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Retrieved on October 10, 2010 from
digitalelephant.blogspot.com
Original titles: *Fatte le dovute eccezioni*, Torino 1997 page 18,
edizioni Lupus in fabula.
'Intervista a Radio Onda Rossa del 20 novembre 1997',
Autodifesa al processo di Roma per banda armata, ecc., Seconda
parte, pp. 47–53.
'Qualche considerazione d'un frequentatore di tribunale'
Dissonanze vol. VI, Catania 2000, pp. 48–50.
Translated by Jean Weir

theanarchistlibrary.org

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beyond that, nothing else. Beyond that, always deny, even the evidence, Victor Serge wrote many years ago, and it seems like good advice to me.

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In the logic of attack which we obviously share, it does not seem that the strategy of specific actions implies such a choice as that suggested in the above position. The two things are not consequential, they do not contradict each other or make one risk turning out to be incomprehensible to those whom such actions are basically addressed to. Unless one is referring to a chosen condition of clandestinity (not that imposed by particular repressive circumstances) something I do not believe exists in the theoretical intentions of comrades whose analyses I am discussing. And it is important here to me to make another consideration, which in times now remote caused far more arguing than necessary. It seems to me that to theorise the need to refuse, as accused, to have any relations at all with the judicial system, i.e. not only to stand trial but even the initial questioning, is only logical in the outlook of a specific organisation which imposes on its militants that they declare themselves 'political prisoners' in the eventuality of their arrest. It would be quite contradictory for an individual who sees change in terms of creating the conditions where they would be the ones sitting in the place of the judge who is judging them today, possibly on the same bench, to take up a defensive position. As we anarchists do not have such problems or projects we do not declare ourselves 'political prisoners', but free individuals who are personally responsible for their actions. So I do not see why one cannot go through trial with all the characteristics that the conditions of the clash suggest from time to time.

On the many occasions I have found myself 'frequenting' the repressive mechanism, it has always seemed to me to be indispensable to claim my identity as an anarchist, leaving the investigators to do the rest and get on with their jobs. It has also seemed indispensable to face them at the level of reason as far as possible, obtaining defensive spaces that might be to my advantage, acting in such a way as not to give them any advantage apart from the initial move, the indisputable and irreversible one, of my being an anarchist and revolutionary. But,

the fields that he finds himself in at a given moment in the alternating conditions of the clash. If one finds oneself in court, in the role of accused of course and not the judge, one must do everything to defend oneself, not so much out of self respect, and even less for fear of the consequences, but in order to gain the freedom of movement necessary to carry on with one's own project. In fact, all the attempts made by the State to bring about trials are in the first place aimed precisely at preventively thwarting revolutionary activity, including analysis, relationships, projects, instruments, etc. By arresting, sending to trial, torturing and imprisoning, the State tries to break the revolutionary's activity as a whole, not just their physical person, and it does this by keeping them away from this activity as long as possible. Defence, with every means, in every field, with the coherence and correctness that only the revolutionary themselves can choose and decide to impose on the enemy, is therefore an obligation. Not so much to oneself, because it would be easy to abandon oneself to the most exclusive refusal, to a superb attitude of distance and indifference, but towards one's project, the other comrades developing it with you, and the exploited and oppressed who from this project might (or might not, that is another question) draw benefit or liberation.

The glory of the barricades is always the first thing revolutionaries think of when they dream of the destruction of an order based on deceit, rules and codes, laws and regulations. And it is on the barricades that they would like to die, on the first day as happened with the fortunate Ascaso who did not have to face and live through all the sadness of revolutionary activity to find death at the end of the struggle like the unfortunate Durrutti. But this is a desire we can send back to the womb of destiny. It is not up to us to calculate the tragectory of the bullet that might kill us and resolve for us all the problems (and compromises) of a concrete, practical revolutionary struggle, which stomachs us so much as to push us back to undignified and perhaps convenient (or not?) positions of refusal.

Introductory note

The appeal trial in Rome in which anarchists were accused of belonging to a clandestine armed organisation has concluded with higher sentences than those meted out on the previous occasion. That was in the logic of things.

In my case I was sentenced to six years, i.e. an increase of two and a half years for a robbery in Rome which, needless to say, I know nothing about.

If on the one hand the fact that there was no sentence for 'armed organisation' or 'terrorism' — to use the terms of the law — can be considered a defeat for the dogged zeal of general prosecutor Marini, the above-mentioned personage has every reason to feel pleased concerning the diatribes that this trial has led to within the anarchist movement.

There was the odd proposal of the comrades who wanted to turn the trial into a 'guerrilla action' at any cost, copying the behaviour of a far off past with no revolutionary foundation other than clandestine movements which through the 'public' moment wanted to make 'propaganda' for their quantitative structure and their own theses. This proposal was quite out of this world and foreseeably ran aground immediately.

