

***The Unexpected Guest, and a section  
of Palestine, Mon Amour***

by Alfredo M. Bonanno

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## *Palestine, Mon Amour (Excerpts)*

### **Nota bene**

In April 2004, as soon as I entered the prison in Trieste, I wrote a fairly in-depth text on radical evil, on the plan for the total destruction of the Jews, studied and partially implemented by the Nazis. On this occasion, for the first time, I recounted – I don't know why but it came to me spontaneously, without any qualms, perhaps because of being in prison, but perhaps because of the extreme radicalization of the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians – the torture I suffered at the hands of the Mossad men back in 1972. I didn't believe it was possible that this story, moreover shortened to a few lines and without unnecessary indications, could interest anyone. After seeing it written on the page, I realized that it interested me. A mad angel had erased the world. The desert was the result, a horrendous incomprehensible hieroglyph. The indications of the catastrophe are the most understandable result of the conclusion. The triumph of mediocrity is guaranteed, the world continually triumphs over itself, layer upon layer. History is an unreliable and nauseating witness. It believes that there are intervals in mediocrity, that someone leaves the mark of his brilliant intelligence in it. Instead, the discontinuous signs are only the consequence of an increase in stupidity. A heavy and repellent mass, hardened by repeated attempts in vain, a ceaseless disappointment, a wound that goes down deep, all this weighs on my heart. No shivers, it is always me, even when I cast a glance into the abyss. Beyond the frost and the evil of life that daily assails me, beyond the dismay and the melancholy, beyond the anger of the righteous and the wickedness of the stupid, beyond the lies that help us survive, beyond the petty ends that justify the ferocious means, beyond the ideologists and the butchers, reality peacefully stretches out, safe, uncontaminated, free of explanations scribbled in all haste by inconclusive pimps. Cockroaches, snakes, grasshoppers and the falsely furious dust of dreamers and poets that reality scatters to the four winds.

I am inserting the text indicated above into this third edition.

Trieste, January 22, 2007

Alfredo M. Bonanno

(...)

## **A strange thesis**

(...) As far as I am concerned, in two words, frank and, I hope, simple, the situation presents itself as follows. – There is a State (Israel) aggressive and militaristic like no other that wants to kill a people (the Palestinians). There are politicians (Arafat, etc.) who have appointed themselves representatives of this people with the sole purpose of establishing a State that could soon become just as militaristic and aggressive as the first. A possible solution would be the dissolution of the Israeli State and the prevention of the birth of the Palestinian State, all in parallel with the formation of free communes and other self-managed structures of Palestinians and Jews together, all having the right to the land and, mainly, to mutual respect in the name of freedom. (...)

[Published in “Provocazione”, n. 16, September 1988, pp. 6-7 with the title: “Let’s not turn a blind eye”]

(...)

## **Palestinians continue to die**

In newspapers around the world, it is no longer news that Palestinians continue to die every day.

These are short articles drowning in a sea of fresh topics, some of which, unfortunately, record massacres of even greater magnitude, in all parts of the world. The most interesting sports for man remain war and death.

Not being able, as is natural, to be interested in everything that happens, we often turn towards this or that situation, and we try to do something, if nothing else at the level of counter-information, that is, we try to correct the damage that the disinforming daily press produces.

On the Palestinian problem we must emphasize the importance of an insurrectional struggle that is putting one of the strongest armies in the world, the Israeli one, in serious difficulty.

This stubborn will to liberation is distorted not only by Zionist propaganda – which is natural – but also by the propaganda of all those who, while claiming to be lovers of freedom and truth, do not realize that those who find themselves in front of the cannon of a

tank, or are locked up in a ghetto subjected to continuous bombing, do not have much time or will to reflect on the great principles of truth and freedom. They must, first of all, attack to survive, they must defend themselves because they are killing them, they cannot wait for pompous extollers of cultural research to find a way to explain that there are profound reasons that make tanks move.

Often many interventions on the Palestinian problem have been of this type, written aimed at distancing themselves and pointing out mutual wrongs and rights, with the aim of bringing the possibility of a struggle in solidarity, here and now, back into the simple and simplistic channel of a cultural discussion. There is no lack, everywhere, not even in Palestine, of collaborationist and pacifying positions, half-hearted rethinking that tries to do everything to leave things as they are, allowing the Jews to further expand their settlements and the Palestinians to continue living in the ghettos.

But, on the ground of real struggle, Palestinians continue to die, while on the other side, behind the insurmountable armor of their tanks, the former persecuted of yesterday apply the same methods as their former persecutors: they destroy the homes of suspects, torture in prisons, deport, kill in the streets, abuse, etc.

The measure of how Palestinians might consider collaborationist behavior is given by the treatment they are reserving for those who collaborate with the Israeli army. At the end of August [1988], in the space of a few days, four of them were killed because they were paid informants by Israel. A few days later, a fifth was hacked to pieces with an axe. Drastic measures, certainly, but they give a sense of what this people is suffering.

At certain levels the sense of pity and humanity disappears.

[Published in "Provocazione", n. 16, September 1988, p. 9]"

## **Not just buttons**

A police force is always a police force for the simple reason that a state, even one as tattered as the Palestinian one, is always a state.

Now, for those who fought in their time (each in their own small way may have contributed) for the ideal of liberation of the people of Palestine, this has a special meaning. The thought that comrades in the struggle, of that struggle that was spreading like an epidemic fever a bit everywhere, in Europe and elsewhere, today wear the uniform with shiny buttons, aped on that of the English cops, is very hard to digest.

