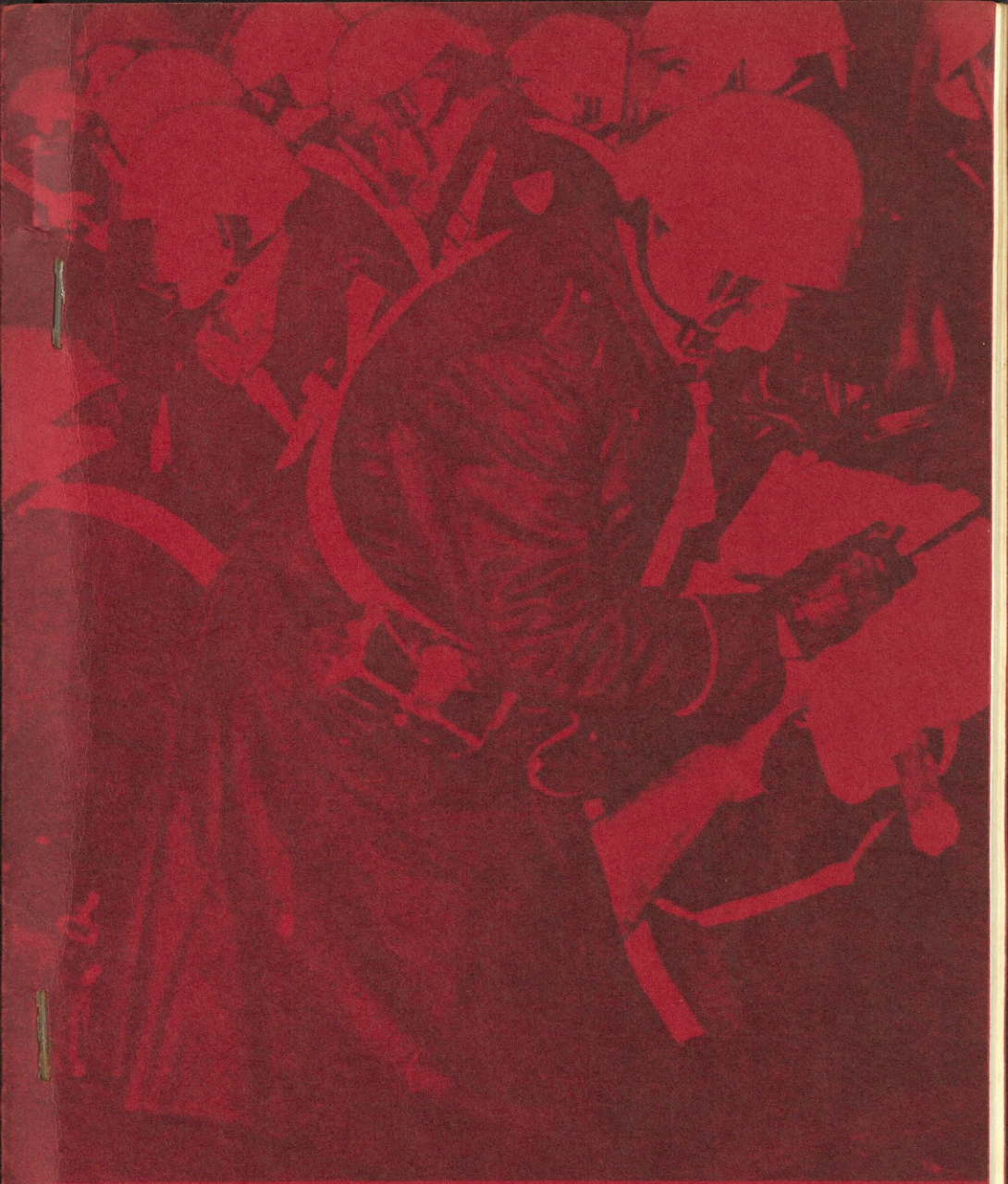

The ITALIAN STATE MASSACRE

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Joe Shaver

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Corrections to text:

Page 12, second new paragraph should read 'The bosses and the ruling class, faced by the crisis over contracts and by the increasing consciousness of the workers that the real purpose of the struggle is to put an end to exploitation, are divided amongst themselves. These divisions...' etc.

Page 22, second new paragraph; 'Only a few days away from the bombs, on the 6th December, Mauro Ferri, secretary of PSU, joins his voice to the hysterical demands of the economic and political right for an authoritarian solution to all the problems: the proclamation of a Presidential republic. An.....'

Page 29, last paragraph; 'The coup d'etat is no longer mooted as a serious possibility - and this is probably an accurate indication of the miscalculation made by the extreme right and the exact calculation made by those who were (and are) prepared to use the fascists just so far as is necessary to bring the people, and especially the workers, "back to their senses". For these people.....etc'.

Page 41, subsection 3); 'When Valpreda undergoes a medical examination, the expert reports that he suffers from Burger's disease in an a-typical form and points...etc'

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Page 46, last paragraph: Ambrosini was in a ward in the 9th floor. He died by falling from a 7th floor window. He was due to be discharged the following day.

ITALIAN STATE MASSACRE

Spartan Books
1972

THE ITALIAN STATE MASSACRE

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1972

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This booklet goes to press mid-December '71.

Our thanks to the friends and comrades in England, France and Italy who have contributed in various ways..

The photos were supplied by comrades of the magazine ANARCHICA, and the Milan group of the Anarchist Black Cross.

The text and photos are Anti-Copyright. We would welcome a copy of any re-prints, and gladly encourage any re-printing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The charges against Roberto Mander have been dropped on the grounds that he was a minor not responsible for his own actions. His lawyers have appealed against this decision, which is of course an *a priori* assumption of guilt.

Also we understand that a date has been given for the start of the trial: 6th January.
As we recieve additional information we shall publish it in bulletin form. To be placed on a mailing list to recieve this, please send stamped addressed envelopes to: Libertaria, 95 West Green Road,
London, N.15. or phone 01-800 9508

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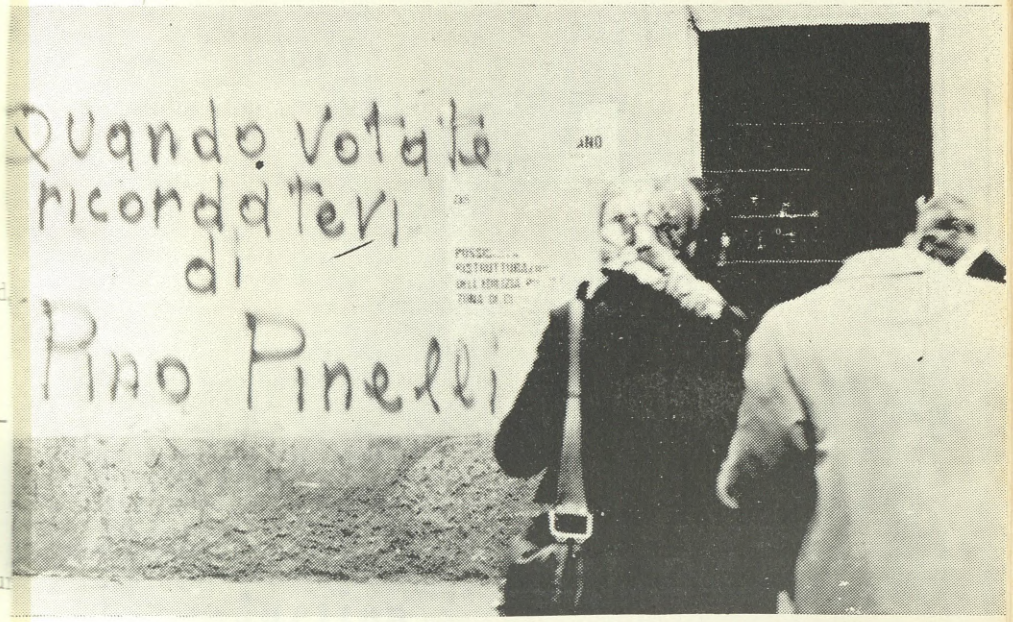


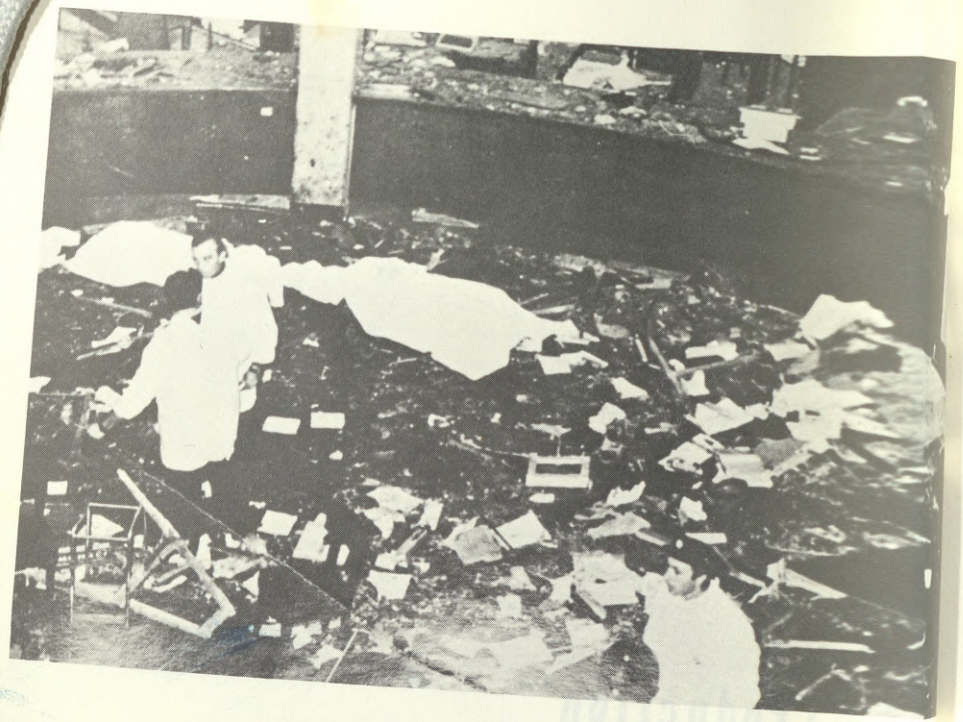
Milano, Via Tivoli: Elezioni 7 giugno

Milano, Via De Amicis

Introduction

On the afternoon of Friday I2th December I969, in the space of an hour, four bombs go off in Rome and Milan. The first, and most serious, explosion occurs at 4.37 p.m. in the main hall of the Banca Nazionale dell' Agricoltura, situated a couple of hundred yards behind Milan Cathedral in Piazza Fontana. This farmers' bank is crowded, as it is every Friday which is market-day. The final death roll is I6, the injured total ninety.