There was also another absolutely unfounded point of controversy. Nevertheless it existed in the minds of many comrades in good faith to such an extent as to create an insuperable obstacle between the latter and those who were of the opposite opinion. This consisted of taking a position against the court, insisting that it is better to have nothing to do with it, to the point of not even naming a lawyer.

As I have always maintained, and in the present collection there is an article that I wrote in 1991 which seems to me to be fairly clear on this subject, it is not by taking up one's defence (when there are good reasons to believe that this will reduce the damage to some extent) that one legitimises the court. On the contrary, the court is legitimised precisely by imposing a 'guerrilla on trial' attitude, i.e. by reading out a declaration in court that it will never take into account, or seeing the charges and sentence in the role of 'political prisoner'. Here too it is a question of aberrations that some — as far as we know — have been able to think but only in their own personal interest and without any foundation in reality.

Of course, it is not always possible to 'defend' oneself in court. When one finds oneself in a situation where there is no possible defence then better to lose interest completely, even to the point of not turning up to the court. But that was never the case in this trial. And nearly all the comrades (sentenced or otherwise), including those who had initially refused to name a legal representative, turned up regularly in court alongside their defence lawyers.

However, arguments and misunderstanding aside and ignoring the instrumental use that some made of positions that were contrary to their own, one lesson can be drawn from this experience. Apparently linear and coherent theoretical rarefactions such as that of refusing to have anything to do with the court simply turn out to be effective instruments for setting comrades one against the other. And as a result that's not bad.

A.M.B.

In that case I must admit to not having been correct over the past twenty years in having subjected myself, putting a brave face on it, to various imprisonments, dozens of raids, over a hundred interrogations of every kind, not to mention the many times I have been stopped and candidly given my name and address, thus collaborating, that is true, with power. Certainly, it is of little importance to say that when, along with Pippo Stasi, I was arrested in Bergamo in 1989 following a robbery we refused (but only for a few hours) to give our names at the police headquarters — for precise reasons and not to be more revolutionary than the revolutionaries — I must admit it wasn't a pleasant few hours as during the whole time we were systematically beaten according to the inveterate custom in police stations the world over throughout time. Now, I am not taking up the problem of torture here, or implying that it would be sufficient to give one's name and address in order to avoid it, (as even in that case we would undoubtedly still have been beaten) I am saying that, apart from our very personal and good reasons, it does not seem to me that there exist general ones to suggest the contrary, valid for all times and circumstances. As a rule when I am stopped or arrested I answer such simple questions orderly and calmly, evaluating what I intend to and can say, discarding what I do not want to or cannot. From these first moments of impact, my (consent me) long experience suggests to me to start working out what my line of defence will be without dallying to make quite gratuitous declarations of principle, when it is not the inquisitors themselves to ask questions of a general nature, which obviously one does not refuse to reply to when they concern one's identity as anarchists and revolutionaries.

Nor do I believe that the decision to face the repressive mechanism on its own ground, i.e. the technical and judicial one of right and the law, means to espouse the bosses' rights on the basis of which I am investigated, tortured, sentenced, imprisoned, etc. I believe that a revolutionary must struggle in all

A Few Considerations by a Frequenter of the Courts

The refusal to say a word in reply to police questioning or to defend oneself in court against accusations, which it seems finds wide consensus among anarchist comrades who in one way or another make reference to revolutionary anarchism, merits further going into. Also because, in the ardour of our declarations or rhetorical outbursts, one often runs the risk of saying something out of turn, implying what one does not really think.

To participate in a trial as the accused does not, in my modest opinion, mean to accept the judicial mechanism. Even less does it mean a recognition of State authority as it performs in the exercise of justice and its relative procedures, prison sentences and all the rest. That is not the case, or so it seems to me, otherwise one would certainly have to be considered a cog in the wheel after so many years' frequentation in the role of accused, investigated, searched, incriminated and all the rest. After dozens and dozens of trials all over Italy, who more than myself would deserve a medal as a frequenter of evil places. Only it doesn't seem to me that I have made who knows what secret pact with power and compromise, just as the quaint idea that being 'identified' or 'questioned' means letting oneself be 'Oedipised' by the judge had never occurred to me. I must confess to not understanding exactly what this 'Oedipising' means but it seems to refer to something obscene, so is necessarily inadvisable for any correct revolutionary.

Apart from the Obvious Exceptions

Apart from the obvious exceptions, the situation does not seem very clear.

Each one thinks they understand it perfectly — each has made up their mind and that's that! — And they look on others with suspicion, the suspicion typical of those who are convinced they are right. Each fails to understand why the other thinks differently, given that we should all be gathered under the aegis of an anarchism that is revealing itself, it seems, to be too insubstantial to provide a solid basis for making a stand.