But the police do not just wear uniforms, they do not just polish their buttons, they control, they repress, they beat and, when necessary, they shoot and kill without thinking twice.

Gaza is not a big city, it has few paved roads and those that are not resemble small village alleys more than many others in the Arab world. In the area where the Israeli Shin Beth was, there are now Arafat's policemen. Not only the policemen, but also the court, the prison and the secret services. Everything is small, everything is scarcely efficient, but the intention is what counts.

What happened to the Intifada?

It continues, of course, against the new masters and against the old ones. Thus, boys and girls are arrested, taken to the multipurpose building of Palestinian state repression, interrogated by little compliant investigators, judged by unlikely judges. They are the children, just a little older, born in the concentration camps.

What can the enlightened strategic direction of the Supreme Leader ever tell them?

Just as it took us years to convince ourselves that the Israelis were torturers even though they had recently emerged from the death camps, it will now take us who knows how long to understand that some of the Palestinians, old comrades of yesterday, can become today's torturers.

Reality evolves and by evolving it changes the masks with which men hide to play their role. But, behind the mask, the role changes and no one notices."

[Published in "Canenero", n. 20, 24 March 1995, p. 2]

## **From Marx to the Houri**

Many things have changed in Palestine. Many others have remained the same. Poverty and hatred are as rampant as ever, especially hatred towards the occupiers, namely the soldiers of Israel, still present in the Territories.

What is more natural than hatred against the invaders? Only politicians who have sold themselves to the enemy, and who have negotiated the possibility of an internal government, and a puppet state, against the continuation of a more effective struggle, can think differently. Many Palestinians, for various reasons, are not willing to accept a coexistence that is based on the protection of the interests of the strongest.

This explains the spread of internal resistance within the newborn State of Palestine itself, which almost entirely presents itself under the banner of Hamas, certainly the most significant armed group, equipped with considerable means, as was evident from the explosion a few days ago [1995], which blew up its arsenal.

There is nothing easier in those parts than to find a boy, between twelve and sixteen years old, born and raised in the poverty and



violence of the concentration camps, willing to listen to speeches that deny the validity of Arafat's choices and the project of a free Palestine coexisting with a free Israel. Nothing easier than to push this boy to a suicidal action.

This is what the men of the "Izz al-Din al-Qassam", the "Armed Wing of God", who are not children and who, as religious fanatics, prepare for the holy death and the war against the infidel, systematically do.

Twenty-five years ago, in conditions certainly no better than those of today, the Palestinian struggle was almost entirely subject to another type of indoctrination, the Marxist one.

Then, middlemen with flowing beards promised aid in the form of money and weapons; now Islamic priests promise eternal life in a paradise filled with *houris*.<sup>1</sup>

[Published in "Canenero", n. 22, 7 April 1995, p. 2]

## Untitled

### I

Too much light that night. We needed the darkness of accomplice short-cuts, solitary paths, to lift one's hand, to find the courage to lift one's hand and make darkness in one's heart.

### II

How to quell the hatreds if there is only them, besides the forgotten lies and weakness? Wondrously spellbound, move forward with trembling lantern, full of curiosity, learning, knowing. But it is the song of the frogs that takes me back into the mud, from where I have not moved for a long time, waiting, like the snake.

### III

Recurring liturgies expand time in the ceremonial, awaiting the miracle that transforms steel into love. An idea of beauty, from the single drops of nitroglycerine. Silence. I put the pieces carefully back into the sheaths, it will be for another time.

### IV

The black wing of the crow has glittered enough. Now that the light is coming I see the far off window clearly, a breach in the almost destroyed building. A shadow mourns the death of his friend, then he gets up and looks at the sun low on the horizon before dying in turn.

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<sup>1</sup>Translator – *Houris* are the beautiful, pure maidens to be found as companions for the Muslim faithful in paradise. While only mentioned a few times in the Quran, they have been extensively discussed in hadith.

## V

Too slow, she ended up sitting on the ground, adjusting the little dress over her infirm legs. It seemed she wasn't breathing, immobile amongst the fallen leaves of the high branches. The shadow hid the irrevocable tears.

## VI

In the end we remained alone, waiting. We had to telephone, before it was too late. The other was silent, looking at the lighthouse not far away, the lighthouse of dreams, closed from all sides. High sunlit walls underlined the jarring lack of light. Life was dying in there; if life is hope there was none left in there. Only the logic of the torturers.

## VII

Good causes are not recognised. If you look them carefully in the face, they are no longer good. They suffocate with justification that had not been requested, they beg to stay on the surface, not to push the knife in, or cry.

## VIII

Backs to the wall, surrounded on all sides, at the bend in the road after the bridge, not a chance, and they are happy.

## IX

The beloved children of the gods are here before my eyes and they spend their time chasing flies. The current lashings of military rule do not seem to touch them. I am here to help them open their eyes and look at all this blood.

## X

Between the grove and the sea a few sparse bushes and the flush to the ground plants of watermelons. A dead mare not far from the field and the footprints left in the sand by the corpses dragged away. The pain is the carrier of the minutes, little by little, in the light wind without story.

## XI

At the end of the dive bar a toothless old man stares into the void. He has realized that I am Italian and his memories must not be good. His hair is short like a prisoner and a round head, only the face retains a certain fullness, and his eyes looking at me gleam some of those bitter memories. My utopias so full-bodied prove fragile and meager under those eyes, family legends capable of driving away cockroaches. Sing, my unconquered faith, sing your fairy tales, this old man won't listen to them, but you sing anyway, sob your hopes and your pride. Squawk here, in the bottom of this dive bar, which

is then the bottom of the world. Lament not, the gravediggers come and go, those eyes remain.