At 4.45 p.m., it is the turn of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro in Rome. This time, the bomb has been placed in a basement corridor; only thirteen people are injured, one seriously - by a stroke of luck, no-one was actually walking down the corridor at the moment of the explosion.



The other two explosions also occur in Rome; they are much less powerful and have a different kind of target: the monumental Altare dekka Patria (Altar of the Fatherland) in Piazza Venezia. The bombs go off in quick succession, at 5.I6 p.m. and 5.24 p.m; the second causes more damage, and two passers-by are injured by flying masonry.

By this time a fifth, unexploded bomb has been discovered in the Banca Commerciale Italiana in Piazza Scala, Milan, near the opera-house. Presumably its timing device failed, but on-one can ever be certain: after a cursory inspection it is exploded by police ballistics experts later that evening.

Large numbers of suspects are rounded up, and within three days, the police have made their arrests. Then justice slips into its familiar quick-quick-slow. The men accused of this atrocious crime are still, two years after the event, awaiting trail.

*

One of the principal ways in which the bourgeois press tried to mystify the bombings of the I2th December was to present them as the work of the generically "anti-social" anarchists, or, when this version, for contingent reasons (particularly the murder of Pinelli), had to be modified, of individual psychopaths with "anarchistic" views.

The purpose of this document (part of which incorporates translations from Italian material) is to show that the bombings have their precise place both in the developing Italian political crisis (sections 2 and 4) and in a pattern of growing authoritarian repression (police, judiciary, burocracy: section 3). The manifestion of these tendencies in the I2th December case is described in sections 5 and 6, while section 7 discusses the contradictions and confusions of the present political situation in connection with the judicial inquiries into the death of Pinelli.

In other words, we do not share the view of the bourgeois press that the bombings were an inexplicable visitation of the Evil One in the shape of the Crippled Dancer, Valpreda; on the contrary we believe that they are explicable logically and historically. But the document will be purely academic if it does not awaken us

to the importance of what is happening in Italy now. And to the fact that if we remain silent, our silence will only condone the injustices that have been and are yet to be perpetrated in the name of bourgeois legality.

2 Political & Economic Background

From 1968 onwards, there is growing tension between different sectors of Italian capital: between "backward" capital (small and medium-sized industry; those large-scale industrialists who have particular links with U.S. interests) and "advanced" monopoly capital (firms like FIAT, PIRELLI, ENI, Montedison, etc, which are either state-owned or heavily financed by the state). (For the latter, *Guardian* supplement of 15.11.71).

Advanced capital presents a direct threat to the American monopoly in international markets and openly competes with American companies (FIAT against Fords, Pirelli against Firestone and the big oil-companies). It is creating the conditions in which small and medium sized companies will be faced by the choice between gradual absorption into the big economic trusts or liquidation.

In the course of 1968, this conflict gets increasingly bitter and open, and the general character of the two sides becomes clear: on the

one hand, the "reactionaries", willing servants of American imperialism and inclose contact with the Greek regime; on the other, the "reformists", who are tired of a dependance on foreign capital which forces them to pay the cost of other people's wars (Vietnam, the Middle East). The space race and the inflation and devaluation arising from these adventures; at the same time, they are eager to open up their own 'centres of exploitation' and to reorganize society in an apparently more democratic but in reality only more "rational" way.

It is in the light of this situation that the right wing of the Socialist Party (which is in the 'centre-left' coalition government) breaks away to become PSU (Unitary Socialist Party): Summer '69. PSU is backed by the CIA, and reflects the interests of small and medium - sized industry.

At the same time, the PCI (Italian Communist Party) finally abandons any pretence of being a revolutionary party and sets itself up as a guarantor of the system; it sees its role as helping to keep productivity up, to weaken American economic power in the country (in fact the PCI is going through an 'economic nationalism' phase), and to strengthen national social and economic structures in view of the new techno-burocracy that is emerging.

While this high-level power-struggle is going on, a new movement develops in the space opened up on the left by the 'defection' of the PCI. At first this movement (student, young-workers) is only sectorial and episodic, but, in the course of working out new programmes, new methods and new forms of organisation, it becomes increasingly a force for liberation. Despite its weaknesses and limitations - inexperience, amateurism, sectarianism, spontaneism, dogmatism,

leaderism - it threatens to make "social peace", i.e. the reinforcing of social order necessary to the plans of the reformists, impossible.

In the autumn of 1969, a large number of labour - contracts come up for renewal. Vast sectors of the population mobilize around this issue, and press forward demands, both economic and social, which are very advanced and very difficult for the system to absorb.

The bosses and ruling class, faced by the crisis over contracts and by the increasing consciousness of the workers that the real purpose of the struggle is to themselves. These divisions are reflected in parliament, between reactionaries and reformists.

The solutions put forward by the reformists seem inadequate. The revolutionary movement continues to push hard, forcing the PCI and the unions to back pedal continually, for fear of being supplanted once and for all.

The plan to amalgamate the unions (which in Italy are 'syndicates' divided roughly along party lines) is, for the moment at least, still not enough to achieve full control of the situation.

This state of affairs, objectively dangerous for capitalism, induces the big industrialists to let the more reactionary part of the bourgeoisie call the tune: - a series of bombing, of an obviously fascist pattern, culminating in the attempted massacre of 25th April 1969 at the Central Station, Milan and the Milan Trade Fair; these bombings will be attributed to the anarchists (see below);

- artifical ups and downs on the Stock Exchange which frighten the petty and middle bourgeoisie;

- a second series of explosions, this time on trains (8th-9th August 1969); again the responsibility is laid at the dorr of the anarchists (comrade Pinelli, who was a railway-worker, was also accused of these attacks; since his death, a number of fascists have been charged but they are all, surprise surprise, out on bail);

Increasing provocation by the police against pickets and workers' demonstrations; the death of the policeman Annarumma during the general strike of 19th November (alleged by the authorities to have been battered to death by demonstrators, but in fact killed in a collision between two jeeps as is clearly shown on a film recorded by French TV) is the occasion for a hysterical campaign against the "hooligans" and "anarchistic murderers" and for President Saragat to launch a law-and-order campaign;

- PSV and the entire parliamentary right propagandize vigorously for law and order;

- 12th December: the bombs in Rome and Milan, which immediately lead into a campaign of witchhunting, motal lynching and 'white terror' brilliantly orchestrated by the bourgeois press with the participation of the 'official' left.

It is in this atmosphere that Pinelli, having been held illegally for three days in Milan police HQ, is thrown out of a fourth floor window. And at the same time, the "monsters", the "wild beasts", the "murderers", the "anarchists" are, with amazing speed, tracked down and secured for justice.

This "strategy of tension" was a risky one for big business: there was the danger that the process of economic rationalization might be blocked completely if the situation got out of hand. But it took its chances and indeed set an example with a series of suspensions, sackings and indictments (over 14,000 workers charged with various offences in 1969); it was therefore a willing accomplice of terroriem and of the massacre. It was in a position to sustain a temporary halt, painful but necessary, in its development-plans. And precisely because of its complicity, it was able to keep a careful eye on things and, at the right moment, to regain control of the situation.

The purpose of this reactionary manoeuvre, seem as a whole, was two-fold, and reveals clearly the contradictions within the bourgeoisie itself: 1) to halt the process of economic rationalization being carried out by large-scale industry with the help of the official left, so as to avoid the defeat of the petty and middle national bourgeoisie; 2) to strike at the revolutionary movement which at that time (69) was going from strength to strength.

The first goal has clearly not been attained. History and economic logic are against it. Teh large monopolies are quite capable of handling jumped-up mini-industrialists. Today these small capitalists, who have officially left (but in reality been thrown out of) Italy's equivalent of the CBI, the Confindustria and regrouped themselves in CONFAPI (Confederation of Crafts and small industry), go and plead poverty with the Minister of Industry who warmly commends them ("you are the backbone of Italian

economy") and sends them away with promises that will not be kept (or will be kept only if they fit in with the overall development programme.)

As far as the second objective is concerned, it's a dufferent story: the bosses, always at each other's throats over questions of interest, dominance, conquest of markets and so on, come together in moments of crisis(and the Italian economy has been "in crisis", productivity stagnant etc, since the autumn of '69), and close ranks against the common enemy, those 'extremists' who do not want to negotiate a better, more "human" form of exploitation, but who struggle against and want to abolish exploitation itself. Behind the bombings of 1969 and the framings of anarchists and other comrades is an unholy alliance of big and small industry and large sectors of the State apparatus.

3 The Bombs of 25th April 1969

On the 25th April 1969, two bombs explode in Milan: one in the FIAT pavilion at the Trade Fair, the other in the foreign exchange office at the Central Station. By a miracle, no-one is killed, though several people are seriously injured.

On the 28th the Chamber of Deputies had been due to debate a bill calling for the

disarming of the police: this proposal is now out of the question.

At first, the inquiries seem to be directed across the whole political spectrum, but they rapidly concentrate on the anarchists; eight comrades are arrested and charged within a short time. An instrumental figure in the directing of attention of the police to this quarter is Antonia Arnati, chief examining judge of Milan, who will also be active in the 12th December round-up and in the incrimination of Valpreda and comrades.