I get this sensation when I read letters and newspaper articles, receive notes and verbal communications.

Perhaps these pages will spur some reflection among comrades. Perhaps they will merely receive a superficial reading, or perhaps, which is worse, they will not fail to be taken for what they are, something written by me and as such no different from what everyone expects, precisely, something written by me.

Apart from the obvious exceptions of course.

Dream and reality

The world is in ferment everywhere, and our ideas are also present in this cauldron, the theories, fantasies, illusions and dreams we have been embracing for years. For years we have all been intent on going into the theory and practice of insurrection and we have also realised concrete attempts, not least

our presence in Comiso in 1982 and 1983 (but one could also call to mind earlier or later examples).

Now the world is simmering with insurrectional deeds, and these are present before everyone's eyes, there is no need to relate them here.

For years we have been discussing affinity and how to relate to each other in tiny groups based on reciprocal knowledge (affinity rooted in the past) and on common projectuality (affinity based on hopes for the future). We have also discussed how to intervene in struggles with informal organisations and base nuclei capable of connecting our anarchist insurrectional action to people's need to solve certain problems and so withstand the immediate effects of repression as far as possible.

I am not interested in going over these problems here yet again, but the legacy of hundreds of hours dedicated to discussing them in debates, 'three days', conferences, and thousands of pages in pamphlets, books and papers still remain, traces of a way of operating that surely cannot have disappeared completely.

Apart from the obvious exceptions.

Two little judges in the vicinity of Rome

Two well dressed little men, frequenters of the Courts of Rome by profession, have decided to arrest a few dozen comrades and incriminate as many more, using all the charges in the penal code topped off with the great find of an anarchist 'armed clandestine organisation'.

In itself the initiative is nothing new, so it was not a surprise to us. At least as far as I am concerned. The judges are doing their job, the Carabinieri theirs, etc. Taken individually there are among them the worst and the not so bad, progressives and reactionaries, swindlers and upright men. That is not the point.

should release all the other comrades. But this does not alter the difficulties of the trial, their intent to sentence us, because the fact that one is free does not mean anything. You can move better, defend yourself better, you can make known the conditions in which the trial has been developed and carried out, but objectively speaking, we are faced with very serious charges and they have every intention of sentencing us. That is what we must bear in mind.

making her say the most incredible things, such as that she had participated in this robbery herself, whereas in her statements she remembered absolutely nothing about either the place, or when, or how, or what they were wearing, or how things went inside the bank. You could see how this construction was completely made up, and not very well at that, proving not only the need of the State organs to do something urgently against us, but also the impudence of these people who are not even able to get their cards right and resolve their problem of trying to prevent a group of people scattered throughout Europe, insurrectionalist anarchists, from realising their projects of attack against the State and capital, projects that scare them.

R.O.R. — *I wanted to ask you whether you want to add anything to the trial aspect that might clarify in some way what has been happening from a judicial point of view.*

A.M.B. — The trial is obviously still to be seen. It is clear that the impertinence we mentioned was obvious right from the beginning. For example, the absolute lack of respect for the rules right from the start: people arrested without any charges apart from the declarations of the girl who continues to maintain there is an organisation, but what this organisation is no one knows. This phantom has been erected by the accusation and then become their continual point of reference. Like saying: this organisation exists because I say it does, after which I work out about a thousand pages saying how it operates. It exists, so can continue to operate for the prosecution. Now you can clearly see that this doesn't follow any logical order, not even the order of reason. And through this fact you can see the way they worked and their impertinence and the fact that they didn't even respect their own rules. At this point things turned against them. Given that we should have been questioned by the judge within 5 days, whereas in actual fact he saw us after 15 months, the Court of Cassation ruled that Emma Sassosi and myself be released. Then on 26.11.97 there will be another sitting of the Court of Cassation, the Fifth Section I think, which

I do not see why we, anarchists who want to destroy the present world without even the alibi of taking over the means of production (unusable in any case in the state in which they have been reduced by the technology that administers life today), should cry scandal because of the activity of two little men in the vicinity of Rome.

Of course, we are crying scandal about the flippant use of a young girl, about the charges devoid of any logic on which we were arrested, for the invention of a 'clandestine armed organisation' which has never existed. And that's all very well. We have voiced our disapproval, even in moral terms, of this 'irregular' behaviour on the part of the little Roman men, but — rhetoric apart — we must admit (and if someone has convinced themselves otherwise it is well that they unconvince themselves as soon as possible) that this behaviour on the part of the Roman gnomes is normal, very normal indeed..

Anarchists scare, not just because of what they do, not just because of their insurrectional activity, but because of their theoretical and practical potential, and the point of reference they might become for the insurgent exploited.

And there are examples of popular insurrection everywhere in the world, too close to home not worry them.