## **XII**

Come to relieve them of their humiliation, I am here to see them sitting at the end of a dive bar, reedy fools singing under their breath, between their teeth, a song that is not one of resignation, a song capable of intimidating the death governed by the ruling class.

## **XIII**

On the unsound bridge, thrown over the abyss, there was little to be done. Pass through taking all the risks or turn back. Adventure and safety do not go together, not even passion and order. I moved on, always moved on.

## **XIV**

The tails of the satyrs stopped intertwining, no more bagpipes could be heard, nor blood warmed in the maenads' veins. Overthinking sleepwalkers advance through the fog with hands full of Christmas purchases thinking how to close their ears to the screams of pain. They are the heirs of the ruins, they have a brutal and stupid universe behind them, expressly made by them, inert masses who cannot see their own destiny.

## **XV**

Battered men and anguished women under the shadow of the cathedral. The cruelty of repression is tangible in the air as intolerable suffering that the blood of slain repressors does not alleviate. No one in these parts sings victory, only the bones of the dead await burial.

## **XVI**

Arithmetic calculation of virtue, made by fat merchants enriched in the dim light of lamps in rooms without air or light.

## **XVII**

Under the wild fig tree, down in the ravine, the gutted donkey gasped in the afternoon sun.

## **XVIII**

The gulls, clumsy and strutting, stalked in the cold morning light, heedless of the crowds under the porticos. A few crumbs of humanity do not arouse their interest; perhaps they suspect a hoax.

## **XIX**

The reddish, fraudulent buildings I had left behind, in the evanescent endless suburbs, now only meadows and groves, flowers and ruins, an ideal place to disappear.

## **XX**

In the quietest hour of the night I reread the ancient verses of revolt, the dragon's teeth, one by one. The storming of heaven continues, but I am almost blind and scoff against the sun that hurts my tired eyes, no one can stop the approaching disaster, not even the butterflies' somersaults.

## **XXI**

The arrogant oak has been struck by lightning and is agonizingly smoldering, it does not consider itself destroyed, it continues to live and, little by little, a bud blossoms among the teeth of the old scorched branches. Even pessimists must admit that I do not give up easily.

## **XXII**

The dignity and pride of workers with their caps lowered over their eyes, while slobs in occupation uniforms push them with rifle butts. The gloomy atmosphere shows the sullen face of death. Fatigue and lack of sleep mark the faces of these workers who ride along with me on the morning bus, yet among them, perhaps with tight lips, someone stands alert in absolute silence. Someone's clumsiness does not prevent perfect mechanisms from exploding at the most opportune place and time.

## **XXIII**

A ticking time bomb purges the phlegm of uniformed controllers beside the fences blocking an unnamed road. In the lethargy of the profitable utility no one around there hears the sobs of the wounded. Adrenaline carries me far away from between clean sheets and new conformisms sliced of rebellion.

## **XXIV**

Bloodshot eyes emphasize his despair to those who will not understand. It is the terrible price for all who grope toward death in libraries.

## **XXV**

He had a big fist and with it he struck the face of the boy who confronted him, reducing it to blood and pus. Falling under the policeman's vicious blows, the boy clutched a rag in his hands, a blood-stained rag and nothing else. The policeman, struck in the chest, fell face down, dead.

## **XXVI**

Captivated, I go around like musical chairs without finding it. Yet it must be there, with its usual melancholy air. There's only a guy foaming with rage, standing still in the doorway and looking left

and right, then he falls to the ground electrocuted. The future has stopped stirring for him.

## **XXVII**

It should have been short-lived, a brief stay in an apartment studying man's behavior. Photos, enlargements, habits, tastes. A long walk in the suburbs, a stupid street of blue-collar inhabited barracks and a few blue-collar supermarkets. He was almost thrilled when he realized what, unexpectedly, was about to happen to him.

## **XXVIII**

No one compromised or agreed. It was a long and unpleasant discussion, very sad, eyes full of misplaced, violent and bitter hatred.

## **XXIX**

The police machinery he represented is smashed. Now he lies face down on the ground as the blood-stain drawing grows across the pavement. His violent life is over, forever. No machine has perfect defenses; there is always a little hole somewhere. Surely the dream of social justice does not pass through this scoundrelly, damp puddle, or does it?

## **XXX**

In desperate conditions I continued to respond politely, it was inevitable if I wanted to go unnoticed. Dissatisfaction. What had happened ruined for me everything I had been planning for the past few days with manic Jansenism.<sup>2</sup> It is not worth remembering the details. Death is an event that almost always deserves no comment.

## **XXXI**

I am not ready, I am never ready. I am always ahead of being ready. I am waiting, that is the only necessity, I am waiting for what I have not yet done.

## **XXXII**

No happiness on the body of the enemies. They lie in their grave and feed the earth. Only a good smell of freshly harvested grass. In mauling there is no completion, one begins and never ends. Nothing can be neglected and it is absurd to think of projects complete with everything, including blood.

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<sup>2</sup>Translator – Jansenism was a 17th and 18th century Catholic movement deemed heretical that was based in interpretations of St. Augustine's thought, holding irresistible divine grace as necessary for genuine free will, practicing rigorous moralism and all-consuming devotion to Christianity with an understanding of humans as capable only of Evil following the Fall. Opposed to absolute monarchical or papal power, the movement incorporated in different places aspects of popular rejection and Enlightenment modernism.

