services etc). This, coupled with the progressive (and by now almost complete) autonomisation of the Communist Party from the movement, to liberate a widespread spontaneity and creativity. This expressed itself in many ways: proletarian youth festivals flourished; there were many struggles for transforming everday life; and a proliferation of meeting places (youth clubs, bookshops, film clubs etc) where people could gather. As a sign of the times, no sooner had Radio Alice come on the air than it was able to mobilise 2,000 comrades for a jam session, and had an average listening audience of 30,000.

A NEW SOCIAL FORCE IS EMERGING.

We can now talk of a new social grouping coming into existence. It seems not to have any objective, material reality. It seems to come together and recognise itself only subjectively - outside of the formal political structures, outside the channels of "democratic participation", outside the political groups, and also outside the workplace.

It is precisely through a denial of its own material condition (the position of being casual labour, lump labour, students etc) that this grouping comes together - precisely when it overcomes the geographical and social dispersion of its members. A process of recomposition (See p.122) is taking place - a quite subjective process, which functions outside of work and the workplace. No simple numerical gathering of these people could hope to capture and organise this

process.

Suddenly we can see Radio Alice as an exemplary and wholly new experience. The very terms in which the attack was made on Alice indicate that it was experimenting something quite new at the level of collective action. The discussion about the "party of diffuse situations", the party that represents struggles and subversive behaviour (See p.122) - this discussion will now have to take account of this experience. Among other things, a very close relationship has been established between political recomposition in this period, and the collective transformation of everyday life.

The Communist Party and the local authorities set out to crush this new movement. They saw it as the "unhealthy" effects of a "disintegration", a "break-up" inside the otherwise healthy body of Bologna's "socialism in practice". For example, the proletarian youth clubs are being destroyed. In August 1976 the Bologna city council sent in a bulldozer to flatten the building in which the "Red Beret" centre was meeting. Others have been evicted by the police, on the insistence of the provincial administration.

Every political meeting place is closed to any expression of politics which is not in line with formally-recognised politics. And meanwhile the local Press alternates between silence and alarmism about each new episode of dissent. L'Unità completely ignores the causes and political motivations of any episode of political violence: they only stress the results and consequences (broken windows etc). The CP is making no attempt to analyse or to win over the new wave of fighters who are entering the struggle. Criminalisation and marginalisation of the new modes and forms of struggle is the pattern in Bologna today.

THE MOVEMENT IN FEBRUARY/MARCH

In the first mass meetings in the University, in February, the political groups were absorbed by and submerged by the movement. The Communist Party was there as the only organised grouping with an intention of imposing its own line. However, the movement defended itself strongly against intrusion by the bureaucratic organisations - and at the same time developed its own criticism of the Communist Party. The criticisms were precise and direct: the wage-cutting policies of the "abstention-Government"; the raising of University fees; the housing shortage; and the lack of adequate local services. On all of these issues the responsibility of the local (Communist-controlled) Authority was stressed.

But it is in the social composition of the movement that we must look to find what was really new about this phase of the struggle. The University provided a reference point for many different people - young people, women, school students, proletarians, militants who had matured in the experience of the political work and the struggles of the past few years. The first big demonstration on 10th February brought together 8,000 comrades, mainly women and young people. On this occasion, the Bologna Communist Party were clearly bent on provoking a confrontation with the movement: through the newspapers they spread the (false) story that the movement had tried to attack their Bologna office.

From that moment onwards, the CP both manipulated and falsified news and information in the pages of L'Unità, intending to heighten the confrontation between the Party and the movement. The Communist Party had broken with the younger elements of Bologna. For that reason it was the youth that presented the greatest opposition to the Party's line. And this situation was manipulated by the Party as the price they had to pay for political stability.

As a result, the relationship between the Party and the movement was already firmly cemented into position even before the events of March 11-12th, even before the events that followed the killing of Lorusso. The only new thing

was the wholly unprincipled way the CP made use of the episodes of violence and street-fighting.

The Party understands (better than the students and young people who were in struggle) the possibilities of political circulation of demands etc, between the different sections of the working class. In February, for instance, the Trade Union mass meetings that were called during the General Strike (Feb.15th) had revealed a solid bloc of working class criticism of the agreement reached with the Confindustria (See p.122). Well, the CP's treatment of the movement in Bologna, the criminalisation of the movement, was a warning to other sections of the class, of what happens if you oppose. It was an indication of the limits of protest that were or were not acceptable. And in fact what the CP wants at this time is the silence of the working class.

THE NEW QUALITY OF THE MOVEMENT.

The killing of Lorusso had the effect of widening the base of the movement to new areas and new sections of the population. We saw very young people coming into the streets and participating massively in the movement, and we saw the whole centre of the Old City of Bologna being taken over in those days - although shortly afterwards, the initiative and thrust of the specific struggles began to fall off, and comrades tended to withdraw into the liberated area of the University. And in fact all attempts by the Authorities to isolate and marginalise the new lifestyles, forms of struggle etc, backfired, because they now began to grow as a mass, social, collective phenomenon.

Radio Alice's catchment area began to widen enormously. That period was characterised by a high level of cohesion, of imagination and creativity - something that surprised many militants and caught them unawares. And the basic material fact was that the fighting forces of March 1977 were rooted in the social structure of Bologna and its surrounds. For weeks on end, thousands of young people were in movement. They came from every stratum and every area the the "social factory" of Emilia. They were all the time coming forward, withdrawing, breaking up and regrouping again, in a form of political practice which could not be halted by or incorporated in the formal political institutions.

This behaviour was rooted in the material conditions of life of the people involved - not just based on "advanced consciousness". And in a situation like that, every struggle, every liberated space acts to spread the antagonism across whole geographical areas, and to previously uninvolved and unexplored sections of society.

We saw this in the total spontaneity of the clashes and the streetfighting on the night of Saturday March 12th and Sunday March 13th, even when the "Movement" was not present. Also in the way large numbers of the population quite ignored the breaking of the law in those incidents.

The demonstration called by the official parties on March 16th confirmed this fact even further. The 200,000 citizens of Emilia who were gathered there were silent, passive, and embarassed. In fact many of them joined the Movement's demonstration after the end of the official public meeting.

During those days there seemed to be a real and strong "contact" between the young people and the City. There were all kinds of different people, with all kinds of different ideologies, acting in all different ways, and this fed and noursihed the inventiveness and creativity of the movement. New demonstrations were continually being spawned; there were meetings everywhere, all the time (ranging from night-time marches to big meetings); new forms of organisation were being thought up all the time.

For example, after March 15th, the police, the official political parties and the local authorities were trying to deny the movement any possible pol-

itical space for coordination etc. The movement was driven out of the Old Centre of the city, and was denied the use of premises. But the movement responded by planning on a geographic basis: meetings were set up, on a rotation basis, in cinemas on the outskirts of town (where the owners didn't make any difficulties), as well as in parks, local squares etc - which had the added advantage of involving local people even more than before!

The whole of 1976 had seen repeated attempts to ghettoise - or destroy - this movement. March 1977 signalled the defeat of those attampts: the movement succeeded in "taking over the city" for days on end. For a while, in April, it seemed that it was only the students element carrying on the struggle, and the Left groups tended to re-emerge in the mass meetings - but once again, during the days of protest for the death of Giorgina Masi (May 13-16th) that same youthful, proletarian force emerged once again, tight and compact, onto the streets. For a few days, the whole Old City was again in the grasp of the 10,000 young people who had marched in the demonstration of March 13th.

And the Communist Party, having interpreted the re-emergence of the Left groups as a sign of the exhaustion of the spontaneous phase, began to intervene directly, after May, with the idea of turning the "honest citizens" of Bologna against the "deviants", in order to isolate them.

EMILIA AS THE "SOCIAL FACTORY". THE EMILIA WORKING CLASS AND THE POLITICS OF DECENTRALISATION.

The reformists are now having to swallow their words, if they want to offer a public 'interpretation' of the events of Bologna. Only yesterday they were saying that Emilia was different from other regions....it showed unity.... it had a high level of economic and political development...etc. Today, though, they say that Emilia suffers from social breakdown and marginalisation.

Emilia was a forerunner of the "social factory". To be technical for a while, the "social worker" and the "whole society producing surplus value" arrived early on, in the development of Emilia - thanks precisely to that "socialism in practice" which is now trying to squash the concrete political demands of a whole new class composition. (For definition of terms see Notes, page 122)

The fact that the Emilian factory and the Emilian working class are dispersed dates back to the reconstruction after the war. In that development, the stage of the mass worker was missed out. The region went straight from the craft worker to the disseminated worker.

Thus, although the actual numbers of the working class have been increasing, its political weight has been decreasing, because the working class has been dispersed along with the dispersal of the factory as an institution.

In Emilia the decentralisation of production has structural characteristics. It is an organic function, in part substituting the need for investment. Emilia's model of development offers hints for the future restructuring of Italian industry as a whole - the disciplinary use of the labour market, the way workers mobility is used by the employers to break up any new levels of organisation. At the same time, we are seeing a growth of out-work in the home; part-time work; seasonal work; and a huge influx of women into the vast network of the service sector. All this gives Emilia a higher percentage of "economically-active population" than almost anywhere in Europe. Very many people are involved actively in the process of capital accumulation. And this dispersal is seen as a broad-ranging alternative to factory work, as such.

So, in the Emilian model, the whole geographical area becomes a productive unit, instead of just the "factory". This takes place through a dispersal of the labour process, and a fluidification and mobility of the labour market. And in this way the Communist Party becomes a function of the relations of production: through it, real interests of the capitalist class are concretely expressed.

The Communist Party as the "mass party of all the working people" has its base in the "integrated factory", the tertiarisation and the decentralisation of production. Under the ideology of "working people", all strata of society are guaranteed equal dignity and political recognition, and all the various interests of the "forces of society" can be mediated. (See Notes, page 122).

In this framework, the unity which has been broken up by the breaking up of the production process, can be recomposed inside the institutions of "socialism in practice" and in the Party: these become focuses of consensus, and of collective action <u>for</u> economic development.

<u>THE COMMUNIST PARTY, IN ALL THIS</u>.

The "integrated factory" phenomenon is growing in Emilia - under socialist management. Meanwhile, the Party maintains and builds a relationship with the "labour aristocracy" in the bigger factories. For its relationship with the broader mass of workers, it relies on the power of its ideology. Today the work ethic has been elevated by the labour movement; it is counter-posed to the other sections of the class. All alternative political demands and perspectives are relegated to the channels of "democratic participation".

Those channels and institutions - the Trade Union, the Party etc - are the go-betweens, between the "producer" and the political system. They represent the worker-as-citizen. They integrate the worker as a producer. Even when they are called in to intervene in a struggle, they intervene only in order to promote 'economic development', to emphasise the necessity of "productive labour" and to put "the producer" on a sort of pedestal. In this way they represent the whole <u>objective</u> condition of the workers.....but the <u>class antagonism</u> and the <u>subjectivity</u> of the class are shut out and denied. In this system of participation you DO NOT have the right to question roles and functions in the society. The existing order of things must be reproduced.

We have a situation where the participation-system is very highly developed - and where there is very little space for workers' subjectivity. So therefore the workers' class-antagonism expresses itself very little through the Communist Party. This is why, in turn, this class-antagonism is not represented in the political system.....which can therefore maintain its outer facade of unity and harmony.

> Under this "socialism in practice", the subjectivity of the working class separates itself, by necessity, from the Communist Party.

In Emilia the rival political parties have, for some while, maintained an appearance of concord and non-conflict. This has been the forerunner of similar developments at national level. And therefore, for these "socialists" of the CP, conflict in their system is seen as "negative", it is seen as a "plot".

> For a long time now, the Party has trodden a single path: it is abandoning its relationship with the class, in favour of a relationship with the official, "constitutional" political parties.

<u>THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE EVENTS OF MARCH</u>.

People often say that the CP's model of "socialism in practice" has a high capacity for political integration. But the events of March showed that in Bologna the very high level of "participation" etc had only been achieved by <u>excluding</u> the new political needs and the new ways of behaving, out of the institutional political system. The socialist ethic stands, as something alien to and hostile to the new needs that are emerging out of a new composition of the class.

In the events of Bologna we saw the lengths to which the official party system must go, if it wants to build its hold over the struggle. We also

saw the weak spots where this project fell down.

During March 11-12th, the movement spread and tried to find its own channels of political recomposition, even through the institutions of the Labour movement. The Party tried to defeat this "subversion" and stop it gaining ground. To do this meant a direct, frontal confrontation with its own political base. Therefore it has to provide political reasons for opposing the movement. But the Party soon realised that it would be impossible to repress the movement from inside the movement, by "defeating it politically". The power that was coming up from the grass roots was stronger than Party ideology.

For instance, on March 11th (the day of Lorusso's death), the CP tried to regain control of the streets. Party cars were driving all round the working class areas of the city, asking people to come into the streets against the "fascists" and the "hooligans". But it was the children of CPers who were in the streets - and calling the children of CP members "fascists" just won't wash! So the CP militants who did obey the Party call were very unsure of themselves. Some of the younger ones actually tagged along with the Movement's march to the railway station and the Christian Democrat headquarters.

After this failure, the CP -which was the only institution with an effective presence in the social sphere - withdrew from the scene. Party officials, members and militants of the CP were sent home, or remained in their branch offices. The CP at that moment could only achieve the political isolation of the movement by separating and isolating the Party from the movement, and then handing over the movement to the State authorities. The CP had failed in developing a mass mobilisation against what it called "the students".

THE SEPARATION OF THE UNIONS AND THE PARTY FROM THE ARENA OF STRUGGLE. A TENDENCY THAT IS NOW COMPLETE.

Since the Party had failed to divide sections of the class against each other in the street, they then passed to attempting it in their Press. Heavy ideology and the manipulation of news were used, to try and isolate the struggles.

But in a structure of society that is built on decentralisation of production and total fluidification, it is very hard to compartmentalise the struggles of one section of society. In fact, contrary to what some people say, the danger is not so much that struggles will not find the ways to link up; rather it is the fact that the Party and the Unions have separated themselves from the struggle. They have made themselves autonomous from the struggles and the mass movements, in order to prevent and block their political recomposition.

Faced with the material interests and the political objectives of newly-emerging sectors of living labour, the Communist Party practices political stagnation. No longer the political use of conflicts in order to shake up the bureaucracy and reorganise the institutions. That model is passed. Now it uses institutional stagnation in order to block the conflicts.

March 1977 marked the end of a model of integration between the mass movements and the institutions of the labour movement - an integration which has been the pattern since the upheavals of 1968.

And when the Party tried to engage its base (in this case the citizens of Bologna) in carrying out their own repression, the attempt didn't last long. After the March 13th demonstration, the political parties, the local authorities and the Trade Union federation set up a "Committee for Democratic Order" in order to police the city. The first testing point was when 8,000 Council workers (strongly dependent on the Party for their employment) were summoned to a mass meeting after a deliberate Press campaign had blown up a couple of harmless wall-slogans into a plot to carry out a "19th-Century-style" sacking of the Town Hall. The meeting was deserted (only 200 out of 8,000), and

no mobilisation resulted!

The formal political party-system (which now includes the CP) faces an impossibility today: how to consolidate their close inter-party links, at the same time as imposing social control, at the same time as trying to keep up their powers of mass mobilisation.

Today we face a joint project built of the socialist work-ethic, and the capitalist coercion-to-work - for it is the socialist system of values that offers the most suitable system for building a form of social control that is built on work. Some people say that the question of control can be separated from the question of work - but others (including trade union officials) state that their main enemy is "those life-styles that are contradictory to work".

The Trade Union movement tried to divide the forces of March 1977, between those who want to "participate consciously in the social process of production" and those who "are opposed to the productive process", and who are outside it. This is the tradition of "the producers of the wealth" against the "parasitic sectors" of the society. These "producers" cannot even conceive of a working class struggle and existence outside of the integral realisation of the value of labour. It was no accident that it was the "workers council"-type Party members and trade unionists who were in the front line, in Bologna, fighting against what they saw as the "parasitism" of the students and the "marginalised" elements. (See Note, page 122)

A fine situation, in which the ideology of the official labour movement becomes hegemonic - but leaves the real power of domination over the production process to Capital. "Working class culture" versus capital's domination of the production process. Gramsci comes into his own: working class hegemony is to be a spiritual value, an ethical hegemony!

Faced with this "poverty of socialism", the new wave of fighters have something something far richer in their sights. And for the moment - in these months of struggle - their refusal to adopt strategic perspectives shows that they have learned the working class lesson - measuring power in terms of income, and taking power over their own lives.

Financial Times



Sept.6th 1977

Left worries Italy Communists

THE ITALIAN Communist Party, which for the first time in 30 years is now part of the governing process, is increasingly alarmed at the growing schism between the official party and young, extreme left-wing independent factions, the *Autonomi*.

This follows week-end incidents in Milan during the annual Communist Party rally there, when independents clashed with police who retaliated with tear gas.

Although the Communist Party attempted to-day to play down the Milan incidents, it has openly stated that the "new Italian Left" now wanted to revive a "climate of terror" in the country.



Hear no evil, See no evil, Speak no evil. CP high-ups Amendola, Natta & Reichlin.

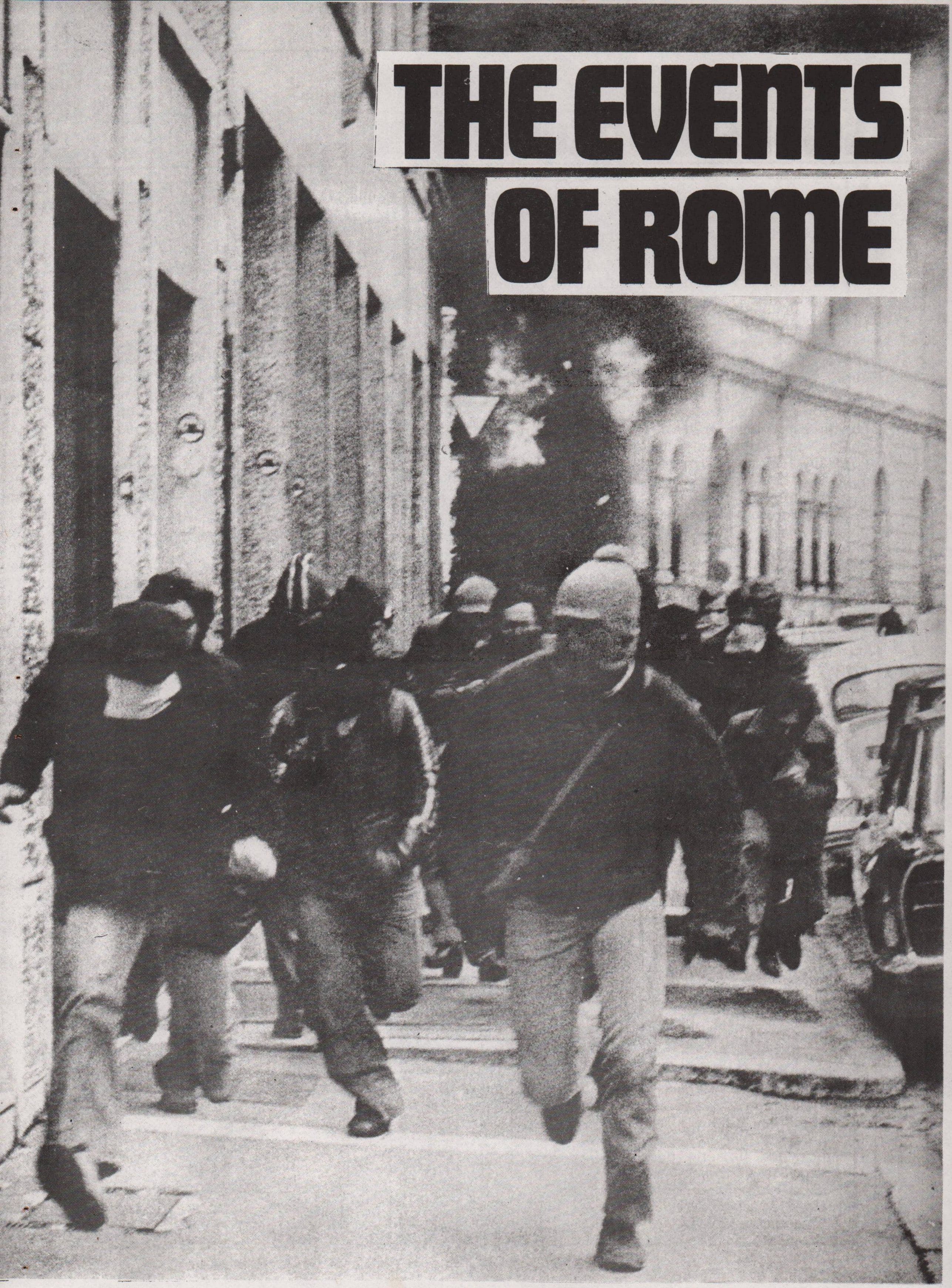


CP GOON-SQUADS IN ACTION

● This photo was published by 'Stampa Sera' - the Turin evening paper owned by FIAT. It shows armed Communist Party goon squads going on a raid, into Turin University, during a national day-of-mobilisation by students. They have gone there to beat up comrades! The local CP complained that La Stampa was becoming a branch of Lotta Continua! They were very angry that the photos were published. The demonstration, although banned, was a great success for the students. It was headed by 500 workers behind a banner saying: "No to the Christian Democrat/Communist Party Government!"

● The section that follows is called "The Events of Rome". This title is slightly misleading: the events happened to take place in Rome, but some of them were "national" events, like demonstrations etc. However, we have included them under that heading for the sake of convenience, and also because all the events reflected some of the specific problems and possibilities of Rome as a city.

THE EVENTS OF ROME



● Photo from Paris-Match: "Street-fighting in Rome. These Leftists have just set fire to a branch office of the neo-fascist MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano). They make their getaway before the police arrive."

SOME FACTS ABOUT ROME

Capital of Italy. Population something over 3 million. Centre of the Papacy. For the last 2,000 years (Roman Empire, Papacy and now as the capital of Italy) has produced very little wealth, but consumes a lot.

Majority of workers employed by the State and para-State organisations, bureaucratic and overinflated. Public servants cannot be sacked (by law), and work 8.00am to 2.00pm Monday to Saturday: many try to get second jobs in the afternoon to supplement meagre pay.

The city's population is also swollen by large numbers of immigrants from the South, living in "dormitory suburbs" (very few facilities) and living (thousands of them) in shanty towns, while building speculators (the Vatican's men are prominent) keep thousands of flats empty, to raise prices. Many of the homeless have organised mass squats, but these often lead to pitched battles with the police (as San Basilio in 1974).

Some factories around the outskirts: their workers do have political weight. But none employ more than 3,000. Most people not employed in the public sector work in the building industry (declining slightly) and service industries. Also, 18,000 employed by the University - the biggest single employer in Rome and the largest University in the world (200,000 students).

Italian students, if of poor parents and out-of-town, can get a £330 pa grant. In Rome some live in halls of residence, but most have to hunt for rooms, up to £50 per month per room. The University teaches very little. Rather it sets many exams and tests, leading perhaps to a degree. A degree is no guarantee of a job, as the unemployment stands at present.

In Italy a crucial fact is that jobs are scarce - and are divided into two types - "guaranteed" and "non-guaranteed". The "guaranteed" job is either a State job (as above) or with a large company, perhaps as a factory worker. Such jobs earn about £200 a month, and carry 1 month's paid holiday, medical insurance, pension rights, double wages in December and sometimes in July (known as the 13th and 14th months). There are laws enforcing all these conditions, and also strictly covering the conditions in which you can be sacked: a victory of workers' struggles over the years.

"Non-guaranteed" jobs are those in small workplaces, non-industrial units, home-workers etc etc, where the Trade Unions have not bothered to organise. Wages and conditions are terrible (eg a lawyer's receptionist gets £10 per 40-hour week). This situation gets worse as you go further South.

Many students, on low grants, are forced to take "non-guaranteed" jobs (not being able to work full-time). They exist in precarious jobs, competing for jobs with others equally desperate.

The Movement that we describe in this pamphlet is clearly centred on this student body, and on the non-guaranteed workers, who found in the University mass meetings (especially when the University was occupied in Rome) a rallying point to which they could flock, to escape their isolation and fragmentation. Interestingly, among those who identify with the Movement are also small but significant numbers of workers from the State sector, like teachers, hospital workers, local government workers and even bank workers (who have a 200-strong revolutionary collective in Rome alone). This is probably because these sectors do not have a very long Trade Union history behind them, and they are feeling the effects of increasing mechanisation, fragmentation, alienation etc, as service sector jobs are increasingly being rationalised.

ROME UNIVERSITY

Leftist in the lions' den

From GEORGE ARMSTRONG: Rome, February 17

THE ITALIAN Communist Party sent one of its most powerful and popular leaders, Signor Luciano Lama, into the lions' den this morning. He escaped unhurt but 29 or more people were injured, some of them seriously, in the ensuing battle among spectators at the gladiatorial event.

The scene was the campus of the Rome University, one of nine Italian universities which recently have fallen into the hands of left-wing groups which call themselves "autonomous." That adjective is virtually all that is known about them (and it may prove to be a false label, aptly applied).

They claim to be autonomous of the Italian Communist Party and they regard the present arrangement between the Christian Democrats and the Communists as a betrayal.

The "autonomous" groups have paralysed most activities

in the universities and have caused much material damage. Laboratory equipment has been stolen. They say that they are opposed to the Government's decision that university students must continue to take exams to qualify for a degree.

This morning the Communists sent Signor Lama to the Rome University to try and convince the youths there (some of whom may even be students) that his party was the best friend the workers and students ever had.

The party sent along many hundreds of its faithful to keep order and to protect the orator, who spoke from the platform of a lorry. There were catcalls and jeers, a few stones were thrown and some cans of paint, but Signor Lama was allowed to finish.

As he left the arena, his driver was struck by a stone and the two opposing forces within the university grounds—the imported Communist youths and the current occupiers—found themselves alone on the stage and face to face. One stone was launched and then another.

The "autonomous" groups began demolishing the improvised speaker's platform and overturning cars to form barricades. The police remained outside, but it is not unlikely that they will be asked to evict the left-wingers from the university buildings.

The trade unions and the Communist and Socialist parties are not going to take this act of "hooliganism" lightly, and there could be serious repercussions. The Cabinet is to meet tomorrow to discuss new measures for maintaining public order.

The measures were meant to be against the neo-Fascists who have been committing political and common crimes, including kidnapping as a new source of revenue. During tomorrow's Cabinet meeting public order could include guaranteeing the personal safety and freedom of speech of Communist Party leaders.

● Our first account of the events of Rome during 1977, is the story of when the Communist Party's Luciano Lama was kicked off the campus of Rome University when he came to "give a lecture" to the students.

As usual, the Guardian's George Armstrong gets it wrong (see left): Mr Lama is a CP member, and in no sense a 'Leftist'.

● THE BACKGROUND

On February 1st 1977 100 Fascists invaded the campus of Rome University. They shot at comrades who had gathered there to protest against Malfatti's anti-progressive education reform bill. Two people were wounded - one seriously, with a bullet in his head. The Faculty of Letters was occupied in protest.

The next day, thousands of students responded with a mass demonstration outside the branch office of the MSI (Italian neo-Fascist party) near Termini station. The police open fire with sub-machine guns. No Fascist had been arrested for the invasion of the University. One cop was wounded by police cross-fire, and 4 comrades also were wounded (two seriously).

All across the country a wave of occupations begins in colleges and universities. The Rome University occupation was held by thousands of students and workers in precarious jobs. They were protesting against Malfatti's Bill, against the Fascist shootings etc. Slowly they were joined by other faculties up and down the country - Palermo, Bari, Milano, Turin, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Pisa, Cagliari and Naples. High-school students also mobilised in a show of strength not seen for some time. There is a sense of a mass movement, the first mass movement since the General Election of June 20th 1976. This movement is new in its creativity, its energy and its new forms.

UP AGAINST THE STATE AND THE CP

The Government chose to keep quiet - speaking only with the voice of the sub-machine gun! In fact Malfatti and Andreotti seemed to be waiting for the CP to act, to restore order. (In fact the CP has produced an Education Reform Bill which is not much different from Malfatti's - another reason why the students are so much against the CP). This was perhaps the first real test-bed of the CP's Law'n'Order capabilities.

The Communist Party publications attacked the University occupations. Order must be restored. The CP will not accept this new movement, but sets itself actively in opposition to it. There were, of course, a few dissident voices inside the CP, against this approach - but they were not the ones that won the day.

The Faculties were occupied; the whole walled campus was a "no-go area", with comrades standing at the gates, stopping and frisking all who entered; large student demonstrations were taking place (eg 20,000 marched in Rome on February 9th).....and the CP decided to act.

On February 15th a group of CP militants organised an "expedition" to the University, to "re-establish order" - a stupid, arrogant move, which was resisted by the students. The CP militants provoked a scuffle with the students guarding the occupied University gates. The comrades observe that, having failed to find a mass base in the University, the CP now returns to the tactics of Czechoslovak renown.

Two days later, February 17th, Mr Luciano Lama, a top Union boss and a member of the Communist Party, enters Rome University to "talk sense" to the students, accompanied by a couple of hundred CP strong-arm heavies and many shop stewards hastily summoned from the factories at the last minute to "defend the University which is occupied by Fascists."

A comrade who was present at the meeting has given this account:-

● MR LAMA GOES TO COLLEGE

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

"During the days and nights of the Occupation, the entire University seemed to be a continuous people's party and people's forum. There were continuing and endless debates in the various Commissions (the counter-information commission, the factory-and-community commission, the teaching-methods commission, the women's commission). There were also the (often stormy) general assemblies, where the movement decided its policies.

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

"Inside, there was a flowering of freedom of expression. Anyone who had anything to say wrote out a large-letter wall-poster, Chinese-style, and stuck it up on a wall. Others then wrote their comments on the poster itself, or put up a counter-poster. The walls themselves were covered with writings, some serious, some polemical, many just zany.

"Fringe and experimental theatre groups came in and performed on the lawn in front of the Faculty of Letters. The women danced ring-a-roses, and many comrades from the South rediscovered their traditional dances....tarantellas were danced, to the accompaniment of guitars and accordions, with a zest that was rarely seen even in their home towns....in particular the women, who were here freeing themselves from traditional patriarchal oppression by organising

in sisterly feminist solidarity.

"The Government and the CP decided that enough was enough. The University was made for studying and not for having fun or for conducting political struggle. So it was decided to send Luciano Lama in.

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

"Lama came in at about 9.00am, on a lorry which was to be his platform, and which was equipped with a powerful loudspeaker system . He was accompanied by his 200 CP heavies (with Trade Union "stewards" cards pinned to their jackets) and about 2,000 shop stewards and workers, hastily called to the University by the Unions, to "liberate it from the Fascists".



Faculty Occupied! Down with the University Barons - the Red ones, the White ones, the Black ones & the Spotted ones!

In the large open area of the Campus where he was to speak, Lama found another platform already rigged up, with a dummy of himself on it (complete with his famous pipe). There was a big red cut-out of a Valentine's heart, with a slogan punning his name - "Nessuno L'Ama" (Lama Nobody...or Nobody Loves Him).

Around this platform there was a band of Metropolitan Indians. As Lama started to speak, they began chanting: "Sacrifices, Sacrifices, We Want Sacrifices!" "Build us More Churches and Fewer Houses!" (Italy has more churches than any other European country, and a chronic housing shortage). "We demand to work harder and earn less!"

"This irony rather aggravated the humourless CP heavies. About 10,000 comrades and students gathered. The Autonomists started to put on their masks. Tension mounted.

"It would be hard to say which side threw the first stone. Certainly there was pushing and shoving and exchanges of insults which led up to it. Violence soon broke out between the Autonomists on the one hand and the CP heavies on the other. Bricks, stones and bottles flew through the air. At one point some CP heavies turned a fire extinguisher on the crowd. I saw a comrade with blood running down his head being led into the Faculty of Letters for first aid. Some Communist Party members received treatment in hospital (the non-PCI wounded could not go to hospital for fear of arrest).

"But the vast majority of those present, both workers and students, did not take part in the fighting. They stood around in groups, and discussed. I met some shop stewards from an engineering factory. One said that Lama was basically 'asking for it'....he had come to the University provocatively, to 'pour water on the fire'. Another steward corrected him: 'Not water - petrol!' Other workers were complaining that the Unions had been very high-handed in just ringing them up and telling them to come to the University, without any explanation or discussion of the whys and wherefores. Comparison was also made with the way the Union leadership had concluded some recent negotiations (unfavourably for the workers). 'First they sign the agreement, and then they expect us to approve it. They damn well ought to consult us first!' A middle-aged cleaning lady, who worked at the University Teaching Hospital (a badly paid and overworked category; also an Autonomist stronghold) was heard to say: "They ought to shoot him in the mouth, they ought!" A Communist Party worker tried to tell her that violence was not the way to do things, and a group of people clustered round them, joining in the argument.

"A woman, a member of the Communist Party, told me: "These Autonomists

really are Fascists - they have beaten workers (ie CP heavies), and that I can never accept." Another girl, who had taken her University degree three years before and had been unable to find any work other than a few temporary stand-in teaching jobs, was hopping mad - a CP heavy had just spat on her, calling her "Feminist.....cock-sucking Autonomist".

"After an hour or so, Lama and the CP heavies retreated outside the University, and all the windows of his lorry were smashed to little bits. The Autonomists ran after them, and then climbed up on the gates. Insults were exchanged over the railings, with each side calling the other: "Fascists! Fascists!" (This is a really deadly insult on the Italian Left, and will usually start a fight).