After seven months in jail, two of the accused, Giovannia Corradini and Eliane Vincileoni, are released for lack of evidence. The others, Braschi, Della Savia, Faccioli, Pulsinelli, Norscia, Mazzanti, wait on.

Finally, having spent nearly two years inside, their trial begins on 22nd March 1971. Two months later (29th May) they are acquitted, on all except some minor charges (but even these, as we shall see, are significant). Despite the efforts of the judge and Public Prosecutor to cover things up as much as possible, a good deal of dirty linen gets washed in the presence of journalists and foreign observors, and enough information comes out to enable us to reconstruct in some detail the true story of the whole affair.

1) The star prosecution-witness, a school-teacher called Rosemma Zublema, having been on intimate terms with some of the accused, was billed to reveal all. But the only thing that the poor lady revealed was her own hysterical condition. So contradictory was

her evidence that in the end even the Public Prosecutor hae to recognize that she was a congenital liar and to dismiss her as a witness. At the same time, her performance demonstrated clearly how she had been quite deliberatelu and callously used by the police in their efforts to frame the accused. Chief mover in this operation was Deputy Inspector Luigi Calabresi, who was to acheive even greater notoriety later in '69 as the murderer of Pinelli. Calabresi evidently thought that he had found the perfect witness in a women who in 1967 had been found guilty of slander in a series of letters to mayors, prefects, bishops and other notables - perfect, that is, for his idea of evidence: it is in the course of this trial that Calabresi will declare, with an air of bovine arrogance, that it is his practice to record only what he sees fit to record in witness's statements. The defence request in vain the indictment of Zublena for perjury and Calabresi for suborning a witness.

2) The prosecution-case rested further on a series of "confessions" by the accused. Apart from the fact that some of these related to events that never occurred or to events for which the accused could not have been responsible, it is not difficlut to understand how the confessions were obtained. Faccioli testifies in court how he was kept without food for three days, and forced to stnad continually, and kept in the cold,... "But what most induced me to sign the statements the police had drawn up were the beatings and the threats. It was the first time I had undergone physical violence. I was slapped, struck on the neck, punched, my hair was pulled and the nerves in my neck were twisted. The beatings were all the more frightening because they would set about me without warning, having closed the

shutters, and I was beaten in the dark." And Faccioli identifies his aggressors: Calabresi, Panessa, Mucilli: one half of the six-man team that in December '69 were to interrogate Pinelli.

Panessa, who already on other occasions has proved himself not a very brilliant witness (the judge in the Calabresi-*Lotta Continua* trial, see below, goes so far as tell him that he talks too much), contradicts himself hopelessly under cross-examination: he is saved by the presiding judge Curatolo who sends him out of the court room.

Doubts are cast on the allegations made by the accused: then it is discovered that when Faccioli got to San Vittore prison, he was not sent to have the medical which is obligatory for new arrivals.

3) Despite the scandal about police brutality, the accused are still convicted for a "confessed", but non-existant crime: the alleged theft of explosives from a quarry near Bergamo which, accoring to all the directors and all the security-guards at the place never happened. Naturally, the court "has its doubts" about the truthfulness of the latter - so why aren't they charged with perjury? They're not.

In fact, this non-existant theft was invented down to the last detail by the ballistivs expert Teonesto Cerri. Another "coincidence": it is the same Cerri who on the 12th December was to authorize the blowing-up of the unexploded bomb from the Banca Commerciale, thus destroying what could have

been a decisive clue as to the identity of those responsible: perhaps *too* decisive...

But the significance of this conviction is clear. Already in the committal proceedings against Valpreda (concludedin September 1970), the examining judge had suggested in his amazing summing-up that part of the explosives "stolen" from the quarry had been used for the massacre of 12th December.....

4) On the 7th December 1969, *The Observor* published the famous secret report (th "P. report") sent by a Greek agent in Italy to the Prime Minister's office in Athens and thence forwarded to the Greek Embassy in Rome. The document revals that the bombings of 25th April were planned by the Greek government and carried out by Italian fascists in direct contact with the Colonels.

The report, which had been widely quoted in the international press, is not so much as considered by the notorious Amati (in charge of the committal proceedings) who refuses even to include it among the trial-papers.

But at the trial, Leslie Finer (the *Observor* journalist responsible for its publication) reaffirms the authenticity of the document and its accuracy concerning the plots devised by the Greek Colonels and the CIA in Italy. The document goes into considerble detail about the contacts and agreements made with memebrs of the police, the army and the Carabinieri (para-military police); these agreements were (and are) aimed at constituting "secret organisations" within these forces designed to take on the provocatory and

terroristic roel assumed "by the Greek military police during the preparation of the colonels' revolution." In the second chapter of the document, which consists of a report on "concrete actions" already carried out, it is stated, with explicit reference to the bombings for which the Milan six were standing trial, "The actions could not be carried out till the 25th an unexpected difficulty made it impossible to gain access to the FIAT pavilion. The two actions have had a considerable effect."

The sic comrades, having served two years' preventive detention, are now out of jail. Those of them that were convicted will appeal, not because they have any great faith in bourgeois justice, but as a means of exposing the system still further.

Their diffidence is well-founded; nor does the acquittal on the main charge in itself give much ground for optimism in the Valpreda case. The Public Prosecutor and the court did everything in their power to keep the scandal within limits that the system could tolerate. They managed to avoid charging any of the false prosecution witnesses with perjury. And they managed to uphold against all the evidence that little bit which allowed them to convict on three minor offences, in order to salvage the political substance of the frame-up and not to have to indict the policemen and magistrates who were responsible for it.

But above all, in order to suggest to public opinion that anarchists really do throw bombs after all, and thus to give credence to the much bigger frame-up being prepared for the comrades accused of the State massacre of 12th December.

4 The 'Hot Autumn & The Bombs of 12th December' 1969

If the bombs of 25th April were intended to dampen the spirits of an embattled working-class, they were a complete failure. The struggle goes on with even greater intensity. As predicted the autumn sees strike after strike and the streets are invaded by thousands of militant demonstrators.

The fact that there seems no end to the government crises which have been occurring regularly since the summer encourages the Right to hasten its plans.

From the beginning of September onwards there are insistent rumours of a *coup d' etat*. The bosses' and fascist press, echoed by PSU, repeatedly demands the dissolution of parliament. PSU puts the choice bluntly: "either we are brought into the Government or else early elections."

During October and November, terrorist attacks grow in number (there are 145 in all in Italy during 1969, more than one every three days.) Fascist "squads" (gangs), financed mainly by small and medium-sized firms, roam the streets, beating up militants, burning left-wing offices etc. Their presence only serves to reinforce the call for a strong government, "to put things right", Pietro Nenni (leader of the

Socialist Party), interviewed in the *Corriere della Sera*, compares the present situation to the events which led to fascism in 1922.

With the intensification of the "strategy of tension" on the Right, there is an increasing number of workers' agitations which show less than the due respect to the bosses. At Pirelli, an indefinate strike is declared with a new slogan: "We want everything and we want it now," On the 21st November, two days after the general strike, La Malfa (Republican Party) and Tanassi (PSU) launch into a bitter attack on the unions which, under severe pressure from their memebrs, have been forced to mobilize five million workers for the renewal of the labour-contracts. The same day, Confindustria releases a threatening statement: "Workers power is tending to take the place of parliament...this is a subversion of the whole political system." The right wing Christain Democrat, Guido Gonella, launches an appeal to the "timid bourgeois" to "react against the workers picket-lines."

Only a few days away from the bombs, on the 6th December, Mauro Ferri, secretary of PSU, joins his voice to the hysterical demands of the economic and political right for an authorition of a Presedential republic. An elequent statment of his is published in the weekly paper *Gente:* "The decision to dissolve parliament belings to the head of state alone... all Italians may rest assured that the power entrusted to President Saragat is in good hands."

All police forces are on emergency standby. Fascists of every description are in ferment. Almirante, leader of the neo-fascist party MSI (Italian Social Movement) delivers diatribes about

"civil war" and urges intervention by the army. The army itself shows clear signs of nervousness and it is increasingly called upon to keep public order. At Monza, on the 15th November, the officer commanding the military district states publicly in the presence of the Procurator of the Republic: "Given the present disorder in the factories and the schools, it is the duty of the army to defend the *INTERNAL FRONTIERS* of the country: the army is now the only bulwark against disorder and anarchy."

The feeling that the situation can only be resolved by recourse to armed force becomes increasingly wide-spread amongst the population.

On the 7th December, *The Observor*, followed by *The Guardian*, sounds the alarm: "A group of officers and right-wing extremists is preparing a coup d' etat in Italy..." On the 10th December, *Der Spiegel* follows this up with a report about "fascist youth organisations in a state of readiness for civil war". Confindustria stokes the flames: its director Gambarotta makes public the official thinking of Italian capital: "The parliamentary system is not suitable for Italy... What is needed is an institution above parties with a mythical faith in order..."

We are on the eve of the State massacre. On the 11th December there is a feverish atmosphere, with meeting os secret service officers and high-ranking army officers in Milan. The weekly paper *Epoca* comes out decked in the national colours and in a prophetic article warns its readers: "...if the situation were to become dramatic... the armed forces could be called upon to re-enforce leagality forthwith... we must consider the possibility of a Presedential republic..."

Amongst the interested parties, there is open talk of "something big" due to happen in the next few hours. The massacre had its prophets, just as it had its predestined victims and its chosen scapegoats.

It will become known later that amongst the most trusted fascist of the Ordine Nuovo (New Order group, it was being said at least two days in advance that the bombs would go off precisely on the 12th in Rome and Milan and would find the fascist ready for action and the police super-efficient.