### **XXXIII**

Parasites sat in the main street, in the still intact cafes of the center, smoking the long pipes or breathing in the cooling ducts. They also trafficked while sleeping. Small merchants graytopped like their houses, eager only to buy and sell, bellies supernourished, and all around rubble and mourning, disemboweled toys and streets with the indelible stench of corpses.

### **XXXIV**

The stubble field not far away could easily have caught fire, and it would have been a disaster. With smug tenderness I had tied the two extremities of death, gripping them tightly with my teeth. Then I had pushed the large body of material toward its obvious destination. I just had to wait.

### **XXXV**

He clapped ecstatically. He was hardly a harsh critic; his knowledge concerned another kind of music whose performance required unavailable instruments. They would come later.

### **XXXVI**

The grocer was icy and gritty, his opaque eyes reflecting nothing but the glass of thick glasses. Yet he was acting like a young fool. Gray hairs are not enough to give meaning to one's life. The poor man did not realize that someone was cutting the thread of it without warning him.

### **XXXVII**

The forest of death rattles with screams at the gates of the pitted city. I loathe the memory of that suffocating air, an inferno of calls and wails. The inconsolable pain in the faces of those who will have to force themselves to be gravediggers. Everything here dies, continuously, in full desolation and without even the dull howl of the owls that are usually never lacking in these parts. The January dawn is not particularly cold.

### **XXXVIII**

The birds stand still by the lake, stuck in multicolored groups, like toys in a children's store, a fairy tale to soothe the moans of pain coming from a people tortured, to death. Not far away, a millstone turned into a morgue table with fragile bodies, stacked head to toe so as not to fall. The goat bells can still be heard, and the punctual moon, and the punctual standing waves of the lake, all seems in order.

### **XXXIX**

Even the agaves are struggling to bloom in these parts, while the sea wind whirls in the oases with their few palm trees. God sings a

melody in the voice that runs in the wind, repeating the words of the muezzin, united we will win until the day of death. How strange, even death they want to grab hold of, martyrdom is for many the only plausible solution. The prophets have spoken.

## **XL**

Ancient peasants among the rows of watermelons, hard and naive looks, the hopes of always held by sinewy arms.

## **XLI**

Purple and white gulls stand sentinel along thick clusters of blackish rocks. In the shallow sea I search for the innocence of these fishermen who have accompanied me through the night of renunciations. They think nothing of it, they work fishing, and they work hard.

## **XLII**

My silent step is that of the angel who gives no caresses in the rugged climb to the city.

## **XLIII**

The still waters of the harbor and the boat that goes away with little strokes of the oar. It has been painted dark blue and smells of saltiness and rotten wood. I think, rambling on and on, mercy if I were caught by surprise. The lapping doesn't seem to subside, it sounds like a chant heralding sleep. My man is punctual and calms the restlessness of the long minutes of waiting.

## **XLIV**

The shadow that walks beside me does not speak; I am used to a taciturn but firm support, one you can count on. The shadow is reached under an old cherry tree on a night of light breeze. Forever. Not a name or a sign. No one to say anything with the cold firmness of bureaucrats.

## **XLV**

Behind the rows of saplings, the temporary sepulchres, signs of my passionate days. There was no one who had stronger certainties than mine, even the dead had theirs, the difference evidently was not here.

## **XLVI**

In the twinkling of morning, plundering the remnants of contenance and watchfulness, as when one goes fishing, with a unanimous sense of duty, without excessive eagerness and detachment, without those preludes of fable that everyone can legitimately expect.

## **XLVII**

Among the tangle of reeds I wait for the sign, I wait for a long time, it does not come. The fog descends low and heavy, an absolute calm comes down from the mountain like a flood. Leaving is always a difficult decision.

## **XLVIII**

The colors of the river, dull in the lightless day, only the wind animates the waiting, always that. The lament is still the same, remote, as if someone mourns the absurdity of all this pain.

## **XLIX**

Without colors, the dazzling sun, no heavens and nothing to dream of. Only a fire not far away, which I see as I remain flattened in the gorge.

## **L**

The pitfall approaches attentively, animal motions, in these parts quite common. The light is devastated by the forest of tree stumps, it is not even possible to stop and drink in the hollow of my hand, dysentery lurking. From a clearing the mountain visible in the background, gloomy.

## **LI**

In the December sky, the hulking houses of a white city await the arrival of the pieces of wood with which the holes are patched. A greeting from hell with an expectant heart.

## **LII**

Darkness awaits me respecting the usual rituals. I move well in these conditions devoid of any commiseration. Yet I had come bearer of millennial hopes. Justice fled before my arrival, did not wait for me.

## **LIII**

Streets without peace, lights hidden behind curtains always lowered, distant noises, timid, cautious rituals in the evening breeze. Bewildered birds don't know how to nest on the barbed wire, their ancient hope becomes disillusioned again.

## **LIV**

The dusty road, full of stones and holes conveniently separated, children tired of their own expressions of innocence who no longer want to cry, mothers struggling to keep up the running pace of funerals, bones abandoned in the precipices of the excluded. I was a child of the dawn.



## **LV**

The man shoots hidden inside a vineyard, a short stretch of small plants, not proud and lush rows, a stretch scattered among the ears of wheat and the poison ryegrass. One must wait to die.

## **LVI**

The wind insists on the leaves until evening, then falls suddenly, it's time to move. All the birds are silent as if a hand is holding their mouths shut. It seems to sink into the millennia, nothing recalls the technique that in a few moments could be unleashed from the burden I carry.