"During the afternoon, then, the riot-police moved into the Campus, and cleared out all the occupiers - who left by a secondary entrance. As the police went in through the gates, about 1,000 Communist Party militants stood outside and clapped and cheered. The following day, I heard that a young CP lady lecturer in sociology at the University had remarked:

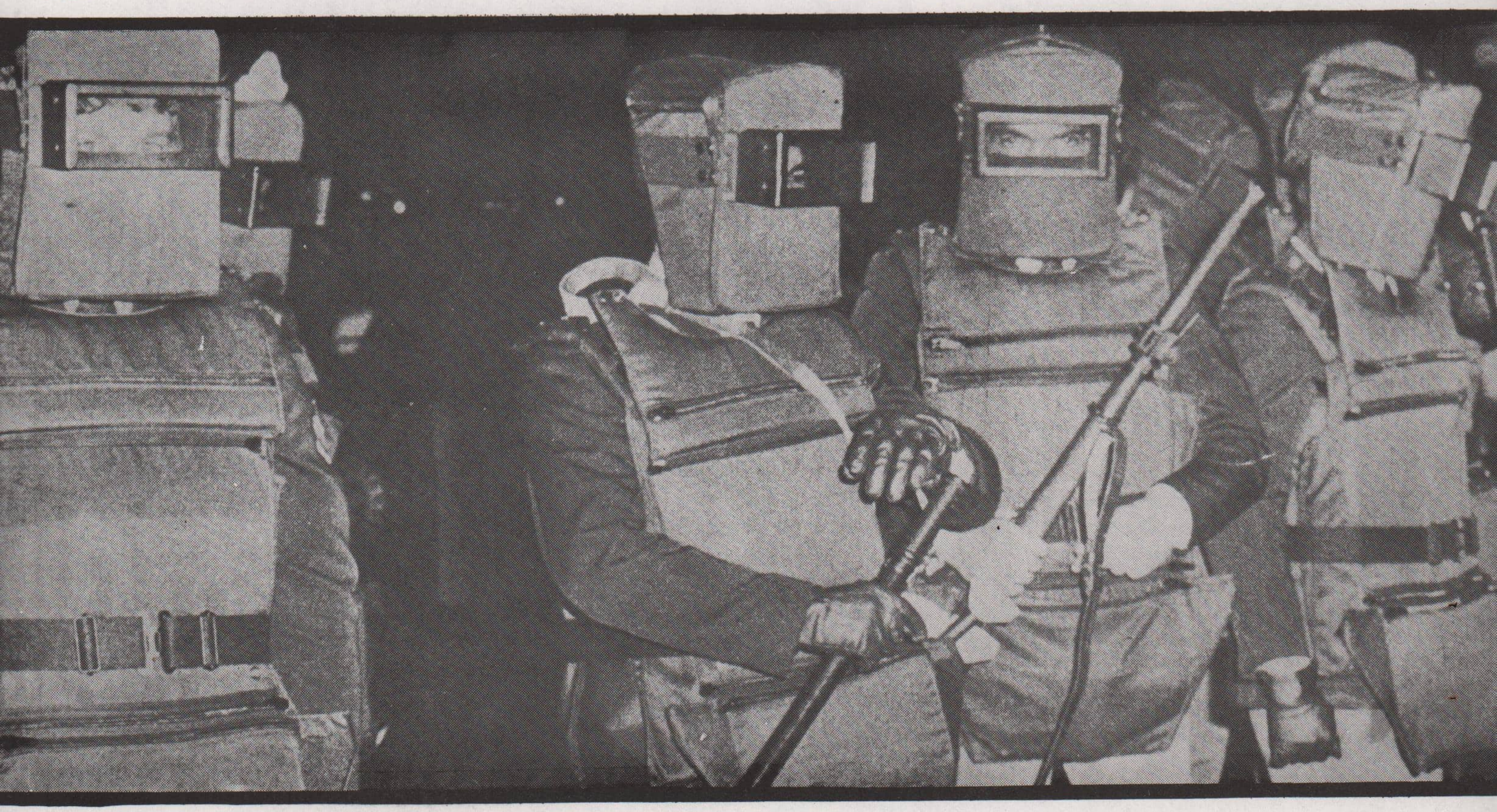
> 'I think the police were quite right to clear the University. After all, there weren't any real students in there, only hippies, queers and people from the slum-districts'.

The whole operation was dubbed "Little Prague" by the students. It revealed the repressive (and no longer reformist) face of PCI revisionism."

●THE POLICE

The gentlemen pictured here are not Daleks. They are Italian policemen dressed up in bullet-proof gear, protecting the central Headquarters of the Communist Party of Italy,in Rome. We thought that a note about the Italian police would be appropriate at this point.

The Public Security (PS - Pubblica Sicurezza) are the ones dressed in two-tone blue - dark blue jackets and light blue trousers. There are between 80,000-100,000 of them, stationed in barracks all over Italy in the 94 provincial capitals, as well as in the local Commissariats. They come under the Ministry of the Interior, and this means that on the local level they are under the command of the government-appointed Prefect, and not of the locally-elected Town Council or Mayor.



They have riot battalions (all PS have to do a spell of duty in these), called "Celerini". These were set up by the DC minister Scelba, who used them in the 1950s to shoot up landless peasants in the South who were trying to take over the land. The riot battalions carry a transparent plastic shield, Roman-style, with the word Polizia across it.

They are recruited mainly from poor families in the South. Recently they have been trying to organise in order to form a trade union, which at present is forbidden because they are legally a military corps.

The Carabinieri are more or less the same numbers as the PS. They wear black uniforms in winter and beige in summer, with a white bandolier across from the shoulder. Technically they are military police, under the Ministry of Defence. They are stationed in all villages and every borough in the cities, and are heavily screened for loyalty. On riot duty they don't use shields, but wear a long, heavy mitten on the left hand as a defensive/offensive weapon. Both PS and Carabinieri have been sent in against demos, or to clear out squatters etc - ie on openly repressive public duties.

Other police include the Finance Guards (finanzieri) under the Minister of Finance, the Forestry Corps (forestali), the Animal-Loving Guards (guardie zoofile!). All the above corps of police carry guns. At all times. Also there are the Traffic Police (vigili urbani) under command, ultimately, of the local mayor.

If you get lost in an Italian town, it is inadvisable to ask a policeman, because (a) he probably doesn't know, himself, having been born and bred somewhere else (the rulers wisely transfer them to other areas where it is unlikely they will wind up repressing relatives, old schoolmates etc), (b) it just isn't done, and (c) he'll probably arrest you as a dangerous foreign agitator

● MASS DEMO BY THE MOVEMENT

● There were 2,000 police and carabinieri involved in the University eviction, using clubs and teargas. Dozens of comrades were injured in the process. At that moment, Rome University had the eyes of the world on it.

Later in the day there was a huge meeting, where it was decided to hold a mass demonstration the next day. Our account of the demo is translated from Lotta Continua, Feb.20th 1977.

ROME: A HUGE MARCH OF WORKERS, STUDENTS, WOMEN AND THE UNEMPLOYED. AGAINST THIS "GOVERNMENT BY ABSTENTION".

Rome. February 19th. Tens of thousands of comrades set off from Piazza Esedra, in broad, flowing ranks that number even more than the big march on February 9th.

The banner at the head of the march reads "No to the Abstentionist Government" (so-called because the Government can only survive in Parliament because of the abstention of the Communist Party). The students march in formation behind the various Faculty-banners, or the banners of the very many high schools that are present.

Together with the regular slogans of the working class movement, others were heard: "They've kicked us out of the University, so now we'll take over the City!"...."Pecchioli, Cossiga, Imbeciles!" (Pecchioli is a particularly reactionary CP leader, and Cossiga is Minister of the Interior)...."The real provocateur is the State machine!" (the so-called "corpi separati" - separate bodies - like the army, the police and the State bureaucracy are supposed to be controlled by Parliament, but in fact are autonomous from it, and answer

only to the centres of economic power).

The vast majority of the slogans are directed against the Government. On the pavements crowds of people stand watching the march. Thousands of leaflets are handed out, informing everyone of the decisions taken by the Assembly of students in struggle. The police must get out of the University! Let's prepare a national demonstration of students in struggle! Down with the Special Laws....Down with the Andreotti Government!

The entrance to Via delle Botteghe Oscure, where the Communist Party national headquarters are, is heavily guarded by 200 riot police with bullet-proof jackets and helmets, and inside the CP building stands the entire heavy squad (servizio d'ordine) of the Communist Party.

The most frequently-shouted slogan of the march was for a national general strike against the "abstentionist government".

- The same issue of Lotta Continua discussed the role of the Communist Party in the events of Rome, and tried to put them into perspective.

THE STRENGTH IS THERE!

The stakes are very high. The Communist Party now wants to treat the whole of Italy in the same way it treated Reggio Calabria six years ago (when tanks and army troops were sent in to quell that town's rebellion, which was fascist-led, but motivated by the need for jobs). The CP wants to make out that the class opposition that is emerging, is a "manifestation of the new Fascism". (At the gates of the University they were lined up with the police, shouting: "Fascists, Blackshirts, Your place is in the Cemetery!" against the students). They are quite out of their minds. They are meeting a mass movement head-on, with open provocation. There is more than one piece of evidence that they have gone off their heads, and have reached the point of doing and saying things that have never been said or done before. But their insane talk will have great difficulty finding an audience: this has already been shown in the factories, and even among the non-CP trade union officials, when the Party tried to put forward their shameful proposal for a "strike against the extremists".

You could imagine that you're hearing the voice of the KGB thundering against the "dissent" movement in the USSR. Only this time what they are attacking is a mass movement, not just of students, but of thousands and thousands of young people who are jobless. This is a movement which is reacting with organisation and struggle, against a regime that is devastating our social life, and is forcing unemployment and poverty on us. And the Communist Party says that we are MAD - because they have no other way of understanding anyone who opposes the Social Contract regime, who resists that attack on our wages and the level of unemployment.

This Government - and everybody knows it - is an Andreotti-Berlinguer Government - the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats. And where is the CP in this?

Lama no longer goes to speak at workers' meetings, for the simple reason that he's now more at home meeting with Dr Carli and the Christian Democrat ministers. Lama no longer makes speeches to the students - but only <u>against</u> the students. Anyway, they're not even speeches - they're punitive expeditions, with all the regular trimmings of the CP's goon squad tactics, and unprecedented provocations, so that they can hand us over to the police and to a blood-sucking Government.

And the CP is also supporting the moves on the Special Laws on Public Order. Let's spell it out. They want to outlaw any organised opposition to this regime. They want to destroy even further the ravaged fabric of democratic freedoms. The Government has just announced an "anti-terrorist" decree, so-

called, which gives the forces of law and order unprecedented powers against the organisations of the revolutionary Left and against the mass organisations in the struggle. It is this situation that we must now face - and we can be sure that the same rigorous sanctions won't be enforced against the Fascists!



●LETTER TO COSSIGA

● After the events at Rome University, Minister of the Interior Cossiga appeared on Television to say that he would be stepping up the repression against the new movement. The Metropolitan Indians wrote a letter to Cossiga, to take up his war-like language. We translate it from Lotta Continua Feb.22nd 1977.

Dear Big Chief Paleface Minister,

Hail Paleface of Teutonic design. How happy we were to see you on the Magic Box. Your forked tongue hissed wondrously; and your metallic voice spat Poison on the human tribe. You said:

> "We are telling these gentlemen that we will not allow the University to become a hide-out for Metropolitan Indians, freaks and hippies. We are determined to use what they call the forms of repression, and what I call the democratic forms of law and order."

We continued to stare in silence at the Magic Box. Our silence contained all the Hatred that the human tribe can muster against your Vile Brood, all the Hatred that hundreds of thousands of young people from the ghettoes of the inhuman Metropolis will howl against a Monstrous Society that tells us to swallow our suffering.

But "swallow your suffering" are words that only exist in your language, in your putrid social relations, in your eyes that are lifeless and without humanity.

No, Minister Kossiga, we will never "swallow"!

BECAUSE OUR WILL TO LIVE IS STRONGER THAN YOUR THIRST FOR DEATH. BECAUSE, IN THE BRIGHT COLOURS OF OUR WARPAINT WE WEAR THE RED OF THE BLOOD OF HUNDREDS OF COMRADES, OF YOUNG PEOPLE MURDERED IN THE STREETS BY YOUR "DEMOCRATIC" LAW AND ORDER, MURDERED BY HEROIN IN THE DESPERATION OF THE GHETTOES, AND MURDERED AT POLICE ROAD-BLOCKS JUST BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T HAVE A LICENCE FOR A MOPED!

You have built the Reservation for us, and now you want to chase us back into it, into the ghettoes of marginalisation and despair. No more is this possible! Because it is precisely out of the ghettoes that our Rebellion has exploded. Today Human Beings have found themselves again, have found their strength, their joy of collective living, their anger, and their thirst for communism.

Your police-goons, dressed up like Martians, have chased us out of the University. They thought they could smash our dream, our desire to transform ourselves and transform the world. But you have not understood. Your Tin Brains can only think up hunger, repression, violence, special laws and death. You have not understood that you will Never Again be able to destroy us. Because our anger and our imagination howl more loudly than your thirst for vengeance!

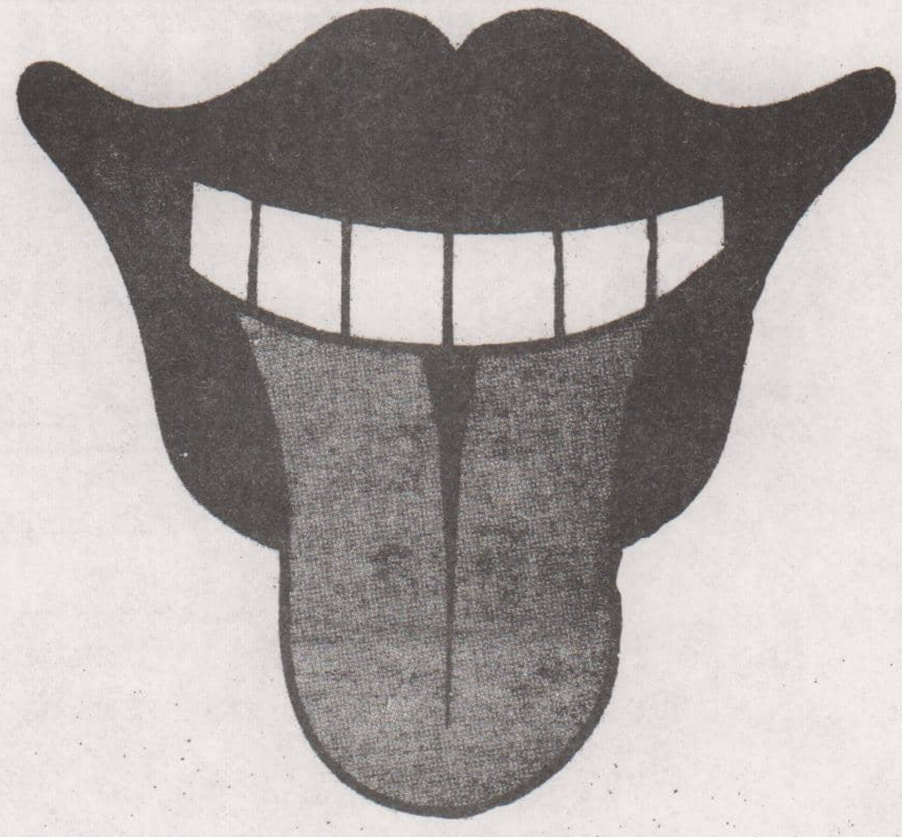
Minister Kossiga, we accept your Declaration of War, so that the battle may be turned into a War for the total defeat of your Vile Brood.

As long as the grass grows on the Earth, as long as the Sun warms our bodies, as long as the Water bathes us and the Wind blows through our hair, WE WILL NEVER AGAIN BURY THE TOMAHAWK OF WAR!

The Metropolitan Indians of North Rome

— Siamo belli, siamo tanti, siamo covi saltellanti (saltando).
— Covo qui, covo là, cova tutta la città.
— Oggi siamo qui, domani siamo là, il nostro covo è tutta la città.
— 100 poliziotti in ogni facoltà, tutto l'esercito all'università.
— Gastronomia operaia, cannibalizzazione, forchette, coltelli, magnamoce er padrone.
— Vogliam lavoro, nero, nero, nero, vogliam lavoro nero per il padron (sull'aria di « Sei diventata nera »).
— Lavorare è poco femminile, vogliamo solo macchine da cucire.
— Fare figli è bello e rallegrante, unisce la famiglia e questo è l'importante.
— Che è 'sta puttanata della liberazione, PCI dacci ancora più oppressione.
— Oggi è solo primavera, tremate, tremate arriverà l'estate.
— Piatti, piatti, piatti da lavare, non è femminile lavorare.
— (Passa un elicottero della polizia) Non bastan gli elicotteri, non bastano i blindati, vogliamo, vogliamo i carri armati.
— Viva viva la DC, carri armati anche qui.
— Sacrifici, sacrifici!
— (davanti al SdO del PCI, in ginocchio) Fioretti, fioretti, pagheremo caro, pagheremo tutto, il movimento deve essere distrutto (battendoci sul petto).
— Lama star, Lama star, i sacrifici vogliamo far (sull'aria di Jesus Christ superstar).
— Non c'è disfatta, non c'è sconfitta senza il grande partito comunista.
— Gramsci, Togliatti, Longo, Berlinguer: che cazzo c'entra il primo con l'altri tre!
— Lama, il popolo ti ama (alzando le mani benedicenti come Paolo VI).
— Macché lotta di classe, macché rivoluzione, l'unica via è l'astensione
— Siamo del PCI, siam della FGCI, scendiamo in piazza solo con la DC, con gli estremisti no, scendere non si può! Ce l'ha vietato Berlinguer (sull'aria di una canzone di Carosello).
— Le radio libere sono provocazione: tutto il potere alla televisione.
— Le radio libere sono un'illusione: l'unica informazione è la televisione (e poi ritmato) TG 1, TG 1.
— La polizia che spara non si tocca, vi freghe-remo tutti: ci spareremo in bocca.
— Poliziotto, t'hanno fregato: licenza di sparare ma niente carro armato.
— I carabinieri sono solo biricchini, siamo noi i veri assassini.
— Operai, studenti, per voi non c'è domani; ci sono i sindacati metropolitani.
— Sacrificarsi è bello, liberarsi è brutto, siamo donne, subiamo tutto.
— Al contadino non far sapere, quanto è buono l'uranio con le pere.
— Abbiamo preso poche botte da bambini, per questo ora siamo tutti assassini.
— Siamo provocatori, siamo teppisti, Lama e Cossiga sono i veri comunisti.
— Facce da criminali, facce da delinquenti, è questo il movimento degli studenti (sceneggiando).
— Meno case popolari, più centrali nucleari.
— Argan, Argan, sei sempre in Vatican.
— Portare l'attacco al cuore del papato, tutto il potere al chierichetto armato.
— E'aumentato il pane? Nooo! E' aumentata la benzina? Nooo! Sono aumentati i salari? Siii! Stiamo troppo bene, stiamo troppo bene (sull'aria delle canzoni dell'asilo).
— Gui e Tanassi sono intelligenti, siamo noi i veri déficenti.
— Or' che buoni siamo stati, possiamo parlare coi sindacati.

SOME OF THE SLOGANS



LIBERATE LE
VOSTRE LINGUE
USATELE PER AMARE
NON Per leccare il culo
ai Vostri padroni

These, dear Reader, are some of the slogans conjured up by the Movement during 1977. It would take an encyclopaedia to translate them all. Some of them are translated on page 112 - the rest we will leave to you. Except for the one above, which means: "Liberate Your Tongues! Use them for Making Love - Not for Licking the Boss's Arse!"

Questa poesia era scritta su un cartello portato da un operaio allo sciopero di venerdì a Taranto

Andreotti, dolce amore,
stai togliendo le 200 ore.

Se... questo ti grada,
toglici anche la paga.

Se vuoi fare le cose con coscienza,
toglici pure la contingenza.

Se vuoi fare le cose serie,
toglici le ferie.

Però ricordati che quando avrai finito,
farai la fine di Benito.

MARCH 12TH DEMO

In a sense it is wrong to call the articles in this section 'The Events of Rome', since some of them are national events which simply focussed on Rome. However, we have made this distinction for reasons of simplicity. One such event was the national demonstration of March 12th, described here. March 12th saw a demonstration of thousands and thousands of people against the austerity policies of the Government (the joint policies of the DC and PCI), and against the repression, whose recent escalation had ended in the killing of comrade Lorusso the previous day. It's important to understand the importance of this demo: it marked a mass movement of opposition to the DC/PCI policies; it showed a compact presence of the Women's Movement on the streets; and it marked new (and unprecedented) heights in the use of the militarised police forces against the opposition movement in Italy. Our translation is from Lotta Continua, March 13-14th 1977.

OVER 100,000 COMRADES FROM ALL OVER ITALY - IN AN ENORMOUS MARCH THROUGH THE STREETS OF ROME - A MURDEROUS GOVERNMENT SEEKS WAR AGAIN.

The Police Attack the Demonstration in front of the Christian Democrat Headquarters. The Comrades Fight Off the Provocation and the March Continues.

This one-party Government, this party of thieves and criminals has declared open warfare against the biggest popular movement of this phase of the struggle. Open War is their answer to the biggest mass demonstration of recent years.

Mr Cossiga - Minister of the Interior, who will soon come to the same end as his colleagues Gui and Tanassi (Trans.Note: incriminated for taking bribes from Lockheed) is moving quite openly to the coup d'etat method. He is abolishing one after another all the main constitutional liberties (first and foremost the freedom to demonstrate), and has gone so far as to demand the intervention of the Army against the students - a provocation without precedent in Italy since cannons were used against Milanese workers in 1898. (t.n. He asked, but it didn't happen).

Today's demonstration in Rome is a show of force by those who oppose this Government of austerity and sacrifices. It matches the impressive size and creativity of the movement which has shaken the whole country in recent months, beginning with the universities and the schools. It matches the anger and the consciousness of hundreds of thousands of revolutionaries all over Italy, who have responded to the Government's criminal escalation of violence - from the wounding of Lonardo and Daddo, to the savage sentence on the anti-Fascist Panzieri, to the murder of comrade Lorusso. A response which is shaking the power of this Government to its core...A response which started from the expulsion of the revisionist 'normalisers' of the PCI out of Rome University in February...A response which is now challenging the "political stability" of a Government which is the worst Italy has seen since the days of Tambroni (t.n. who led a Fascist-supported DC Government that was toppled by street-fighting in 1960), but which has been able to put through its plans thanks to the "understanding attitude" of the Communist Party of Italy.

Over 100,000 comrades came out onto the streets against this Government of sacrifices. In other cities all over Italy - from Milan to Iglesias in Sardinia - there have been large demonstrations this morning. In Bologna in particular, the young proletarian masses have shown their disdain for the calls-to-order of the PCI. This has been an extraordinary show of force,

which the Government has understood for what it was - a demonstration of the total incompatibility between the proletarian masses and the Government's policy of anti-proletarian offensive.

The first big armed provocation against the march (leaving aside the initial provocation of banning the route chosen by the students) took place, predictably, in Piazza del Gesù, where the Christian Democrats have their national headquarters. The Christian Democrats are ready for anything. Those who imagine that the decision to incriminate Gui and Tanassi might have had a "stabilising" effect on the DC might have considered this fact. Now that Mr Rumor has been saved as well (t.n. ex-Prime Minister, also involved in the Lockheed bribery), the DC want to have their cake and eat it. They are confident in the support of the PCI (which is, anyway, well down the slippery slope), and they are hurling an open challenge at the proletariat, using the most risky resources of class warfare.

The Rome demonstration has shown the proletarians in struggle quite ready to accept this challenge. The fact that the march dealt with the provocation, got itself reorganised, and then set off again promptly, is the first among many defeats for an anti-proletarian 'Minister of Internal War', whose proper place is in prison, firmly behind bars.

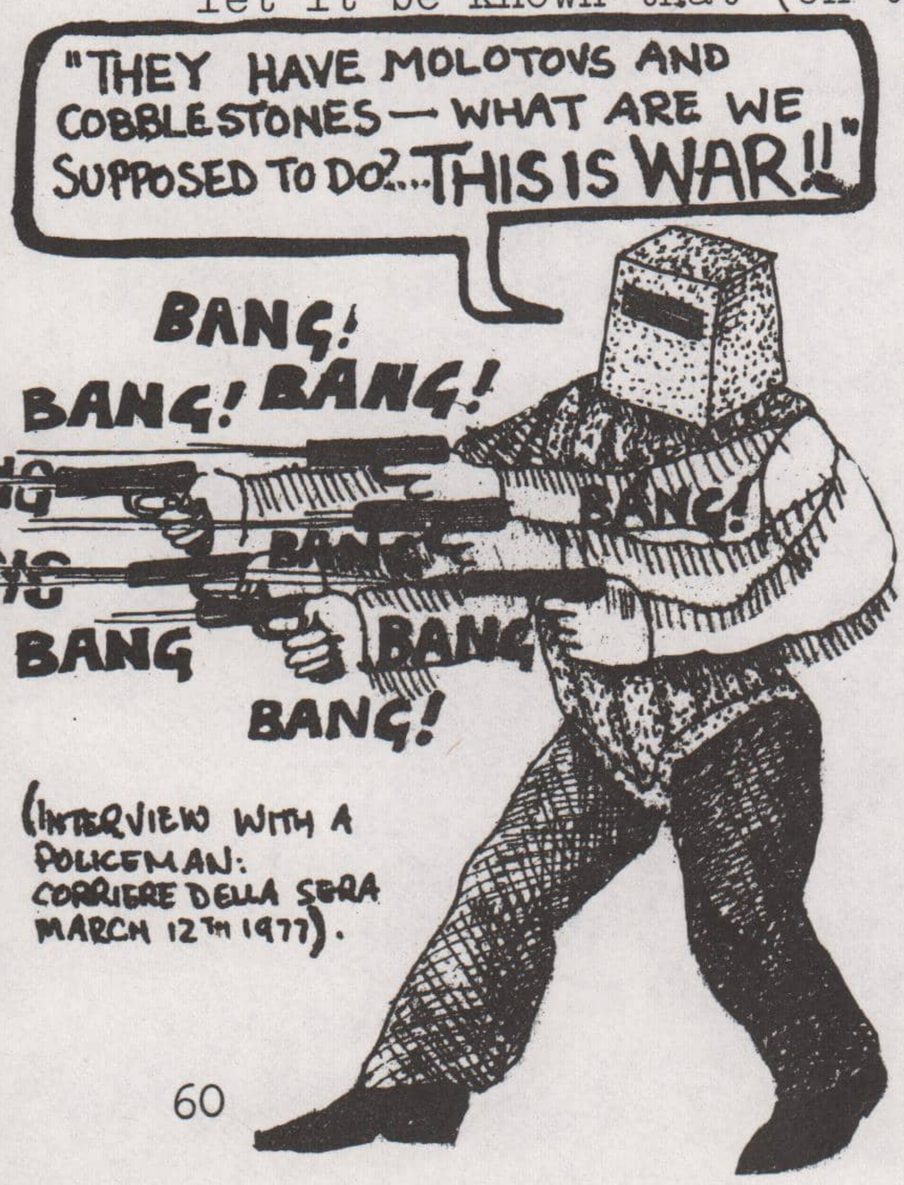
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AN HOUR BY HOUR, MINUTE BY MINUTE ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS OF MARCH 12th.

• That last article gave a freely-translated account of the background and importance of the March 12th demo. Now we print the diary of the days events, from phone calls etc received by the Lotta Continua newspaper.

4.15pm: A soldier comrade calls us from a barracks in Rome: "Here we are on pre-alert till Monday. The Captain is receiving orders every 15 minutes. We're ready to move off with a motorised column. We are a small barracks, but I have news that this is happening in every barracks in Rome."

4.30pm: Piazza Esedra and Piazza della Repubblica are filled with comrades. The head of the march is forming up, in front of the Magistero Faculty. A strong and militant squad of march-stewards is drawn up at the exit to Via Nazionale. Further down, the road is blocked by two police armoured cars. The Carabinieri have been withdrawn from sight of the march, but the police let it be known that (on the Minister's orders) the only permissible route is through Via Cavour. There are negotiations. Magri, Corvisieri and Mimmo Pinto (Democrazia Proletaria MPs) negotiate with the authorities, watched over by delegations of comrades. The tension is very high. The journalists have gone away.



5.00pm: The march moves off, towards the beginning of Via Cavour, the only exit allowed. There are at least 50,000 comrades, male and female. More than 10,000 of these have come from other parts of Italy - delegations from Naples, Bari, Sicily, Milan, Turin, Bologna etc.

5.00pm: We phone the Ministry of the Interior to see if there is any official motivation behind the ban on Via Nazionale. There is none.

5.20pm: Comrades from Radio Pesaro inform us: they have learnt that the "Padova Battalion" of riot

police has arrived in Bologna, and wants to clear out the University before nightfall. They confirm the State of Alert in barracks all over Italy....

5.25pm: Radio Pesaro phones to tell us that the police invasion of Bologna University has begun. Clouds of tear gas hide the sky.

5.30pm: The march sets off down Via Cavour, tight, compact and determined. An angry march. The comrades from Bologna, who are at the head of the march, shout: "Bologna is Red - With Francesco's Blood" (t.n. Bologna used to be called 'red' because it was administered by the Communist Party).

There is no sector of the march that does not show the same anger and determination. The police let it be known that they will not allow the march to pass through Piazza Venezia. They want to send it through the avenues flanking the Tiber to arrive at Piazza del Popolo. The march-stewards are tight and compact all along the sides of the demonstration.

The march is preceded by a lorry of the Carabinieri, and by mobile radio jeeps and police armoured cars. They inform us that squads of Finance Guards are also present, armed with sub-machine guns.

5.30pm: From a Press Agency we learn that 5 comrades were arrested as the march was starting, for carrying offensive weapons (they were gathering cobble-stones).

5.40pm: The comrades who work in the Feltrinelli Bookshop phone us to report the provocative initiative taken by the Shopkeepers' Association, which yesterday invited all the shops in the historic City Centre to close down for the duration of the demonstration. The workers at Feltrinelli stayed open, to protest against the manoeuvres of the Association, and to show solidarity with the demonstration of the students.

There is a very substantial section of the march consisting of women only. (see below). The women comrades are shouting: "You'll pay for everything!" The comrades march past the occupied houses in Via Cavour.

5.58pm: While the head of the march is entering Corso Vittorio, a moment of uncertainty by the comrades in Piazza del Gesù unleashes the police attack. Unexpectedly, the teargas grenades start flying. One part of the march is near Via delle Botteghe Oscure (t.n. where the Communist Party have their national HQ: see photo p.56); another part has dispersed through Largo Arenula, where the comrades start to organise in self-defence. The majority of the march is in Piazza Venezia.

6.00pm: A phone call from Piazza Esedra: Thousands of comrades are still waiting to begin the march. The delegations from the North and the South, and the Rome comrades at the rear of the march, are still waiting to go through Santa Maria Maggiore. There are delegations from all over Italy - students, hospital workers, the building workers collective from Augusta, Italsider steel workers from Naples, the factory council of Italtrafo in Naples, the Committees of the Unemployed.....There are more than 100,000 ready to face, if necessary, Cossiga's violence.

6.10pm: In Piazza Venezia the clashes were very heavy. Firearms were used. The comrades are still dispersed. Visibility in the square (t.n. the equivalent of Piccadilly Circus) is reduced to zero, owing to the teargas. Until a few minutes ago it was pouring with rain. The presence of the Finance Guards is confirmed: they were standing guard in Via Nazionale (where the Bank of Italy is). Thousands and thousands of comrades are taking part in the march, shouting slogans. There is a very large participation by Rome high-school students.

6.30pm: The tail end of the march is now passing peacefully through Santa Maria Maggiore.

6.30pm: Two women comrades arrive at the editorial office of our newspaper: it was the women's section of the march that bore the full fury of the police charge before arriving at Piazza del Gesù. There is fighting on Garibaldi Bridge. (t.n. see below).

6.35pm: The bulk of the march has arrived at Piazza Venezia, an hour and a half after it set off, and has reached the bank of the Tiber, heading for Piazza del Popolo. The head of the march, which was attacked, is rejoining the main body of the march, through the narrow side-streets. The march is still enormous - the biggest seen in Rome in recent years.

6.50pm: The march proceeds compact. It has arrived at Mazzini Bridge. The tail end has now finished marching through Via Cavour. "Cossiga Hangman!" is the slogan that unites everyone, as well as the slogans about Francesco's murder by the Carabinieri, and demands for the freedom of Panzieri. One piece of news which we hope will not be confirmed, concerns a comrade seriously wounded in the head by a teargas grenade in Largo Arenula.

7.00pm: The head of the march, now re-organised, has arrived in Piazza del Popolo. The sector of feminist comrades, who have also succeeded in reorganising, has arrived too. They wait for the bulk of the march, which is still coming up along the banks of the Tiber.

7.10pm: As we go to press, we learn of fighting in front of the Ministry of Justice. The police have opened fire again.

End.

• THE MILITARY ALERT

• Lotta Continua newspaper published information on the military forces that were put on State of Alert during the demonstration of March 12th, and the subsequent regional general strike of March 23rd. The Rome Coordinating Committee of Democratic Soldiers, which collected this information, put out a Press statement, condemning the growing use of the Armed Forces in public order duties. We print the details of March 12th:-

THE MILITARY ALERT OF MARCH 12th 1977

Gandin Grenadiers Barracks:

.All day March 12th and March 13th the entire barracks was mobilised until 12.30, with all leave cancelled. Eleven M113 tanks, 12 CM tanks, and one pick-up lorry were ready to go out, with their crews at the ready and Browning machine guns in place. All the men were in camouflage battle dress, with gas-masks.

Smeca Barracks: Ordinary Armed Patrols (PAOs) of 54 men, on alert till midnight of the 12th. Total cancellation of all leave. At 11.30 came the order to move out. The order was withdrawn after 30 minutes. The entire barracks on alert.

Ruffo Barracks:

PAO of 60 armed men, on alert. All leave cancelled. Twelve M113 tanks ready to go out, with machine guns, radios and crews.

Macao Barracks:

PAO of 90 men, gas masks, automatic Garand rifles with loaders, arms and ammunition being brought in. MG machine guns mounted on the roof, aimed at Castro Pretorio (an area of Rome near the University). Corporals issued with pistols (in the Army, corporals do not carry pistols).

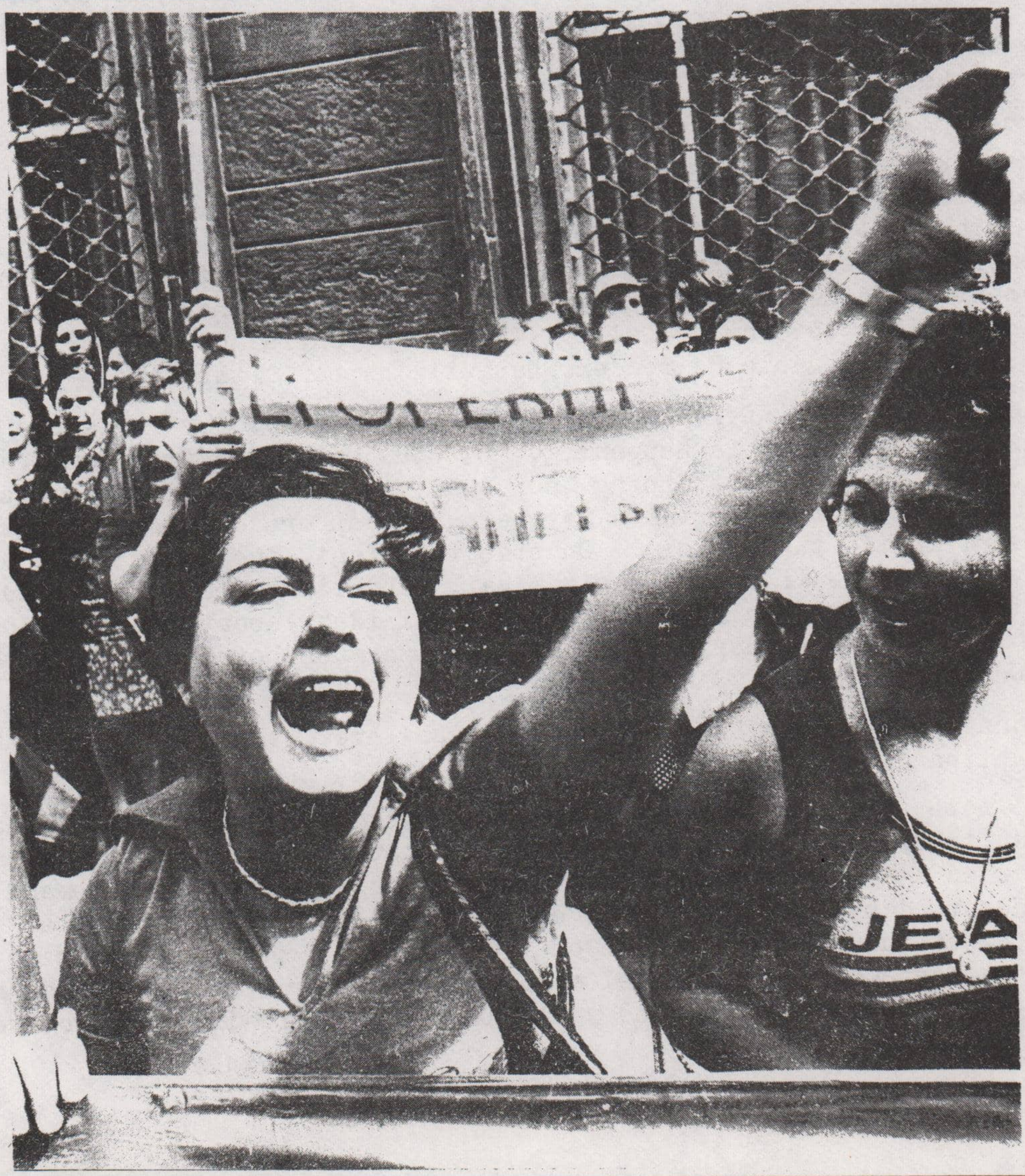
Note: the function of the PAO is to act outside the barracks.