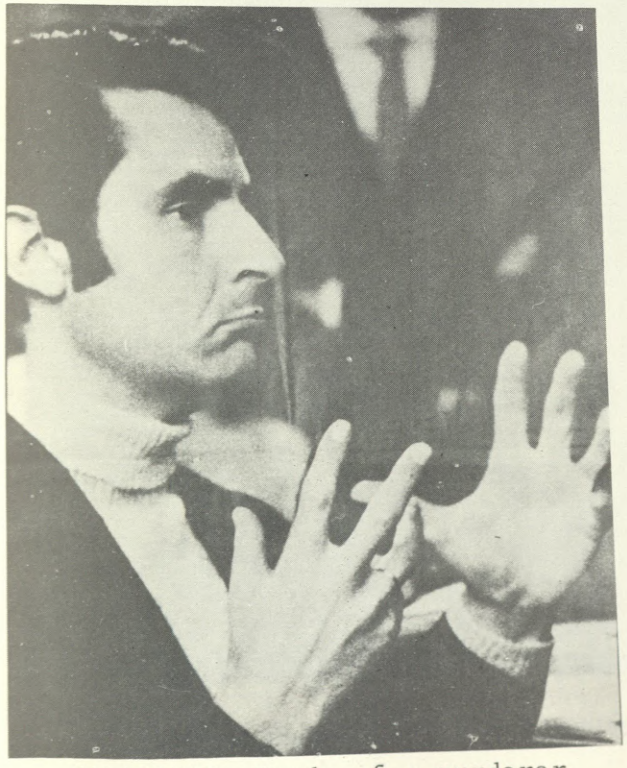
And indeed within a few minutes of the Rome explosions, the fascists are on the streets with leaflets and posters denouncing the "anarchist terrorists." While the police, as promises, acts with unaccustomed speed. Except that, as will appear later, it moves so fast that it's in danger of meeting itself coming back.

5 The Round-up

Despite the statement of the Minister of the Interior Restivo to the effect that inquiries are going on right across the political board, the police seem to have little doubt about where to direct their energies; the final scoreline of those arrested or brought in for questioning immediately after the

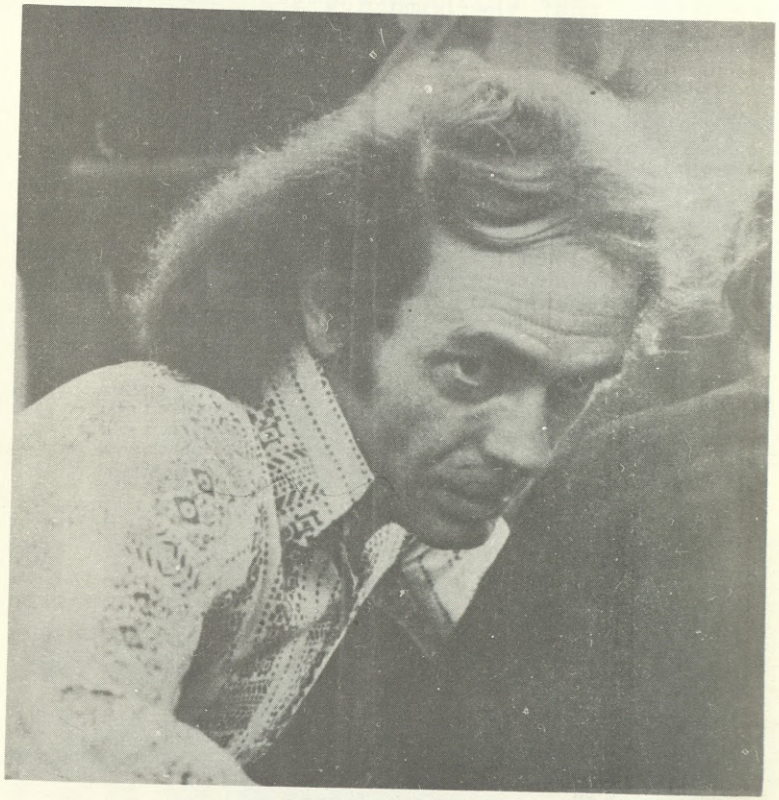
bombings reads: Extra-parliamentary left, including anarchists, 588 - fascits, 12 (all of these twelve are treated with due respect and quickly released).

Certain members of the judiciary and the political police display remarkable powers of intuition. As soon as he hears the news of the explosion in Piazza Fontana, Judge Amati telephones Milan police HQ and advises them to investigate "in anarchist circles". This insight is shared by the officer directly in charge of the case,' Deputy Inspector Calabresi, who the same evening is informing journalists that the bombings are certainly"the work of anarchists."



CALABRESI; Hands of a murderer.

Calabresi has even more precise ideas which, however, he does not reveal to the press. Those that hear about them are the anarchists whom he questions: he asks them insistantly about their contacts with Pietro Valpreda, and about Valpreda's present whereabouts; he makes it pretty plain that, as far as the bomb in the piazza Fontana is concerned, the police are convinced that Valpreda is the culprit.



Pietro Valpreda (Photo taken late '71)

Pietro Valpreda, 37 year old darcer, is one of the leading members of a Rome anarchist group calling itself, in memory of Cohn-Berdit, the "22nd March circle". During the next few days the other members of the group, all of whom are in Rome, are picked up. Valpreda it is known, had driven to Milan on 11th December in answer to a summons from the Palace of Justice in connexion with a minor political offence. Throughout the weekend, the Milan police search for him to no avail.

Monday 15th December is the day for coups de theatre. At 5:30 in the morning, the police arrive at the flat of Valpreda's great-aunt, Rachele Torri. He is not there. The old lady informs them that Pietro had gone to spend the weekend "with a friend" (police version), but that they would be able to find him later that morning at the Palace of Justice where he has an appointment with Judge Amati. Valpreda turns up to keep the appointment, the police are waiting for him, the fish is in the bag. He is almost immediately transferred to Rome.

That same morning, a taxi driver, Cornelio Rolandi, evidently in a state of considerable anxiety, annoys a customer by taking wrong turnings and seeming to get completely lost. His customer asks him what the matter is. Rolandi pours out his soul: he thinks he might have driven the murderer of piazza Fontana on the fateful afternoon of 12th December: he had picked up a man carrying a black bag, the man had got out near piazza Fontana and come back without his bag, then he had driven on a short way in the cab, and got out, paid his fare and hurried away up the street. Rolandi's client

advises him to get in touch with the police at once, and having eventually reached his destination, himself telephones the police and reports the conversation. Rolandi presents himself to the cops, and spends the whole day at the station; he tells his story and gives the description of the man. The next day he is flown down to Rome and recognises Valpreda in the identification parade. The police have a "super-witness".

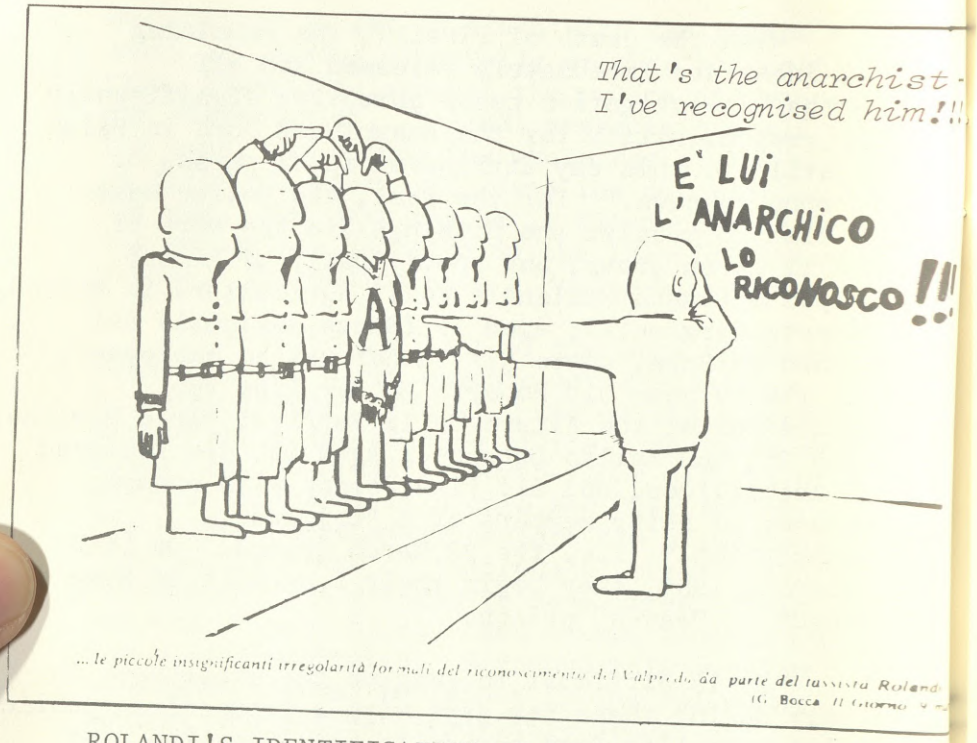
The third and last of the days traumatic events occurs a few moments after midnight: Giuseppe ('Pino') Pinelli, one of the anarchists picked up on the evening of the 12th falls from the window of Calabresi's fourth-floor office; he is taken to hospital in a coma and dies an hour later. The police immediately declare him a suicide: Pinelli, informed of Valpreda's arrest and his 'confession' is alleged to have cried, "this is the end of anarchism!) and thrown himself out of the window forthwith. Although this version undergoes several revisions in the following months, the police steadfastly stick, not surprisingly, to the thesis of suicide. Equally steadfastly, the left as well as a growing sector of liberal opinion, refuse to believe either that a man of Pinelli's experience was likely to be impressed by police intimidation or that a man of Pinelli's character was capable of making such an absurdly melodramatic gesture.

The arrest of Valpreda, the appearance of the superwitnesses Rolandi and the death of Pinelli, bring the most frenetic phase of the investigation to a close - only three days after the bombings, the police can close the dossier and congratulate themselves on having, with commendable speed and efficiency, identified and arrested the murderers.