## **LVII**

The sea not far away relentlessly etches the expressionless black rocks, I lay the burden on the ground, no one will notice it until morning dawns, when it will be too late to remedy. The hollowed faces of the suffering do not move a muscle, they will not notice and their agony will not improve.

## **LVIII**

My breath empties as I quicken my pace and fade like a fire in the rain. I am in no condition to turn back, now it's just a matter of punctuality. It is amazing how death always reaches criticality on time.

## **LIX**

Living by listening to dirges, hagiographic passages, uplifting tales and ancient legends. Living and dying by reading a few pages each day and the evenings the prodigy of sleep, punctual. Meek lamb with pitiful eyes. The taste of wet leaves in the parched mouth.

## **LX**

Now I know you exist, before you were just a name on a piece of paper and a black and white photo, cut out of a newspaper, faded. The light of the night illuminates your last steps.

## **LXI**

A small mosque and a stunted, rough bell tower. I enter hastily between two out-of-time poplars, carrying my tool bag. The green of the meadow remains bright despite my intentions that I can reveal only in mute, while a glimpse of the sky indicates with determination what I will do tomorrow.

## **LXII**

I imagine a sweet melopoeia<sup>3</sup>, and ancient quivers at the moment of landing, oars aloft, square sail without wind. I too am in the same

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<sup>3</sup>Translator – Melopoeia is one of the three kinds of poetry identified by the poet Ezra Pound, defined by the charging of words with musical property, alongside

harbor, on the same beach, for a dream of freedom equal to theirs, what sense a few thousand years difference makes. The sparrows in the sky near the watermelon plants are still the same. I feel like a thread of straw with a little happy thrill. I wait for the March bloom, now I have the time. Before I used to arrive, bite, leave. Now I can look intently at the last cloister of the Orthodox monastery, its round dome, the musty books on the walls of the small library, the words I should know and struggle even to spell. But I am back. It is they, the bad guys, who have gone into hiding, though still, in the marketplace, near the military school, I see a few faces around that I don't like. Now I'm here, in the same sod, but if I did what I did before they would inevitably put me to rot somewhere. I think they just have a desire to forget. Not all of them, fortunately. There are still some with stormy, clear eyes, and I imagine that he came for me, here, in this old village tavern, but instead he is just a thirsty man.

### LXIII

The shacks are covered in dirty white paint, they are not very different from the houses I saw in the oases, made of stone and clay. The ground is muddy even though it hasn't rained for months, all the dirty water is thrown into the street. Dirt invades the air, the smell is terrible and waves in unstable gusts. Only the faces are dark and harshly carved, even those of children, the latter always covered in flies. Old people, dressed in rags, many emaciated, almost toothless, calm gestures, few words, they wait for people to give them something, anything. In the cafes there is a higher level of well-being, people, noise, always the eternal flies, many sit around a tree that to me looks like a carob tree on which a house has evidently been built. Outside the city, outskirts, larks and a field full of little blue flowers and poppies, the puddles mark the characteristics of the seaside oasis. The sky is incredibly blue, brutal and does not allow compromises. Still houses in ruins, signs of war, the war of massacres and door-to-door killings. The sea on the left, the olive trees on the right. The rows of trees are interrupted every now and then by hedges of prickly pears, I feel at home but I am not. I am a presumptuous and pompous foreigner, an infected bearer of freedom. My companion bears the name of the stone, he is a big man in a brown caftan, even though he is from Syracuse, he has the sickly look of someone with a liver problem, swollen eyelids, absent eyes. I know he keeps a

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phanopoeia (imagistic evocation through words), and logopoeia (the use of words outside their usual contexts or meanings to induce a play of intellectual compositions). Pound was a highly influential American modernist poet and editor of literary magazines who moved to Italy in 1924 and acted as a fervent propagandist for fascism and nazism, which is acknowledged and grappled with by Bonanno in another piece included in *Palestine, Mon Amour* titled "Jews and absolute evil", on pg. 31 of this reprint.

dagger under his shirt and that he caresses it continuously. A few months later he will not be able to use it.

#### **LXIV**

A thick, dark, tangled thicket, where a path reduced to a swamp separates trees gnarled by ancient diseases from a dark background of vegetation full of thorns and dark leaves. The screeches of unknown birds increase the impression of fear, as if a mass of poor wretches were complaining of unbearable pain. A part that hurts, mercilessly, and that does not care about what I could do, my hopes, my illusions. Maybe because I do not know how to drive a tank.

#### **LXV**

The village is almost deserted, populated only by the shadows of the houses and a few hasty and worried passers-by, it is not the right time to wander around, nor is the place well chosen, nor is the era sad and anguished by dark ghosts of civil war. Some medieval streets, narrow and dark, wait like ideal ambush places, while a light and continuous rain wets everything. Staying reveals a maniacal insistence on one's intent, even the silence seems to advise against this out of place stubbornness. From every corner a strip of forgotten wall emerges, death elected as a system of government, resignedly accepted by all. Yet running away would be a sort of betrayal. The next day is the obsession of solemn religious frenzy, a procession as a morbid challenge launched to misery.

#### **LXVI**

In the night the sand dogs howl, the voice of the desert. Mysterious howls that take me back in time, to the light Algerian hills where you can't stop for long without running the risk of staying there forever. I sat on the side of the road to Morocco, waiting for the red color of the sky to turn gray. I had a slight wound on my back, I was afraid that the blood, my smell, would attract the dogs, they didn't come. I was given a lift by a truck from a local commune, driven by an Algerian who was a fan of Tom Robbins and Timothy Leary.