And even if that were not the case? Even if these Roman goblins were only afraid of the word, (hazy recollections gather confusedly in their minds) why consider them wrong? Let's put it bluntly: anarchists scare power and it is right (for power but also for anarchists) that things are thus.

We are precisely those who could carry the revolt of the excluded to the extreme consequences at any given moment.

Anarchists scare.

A young girl

Recruited by the Carabinieri, a girl just turned twenty is reciting the role of the 'penitent' under the protection of a forest of bayonets.

If things weren't so absolutely ridiculous this would arouse a modicum of compassion.

Poor girl, trapped by a wolf in the guise of a Carabinieri in love, dragged into a mire of choices that were perhaps not her own, choices she has now embraced for good and which she is obliged to follow to the end, on pain of the interruption of her wages and police protection.

I imagine her, this young girl, scared in a corner of the inquisitor's room, obliged to learn dates and places, facts and movements, tales and deductions, words and theories by heart, all questions that have always been something quite foreign to her.

I cannot manage to see her as anything other than a poor wretch whom dangerous, unscrupulous persons have dragged in, scarring her life for ever.

Farewell my poor girl. You could have become a woman like all the others, a human being. You are and always will be an outcast of that same society that some mad scoundrel invited you to come and defend against the aggressors, against the anarchist barbarians come out from nowhere as far as you were concerned.

The Batrachomyomachy

In the quagmire the frogs stirred up a furious battle against the rats. At first they were not even aware of having begun it. Everything came, let's say, quite naturally. They gave vent to far off grudges in the slime, the deep slime where ghosts and

the part of the State frightens it on the one hand and on the other it makes it dive back into the past looking for the anti-State, anti-capitalist organisational models which were most effective. Now the model that the State always has of its antagonists before its eyes is the closed, armed, clandestine model. The model that was realised in Germany with the R.A.F., in France with Action Directe, as today the Basques of the E.T.A., or in Italy with the Red Brigades. These models, although they have nothing to do with us, have been stitched on to us as we can see in these accusations. Reading the documents, which are thousands of pages long, one realises that that is the kind of model they have in mind, i.e. that they do not understand that our revolutionary aim is to go towards another kind of attack on the State, that of convincing people that it is necessary to do something, even small, right from today, not start organising for a final battle with the State itself, like the classical model of the organisation like the Red Brigades, i.e. the clash, victory, take over the State and manage it.

We are anarchists, we have nothing to do with any eventual management of the State. Our aim is that of trying to destroy the projects and realisations it is bringing about, that could end up by closing us up in a structure of control that will turn out to be absolutely insurmountable. The last argument, I forgot, is that of the R.O.S. document that turned up at the radio stations concerning the way they constructed this 'pentita'. This young girl who has been spoon-fed so many details and everything she says. Reading this document one can see how this mentality always remains the same, that is the coup mentality of the 70s, that started off with piazza Fontana and so on, where a group of people belonging to constituted authority operate as a parallel organisation and decide, you might say, to chance their luck. Because the papers of the trial were not all that good they weren't able to fit up the comrades who were arrested following a robbery in Trento area, and so nail others on them. It was at this point that they tried to amplify the tale by using this girl,

that is because it is necessary to try to understand what the State is organising within a social reality which will have a form that is more and more rigid and irreversible, which it will be increasingly difficult to combat.

When we said that they are controlling us, they are closing us up in an absolute telematics circuit within which individuals will become mere numbers who will be identifiable and controllable at any moment in time, we were not talking about science fiction. Because, almost completely excluded from the classical productive circuit where exploitation was, you might say, palpable, we are moving towards a productive and social reality where exploitation still exists, is even more radicalised, but is less comprehensible. Now in this reality it is necessary to do something starting now, not when we will be completely closed up in this project of control by capital and the State. So this concept certainly disturbs, because, as we said, we are doing something now. I have theorised and written these things and been in court for writing them. For example on the question of the pylons, when I said, 'It is necessary to do something to stop the development of the great information technology multinationals'. And in fact this voice of mine has been picked up in discussions that were going on at European level on the question. From the news we have, both through the newspapers, and through the charges that have rained down on us on all sides, we understand that many of these actions have been carried out, that comrades are determined to attack the State. Now, in the first instance I was sentenced for theorising this idea of small actions, then in the second phase I was acquitted because the Court of Cassation decided that theory is one thing and practice another. Theoretically they should sentence you after demonstrating that you've done something, not because you thought it. So the simple theorisation of these things already causes fear. Their realisation causes as much fear again because they cannot find out who is doing these things all over Europe. And this not being able to find out on

rancour lie crouching. In the first inkling of the skirmish, the mire bubbled and rancour and ghosts came to the surface.