•THE SISTERS SPEAK

•| Some feminist comrades tell of their experiences during the demo of March 12th. Translated from Lotta Continua, March 16th.

"When we arrived in Piazza Venezia, we stopped. The police lines were closing off one road on one side; and on the other side of Piazza del Gesù the thick fumes of teargas told us that the head of the march had been attacked. It was only a matter of minutes. At that point, in fact, we were at the head of thousands of comrades, coming up behind us. We closed our ranks and marched forward, with arms linked, shouting: "Against the Violence of the Police! Women - Shout it Aloud! The Streets are Ours!" That was the moment when, more than at any other time, I felt how strong we were, and felt the security of holding hands with comrades like myself, who, together, shouted out their anger and their determination not to let themselves be scared and be overpowered. And it was the moment in which - even though it was the first charge that attempted to break up the march - I was not at all afraid....."

"When I got to Piazza Venezia, I was swept away by the riot police who were charging down from Via del Corso, and I got cut off....so all I could do was run away. When I stopped running, I felt so frustrated, and I hated myself for being afraid. Maybe, I thought, if I had had something to defend myself with, I would have stayed on. But what...and how could I have used it? I only know one thing for sure....I want to carry on going to demonstrations....."



'The Students Should Come to the Factory Gates'

• Lotta Continua, March 17th 1977, published a page of interviews with FIAT workers, about the student movement and the events of Rome and Bologna.

Question: What kind of discussion is there in the factory, about the students' struggles and the events of the last few days?

1st Worker: In general, people are very uninformed. The workers get their news from the papers, the radio, the telly etc. They are bombarded every day by the bosses' propaganda. And L'Unità (t.n: the PCI paper) is certainly no exception to this - in fact, on some questions it's even heavier than the other papers.

There are different positions in the factory. On the whole there's a positive attitude towards the students' struggles, even if the workers do have questions which they aren't able to answer. There isn't a clear idea of what the students want, what their problems really are, or where they want to get to. The student demand that most impresses workers is the demand for jobs. But often, to get a discussion going, it's necessary to make a distinction between the initiatives of the mass of the students, and the initiatives of certain groups, like the Autonomists, who make serious political mistakes. As regards Cossiga's measures, people don't have a clear idea of them, and they're badly informed.

The anti-crime campaign is probably the one that has the most effect on workers. If someone starts saying we need order and tranquillity, he will usually get a hearing. In general, with regard to Friday's mass rally by the workers, there is a general feeling that the students ought to come along and participate.

2nd Worker: There was a lot of criticism of the response to the killing of comrade Lorusso in Bologna. Criticism of those who break windows, or who burn cars belonging to people who've got nothing to do with it, is very sharp. People can see no connection between this and the struggle against the Government. Another question which even I don't know how to answer is what happens if this Government falls. There's a general desire for it to be brought down, but people do wonder what will happen afterwards.

3rd Worker: There are many different opinions in the factory. There is the feeling that something big is happening. But Sunday's news from Rome (about the demo) didn't succeed in stopping the usual talk about Sunday's football matches. Outside the factory there may be an atmosphere of panic, but this is not present inside the factory. Outside the plant, the other day I met a pensioner who asked me if this was civil war. There's a feeling of security in the factory - but not so many clear political ideas about the political situation. On the whole people don't distinguish much between the Autonomists and the students.

2nd Worker: I don't agree. On the whole, at a mass level, the workers do make this distinction.

3rd Worker: The more politicised workers certainly make a distinction, and say that it's quite right to rebel with violence, that it's unjust for so many to study for so many years and then not have a job to go to. The demand for jobs is understood by everyone. This doesn't mean that there's a clear understanding of the characteristics of the movement - where it wants to go, what it's forms of struggle are, etc. A PCI worker (not one of the highly regimented ones, though) said to us yesterday: "Lotta Continua and Potere

Operaio were better in '69 because they were closer to the working class movement." The closely-regimented PCI members say that the students are against the workers. Not many workers believe this, but some of them are wondering why the students don't seek closer links with the factories. What worries me is that the mass of the workers may underestimate the importance of what is happening. It would be very dangerous. The situation could escalate and we would be insufficiently prepared for it.

2nd Worker: It is quite true that the students are isolated to a certain extent. The students must take the initiative to break that isolation, and come to the workers' rally on Friday. It is possible to unite on the problems of unemployment and the struggle against the Government. The students must organise counter-information. They must explain clearly their demands and what they want. In this way they can contribute to solving problems that the workers pose, not only to the students, but also to themselves. There is a feeling in the factory: "All this is going on outside, and we're not doing anything". The Trade Union bosses are worried about Friday. They know that the Friday strike will be a moment of generalisation of the struggle. This is something dangerous for the Union. It doesn't have control over the student movement - but neither does it have control over the workers. The Union will do all it can to control or hamstring the student movement. The students must be ready for this and act accordingly.

Question: In your opinions, what are the responsibilities of the vanguard workers, as regards the present and future situation inside the factories?

4th Worker: At present there are no vanguard workers - or if they do exist, they are very weak, representative bodies, factory coordinating bodies etc. The students must seek contact with the masses of the workers. Counter-information is an important first step. It can be useful to break the conspiracy of silence that the Unions and the Communist Party are trying to impose on the factories. What's more, it's the only way to oppose the way the Unions are trying to present themselves to the students as the sole real representatives of the workers.

3rd Worker: After what happened to Lama in Rome**the workers understood very clearly. Many approved of his being kicked out of the University. They said: "He wanted to do to the students what he's done to the workers. They were quite right to boot him out." After the recent events of Rome and Bologna, however, people are more confused.

2nd Worker: Inside the factory, on the whole, people talk more about what happens inside than about what happens outside. For example, lately people have been talking more about the worker who killed a foreman, maybe even more than about what happened in Bologna and Rome.

4th Worker: It should be said that the newspapers do all they can to not talk about the tension that there is in the factory. There was a lot of tension in last Friday's shop-floor marches. (t.n: In Italian factories, when there's a strike, the workers often march around the various departments winkling out scabs and blacklegs, including white-collar scabs). The papers are always talking about the Autonomists, but they don't talk about the foremen who got beaten up in the Body Plant and in the Press Shop during the strike. Or about the internal marches. Or about the fact that the CISNAL (t.n: = fascist union) office got burnt down in the Press Shop. In this case it certainly wasn't the Autonomists who did it!

1st Worker: I think that at present there is tension among the politically conscious workers, but it hasn't reached the mass yet. Sure, the strikes are a success. FIAT is afraid of the situation escalating. Indeed it even tries to avoid the situations of confrontation - for example, FIAT is not organising blacklegs at the moment.

** See pages 51-57

4th Worker: There is a difference between the tension that existed during the strikes against Andreotti's Budget, and what there was in the strikes over the factory dispute. Then there was a much more fighting spirit - now it's mainly grumbling.

3rd Worker: A lot of people are angry with the PCI for its abstentionist policy in Parliament. They're also angry with the Unions, which continue to make gifts to the Government. In this period the Union certainly hasn't regained any credibility. The question that the workers ask the students is: "Where are you heading for?" It's the same question that workers are asking themselves.

Question: How can the relationship between students and workers be developed in this situation?

1st Worker: I think that, as has already been demonstrated, the centralised coordinating bodies between workers and students are not very helpful or productive in this situation. There is no harm in having them, but it's essential to develop coordination on a local and a factory level.

3rd Worker: It is essential to defeat the Unions' attempt to make themselves the main channel of relations with the students. What have the Unions done so far, so as to break the isolation of the students? Nothing! Before Lama went to speak at Rome University, he used to hold Union courses on "students", without understanding a thing about them. The Unions and the PCI have underestimated the force of the students. The Unions did not call the workers and the students to struggle against Education Minister Malfatti's Education Bill and against the Government. It is intolerable that they should blame the students for being isolated, when the Unions haven't done a thing to break that isolation. And this is no accident. It's a careful political calculation. It's designed to keep the Andreotti Government in power.

1st Worker: I can hardly overstate the importance, that today it is of decisive importance that the students should come en masse to the factory gates to talk to the workers.

2nd Worker: I think that, today, the students ought to take on general political responsibilities. The proposals presented to the Student Assemblies by the Autonomists must be defeated. It's no accident that the Autonomists do not pose the problem of building a relationship with the workers. They've talked so much about the armed struggle that they've forgotten what strikes are for.

2nd Worker: It is of decisive importance that the students must seek a mass relationship with the workers. The struggle today must move to the factories. The students can do a lot in this direction, even if, obviously, it must be the workers who will take on the responsibility for this task.

End.

IRONY: MARCH 23RD

A massive rally, called by the Trade Unions, with the Communist Party's Luciano Lama as a star speaker..... This took place in Piazza San Giovanni, in Rome. It was the occasion where the fullest use of irony came out, in dozens of inventive slogans against the DC/PCI alliance. The Trade Union stewards tried to keep the students and young people out of the main square, but their message breached the barrier and left its indelible mark. On page 58 we have printed some of the slogans that were invented by the Movement and were used at this demo (most of them untranslatable!)

Our account of the demonstration, below, is taken from Lotta Continua, March 24th 1977.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND MR LAMA STAND NAKED, EXPOSED TO THE IRONY OF 25,000 COMRADES - 100,000 PEOPLE WATCH AND UNDERSTAND.

The Students March Past, and a Hundred Thousand Workers Crane their Necks to Catch a Glimpse of Them.

To sum up: the students today held a march which was short, but "sharp". A great pity that the 100,000 people in Piazza San Giovanni couldn't see them! They were carefully isolated from the marchers by dozens of cordons made up of the usual demo-stewards from the Trade Union Confederation. By the time the demo was over, a lot of comrades were very hoarse: dozens of new slogans had been created, very neatly aggravating everyone who had chosen to make a stand against this movement (everyone from the police in their helicopters to Mr Lama who was speaking).

Today the scene had been set by Cossiga - a trap, first to isolate, and then to strike a blow at "student subversion". We were to see the results of his campaign of hysteria against the students.

Over 25,000 comrades had assembled and marched down Via Merulana. Some were marching with linked arms; some were dancing down the street ring-a-roses style; some even marched in arrow formation (the Metropolitan Indians). Most of them were University students, but the strike had also emptied the high schools, and the march also contained the organised unemployed, bank workers, public sector workers, thousands of whom had decided to follow the political line of the Movement, and came on its march. Some even had PCI membership cards!

The march arrived at Piazza San Giovanni. It was 10.30am - and here was the first effect of Cossiga's campaign....all the prejudice against students and young people that pour out daily from the pages of "L'Unità" (the CP daily)....the confrontation with the Trade Union stewards began, just as Luciano Lama was speaking....The stewards stood there, sternly, but eventually even the most thick-skinned must have realised that those who stood before them were not "700 savage Autonomists", but something else....the representatives of another social stratum, another conception of what politics is all about.

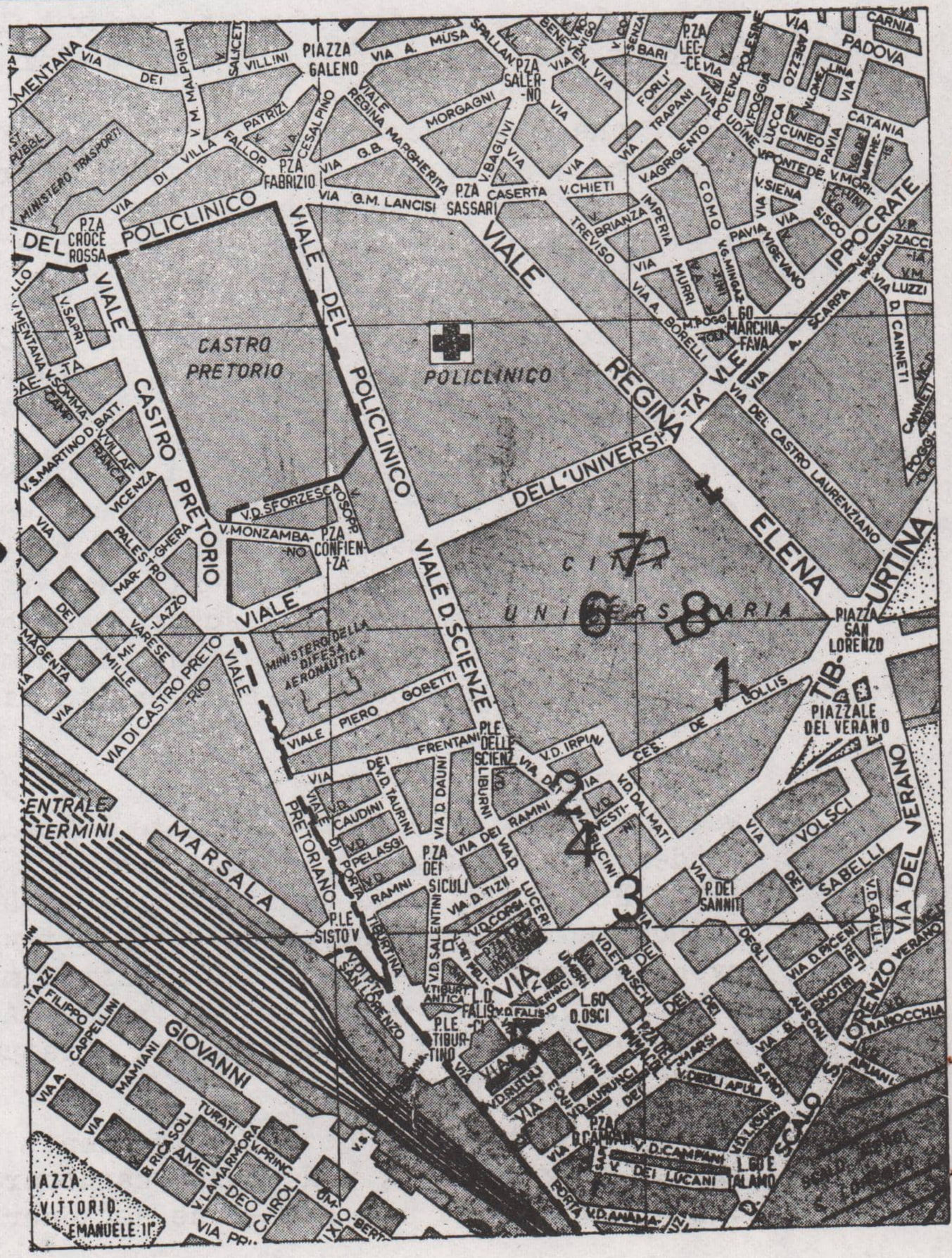
When they saw dozens of students kneeling on the ground before them (Lama, Forgive Us!), and waving cardboard model P.38 pistols at them, even the staunchest of the Lama-line defenders must have felt a little bit silly.

Meanwhile, in the main Square there was a growing curiosity of people, to get a glimpse of this march that the masses weren't supposed to see. Once again, curiosity and the desire to make contact with "the students" got the better of them. Some of the Engineering Union workers started shouting slogans against the PCI's abstention policy on the Government, and slogans for the release of the anti-Fascist Panzieri. Then they started shouting: "Workers, Students, Unemployed - Organised Together, We Shall Win!"

Now, the students did not take up this slogan. But it was only because they were getting stuck into irony and paradox - which was the distinctive new feature and tactic of this march. After all, it wasn't hard to do. All you had to do was take what was said from the Union platform and repeat it out loud, rhythmically, making it ridiculous.....This showed up the gap between those Union speakers and the mass movement.

So, the march went past, escorted by police in the street and police in the air - large numbers of them - who were applauded by the Trade Union stewards!

In that square something had happened. Two strata of society had stood face to face. But so had two different ways of thinking and making politics - and making marches. A lot of people liked the students' way of doing things - in fact, many PCI militants followed the students' march down to Piazza Santa Croce, where it ended with some street theatre, a lot of clowning about, and a lot of little speeches by comrades. The party continued all afternoon long, on the University campus. And Mr Cossiga's plans for "dealing with" the student subversives suffered ridicule and humiliation when the day's events turned out quite the opposite of what he had intended.



A Map showing the Surrounds of the University of Rome. (see the account on pages 73-5)

1. The campus gate.
2. The first barricade, of 3 buses.
3. The second barricade, of 1 bus.
4. The spot where policeman Passamonti fell.
5. HQ of the Autonomists, in via dei Volsci.
6. Piazzale della Minerva.
7. Law Faculty.
8. Letters Faculty.

CLAUDIA CAPUTI



Enough of violence against women!

17-year old Claudia Caputi had migrated to Rome, by herself. About a year ago she was gang-raped by a bunch of hoods. She recognised some of them, and denounced them to the authorities (an unusual step in Italy).

Recently she was gang-raped again, and razor-slashed all over her body, as a "warning", to make her not press the charges. The magistrate in charge of her case reacted in an amazing manner.

Our account is taken from Lotta Continua, April 3rd-4th 1977.

THE MAGISTRATES HAVE FOUND THE TRUE GUILTY PARTY - IT'S CLAUDIA!

The Rome magistracy have done nothing to arrest the rapists. They have done nothing to carry out investigations into the men who threatened Claudia (whom she has named). And now they are accusing Claudia of having made the whole thing up! She has horrible razor slashes all over her body, and they are calling it "simulation". All because the investigating magistrate finds it inconceivable that the women should have mobilised so quickly in Claudia's defence (10,000 mobilised within 6 hours of hearing the news of the attack). According to the magistrates, it must all have been arranged in advance! Claudia was in a hospital bed when the policeman came into her room, sent her comrades out of the room, and read the judge's statement to her. This new act of violence must not go unanswered.

The feminist movement is drawing up a Bill to be submitted to the women members of Parliament, which will give the movement the right to participate, as an interested party, in trials for violence against women. Meantime the trial of the rapists continues .....

THE WOMEN MOBILISE

- The following describes the mobilisation of women, in Rome, in support of Claudia.

Ten, fifteen, twenty thousand women....the exact figure doesn't matter. What we saw was that there were so many of us, and we were all prepared to take the struggle right through to the end.

The news of this umpteenth act of violence against Claudia arrived late in the **evening.** We mobilised at once, via chains of phone calls, and radio announcements via Radio Città Futura (the few channels of communication that the movement possesses today). Thousands of women poured onto the streets in a few hours, and there were many whom we were seeing for the first time. Many women who were no longer young, many from the proletarian parts of the city. So many of us wanted to come and shout our contempt, our anger, and we didn't want to be hampered with the usual kinds of problems - like where to leave the kids. And for the first time we were so strong that the men comrades, with the Radio CF broadcasts, publicly offered to look after the children - recognising that we were determined to handle the whole affair ourselves.

Our march started from Piazza San Giovanni, headed by the banner of the feminist collective of the Appio-Tuscolano neighbourhood (where Claudia lives), with the slogan: "Claudia is not afraid". We marched right through

the neighbourhood where she lives, and where her rapists live. The people on the balcony, the women who were clapping as they lined the street, were saying how right our (and their) demands were. Some hung banners out of their windows, with slogans thought up there and then - like "Woman is Beautiful". This confirmed for us, that the women in the area are fed up with the activities of these sordid males, and that they are sick and tired of being oppressed and of being cooped up in the home.

A platoon of the "Padova" crack riot-police battalion was drawn up across the entrance of the street that led to the Via Noto offices of the Fascist Party, to keep those thugs safe and sound.....but they were unable to stop thousands of women shouting "Murderers" to their face. A few males on the pavement who allowed themselves to snigger, got short shrift - a swift response which wiped the smile from their faces. And once again, the authorities played on the climate of terror that they have been creating in Rome in the last few weeks....so that shopkeepers were pulling down the steel blinds in front of their shops.

By the end of the march we felt satisfied - satisfied that we had been so many in number....feeling strong....but with a bitter taste in our mouths to think that Claudia's rapists, and the rapists of so many other women, are still at large and free from harassment.

THE QUESTION OF RAPE

An Italian sister has explained the situation to us: Unlike France, in Italy rape <u>is</u> a crime - so the women's movement has not had the problem of whether to ask for it to be made a crime. Recently in Italy there has been an increase in the number of rapes - and also in the number of women who declare that they have been raped. The legislation is incredible, though. Within 24 hours you've got to go to the police, get a doctor to examine you, and <u>prove</u> (!) that you have been raped. Rape in Italy is defined as complete sexual intercourse with violence (excluding rape with the hand). The penalty is 5 years, or so, jail - although up to 2 years ago the man could annul the crime by offering to marry.

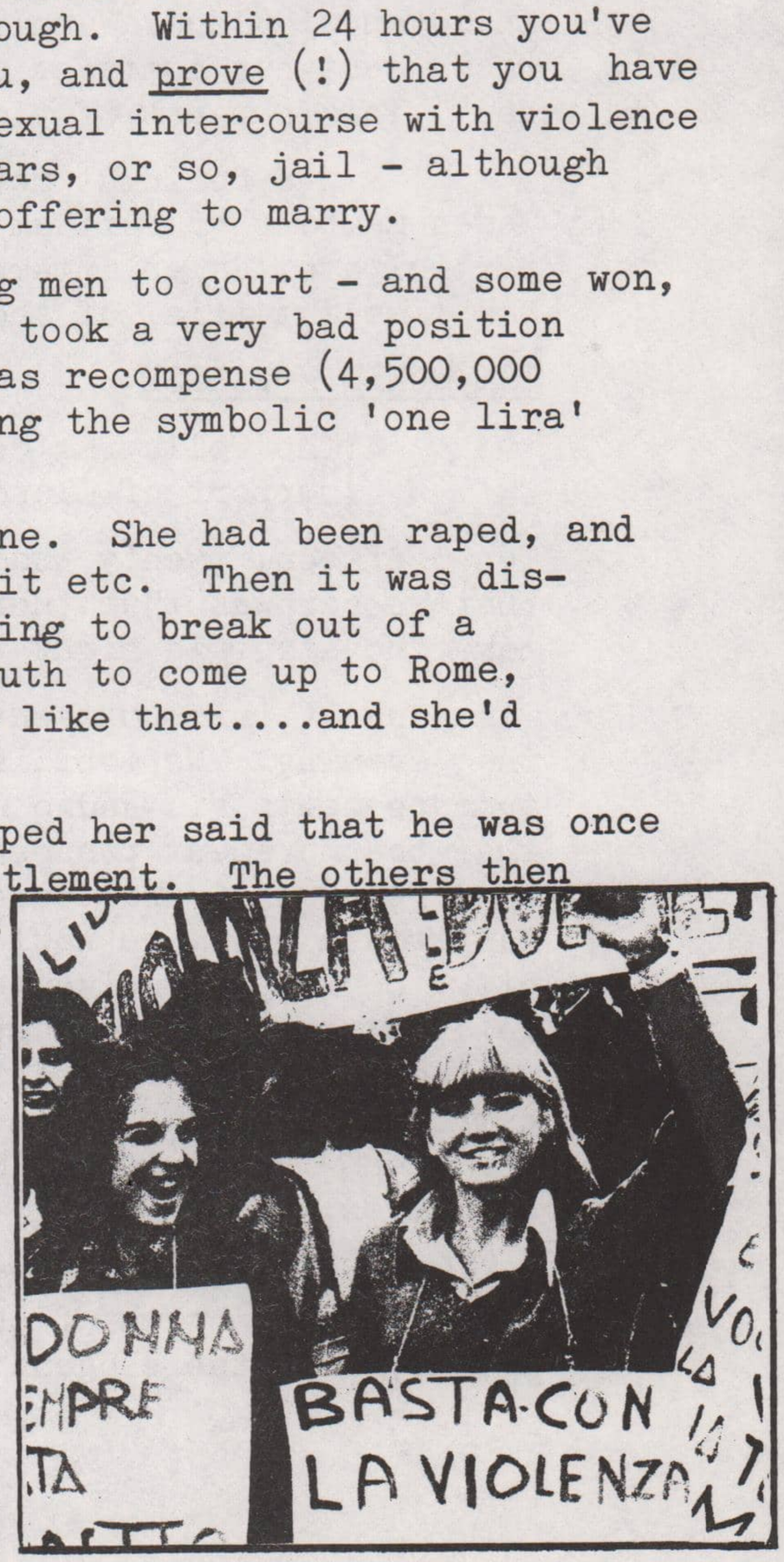
In 1976 there were quite a few cases of women taking men to court - and some won, while some didn't. The CP 'Union of Italian Women' took a very bad position in one case in Turin - namely they asked for money as recompense (4,500,000 lire, thus putting a price on rape) instead of asking the symbolic 'one lira' which everyone has asked for up till now.

The situation with Claudia Caputi was not an easy one. She had been raped, and she told a lot of false stories about who had done it etc. Then it was discovered that she had been raped because she was trying to break out of a prostitution racket. She'd left her home in the South to come up to Rome, following an advert for a baby-sitter, or something like that....and she'd wound up in this prostitution racket.

The trial was incredible - the man who had first raped her said that he was once her boyfriend - and therefore had some sort of entitlement. The others then argued that they had only followed suit....and this was accepted by the magistrate who said: "A woman lying in a field is like after a battle....What is a man supposed to do when he sees her lying there?"

It has now turned out that this magistrate was actually tied up with the same prostitution racket!

The whole trial has been very important, acting as a mobilising point for the women's movement, and bringing the question of rape right into the open.



POLICEMAN PASSAMONTI

Some people in Italy (including the Red Brigades and the Armed Proletarian Nuclei) believe that the time has come for armed struggle (eg the RB slogan about "carrying the attack to the heart of the State".) There are a growing number of (hotly debated) incidents in which Left-wing forces have made use of firearms.

The political discussion of these tactics came to a head after the events of April 21st in Rome, when the policeman Passamonti was killed.

A General Assembly of the students at Rome University had met to demand expulsion of the police who had been patrolling the campus since February. The Rector, with PCI backing, called in the police against the students (See the account on page 9).

Our account of the events of that day is taken from Lotta Continua, p.12, 23rd April 1977.

1.30pm: A few dozen comrades are on the University campus, waiting for the other students to arrive, for the mass meeting which is scheduled for 4.00pm. Unknown to them the Rector has called the police in.

2.30pm: Without any warning the police enter from the University gate in Viale Regina Margherita. The cops are behind armoured cars, which advance at walking speed. They pass in front of the Law Faculty. They evict people from there. Then they head towards the Letters Faculty, where about 150 comrades are grouped. As they advance, the police fire the first teargas grenades from about 50 yards distance. At this point the students head for the exit in Via De'Lollis (on the opposite side). Here they stop for about 10 minutes while the police enter the Faculty of Letters.

3.00pm: The students regroup in Piazza dei Sanniti, right by the University. Meanwhile some comrades build a barricade with 3 city buses, at the crossroads between Via De'Lollis and Via dei Marrucini, so as to guarantee themselves a retreat towards San Lorenzo (See Map, page 68). Other comrades start to arrive. They gather together and discuss what is to be done. Two small groups set off through the streets of the neighbourhood to inform the population of the police action at the University.

3.30pm: The comrades now number about 500. They decide to return to the gate in Via De'Lollis. There they face the police, who are lined up inside the campus, about 50 yards back from the gate.

After a few minutes the police fire off a volley of hundreds of teargas grenades against the comrades, at chest height. The comrades respond with a hail of stones. Many cops are now firing their pistols at the comrades. Two paper-bombs hurtle over in the police direction. The teargas has made the air unbreathable. You can't see a thing, the smoke is so thick.

By now there is shooting from both sides. An American journalist who was filming the scene with her crew, from behind police lines, is shot in the leg.

4.30pm approx: At the Via De'Lollis gate, the comrades have grown in number.

There are about a thousand of them. About 300 comrades have moved to Piazzale Del Verano, where, after a few baton-charges by the Carabinieri, they are dispersed. The other comrades move away from the gate in Via De'Lollis, because the teargas, the smoke and the shooting make it impractical to stay there. They move to the cross-roads between Via De'Lollis and Via Dei Marrucini. Other students are also arriving here, some having been pushed in this direction by the riot police. All the comrades gather round the barricades that had been built at 3 o'clock.

The police advance and pass beyond the 3-bus barricade. At the same time the comrades are forced to retreat towards Via Tiburtina, and to form another barricade with a bus at the junction between Via Dei Marrucini and Via Tiburtina. The police go back to the first barricade in order to reorganise, and, sheltering behind it, they continue to fire teargas grenades against the comrades.

There is a lull that lasts for about a quarter of an hour. Most of the comrades remain behind the barricade, while a hundred or so advance towards the police, drawing close towards the first barricade, which is now protecting the police.

Some Molotov cocktails are hurled against the buses. At this point the police come out from both sides of the barricade, firing teargas grenades and pistols.

The group of comrades who had advanced on the first barricade beat a hasty retreat. Some go back to the other barricade. Others stop behind parked cars on both sides of Via Dei Marrucini. From one of the groups sheltering behind a parked car, pistol shots are fired against the advancing platoon of police. Two policemen are felled. Other comrades sheltering behind the cars hear the shots, but do not realise what has happened.

Then the police fire becomes hellish and these comrades also run back to where the other comrades are grouped. There are about a thousand comrades gathered there, completely in the dark about the fact that a cop has been killed. Since it has started raining teargas grenades again, by the hundred, and continual firing is heard, these comrades retreat into Via Dei Sardi. Only when the shooting stops and the smoke lifts do the comrades realise that so many pistol shots have been fired, because the walls are pock-marked by bullet-holes. Meanwhile the police retreat, clearing away the first barricade, back to Piazzale delle Scienze.

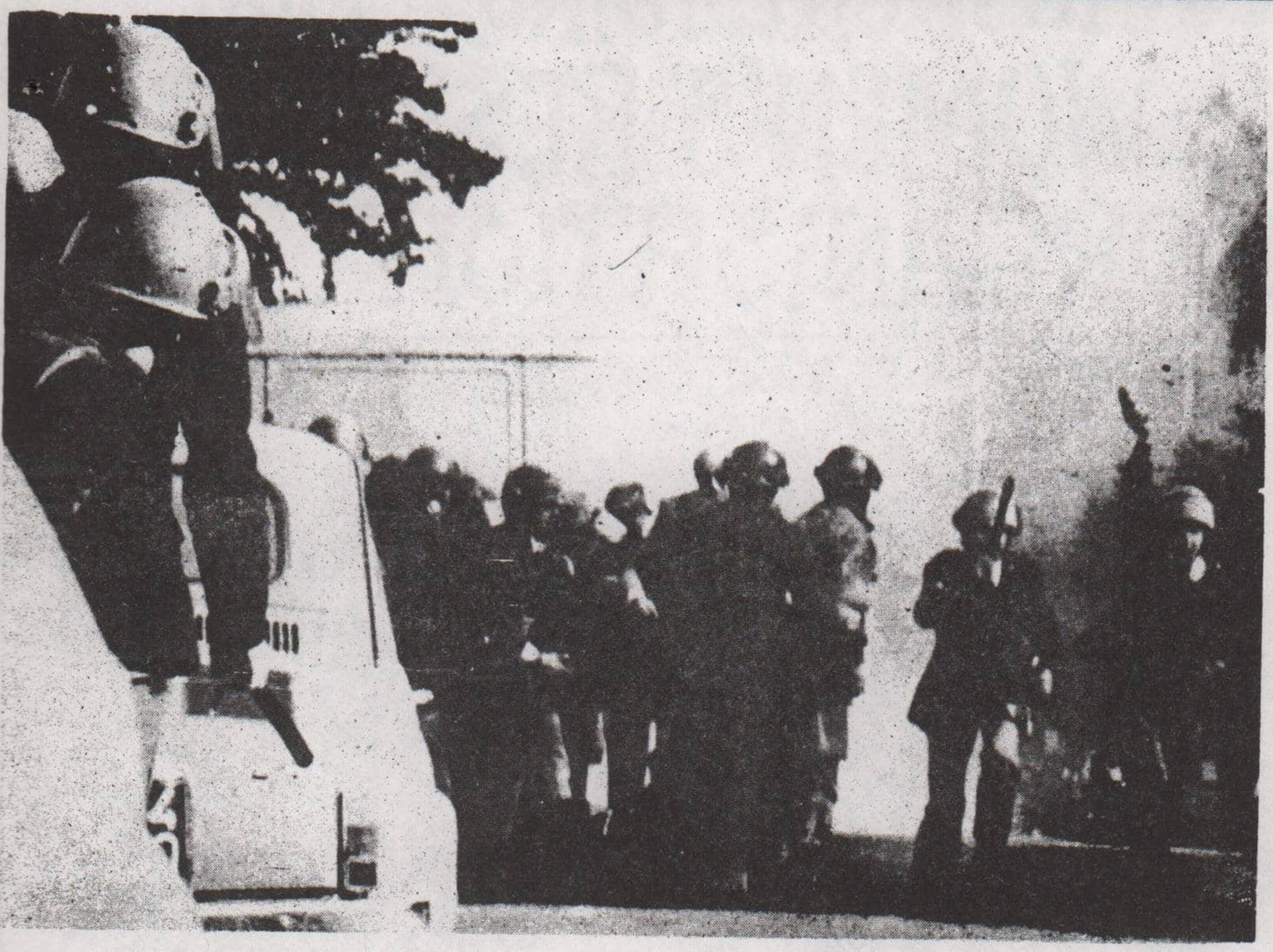
The comrades see that the police have retreated. They return to the cross-roads of Via Dei Marrucini and Via De'Lollis. Here they see the blood on the ground. They realise that something very serious has happened.

Only a little while later does the news arrive that a policeman has been killed. The comrades do not know what to do. They are very disorientated. They don't know quite how it happened. There are discussions to try and reconstruct the sequence of events.

The police are standing at Piazzale delle Scienze, and do not look as if they are about to make a move. The comrades are all clustered in groups, talking. Someone goes round with a megaphone asking everyone to regroup at the Architecture Faculty (in another part of the City), where a mass meeting will be held.

• At the Architecture Faculty meeting, a lot of the discussion hinged on the question of armed struggle. The following editorial from Lotta Continua (the day after) summarised one of the positions

DANGERS INSIDE THE MOVEMENT



●Police on the move: Rome, April 21st.

Lotta Continua Editorial: April 23rd 1977.