#### **LXVII**

Anyone who has been tortured often thinks about this shameful event. I do too. I think about before, when the instruments are prepared, and after, when everything is over. I never think about the pain, no one can really think about that moment in which they were one with the torturer. The thought disgusts me too much and I prefer to stop at a before or an after. So the fear of the before is always present as an object, a bucket, an awl, a rag, a knife, a funnel, an ashtray, a horse's saddle strap. So the dismay of the after is always linked to time, how much has passed? Will it last longer? Why did they stop?

## **LXVIII**

Smelly streets in the heat of the evening, a pale, fat candy maker in a dirty apron, dirty black hair twisted on his head like a crown. The childish grace of an old woman who can only accommodate sailors and soldiers, men with good mouths. A half-naked body in heavy sleep.

## **LXIX**

For how many more years will tomorrow be the same as today, in this hole everything always goes back to the same.

## **LXX**

Night falls over the surrounding hills, covering the countless eyes that spy on life.

## **LXXI**

A thousand monsters lurk all around the clouded mountain. They wait to unleash their claws.

## **LXXII**

My wound, small, incurable. The need to wash my tired body, swarming with carnivorous beasts, very small, that twist to better penetrate the flesh. Each beast equipped with a knife, and pliers and awls, animated by a spirit of revenge, or fear?

## **LXXIII**

Gentle hollows and stars in the sky, two landmarks, then nothing in the useless depths. A sheer rock, the sea below, an ambush of fate.

## **LXXIV**

The bosom of the trees is dark, the green is elsewhere. It is there that I will end up one day, and that day will be furnished with night, and dawn will follow, and then again night. All this is indifferent.

## **LXXV**

The nomad's blue robe in the wild and unknown distance. Endless sandy slopes, scrub, deserts. Mystical solitudes and immense expanses, open to absolute nothingness. Unconscious recollection, serenity sensed in the sad eyes of those who know they cannot free themselves.

## **LXXVI**

The Mediterranean scrub and its stony bone structure. Solitude has no home for the stupid.

## **LXXVII**

A knight of the unreal has a gaunt, burning face, his sword is infernal. It irritates me to see myself in this perspective.

### **LXXVIII**

In the desert the wind, now stronger now weaker, mournful. A hundred uniform humps, wild hillocks, destroyed, as after a cataclysm. Running, always running, an unstoppable, fantastic run. A good run.

### **LXXIX**

A kind stranger was hiding death in his pocket, and it wasn't the first time.

### **LXXX**

The secret vibration of every fiber remains hidden in my half-closed eye that watches the mad rush of death, still suspended but already intoxicating.

### **LXXXI**

The trembling of the moon on the water, the wind that raises the dust on the road, the dark roar of the wave, all this concert accompanies my silence. The only presence, the stars.

### **LXXXII**

I peer restlessly across the dark desolation of the plain, not a single sign of human presence. Yet I know that something down there is moving, restlessly, though I don't know how to define it, this something. A wave that crests on the infinite desolation of the desert?

### **LXXXIII**

A few sheep guarded by two dogs and a meadow with splendid flowers. I have my back against a tree and my eyes wide open, the plain is large and the rain has just stopped. No one expects a rainbow.

### **LXXXIV**

Far from home I watch the clouds beyond the cliffs that border the desert. My books, my room, are here with me, far away, remote, my children, I could not have hosted them in this solitude, they would have soon made me meat for crows. I live here alone, everywhere like a bird in a leafy forest and I can watch carefully the man who, far away on the horizon, moves slowly and does not know he is in my telescope. He does not know and seems absorbed in his thoughts.

### **LXXXV**

I go forward among incomprehensible obstacles, among enemies I cannot see, among movements my eye does not catch. I follow the smoking line of the horizon bathed in the July heat. I have checked the shots in my wheel and I feel safe. The latch is already popped,

all I have to do is finish and then go away. The appointment on the rocks cannot be postponed. The elm is a solitary tree.

### **LXXXVI**

My craft has brought me here, on this lonely dusty path, I have no goods to offer, no smiles or consolations, I am the messenger of the sultry and heavy evening and there are no fountains in sight, no young women with amphorae full of fresh water. The desolation is in the path and marks me, the absolute absence engraves on my step, the undergrowth that I cannot call with a known name, that does not answer me as the simple stone does, I am a lonely man and I do not know their words nor do I know if they exist. Here, my solitude competes with this path where I find myself, I have my epigraph under my feet, that is why it would be a supreme lie to think of it in another place. I cannot stop to contemplate some stone, a piece of marble, go beyond, always beyond. Only the sea erases and covers, discovers and preserves forever. The sea, after all, has been my adventure, I have always set sail from somewhere leaving my many ballasts on the dock, and it is the sea that I choose, over there, immediately to the left.

### **LXXXVII**

The ruins of a Greek temple, with its good slope, the fountain from which I drink, a web of myth tied like a thick fisherman's net. Around, the sun, too violent, covers the head of some hero, ancient, collapsed under the masterly blows of some bronze sword. The man drinks from a kind of canteen that he holds around his neck, personifies a tourist, does it quite well, I would say, not for my trained eye, the ivy behind him, on the wall, seems an artificial fabric, an arabesque of divine images. It is a reflection of the ancient era that still resides here somewhere. Rubble and columns thousands of years old. The man now walks a little faster towards a woman's silhouette. I know why they are there, together, they will never be again.