Now, in themselves frogs are accommodating, affable creatures, they accept debate and opinion within their ranks. They stand and listen, even patiently at times, often exploding in disagreement which is soon placated in the name of a common membership of the world of frogs, which then is nothing other than the great quagmire that extends from the edge of the path to the field.

But when the rats attack, battle is battle. It rouses stern countenances, ensigns and banners, causing them to march with pride, inviting you to take a position.

Come on, little frogs of my heart. How often have we been up to the neck in slime together and come out snow-white like mint creams.

On absence and copping out

That at a certain point some want to dedicate themselves, like Candide and his master Pangloss, to growing potatoes seems quite legitimate to me. What is curious is that when the roar of the earthquake of Lisbon reaches them, they think they are still in the race.

This means having a hierophantic idea of reality, of being supported by one's guiding star, sacerdos in aeternum. Anarchists eternally, even when growing potatoes in the tiny back garden of their own homes.

For goodness sake, apart from the obvious exceptions.

It's nothing (what is spending a bit of time in prison to anarchists?)

Well? We have been arrested before, many of us, and arrested on charges that carry life sentences. So? It is just one thing among the many others that befall us in the course of our life and death struggle with power.

Prison is a place where anarchists often find themselves locked up when they start to get dangerous. And dangerous they are, because of what they think and what they do.

For what they think, it is obvious. Our thought is absolutely anti-Statist. So what do you expect the State to do? As soon as it can, it prevents us from moving freely in that conditioned, ideal-less society where we might become the spark for a rebellion. Of course, we might also not be all that dangerous, but you never know.

As for what they do. Each anarchist is responsible for all the actions they carry out in their lives, from everyday activities to the often more complex, though not more difficult, ones of the attack on the State and the institutions and people who make it up.

There is no such thing as collective responsibility.

Each anarchist chooses their comrades in struggle, often on the basis of affinity or other theoretical foundations that only they can judge, and proceeds right to the end, even to prison, even to death.

To cry scandal about things that are obvious seems absurd to me.

There can be no doubt that when the behaviour of the State is itself illegal, false, contradictory even in relation to its very laws, everyone, including anarchists, feels repulsion. They feel a sense of disgust, deep distress for the low levels to which man is capable of sinking, in short a kind of moral disgust for everything they see, nothing more.

The State and its servants are all of this as well: deception, ignominy, outrage. We fly higher, carry other perspectives and dreams in our hearts.

organisation that has been through the negative and positive experiences, we are not judging them here, of the past twenty years of revolutionary attacks on the State. At other times it is reduced to the classical model that could be that of the Red Brigades.

If they continue to see this classical model of clandestine organisation, they obviously cannot understand what we want to do and are trying to make a coat that is too tight fit us, because that kind of action does not interest us.

R.O.R. — *Another of the elements that led to seeing how this is an instrumental trial, because it is aimed at striking enemies of this State who can in no way be absorbed by the so-called democratic institutions. As well as a series of irregularities committed in this procedure surely an important element to reflect upon is the R.O.S. internal note which reached a number of movement radio stations, precisely during the preliminary hearing in July. It was all mapped out in this internal note, how to fit up these dangerous enemies of the State, whether they represent a real danger or not, and so it should be seen as a preventive counter-revolutionary act, that is as an attempt to block at the start, prevent any development of given practices or theories that are incompatible with the system. We wanted to know from you what you thought when this note turned up?*

A.M.B. — I fully agree with what you say, because in fact insurrectionalist anarchists constitute an element of great preoccupation for States, in that they are a point of reference for a possible aggregation of all those irreducible elements who do not agree with the sanatorium that has been pronounced in the area of the classic concept of class struggle, so are always available to put an attack against the State into act. When I speak of attack, I am speaking of a denunciation of the State, its programmes and its projects, and at the same time, its realisations. When we say the large objectives of the past, for example the structures which in the past led many comrades to the huge demonstrations, are of little importance nowadays

the State, given that this society is pre-eminently dependant on irreversible technological development based on the technics, information technology and so on, there is nothing to be done but to destroy it. It cannot be used, transformed, improved. A free society, where man must be what he really is, cannot be based on this structure. Now then, it also starts off from the concept of immediate attack against what the structures of the State are today. Today it is necessary to agree on what we mean by this concept of attack. Above all it is necessary that it be done by anarchists, but not only. That it be anarchists, but with the people. And here we come back to the question of the relationship between the minority that is composed of affinity groups and the various objective situations that are realised in the social field. The possibility to create base groups, people who are trying to reach their own objectives, for example to prevent certain of the State's destructive projects being realised. So, insurrectionalism is above all a personal thing. Each one should accomplish their own insurrection in the first place, therefore modify their own ideas, transform their own reality starting off from the family, school, from the conceptions that imprison each one of us in models that we cannot break out of. I realise that these words of mine, aimed at trying to explain a little what the concept of insurrectionalist anarchism is, are a bit confused and superficial. On the other hand the instrumentalisation of the concept by the prosecution has even led to a name being created, created by the prosecution themselves in their documents, relations, in the public prosecutor's statement of charges.