"The Rome students' mass meeting on Thursday evening showed that once again we are at a cross-roads. Either the movement is able to defend itself, giving itself effective decision-making bodies, to defend and enforce its own decisions primarily among its own participants, or it will head towards a split along its various political lines and components, and also towards a loss of its mass character, into regression and defeat....More than by police repression (...) the movement is threatened by its own weakness and by its internal contradictions.

This is why this problem must be given top priority in the movement's internal discussions at this time.

We must stress that the Government wanted to provoke the students, by hurling police, machine guns and armoured cars against the occupied Faculties, without even seeking a pretext. We must also stress (although this is no longer sufficient) the incredible behaviour of this Rector, calling in the police (...) and turning himself into a political hack, or a puppet of hacks, a yes-man of the parties, who give him orders by phone.

(...)

All this is secondary in the discussion inside the movement. For a very simple reason. Because the biggest danger to the movement is not that of being destroyed by its enemies, but of destroying itself.

The movement is being driven towards its self-destruction today by the theorisation of "armed struggle now", by the search for "higher levels" of struggle, by the constant contempt for the mass of comrades, as we see in the way these theories are translated into practice, in the mass meetings, in the demonstrations and in the streets.

It is possible to assert the movement's right to mass self-defence only on condition that the movement has the ability to defeat (and this means in practice, not only in discussions) positions inside itself which are adventurist and suicidal.

Thousands of young people have been in the forefront of the struggles of the last few months, and have reaped some very rich experiences. The issue now is to let these experiences bear fruit. We must prevent the line of those who think that Thursday's events represent the "necessary level" of the struggle, prevent it from obtaining the effect that (so far) neither the Government nor the revisionists have been able to obtain: namely, the suffocation of the mass initiative of the students which, over the last few days, has seen a fresh upsurge in towns all over Italy."



IN ITALY CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN ARE INCREASING - BUT SO ARE WOMEN'S RESISTANCE AND ORGANISATION.....



Rome, April 1977

Ecco la giustizia sulle donne

Roma - Cinquemila compagne manifestano sotto il tribunale alla seconda udienza del processo contro gli stupratori di Claudia. Il PM Dell'Anno, « invitato » dalla difesa, rifiuta di astenersi. Gli avvocati di Claudia e le femministe in aula abbandonano il tribunale. Una delegazione di donne impone alla TV di leggere ai telegiornali le motivazioni per cui si chiede l'astensione del PM. La polizia carica le donne che attendono la risposta davanti ai cancelli della RAI. Articoli a pagina 16.

GIORGINA MASI

May 12th 1977:
THE PICTURES THAT TELL IT ALL.



•Police provocateur, armed with a pistol, advances behind uniformed police.



●Plain clothes cop comes forward to beat Left-wing MP Mimmo Pinto, while he is held by a uniformed cop.



•●The infamous picture of the armed policeman dressed up to look like an Italian hippy - next to a plain clothes officer.

ITALY: CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRATS IN ALL-OUT ATTACK ON DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND WORKING CLASS LIVING STANDARDS. COMMUNIST PARTY PROVIDES COVER-UP FOR POLICE CRIMES AND CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT.

Rome, May 12th 1977

::::::Heavily armed police, flanked by the so-called "special squads" of long-haired, gun-toting cops in jeans masquerading as Left-wing demostrators, ran amok in Rome's historic city centre today.

::::::Peaceful, non-violent Radical Party (civil rights) members are savagely attacked. Bona fide journalists and photographers from bourgeois papers, and two Members of Parliament (1 Radical and 1 Democrazia Proletaria) are thrown to the ground and kicked by police shouting "Filthy pigs!" Passers-by, including elderly women, are assaulted and beaten up.

::::::Later in the afternoon the police open fire with pistols and rifles against unarmed demonstrators. A 19-year old school student, Giorgina Masi, feminist and Lotta Continua sympathiser, is shot dead and another girl is wounded by gunfire.

::::::Yet another comrade killed by the police!

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MAY 12th

May 12th 1977 was the third anniversary of the historic 60% victory of the referendum that defeated the attempt to abolish the right to divorce: the Christian Democrats had been isolated with the neo-fascist Social Movement (MSI) and soundly beaten by the popular vote.

Under Italian law, citizens have a constitutional right to collect signatures for the abolition of any law. If they collect 500,000 signatures in 3 months, a referendum must be held, in which the popular vote decides whether to keep or abolish the law in question. The Radical Party, Lotta Continua and the Movement of Workers for Socialism (MLS) had been collecting signatures under this law for 8 referendums to abolish 8 laws surviving from the Fascist era, including the Concordat between State and Church.

Minister of the Interior Kossiga (as he is now spelt) had imposed a ban on all

public demonstrations in Rome until May 31st. It was decided to defy the ban with a completely peaceful, non-violent signature-raising drive in Rome's central, picturesque Piazza Navona, on May 12th, to commemorate the divorce-referendum victory. Many democratic bourgeois personalities besides the Radicals (in particular Socialist Party leaders and Members of Parliament) declared their support for the initiative. But the Communist Party did not.

So Kossiga maintained his ban.....

●POLICE & P.C.I.

Police tactics during the afternoon were designed to widen the area of confusion and fighting as much as possible, so as to provoke an armed retaliation which would give the DC Government the pretext it needed to pass emergency laws - with the backing of the PCI. The aim would be to crush the present movement of students, marginal workers, unemployed etc completely, so that later they could attack the organised sections of the working class, dismantling those laws that still protect workers' rights: ie, prevent at all costs the formation of a united proletarian front....keep the divisions....defeat the anti-revisionist elements....and leave the PCI to control the rest.

The police tactics were confirmed completely by photographers who were at the scene. "Special squads" of police, illegally armed, and dressed casually as if they were demonstrators, acted as provocateurs.....masked provocateurs wearing (illegal) handkerchiefs to cover their faces were photographed standing next to uniformed riot police.....while the riot police themselves went berserk.

What needs to be said is that the Communist Party has backed the above strategy to the hilt. It is wrong to describe the PCI connivance with the DC as a "Historic Compromise" - a compromise, after all, involves conceding some points in exchange for certain gains. The present operation should be called a "Historic Sell-Out" of all political rights and economic advantages the working class has won in years of struggle - with nothing being gained in exchange. The list includes the right to demonstrate peacefully; the right to legal defence in a fair trial (3 lawyer comrades of the Red Help organisation have been arrested on trumped-up charges of "complicity with their clients"); the freedom to publish (Bertani, a comrade publisher, was arrested, and material that he intended to publish about the events of Bologna was confiscated - the material that we publish in this pamphlet); the right to participate in constitutional initiatives (such as the referendums); not to mention the right to live without being shot dead by police marksmen (maybe disguised as hippies.....One "hippy-cop" was heard asking his uniformed colleague "How are we to distinguish us from them?" It is likely that this is why they chose to shoot at two girls, for no policewomen were masquerading among the demonstrators).

These measures have gone hand in hand with others, of an economic nature. The cost-of-living sliding-scale allowance (included by law in all wage-packets) has been flattened; several annual public holidays have been abolished; price rises, closures and sackings continue unabated. All the PCI can mumble, is that these things are happening less quickly than they would otherwise. At the same time, however, the PCI leadership and apparatus actively promotes a witch-hunt for "Autonomist bandits" whenever it meets any resistance that is not purely verbal.

May 13th 1977

Demonstrations are held all over Italy to protest against the murder of Giorgina Masi. In Milan about 20 "Autonomists" leave a march and open fire on a police squad, killing one cop (he died a couple of days later). The Milan student movement immediately condemns this act as a provocation (two "Workers' Autonomy"

militants are beaten up by student militants) and even the leaders of the Milan "Workers' Autonomy" group dissociate themselves. (Days later 3,000 PCI cadres and bureaucrats attend the dead cop's funeral.

In Rome, during the afternoon, 4 local demonstrations are held in proletarian areas. Police attack two of these.

The PCI Central Committee issue statements attempting to confuse the issue, saying that Giorgina Masi died in "obscure circumstances" (implying that she might have been shot by comrades!!) and condemning the Radical Party initiative as "triggering or encouraging provocation and violence". "No defence," says the PCI, "must be accorded to these initiatives." What a wonderful institution the Italian Communist Party is!

May 14th 1977

Rome. A peaceful sit-in by about 10,000 comrades (with a strong feminist presence) on the spot where Giorgina fell, is violently dispersed by police baton-charges.

May 16th 1977

Rome. 5,000 attend Giorgina's funeral. In spite of hypocritical "mourning" notices pasted up on street walls, the PCI newspaper gave no indication of when or where the funeral would be hald, and no PCI delegation turned up for the event. Comrades refuse to carry PCI wreaths in the procession.

May 17th 1977

Rome. 3,000 Movement militants hold an assembly in the University to decide what to do on May 19th - a one-time public holiday, abolished by the Union-Government agreement. The majority votes to demand a suspension of the ban on demonstrations, and, if accorded, to hold at rally at San Paolo Gate (scene of violent PCI-backed anti-fascist battles against the police in 1960 - a point that comrades were at pains to stress!) If the ban was not suspended, a general People's Assembly would be held in the University. The minority, composed mainly of Autonomists, voted to go ahead with the demonstration at San Paolo Gate "in any event".

This would mean either going to be killed, or going armed. And since it was felt that working class opinion was not yet ready for armed conflict with the State, this proposal was defeated

May 18th 1977

Rome. The Autonomists call an Assembly of their own. About 1,000 attend. But nobody proposes going to San Paolo Gate, for they feel (and they are) isolated in the movement. They decide to gather at the Unemployment Office for a public meeting, and at the University Teaching Hospital (an Autonomist stronghold).

Senator Pecchioli, head of the Communist Party's "State Affairs Commission" made a public statement. He said:

> "The presence of plain-clothes policemen on public order duty during demonstrations is not only legitimate but also useful....a policeman on duty, even if he is in plain clothes, must not be unarmed....if he is recognised, he must be in a position to defend himself."

Cossiga, Minister of the Interior, had denied that any Special Squads were used on May 12th. Photographic evidence published by the mass circulation bourgeois daily Il Messagero showed he was lying. He said they were only armed with service pistols. More photos showed he was lying again. He said the police Special Squads did not use their arms. Dozens of witnesses testified that he was lying. What does the CP's Senator Pecchioli have to say about this....?

He said:

> "What does seem very necessary to me, on the political level, is that the Minister should draw the necessary conclusions from this regrettable episode."

Presumably this means that he should learn to lie more cleverly. And as regards "self-defence" against an unarmed schoolgirl, the autopsy shows that Giorgina was shot in the back.

May 19th 1977

Milan. 5.00am. Bombs explode on the Underground subway.

Milan. 6.00am. Police baton-charge against workers picketing the University teaching hospital. An ANSA (bourgeois news agency) reporter is beaten by the police. (DC-controlled radio station says he was beaten up by strikers!)

Rome. Unemployment Office and Teaching hospital are surrounded by police in full battle-gear. A humorous telegram is sent from the Movement to Kossiga: "...We are not holding any open-air demonstration today, so we will not be held responsible for any clashes that may take place between your "hippy-freak" cops and their ultra-armoured colleagues".

Thousands of armed cops surround the University in the afternoon, and stop, search, and identify all those who enter. 5,000 begin a general Assembly in the University. Comrades in the armed forces report a General Alert in Rome's Army barracks. Even tanks, apparently, were put on alert.

●The Pope Speaks

Finally, let's not leave the Church out of the picture. What did the Vatican have to say about the killing of Giorgina Masi? We quote from Vatican Radio on May 14th:

> "The ban on public demonstrations in Rome is certainly a limitation on democratic liberties, but it is legitimate, and, in present circumstances, more than justified....These people want to give a coup de grace to the State, which is on its knees, and when they see that the State still has the capacity to react, they cry "Police brutality" and try to pose as victims. It will be rather difficult for the ordinary citizen to feel pity for this sort of victim, if he has only once listened to their outrageous verbal violence or the continuous instigation that pours out day and night from their radio stations. If there are victims, these are to be found among the uncautious and the curious (Translator's note: who go close to see what's happening, and get killed by stray bullets) and amongst those young idealists or madmen who are sent into the streets to sow and reap death."

So much for Christian Charity!

● It is unfair to leave our readers with a General Alert in the Armed Forces and the armed police surrounding the University of Rome - but that is precisely what we shall do. We are not going to up-date this pamphlet any further. From now on we hope that you will find reason to read the newspapers more closely to identify what is really happening in Italy. The lessons of Italy undoubtedly hold crucial importance for the revolutionary process in Europe as a whole.....But take a warning: Peter Nicholls (the Times reporter) writes society chit-chat and upper-class twitterings. And George Armstrong of the Guardian, once described as an arm of the CIA, goes to great lengths to present Italy as a sort of Mickey Mouse country - faintly amusing.

THE LEFT & THE MOVEMENT

●Guarding the gates of Rome University against Fascists, police and provocateurs, February 1977.

• Introduction

This section of our pamphlet is about the Left in Italy, about the Movement, and about the problems that they face. In our experience, Lotta Continua has been the organisation most likely to be open to the changes and contradictions of the present situation. It is for this reason that we concentrate our attention mainly on what has happened inside Lotta Continua. This does not, of course, imply that LC is the only serious organisation on the Italian Left.

In the history of Lotta Continua there is no more important event than the National Congress which was held in November 1976 (pre-dating the events described in this pamphlet). It was a major upheaval, whose repercussions were felt throughout the organisation, with a deep crisis in the year that followed. We have shown the nature of the Congress debate by reprinting a selection of the speeches; and we indicate the nature of the ensuing crisis by reprints from the Letters Pages of Lotta Continua's newspaper, which has thrown open its pages to all sides of the revolutionary movement, to initiate a lively and crucial debate on the correct directions to take in the coming period.

Therefore this final section of our pamphlet contains the following:-

- The <u>first section</u> is a series of speeches from the Rimini Congress, chosen and edited in order to show the kinds of tensions and contradictions that have arisen inside the Italian revolutionary movement (pages 81-96).
  The <u>second section</u> is a selection from the newly-opened Letters Pages of Lotta Continua: it shows the high quality of the political debate in Italy, and also the fears, hopes and confusions. It shows how Italian comrades are now going a long way in breaking down the separation between the "personal" and the "political" spheres of life. (pages 97-107).
  The <u>third section</u> is a list of the various groups in the revolutionary Left. And a note on the Italian Women's Movement (pages 109-116)
  The <u>fourth section</u> is an overall analysis, an article by Sergio Bologna, one of the editors of the Marxist journal "Primo Maggio" (pages 117-122)
  The <u>fifth section</u> is a series of Notes and Corrections to the pamphlet,
  The <u>sixth section</u> is an Appendix about the question of Social Democracy and Repression.
  And finally there is a Reading List.

- <u>Note 1</u>: Up until now, the Left organisations in Britain have tended to treat the developments in the Italian revolutionary Left as a kind of joke - a reflection of the "Mickey Mouse" treatment accorded by the bourgeois Press. Unfortunately, the source materials have not, so far, been available for British comrades to judge the situation for themselves. We hope that the items reprinted here will provide that much-needed source material, to show how urgent, serious, and unavoidable this debate in Italy has been.

- <u>Note 2</u>: The English language suffers from a shortcoming: in Italian sexual differences are easily conveyed, by word endings (eg compagno/compagna; operaia/operaio). In English we have to use the much more clumsy "women comrades", "male workers" etc. We have done this, because in many cases simply saying "comrades" would have not conveyed the full meaning of the speaker's intentions.

THE RIMINI CONGRESS OF LOTTA CONTINUA

The following items are speeches that were made at the Rimini Congress of Lotta Continua, November 1976. They are chosen for being representative of some of the main arguments and contradictions inside the organisation at that time. We have translated them from the book of the proceedings of the Congress, published by Edizione Giornalisti Lotta Continua, 1976, under the title Il 2° Congresso di Lotta Continua.

The first item is a translation of the Introduction to that book, written by Guido Viale, a leading member of the organisation. It is a shortened version.

The second national Congress of Lotta Continua was held in Rimini between 31st October and 4th November 1976. During the 5 days of the Congress, over 500 comrades spoke in the plenary sessions, the commissions, the women's meetings, the workers' meetings, and the workshops. This alone illustrates the extraordinary character of the Congress.

When Lotta Continua came to its second Congress, like all the other groups of the revolutionary Left in Italy it was going through a crisis which was striking not so much at its political line, as its way of carrying out its politics...its relationship with the masses...the way political positions were arrived at: a crisis which undermined the very reasons for its existence as an organisation, and undermined every single militant's reasons for political involvement.

These are not problems that have appeared out of the blue. They are the product of many years of class struggle in Italy - of the successes and the mistakes which have accumulated without being adequately thought through. They are problems that arise through the "personal" history of at least 4 "generations" of revolutionary militants: the generation that was politicised before 1968; those who came into the struggle through the workers' Hot Autumn and the student revolt of 1968-9; the generation that grew in the wage struggles, anti-fascist struggles and the fight against Andreotti's Government during 1972-4; and finally the generation that has been formed since the intensification of the Crisis, in the difficult struggle against the restructuring of the factories (ie productivity deals etc), in the struggles of the unemployed and those of the small factories against redundancies, in the housing struggles and the self-reduction of prices, in the youth collectives, and in the explosion of feminism.

The split and the estrangement between this last generation and the organisations of the revolutionary Left, including Lotta Continua, has become increasingly evident.

This crisis, this imbalance between the demands of the class struggle and the ability of an organisation to cope with them starts a "race with time", which becomes increasingly tiring and lacking in adequate collective thought inside the organisation. This in turn is the origin of the schematism and abstraction in the way the political line is developed. Thus the relationship with the masses deteriorates, first qualitatively, and then quantitatively.

This process, which has been going on for some time, has been accentuated since the General Election of June 20th 1976. Revolutionaries have taken the results of June 20th as a defeat - even a personal defeat - although it was not seen this way among the great mass of people.

Our second Congress had been decided on over a year ago, and finally took place after having been postponed several times. Its story is the story of the answers we have tried to find for the problems that came to light after June 20th - problems whose effects on militants have extended far outside the confines of the various organisations of the revolutionary Left.....

There has been no period in the history of the Italian revolutionary Left which has been comparable for its depth and intensity of discussion. It is still too early to say clearly what will come out of this debate in organisational terms, and in political line. It is certain, however, that this debate will leave its mark on the entire revolutionary Left, and particularly on those parts of the revolutionary Left who decided to react to the crisis of June 20th in an open way, <u>not</u> by isolating themselves (as some groups have done - witness the limited publicity they give to their internal debates) and <u>not</u> by hardening-out their internal differences.

This is the situation that the Rimini Congress aimed to break through - a position that we still maintain today.

<u>The Trends in the Congress</u>

So, what did our organisation discuss during the Congress? First, we should reject the misconception that is being spread around, that Lotta Continua did not discuss politics or its political line. The speeches that we are printing here are the best reply to this misconception....

There are of course "two legs" on which our political discussion should proceed: on the one hand our political work, the elaboration and carrying out of our political line; and on the other, the political challenging of that line and the way it is carried out, with everybody being able to contribute, bringing in the relation of our mass work and the contents that are emerging from the class struggle. The Rimini Congress gave its main emphasis to one of these poles - the latter one: it opened a decisive political battle against the <u>leaderist</u> elaboration of the organisation's political line - a method of elaboration which is often abstract and even 'fetishistic', a method which in Lotta Continua has been fed and encouraged by its methods of leadership.

The political line, the organisation and its militants came under intense discussion. This discussion was dominated by three themes. The first was <u>feminism</u>. The second was the <u>centrality of the working class</u> (centralità operaia). And the third was the <u>nature of political leadership</u> in the organisation.

The first theme, then, was <u>feminism</u>. The women comrades rebelled against a political practice and a concept of communism and the revolution which totally ignored their needs - to the extent that it transformed revolutionary militancy into a new form of oppression.

They were able to put forward a deep-rooted criticism not only of the political line in abstract, but also of the way it was carried out. The women comrades developed this practical criticism, collectively, starting from their own personal experience in the women's movement, in everyday life, and in Lotta Continua. But

this need to discuss the contradictions we experience is something which is valid for <u>everyone</u>: it is a fundamental condition which can no longer be ignored in the reconstruction of any revolutionary organisation.

Lotta Continua was late in coming to terms with feminism - at least, as far as the men comrades were concerned - and when it came up against feminism it was a traumatic, violent moment. The events of December 6th (t.n. when Lotta Continua members physically attacked a women-only march about abortion in Rome) are, and will continue to be for some time, an important question for debate. For the women comrades this was the starting point whereby the feminist component of our organisation began to "harden out". For some this was an intermediate stage towards starting to work increasingly outside the organisation, or simply leaving the organisation. For others it gave the spur for setting up autonomous areas of work and development, as well as forcing the men comrades to rethink the basic problems of revolution, of communism, and the construction of the revolutionary party, starting from their own needs as women and proletarians and as comrades.

For most of the men comrades in Lotta Continua, December 6th and the subsequent separation of the feminists was the clearest sign yet of their lost power, and of the limitations of their own abilities and the tranditional methods of running the organisation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the internal discussion about the question of organisational structures in Lotta Continua, which had been very lively even before December 6th, should now become a central theme...defined in quite new terms, by the women comrades.

The men comrades of our organisation, including the male workers, find it hard to come to terms with the way the theory and practice of the organisation has been subverted, as a necessary result of this eruption of feminism (in fact they don't always manage it).....It was extremely difficult for the male workers to control the contradictions through which our organisation was passing.....

The main contradiction was between men and women. But it was not the only one. For instance the contradictions of unemployed and underemployed youth, State clerical workers etc. In this situation, the Rimini Congress (and the pre-Congress meetings), by bringing together various components which in some cases had not confronted each other for months, produced an explosive effect which exposed the limits of the lack of democratic centralism which for some time had been paralysing Lotta Continua.

.....There has developed a just demand that one's own existence and condition in society should be recognised as the basis for one's own participation in the construction of a revolutionary party. This was a demand that arose not only from the women but also from the workers and the young people (note that the young people perhaps had the least space in the Rimini Congress, and yet have most valued the terms of its debate, as has been shown by the big increase in mass youth work, and how the attendance of young people at our meetings has increased dramatically since Rimini).

The second dominant theme of the Congress was <u>workers' centrality</u>. If we want to start a discussion about the way in which our organisation functions, we have to start from a contradiction: On the one hand the workers in Lotta Continua are continuing, through their own work, to guarantee a relationship with the masses, on behalf of almost the whole organisation; they have also guaranteed the political unity of Lotta Continua, albeit within broad areas of great disagreements; and in many branches it has been the workers who have ensured the continued existence of Lotta Continua after the Election of June 20th. But on the other hand - and here's the contradiction - they have had less and less influence on the elaboration of our political line, and in the decision-making processes, which have generally gone right over their heads.

Behind this "loss of workers' centrality" inside our organisation, there

is a more general, more crucial problem arising out of this whole period of intensification of the Crisis: ie the attack by the state and by capital, on the centrality - ie the leading role - of the working class in relation to the whole of the proletariat (by which I mean all those sectors who, having been invested by the strength and the contents of the workers' struggles over the past few years, have now found, or are starting to find, the path towards their own autonomous growth as a movement and a mass organisation: the unemployed, the State and local authority employees, the young people, the soldiers, the social struggle etc).

The attempt to "corporatise" the working class, and turn it into one sector among many others, is the main thrust of the capitalist attack (which is shared by the line of the PCI and the trade union leadership). This is a counter to the leadership role that the workers have won for themselves, ever since 1969, in relation to the whole of the proletariat - a leadership role that has provided the most solid base for the workers' autonomy. But we cannot meet this attack be reducing the class struggle to simply the working class in the big factories in its daily confrontation with the employer and the government. This approach would tend to nullify precisely the richness of political content, of social subjects, of material power that workers' autonomy has produced in recent years.

There is a risk, on the one hand, of conceiving the revolutionary party as the juxtaposition of the vanguards of various numbers of mass movements, all with their own particular interests, thereby putting the working class in a corner along with all the rest, and entrusting the task of mediating between and recomposing the contradictions that open in the class, to a higher "political leadership".

On the other hand there is the risk of seeing, in the working class and in the centrality of the contents expressed by workers' autonomy, the right of workers (male, adult and fully employed) to dictate and lay down the law to all other proletarians, rather than providing a stimulus for the growth and development of the other mass movements. The isolation in which the workers in Lotta Continua have been kept, due to the leadership methods of our organisation in recent years, is the principal cause of this increasing danger.

The debate at the Rimini Congress among the workers showed that the main way to break this isolation will be through political discussion of the present phase and our political line and our tasks within it.

The third major theme was that of the <u>political leadership</u> of Lotta Continua, the comrades who have exercised it, and they way in which they have exercised it. (t.n. We are leaving discussion of this aspect to the contribution made by Adriano Sofri in his closing speech. See below, page 93).

The Conference

The first day of the Congress was fairly 'regular'. Adriano Sofri made his introductory speech, which was followed by contributions from the various Commissions. However, the atmosphere was tense - a continuation of the pre-Congress regional meetings....the emergence of the new movement of young people, the pressure felt by the women etc.

On the evening of the first day, the women asked for the proceedings to be suspended, because they wanted to meet as women. They also demanded that the Congress should not continue in their absence. This was agreed - and not only the women, but also the workers, went off to have meetings by themselves.

The women and the workers felt that they had not been getting the right to speak. They decided that the next day should be a general, plenary session (instead of the planned workshops). And they decided that all speeches that day should alternate - a woman - a worker - a woman - a worker etc.

It was this day's speeches that really opened up the areas of problem and contradiction. It is for this reasonthat we are printing the following edited speeches.

Ciro from Fiat Spa-Stura

On the question of workers' centrality. I personally don't believe that workers are 'better', or more 'capable', and for that reason should lead the revolution. No. I don't believe that today the workers can provide a line for the feminist comrades, a political line for the students. However, I will make one simple observation: the idea of workers' centrality expresses the fact that only the worker, as a worker, expresses what is expressed by the proletariat. Women, as women, do not express what is expressed by the proletariat. They can be women, just women, even bourgeois women. They can be reactionary women, and not express the proletarian point of view. I say this without meaning to be anti-feminist (as I have been accused), because it is a simple fact. The feminist comrades should keep this in mind. It's obvious that I can't manage to grasp all the problems of the feminist comrades, but I still say that today we have to face the problem of where the feminist comrades stand, from the proletarian and working class point of view, in the elaboration of their mass line and their objectives.

The same thing applies for students. The student, as a student, is not a proletarian. A student can be a proletarian, as can a woman, but simply as students and as women they do not express the proletariat. It is very different for the worker, because the conditions of his existence in society, force him to be a proletarian, because he has no alternative, while the woman is not forced to be a proletarian.

(Interruptions....)

I do not say this, to oppose the women's movement. I say this because you must explain to me how certain things are to be resolved - if you are in fact taking them into consideration in the elaboration of your political line... if you are keeping the proletarian point of view firmly in mind...because this seems to me fundamental, particularly if we are to avoid counterposing lines between sectors of our organisation.

There is a further problem regarding workers' centrality, in relation to Lotta Continua's way of running itself - the leaderist way in which the organisation is run... As I see it, workers' centrality is to be sought among the

masses. As I see it, the correct relationship with the masses is already workers' centrality, as far as we are concerned, but as far as the organisation is concerned, that's another matter.

I want to describe the outline of the Party as I see it. I want to compare it to an army, in which there is the general staff, there are the officers, and there are the soldiers. I'll start with the soldiers, since, obviously, you can't get anywhere without the soldiers. Who are the soldiers? They are the masses. So who are the officers, today? I say that the officers are groupings like the workers' collectives at Lancia-Chivasso...the workers' coordination in Milan....the agitation groupings inside Fiat-Mirafiori...and the autonomous committees in all the other sectors. These are the officers, in my opinion. They are part and parcel of the structure of the revolutionary party.

And the general staff? As I see it, it is not us who are the general staff, today, precisely because we are not capable of building the revolutionary party...we do not have the tools to build it....we do not have the structures to do it. And therein lies the whole range of reasons why we are not the general staff.

Very often the reason why things come to a standstill cannot be blamed on the leadership. The elaboration of the political line must start from the base, certainly, but the problem is how to get this process moving, how to carry it forward.....

○ Donatella from Catanzaro

That speech was followed immediately by this contribution from Donatella from Catanzaro, explaining how the so-called "workers' centrality" cannot resolve the problems of women.

First of all I want to thank the comrade who spoke before me, because I think he has broken what was beginning to look like an absurd unanimity of opinion in this Conference, and he showed up the contradictions that exist among us.

I want to talk about what the party should be, from the viewpoint of feminist militancy.

I think that I have understood many things in this past year, and I have changed my ideas on what the party means. What I mean is that if we abandon the old way we used to see things, we will find a whole wealth of experience inside the class struggle today. I am basing what I say on what happened to us in Catanzaro, because I believe that you have to base yourself on practical experience in the class struggle.

A 19-year old woman recently died during childbirth at Catanzaro Hospital. They let her die. As a result of this, and through our leaflets, we held a series of meetings with the midwives and the nurses in the maternity wards, and we discovered that conditions inside the hospital were horrible.....conditions of exploitation, such that deaths were bound to occur (15-hour shifts, for instance). If we had just stopped at that and gone no further, I don't think we would have understood at all what it means to carry out class struggle in a hospital.

Arising out of these meetings, we discovered other things: that there is not only economic exploitation. The midwives and nurses don't just let a patient die just because they haven't got time. No. There's something else, which can't be solved simply by cutting the hours of work. It is that the midwives and nurses experience a contradiction which originates in their sexual repression. What does that mean? It means that the women who are having babies, who are in there for reasons linked in some way to sex, are rejected because they are seen as an incarnation of that sense of guilt which women have always had, and have internalised. If their

self-awareness is not raised, it will never be possible to solve the problems which the patients and the nurses and the midwives have.

So how did we face the problem? We took up the problem of consciousness-raising with the nurses. Some came into our consciousness-raising group, but, more important, they started discussing with the other nurses what being a woman meant, inside the hospital.

These may seem small things, but they show what "facing the class struggle in a different way" means. The women patients were for the first time being encouraged to rebel against what the doctors were doing to them. And that is important, because when a woman is having her baby, and she tears, and they give her stitches without bothering to put her to sleep first, because they don't care - well then, the women should be encouraged to protest.

As regards "the centrality of workers in politics" (centralità operaia), I would like to point out that there are workers among the women as well! And they are not only workers - they also have to become aware of how they, as women, fit into the factory situation: for example, in the way they are exploited. In Catanzaro, 150 casual workers were recently sacked, and most were women. I believe that the problem of sackings has been dealt with in a one-sided and incorrect way. Married women probably feel less strongly about being sacked because they are less conscious of the fact that it is not enough to take money home....that it is necessary for them to become independent in their own lives, too.

In Catanzaro, a girl of 15 was raped by someone who fancied her. The rapist was charged with obscene acts in a public place - but so was the girl! Now, there's **something** that must be clarified. This girl comes from a village where the land has been occupied - where 800 farm labourers have joined the Farm Labourers Union. And yet, in a village where the class struggle has been so fierce, that girl was looked on as a prostitute. Men stop her in the street, as if they can use her as they want.

I believe that these farm labourers are not carrying out a real class struggle and will never make the revolution.....(applause)....They won't do it, and neither, of course, will we, because I think that the reality of the class struggle today is something that we still have to discover.

I think that, starting from the problem of women, we can begin to learn to make a different class analysis, because there are so many contradictions within the working class today, and they all have to be analysed... This means that we have to have a new conception of the party, with a clear political line, and giving a clear leadership.

I don't agree with trying to build our party by having 10 meetings a day. Today the party has to see itself in relation to a new reality in the class struggle. In order to liberate ourselves from all these contradictions, we must find a new way of organising.

As regards the "centrality of the working class", there is another thing I want to say. There is now something else which is central, and I am going to make it quite clear what I mean. I believe that this "centrality of the working class" notion cannot, today, express women's point of view (even though there are women workers). Abortion is an example....

It's quite clear that the content of the Abortion Bill has a sweeping revolutionary significance, and the fight on this front is being developed only by women, because today it is the women who have the ability to say who has the "right to life". I think that the "right to life" is a meaningless phrase, since in every historical period people have conceived of the right to life in different ways. I think that today it is only women who

have the right to say who has the right to life.

Women have not only agreed to make their bodies available for creating another life...they've also accepted another thing: that the baby can be fed, looked after, brought up by the father too. Until recently this was not the case. It was only the mother who fed the baby and gave up her life when the 9 months was over. It was us women who, in this way, allowed humanity to develop. I think this is very important. It is not only in material terms that we have allowed other human beings to live - but we have also done it by sacrificing a large slice of our sexuality. For a very simple reason: when men make love, they don't suffer any consequences (except that they might have succeeded or failed to please the woman). But for women there are enormous consequences, which have marked women's lives for thousands of years, every day and every year of their lives: the fact that when they make love, they are also creating children. Thus sexuality and motherhood have up till now been inseparable, and even now, contraceptives, abortions etc, are things which violate women yet again.

I'm convinced that this needs stating very strongly. We have given our life to others, at the price of our own sexuality. And this doesn't just affect women, either, because it happens through the family, through the maintainance of a concept, a society. Women have seen their fulfilment only in terms of having children.

So, I think that all these things give to women, and only to women, the right to determine who has the "right to life" and who doesn't. (....) That is why I am saying that concentrating on "the centrality of the working class" (centralitá operaia) can only express a certain part of all the problems that we face.

○ Laura from Turin

• Donatella's speech was followed by another, from Laura from Turin, who took up similar lines of argument.

"I want to say that the class struggle is here, in this assembly. I want to start with some of the recent developments in our organisation.

I believe that the 6th December 1976 (the big abortion march) was an important date, because for the first time a political organisation became aware of the contradictions inside itself. I well remember the clash with Adriano Sofri (I was there when we occupied the National Committee meeting). We had accused 2 comrades of Cinecittá of fascism. Sofri defended these comrades, saying that you couldn't use the term fascism for comrades who were involved everyday in anti-fascist struggle.

I remember that I replied: "Well, what should we call them? Should we just carry on calling them comrades and leave it at that? I would like to know what name I should give these comrades who are my enemies in the street and who are my enemies every day" And so, for the first time, the term 'sexist' had to be accepted inside our organisation. 'Sexist comrades'!

How have the demands that women comrades have been making, developed inside the organisation? There was a need to win a wider political role... but this did not come about. The women comrades did not succeed. They continued to go to branch meetings, but they were unable to open up the debate.

I remember that in the branch meetings I tried to explain how we women were organising ourselves, what we were doing in the area etc etc - all of which was completely ignored. It was as though we had come from another planet. It was impossible to get our ideas across.

This situation continued - and women comrades increasingly started working outside the structures of our party. And what was the response to this? It was: "We recognise the autonomy of women"...."We wouldn't want to stick our noses into women's affairs"..."The women have their own autonomy - they can do what the fuck they like", etc. But how does one go on supporting the male-dominated party? It is a little difficult to support the Men's Revolutionary Party.

I think that today, for the first time in the provincial congresses, we have begun to face the problem of the women comrades who haven't actually made the choice "I'm leaving Lotta Continua", but who in reality are no longer in the party. So what is the answer? We're told "We'll make a grand alliance between workers and women"! The women are organising on their own - Good! And now the workers, who for years have been expropriated by the leadership, are organising on their own. So perhaps we could organise the party. After all, both of us, women and workers, are important for the revolution, and so we should come to an agreement.....