### **LXXXVIII**

I feel horror breathing on my face, it is not fear but something more subtle, that penetrates me to the core. A muddy alley on the outskirts of a besieged city, covered with barbed wire, with wings of flame. The dead wait, without knowing they are waiting, an impossible mercy. No one knows mercy here, a muddy tide has covered everything. The ancient feathers on which I laid my thoughts of freedom have disappeared, now I take shelter inside a house gutted by two grenades, the second to be safer, to leave nothing unfinished. The forest is taking over these ruins, entire neighborhoods are wrapped in the fury of the storm, after all this city is a city where it

is starting to get cold.

## LXXXIX

I carried on my shoulders a great responsibility under the cedars, having erased myself, while next to me raised fists roughly summarized what I also believed in with a thousand details, in a different way. For me an abstract utopia, for me come to nail on the field the a priori axioms of exactitude and certainty. My roars of truth, now seem to me to be frantically drumming on robust chests. Why doesn't the sky cover itself with clouds? Why on these occasions doesn't a sign arrive, moved by a force of truth and reach even the decrepit thistles to burn them completely and warn? Nothing is more stupid than waiting for a sign like that, there are no places where hope is nourished without my commitment, balsamic places that nurse it attentively, expectations languish dismayed by their own inability. All around are only scowling looks that support bellicose attitudes, specialists in massacres without even the alibi of coming from some library background. I pity the oppressed and act alongside him, he looks elsewhere, he does not turn his eyes like me just towards freedom, no more or less, they told him that only his oppressed land must be free. And perhaps it is right that it be so. Why should he give explanations to me who claims to defend him from planetary arrogance? And his enemies, whom I admired, are now my enemies and advance with their heads down and immerse themselves ever more in this sea of hatred. Dignity in the mud, trampled, was and continues to be, only the feet have changed, now the trampled of the past have become trampers of themselves first of all. I no longer see the sacred fire of the quest in their eyes, not even in those of my companions, too much blood has filled the muddy streets of the villages, too many dead, too much horror for all this to suddenly calm down. Perhaps time, which has no boundaries, will erase the memory of so much raving, but my eyes, now tired, continue to see the same faces along the desert road, the same faces of children about to be killed. Where have my dreams gone? I thought they continued to bloom under the cedars. It is not so.

## XC

The vapors thicken near the dawn and magically emerge from the earth, here the oldest myths in the world and the sense of the sacred, a mixture of fear and beauty, were born. If I could hold this ancient message in my hands, right in front of the first ship and the first furrows of the plows, ship of the golden myth. Instead I only have a burning thirst and I feel stiff. Why did I come here with the morning wind? Because this mist does not clear, because it insists on hiding my man, who goes off to his daily work of massacre. He is a civil servant like many others: order and cleanliness. You can see, a

little, that he is happy with the fate of his country. He longs to earn his salary, but I have no salary to earn, fortunately I have escaped from that bitter ford, now I dedicate my life to that of my man, but he cannot know this. That is why he goes away quickly, as if he had no worries. He should have.

### **XCI**

I saw a vulture with its rotating wings rise not far from where I lay still. These birds do not make mistakes, they do not approach a living being, but a dying one, and they wait patiently for it to make up its mind. Each one follows its own path, next to me someone has reached the point where he could arrive, is dead and therefore cannot greet the waiting bird, nor invite it to the banquet. The meal has not yet begun because I am there, and I am not yet dead.

### **XCII**

I remember the desert, an animal in motion that swallows everything it finds, it's just a matter of time, no road is safe, there is no project that can be successful with certainty. And to think that there is someone who comes here on vacation, thinking of having fun. Only here instead is the fullness of hate transformed, or of love, which is the same thing. I learned to despise comforts and then regret what I had learned, humility is a condition of survival.

### **XCIII**

The waterfall foams and scornfully rejects every attempt to tame it. Sharp rocks defend it like shaggy, age-old giants and guard the abyss it holds in its bosom. A little further away is the tranquil lake and the birds of many colors, layered, still. There is no wind or movement. Everything here is silent as it screams and tears down there. My destiny is similar to this contrast. I have always written late at night before acting, as if my time were running out, a tired boxer who fears going to the canvas and being counted out.

### **XCIV**

I feel the damp and the cold slowly taking over me, I can't help it. I've been watching the fisherman absorbed in his line for hours. I'm waiting for the woman who's supposed to take him away to arrive. It doesn't take much cunning to clean the sewers, you just need to have a firm stomach to resist the urge to vomit. All this is the result of an objective analysis, an operation of small details and infinite patience. Having started with great plans for social upheaval, I've understood that nothing can be based on infection and gangrene. What does it matter to look at the moon and breathe in the smell of the sea if monsters like the fisherman and the dark-haired woman who will take him away are circulating? I can't let myself be lured by the sky that gets lost in the water, I have other things to think



about, nostalgia is not a feeling I can allow myself, it would be like if I stood up to greet them, they wouldn't let me take a step.

### **XCV**

A proud people in misery, suffering in a foreign land, massacred, immersed in the blood that fills the dirt roads of the fields where they were herded to make room for the persecuted of yesterday, today's persecutors. A circle within another the flames of oppression burn freedom, it is a spell, there is no treasure that you can keep by defending it, you can only share it, if you think of holding it tight you only hold your misery. There are no kind eyes here, only suspicious glances of armed men who try to overwhelm each other. You can't get out of this infernal circle except with freedom. Am I the bearer of freedom? I don't know, I also hold a weapon in my hand and the anguished antinomies of my philosophy do not change my condition. I attack to defend the poor oppressed, but I do not hide the horror of hitting once again the same bodies that were hit yesterday. Digging deeper, where can I put my foot down?