They alone are the first to speak of this O.R.A.I., so much so that every now and then it gets confused. Sometimes they call it one way, sometimes another. There is never one single way to refer to this phantomlike organisation, because in fact it has been proved that it does not exist but is the theory of, not a clandestine organisation but a mass one. Sometimes they reduce it to the ideological structure of a specific clandestine

The two paths

But we are defending ourselves. Because we are not convinced that the game is over completely, or that the State is winning even this ongoing small battle, and we believe there are still possibilities, even legal technicalities, in our favour.

Apart from the obvious exceptions of course.

We are defending ourselves and counterattacking point by point. Underlining the errors in the logical structure of the whole accusation as well as the individual charges that have been meted out to us.

The castle of theorems devised to have us shut away in prison for years and years has not been very well constructed in fact. The little men in Rome have not been working to the full extent of their capabilities. There are cracks into which we can get. First of all, the crack that could blow up the main accusation, that of 'armed clandestine organisation'.

This idea is obviously my own and I know that not everyone shares it. Well, I hope I am right, not so much for the pleasure of being able to say so, but because the collapse of this accusation would greatly reduce the possibility of a considerably long prison sentence.

Moreover, given that the theorem of the prosecution is based on some of my writings where I support theses that are absolutely antithetical to any concept of 'clandestine organisation', the question touches me personally and I intend to do everything I can to clarify it thoroughly. Of course, I am not sure that I will be able to make myself heard. It might turn out, as many comrades maintain, that there is no room in court for such a defence. Well, I will take note when the time comes. Not before.

My position on this is not shared by many. I am glad so many comrades think differently. Obviously they will decide for themselves as I am deciding for myself.

The two paths are not as different as they seem to me. In fact, if I refuse to explain something to a judge, thinking (quite

rightly) that he will probably not understand or even hint that he understands what I am saying, that is not to say that I accept his thesis, nor does it mean that I subscribe to the accusations against me. Indeed, as many comrades point out, the refusal of the prosecution's thesis is stronger the more rigidly and decidedly one refuses to enter into details before the judge. Well said.

As you can see, the two roads should be parallel for everyone, apart from the obvious exceptions of course.

Two other paths appear, this time more arduous to travel.

They concern the others, the outside world, that world to which we must clearly decide how to relate.

We want others to know, but not everyone has clear ideas about the specific ways of informing them.

Here, to be a little more schematic, we could divide the things that could be done into two paths, two paths which are anything but parallel this time.

The first is the path up into the mountains. It develops the idea of generalised attack in the terms that have been examined many times. But here the game could become difficult and the generalising be delayed. This could lead to the conclusion that one must take on the task of pushing for this generalisation personally, choosing objectives that become increasingly significant and substantial as time goes on, so end up moving away from the generalisation that has always been our aim. Once on top of the mountain we would merely repeat the farcical tragedies of the past to the bitter end.

The second path leads to the plain where everything is easy. It develops the idea of involving the body of opinion that still exists in this country, those more or less willing to espouse all the lost causes of this world including our own, so long as the

ties, one at Santorino the other in Salonico. Now, I used this list for the conferences and it contains the points of the talk which took place in public in front of hundreds of people. It is obvious that had it been a question of, as the prosecution maintain, the theorisation of a clandestine organisation, I would not have been able to have gone and discussed it in front of hundreds of people. That is why the prosecution have found themselves at this crossroads, in this dilemma. Either the text concerns a mass organisation, as in fact it does, so reading it one realises that Bonanno went to Greece to give these talks; or the text must be made to become the theory of a clandestine organisation, so Bonanno can't have gone to Greece to give these talks. Conclusion, Bonanno didn't go to Greece to do these talks. I on the other hand presented the Judge (D'Angelo) with the documentation of these conferences, handing over an interview in one of the main Greek dailies, complete with photographs and all, so there is objective documentation.

R.O.R. — *Another of the arguments that has been upturned by the prosecution is that of anarchist insurrection as theorisation and concept. We wanted to know from you: how has this been used by the prosecution to outline this O.R.A.I.?*

A.M.B. — Here again the problem is quite vast, there are two different questions. First, anarchist insurrectionalism and second, how it has been instrumentalised by the prosecution.

The first thing to understand is that we are anarchists, but we are also insurrectionalists and consider that it is not possible to start off from the old conceptions of anarchism today. These were characterised by the idea of the revolutionary struggle which saw intervention aimed at organising the masses in the traditional sense of the term, traditional anarchism such as that which was close to anarcho-syndicalism, similar to the Cobas today in many ways.