I believe that the women comrades have intervened in the spirit of changing these things. We say that there is no way you could form an alliance of women and workers at the moment (male workers), and we say it very firmly. We try to explain it in very practical terms.

We think - and it came out in the meetings that we have held over the past few days - that there is something very irrational and partial about the men comrades when they express what they need from communism, when they live in the way they live, in the way they make love, in the way they act in the streets or in the cafes, in the way they relate to people and things, in the way they act politically, and in their concept of communism.

We recognise that the workers have a fundamental role to play, but only concerning one aspect of this process - namely, the overthrow of the capitalist relations of production. We say that today this is insufficient, because it does not include the totality of women's needs as expressed by the movement.

We say that the workers are a preserve of bourgeois power in the division of labour between men and women. I maintain that the work which Donatella was talking about earlier is a burden which rests entirely on the shoulders of women. Pregnancy is work, comrades, because it requires hard work...energy... because it prevents you from doing other things. Breast-feeding and raising a child, that's work too. But that's not all. Being sexual objects is work. Being the object of male pleasure is work.

So we are struggling against this kind of work defined by capitalism which is imposed on us. And workers' centrality (making male workers the centre of our politics - trans.) will not satisfy our needs in this sense.

○Lina from Magneti Marelli

●A contribution following on from Laura, from Lina, a woman factory worker from Magneti Marelli, Milan.

Before being a woman, I'm a worker, and so I have different problems both as a woman and as a worker, inside the factory and in the place where I live.

I get very frustrated with the other comrades at the factory, because they try to keep me out of things. They think I should be shop steward just for the 4 women, while in fact I'm the steward for 92 workers. The Union keeps telling me: "Just concentrate on your women...don't worry about the others". But why should I only lead the women, and not the men, if I'm quite capable of leading them?

They would like to throw me out of the Shop Stewards Committee. They try to shut me up....they don't like me speaking out. They tell me that I'll make them all lose their jobs, and that if they continue having me as a shop steward, they'll end up getting thrown out of the firm. They're afraid of me, and they're against me.....but the next minute they're with me again, because they realise that it's not the bosses who'll defend their interests, but me, because I fight together with them.

The male comrades ought to see and understand the problems of women, because they live in a family, with mothers, sisters, wives, and therefore they should face these problems and not deny that they exist, because they are everyone's problems. When they ignore women's problems, they are in fact denigrating themselves, since they too experience the problems, and it is wrong to ignore them.

This is why women refuse to work with them. It's not because they don't want to.

I think we must come to a proper agreement about this, so that our party can survive. The party can't exist without the women comrades, because when the women started disappearing, the local branches became empty shells.

Comrades, we are aware that men need women, but we must analyse in what way. Women have always been looked on as chattels. I have never stood up and talked about myself. I've always talked about other people's problems, but never about my own. I've had very deep experiences that have influenced my life. I can't tell you all of it now, because it would take too long. I too had a husband who wanted everything his own way...I was very ill, but he just wanted me to be there as a wife and a woman. He never paid any attention when I was in a bad way and needed him. He went off with other women - except when he needed his creature comforts...then he came back to me and I had to take him in. I've been separated from my husband for 8 years and I don't miss him. I don't even feel the need to live with another man. That's because I had this terrible experience in my life, in my past. In the 18 years I was with him, I thought I was happy, but then there was a big crisis in my family, and I suddenly realised that my husband was a stranger, that he meant nothing to me, and that if I hadn't had my mother by me; I would have landed up in some lunatic asylum, and I wouldn't be here today talking to you.

A man doesn't give you a real love. He gives you a "love" which disappears when he doesn't need it any more, and then he gets rid of you. He only needs a woman when she's OK, gives him a good time, is his servant in all senses of the word.

Women have become aware of this state of affairs, and they're sick of it. For thousands of years, women have been slaves of men and of society. Bourgeois society was founded on the slavery of women, and you can see this in films too - how women are sold on the market like slaves. But history teaches us that we must rebel, that we can't wait any longer. We have urgent needs - but this does not mean that we're going to ignore other important problems. And since I am a woman worker, I would also ask the men worker comrades to make the problems of women a priority, because they're urgent.

○ Silvio from Parma

I speak as someone "different" (t.n: as a homosexual), and I think I can provide a perspective on how imagination and enjoyment can be developed in a clearly revolutionary way.

I said this to a comrade from FIAT, who is also a friend, and I explained what I meant by imagination, and he said to me that after work he had no time to think, although he did have the time to be aggressive and authoritarian.

Let's take the struggle for the 35-hour week. It'll be fine, if we win it. But that still leaves another 133 hours in the week....and how are we going to learn to live them in a different way? Will it just come automatically?

(.....)

Men comrades always repress and ignore any desire they have for me. I mean, if you're a nice person, why can't they desire you? And when I say to someone "I'm shy of expressing my love for you", he says things like: "Well actually, I've got flu at the moment...."

Sometimes they say I'm not feminine enough - and incidentally, I must say that there are many comrades who sit around in a bar, drunk and bored, making fun of transvestites etc without looking at what's behind it all. Apart from anything else, all these transvestites, prostitutes etc are from proletarian origins....so there's another problem that we have to face.

As you know, after the Elections there was a great hoo-ha with homosexuals writing letters to the newspapers of the so-called revolutionary Left. Somebody asked me to write a letter too. Well, I didn't feel like it. Why not? I don't know, really. I'm a homosexual, and that's that. I should say it here and now. My name is Silvio, a gay in Lotta Continua. If you have problems, drop me a note.....All these notes will be put in a hat, and the lucky winner will get an evening with Adriano Sofri, or the Secretariat, as you fancy. (...)

And now, if "Nature" is to be used against us by men, as a term of repression, then our slogan must be "It's time to fight against Nature!"

○ Salvatore from Alfa Romeo

• Salvatore, a male worker from the Alfa Romeo factory in Milan takes up the theme of personal life.

"I too will talk about myself. I have no desire to work - and still less the kind of work that I am doing. Perhaps I could find another solution. But not the working class! There is no other way out for the working class.

The working class, not having any other means to live other than its own labour-power, is forced to sell this labour power. Thus it has no choice, if it wants to live. And how do we live? Badly!! I have to get up at six in the morning. I get to work, where my time is divided up, so that I have 4 minutes to complete the various operations of the machine. In this way I spend my eight hours.

I don't put myself into this work. It is work that is completely alien to me. Therefore, if anyone asked me if I'm happy with my work, I would have to say that I'm not.

It's obvious. There is a situation of exploitation. There are two choices - either you submit, or you rebel.

To struggle against oppression we have to get together, to organise, and when you start talking about this, implicitly you're talking about a party. If you want to have a revolution, a party is needed, and you need to get together.

We will have achieved liberation when we have abolished the classes, destroyed the bosses, and constructed communism. When we rebel collectively

against the boss, when we really get at him and we don't allow him any peace of mind, that is a moment of liberation.

There is also the State, the police and the carabinieri. We need to overthrow this power to achieve liberty, the liberation.

I just spoke of my 8 hours at work. We will make no more sacrifices. We want to leave the situation of sacrifices behind us.

There are many who abandon the working class. They become small businessmen etc. But this is going over to the enemy - this is not liberation, comrades.

The man/woman contradiction derives from capitalism. It is a contradiction experienced by bourgeois women as well. For example, what is the difference between Agnelli and his wife? The difference is that Agnelli has power and she hasn't.

It is a contradiction that we must face up to. I can say, at once, that we are oppressed, exploited by the boss. But I am also willing to admit that the proletarian man is himself the boss, as far as his woman is concerned.

I don't agree with the comrade when she says that I must look at my own actions and make a self-criticism. No, comrade, it is <u>you</u> who has to make me self-critical. It is a very important aim. I mean that it is you, with your struggle, who will make us self-critical. I must make a greater effort to be self-critical - but your point of view will prevail only if you have the strength to make it prevail."

○Gaetanino from Fiat-Mirafiori

● Gaetanino, a male worker from FIAT Mirafiori in Turin, spoke a short while after Salvatore, explaining some problems.

"Comrades. I'm a bit frightened to be speaking here...I'm getting a sort of knot in my stomach, because I find it very hard. In the workers' meeting we were all agreed and united, and we're head-on against the Union. Now, here in this meeting there are some positions which are right and some which are wrong. I've got a way of seeing things, and I live it, in the factory. But now that I come here, I'm sort of castrated when it comes to explaining a correct idea, like how workers' power today can not be delegated. Anyway, that's where I want to start from.

Today, as it happens, the bosses, Andreotti and the Communist Party are all united in their battle against the working class. We had this recent Budget coming crashing on our heads, and what has the working class been doing? What are the weapons of the working class? The instinctive weapons have always been those of violence...how to bring about a crisis in the powers-that-be...like has happened in Turin and various other parts of Italy....In other words, succeeding in capturing a majority, by means of a favourable show of force. Like in the factory, if we saw the boss laying off workers from the assembly lines, we didn't used to go home...we marched up to the management instead. This happened at Mirafiori during the struggles over gradings: all of us marched off to the Admin buildings, because that was our strength. And we succeeded in our objectives.

We must no longer delegate our power to the revisionists. But the problem now is to know who are our enemies, who are the class enemies. During the struggle against restructuring of the plant, our comrades were picked out and identified on the marches, and the foremen transferred those comrades who gave them trouble, who obstructed the boss's policies.

During the struggles over the wage agreement, the foremen took a beating at the hands of the workers, because the workers didn't want to be transferred,

they didn't want their strength to be broken, their groups to be dispersed. But in the recent events things have been very different. In Turin there was a mass meeting. The Union did not make the speeches etc. They said that they were in agreement that the workers should speak first. And the workers attacked the Union, and attacked the Communist Party. They said: "I voted CP. And now Berlinguer says that the working class has to make sacrifices. I'm sick and tired of making sacrifices, and when I voted CP I did it to show that I wouldn't accept any more sacrifices, and to show that the CP should take forward the class interests of the workers".

Then some of the Communist Party people got up and spoke, and all they did was to explain that, since there was a crisis, sacrifices were required. So, by voting CP, the workers had delegated to the Communist Party the job of taking forward their own needs....

The Christian Democrats, after 30 years of misgovernment, thought they would find a working class that was finished. But events have shown the opposite to be true. Workers have responded to the Budget by blocking off motorways, marching to the price-control offices etc....

At Mirafiori there have been pickets against working overtime, and the workers said: "Up till yesterday the Union was allowing 131 Section to come in and work overtime. Well, now we're going to stop everybody doing overtime." Now the workers are tired of always having to go back to square one. They want to create a crisis in this plan, this programme of the revisionists.... I'm sorry if I'm finding it a bit hard to explain all this, I'm in a bit of a state....I wanted to explain what I felt about the 35-hour week at Mirafiori and how it affects me personally. In the mass meetings we were very solid, since we could show that a reduction in the working week could attack the employer's process of restructuring and upset his plans. Then we showed that the 35-hour week was a correct demand. Then the Union official turned round and asked me: "Do you want your half-hour break inside or outside your basic 35 hours?"

At that moment I didn't know what to say...At one point we thought we had won, on the question of the 35 hours. We thought we had put the Union in a crisis. At some points there was booing of the Union, and some workers argued against the agreement....but others were saying that we should keep quiet about it, because the Lotta Continua comrades over in Milan had in fact accepted the agreement, and so we shouldn't just be obstructive....But anyway, this is my struggle, and I live it myself, personally. And Adriano Sofri, a charismatic person, is quite welcome to come and organise in Turin, but he'd better get it into his head that he must leave the workers alone to do what they have to do, he must leave the workers to work out their political line, themselves."

○Adriano Sofri, General Secretary

● At the end of this Second National Congress of Lotta Continua (a unique conference, by any standards), Adriano Sofri, founder and undisputed leader for seven years of the most powerful revolutionary organisation in the industrial West stood up and made the following self-criticism.

This Congress is enormously important, for me and for all the comrades who are taking part in it. I have given my introductory report to the Congress, and for some while I had hoped that it would be my last report as general secretary. I was also more than happy that I would not be doing

the summing up.

Being a General Secretary means being the top of a pyramid. At the base of that pyramid are people - people who have what is known as a "social existence" - whether from a sexual point of view, or from their location within the relations of production. Down below there, there are the men and the women, the workers in all their different industries, the young and the old etc etc.

But as you ascend the pyramid, you lose more and more this relationship with a social existence of your own, and you find yourself involved more and more in synthesising and generalising. At the very top sits the General Synthesis - where you are neither male nor female (yes, I know you are really male!), neither old nor young, neither railway worker nor factory worker.....no....you are General Secretary!

Up till now this has been my role. I have been working long and hard at <u>not</u> being General Secretary any longer. And one thing I must tell you, comrades, is this: even though I worked right up to the last minute to ensure that this might not be a "congress" in the usual manner (people have spoken of manipulation, string-pulling etc, but I think the way the Congress has proceeded can dispel those doubts)....well, anyway, what has happened at this Congress was something I never could have imagined.

I have wavered a lot- especially recently, between having confidence and having no confidence in the role of our women comrades (starting from those I know and whom I see every day). This lack of confidence has become almost permanent with me in recent weeks. Well, I have been completely shown up by this Congress: in short, I was wrong.

(.....)

In the first phase of Lotta Continua's history my role was heavily questioned by many comrades and many local branches - but it was much easier to define then, than it was in the second phase. My role was that of a "smart-Alec" - a "ganzo", as they say in Tuscany. There they have even coined a term - "smart-Aleckism" - which means to look out for yourself, and to be one-up by ripping other people off. In the early phase, "smart-Aleckism in the service of the working class" was particularly easy to justify, when the "smart-Aleckism" of certain people coincided with the spontaneous, mass expression of working class rebellion. I was one who put his smart-Aleckism, so to speak, at the service of the working class. But then I drew the working class into the service of my "smart-Aleckism", justifying myself with the fact that the working class was marching towards its radiant destiny etc.

(.....)

A handful of people (Sofri includes himself here) who knew each other and who ran the organisation, considered Lotta Continua to be a sort of <u>private property</u> which they could use without having to ask anyone's permission, simply by interpreting or "reading" the moods and attitudes of the rank and file...

(.....)

The problem that has come to the fore, recently, has been the problem of the <u>autonomy of individuals</u>. Of course, in this type of organisation, individuals have a very strong degree of autonomy. At present we are passing through a collective crisis that is quite unprecedented. But there have been other searing moments of crisis - between comrades, within the masses, in different sectors of the movement etc. In those moments there are some comrades who can stand up to it better than others.

The fact is, I can manage. I can get along. I think about it and I feel

OK, and if I'm alone I'm OK. I'm interested in understanding things, and when I think that I understand them, I have a feeling of power. That is my material base. I've wanted power ever since I was a little boy. It's a material base of my way of being, it's an obstacle to the fact that, even when I am aware of my way of being, I manage to get over it easily.

A long time ago, before Lotta Continua existed, I took part in a political discussion. I took up a position on what a vanguard is. I argued against the Leninist approach, and maintained the notion of the "internal" (as opposed to the "external") vanguard (ie the blokes who are in the vanguard <u>inside</u> some real, actual struggle, like workers <u>in</u> a factory, as opposed to the theoreticians who are not <u>personally</u> taking part in struggles themselves, from the inside, but who are the 'professionals' with a general overall view which the workers, according to Leninists, cannot reach by their own efforts - our note). There is no need for me to spend much time on this. The fact, though, is that even though I am, and have been, firmly critical of comrade Lenin's thesis and the conditions that gave birth to it, I myself, in all my life, have never managed to be an internal vanguard of anything!

(.....)

In this Congress we have had a confrontation - to my mind a very beautiful and very fruitful confrontation. It has been exactly analogous to the confrontation that took place in 1968 and 1969, between the revisionists and trade unions on the one hand, and the students of '68 plus the workers of '69 on the other. Those of us with good memories of 1968 will recall that the confrontation with the Communist Party (which reacted by revealing its complete estrangement from the student movement of the time) was not a conflict over political line, but a conflict over what politics was all about. Today we have found ourselves doing a re-run of that conflict: only now, instead of Longo, Berlinguer and Amendola and the PCI, there are Sofri, Viale & Co playing the same role. The difference has got to be in our ability to understand this situation and turn it on its head.

In the style of working of the leadership that has run Lotta Continua up till now, the vices are clear for all to see. The individualism, the "smart-Aleckism" (encouraged, moreover, by the fact that several smart-Alecs banded together...We're an organisation with few geniuses, but plenty of smart-Alecs), and lastly - and very heavy it's been too - the paternalism. There is no doubt: I am a very heavy paternalist - and my paternalism is proportionate to the very widespread "followerism" that exists in our organisation. In recent times, comrades have started to question this seriously, and my position has become very uncomfortable. For instance, at the Lotta Continua workers' assembly recently. This was held in a very crowded room in a hotel. Many comrades were standing up. When I arrived and sat down, there was one chair which stayed empty - the one next to me! This happened for two days running. So, although I had not stopped feeling in a paternal relation to the organisation, people had stopped sitting "filially" at my side!

(.....)

Everyone has noticed that everyone's feelings have gone up and down a lot. In my case, it's not been so much a wavering between fear and courage - but something else, which I have experienced, I think, more than anyone else. My <u>sense of responsibility</u>. My paternalism (which a few comrades, a little unjustly, I think, have gone so far as to call Peronism) takes the form of a "sense of responsibility", which in turn shows how I relate to the organisation as if I owned it. It has only been very recently, in this Congress, that my sense of responsibility has lessened considerably - ie I have had the <u>feeling</u>, not just the <u>idea</u> (because I've had that for some

time now) that I could do without it. I now hereby resign definitively from this sense of responsibility!

(.....)

A lot has been said about earthquakes. Someone said we should be building quake-proof houses etc. Well, I'd like to say something about this. (I'm stealing this idea from Cesare Moreno, who usually steals his ideas from the masses): when there is an earthquake, "you can't do anything". When they bomb you, or run after you and shoot after you, you can always throw yourself to the ground. But when there's an earthquake, there's no point throwing yourself to the ground, because it's the ground that's shaking. This is a complete subversion of the ideas that people are used to. The problem in this Congress is what to hold on to. A lot of proposals have been made, about making the organisation more solid, strengthening the organisational structures etc (ie building quake-proof houses). They are all correct - but they are only the technical, "expert" side of the problem. There is also the political, the "red", side of it. In China, and in Friuli, when there were the earthquakes, it became apparent that the only chance is to hang on - not to the ground, which is slipping away, but to oneself, to one's own consciousness, to what we call "individual autonomy". This is not to say that this autonomy is the fruit of the individual - rather it is the fruit of the relationship between oneself and other people. In particular, in an organisation, it is the fruit of the relationship between oneself and the other comrades. Then the problem becomes whether we are to continue to hold on to our individual autonomy inside an organisation in which we have the possibility of becoming stronger, and of helping the others to grow stronger. The question of whether to leave the organisation or not, whether to split or not (not to mention the issue on which I refuse to take a stance, of the centrality of workers versus the centrality of women....this alternative is completely impossible to sustain....I don't think that mine is a centrist position, because in fact I stand for a link-up between both these two centralities) - these are decisions that are up to all those who have lived through and have understood this Congress - to hold onto themselves in relation to the other comrades both inside this organisation and outside this organisation.

(.....)

A thought occurred to me. Once, when I was a little "smart-Alec", I was very attached to a saying of a certain professional philosopher, who used to say that when we are interpreting things "We must neither laugh nor cry, but understand". More recently I've come to feel that this is the biggest piece of shit that I ever heard in all my life. No... the problem was precisely to laugh, and to cry, and to understand.

(Applause. End of speech).

***Readers should note that this Congress took place at the end of 1976 - before any of the events that are charted in this pamphlet.

•End of Conference Speeches.

THE LETTERS PAGE OF LOTTA CONTINUA



Italy is in a state of great turbulence among all sorts of different sectors of the working class and the various 'movements'. No clear line of policy or of programme has emerged from this new situation. The answers are not held by any single political organisation. They must be sought in a much wider terrain, where a new mass politics can be created out of the material conditions that exist.

It was for this reason that Lotta Continua opened its letters pages to all sections of the movement, to write and express their opinions about the point reached by the struggle, and the directions for the future.

Not only is this a very exciting move - allowing all kinds of ideas to come out - it also gives the richest documentation of the problems, hopes and fears of a revolutionary movement in Western Europe. It's an education in itself.

We cannot hope to print a representative sample, so we are simply printing a few that we translated in the course of our work on this pamphlet.

What is 'The Movement'?

The following letter is from Sergio Bologna, one of the editorial group of the journal "Primo Maggio" ("May First"). It is a clear-headed attempt to clarify some of the area of debate about 'what is the Movement'. We have not translated the whole of it.

Dear Comrades,

I'm glad to be able to accept your invitation to write about the question of "workers and the marginalised sectors" (operai e emarginati), even if the escalation of the situation during this week of the death of comrade Lorusso and the events of Rome and Bologna demands rather more immediacy and urgency in the debate. I must say at once that I do not at all share the definition of "marginalisation" which is being given to the mass of people who have been in the forefront of the struggle in the Universities this week.

In particular I do not believe that there exists, in Italy, an area of society that is radically excluded from the relations of production. Even after all these years of crisis, marginalisation is not a fact in our society - or at least, not at a mass level. The real marginalisation is political marginalisation. And for this reason, the causes of "marginalisation" are not to be attributed (as the bourgeois Press are starting to do) to the "objective" mechanisms of the economic crisis. No - the causes lie precisely with the parties, the "party system", who have decided to exclude certain modes of struggle, certain material and subjective needs, from the things which can be accepted as having social legitimacy in our country.

(He explains how many sectors of workers who have not accepted the austerity policies; the young proletarians who are organising politically; the women who are building their strength etc - all these are being defined as 'outside'

the framework of politics).

You know well enough that, when faced with these sections of the class, the "party system" has decided to treat them as pathological aspects of late capitalism. Measures must therefore be adopted to <u>cure</u> them (within, of course, the limits imposed by austerity). Or to use law and order against them.

(He then looks at the new composition of the students - no longer the privileged sector, but worker-students, the children of proletarians, and students who have come out of workplaces in order to study. All or most of them have a precise location in the relations of production).

To define the student as the "unemployed intellectual", rootless, and a potential anarcho-fascist is a propaganda exercise designed to put the students into a political ghetto, by falsifying the realities of this society. But even let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that there does still exist a wide stratum of people who are students and nothing else - who do nothing else in life except go to the University, and who are kept by Mummy and Daddy...or by their sisters...or by prostitutes...ie, 'kept' people, who may even manage to wangle a grant in some cases. We find that these people want to represent themselves. They want to function politically. They want to have power, <u>as they are now - ie, as figures of abstract labour, before starting an actual particular job</u>. And it is precisely this prospect that makes them take their stand by the side of the mass-worker.

In other words, comrades, to be brief: the petty-bourgeoisie is a class that has been politically and socially defeated - above all, with the crisis. The ones who have stood up to the crisis, who have largely maintained their cohesion (and here we must not be stupidly extremist...this has also been thanks to the "official" labour movement) has been the working class. We find that it has been precisely the behaviour of the working class - its forms of struggle, its forms of organisation, its ideology based on its own needs, and its autonomy - that has exerted a powerful attraction on the hospital worker, on the local government worker, on the marginal worker, on the University worker without a steady job etc etc. And it has also had a powerful effect on the full-time students too. But why is this?

Because, comrades (and you know this very well), these struggles in the Faculties have involved - sometimes to an even greater extent than the students themselves - these workers, as well as the proletarian youth clubs - ie that cluster of social forces and representative figures of the overall relations of production whose subjective behaviour has been politically <u>pushed out</u> of the "party system".

In this sense, the struggles today in the Universities give a clear cross-section view of the new class composition in our country, and in this sense the University struggles are radically different from those of 1968.

And here we come to the point, comrades. I do not agree with the way in which Lotta Continua, both as a newspaper and as a collection of militants operating in various places, has placed itself within the movement. What has Lotta Continua done? Instead of coming forward with a political identity of its own which would have enabled it at least to undergo a mass criticism (and so get off the sandbanks on which the choices of its leading group have stranded it), Lotta Continua has painted its face like a Redskin, dressed up as a first-year student, and is playing at political primitivism. This is a typical case of camouflage and transformism.

If what we have said so far is true, you can easily understand that the best way to distort these University struggles is to pretend that they are only

about the University reforms, and therefore only of interest to University workers and students. This is false - because we have seen an entire class composition (t.n: ie a new make-up of a section or sections of the class) coming together around the Universities - and the organised autonomy movement does represent a tiny but nonetheless real fraction of this. Of course, these struggles do concern the reform of the University - but as a structure at the service of this political class composition, or rather integrated with it (as in fact it already is, but is not recognised as such). So it becomes meaningless to intervene in the mass meetings "as First Year students".

Like everyone else, I love the Metropolitan Indians. At long last, they've brought us back some gaiety after centuries of gloom. But when I see members of Parliament , militants of PdUP-AO and militants of Lotta Continua masquerading among them, all shouting together for the "end of politics", an "end of power structures" etc, I feel like laughing. Because it was precisely that grouping of forces, united under the banner of "Proletarian Democracy" for the General Election of June 20th, that created this nausea among the militants, the women and the young people, for a certain style of political work.

You say that the Autonomists do just the same? Well then, enter into the merit of political debate with them. Work out different forms of relationship with the movement. In other words, start trying to carry out a political project. It seems to me, however, that you are dreaming of impossible political rebirths. Among other things you are giving credence to that fuzzy and all-embracing image of the "area of autonomy" which we know to be one of the biggest political falsehoods current at this time.

One last point on the subject of autonomy, and then I'll end.

The situation is different today from 1968, when, as political militants, we went to the factories, playing a role of vanguard-detonator. Today some sectors of the organised autonomy tendency are actual and concrete elements of class composition - ie, they are inside it, particularly inside those sectors that have been expropriated from all political power. This is to say that they are not (unlike ourselves, as we partly were, in relation to the mass worker in 1968), theoretical and ideological representatives. In my opinion this changes considerably the type of relationship between the vanguard and the mass - if we want to call it that - from what it was in 1969. But on these matters we can, if you like, continue the discussion another time.

Fraternally,

Sergio Bologna.

O The Good Old Days

A Lotta Continua comrade from Sarno, a village near Naples, writes a letter to the newspaper, explaining that he's unhappy with the recent developments inside the organisation.

Sarno: May 15th 1977.

Dear Comrades,

I'm a "militant" of Lotta Continua. I'm very angry, and I'm going through a crisis. I put "militant" in inverted commas because my relationship (and that of the other Sarno comrades) with the proletarians has been reduced to nothing.

Up until the Rimini Congress we used to have a branch of Lotta Continua here. As a result of what happened at the Congress, everything here got fucked up, and the branch closed down. To cut a long story short, Lotta Continua had been active here in Sarno since 1970 - and thanks to our style of political work we had won quite a following. So much so, that in the June 20th elections we got almost 3% of the vote (473 votes).

After the branch was closed, discussion among comrades came to an end. I think a certain climate of mistrust was created. In case they have forgotten the fact, I would like to remind the Sarno comrades that in our town there are workers....there are unemployed people....and our local economy is based on casual labour....So there's no point in buying 4 or 5 papers a day and then indulging in intellectual masturbation. There are bosses here in Sarno too - even though some people seem to have forgotten the fact!

I want to tell the Sarno comrades that it's absolutely essential that we get back to the old methods of work that we've always used. If we allow the usual shambles to continue as it is, we will never be able to grasp this state of unease that exists among young people, to turn it into a potential for struggle.

With this letter I hope that a debate can be opened among the Sarno comrades, for a return to the good old days, when Lotta Continua in Sarno, in its struggles, was able to gether together the anger and the hopes of the proletarians.

Yours for Communism,

Gennaro Clemente

An Insane Leaflet

A comrade from the Genoa Communist Party writes to complain of a leaflet issued by the Youth Section (FGCI) of the Italian Communist Party, regarding the events of February 17th, when Mr Lama was chased off Rome University campus (See p.51).

Dear Comrades,

I am sending you an insane leaflet that I would like you to publish. It is signed by the Youth Section of the CP. I should add that I am a member of the Youth Section in Genoa, but faced with imbecile things like this, a militant can't just sit quiet. I thought I ought to write to you, partly because I like what you're doing, and partly because I'm sick to the teeth of all the old bollocks the Party's putting out. For them, when someone's killed by the police, or arrested, the Party wants to know, first of all, what group or organisation he belonged to. Not me! I just think he's a comrade, that's all. That's the difference between them and me. PS: I'm sending you 1,000 lire for the paper. It's improved a lot.

Chicco, FGCI of Genoa

TEXT OF THE FGCI LEAFLET

The events that took place on Thursday 17-2-77 at the University of Rome during the meeting of trade union leader Lama, show how certain groups like Avanguardia Operaia, and others like Lotta Comunista and Lotta Continua, who call themselves Left wing, are in fact gangsters and fascists.

They have attacked trade unionist comrades and workers who were providing the stewards for the meeting, showing the unity that exists between

democratic students and working people.

Let us unite and combat all those who want to throw the country into chaos, because they are all fascists even if they masquerade under Left wing names, and are led by Fanfani, De Carolis and the CIA, who want Italy to become like Chile.

Unity of all the democratic forces can defeat this plan. Let us set up an emergency Government, with full political powers, like during the Resistance. Let us start a New Resistance, for a more free and peaceful country, and for a better education system.

Italian Communist Party,
Irma Bandiera Section, FGCI.

O A Stalin in Each of Us?

IS THERE A STALIN IN EACH ONE OF US?

- In July 1977 a clash took place in Ravizza Park (Milan) between the Autonomists and the Workers for Socialism Movement (MLS). This clash provoked an important debate in the pages of Lotta Continua newspaper. Here we print part of a feature article published on 29th July 1977.

In recent weeks we have already published a number of articles about the incidents and the arguments that took place during the "Festival of the Opposition Press" in Ravizza Park, 9th-17th July, promoted by Popular Front (the MLS magazine). Readers will recall that some Autonomist comrades were beaten with saucepans by the MLS heavy squad (servizio d'ordine), and that later on the Autonomists turned up at the Festival with their own heavy squad "in battle gear", to distribute a leaflet against the MLS. We have received many letters, out of which we can only publish some excerpts. (Trans. Note: An all-out free-for-all between the Autonomists and the MLS was avoided, largely because Lotta Continua and the majority of non-aligned comrades preferred to hold an Assembly to discuss matters instead).

WHO DO THESE AUTONOMISTS THINK THEY ARE?

- The United Anti-Fascist Collective of Milan, a group of partisans close to MLS and AO, writes:-

"Who do these Autonomists think they are? After being saucepanned by a comrade who has little patience with those who defend the line of using P.38 pistols, they go crying and looking for protection all over the place. What revolutionaries are these, who can only use insults against the partisans present at the Festival, and who right under the noses of the Carabinieri anti-terrorist squad, hand out a leaflet that is politically beneath contempt, and who are organised to threaten and attack comrades, and to prevent any revolutionary initiative. They are not for unity, but for division. They are not on the side of the masses, but have the nerve to substitute themselves for the masses. They are not guided by the interests of the people, but only by their own anger and desperation. They turn their backs on the enemy, and lend themselves to the policies of reaction, practicing small-group struggle instead of class struggle of vast proportions....."

HE TRIED TO STRIKE ME WITH A SPANNER, BUT I LAID HIM FLAT

- A young Autonomist comrade from Cantù, north of Milan, tells of his troubled relationship with the MLS ever since May 14th of this year, when:

"I saw this individual, foaming at the mouth, with a spanner in his

hand (he was a lurid gorilla of the MLS). He asked me, snarling, if I belonged to Autonomy. When I said I did, he aimed a spanner-blow at my head. But I dodged, and succeeded in flattening this venomous mollusc (!). Revolutionary communist militants must no longer put up with the suffocating and counter-revolutionary presence of the Stalinists, these opportunists who, ever since the Russian Revolution, have always strangled at birth the positive, libertarian development of revolutions (...) So, I say that it was quite right to go armed to the Festival of the Opposition Spanner - so as not to run the risk of being "sauce-panned" by the opportunists....."

THE "WILL TO DOMINATE" INSIDE THE MOVEMENT

- Lastly, from Rome, comrade Torquato has sent us his reflections on the "will to dominate" inside the movement, referring to a previous article that had attacked the conception of the"Party as a will-to-dominate".

"The first thing to be said, I think, is that the "will to dominate" is not something inborn in man as such, but is a psychological product of the capitalist relations of production - for the following reason:

The basic, and almost constituent act of capitalist relations, is the exchange of goods, and this produces antagonism between those who are exchanging, because each one attempts to give as little as possible and to obtain as much as possible. So it is a sort of competition, and the stronger man wins. It gives rise to the figures of the "strong" and the "weak", the "clever guy" and the "sucker".

Now, for the bosses it is of the greatest importance to get the proletarians to adopt this attitude too, because that way they remain divided and in antagonism amongst each other, and so it's easier to control them (...)

Against all this, the proletarians attempt to oppose the collective solidarity of the exploited, based not on mutual power-relationships, but on relationships of equality and of mutual human enrichment. These relationships find their roots not of course in the exchange of goods, but essentially in a factory-type of situation, where it is clear that fighting the boss alone, you lose out, whereas united with your mates you can win.

Unfortunately, for various reasons (which we could discuss another time), when the proletarians start to organise, historically, on a social scale, up till now they have been organised all too often <u>hierarchically</u> - perhaps with the idea that they could beat capitalism by pitting a similar structure against it. The trouble is, that by doing so, they have expropriated themselves of the power to direct their own struggles and their own lives, handing themselves over to a few leaders, who have become leaders partly because they are people who possess certain privileged cultural tools, but above all because they are highly motivated to become leaders - ie motivated by the "will to dominate" as individuals. (After all, the applause and respect of many people enjoyed by a leader, are highly gratifying).

Now, I think it would be useful to propose these issues for debate by comrades - also with a medium-term practical purpose in view: namely the building of organisational structures of a new type.

This means: we have to understand what kind of organisation Lotta Continua was (before it crumbled); we have to make a more thorough criticism of the "conception of the Party as a will-to-dominate" ie the hierarchical party, whose attitude to the masses is: 'Let's capture them! Let's replace the bourgeoisie's hegemony-control over them with our own hegemony-control' etc, instead of thinking how it might be possible to contribute to the process of self-liberation of the masses from all forms of control. (not accidentally, in a letter to LC entitled "The Crusaders of the Revolution", comrade Lorenzino used the term "feudal domains" to describe the

schools in Milan that are hegemonised by this or that political organisation.

We should therefore also try to understand why Lotta Continua as an organisation "blew up" at the Rimini Congress, and even now is unable to put itself together again - in spite of the fact that the newspaper is being bought and read by more people than ever before, and the enactment of the Historic Compromise is leaving an enormous political vacuum on the left of the PCI."

O Soldiers Strike

• A group of soldiers write to the paper, describing strike action that they took in their barracks. The mass movement of democratic and revolutionary soldiers is very widespread - unfortunately it is outside the immediate scope of this pamphlet to deal with it.