With the death of Pinelli, the remaining detainees are immediately released and all further investigation cease abruptly: significantly the responsibility for the unexploded bomb in Milan is still to this day attributed to "a person or persons unknown." For the rest, the police-case is tied up neatly: the bombings are the work of the 22 March group, and specifically of Pietro Valpreda (Banca Nazionale dell' Agricultura in Milan), Roberto Gargamelli; aged 19 (Banca Nazionale del Lavoro in Rome, where his father was an employee), and the 17 year old Roberto Mander (the two explosions at the Altare della Patria); Mario Merlino aged 25, and Emilio Borghese, aged 18, are indicted as accomplices, and all five, along with others, accused of being members of a "criminal association." (i.e. the 22 March Group). On 15th December 1969, they begin their long wait in Rome's "Queen of Heaven" prison.

It is difficult to imagine the atmosphere in Italy during these few days with a traumatized public opinion reeling from horror to releif as the news media pour out information on the development of the case. While the response of both right, and left, however, is hardly more than demonstrative, the "centre" capitalizes on the situation with authoritative calls to reason and legality.

The coup d' etat is no longer mooted as a serious possibility - and this is probably an accurate indication of the miscalculation made by those who were (and are) prepared to use the fascists just as far as is necessary to bring the people, and expecially the workers, "back to their senses." For these people, the bombings were timed perfectly to 'lance the boil' of growing militancy (even if only temporarily.)



ROLANDI'S IDENTIFICATION OF VALPREDA
Caption, from *Il Giorno*, reads: "...the few insignificant formal irregularities in the taxi-driver Rolandi's identification of Valpreda..." (9/3/70)

After the initial shock, the majority of the press calls for enegetic repression of the criminals and their organization(s). On the right, this inevitably takes crude authoritarian forms, extending to a call for a state of emergency, suspension of civil liberties etc. Towards the centre, a paper like *Corriere della Sera* develops what is evidently destined to become the theme-song of the seventies, the

theory of the 'opposite extremes'; according to which the extra-parliamentary groups, composed of frustrated and desperate anti-social minorities, ineveitably breed violence, and 'left' is really indistinguishable from 'right', their opposing ideologies being only a cover for their common commitment to thuggery and bombs; 'les extremes se touchment', only within the bounds of parliamentary legality may sanity be found. The theory appears to be confirmed after the arrests when it is discovered that one of the leading lights of the "22 March" group, Mario Merlino, is a fascist infiltrator and provocateur. The bombs are the work of a monstrous hybrid called "anarcho-fascism".

The theory of the opposite extremes is is greatly refined after the events of 15th December. At first it is suggested that Pinelli had 'committed suicide' because he saw that the game was up, that he had even confessed to his complicity. This version is quickly modified: the suicide was the gesture of a guiltless idealist, someone who could not cope with the idea that a self-declared anarchist like Valpreda could have committed so heinous a crime - 'the end of anarchism' provokes the end of Giuseppe Pinelli. Thus a distinction is beginning to be made between 'good' extremists and 'bad' ones. On the one hand, the holders of utopian ideals, naive perhaps, but not murderers. On the other hand, the Valpredas and Gargamellis and Manders of this world, madmen and/or social misfits. Valpreda, for example, is a professional dancer but suffers from an occasional form of arthritis (Burger's disease) in the legs - his 'anarchism' is the alibi of a frustrated artist. The teenage members of the group have all broken with their families

- 'anarchism' is a convenient label to be adorned by people with a chip on their shoulder.

Within a few days, the responsibility for the bombings has been narrowed down to the anarchists (always associated in the public mind with terrorist attacks) or 'anarcho-fascists', and then further to a few individuals, 'not real anarchists', but madmen and misfits whose head have been turned by the rhetoric of the extremes. This explanation convinces for a time a noteable section of the 'democratic' left (for example, the PCI). If, as the evidence suggests (the evidence not considered by the magistrates), the bombings of the 12the December were planned in advance with the active participation or at least the connivance of the police, and Valpreda was framed, they have chosen their scapegoat well: Valpreda, in fact, is not popular, either personally or politically, in the anarchist movement; only a few months earlier he had quarrelled openly with Pinelli over tactics; and he was in fact the kind of anarchist who would go around shouting "bombs, blood and anarchy", as the police alleged.

But from shouting slogans like these to planting a devuce which will claim over a hundred victims (dead and injured) is a step which those who actually know Valpreda doubt him capable of taking. And as details of the police and judicial enquiries begin to filter out from Rome, the doubts increase: why did Valpreda take a taxi to do a journey of a couple of hundred yards? Why did the police not look for him at his grandparents' house where he often stayed when he was in Milan and where he claims he spent the weekend of 13/14 December,

ill in bed with flu? is Rolandi's identification of Valpreda ' above all suspicion'? Where did a small and unimportant group like "22 March" get the money and the materials to carry out such a vast operation? But it is the death of Pinelli which really puts the cat among the pigeons. Many of those who are at first prepared to accept the guilt of the "madman" Valpreda and his adolescent accomplices are less than convinced by the 'suicide' of a man who is known to be sound in mind and body, with a long experience of police interrogations, and (as is officially recognized later) completely innocent of any involvement in the bombings.

Valpreda and Gargamelli at the committal procedings

As the doubts and questions multiply so the pahse of the 'clear-cut case' with the ready answers confidently expounded by the police in their daily press-conferences, gives way to that, which still persists today, in which nothing is certain, on diversionary tactic follows another, the fog descends,. Only one landmark remains: however they did it, for whatever reasons, whatever contradictions there might appear to be in the case, Valpreda and his friends are officially guilty.

6 The Case Against Valpreda and Comrades

The committal proceedings draw to a close on 26th September 1970 with a summing-up *Sentenza istruttoria* which is conspicious for its high-minded moralizing tone, for the suppression of several pieces of evidence favourable to the accused (which can be checked in the 16,000 pages of trail-documents), and for the contradictions and inadequacies of that evidence which is admitted.

Valpreda, Gorgamelli, Mander, Merlino, Borghese and others are all accused of being members of a "criminal association," and the Public Prosecutor devotes a great deal of space to showing that the "22 March" group was the 'type' of organization that could plan and prepare the atrocities and that Valpreda and comrades were the 'type' of people that could carry them out. The group, we are told

which only came together in the autumn of '69, was composed of individuals who were for the most part immature both psychologically and politically, vaguely committed to ill-defined programmes of 'action'; there was a good deal of talk about bombs and explosives, but "no clear political aims" (the judge's words). The group, however, did put their ideas into practice: plans to explode a molotov at the Queen of Heaven prison on 13th September and to smash the windows of FIAT's offices in Rome five days later were thwarted by timely police intervention, but they did succeed in throwing a Molotov at the MSI headquarters in Rome on 7th October, and in breaking windows at American firms during the Vietnam demonstration of 15th November. They were strongly suspected of being responsible for a bomb that went off at a barracks on 24th November, but "it is impossible to be certain."

Their plans for violent actions during the general strike of 19th November had been circumvented by the whole group being taken into custody early in the morning.

The role of the fascist infiltrator Merlino in provoking these incidents is recognized by the Public Prosecutor; most of the information, however, comes not from him, but from another stranger in the camp, one Salvatore Ippolito, who turns out to be a police agent. Of course, the authorities cannot afford to suggest that Ippolito knew in advance about the plans for 12th December: this embarressment is averted by it being said that after the arrests of 19th November the group grew suspicious of him - which contrasts strangely both with the statements of the accused (Valpreda for many months refuses to

believe the real identity of the comrade they knew as "Andrea") and with the confidence allegedly made to Ippolito by Borghese immediately after the events, to the effect that no-one would suspect Gargamelli of planting a bomb in the bank where his father works. And if anyone wondering why the police should infiltrate from the moment of its inception an evidently very able agent into a group consisting mainly of a few boys with "no clear political aims" - well, of course, that is just another of the mysteries of the case.

There is, incidentally, no evidence to suggest that either Merlino or Ippolito knew what was being planned or therefore knew to what ends the information they were supplying was being put - rather, the contrary. Merlino evidently was so completely in the dark that he didn't even trouble to supply himself with an alibi for the afternoon of the 12th, and he caused a good deal of embarressment to his fascist friends with his desperate attempts to secure one afterwards.

Another 'mystery': what is the inexorable logic - so inexorable that the Public Prosecutor doesn't bother his head about it - that lead a group of politically ill-prepared youths from bottle throwing and window-smashing in November to mass-murder in December? As to the practical matters - money, materials, expertise - and the all-important question in these cases, 'who gave the orders?', the judge shrugs them off in the evident belief that you can assume what you like once you have proved the existance of a "criminal association".

In the summing-up, guilt by association is compounded by guilt by default. Thus, since neither Gargamelli nor Mander can provide watertight alibis, it is safe to assume that, being members of a "criminal association", they are lying. This is enough to presume them guilty of being at the scene of the explosions at the relevant time even though no on-the-spot witness has positively identified them.

But these are mere preliminaries. The real core of the case is the evidence against the principal accused, Pietro Valpreda,. At the beginning of the committalproceedings, the cops say they have a number of "indications" against him which they are confident will emerge as "certain proof".

Nothing very substantial, but enough to tranquilize a public opinion eager for "order" and culprits.

1) The taxi-driver Rolandi (for his story, see above).
2) A greenish-yellow piece of glass was found in the bag left in the Banca Commerciale (that which contained the unexploded Milan bomb). It was well-known that Valpreda used coloured glass of this kind to make art-nouveau lamps with.

3) According to Rolandi, his passenger used the taxi for an extremely brief journey (only 135 metres on foot from the pick up point to the bank.) Valpreda could not walk because he suffered from "Burger's disease" which caused him very painful cramps in his legs. It was further rumoured that he was missing a big toe.

4) During military service, Valpreda had taken part in an explosives course, and was therefore well-versed in ballistics.