Traditional anarchism thought it could get closer to the destruction of power through an intervention of mass propaganda. We think that given the present structure of capital and

struggles in Turin. In developing a trade union kind of struggle it is possible to have recourse to different instruments, for example sabotage and not just that of the simple strike. Now this kind of realisation has nothing at all to do with the concept the prosecution are trying to attribute to us of an armed clandestine organisation capable of operating at a double level, the publication of theories and a level of clandestine actions, because everything we have done and the all publications we have brought out have been done in the light of day. It is a question of things we have done in the past, concrete realisations along with the people, mass interventions in the social territory and ideas illustrating this model of intervention.

The question of a double level is in a way a necessary concept for the prosecution because without this concept they would not be able to talk of an armed clandestine organisation. If they examine the writings and theories about what they think a clandestine organisation is, reading the single formulations, the individual pieces written, it is obvious that what is being talked about is a mass organisation, an organisation in the light of day composed of base nuclei and affinity groups who realise a very wide range of interventions, requiring a coordination of the same. Now this is clear in what we have written and also in the things done. But because they want to sentence us with an accusation of clandestine organisation the conclusion is upturned in an extraordinary way to the extent that material that talks of mass organisation becomes the theory of a clandestine organisation.

So much so that they have chosen as the main text, considered by them to be of particular significance, an article of mine that was published in Anarchismo entitled: 'New Developments in Capitalism'. The title itself would be perplexing were it, as the carabinieri say, a text talking of a clandestine organisation and an armed gang. It is cutting it rather fine to talk about clandestine structures whereas the text in question is a number of conferences that I held in two Greek universi-

proposal is made in an opportune way without truculence and without sectarianism. In a word, we would have to present ourselves as the persecuted of the moment, or at least as those who, although desiring to attack the State, have not in fact attacked it and who, innocent, are suffering prison unjustly.

Each path, the one divergent from the other, seems impracticable to me. I believe many comrades will agree with this, apart from the obvious exceptions of course.

In the ford

Remaining in the ford empties our actions of any significance. Either we are capable of finding another direction that is appropriate to our intentions, or we must accept one of the paths mentioned above, the one leading to the top of the highest mountain or that which leads to the plain.

But first we must ask ourselves: can we really come through the ford? Or are we destined to remain prisoners of indecision?

As things stand, one cannot say there seems much hope of going beyond the condition of indecision in which we find ourselves.

The diatribes flying around while we remain stuck in the quagmire are not the sickness, they are a symptom. The same for the organisational exacerbation. One could simply have been clear, reflecting on everything that has been discussed and done over the past five years.

To have been incapable of doing so is indicative of something. A firm decision not to accept discussion? Simple theoretical superficiality? Personal disillusion? Who can say for sure?

No one, apart from the obvious exceptions of course.

Can we get out of the ford?

With great difficulty in the present state of affairs.

As has happened in the past, in different circumstances, we are paying for the theoretical shortcomings and inexactitudes of many of us, as well as the word-mongering whims of those who can only explain the world in their own ghetto slang. We are also paying for the double standards of those who would like their ideas and practice to spread but do not have their heart in it enough to make that happen, so always end up deciding what is to be done themselves, turning out to be incomprehensible to others.

The result is that we do not move. If we set out on a little path in the mountains, as soon as we have gone a few yards we think we have resolved the problem and are scandalised if all the world does not grasp what we are trying to say immediately. Of course, we see the next step and the steep uphill slope but we soon come to a halt because basically we know that path, with its obvious implications of military conflict has never been ours.

Conversely, as soon as we lower ourselves to the level of the plain and take a straightforward path, we begin to regret it. What on earth are we doing? Is it possible that we cannot see anything other than the old model 'Piazza Fontana = State massacre' (1969), where the supporting role in defence of the accused anarchists was played by the Communist Party? Of course we see this next step and the path that opens wide before us, but we soon come to a halt because we know that this path with its petty political conflict has never been ours.

Given the obvious exceptions of course, that's the way things stand.

not come about within the affinity group. It happens with new organisational forms that develop in the area, that of base nuclei, structures organised in the social territory. When these increase in number it is necessary to coordinate them in the same way as happened in the case of Comiso and could happen in any other situation. Sometimes the intervention involves a large area with different villages or regions, resulting in there being more nuclei. In that case it is necessary for the work, let's say the struggle, the spreading of ideas, making known problems and also, finally, the violent intervention against what the State is trying to bring about, to be done in a coordinated way. So in this case a coordination of base nuclei is created, a permanent structure such as that which came about in Comiso where there were rooms with a telephone and all the rest. We remained there for two years coordinating the interventions of the various base nuclei. This has nothing to do with a clandestine model of organisation.