Dear Comrades,

Thursday, 24th March, at the Vittorio Veneto barracks, the soldiers carried out a mess-boycott, in protest against the conditions of life in the barracks. The boycott was almost 100% successful. Only the guard, and about 5 soldiers (out of more than 300) went into the mess to eat. The objectives we have posed in this first bout of the struggle are as follows:

* exit permits every fortnight
* leave every 30-40 days
* elimination of pointless duties (eg PAO - armed patrol duties) and reduction of exercises and army repression.

After the success of our first boycott, there was a boycott of our exit permits (this had an effect in a small town, where the cinemas, bars etc depend on the money of the soldiers). This strike was also very successful.

We soldiers are now discussing and organising to find other forms of struggle. We want to make them even more effective, if necessary keeping them up for long periods in order to get satisfaction of our demands.

Soldiers of the
Vittorio Veneto Barracks.

O Problems in Brescia

• A letter from LC comrades in Concesio, Brescia, about certain problems they face. Lotta Continua April 18th 1977.

Dear Newspaper,

We are the comrades from Villa Carcina and Concesio in Brescia province. We are writing to inform you that we have commandeered the duplicator from the Brescia branch office, because the comrades in the town leave it looking like a shitheap.

Furthermore, we are convinced that they no longer wish to carry out the class struggle. It seems that recently they have forgotten that there are Christian Democrats in Brescia (hundreds of them), and bosses, and Fascists.

Maybe they think that it's too tiring carrying out the struggle. Well, some of us thought that way too, for a while (and some still do), but now it seems that we've decided that it can be a good thing, as well as being tiring, and it might mean that, in the end, comrades like Francesco Lorusso don't have to die in the streets, and so many comrades won't be left to rot in the prisons, and people won't be shut out of this society, and crazy people won't be segregated,

and workers and students will take power in order to liberate themselves, so that there will no longer be any exploitation. (...) Since the majority of Brescia comrades are obviously waverers, we have taken the duplicator, and are extending an invitation through you, dear newspaper, to them to come and discuss with us in our new office.

The Comrades from
Villa and Concesio.

Burning Gays?

HAVE THEY STARTED TO BURN THE QUEERS AGAIN?

- On July 29th Lotta Continua (which had long been closed to frank and open discussion by gay comrades) published the following two articles, as part of the continuing debate which has now opened in the pages of LC.

"Once again a homosexual has committed suicide in prison.

The facts are already known. He was Giuseppe Bertolini, a painter who worked in Piazza Navona, Rome. He was attacked and beaten last Friday.

He turned to a policeman. He was upset because of what had happened to him, and he had had a little too much to drink. He calls the policeman "incompetent".

Now, instead of being the victim, he becomes the criminal. He is arrested on a charge of insulting a public official.

At the San Giacomo prison his injuries were hurriedly dressed. Funnily enough, the doctor didn't seem to notice how agitated he was (or if he did, why did he allow him to be taken off to Regina Coeli prison?).

Bertolini is locked up in the isolation cell. And there, with no possibility of help, Giuseppe Bertolini hanged himself."

WILL IT BE THE STAKE, OR THE GHETTO, FOR GAY PEOPLE?

"Since the fall of Fascism, the Italian Penal Code has not enacted any specific laws against the "horrible vice", the "sin against nature par excellence", the "shameful disease" - ie homosexuality. The reason is that a Government Report considered the incidence of the "social plague" to be small and therefore irrelevant.

But for years now we have met each other, sought each other out, and loved each other in street toilets, in station lavatories, in parks, in third-class cinemas - ignored by public opinion, ridiculed and insulted in the streets, oppressed by the powers-that-be in the family, and ghettoised at work (how many have had to resign because they could not bear the cover-up game!).

The birth, growth and spread of the feminist movement, which has acted in a practical, everday way, to undermine male power and capitalist-patriarchal society, has opened the way in Italy. Opened the way for a revolutionary movement of (homo)sexual liberation towards the liberation of polysexual desire and the possibility of the abolition of classes and of gay communism.

(...)

We shall continue to be gay, to love each other, and to multiply, snatching more and more lives away from the jaws of the Norm. If they want to stop us, they have only two ways of doing so - turning us into merchandise in the ghettos of capitalism, or open and legalised repression. Perhaps there is a third way: the psychiatric hospitals, on the Soviet model."

Justine.

Pornography

A sister working on a news-stand in Milan writes to ask whether Lotta Continua newspaper might write something about the problem of pornography, something which affects her a lot. Lotta Continua, April 28th 1977.

Dear Comrades,

I am a woman working in a newspaper kiosk in Milan, and I am sick, very sick, of what I have to do. I am referring to the amount of pornography or pseudo-pornography that comes pouring into the kiosks every day. This morning I removed 23 titles, and that's the sort of number of items that I am faced with every day. They are offensive to women, they disgust me, and they make me feel sick. What am I going to do about it?

I can't refuse to sell them, because by law I'm bound to sell everything I'm given to sell. I could hide them, not put them out on display, but then I always feel I'm leading a double life, selling out women, a feminist on the one hand and running a kiosk on the other. (...) How the hell can they carry on putting out this damn stuff. "Lola with the magic arse"..."Claire with the tight cunt"..."The bestial loves of a 13-year old nympho".... I don't agree with censorship, but I just can't carry on selling this stuff. And it's not just old men who buy them. Sometimes comrades buy them! I sometimes hear someone ask for 'Le Ore' in the same breath as asking for 'Lotta Continua'. I need not tell you what I'd like to do with those papers!

So now, I want the newspaper to start a debate on pornography, and also on the "new pornography" - sadism, violence etc. I want people to shut these kiosks down, by not buying from them any more. And I also want to see magazines that have love and happiness, eroticism and real joy instead of that other junk.

And another thing: I'm often seen as an "easy lay" by men, because I sell those types of magazines, along the lines of "If I sell whores, then I must be a whore too", as one man said to me. This means that I've often had to defend myself against unpleasant scenes. Not to mention the time I found a man masturbating behind the kiosk because he was excited at the sight of "my" magazines.

I'll leave it to you to write the article, draw the conclusions etc, and maybe I'll just end up quitting my job.

Patrizia from Milan.

A CP Steward Writes

A trade unionist and CP member from Bologna writes to explain what he felt about the events of March 16th in Bologna (See p.27), after the death of Francesco Lorusso. Lotta Continua March 21st 1977.

Comrades,

I am a worker, and have been a militant in the Communist Party since 1970. Since 1966 I have worked on the assembly line at Becchi-Zanussi in Forli. From 1966 to 1970 I lived a life that was full of political contradictions, although I have always been on the side of the workers, come what may. At the end of 1968 they elected me shop steward, and also forced the company to re-instate me when I had been sacked.

I have a lot of sympathy with Lotta Continua: I have lived many moments with

this organisation - some which formed me, and some which destroyed me, but overall it has been a negative experience.

Now I am in the Union and in the CP and I believe I am playing a positive role for the workers, who re-elect me each year. But this is not really enough for me. Because everyday I find new problems, contradictions opening up for me. The workers are rightly demanding....the problems that they and I share sometimes tear my brain apart, and then there's the lousy job, on the line.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, it explains why, on Wednesday March 16th I was present as one of the stewards of the Trade Union meeting in Bologna.

There were so many problems to confront...and a fear which was not only physical...they bothered me all the way to Bologna...but they vanished when I got there. I found myself stationed on the corner of via Rizzoli, facing the young people from Lotta Continua. I immediately felt calm. We discussed. Everything went smoothly. There were no provocative slogans, no clubs, but a good, tight presence.

After a bit, Bruno Giorgini, of Lotta Continua, arrived. He played hard: "We're going to line up along the barricades." I answered: "OK". And then the slogan-shouting started. There was a ruffle of nervousness, frowning faces, it only needed a little spark to explode. The space between us and Lotta Continua shrank. We did our best to avoid provocations.

In front of me, familiar faces, friends faces. We don't greet each other, or we pretend not to have seen each other. Then I see Travaglini in front of me, and we stare at each other, staring and questioning each other without saying a word...hard...silent. Then the moment passes.

I got angry with one man who wanted to get a look at the "Indians". I push him back, roughly. Sorry, mate, we're not at the zoo. Then Francesco's brother speaks from the back. The atmosphere is tense. I am crying. I think of all the comrades who have been killed - too many, all of them, too many, and I want to shout Stop it! I can't take it any more. I see that my other comrades nearby, who are generally less emotional than me, they too are moved, and that gives me heart. But then something ugly happened. A student turns towards us, to read the statement that Francesco's brother can't manage to read, because he's so upset. That should have been OK....no problem for anyone...But some arrogant bloke stepped up and tried to tell him he couldn't speak. At which point we all started shouting and arguing, and finally he was allowed to speak. And now the tension is gone, and I feel completely drained.

At about 6.00pm, having finished my job, I went home, discussing with my comrades about why so many of these young people are drawing away from the workers - or at least from the parties that represent the workers. (...)

All these young people, with their problems, their exasperations, their slogans, we can't afford just to leave them alone and abandon them, at least, not if we want to be a hegemonic class, and not simply a bunch of paternalists.

Valerio Pachetti

Dealing with Fascists

A group of Lotta Continua comrades from Cassano d'Adda explain how they have been dealing with the Fascists in their town. Lotta Continua April 27th 1977.

Comrades,

For the second time in two years, the Fascist branch office in Cassano d'Adda has been shut down.

On Wednesday evening, a militant and combattive demonstration decided to put an end to the raids and provocations which the Fascists have been carrying out here, and which they are trying to extend into the whole area.

Last Wednesday came the umpteenth provocation. Two comrades were threatened and hit by a number of fascists.

Shortly afterwards two P.38 bullets were found on the doorstep of the Democrazia Proletaria offices: a clear threat.

The comrades in the area organised, and met on Wednesday evening. There have been a number of neo-Fascists in the town for some time. Their provocations and the long list of attacks, letters, threats etc, has been too much. We have made our answer by closing the MSI (t.n: neo-Fascist) offices in Via Mazzini. It is vital that the comrades living in this area coordinate, in order to root out the terror that the Fascists are imposing in this area, and it is for this reason that the Lotta Continua comrades are proposing the formation of an anti-fascist committee in the Adda region.

The Comrades of the Gorgonzola
Section of Lotta Continua.

O Male Chauvinists

● A letter from the Feminist Collective of Teramo, on the East Coast opposite Rome. They write to inform comrades of the behaviour of certain male Leftists. Lotta Continua 16th April.

Dear Comrades,

Do you know Ugo and Aldo Di Carlo, Enrico Valeri and Oscar Di Teodoro? These so-called "comrades" live in Teramo, and we are going to tell you about the sort of violence they are capable of, against women. They came into a shop run by a feminist comrade, and they wrote insults all over the page of Lotta Continua that described the trial of Claudia Caputi (eg Down with Women! Long Live Male Chauvinists!). They attacked the women comrades who were there, verbally, and called us petty bourgeois because we do not practice the armed struggle, and they carried on insulting us, calling us whores, slags, "I wouldn't fancy screwing that one" etc etc. (....) (t.n: they also describe other incidents).

Naturally, the women comrades got angry, and at that point they started showing off. All they could say was: "Calm down...don't get hysterical...it doesn't mean we're not talking to feminists any more..."

These acts of violence might appear to be only verbal, but we experienced them as physical violence against each one of us, and we are no longer just to make verbal replies to things like that. We're no longer prepared to suffer these things every day, even when we find ourselves with men comrades, when they come on with ironic tolerance, false goodwill, open or half-hidden sarcasm and paternalistic interest.

With this letter we want to show clearly that if we women are supposed to be part of the whole movement (as everybody now seems to be repeating like parrots), then we can't accept men comrades who are also male chauvinist at the same time. Anyone who's against women is against the whole movement. So we are asking the political organisations, and the men comrades who want to build a correct relationship with the women's movement, to isolate certain individuals at every level of their organisations.

Feminist Collective of Teramo.

THE TRUE FACE OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE





Enrico Berlinguer

THE ITALIAN REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

What follows is a loose account of the revolutionary Left in Italy. For understanding the very early days, there are a number of available sources (see the Note on page 124), some of which are available in this country. However, this list was drawn up by an ex-Lotta Continua comrade.

PdUP-Manifesto

Il Manifesto - Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Communismo: (Daily paper: Il Manifesto).

In 1970, some PCI central committee members were thrown out of the Party for producing a magazine which was considered "out of line". The magazine then became a daily paper in 1971, and the organisation fused with the remnants of PSIUP (Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity), after both had failed to win any seats in the 1972 General Election (PSIUP got 600,000 votes, Manifesto got 220,000). In the General Election of June 20th 1976, which saw the big advances by the PCI, they combined with AO, LC and MLS in the single revolutionary electoral body known as Proletarian Democracy (Democrazia Proletaria - DP). Of the 6 deputies elected, 3 were of this group.

It has some following among some shop stewards, and a number of Trade Union officials are members (part of the so-called "Trade Union Left"). Its political line is often criticised for not being a deep enough critique of the PCI. In fact, they advocate a "return to Togliatti", and can be described as a sort of ginger-group to the left of the PCI, aiming to convert the PCI and the Unions "to socialist policies". It opposes the Historic Compromise, but this opposition is weakened by its fear of offending the CP. The newspaper is written in pretty high-brow style, and as a party it is attractive to intellectuals who wish to pose as "left of the PCI" but without making a drastic break. It recently split while trying to unite with AO.

Avanguardia Operaia

AO: (Daily paper: Il Quotidiano dei Lavoratori).

This organisation started in 1968/9 in the Unitary Base Committees (CUB) that sprang up in a number of factories and schools, especially in Milan, which is still AO's strongest base. Avanguardia Operaia calls itself Marxist-Leninist, but has been called Trotskyist by some (it has 'fraternal relations' with the SWP in England). It expanded nationally by absorbing other, smaller, local groups. 2 of the 6 deputies elected in 1976 for DP were AO candidates, but one of them (Corvisieri) resigned from AO earlier this year (but not from Parliament), accusing his ex-party colleagues of selling-out AO to the PdUP in the projected unification between the two groups. This unification had not gone as planned, in fact, because both have split, and the minority of each has joined the majority of the other. Both PdUP and AO have played little part in the recent movement, but mainly "tailed along behind it criticising and gesticulating".

Lotta Continua

LC: (Daily paper: Lotta Continua).

LC started in 1968 in Pisa, with the split of the old "Il Potere Operaio". (The other



half, Potere Operaio - Workers' Power - subsequently grew to national status, but then dissolved a few years ago). LC took off in Turin in the Hot Autumn of 1969, with the Worker Student Assemblies (see account in Red Notes No.2). Subsequently it expanded all over Italy, being the only national group to have a certain strength in the South. At its height it had anything up to 50,000 militants, 100 full-time paid officers, at least one branch office in nearly all of Italy's 94 provinces (in Rome alone, a city of 3 million inhabitants, it had 21 neighbourhood branch offices at one point). Traditionally, LC has never produced much theoretical work, and was accused of having no strategy, only tactics,"which changed from week to week". However, its strength has been that it was always in the thick of all proletarian struggles (housing, students, workers, unemployed, soldiers, prisoners and women's struggles). As it grew in size, its organisational apparatus became more elaborate and hierarchical, and at the 1st Congress (held in Rome in December 1974) it officially adopted a Leninist type of statute (actually modelled on the statute of the Chinese Communist Party).

The collapse of the organisation can be dated as starting on December 6th 1975, when a group of LC's Rome heavy squad (servizio d'ordine) physically assaulted a 30,000-strong national march of women only, who were demonstrating for the legalisation of abortion. (The reason they gave was that they wanted to be in the march too!) That evening, 300 furious LC feminists invaded the National Committee, which happened to be in session, demanding the heads of those responsible. The organisation nearly suffered a total exodus of all the women there and then - but this was put off by giving them a bigger say in the power structure. In any event, the organisation managed to hold together until the June 20th elections in 1976, when a big victory was expected (forecasts of 3% of the vote were being made), which would have made the DP decisive in forming a left majority in Parliament. The disappointing result (only 1½%, and LC only got one of the 6 DP seats), caused the crisis of the organisation to precipitate.

This came to a head at the 2nd Congress, held at Rimini in November 1976, where, in an atmosphere of indescribable confusion, the General Secretary's introductory Report went unheeded, and the women held separate meetings "for women only" - a move soon imitated by the workers (which left the traditional male intellectual leaders rather out of things). The leadership was attacked, especially by the women, and accused of having expropriated the rank and file of their political decision-making power over the years. The old "traditional", "sacrificial", no-fun style of political work came under fire. There was much talk of integrating the "political" and the "personal" aspects of life.

It is said that the General Secretary burst into tears. He confessed that he had in fact enjoyed being a powerful leader-figure (see pp.93-6). In any event, it was a highly emotion-charged experience, and those who participated said it was impossible to describe the feel of it to anyone who hadn't been there. The leadership was changed, a "provisional" National Committee was elected, and it was decided that "the Congress would continue at local level".

Since then the organisation has just crumbled away, and hundreds of branches have closed down. During the events from February 1977 onwards, LC militants basically "dissolved" themselves into the movement, where they each acted individually. The newspaper, on the other hand, has been selling <u>more copies than ever before</u> (in 1976 it averaged 13,000 copies a day; by March 1977 this jumped to 23,000, and in many places more than doubled. (In December 1977 the figures were 35,000 copies sold every day). The newspaper has been acting, basically, as the voice of the unaffiliated majority of comrades in the movement.

The sudden collapse of Lotta Continua is a crucially important fact for revolutionaries in other countries to understand.

<u>A Note on the Revolutionary Daily Press</u>:

All the political daily papers in Italy are distributed nationally, so

that each kiosk has at least one copy of each paper. The kiosk-owner's own political opinions are not allowed to influence his choice of stock, so Communist vendors sell even fascist papers and vice-versa. This is a great help to the revolutionary Left, of course.

MLS Movimento dei Lavoratori per il Socialismo - Workers' Movement for Socialism: (Periodical: Fronte Popolare).

This group, which is smaller than the other three, also included candidates in the DP election lists, but none were elected. It is mainly based in Milan, though with local branches in some other towns. It is the largest group of the"Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist-Maoist" tradition. It is criticised by many for heavy dogmatism, and the Autonomists even accuse them of being "agents of the bourgeoisie". Together with Lotta Continua and the Radical Party, they joined in the 8-referendum signature-collecting campaign earlier in 1977 (see below).

Marxist Leninists There are various other very minor Marxist-Leninist groups, some numbering only a score of militants or less. The PCdI, which was the only party officially recognised by People's China, recently sided with Albania in the dispute over the "3 Worlds". Stella Rossa, another group, although dating back at least to 1968, is today only known because they took over an old convent in Rome and are organising various mass cultural activities there (films, theatre, pop groups etc).

GCR Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari - Revolutionary Communist Groups. Members of the IVth International. Up until 1967-8 this was the largest grouping left of the PCI. Deep entryist into the PCI, and well-known for their leftist resolutions in PCI conferences. They see the "masses" developing through "their organisations" - the PSI, PCI, Trade Unions etc. Membership in 1967 about 2,500; from 1970 onwards about 300. Now even smaller than MLS. Trotskyism has never gained much influence in Italy, unlike Britain.

Bordigists There are a variety of tiny groups that hearken back to the thought of Bordiga, first national secretary of the PCI in the 1920s. Lotta Comunista, generally reputed as a Bordigist group, gained a certain notoriety a couple of years ago, for its very rigid dogmatism. They often fought physical battles with other comrades, and were accused of having accepted not-so-ex fascists as militants.

Autonomia Operaia Workers' Autonomy. Various publications, including Rosso, Senza Tregua, Mai Più Senza Fucile etc (Red, No Truce, and Never Again without a Gun).

Autonomia Operaia is not a national organisation, but a wide and growing "area" including a number of local organisations that agree on some issues, but disagree on others. They are, however, all bitterly opposed to the PCI and the Trade Unions, whom they regard as class enemies (and by whom they are considered to be fascists). Their class basis is mainly the more desperate jobless immigrants from the South, though they have some support in Northern factories too. In Rome they are popularly known as the "Volsci" from their HQ in Via dei Volsci, where they have a radio station. They represent the "hard-line" wing of the movement, proposing that "the level of struggle must be raised", which often means that it be raised to armed confrontation with the police. While one could not say that they actually killed the policeman Passamonti, they certainly shed no tears.

They were the only force to act as an organised fraction inside the Movement, but they alienated many comrades by the strong-arm tactics they used in their attempts to win a majority in the Assemblies, as well as by their proposals, which are considered "adventurist" by many. They are not popular with the

feminists or the gays, for they tend to regard both as a frivolous waste of time. They have grown, however, since many comrades say: "Well, at least they are doing something!" And they too are usually to be found in the thick of proletarian struggles. They accuse Lotta Continua of getting "institutionalised". They should not be confused with the "creative autonomists" of Bologna, who are much like the Metropolitan Indians of Rome.

Metropolitan Indians

This again is not an organisation, but a sector of the Movement, who gained much publicity by their imaginative use of biting irony and wit to make fun of the PCI, as well as using theatricals, war-paint, mime, fancy dress etc.

BR and NAP

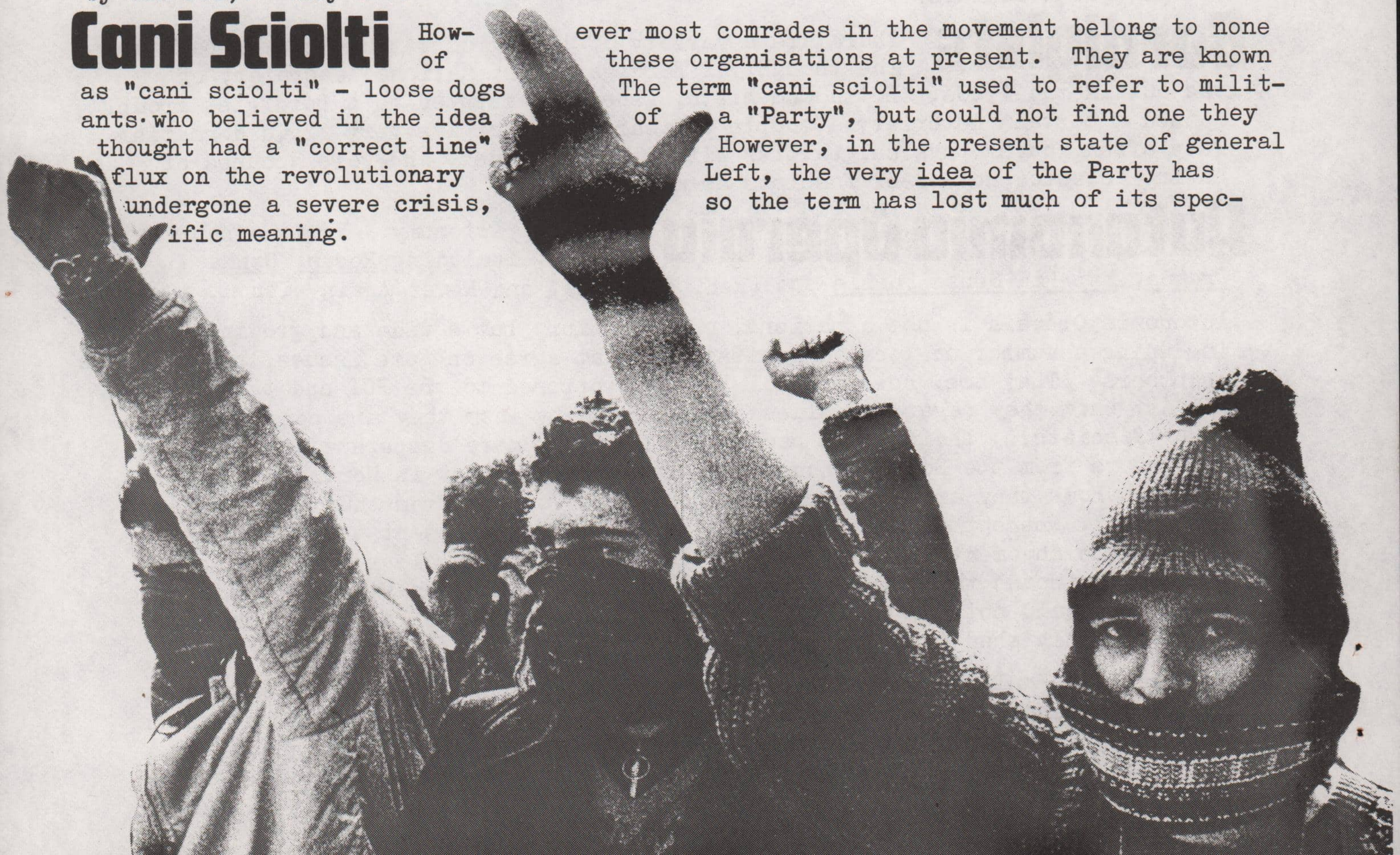
These are underground organisations, who have declared war on the State. They carry out this war by killing and kidnapping, and shooting in the legs right-wing magistrates, journalists, industrialists, foremen etc. Many comrades are very suspicious of them, and say they are manoeuvred by the Fascists, the CIA etc. The BR (Red Brigades) is mainly Nothern-based, and is said to recruit in the big factories; while the NAP (Nuclei Armati Proletari) recruits from the prison population in the South.

Radical Party

The Partito Radicale is a phenomenon on its own. It has grown recently from far-off tiny beginnings to get 400,000 votes in 1976, and 4 deputies. They are a bourgeois civil-rights party, campaigning for things like divorce, abortion, conscientious objection, ecology, drugs etc, and making wide use of referendums. Although they are not revolutionary, and are non-violent, and even "democratically" talk to Fascists, they have been so cold-shouldered by the "official" left (PCI and to a lesser extent PSI) that they find themselves often campaigning side by side with revolutionary comrades. Their leader, Marco Pannella, is a flamboyant character who has often gone on hunger strikes to obtain time on TV. They are dead-against the Vatican, and are hated by the Catholics (and hence - Historic Compromise - also by the PCI). They have a radio station in Rome

Cani Sciolti

However most comrades in the movement belong to none of these organisations at present. They are known as "cani sciolti" - loose dogs of the term "cani sciolti" used to refer to militants who believed in the idea of a "Party", but could not find one they thought had a "correct line" However, in the present state of general flux on the revolutionary Left, the very idea of the Party has undergone a severe crisis, so the term has lost much of its specific meaning.



THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN ITALY

The following three items give some background about the development of the women's movement in Italy. First a preface, followed by a letter from two sisters in Bologna, and then the concluding document agreed by the National Conference of the women's movement, February 1978.

The situation of women in Italy is one of the most backward in Europe. Feudal and patriarchal customs continue to exist: many of these are savage, with the law looking kindly on men who beat their wives - or even kill them, in the case of adultery. As in other Catholic countries there is a tendency for men to look on women either as "the Madonna" (to be respected) or as "the prostitute" (to be desired, but despised). Violence against women is widespread, and increasing. Any woman travelling around a city by herself after dark is considered to be "asking for it". And gang-rape is not uncommon. In this sort of situation, women have been forced to organise - and their organisation has extended to cover the "legal" forms of violence against women - ie treatment by doctors, abortion, birth etc.

The anti-women attitudes are rife on the Left as well, and until not so long ago, on the revolutionary Left too. Women had a hard struggle to make themselves heard in the revolutionary organisations, and too often were either considered simply as "so-and-so's girlfriend", or as a useful person to turn a duplicator handle.

When the workers and students began to move in Italy in 1969-70, the women's movement was hardly even in embryo. There were influences from the women's movement in the USA, but these were not very widespread. In fact it was only really the Divorce Referendum in 1974 that gave the push to the movement: the campaigning against the Right's attempt to abolish the divorce law was seen by some groups as mainly an issue of national party politics - but it began to raise women's issues in a fundamental way.

Abortion was also a key issue - an issue which provoked a major scandal inside Lotta Continua. The first big national demonstration over the abortion issue was called in Rome, December 6th 1975: it was "for women only". Men were not to be allowed to march. However, at one point Lotta Continua's "servizio d'ordine" (march stewards) attacked the march, demanding to be let in: this attitude led to a crisis which had far-reaching consequences for that organisation and for the whole of the revolutionary Left.

Apart from demonstrations, the movement mainly took the form of consciousness raising groups, which started to spring up all over Italy as a place where women could meet and begin to discuss their problems specifically as women. Alongside this movement came the "crisis of the couple", in which thousands of women (mainly on the revolutionary Left, it must be said) started to challenge their relationships with the menfolk, and began exploring new kinds of relationships.

The high point of the movement can perhaps be dated at April 3rd 1976, when 50,000 women from all over Italy marched through the streets of Rome demanding the right to abortion on demand. Even the PCI's 'Union of Italian Women' marched. But the Christian Democrats, with the CP, concocted a sort of compromise Bill, giving ultimate decision-making power to the doctor, not to the woman. This Bill began its course through Parliament, and opposition from women in the

streets has been at a low level - partly because the women's movement has seemed to take up a sort of rejection of politics. However, on the one hand the practical everyday organising (for instance arranging abortions for women etc) has continued. And on the other hand the movement has periodically taken to the streets again, around specific issues. One was the case where some rich Fascist youths raped two young women, murdering one in the process. Another was the case of Claudia Caputi (see p.69), and there have been others.

Needless to say, the repercussions of the growing women's movement have not only been felt in women's issues: their impact has been throughout the Left organisations. When the new revolutionary movement began to emerge in February 1977, it was firmly based on the material and other needs of the participants themselves, and no longer on some abstract "commitment to the needs of the working class" in abstraction. In this new movement, the feminist component has been more strongly present than ever before, particularly in the struggle to integrate the "personal" and the "political" aspects of politics, and in the struggle against hierarchy-structures and leader-figures.

a Letter from Bologna

Dear Sisters,

It is very hard to describe the situation of our movement in so short a space. We'll try to outline some of its tendencies, and explain to you some of our own points of view.

The past 5 years of struggle have meant a tremendous amount of work, analysis and organisation against the system. We have insisted that our movement is specific and distinct. As a feminist movement we have fought to establish the fact that our daily life is political - we are autonomous political agents. We have challenged the holy myth of the "centrality" of the industrial working class. We have stressed that social life has a primary political importance, especially as far as women are concerned, as part and parcel of the new restructuring of Italian capitalism along the lines of the "diffused factory" (See p.123). We have also chosen to be autonomous from the so-called revolutionary parties - where women had become the 'Florence Nightingales of the duplicator'!

Because of all this, we have been constantly critical of the politics and the practice of the established Labour Movement and the revolutionary movements, because they deny women the status of political individuals in their own right - living with a specific form of exploitation. Instead, we have moved in a different direction. We have looked at our marginalisation in order better to understand and impose our needs. And our main objective has been to satisfy those needs.

We have been working on consciousness-raising as our method of analysing our family life, our sexuality and sexual experiences, our relationships with other women/men, and with the institutions. On that basis we have formed women's health collectives; groups to do abortions (which are still a 'crime' in Italy); self-analysis groups; "wages for housework" committees; and intervention groups based around hospitals and factories. Our intention has been to create as many channels of counter-information and propaganda for women as possible.

Partly because our movement is not a single, unified whole, our main problem is the relationship between the women's movement and the political arena outside of it. This is partly brought about by the way the State has been dealing with our struggles.

It's not accidental that the State is choosing this period to reorganise the plan for the social services: this has coincided with the first struggles of the women's movement - the moment when we, as women, are starting to leave

the housework and the children to our husbands, making our own needs the basis for a new relationship with our menfolk. Also we have been forcing doctors to visit us not alone, but in the company of other women, and forcing them to explain simply and in detail what is wrong with us, so that we can actively participate in the problems of our own health. It also coincides with our refusal to allow ourselves to go on dying from clandestine abortions, or to go on suffering giving birth in inhuman conditions.

We have demanded a social services system run by and for women, on the basis of our needs. The State has replied by setting up laws and institutions to deal with us <u>individually</u> (and not as a <u>movement</u>), thereby reducing the overall problems of woman's life to a whole series of <u>separate</u> aspects.

For example, we have always said that abortion should be available free and on demand - a fundamental moment for a wider struggle around the whole issue of health. But the State has drawn up a law which is experimenting the Historic Compromise on our health and our autonomy, and the result is highly repressive. We could tell you of all the comrades who have been arrested for doing free abortions....We could tell you of the indiscriminate protection that is allowed to the practitioners of legalised rape, who are allowed to violate us first before then giving us abortions at an average price of hundreds of thousands of lire. And we could tell you a story that's been in the news this week - a doctor in Rome violated a really young girl just before performing her abortion - a violence he justified as being part of the treatment! And we could tell you of the violence and the police arrests that are used against women who have to carry out abortions with primitive instruments - women who have to turn to the hospitals in the event of an emergency, and then wind up in prison.

The problem that we face at national level is precisely how we are going to deal with these institutions which, while they are not what we wanted, could perhaps be turned into a means of control and counter-power for women. It will not be easy. We run a danger that our control of this area as women in the women's movement might end up turning into a system of <u>co-management</u> alongside the hierarchy of the medical Establishment - which is precisely what the system is planning.

Anyway, for further information we are sending you the document that was approved at our last National Women's Conference on February 25th-26th 1978.

O National Women's Conference

This is the final document approved by the recent national conference of the women's movement, a united position on the problems of abortion, contraception and sexuality, put forward as the basis for a national mobilisation on March 8th 1978.

As the women's movement we have carried forward a struggle for abortion - a struggle which has affirmed the right of women to make our own decisions about our own bodies, our own role as mothers, and our own lives. In our meeting in Rome we have felt that it is necessary to re-open the debate and the struggle, in all towns in Italy, and in all our collectives, to raise the problem of abortion and of sexuality, in order to reaffirm our conception of women as whole, autonomous, individual beings.

The central point of this struggle is to reaffirm the principle of women's self-determination in all fields. In relation to abortion, this means that the women's movement refuses to accept any law which establishes control over women and over our rights to decide our own lives. Abortion must be available

as an emergency service in all public hospitals, and must be available at women's request. We shall fight for all those employed in the public health services to be bound to assist in and practice abortion. Women are opening up this struggle in particular cities, concentrating on particular hospitals: uncovering and denouncing clientelism, exposing connivance and repressive attitudes among health service personnel, is a first step towards a different sort of medicine, for a sexuality based on life and not on death.

Therefore we suggest that the women's movement organises a struggle against the Bill being proposed by the 'Movement for Life' - a law which sees women simply as a receptacle for children. We also reject the law proposed by the lay parties, because it contains no statement regarding women's right to self-determination, and because it sanctions State control of women's bodies. No party has the right to legislate on women and on women's bodies - particularly today, when the demands of the women's movement are being traded and sold as part of the political stabilisation project between the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats - as part of patriarchal power.

Abortion must immediately have all legal penalties removed from it, and this should take place via referendum if necessary. Regarding the public "family" pregnancy advisory services, these are clearly being set up by the Government and the political parties as a response <u>against</u> the proposals brought forward by the women's movement. For this reason we will combat them, with the aim of transforming them into public abortion clinics "for women", based on the aims and activities of the women's movement, and under the real control of women. The self-managed abortion clinics and the principle of self-help and self-managed abortion are an essential heritage of the movement: they must be continued and broadened in all situations - not as "women's solution to the problem of abortion", but as a moment of struggle and re-appropriation of knowledge, for a medical service that really serves women. The correct way to pose the problem of sexuality is to base it on a deep consideration of sexuality, on the precise and fundamental objective of separating the reproduction aspect from sexuality as such.