5) A number of people declared that they had seen Valpreda in Rome the day after the massacre. According to his own statements, he had not left Milan. But if he is lying about the Saturday, his alibi for the Friday will also be completely discredited. His great-aunt, mother, sister and a friend who confirm his story are indicted for prejury.

6) Valpreda states that on Sunday 14th December he saw the nurse who regularly called at his grand-parents' flat to give his grandfather an injection. When she is questioned about by the examining judge, the nurse, Signora Galli denies having seen him there.

7) Valpreda had at his disposal a massive quantity of explosives coming from the famous quarry-theft already mentioned. Furthermore, the "22 March" group had a cache of explosives on the via Casilina leading out of Rome.

Now let us see how these "indications" became "certain proof".

1) Roland's story is a long and complex one, and her we can only mention the essential features. Apart from the general implausibility of his account of this crazy taxi-ride, there are certain details which are extremely worrying. Firstly, the version that he gave his passenger on the morning of 15th December differs from that officially recorded by the police later the same day, particularly as regards the routs. Secondly the entry for the journey in

question in the little book which all taxi-drivers use, has clearly been written in later, in a heavier hand thtn the others; Rolandi made two other journies that Friday afternoon, but these have not been recorded. Thirdly, the description that he gives of his passenger is very inaccurate as far as Valpreda is concerned on height, hair colouring and form, facial appearance, voice-pitch and accent. Similarly his idendikit, which he declares 80/ 85% accurate, is notable for only one thing: its similarity to himself! But the identification becomes even more suspect when Rolandi is asked to recognise rather than describe the man. Having spent the morning with the Carabinieri going through a thousand-odd photos (none of them of Valpreda), he is taken to police HQ where special branch officer Zagari shows him only one photography, Valpreda's. In case he should have any doubts about the identification, Zagari points out that the photos is not a recent one. Rolandi is sent away about 7.30 p.m. When he gets home, two policemen are waiting to take him back to police HQ again. Here he is met by police chief Guida himself who expresses his warmest admiration for his sense of civic responsibility, adding his congratulations with a slap on the back and the words, "Good old Rolandi, your taxi-days are over!" Rolandi agrees to go to Rome to identify Valpreda and is formally warned to "act according to your conscience." He is also told to forget (for the time being) that a reward, just under £33,500, is being offered ... And the next day at Rome, the identification: five in a line - four cops and Valpreda. But even so Rolandi has his doubts: he points Valpreda out, and then adds, "if that's not him, he isn't here", after a moments hesitation, he confirms the identification. Later he will admit that "they showed me the photo of the person I was to identify at Milan."

The absolute inadmissability of this evidence is only aggravated by the personality of the witness. A heavy drinker, and notoriously reactionary (even though a paid-up member of the PCI), his relations with the police had been friendly for some time - the occasional tipp-off, the occasional reward. Another Zublena?

2) The piece of glass which was supposed to fix Valpreda fixed the judge instead. It is found on the 14th December in the bag which had contained the unexploded Milan bomb by officer Zagari and Russomanno. But instead of sending it immediately to the judicial authorities along with the bag and everything else, they pass it on to the *police* forensic department "for analysis", Only three months later it will be handed on to the magistrate. The procedure is totally illegal but that isnt what counts. The police knew perfectly well that Valpreda and other comrades made art-nouveau lamps with pieces of glass, so their zeal is not surprizing. What is surprizing is that on the 14th December, Rolandi had still not been heard of, let alone recognized Valpreda. So what can explain such *premature* zeal? Anyway, the piece of glass turns out on analysis to be "similar but not identical" to the type used by Valpreda. Similar but not identical is a euphemism for *different*.

As if all these faux pas were not enough, the Public Prosecutor (in concluding the committal proceedings) goes on to suggest that the piece of glass, which is now getting too hot to handle, might have ended up in the bag "by chance" after the explosion; and so he concludes with splendid logic: "This possibility invalidates the circumstance as serious evidence

against Valpreda, and therefore the Public Prosecutor does not intend to bring it forward as proof against the accused." The defence, however, does not concur; the business of the piece of glass is one of the most serious elements against the investigators.

3) When Valpreda reports that he suffers from Burger's disease in an a-hypical form and points out that the illness is quiescent and has no particular effect on his ability to walk. Having been described as a human wreck, it is discovered that besides having five toes on each foot he is able to walk and run over long distances without any problems ("like a gazelle," the papers say.) Not for nothing is he a dancer, and in fact just before the bombs he had been signed on for a TV show in Cagliari. So why the taxi? The Public Prosecutor explains (p.82 of the *sentenza*): "...there is no need to delay over the sterile question (which appear to have troubled some people even outside this court) as to why Valpreda had to use a taxi. In criminal reality what counts are the facts as they occurred and not as they ought to have occurred in order to make the perfect crime."

This, in our humble opinion, is not an argument, but plain idiocy.

4) It is true that more than 15 years ago Valpreda did a month's explosives course at Gorizia. If we allow that every year a thousand recruits take part in this sort of course, there are at least 15,000 people in Italy who could be indicted on these grounds. According to the instructor Michele Cicero the only practical work done in the course which Valpreda "attended at

least a few times" consisted in firing a charge of 200 grammes (less than ½lb) of TNT linked to a detonator and a slow-burning fuse and buried in a hole in the ground. We're a long way away from the type of explosives (gelignite,dynamite) and the sophisticated priming-mechanism (electrical, with timing-device) used in the Milan bombings. The person who constructed these bombs was a professional, not one of Michele Cicero's recruits.

5) In the *sentenza* it is assortively declared that "from the direct evidence of Armando Cageggi, Benito Bianchi, Giovanni Caraffa, (stage-name Sampieri) and Palmira Zaccardi, whose statements are in full agreement, it emerges without possibility of contradiction that around 8 or 9 O'clock on the evening of Sunday 14th December Pietro Valpreda was at the Jovinelli Bar (Rome)." What is not stated is that Carraffa and Zaccardi, both giving exactly the same version, are relating an incident which occurred at least two or three weeks before when Valpreda went to the bar in the company of Angelo Fascetti; it was at the time when, as Caraffa and Zaccardi; (who are married) state, Valpreda's eye was swollen, the result of a fascist assault. According to Caraffa's statement, on the evening of Saturday 13th December, he is sitting in the Ancora restaurant near the Jovinelli cinema. Valpreda comes in with a young man (this turns out from the description to be the anarchist Angelo Fascetti): Valpreda's eye is swollen: they joke about it. They chat for a bit: Valpreda tells them that he's leaving for Milan in a few days time in the hope of finding work. Then they leave together, Caraffe, Valpreda and Fascetti, and go to the nearby bar, at the corner of via Turatia. But Gorizia Palluzzi, who owns the Ancona restaurant and has known Valpreda for

six years, remembers distinctly that the last time he came to her restaurant was the 3rd or 4th December, with a certain Angelion, i.e. Angelo Fascetti. Her description agrees perfectly with what Valpreda had said in one of his first statements. She gave her evidence four times to the judges, but was not beleived.

The Public Prosecutor fails to point out that Cageggi's wife states that it was only Benito Bianchi who remembered having seen Valpreda in the bar and that it was he who told the story to Cageggi, with whom he worked as a stage-hand. He also passes over in silence the fact the Cageggi had said that he had seen Valpreda sitting at a table in the bar with a certain Leonetto Rossellini and that Rossellini has absolutely denied any such meeting.

Another witness from the sqallid world of the Jovinelli bar is Ermanna Ughetto, stage-name River: on the 28th January 1970, the weekly paper *Gente*, under the title "Valpreda's love-life as told by his girl-friends," publishes an interview with Ermanne Ughetto in which she says that she last saw Valpreda *about three weeks before* the massacre at Pizza Fontana. Valpreda had waited for her at the end of the show at the variety-cinema Ambra-Jovinelli, had taken her to eat and then taken her home when he had asked without success if he could spend the night with her.

This same episode is related by Ermanne Ughetto to the magistrate a couple of weeks after the interview. Only this time the date is shifted: her meeting with Valpreda now

took place no "about three weeks before" the massacre, but immediately after, the evening of the 13th or 14th December. The usherette at the cinema maintains that the meeting between Pietro Valpreda and Ermanne Ughetto took place toward the end of November, but the magistrate doesn't listen to her.

The Public Prosecutor passes too many things over in silence. In his opinion, the Jovinelli evidence is "univocal" and "unequivocal" while in the chapter entitled with admirable fairness of mind "The false statements of Valpreda's family" he defines the evidence of Pietro's great-aunt (68), sister (35), grandmother (80) and mother (58), which coincides exactly with what Valpreda had already declared in total isolation, as "pitiful lies". Likewise, for Elena Segre, the friend who visited Valpreda in Milan on the Sunday afternoon, "she is completely unreliable because she is attached to Valpreda by sentimental bonds." As simple as that.

Apart from all this, everything is mysterious. Why should Valpreda have gone to Rome? And if it were true, why should he deny it? What reason could he have for giving a false alibi which would imperil his whole family? Is this another of those "sterile questions" which do not trouble the Public Prosecutor?

We don't want to paraphrase, but it seems that in police reality what matters are the facts as decided by the Public Prosecutor and not as they occured in reality.

6) The nurse did indeed deny having seen Valpreda. An elderly lady, she was bundled off to Rome to testify in a state of terror and she came back even more frightened and in tears.

7) The fictitious theft has already been discussed above. As for the cache on the via Casilina, nothing was found. Even Ippolito's reports mention only some detonators and a few lengths of fuse. Nobody, not even the police-spy or the fascist, has ever stated that they saw as much as a single stick of dynamite.