R.O.R. — *In fact the investigators, in particular the ROS, [carabinieri special operations cops] extrapolating a few phrases, a few concepts, have come out with the hypothesis of a double level, one open and the other underground. One level of let's say clandestine activity and another which is carried out instead through the work of weekly periodicals and social centres and so on, maintaining that these concepts have been expressed in conferences in Greece. That does not seem to be the case to us. Can you explain better?*

A.M.B. — The problem is a little more complicated. These ideas were formed in the anarchist movement ten years ago, in various books, pamphlets and conferences, but they have also been put into action and this is important because it is not just a theory worked out on paper or in words. It was verified in events for two years during the time of the occupation of the missile base in Comiso, and a similar kind of organisation also developed in Turin in '75, affinity groups on the one hand and base nuclei on the other in the reality of the railway workers'

concept of affinity, that is the comrades who know each other personally and have a past in common behind them, which they consider both theoretically and practically. They therefore dedicate themselves to the activity of spreading information and ideas in a given area, because obviously this knowledge is nearly always circumscribed from the territorial point of view. So the affinity group is a group that we could define as one based on reciprocal knowledge and common activity. As a perspective, a project of intervention in reality, for example struggles in realities such as schools, factories, housing estates, social centres, the affinity group is made up exclusively of anarchists. Now at certain times a situation presents itself in one area, such as for example what happened in Comiso in 1983. The struggle was against the American missile base that they wanted to build there and which they later did build, just as now it could be a struggle against the building of high speed railways.

It is clear that these problems concern the specific interests of people who find themselves in a given area, in a given territory. Now these people are anything but anarchists and have very little interest in going into ideological and theoretical discussions about anarchy. But they are interested in trying to solve the problem of the attack that the State is making on them by imposing particular social and productive conditions that they do not want. Now in this case it could also be that a number of affinity groups make contact with these people, go into things together, work together, struggle together, thereby demonstrating publicly the desire to prevent what the State is trying to realise at their cost. So they solidarise together, anarchists and non anarchists, creating new groups of a territorial kind which have the exclusive aim of reaching one objective. At the present time there is an attempt to prevent the construction of high speed railways, just as in Comiso there was the objective of preventing the construction of the missile base. Now this union between anarchists and non anarchists does

Bitterness and disillusion

As soon as you show your feelings they cut off your head, old Walt once said. And for many long months I kept this state of mind to myself, reading the news that reached me from outside with an open heart, not with the critical eye I would normally apply to such reading matter.

Why this reluctance? Because I am in prison perhaps? Apart from the obvious exceptions, I think everyone will believe me when I say no.

No, it is not prison that has made me reserved. Not so much with others as with myself. It is precisely the situation as a whole.

Looking back, what has been the use of all the evenings spent together discussing problem after problem? And the public debates, page after page of books, pamphlets, reviews, papers?

I can understand that some might never have been interested in such a quest, but then why wait for this particular situation before putting out their absolutely other ideas? They could have done so earlier, made a contribution, pointed out where one was going wrong, where one had gone astray, run aground.

This is what makes me bitter and disillusioned.

There is only one thing left to do

Obvious exceptions aside, I think that all comrades will agree with me in admitting that our situation can only be faced by attacking.

But what does that mean? What path must we take? And how far along it do we go?

That is the problem. I think each individual should decide as they have always done, choosing their own comrades. There

are no set recipes. Apart from the obvious exceptions, no one thinks they hold the winning card. If the affinity that once linked some of us ceases to exist, this could become an unbearable weight.

If the target is a common one: the enemy who oppresses us. If the method is also common: attack, there is no reason why each should not follow their own path to the end.

Without hesitation.

With the obvious exceptions, of course.

Interview with Radio Onda Rossa

R.O.R. — *We telephoned Alfredo Bonanno, one of the two comrades released from prison as a result of a recourse in cassation on 30/10/97 after 13 months' imprisonment.*

R.O.R. — *We are interested in two of the charges in this trial, armed clandestine organisation and subversive association (conspiracy), given the existence, according to the investigators, of this O.R.A.I. led by Alfredo Bonanno.*

Alfredo, can we go into the question of affinity groups and base nuclei for a moment, given that the prosecution are pointing a finger at these two points, extrapolating them from a series of interventions?

A.M.B. — Now, in order to understand this question better it should be said that it concerns theories which have both organisational and practical aspects. One way anarchists think of organising, not only their own groups, but also revolutionary activity taking place throughout the country along with people who are not anarchists. This relationship is naturally seen differently according to the aims one wants to attain. That is to say, not all anarchists organise in affinity groups or base nuclei. Anarchists who have a different idea of organisation, for example the F.A.I. (Italian Anarchist Federation) have different aims: a fixed organisation that goes on in time and so on, which has the aim of establishing a relationship with people and is divided into various sectors such as school, work and so on. We believe, and have done so for over 10 years now, that the organisation of anarchists should start off instead from the