In relation to this, we see the necessity of organising at the national level, through groups in each town, setting up study groups to look at the literature, the statistics and the problems, with a view to reappropriating in real terms all those instruments of knowledge that, together with our struggle and our control, will finally lead to the creation of safe, reversible, harmless contraceptives for men and for women.

The National Women's Movement Conference asks all women and all collectives to mobilise all over Italy on March 8th, on the lines proposed in this document. We also ask sisters to attend the trial which will take place in Salerno on March 13th (t.n. a trial of women involved in a pro-abortion campaign), in order to express our opposition to the fascist and religious ideologies that want the practice of clandestine, illegal abortion to continue.

<u>Rome, February 26th 1978.</u>



AN OVERVIEW

The following is a further contribution from Sergio Bologna, one of the editors of the journal Primo Maggio. This is a major article, which took up 2 pages of Lotta Continua, September 20th 1977.

We do not pretend that this is an easy piece to understand. But its implications are so far-reaching that we have printed it anyway. In our translation we have tried to stay close to the original, while still making the piece intelligible to an English reader.

In the article, Bologna is asking whether the recent difficulties of the revolutionary movement in Italy are due to contradictions in the theories, or to a defeat of the practice. The analysis is conducted firmly in Marxist terminology.

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE THEORY OR A DEFEAT OF THE PRACTICE?

My contribution is based on the working class and the Communist Party in Milan - ie the working class and reformism.

I think we must start from the head-on confrontation between the battleground of the working class and the battleground of the capitalists - namely the refusal of work, on the one hand, and the reduction of socially necessary labour on the other.

Comrade Karl-Heinz Roth wrote a letter from prison a year ago, in which he said: "For a long time now capital has not restricted its exploitation of labour-power purely to the immediate process of production: rather (as a response to the struggles in the factory) it has extended its command, with ever-higher levels of efficiency, to the entire cycle of reproduction of labour-power. This applies both to capital's specifically technological power, as well as, formally, to the extension of the wage relation." Even the reduction of socially necessary labour (reducing the amount of living labour, replacing it with machinery, automation etc) is a process which capital is enacting without necessarily passing through the immediate process of production.

To explain: If capital had tried to reduce the labour force in recent years purely and simply by using technology, it would have clashed head-on with working-class rigidity in the factories, and therefore would have accomplished very little. Of course, capital has managed to win some important battles on that front....but this has not been its most powerful weapon. No...it has been using other weapons, more effective ones. In particular the weapon of "monetary chaos". In so doing, it has valorised labour-power to such an extent that we can say that today we have reached that stage of "destruction of the barriers of value" which Marx speaks of, so mysteriously, in some pages of the Grundrisse (t.n. for example pages 443-447 of the Penguin edition of the Grundrisse).

What happens? Well, let's say that the terms of exchange, the prices of commodities, are no longer determined by the relation between fixed capital and variable capital; notions of productivity and profit no longer make economic sense, and therefore are no longer useful for defining, for instance, a power-hierarchy between various capitalist states. Then we might say that the terms of exchange are defined instead by a series of measures that we can call monetary dictatorship - real "acts of illegality" against the law of

value. At that point we can say that the process of reducing socially necessary labour is taking place outside the immediate process of production. And the accumulation of capital is happening outside the production of commodities, strictly defined. It takes place primarily in the sphere of interest-producing capital ('capitale produttivo d'interesse'), which can operate on a terrain all its own, out of reach of the daily rigours of the battle with working class resistance. On this terrain it can regain some margins of manoeuvre which later, with the completion of the crisis-cycle, can be recycled into direct command over labour inside the factories.

The law of value has been systematically broken by capital itself. We find an indication of this in the fact that nowadays it is sufficient for a country to posses monetary power, for it to be classed among the "Great Powers", whereas, in the past, political power was accorded to those states which enjoyed a greater availability of technology, or greater flexibility and discipline of labour. Saudi Arabia, for instance, lacks technology and labour force (the two elements which have traditionally made up the productivity of an economic system), but nevertheless has a vital role in determining the strategic choices of international capital. Some might say that this is because Saudi Arabia has large reserves of a particular commodity - oil. This is not true. Saudi Arabia has entered the Great Power arena by virtue of the specific form which accumulation has adopted in this precise moment of history - ie, interest-producing capital, the new way of producing money as a particular commodity.

Anyway, let's return to the balance of forces that the working class had brought about prior to the onset of "monetary chaos". We are talking of a balance of power that was built around the wage. The refusal of work was organised around the wage; working class autonomy showed itself around the wage; working class organisation in the factory was fundamentally based on the wage. In fact (in the words of the Governor of the Bank of Italy) the working class had become a 'monetary authority' in its own right, because the working class was forcing capital to pay it wages whose magnitude was determined solely by the working class itself. This continued to be the case (and it's vital to understand this) even when the confrontation between labour and capital was transferred outside the immediate process of production - I'm referring to that colossal expansion of public spending, the increase of the social wage and the increase of the indirect wage, all of which enabled the working class to find "new allies" for the first time in its life (ie new political protagonists among whom women were the main - and perhaps only - force).

It has been this ability of the working class to extend its own monetary authority outside the four walls of the factory, that has forced capital to adopt inflation as the means of running the system. At this point, reformism had no choice but to follow where events took it....obliged, by its senile economic formulations, to criticise inflation, and, on the other hand, forced by the working class to accept it in practice.

However, we must stress that, while interest-producing capital (ie the new way to produce the money-commodity) and inflation (ie the new way of financing the factors of capital) are two tightly interlinked phenomena, each feeding the other, they are nevertheless very different politically. Their material development is radically different. In fact inflation is the form through which capital must undergo a working class offensive; interest-producing capital, on the other hand, is the form in which the working class must be subjected to accumulation in such a way that it finds it impossible to intervene or exert its power as labour-power.

So, when present-day capitalism wants to deepen the Crisis, what does it do? Mr Modigliani, interviewed in Corriere della Sera (June 10th 1977) gives us the answer: inflation must be attacked. Even if the inflation-potential of interest-producing capital is at least as high as that of wage increases. Inflation must be attacked because it represents the residual power of the working class.

Inflation is the terrain on which the working class can unite with other sections of society who are pressing for higher income and better services.

Second Wind for Reformism?

A second introductory element of my analysis is the following:

Capital's strategy is to reduce socially necessary labour; to reduce the labour force employed in the immediate process of production; and therefore to introduce massive unemployment. Now, the prolongation of workers' "authority" over wages (whether direct or indirect wages) can function as an exchange commodity. In other words, the factory working class (which is well protected and guaranteed) takes back certain amounts of the socially produced surplus value and defends the income of the non-guaranteed strata, in exchange for a complete standstill as regards defending manning-levels. In other words, it advances on the front of distribution of income, but retreats in the face of the attack on jobs (ie it retreats in the face of the reduction of socially necessary labour which today's crisis is bringing about in the immediate process of production).

This has happened in a number of countries where reformism has accepted the terms of this exchange, and has been able to impose it on the working class. But this has <u>not</u> been the case in Italy.

This brings us to the situation in Milan. In Italy struggles against Cassa Integrazione (Note), against redundancy, have been a constant feature of the crisis of recent years. From a wage point of view, redundancy is not bad (at least, it's not as bad as other things). But more to the point, the redundancy schemes are masking a police operation for systematically purging left-wing cadres out of the factories. And they are also the most concrete form in which we can see the reduction of socially necessary labour taking place. Redundancy acts in the same way as introducing machinery to replace living labour: it takes away from the working class the power to make its presence felt inside the cycle of production, the power to block the cycle of production; it even takes away knowledge of the cycle of production.

In the struggle against redundancies, the factory working class has expressed the highest point of a movement of resistance whose demand is <u>to continue to function as labour-power</u>.

So, we have a conclusion: there is a desire to continue to be labour-power, to continue to have all the social powers that derive from that condition. There is an intention to prevent the destruction of the working class engaged in the immediate process of production (or rather, its reduction to a minority status in society). This desire has been, and is, part of the programme which the working class has adopted during this period of the Crisis, with all the contradictions that this implies.

It is in this arena that reformism now intervenes (regardless of whether the CP did or did not support this or that specific factory struggle against redundancies). What I want to stress here is the following point: every time the class struggle goes through a phase in which a fundamental point of the working class's programme is the attempt to preserve its own role as labour-power, then <u>reformism</u> represents the most concrete mediation of the interests of the working class (especially if this reformism has Leninist origins and roots). It then becomes extremely difficult to launch a frontal attack on this reformism, because it is fundamentally and integrally rooted in a given political composition of the working class. Of course, if we are only at the start of the real crisis in Italy (as Mr Modigliani maintains), then the Communist Party's reformism will be seriously put to the test. But my assessment of the nature of the Italian labour and trade union movement convinces me that reformism will attempt a new revival in relation to the

workforce. Furthermore, it will re-affirm its role not through paralysis of the struggle but through the promotion of struggle.

A few weeks ago Luciano Lama of the CGIL was being heckled and booed in the Cathedral Square in Milan. If the demonstrators had actually stopped to listen to him, they would have heard him say that it was vital that the Trade Unions return to the grass roots - the shop stewards and area councils. Is it possible that Lama might succeed in repeating Trentin's brilliant operation in 1969, inside this new situation of a cycle of struggles whose aim is to defend labour power (and, in the last analysis, to re-affirm the validity of the laws of value)? On the other hand, might this attempt be scuttled by the CP's recent positions on trade union unification (Note, p.122), and by their lack of credibility since the Party and the Unions have repressed so many struggles? I don't have the answers to these questions. But I do predict that reformism, as a programme of defending labour power as labour power,and as a means of re-affirming the validity of the laws of value, will have a lot of political space in the coming period, and will in fact continue to represent a sizeable sector of working class interests.

A Fragmentation

Having said all that, I'll come to the heart of what I want to say. If we agree that a fundamental part of the programme of the working class in this phase is the defence and guarantee of its own existence as labour-power, then we have to admit that this is in contradiction with the refusal of work. But there is more. We have said that capital can attack the composition of the working class, can attack its material strength and its physical numbers, even outside the immediate relations of production (ie capital can choose a terrain of struggle outside of the factory). But the refusal of work cannot organise outside the immediate process of production. Furthermore, even the workers' ability to impose their "monetary authority" both inside and outside the factory can also be interpreted as a weakness - the inability to organise the rejection of work inside the factory at the level required to be able to counter this capitalist offensive based on the reduction of socially necessary labour.

In short, the workers have won, at the level of wages, but have lost, at the level of the working week.

An example from history - not as a model for us, but to show what I mean by a defeat at the level of the working week and consequently a defeat for levels of employment: During the crisis that preceded the Spanish Civil War in the '30s, redundancies were threatened all round. A number of anarchist workers, faced with their mates losing their jobs, put a proposal to their boss, for a different organisation of the shifts, so as to absorb the same amount of workers as previously. Obviously, what was being cut down and shared out was the number of working hours, not the wage. And they could guarantee that the agreement was kept, because they were armed.

Now, if the rejection of work is not to be contradictory with the preservation of labour power in its role as labour power, it is obvious that the struggle for reducing the working week is going to have to go to lengths which are quite Utopian, considering the present state of the mode of production and the balance of power between the classes. I would say that if we want to impose a reduction of the working week such that it forces the bosses to hire new workers and maintain favourable manning levels, then we should give up the 35 hour week, the 34 hour week etc, and start demanding a 20-hour week with no loss of pay. This is the only way that we can materially stop, from within the direct process of production, this reduction of socially necessary labour.

Here, we have to admit, there has been a defeat of the working class, a defeat which has managed to interrupt the onward march of the mass worker.

So, we have a defeat, a historic defeat, which brings with it a lot of troubles for theory. In fact, both the crisis of the Party as an organisational form, and the crisis of theories regarding the new protagonists of the struggle, are reflections of this defeat. (...) First problem: the rejection of work can no longer be presented as a form of organisation of the working class (t.n. as it once was). Rather it has become individual subjectivity - everything from absenteeism to the liberation of personal desires, from the worker who comes out as a gay, to the worker who sits and smokes dope. What has happened is that the organised forms of the rejection of work have been fragmented, and that rejection of work has now been taken up at an individual level....but these individuals no longer have the factory as the organisational base of their political practice and their "cultural" existence: rather, they operate inside the Movement (or the sum of movements) of proletarian youth, of women, of homosexuals etc.

The best analyses of the tertiary and service sectors show this defeat of the industrial workers - a defeat which in Italy, and perhaps in Britain, has admittedly been slowed down by the rigidity of the workforce (everyone knows that in Italy whole sectors of industry are kept alive even if they are totally unprofitable.....but then again, is profit still an economic notion?!)

Need for a Reassessment

When, in order to "save" a factory and its workforce, it becomes necessary to use the formal political parties and institutions, and when these are the only means available, it becomes even clearer that reformism has a historical role to play. It is in this context that we should discuss the history of the armed struggle in Milan, in recent years. In the early 1970s the political practice of illegality had its baptism in the big factories of Milan. Since that time the "armed party" tendency has taken a different course, drawing on traditional theories on the building of an external leadership. But we must never forget that, in the beginning, this movement had a clear working class character, which was certainly a minority presence, but nonetheless did exist inside the large industrial estates surrounding Milan. If you want to understand the attitude of the Communist Party in Milan, you have to remember that for a long time the CP has had to confront a series of openly illegal initiatives. In fact, one of the main threads of the CP's reconstruction of its presence among the Milanese working class has been to expel all the worker militants who, even though not directly involved in the armed struggle, might have given it political cover in the factories.

But this in itself is not enough to explain the punitive behaviour of the Communist Party's stewards at Lama's recent appearance in Milan**. To fully understand this we would have to take a long look at certain episodes where the revolutionary Left has not had the courage to make a clear analysis. For instance some episodes of "armed spontaneism", like the shoot-out in Via De Amicis, during and after which the Milanese Left retreated into a period of humiliating disorientation. We must say that the critique of the party as an organisational form must not end up in a situation where the individual person becomes the Party, and where juvenile behaviour can create situations that have a disastrous effect on the whole movement (especially in the face of obvious criminalisation of the struggle by the State, as exemplified by the recent arrest of the lawyers in Milan). Here is a debate in which those who have credibility should stand up and make their opinions known. For myself, I will merely say that the "critique of arms" began with working class characteristics, and only in that context can it make sense.

But now, in recent years, we have had the crisis; we have the defeat which has been suffered inside the direct process of production; and we have a new form of the State emerging, with the Historic Compromise. It is now not enough for the "critique of arms" to simply debate the choice of forms of struggle for the future. Rather, the debate must once again start questioning all the

**See Note on page 122

elements that are needed for the formation of a programme - and in particular, the role of the factory working class. Do I believe that knowledge can still be of assistance to practice? I think so, at least for a limited period, as long as we start from trying to recover that knowledge which capital (in the process of reducing socially necessary labour) is daily expropriating from the working class.

We've had enough of ideology-merchants! Let's set to work again as "technicians", inside the theoretical framework of class composition. This job is not one for a small group of intellectuals, but for thousands of comrades - the doctors, the technicians, the psychiatrists, the economists, the physicists, the teachers etc etc.

But there is still more to be said. We have pictured capital as tending to eliminate the workforce involved in the direct process of production. Does this mean that it is <u>capital</u> that carries the historic task of liberating us from exploitative wage labour, or perhaps that it is simply a question of technology, automation etc? This could lead us to the illusion that there exist "alternative technologies" capable of liberating us from wage labour, without materially eliminating the working class. This is a false dream. Once again, we'll quote K-H. Roth:

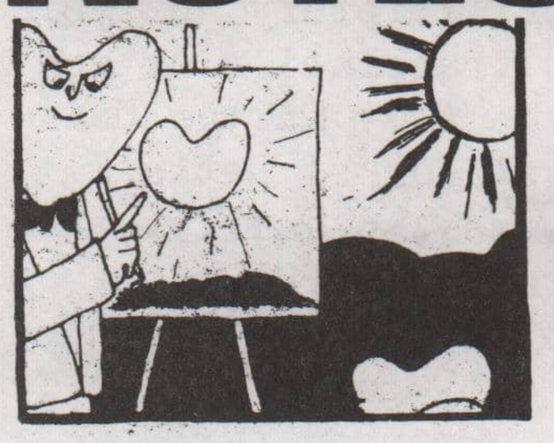
> "It is a big mistake to believe that, with the reduction of socially necessary labour, we will see the actual reduction of the real mass of working time (both waged and unwaged)! On the contrary: in no way does capital liberate labour power in the definitive sense that you imagine. Capital continually increases the ratio between unwaged labour and waged necessary labour, and at the same time it integrates the whole cycle of reproduction of labour power, and increases the amount of unwaged labour in all phases of that cycle (lower expenditure on the formation of labour-power, reduction of family benefits, destruction of the welfare state)."

The destruction of the barriers of value in the form described above is a <u>cyclical</u> process; the reduction of socially necessary labour is a process which is reversible, even within the direct process of production; after the crisis comes the planning of reconstruction; after capitalism comes socialism, if you like. The idea of the material extinction of the working class is an absurdity. <u>New factories are being built; they await new workers</u>. It is in this context that we must talk about the problem of the relationship between the working class and its "new allies". We must tackle the question of the multiplicity of political protagonists, as a political fact, not only as a mere "objective labour force wholly subordinated to the real domination of capital".

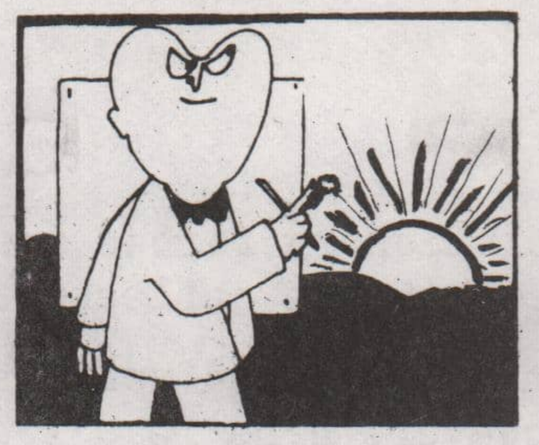
The struggle in Italy has thrown up new forms of insubordinate behaviour. On the one hand, the people who practice them mustcome towards the working class. But also the working class, in the direct process of production, and in the process of reproduction of itself as labour-power both inside and outside the factory, must accept the new trends of opposition and insubordinate behaviour, and make them its own. We must break down this idea of a"separate" working class culture; we must break down false ideas of "hegemony"; we must break down the idea of the factory as a separate political institution!

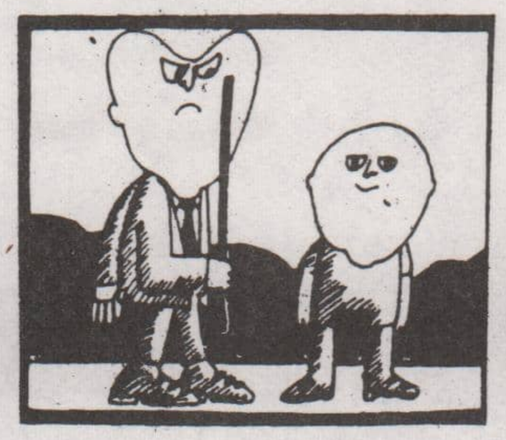
Sergio Bologna
<u>20th Sept.1977</u>

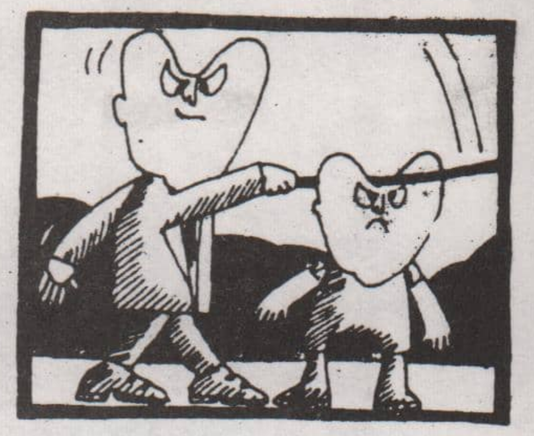
<u>Please Note</u>: We have translated this article as part of our continuing attempts to make some of the new Italian Marxist theory available to English-speaking audiences. <u>Red Notes</u> is also cooperating on another book which might interest readers of this pamphlet. It is called (provisionall) <u>"Money and Proletarians - Essays on Class Struggle and Capitalist Crisis"</u>. Alison & Busby are the publishers - expected date of publication Autumn 1978. The Book contains articles by Toni Negri, Christian Marazzi, Romano Alquati, Paolo Carpignano, John Merrington, Phil Mattera and Sergio Bologna.



NOTES







& CORRECTIONS

- These notes explain some of the technical points that are in our pamphlet. There are also a few corrections. And we end the pamphlet with some notes about Social Democracy and what it means for the developing revolutionary movement in Europe.

Page 39: The Bologna Conference against Repression. The public outcry against the events of Bologna in March, led to a public inquiry being set up in that city, on September 23-5th 1977 - a tribunal which judged the increasing State repression and the Communist Party's support for it. It was billed as a European Conference on Political Dissent, and 70,000 people attended.

Page 41: a process of recomposition. The tendency of the working class is to create unity between workers, through struggle. Capital lives in mortal fear of this unity, and does everything to break it up - to "decompose" the working class. The working class has a constant struggle to recompose itself against capital's attempts at division.

Page 42: the party of diffuse situations. (See note below, page 44)

Page 43: the Confindustria. This is the Italian employers' organisation, the Italian equivalent of the CBI in Britain.

Page 44: "social factory", "social worker", "disseminated worker", "diffuse factory". The capitalism of the late 19th Century produced huge concentrations of factories, and brought together workers as a proletariat, organised under one roof. The political dangers of this are obvious. It was this concentration of labour power, working under one roof and living closely around the factories where they worked, that led to the possibility of soviet-style organisation. And in the past 50 years we have seen how the "mass worker" of the assembly lines in the big factories has become an unmanageable social force. How much safer for capital if these workers and these factories could be dispersed, turning the "mass worker" into the "disseminated worker" whose power is no longer centralised in one place - the "social" worker in the "social factory", the worker whose productive power is dispersed throughout the society ("the whole society producing surplus value"). This dispersal and spreading of the factory working class (decentralisation of production) has been going on for some time in Italy - the creation of the "diffused factory". It sets great problems for revolutionary organisation. This has given rise to new organisational needs - for instance the discussion of "the party of diffuse situations" (page 42), as an organisational form to match this new reality of capitalism.

Page 45: tertiarisation. Often referred to as the "service sector", the tertiary sector includes the immense growth of office work; welfare state functions; communications; finance activities; and distribution of goods produced.

Page 47: "workers council"-type Party members. A lot of the Italian Communist Party's ideas were built in the communist movement of the 1920s, when the factory working class was seen as the principal driving force for the revolution. The problem, as they saw it, was to gain control of the factories, and socialism would follow. However, today's reality is a lot more complex -

particularly when many of the revolutionary forces are outside the factories, as in the case of the women's movement, the jobless youth etc.

Page 58: The Slogans. These slogans would need volumes of 'literary analysis' to explain their full meaning. However, here is a rough translation of some of them: "We want 100 policemen in every Faculty! All the Army in the University!!" "Workers' Gastronomy! Cannibalisation! Knives! Forks! Let's Eat the Bosses!" "Having children is good for you. It Unites the Family, and that's what matters!" "What's all this crap about liberation?! PCI - give us more oppression!" Lama Star, Lama Star, We want to make Sacrifices!" (tune of Jesus Christ Superstar). "Free Radio is a Provocation! All power to the TV". "Policeman - they've conned you! Licence to kill, but no armoured car!" "Workers...Students...There's no future for you...the Metropolitan Indians have arrived!" "We weren't beaten enough as children - that's why we're all assassins!" "We are hooligans and provocateurs...The only true Communists are Lama and Cossiga!" "Carry the attack to the heart of the Papacy! All power to the armed vicars!" (a pun on the Red Brigades slogan: "All power to the armed proletariat - carry the attack to the heart of the State").

For the rest you'll have to dig out your dictionaries.

Page 109: The early days of the revolutionary Left. In the bourgeois magazine L'Espresso an article was published (Nov.30th 1969) which printed an excellent family tree of the Left organisations. The same magazine has since published another family tree, updated to February 1978 (Feb.5th 1978). For English language readers, see the Radical America pamphlet (1973) and the Revolutionary Struggle pamphlet (1978) in our Reading List.

Page 119: Cassa Integrazione. This is a fund which pays out most of workers' wages (for a period), when they are laid off. Class conscious workers tend to fight it, though, because it is usually a prelude to sacking.

Page 120: Trade Union unification. As in Britain, there has been a growing merger movement among the trade unions.

Page 121: Lama in Milan. When Luciano Lama, CP member of the CGIL trade union leadership, went to Milan to 'sell' the Italian CP's version of the social contract, he was roundly heckled by militants at the mass meeting.

● CORRECTIONS...CORRECTIONS...CORRECTIONS...CORRECTIONS...CORRECTIONS...
CORRECTIONS...CORRECTIONS...CORRECTIONS...CORRECTIONS...CORRECTIONS...

Page 122: As you'll have noticed, the Notes start on page 123, not 122.

Page 70, line 36 - 47: We have since been informed that this magistrate was apparently not tied up in the racket. Also, the defence made clear that Claudia was not prepared to name the men who raped her because she was scared of the consequences.

Pages 75-78: These lines should refer to Giorgiana Masi, not Giorgina.

Page 77, line 1: This was not a case of "students being beaten up by workers". The organisation MLS (Movement of Workers for Socialism, a "Marxist-Leninist" group that is relatively strong in Milan) are daggers-drawn with the Autonomists. In early 1978 they are continuing their "practice" of beating up people they disagree with.

***Anyone comparing our translations with the original articles will find that some of our translations are a bit free, while still staying as close as possible to the meaning of the original. This is for reasons of readability.

***In some places the quality of the printing is a bit weak. This is because we have tried to produce a cheaper pamphlet than would otherwise have been the case. Also, while printing this pamphlet our printer was "experiencing acutely the contradictions between personal life and political life".

***(t.n.) means (translator's note).

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY....EUROCOMMUNISM...AND REPRESSION...

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY....EUROCOMMUNISM...AND REPRESSION...

In this section we argue that the two main labour-oriented forces in W.Europe - Social Democracy and Eurocommunism - are turning from being "allies" of the working class, to being "enemies" of the working class, carrying out direct repression and anti-proletarian policies. This means, in Britain, the Labour Government, and in Italy the Communist Party.

In the 20th Century, Social Democracy has been the main channel through which the aims and aspirations of the European working class have been expressed. At times this has been a channel for reform and progress - but more importantly, in times of revolutionary crisis (like the present day), Social Democracy has acted with a clear anti-revolutionary function.

A Bit of History

Victor Serge (in "Year One of the Russian Revolution") describes how, in 1918, all Germany lay in the power of the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets, with the revolutionary movement spreading like wildfire. The calculated choice of the ruling class (the Hindenburgs, the Krupps, the Ludendorffs) was to put themselves at the head of the movement in order to avoid being smashed by it. It was not just a choice between social revolution and a restoration of normal order. It was more than that. The International Powers (through the Treaty of Versailles) had imposed crushing armistice terms on the German working class. The German working class had to be crushed and its revolutionary organisations destroyed, to the point of accepting many years of sweated labour in the interests of the other international powers.

In order to achieve this crushing, the ruling class turned to opportunist elements inside the Sccial Democrat camp. Ebert and Scheidemann were invited into Government, with Noske, the Butcher, as Commander in Chief. Their task was to seize the right moment for a confrontation - which they did, when they brought the Army against a workers' uprising in Berlin, and within days had murdered Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, the best leaders of that movement.

Serge says of Ebert and Scheidemann that they were "Socialist leaders of the utmost decorum", "but with influence among the masses". It is those two special qualities that bring us right up to the present day and some modern-day "butchers of the revolution" who are also "Socialist leaders of the utmost decorum", and who have guaranteed their "influence among the masses" by a whole range of contacts with the official machinery of Trade Unionism: James Callaghan, Helmut Schmidt, Mario Soares etc. These gentlemen are performing their services to multinational capitalism, by imposing Austerity on the working class. They are also moving violently against the revolutionary forces. We need no reminding that it was a Social Democrat Government (Labour) that sent the troops into N. Ireland and has been torturing, maiming and killing the Republican population ever since. Likewise, it is Helmut Schmidt's Social Democratic machine that has perpetrated the horrors of sensory deprivation on political prisoners, has authorised the murders in Stammheim jail, and is turning West Germany into a police State (eg. the jobs ban on political dissidents).

A New Phase for Social Democracy - from Reformism to Repression

The face of Social Democracy in Europe has been changing rapidly in the past 5 years, as the class struggle has grown. We could summarise as follows:-

In Europe the capitalist crisis of 1973-onwards has been brought about mainly by the growth of the power of the working class in the preceding period.. The Crisis has been a necessary means and a tool to destroy that power. The

International Monetary Fund (IMF) has used the strict terms of its loans to countries like Britain and Italy, as a sort of Versailles Treaty - to re-impose control of the working class by means of drastic Austerity.

However a Chilean-style solution (eradication of the working class movement) has been an impossibility in this period (both because of the strength of the working class, and because such a solution is known to block capitalist development: it will only be used as a last resort). The only way that the Crisis could be made to function effectively against the working class was for capital to enlist the help of Social Democracy (in Britain, the Labour Government and Trade Unions, in an inter-class alliance similar to the wartime and post-War reconstruction periods).

In most European countries we have now lived through 4 years of Social Democracy plus Austerity Measures. The political Right has been pushed to the background of the European political stage (where they wait, like vultures). The centre of that stage is now occupied firmly by the Social Democrats - and by their allies, the European Communist Parties. We'll return to the CPs in a minute.

The important fact is that, although Social Democracy has managed to block the channels of struggle in certain spheres (eg money-wages), new struggles, new forms of behaviour, and new contradictions have appeared in other spheres.

We can say that, despite the hardships and bitterness of the Crisis, Social Democracy in Europe has still not managed to achieve the fundamental precondition for a capitalist Restoration - ie a return to productive labour and labour discipline throughout the society. In many spheres (both inside and outside the workplace), new forms of dissent, of organisation and of struggle have been born, to confound the Social Democratic project. New spaces of struggle have been opened.

Therefore we find ourselves in a new phase of Social Democracy, to match this new phase of resistance. Social Democracy is no longer a tame, reformist enemy, simply to be outflanked and outmanoeuvred. It is now an enemy that is intent on destroying the forces which are resisting the capitalist Restoration, in order to guarantee a "peaceful" and "planned" return to "normal" exploitation. Put simply, this means adopting every possible means to isolate, silence, discredit, imprison, marginalise, defuse, and if necessary kill those who are organising this new phase of resistance. You might recall that one of the much-heralded achievements of the Common Market recently was the establishment of an anti-terrorist Conference. And careful reading of the papers shows our Minister for Internment Merlyn Rees regularly slipping over to Germany to sharpen up his police techniques, and then continuing to Italy to meet Mr 'Civil War' Cossiga.

And What About the Communist Parties?

It's not extreme to say that in some situations and at some moments, the forces of Social Democracy become the main enemy, acting as the front-runners for the overall project of restructuring of capitalism. In Britain, for instance, it is the Trade Unions (even more than the managements) who are conducting the purges of the militants in the car factories (March 1978).

But the question is, can we include the European Communist Parties as part of this same anti-revolutionary force?

Obviously, Eurocommunism and Social Democracy stem from different roots, and have very different histories. But at a moment when (in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal) the CPs are pressing for national governmental power, it is worth recalling George Orwell's statement, some 40 years ago: "The Communists stood not upon the extreme Left, but upon the extreme Right....Official Communism must be regarded, at any rate for the time being, as an anti-revolutionary force".

From our work on this pamphlet, it is clear that the Communist Party in Italy

is part of the same tendency by which the traditional "working class parties" are being called on to help the bourgeoisie unload the costs of the capitalist economic crisis onto the workers. In this pamphlet we have described how the PCI has been moving against those revolutionary forces which it cannot control. The PCI has now become the most committed Law and Order party in Italy. It gives its support to each new measure of police repression and erosion of civil liberties. It now says that Austerity is a necessary step along the road to Socialism - and that the working class must therefore tighten their belts. And it has publicly abandoned the defence of workers' jobs and workers' rigidity in the labour market.

The resistance to this PCI is hard to measure and define - but it undoubtedly exists. The central question for the coming period is whether these forces will be able to consolidate their power into organised forms, to get through this phase of the struggle, when the PCI is starting to reveal more openly its repressive and anti-proletarian nature.

● IN A SENSATIONAL INTERVIEW, TOP COMMUNIST PARTY UNION LEADER LUCIANO LAMA REVEALS HIS TRUE COLOURS.

Just for the record, here are short quotes from Lama's interview in La Repubblica, Jan.28th 1978, under the headline: "The Sacrifices We Are Demanding from Workers".

> "The Union is proposing that the workers follow a policy of sacrifices. Not marginal sacrifices, but substantial sacrifices.....We can no longer force companies to keep on a number of workers in excess of their productive possibilities, nor can we continue to demand that the Layoff Fund go on forever paying the surplus workers their wages.....This is a fundamental turn-round in the Union's attitude. Ever since 1969, the Union has staked its cards on the rigidity of the labour force.....We are convinced that to impose excessive quotas of manpower on companies is a suicidal policy. The Italian economy has been brought to its knees on account of this policy. Therefore...we maintain that when it has been ascertained that companies are in a state of crisis, they should have the right to fire."

● STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...

Finally, we have room to mention a political development just as we go to press: the kidnapping of Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades - an event described by journalists as "unprecedented" in Italian post-War parliamentary history.

The newspapers generally present Italy as a "generalised crisis of violence", "breakdown of law and order" etc, lumping together actions by both Left and Right and by the Mafia. It is important that the reader is able to distinguish the one from the other - because they raise important questions for the class struggle.

On the one hand there are robberies, kidnappings etc that are done by the Mafia and associated crime groups. On the other hand there are robberies that are carried out by revolutionary elements - as well as physical assaults on Fascists, top company officials, magistrates, police etc (including shootings). Then there are the burnings of Fascist headquarters - a type of action which is a mass action (see p.49). And there has also been a movement towards 'expropriation' from shops and supermarkets (organised plundering), which, like the execution of fascists, has been carried out by certain sections of the Left, and has been hotly debated by the movement as a whole, with many, widely differing positions being expressed.

The Red Brigades, like the NAP, are made up of elements of the revolutionary

Left, joining together with "illegalists" (including ex-prisoners) and (in the case of the RB) other elements recruited from the assembly lines of the big factories in the North. Since they started life in the early 1970s, they have carried out a whole series of armed actions. Many of their number have been arrested - and it was the starting of the Red Brigades trial in Turin (49 defendants) that sparked the Moro kidnap. The kidnap takes up the RB slogan: "Carry the Struggle to the Heart of the State: All Power to the Armed Proletariat".

56 PAGES

Evening Standard

47,597 London: Thursday March 16 1978 6 8p

LATE PRICES STOP P

50,000 in manhunt for Red Brigade assassins



SHOT DOWN — one of Aldo Moro's bodyguards lies dead in a Roman stree.t Three colleagues were killed in the ambush and a fourth died in hospital.

AP, by Wide

EX-PREMIER KIDNAPPED: 5 SHOT DEAD



ALDO MORO — the Red Brigade telephoned: "Moro is just the start."