At the end of his *sentenza* the Public Prosecutor, seeming almost to sense that all is not well, is eager to allay any doubts or suspicions, and it is only fair to give his point of view: "The deaths of Pizza Fontana have been the occasion for gratuitous attacks from several quarters against the Magistrature (accused of following political directives and not the dictates of justice), attacks which have gone far beyond the limits of the right of criticism. The respect which the writer feels should be borne towards innocent victims and those who still bear on their flesh the marks of the crimes of others will not allow an adequate response here to the insinuations made against the investigators. But one thing must be said for the peace of mind of citizens: the Italian Magistrature *is not a slave* either to other powers or to guiding ideas; rather it *guarantees* for the people objectivity of inquiry and independence of judgement." (emphases in text.)

We give this amount of detail, so that when the trail finally begins, English observors may evaluate what happens. Sometime in the next few months Pietro Valpreda and comrades, having

spent more than two years in jail, will be tried on this and similar evidence. They face sentences of life imprisonment,.

Given that the trial takes place at all, and that it is conducted with some degree of even bourgeois legality.

A trial is very different from committal proceedings (which in Italy are secret; without cross-examination,etc.) But what most emerges from the *sentenza* of September 1970 is the arrogance with which the authorities feel able to ignore all the demands of truth or even plausibility. And their confidence is adequately reflected by what is going on outside the court, for example in the way that "inconvenient" witnesses disappear in "Mysterious" circumstances:

13th December 1969: Udo Lemke, a German hippy goes to the carabinieri and tells them that immediately after the bombings he recognized near the Altar of the Fatherland three young Sicilians who a month before proposed to him that he plant bombs in various cities, including Rome and Milan. A month later he is arrested on a drugs charge and put in a mental hospital.

14th December 1969: Vittorio Ambrosini, a lawyer, brother of Saragat's constitutional advisor and godfather to Restivo (Home affairs Minister), is taken to a nursing-home. He confides to an old communist friend that he had been present at a meeting at the Rome HQ of Ordine Nuovo in which the massacre was planned. For 21 months he is strictly incommunicado. 20th October 1971: he commits suicide.

15th December 1969: murder of Giuseppe Pinelli.

25th December 1969: disapperance of Armando Calzolari, director of Valerio Borghese's Fronte Nazionale (National Front). He was not in agreement with his colleagues' plans vis-a-vis the bombs. An experienced frogman, he is found three weeks later in a well: drowned in less than three feet of water.

27th September 1970: five anarchists from Calabria die in a road accident. Two of them - Angleo Casile and Giovannia Arico - are important defence witnesses in the Valpreda case and, are engaged in gathering counter-information. The accident - caused by the sudden braking of a lorry just in front of them - occurs at the same spot where eight years previously the wife of Valerio Borghese had died in similar circumstances. One of the boy's fathers had been phoned a few days before they left, by a friend of his in the carabinieri advising him not let let his sone go.

And many other defence-witnesses (Angelo Fascetti, for example) are arrested during demonstrations, beaten up and then charged with assaulting a police officer or in some way drawn in as defendants in the case against Valpreda; they are subsequently discharged, but it is enough to precent them from testifying.*

But it is not only dfence-witnesses that are inconvenient. Prosecution-witnesses can be too (see the case of Zublena) especially when

* Early in November (71) Fascetti is involved in a motor-cycle accident. He is reported to be suffering total loss of memory.

they are psychologically weak and their performance in court cannot be relied on.

And so, on 16th July 1971 (two months after the other bomb-trial) comes the death of the super-witness, Cornelio Rolandi. Everything suggests that he would not have withstood the ordeal. Over the past 18 months, he had cut himself from all his friends, hated the very mention of his taxi, was beset by a continual anxiety which he could never put a name to. His drinking became even heavier. He died however, not from drink, but from bronchial pneumonia. Aged 49. And as a legacy he left a sworn affidavit which the ever prescient examining judge had had him sign a year before.

There is some hope then that the trial will begin without any witnesses, and, if all goes well, without any defendants either. On 11th July 1971, the press reports that Valpreda and Gargamelli have attempted suicide. The reports are completely without foundation: but who put them out and why? Somebody who wnats to get people used to the idea that Valpreda too (like Pinelli!) might "commit suicide?"

It should be stressed, however, that for some time both Valpreda and Gargamelli have been in the prison infirmary, Valpreda with a circulatory disorder, Gargamelli suffering from asthma. The trial, which should have started this autumn, has still not been given a date. What are they waiting for?

7 Political Confusion & the Pinelli Case 1970-71

The Italian judicial system is notoriously even slower and more cumbersome than the British: latest figures show that the proportion of remand-prisoners to convicted prisoners is in the ration of 4:3. And of course this state of affairs has been used to justify the delay in bringing Valpreda and comrades to trial. The most recent, ridiculous excuse is that they can't find a hall big enough to accommodate all the legal staff, witnesses, observors etc, who will make this one of the biggest and longest trials in Italian history.

But the real reason (*pace* the Public Prosecutor and his touching belief in the autonomy of the judiciary) is to be found in the internal divisions and conflicting ambitions of the ruling class itself. There are those who, for various reasons, want no trial at all, others who want a conviction at any cost, and even some who perturbed by the mounting wave of popular indignation, would be prepared to countenance an acquittal with some face-saving formula (e.g. "insufficient evidence,' which under Italian law is not the same thing as "not guilty"). These differences of opinion in turn reflect the prevailing confusion in the current political situation: the inadequacy of the centre-left government, the failure of the "progressives" to find or impose a solution to Italy's

political backwardness consonant with her economic dynamism - the problems of the late '60s now only aggravated by more recent developments (US economic measures, beginnings of recession in Italy, etc). And as usual in this conjuncture, people look forward to some event in the future which will somehow clarify everything and decide things one way or the other: the Presedential elections in December, the government crisis (already announced in advance by Prime Minister Colombo) in January, the referendum on divorce (which threatens to polarize opinion in the country, to be a sort of paper civil war) in the spring. This year, next year, sometime, ***** As things stand, however, the ruling class proceeds with a mixture of reform (eg new, 'rationalized' tax-laws) and repression, with rather more emphasis on the later. In fact, if one thing has changed significantly since '68-69, it is that the PCI and the unions have shown themselves much less capable of delivering the goods (i.e, a soporic working class) than was hoped at the time when there was serious talk of forming a new government majority (coalition of Christian Democrats and PCI).

The various judicial investigations into the death of comrade Pinelli have been a clear if poignat illustration of this confusion,. These inquiries have passed through four distinct phases:

1) OVERT REACTION: Licia Pinelli's (the widow) denunciation of police-chief Guida for slander and the concurrent investigation into how the anarchist died are rapidly shelved by the examining judge (Amati). The sentence of June 1970 is matched only by the conclusion to the Valpreda committal proceedings three months later for its inconsequentiality and arrogance. But the left refuses

to let sleeping dogs lie. With insistent regularity and determined courage, the fortnightly paper Lotta Continua accuses Calabresi and his henchmen of murder. Calabresi, it is said, would prefer to ignore the provocation, but on orders from above he sues the editor, Pio Baldelli, for libel. The trial that opens in October 1970 is the occasion for the second phase.

2) MUDDLE: Baldelli's lawyers correctly use the trial as an opportunity to shed light on the mystery of Pinelli's death. Very quickly, people get the impression that it is not the paper but the police who are in the dock. But as one contradiction after another is revealed as police-lie follows police-lie, it becomes increasingly difficult, despite the efforts of the defence, to see anything clearly. Most important, the court does not appear to have the will to go further than 'noting the contradictions' (they are too numerous to go into here, but, apart from the incompatability of the action with the personality and status (officially declared innocent) of Pinelli, they include the timings of the death and the 'famous last words' about anarchism; what the six policemen in the ten foot square room were doing at the moment of the alleged 'jump'; the type of interrogation, etc.): it does not want to insist on the truth. And when it does show a minimum of spunk, when the presiding judge Biotti finally decides (in April 1971), to authorize the exhumation of the body which the defence has been demanding for months, the third phase is sparked off instantly:

3) INTIMIDATION: Of which the standard-bearer is Calabresi's defence-lawyer Michele Lener, one of the old school, noted advocate of policemen and rich capitalists, who with the exhumation

decision promptly "refuses" Biotti, alleging that some months previously Biotti had confided to him that he would have to acquit. Both judges and trial are temporarily suspended. Almost immediately, determined not to lose the ground gained in this trial, Licia Pinelli brings her case against Calabresi and company - the charge is murder. And once again, Lener is on the spot, this time with an extraordinary denunciation of Licia's lawyers for libel against Calabresi (the libel allegedly consisting in the charges they have formulated on behalf of their client). Whether Lener actually expects a conviction on such a charge is immaterial; for him it is enough to create an atmosphere of insecurity and fear within the legal profession itself. And once that has been achieved, there is room for the fourth phase.

4) SWEET REASON: The character so far of the *istruttoria* in the Pinelli-Calabresi case with a young open-minded examining judge carefully sifting through all the evidence, etc. But even though Calabresi and the others have been formally "advised" that a judicial investigation against them is in progress, no-one seriously believes that the conclusion will be other than the closing of the Pinelli case once and for all, good and proper, not in the abrupt and reactionary manner of an Amati, but reasonably and convincingly. conclusion will be other than the closing of the Pinelli case once and for all, good and proper, not in the abrupt and reactionary manner of an Amati, but reasonably and convincingly.

It has been evident all along that the police in general and Calabresi in particular are being protected from above and the fact that in the midst of the judicial commotion this summer they

were all promoted only confirms this. As things stand in Italy at the moment, such a fact is independent of the will of any judge, however well-intentioned. And although there might be a good case in some bourgeois minds for blackballing Calabresi, the game is not worth the candle, for an increasing number of people justly feel that the truth on Pinelli's death holds the key to the truth about the bombs. At two levels:

1) concerning the activity of the political police and their bosses in general during '69;

2) concerning the specific question, why was Pinelli killed at that particular moment? It is widely believed that at a certain point in his interrogation, Pinelli put two and two together, certain names, dates, places, confronted his interrogators with his knowledge, and had to be silenced. And if this is the case, it is obviously a truth which the bourgeois courts cannot be allowed or allow themselves to "discover".