From Brian McKenzie

ROME

ALDO MORO, leader of Italy's Christian Democratic Party and tipped as the next President, was kidnapped by terrorists today in a bloody street ambush.

His five police escorts were mown down in a hail of sub-machine gun fire. Four died instantly and the fifth in hospital.

Fifty thousand police and Army units joined in the manhunt for the guerrillas who said they had carried out the abduction — the feared and vicious Red Brigades.

Then, in phone calls to newspaper offices, they demanded suspension of the Turin trial of 49 of their comrades on kidnapping charges.

And they threatened that if their demands were not met and the trial went on they would seize another prominent Italian.

"This," they declared, "is only the start of the campaign to hit the heart of the state . . . Moro is just the beginning."

The Turin trial has not yet go underway because jurors and court-appointed counsel have refused to attend after threats to kill anyone involved in the case.

Sixty-one-year-old Signor Moro, five times Premier, left his home in the north Rome suburb of Camilluccia to drive to work this morning. Two police guards were with him.

Three more followed in another car. A white station wagon with a Diplomatic Corps licence plate —stolen from the Venezuelan Embassy—crossed his way.

Signor Moro's car came to a halt and the police car following it slammed into its back.

Three men in Air Force uniforms jumped out of another car, pulled submachine guns from attache cases and rained fire on the police escort.

Two policemen died instantly in their car: seats, two more on the pavement.

Still another gunman rode a Japanese motorcycle. The gunmen bundled Signor Moro into a white Fiat 128 and sped away. The car was later found abandoned with blood stains on the doors and the seats.

One eye-witness said: "It was a massacre . . . the guards never had a chance to react."

Another said: "I saw a man get out of a car and walk

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THE FACTS OF THE MORO KIDNAP

No account of 1977-78 would be complete without an account of the crucial fact of the kidnapping of Italian Christian Democrat leader Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades - and his subsequent execution.

So, for this second edition of the pamphlet we have added an account taken from the People's News Service (PNS) Bulletins, numbers 146-148. This was prepared by the PNS correspondent in Rome.

For the third edition we hope to prepare a broader analysis of this event, which has undoubtedly been a turning point for the course of working class politics in Italy.

MARCH 1978: THE RED BRIGADES, AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Turin is in a virtual state of siege, owing to the mammoth trial of members of the Red Brigades, a clandestine group dedicated to armed struggle against the State. The day before, other members of this group killed a policeman of the anti-terrorist squad. Those on trial refuse all legal defence. This created many difficulties since, under Italian law, a trial cannot take place without counsel for the defence - lawyers have had to be appointed for them. In spite of the highly-charged atmosphere, with armed police on every street corner, 500 to 1,000 young people marched, protesting against the militarisation of the town promoted by the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats (PCI and DC).

In Rome, on the evening of March 11th, Signor Andreotti at last presented his "new" government to the country. Actually, it is little more than a Cabinet reshuffle. There are only two "new faces", and they are all Christian Democrats. Signor Andreotti himself has been a Cabinet minister or Prime Minister on and off for over 20 years. The novelty is that whereas the last Cabinet could count on the abstention of the PCI in Parliament, this one will have its active support, as well as that of the Socialists, Social-Democrats and Republicans.

This solution enables the PCI to say to its rank and file: "We have made a further decisive step towards State power", while the DC can say to its own die-hard anti-communist backwoodsmen: "Nothing has changed". In fact, the PCI support for this Government does appear to be gratuitous. However, PCI Senator Armando Cossuta explained: "The contradiction between the DC and public opinion is getting more and more acute, because it is becoming more difficult to show that it is not legitimate to form a Government with the Communists. Why can they be in the majority but not in the Government? That is a question which the DC is going to find more and more difficult to answer."

In effect, the enactment of the Historic Compromise proper (meaning PCI Cabinet posts) has been postponed, although a step further in that direction has been made. However, what Senator Cossuta did not say was that the PCI's own position in relation to its electorate is going to become more and more difficult to justify, as the attack on democratic rights and working class living standards goes forward.

MARCH 1978 (Continued): THE MORO KIDNAPPING AND ITS EFFECTS

At 9.15am on Thursday March 16th, in Rome, a band of armed persons ambushed the President of the governing Christian Democrat party, Aldo Moro, killing the 5 policemen in his escort and carrying him off to an unknown destination. That same morning the news hit Parliament just as it was starting the debate of confidence in the new edition of Andreotti's minority Government. Shocked members of Parliament voted the Government in without even going through the usual debate on its programme, which was not even read. Not only the 5 parties which had previously agreed to back Andreotti voted in favour (ie the Communists,

the Christian Democrats, Socialists, Social Democrats and Republicans) but so did the neo-Fascist breakaway party "Democrazia Nazionale". Mr Andreotti thus counted 545 votes, while the opposition was reduced to a mere 30 (the neo-Fascist 'hardliners' of the MSI, the tiny Liberal Party on the right, and the Radical (civil rights) Party and the Proletarian Democracy group on the Left.

Meanwhile, the Trade Union Confederation at once organised a national general strike of protest, to last until midnight. Shops, factories and offices closed down (some closed by their owners) and tens of thousands of people poured into the streets and squares to hear speeches by Trade Union leaders. During the day, the Brigate Rosse (Red Brigades) called a newspaper to say that they held Moro.

Who is Aldo Moro?

A retiring, aloof professor of law, and one of the 'historic' leaders of the DC, he recently threw his prestige into a project of convincing the party's right-wing backwoodsmen into accepting the PCI into the Parliamentary majority. He is thus a key figure in the political set-up.

He was not one of the most hated of Christian Democrat leaders. In fact the political commentators saw him as a man of much influence. So much so, that he was, before his death, tipped as the number one candidate to succeed Leone in the Presidency.

Who are the Red Brigades?

They were founded in Milan in 1969 by Renato Curcio, a sociology student of Catholic extraction who at present is on trial with other members of the group in Turin. Since Curcio's arrest, nobody knows who the new leaders are. They engage in clandestine armed struggle, and their slogan is "Carry the attack to the heart of the State" - which is what they now seem to have done.

Two days after the kidnapping, the Red Brigades put out a Polaroid photo of Moro as their prisoner. They announced that they were going to put him on trial, and they put out a leaflet which theorised the need to attack the top personnel of the Christian Democrat party, which they said was essentially a "transmission belt" for the interests of multinational imperialist corporations. The leaflet contained no reference to the mass struggles actually being conducted by the Italian proletariat, nor any mention of the role played by the PCI or the Soviet Union.

Many commentators of all shades of political opinion tried to speculate as to who might be 'behind' the Red Brigades. There is widespread disbelief that a 'home-grown' group could have pulled off a job of such magnitude so efficiently. So far, the CIA, the KGB, the West German BND and even the Libyan secret service (as well as the West German Red Army Fraction) have all been suggested as possible wire-pullers behind the scenes. There are indeed many possible 'interested parties' who have reasons to oppose Italy's new political formula, the 'Historic Compromise'.

The Italian police, though well-trained in repressing political demonstrations, is not so good at detective work, and so far its hunt for Moro's secret prison has met with no success. 20 photographs of "Red Brigaders" from the police computer were put out by the TV and Press, but then it turned out that two of these were photos of the same man (with and without moustache), two have been in prison for the last 6 months, one was regularly registered in a hotel at the time of the kidnapping, and one emigrated to France two years ago. Another was a well-known Italian secret police informer, publicly unmasked as a police provocateur years ago.

The Army has been called in, and Rome is surrounded by road blocks. But journalists calculated that the Red Brigades squad had 47 minutes, ample time to make their getaway before these were set up. At the time of writing massive, though fruitless, house-to-house searches are going on. Two British SAS, and

32 West German police officers are helping "in an advisory capacity".

The President of the pro-business Republican Party, Ugo La Malfa, has demanded the introduction of the death penalty and a curfew in Rome. So far, the larger parties have not heeded these rather wild demands. But the new Government, after only a few days, passed a Decree giving the police wider powers to hold and interrogate suspects and to conduct house-searches - all without warrant or the presence of a lawyer. The 'Corriere della Sera', a major establishment newspaper, commented on these measures, saying that they were a "bitter necessity" which the newspaper would have opposed in normal times.

Reactions to the Moro Kidnap.

The virtually unchanged composition of the new Government had been considered as something of a slap in the face of the PCI, before Moro's kidnap. There were rumblings of discontent in the PCI grass roots, and one paper even reported, on March 15th, the possibility that the PCI might even vote against the Government, or abstain. All this ferment was frozen as soon as the news hit the country. The PCI leadership is one of the main promoters of the moral blackmail line: "Those who do not rally round the State are basically terrorist sympathisers". The whole of the ruling class establishment is more or less adopting this line. In fact, if the intention of the Red Brigades was to weaken the State apparatus by seizing Moro, the effect of their act, at least in the short term, has been to strengthen it and unite it. The general reaction of the media has been to promote a "we are at war" atmosphere.

PCI leaders, including Mr Lama, the CGIL union boss, have issued calls inviting the workers to denounce any of their workmates who are ideologically "flirting with the Red Brigades", thus trying to create the conditions for a mass witch-hunt and wipe out, not just terrorism, but all Left-wing opposition to the present political set-up. They also demanded the closure of Free Radio stations that exist all over Italy, and that broadcast live calls from listeners that expressed approval of the kidnapping, and so far one radio station has been closed down by police in Rimini.

The opinions of Italy's ordinary working people are hard to gauge with any precision, but in any case they appear varying and confused. For decades the PCI has conducted heavy mass criticism of the DC, accusing it of being corrupt, exploitative and oppressive. More and more people (and not just revolutionary activists) are now accusing the PCI of having been hypocrites, for now the PCI is backing a DC Government (and the DC has not changed noticeably), and it is urging the masses to collaborate with the police in persecuting all those (not just the Red Brigades) who are against the State. This process of mass disillusionment with the PCI has been going on quite independently of the Red Brigades actions, which, if anything, have tended to cloud it over and prevent it from reaching maturity. Nevertheless, hundreds of telephone calls were received from working class listeners to Radio Onda Rossa, a revolutionary radio station close to the Workers' Autonomy group (see below), telling of their poverty-stricken living conditions, accusing the PCI of betrayal, and, many of them, expressing emotional satisfaction that at least one of the "high-ups" had been hit. On the other hand, the same social strata also express heavy criticism of the kidnapping, often identifying with the 5 policemen who died, as "exploited workers" (the youngest was only getting £50 a week).

Then again, the same sentiments for the police are often coupled with total indifference to the fate of Moro. There are emotional echoes in all social classes of La Malfa's call for the death penalty. There is also the more "political" criticism of the Red Brigades, on account of the negative effects of their action, which has enabled the ruling DC to present itself as a "victim", the PCI to weld together its incipient internal contradictions, and the Govern-

ment to assume virtually dictatorial powers, on the basis of an unheard-of Parliamentary majority, including Communists and neo-Fascists, without any popular protests!

One could divide what is generally called "the Left" into 3 broad sectors today. There is the "institutional Left", comprising the PCI, the PSI (Socialists) and the PdUP-Manifesto (a small party which split from the PCI in 1970) and the Trade Union movement. These forces promoted the demonstrations of March 16th, and their line is "defend and strengthen the State".

Then there is the "movement", consisting mainly of two "areas" (they are not organised parties), those of Lotta Continua, and Workers' Autonomy, as well as hosts of unaffiliated militants. Lotta Continua's headline on the day of the kidnap was: "This is the Heaviest and Dirtiest Trick Ever Attempted over the Heads of Italian Proletarians". Gad Lerner, one of Lotta Continua's editorial collective, was interviewed in 'Corriere della Sera' on March 19th. He said: "Ten years of State repression have led to this barbarisation of the political struggle." The interviewer then asked: "But aren't you afraid of being accused of being fellow-travellers of the Red Brigades?" He answered: "No, because no other group, not even the PCI, has made a self-criticism on the question of terrorism as we have done.... The Communists have never really settled accounts with Stalinism or with their Party monolithism." He also noted that the Red Brigades communique made no criticism at all of either the USSR or the PCI. While Lotta Continua could by no means be described as pacifist, this interview is indicative of the sort of re-thinking about political methods that has been going on within the area.

Workers' Autonomy has always distinguished itself from the Red Brigades, criticising in particular their clandestinity and lack of contact with and confidence in the masses. This criticism has now been intensified, also because of the general feeling amongst all members of the "movement" (which debates all its decisions in open, sometimes stormy, assemblies), that the Red Brigades have, by this high-handed act, violently expropriated the movement of all decision-making powers. The Autonomists, in particular, say that they are in favour of anti-institutional violence, but by the masses, and not by a secret sect of self-elected 'vanguards'. However, on several occasions during recent demonstrations, the Autonomists have been heard to chant Red Brigades slogans. In fact, the Rome movement's assembly split on March 20th, over whether or not people chanting such slogans should be formally and forcibly excluded from demonstrations or not.

Lastly, there is the clandestine armed 'Left', consisting mainly of the Red Brigades and the Armed Proletarian Nuclei (NAP - largely recruited from the prison population of the South, and less efficient than the Red Brigades). While all shades of public opinion (at least, that 'publicly' expressed) express condemnation of these (to do otherwise would mean instant arrest), the armed groups are not totally rejected by all sectors of society. L'Espresso, a weekly news magazine, reported some hundreds of Red Brigades leaflets turning up inside the giant FIAT factory in Turin, where they estimated some 2-3 00 sympathisers are employed. Other instances of sympathy are mentioned above. In fact, class hatred runs deep in Italy, as does hatred for the State, which is generally viewed as an organ of class oppression.

Double Killing in Milan - A Reprisal?

On the afternoon of March 18th the funerals of the five policemen were held in Rome. Pro-establishment newspapers put the crowd at anything from 10,000 to 100,000. Shortly after the funeral, a group of plain-clothes policemen burst into a nearby students' hall of residence and fired a pistol at the students after throwing some funeral flowers. Fortunately nobody was hurt.

That same evening, two youths on their way to a concert were shot dead; they were sympathisers of the revolutionary movement, and as a result of the attack a gathering of 4,000 people came together immediately to protest.

Although the media tried to minimise the attack (as a 'drug feud'), 100,000 Milanese workers went on a de facto general strike, while the Unions tried to make up their minds whether to do it officially. Whoever was responsible for the killings, they were probably done to start a spiral of counter-reprisals. The mass response of Milan's workers dashed any such designs. Meanwhile, in Rome, the police refused all requests from the movement to demonstrate in protest against the killings. Apparently the Chief of Police said: "You can demonstrate, but I won't be responsible for my men".

In conclusion, the situation at present is highly fluid, although the basic high degree of political awareness and maturity of vast masses of Italian people make the situation less unstable than it appears to the casual observer. For the immediate future, a lot will depend on when, and under what circumstances Moro is found, as well as on further communications and/or demands from the Red Brigades. It is worth noting, in addition, that Moro knows a number of very well-kept secrets, such as the role of the Italian secret police in the bomb massacre of Milan in 1969, and the Lockheed scandal. He could be in a position to make some very explosive revelations.

PNS Issue 146, 10.4.78

NEWS FROM ITALY - APRIL 1978

- PNS' correspondent in Italy writes again, with several more items about the situation there. It is worth remembering, in view of the way in which events rapidly succeed each other, that the reports were written on April 9th.

Police Vent Their Impotence against the Left.

The Italian police have made no progress in their hunt for Moro's secret prison. On Monday April 3rd, police made dawn raids on the homes of over 200 young people, all of them revolutionary (but not Red Brigades) sympathisers, in the hope of finding Red Brigades "fellow-travellers or active supporters". Many were taken off to the police station for questioning under the new emergency laws decreed by the Government (see above). Where the individuals wanted were not at home, family members were taken instead. Police entered schools and picked up "subversive" high school students out of their class-rooms, to interrogate them and see if they were holding Moro. During the day 41 arrests were made, often on the pretext of finding "arms" (anything from old unusable guns to paper knives) in the home.

The revolutionary opposition movement, highly alarmed, held a mass assembly of 2,000 that afternoon. Mothers of persecuted revolutionary activists attended and one addressed the meeting (this could be a new development in Italian politics - hitherto mothers used to be conservative). Vans of riot police drew up outside the hall, and all those leaving the assembly were stopped, searched and identified.

Two days later, the movement split between those who wanted to hold a street demonstration in protest, regardless of police bans, and those who preferred to hold a People's Assembly in a theatre. On Friday April 7th, a few hundred militants held scattered street demonstrations, and a couple of Christian Democrat party branch offices were set fire to. This was also the second anniversary of the death of Mario Salvi, a young militant shot in the back by a Ministry of Justice guard during a demo. The other wing of the movement held its indoor assembly on Sunday April 9th, with the participation of "democratic personalities" (Left-wing magistrates and so on.)

The day after the police swoop, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) said that this was "not an application, but a violation of the recent emergency laws" (which the PCI had approved in Parliament). One contributing factor to this apparent about-turn by the PCI was that a few PCI members (ex-members of the revolutionary groups) had been caught in the police net! The upshot was that 29 of those arrested were released, pending trial on charges of"subversive association", and the other 12 were tried on Saturday April 8th, on charges of keeping weapons. Some were acquitted and others were given suspended sentences.

Christian Democrats fear Moro may Reveal All.

The Red Brigades put out a few more communiques, giving a broad picture of their political position, which included heavy criticism of the PCI. Two letters, hand-written by Moro, were also published. He asked his party colleagues to abandon their hardline stance that "The State never will negotiate with the Red Brigades". He said that he was having to carry the can for things that all his Party colleagues had done together. He felt that this was not fair. He implied that he might be forced to make unpleasant disclosures.

The PCI reacted as if these messages had been dictated to Moro by the Red Brigades. Graphologists were called in to analyse his hand-writing and to say that he "didn't really mean what he wrote". One daily newspaper called his second letter "whimpering, cry-baby" (up to March 16th Moro had been Italy's most respected politician). The Establishment is very disappointed that Moro is not playing the hero. Lotta Continua, daily paper of the revolutionary Left, said that the Establishment wanted him dead, since alive he was more of an embarassment than anything else. 'L'Espresso', the weekly news magazine, said that all politicians were scared stiff at the thought that Moro was probably answering questions from his captors like: "Who did the cover-up for the bombs of Piazza Fontana in Milan in 1969?" (16 people were killed in a bomb blast in a Milan bank; the carnage was blamed on the Left, and a well-known anarchist, Pinelli, subsequently "fell" from a high window at police headquarters during interrogation - the full story of the bombing has never come out). They might also be asking: "Who was behind the 'Italicus' train massacre in 1974"; "How did the DC personnel come to take over all the key posts in public bodies and banks?" and questions about all the many other scandals which have rocked Italian public life in recent years.

On Saturday April 8th, in fact, the evening papers came out with headlines that the DC was going to give in to the Red Brigades, and was preparing to negotiate. This came after rumours of secret negotiations involving the Vatican, and pressures from Moro's wife and family.

PCI Cracks Down on Left Wing Dissidents in the Party and Unions.

Six PCI members, dockworkers in Genoa, were expelled from the Communist Party because they were among the organisers, together with revolutionary Left militants, of a 2,000-strong Dockworkers' Collective that had put out a leaflet stating: "We stand neither with the State nor with the Red Brigades". The dockers held a Press Conference, accusing the PCI, among other things, of 'Stalinism'.

On Friday, Mr Lama, PCI man and top CGIL Union boss, said that all those who adhered to that slogan should be expelled from the Union, for the Unions had to rally round the State. Other Union leaders held this as undemocratic, and over the weekend furious arguments have been raging in the national Union leadership. There is even talk of a split.

The Genoese dockers' slogan sums up the position of Italy's revolutionary Left, who feel expropriated by the Red Brigades; consider their action to be

uncommunist, adventurist, giving the State a chance to become more openly repressive, and so on. At the same time, there is a strong feeling that this State is not actually worth defending, not just because some abstract slogan says so, but because it is actually and visibly corrupt, oppressive etc. This feeling is also shared by many ordinary people, as well as by some intellectuals, like the Sicilian novelist Leonardo Sciascia.

Women March for Free Abortion.

On Saturday April 8th, 15,000-20,000 women marched through the streets of Rome to demand free, non-penalised and State-assisted abortion facilities, and that the people's Referendum to abolish the old Fascist law prohibiting it be held this Spring, according to schedule. At present the parties in Parliament are working out a watered-down law that will replace the old one and so avoid the Referendum - but in which the woman's right to choose will be so wrapped up in red tape as to be practically nil.

Meanwhile, the general atmosphere of collapse of the credibility of the State is now being underlined by revolutionary comics, that run satirical pieces making fun both of the Establishment and of the Red Brigades, eg depicting Moro as kidnapped by flying saucers. One ran a centre-fold of the now famous Polaroid snapshot of Moro, satirising a well-known advertisement for men's suits, with Moro saying "Sorry, I usually wear a Marzotto suit".

PNS Issue 147, 9.5.78

ITALY - THE SITUATION IN LATE APRIL

On April 10th, a hand-written letter by Aldo Moro was put out by the Red Brigades, in which he attacked Taviani, one of his Christian Democrat colleagues and an ex-Minister of the Interior. Some commentators saw this as a 'sample' of the devastating revelations that he might make later.

On Tuesday April 11th, the Red Brigades gunned down a prison guard in Turin, thus putting into effect their strategy of "demolishing the prison system". Before dying, the guard managed to wound one of his assailants, named Piancone, an ex-PCI member. The following day the DC in Bari, Moro's home town, and a local bishop, put out an appeal asking the Government not to refuse to negotiate with the Red Brigades. On Friday, April 14th, the PCI, it was reported, handed over to police political departments lists of ex-Party members who had left or who had been expelled from the Party, with the intention of aiding in the search for Red Brigades sympathisers or activists. They later hotly denied having done this, but admitted that all Party members had been instructed to keep their eyes and ears open to report anything suspicious to the newly-instituted "vigilance officers" in each local Party branch.

On Saturday April 15th, the Red Brigades put out communique No.6, announcing that Moro had been"tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death". Three days later (the 30th anniversary of the DC's landslide election victory), a communique, purporting to be the Red Brigades' No.7, was put out, announcing Moro's execution, and saying that his body was in an inaccessible mountain lake under 3 feet of snow and ice. Despite the communique's dubious authenticity, the search went ahead.

At the same time, a leaking tap which flooded the apartment below, led to the discovery of a Red Brigades hide-out near the scene of the kidnap. Classified police documents found there gave rise to speculation that the Red Brigades might have infiltrated the police. Piancone, however, who somehow managed to give an interview with a journalist while confined, explained that threatening phone calls were often enough to get individual policemen to supply information.

Up to this point, nearly all 'official' opinion had been opposed to any

talk of negotiating with the Red Brigades, on the grounds that the State must stand firm à la West Germany in the Schleyer case, or there would be chaos etc. This, however, meant leaving the Red Brigades with no option but to kill Moro, an event which many fear would be followed by an unprecedented pogrom against all forms of political dissent, organisation or activity to the Left of the Communist Party.

On Wednesday April 19th, this wall began to crack. Lotta Continua, a daily paper of the revolutionary Left, published an appeal "originating from circles close to the Moro family", which asked the State and the Red Brigades both to seek a solution that might save Moro's life. In particular, it asked the State to relinquish its "fideistic and fetishistic defence of its own prerogatives and functions". In simple language, this meant that it should abandon its stance of no-negotiations. As the days passed, this appeal collected signatures from the most diverse quarters: Heinrich Boll (Nobel Prize-winning authoer); ten bishops; one archbishop; the President of Catholic Action (a right-wing Catholic organisation close to the DC); numerous University teachers; journalists; Mimmo Pinto (Lotta Continua's member of Parliament); hundreds of workers and factory delegates (mainly from Milan); and even two PCI leaders (Umberto Terracini and Lucio Lombardo Radice), albeit in a purely personal capacity. Shortly after, the Socialist Party (PSI) swung round to a pro-negotiations stance, although they excluded the possibility of an exchange of prisoners. Marco Boato, a Lotta Continua leader who had been an old friend of Renato Curcio (the Red Brigades leader on trial in Turin) when they were at University together, handed him an open letter asking him to intervene to save Moro's life.

On Thursday April 20th, the Red Brigades put out a genuine communique No.7, plus a Polaroid snap of Moro holding a recent newspaper. They said that the previous communique was false, and probably cooked up by Andreotti and his cronies. And they gave the DC a 48-hour ultimatum within which to start negotiations for Moro's life, in exchange for the release of unspecified 'communist' prisoners. On the same day, a Red Brigades squad killed another prison guard, this time in Milan. The next day, Lotta Coninua headlined: "Moro's Life Now in the Hands of Zaccagnini" (DC national secretary and Moro's political protege). They also noted that no other paper had published the full text of the appeal or the list of signatories, and that "bishops had to phone Lotta Continua, to sign the appeal".

There was a scuffle in Parliament as Antonello Trombadori (a particularly reactionary PCI deputy) came to blows with Mimmo Pinto, shouting: "Moro's dead, even if he's alive, and anyway I won't sign with bishops!" Then came Saturday April 22nd, when the ultimatum fell due. The Pope wrote a letter to the Red Brigades, "begging" them, "humbly", "on my knees", to let Moro go. And La Repubblica, a bourgeois daily that was against negotiations, published a 'secret' letter from Moro to Zaccagnini in which he said, among other things, "Is it possible that you all agree in wanting my death for a presumed raison d'etat that someone is lividly prompting you to uphold, as if this were a solution to all the country's problems? Responsibility for my blood would fall on you, on the Party, on the nation...." The "someone" may be, it is thought, a reference to the PCI, who up till now have certainly been the most rabid upholders of the no-negotiation line. The DC and all the other parties with the exception of the PSI and the revolutionary Left, are following the same line.

The deadline passed at 3.00pm on Saturday, and until Monday April 24th no more was heard. The communique No. 8 appeared. It said that the DC's answer to the previous communique was neither clear nor definitive. It demanded the release of 13 'communist'.prisoners, most of them Red Brigades activists. It demanded an immediate and positive answer from the DC. Otherwise, it said,

they would "execute the sentence to which Moro has been condemned". As regards the various humanitarian "appeals", the Red Brigades suspected they were put out as propaganda support for the DC, and that the "noble personalities" who had put them out (an obvious reference to the Pope) now had a chance to prove the a-political nature of their appeals by making similar appeals to the DC to free the 13 prisoners.

On the same day a further handwritten letter from Moro to Zaccagnini was published. He expressed surprise that nothing had been heard of the individual positions expressed by the various DC leaders. They all appeared to be in total agreement. He said that he thought that a human life could not be sacrificed against the release of other men. He said: "I do not accept the iniquitous and thankless sentence passed by the DC. I repeat, I will not absolve or justify anyone. Let not the DC think it has solved the problem by liquidating Moro." He ended by asking that no State dignitaries or party leaders come to his funeral.

The answer from the DC, the Government and all the parties was no. Since then the Red Brigades have said that they have carried out the sentence passed on Moro. It remains to be seen whether this is true or not.

PNS Issue 148, 9.5.78

ITALY: THE DEATH OF ALDO MORO

- Most of the news items in this report from the PNS Italian correspondent were quite drowned out as the media flooded the country with a barrage of propaganda and rhetoric celebrating the unity of the State against the barbarous attacks of the Red Brigades, etc. As the report reveals, the country was in fact deeply divided over the issue.

Tuesday May 9th 1978

Aldo Moro's dead body was found in a parked car in a side-street only a few yards from the national headquarters of both the Communist Party (PCI) and the Christian Democrat party (DC). All the parties started to put up wall-posters. By the next day the whole of Rome appeared virtually papered with posters announcing "Moro is dead"...."Moro lives on"..."Barbarously murdered" etc. His family put out a communique which said: "The family desires that Aldo Moro's precisely expressed wish be fully respected by the State and the DC party authorities. This means: no public demonstration or ceremony or speech; no national mourning nor State funeral nor posthumous medal. The family closes itself in silence and requests silence. On Aldo Moro's life and death, history will be the judge." In his last letters, in fact, Moro had said that responsibility for his blood would fall on the DC leadership, and that he did not want any State or Party authorities at his funeral, but only those who had loved him.

Condemnation by all the parties, Trade Unions and other political forces was unanimous. The revolutionary Left opposition movement also condemned it. Lotta Continua headlined: "Nobody Will be Able to Cancel the Infamy of Aldo Moro's Murder". Autonomia Operaia, who had been depicted by the State as Red Brigades fellow-travellers, put out a communique condemning the Red Brigades strategy, and saying: "With this last act the Red Brigades no place themselves outside the building of the Communist revolution". Militants of the revolutionary movement, on trial in Bologna for the events of March 1977, read a statement in court condemning the Moro killing.

On the same day, Peppino Impastato, 30, a Lotta Continua militant and candidate for the revolutionary Left in forthcoming local elections in a village

near Palermo, was found killed by an explosive tied to his chest near a railway line. Shortly before that, he had held an electoral speech to 500 citizens, in which he denounced and named local Mafia "godfathers". Carabinieri conducting investigations said they were exploring two "theories": either suicide, or that he was killed while trying to "blow up the railway line". This version was taken up by the national Press, in an attempt to hush up the affair. Police forbade a protest demonstration in Palermo, and baton-charged militants who were handing out leaflets denouncing Mafia responsibility for the killing.

Wednesday May 10th 1978

Renato Curcio, Red Brigades leader on trial in Turin, declared that the killing of Moro was "the highest act of humanity possible in this society".

Mimmo Pinto, a formerly unemployed Neapolitan worker, now Lotta Continua's deputy in Parliament, declared that since Parliament had refused to hold any debate on how to free Moro while he was still alive, despite Pinto's insistent requests to that effect, he refused to take part in the Parliamentary sitting to commemorate Moro now that he was dead (also out of respect for his family's wishes).

At a Trade Union demonstration held in Rome to express condemnation of the killing, PCI heavy-squads charged members of the revolutionary opposition movement, who responded by chanting rhyming slogans that criticised the Stalinist heritage common to both the PCI and the Red Brigades.

Cossiga handed in his resignation as Minister of the Interior. During the 54 days that Moro was held, police checked 15,000,000 citizens at road blocks and searched tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of dwellings, all to no effect.

The Moro family held a private funeral, quietly, in accordance with Moro's last wishes, in a little village near Rome where the body was buried. Meanwhile the Government announced that it would go ahead with a State Funeral regardless.

Saturday May 13th 1978

All the highest dignitaries of the Italian State apparatus, amid great pomp and circumstance and under heavy police protection, attended what Lotta Continua called the "mock funeral" of Aldo Moro. Although purporting to commemorate Aldo Moro as what La Malfa (Republican Party President) called a "heroic victim", they were actually flouting his own last wishes, and those of his family, and behaving as if his funeral and burial had not already taken place. Though subjected to visits and pressure from Vatican officials, his widow and children refused to attend. Only a few thousand people followed the service in the enormous square outside the Basilica where the service was held. Inside the Church, Christian Democrat, Fascist and Communist Party leaders stood to attention side by side as they listened to Pope Paul's sermon. His presence was quite unprecedented: he explained it, saying that he was a "personal friend of the deceased".

Sunday and Monday, May 14th and 15th 1978

Local Government elections were held in various parts of the country, involving about 10% of the electorate. The PCI dropped 9.1% from its big advance in 1976 (from 35.6% to 26.5%); the DC gained 3.6% (up from 38.9% to 42.5%; while the PSI, the only Parliamentary bourgeois party in favour of negotiations to save Moro's life, gained 4.1% (up from 9.2% to 13.3%).

Meanwhile, the Red Brigades and other clandestine groups were continuing with almost daily shootings and woundings. There were also acts of sabotage in the Alfa Romeo plant in Milan.

PNS Issue 149, 6.6.78.

A Reading List

In the course of our activity on Red Notes, we have accumulated a great deal of translated materials about the class struggle in Italy. Some of these are reports of struggles in progress; others are analyses of the general class situation at a given time; and others are translations of important theoretical documents.

Instead of just leaving this material sitting in our files, we have produced a reference-index for it. If you are interested, write to us and we can send you a copy.

But for the moment, here is a list of some of the materials from that list - those that are most easily available. Together they chart the whole development from 1969 to the present day. (There are, of course, other articles, pamphlets etc which are not included on this list).

1969: Italy 1969-70: New Tactics & Organisation, a 62-page pamphlet dealing especially with the struggles at FIAT. Big Flame, 1971.

23 Years at FIAT and The Worker-Student Assemblies - Turin 1969, two interviews relating the rich experiences of the Hot Autumn of 1969. Pub. in "The Motor Industry Crisis 1975-6", Red Notes, 1976

1970: Take Over the City. Two separate pamphlets published by Lotta Continua sympathisers in London, 1971, dealing with the wide-spread community struggles, and LC's programme at that time.

Potere Operaio - A Selection: Pamphlet translating the key articles from PO's newspaper 1969-70. pub. London, 1971, 62pp.

1972: What's Been Happening in Italy? Discussion document published in Factfolder No.2, 1972 (available from Red Notes).

1973: Working Class Struggles in Italy. A broad-ranging 120-page pamphlet published by Radical America, Vol.7, No.2, March/April 1973.

Italy 1973: Workers' Struggles in the Capitalist Crisis: Translation of a Potere Operaio piece. Pub. Factfolder 1974.

1974: Fighting for Feminism: Translation of various pieces about the growing Women's Movement in Italy. Pub. Big Flame Women's Commission, 1974.

The Working Class Against the Crisis: Self-Reduction of Prices in Italy: Pamphlet by Bruno Ramirez, pub. the Struggle Against Work Collective, Toronto 1975.

Class Struggle in Italy - October 1974: A selection of translated materials, interviews etc, published in "A Dossier of Struggles - 1974", pub. Red Notes 1975.

1977: Counter Culture, Revolt and Repression in the heart of Italy's Red Belt: A look at the events of Bologna, pub. Radical America Vol.11, No.6, Feb. 1978

Free Radio in Italy: Article published in Wedge No. 1, Summer 1977.

Italy - State Terror and Proletarian Counter-Power: Pamphlet on recent developments and the role of the Left, pub. Revolutionary Struggle, 1978

* ITALY IS A CRUCIAL TESTING POINT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN WESTERN EUROPE.

* STATE REPRESSION IS INCREASING TO "GERMAN" LEVELS - BLANKET ARRESTS - NEW ARMOURY FOR THE POLICE - A NEW, OPENLY REPRESSIVE ROLE FOR THE ARMY.

* THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS A PARTY OF LAW AND ORDER - BEATING UP WORKERS AND STUDENTS WHO STRUGGLE - ALSO DENOUNCING COMRADES TO THE POLICE - AND AIDING AND ABETTING THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS REPRESSION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES.

* THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT HAS BEEN HELD BACK BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S SOCIAL CONTRACT - THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS.

* IN ITALY ALL THE MAJOR ORGANISATIONS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT HAVE BEEN GOING THROUGH A PROFOUND CRISIS - WHERE IS IT LEADING?

* MEANTIME, A NEW AREA OF MASS, REVOLUTIONARY OPPOSITION IS GROWING - THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT - THE YOUNG PEOPLE - THE UNEMPLOYED - THE 'NON-PRODUCTIVE' SECTORS - THE STUDENTS - IN SHORT, '<u>THE MOVEMENT</u>' - ALL THOSE NOT REPRESENTED BY THE OFFICIAL PARTY SYSTEM.