The inevitable suppression of this truth, however sweetly or reasonably it might be done, can only be described as repressive, and in this the development of the Pinelli case has been entirely consistent with other things that have been going on in Italy over the last two years. The action against *Lotta Continua*, for example, is only one of a number brought against that and other left-wing journals under the Fascist press-law which, despite the undertaking of the 1948 constitution, was never abrogated and has now had its dust-covers taken off. Thousands of workers and other militants have been fined or imprisoned on charges arising out of the strikes and demonstrations of 1969 and subsequently. The occasional fascist arrested has been treated with remarkable leniency. And this despite the fact that throughout 1970 and '71, whole sectors

of Italian cities have been terrorized by squads of fascists rampaging through the streets on the hunt for 'lefties'. Their commitment has been rewarded by their ability to take control of the Reggio Calabria insurrection and by their successes in the local elections in Rome and Sicily (June 1971). To compound the terrorism on the streets and the repression in the courts, the incipient recession has presented the bosses with a new weapon: sackings and short time working (FIAT, Pirelli: autumn '71).

Yet the installation of an overtly Fascist regime seems no more probable than the inclusion of the PCI in the government. The initiative is still to a large extent with the (political) centre, who will make their decisions pragmatically. In any case, it is not our business to prophesy. What can be said is that a growing body of opinion in Italy is becoming increasingly angry at the bamboozling of a burocracy which it has always regarded with extreme scepticism (cf. *Times* report of 15.11.'71). We add our voice to the millions, not only in Italy, that demand freedom for Valpreda, and truth for Pinelli. If and when the trial takes place, and the authorities know this and are frightened of it, it is not Valpreda and comrades who will be on trial, but the Italian bourgeois state.

PINELLI ASSASSINATO - VALPREDA INNOCENTE

CALABRESI, WE ACCUSE YOU.

From Lotta Continua,
May 14th, 1970.

(The following is part of the answer of Lotta Continua to the lawsuit brought against them by Calabresi for "continued and aggravated defamation.")

Two months ago we wrote that "the only judge is the proletariat" and today we can repeat it with the same conviction; the only 'legality' that we recognise is class struggle of the proletarian masses. 'Their legality', the entirity of the laws of the bourgeois state, concerns us only insofar as we have to undergo it in the course of our struggles. But we absolutely do not believe that we should appeal for a democratic interpretation of the law or the Constitution to defend ourselves; these are the weapons of the bourgeoise, which the proletariat cannot use, but only destroy. Our weapons are different, are more arduous, more dangerous, but infinately more efficacious: the organisation of the strength and the autonomy of the proletariat, which will see that all its enemies get the justice they deserve...

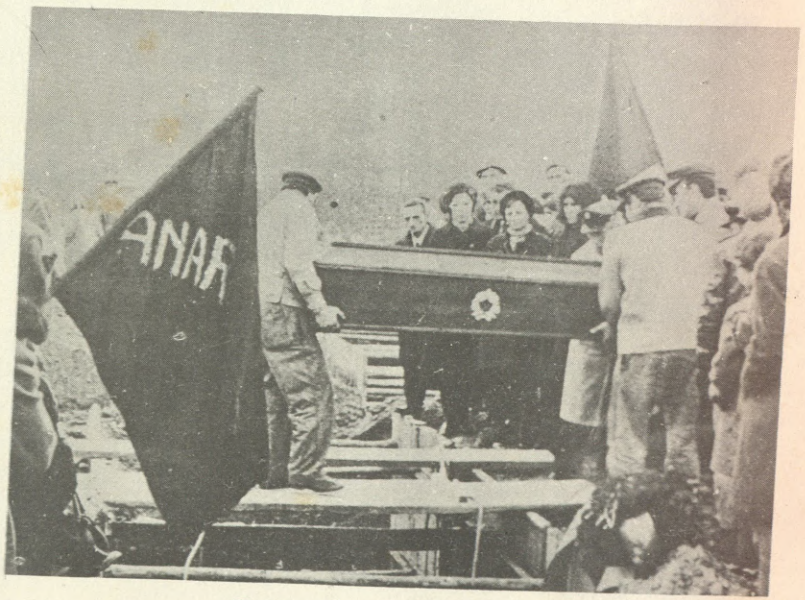
The newspapers say that Calabresi is taking us to court for defamation. We are not sure what it was that we said. Was it that "he has an aggressive chin" - or was it that we wrote that it was he who 'suicided' Pinelli? Well, from the little information we have received, and above all from the very close acquaintance that we have with Calabresi, we think that it must be the latter.

Now, we are a little bit surprised at this, because 1) everybody knows that he did it;

2) he would have to denounce, chain, gas and garrotte half the journalists in Italy;

3) he would have to knock down half the walls in Milan, where you can see on every street corner the name 'Calabresi' always accompanied by a series of epithets, of which the most complimentary is "assassin".

...P.S. We have written several times that Calabresi is an assassin. It was right to do so, and today we do so with still more force and conviction, and no court case is going to stop us doing so. And we say this, even if it should by chance transpire that it was not him who gave Pinelli the karate blow - as reported in Avanti - but, say, the pig Muccilli; or if, by way of hypothesis, it was not Calabresi who pushed, or made slip, Pinelli out of the window, but, say, Vito Panessa....



Funeral of Pinelli

We trust that the typing errors and spelling mistakes have not been to difficult to unravel. For textual corrections, please see inside front cover, and page four. Also, any donations toward the cost of the bulletin mentioned on p:4 would be welcomed. The first bulletin is now ready, and includes background information about Ordine Nuovo, an account of the uncovering of an agent provocateur at the 'Old Mole' bookshop in Milan, as well as other material relevant to the struggle in Europe. A copy costs 7p to produce.

Also of interest is the 60-page pamphlet, 'ITALY 1969/70: New Tactics & Organisation'. Concerned with industrial struggles, it includes articles on organisation at FIAT, line delegates, and interviews with Italian workers involved in the struggles described. The pamphlet is available by itself for .25p (2½p post.), or as half of an issue of Radical America (.50p), which also includes 'Two Steel Contracts' and 'Black Studies' by C.L.R. James.

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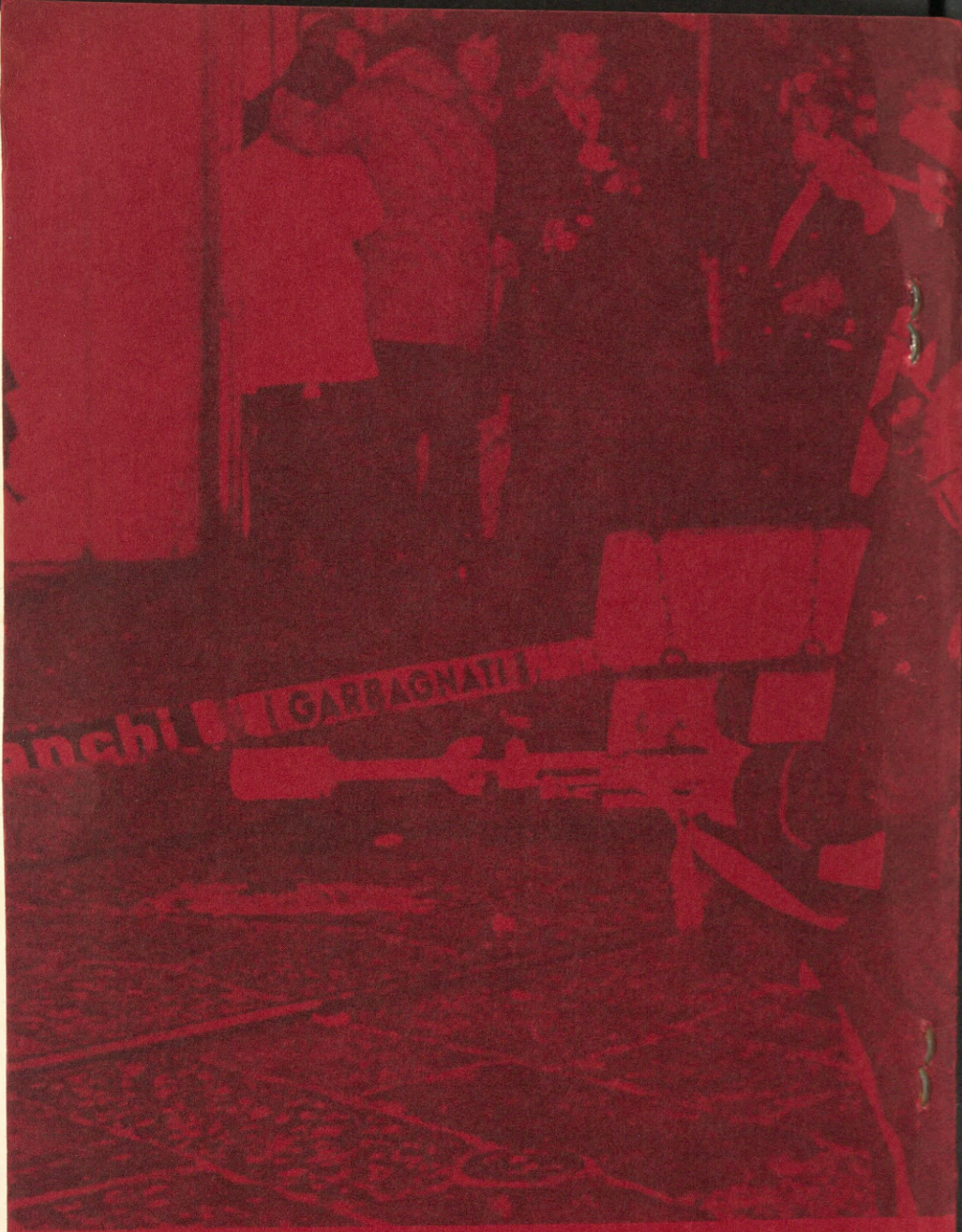

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