### **XCVI**

Hundreds and hundreds of thoughts fall upon me, storm and hail. I count the showers one by one and they are abundance, overflow, full. And yet I resist like an old eroded rock, while streams flow along my body marked by the knife, by the desire of others to bend me. Monsters and clean faces have presented themselves, together an excellent company of wretches, waiting to see me give in, but I remained firm under the threatening axe, under the piece of wood, the rope, the salt water, the wet rag. Vile nightmares that only man knows how to hiss with his mind educated in perfidy, how much more correct would have been a good paw from a ferocious beast, clear, decisive, clean. Instead the mental tortuosity of torturers has no limits, especially when it has been educated in the school of those who have suffered torture.

### **XCVII**

I have adapted to every experience, punishing and forgiving are the most terrible, it is always difficult to be pilgrims of justice, the personal one I mean, not the circus machine. My justice that looks the enemy in the eye, my enemy, and sees him through great deformities and dark omens imposed by the condition of oppression. Horror has no boundaries and cannot be completely swept away on the enemy's side, only words can do that, but it is a banal ideological cleansing. Reality dances differently, it presents itself as beautiful and multifaceted, but it hides within itself evil, the dullness and stupidity of evil, a circle that moves slowly but moves, deceives and throws flowers as you pass. Horror attracts you to the cheerful

threshold of its stage and turns on false lights that shine brightly, how can you avoid being deceived? There is no rule to alleviate the pain, there are pains that cannot be soothed. Impossible, horror smiles on the miseries of the human heart, on the supreme beauty as well as on the deformed fixity of ignorance, it smiles.

### **XCVIII**

In the general misery that I see here, around me, severed limbs, quarters of men carried away, seized by a gigantic force, there is no nobility of ideals, only pain and death. There is no hope of a better future, not even of life, there is only the worst, silent and fatal, a worse that spreads and multiplies while some ghost in a dirty slaughterhouse coat lurches left and right. And yet all this was done by man to humiliate man, the beast does not go that far, it strikes if it is hungry, is satisfied and goes away, it does not cripple in the cold for reasons not present in its furious paw, its mark is clean, innocent, that of man causes vomiting. Where is the justice that I dreamed of? Where has the sacred river of my iconoclastic fury gone to flow? My pure heart and my pious hands have drowned in the filthy mud that surrounds me. There are no clear expanses of the desert before me that I dreamed of, nor the high blue sky, there is only the primordial sun that floats on the chaos perhaps to regenerate a new life from this horror, perhaps to linger still feeding the next horror.

### **XCIX**

A small, now yellowish lamp casts stupid light on the wooden stairs. Under the door another thread of light. The miser waits calmly for a knock at his door, he knows that whoever is coming has no alternatives, he is a tie maker, and in this country tie makers are worse than their Italian counterparts, they are more greasy and subtle. They don't go on trips to Nice, they don't even have a car or a bank account, they don't use checks, only the veiled threat. A draft in the corridor indicates that the door has opened. I haven't even heard him come in, and yet I'm not far away, the corridor is short but dark. I go in too, without knocking, our friend is a hatter and has many hats ready to felt, it's a long and boring job. My visit makes the guest run away, I hope he hasn't paid yet. He, the miser, stays at his work table, sitting with a needle in his hand. He knows why I came.

### **C**

The enameled light bulb of the gas water heater is the goal to be reached, in the mezzanine, without a rustle. A slow and delicate job, free from possible confusion. The employee has returned home, sits in his lonely armchair. He has no wife or children, who would marry a mass murderer? Under the water heater, a pile of old newspapers.

## CI

Behind the window I watch the winter clouds gather. Black figures pass almost running, some stopping under a balcony to find shelter. No one notices the man who advances in the dark raincoat. Now he too stops under a balcony. As the street empties, under the wind that hits it from top to bottom, the raincoat is increasingly left alone, visible like a mountain in the desert. I feel a certain satisfaction in seeing how carefully and worriedly he looks around. He is looking for me, I am his concern, it is me he is looking for. Peering through the showers of rain. My man is curly and dark, he is well trained in his physique and in his ability to resist, and yet I know that at this moment he is afraid, he would like to be somewhere else. I too, for that matter, would like to be somewhere else. But I am here.

## CII

The secretary has a small sweets shop next to the synagogue. He supplements his salary, which must not be high, and satisfies his passion for children. Many people frequent the little bazaar. He is a young, pale man with regular features, but the way he transforms when a boy approaches is repulsive, he seems to melt into a soft and disgusting mass. The secretary's second job, to tell the truth, is not selling sweets, but informing the police. In a country like this it is a dangerous job but well paid. The man gravitates around the boys, he talks to the police about the stories they let slip and so he has a sort of safe conduct. Today the secretary closed the padded door of the little sweets shop behind him for the last time. He will no longer talk to the police, he will no longer play dirty, he will no longer do anything except rot slowly as food for compassionate worms.

## CIII

The man is punctual, at nine in the morning he is always at the beginning of the street, the shopkeepers could regulate the opening of the shutters around him. He seems not to have a care in the world, only I know that he must have many thoughts, given the job he does. He never stops more than necessary. He walks with a light, athletic step. He smokes, he stops to light a cigarette. He uses a cigarette holder, a horrible habit that comes from his job. All torturers smoke with a cigarette holder, the cigarette is a powerful weapon. Only those who have seen them at work can know this.

## CIV

The women here sit in the evenings in their white cotton aprons and chatter an incomprehensible singsong. They have washed the vegetables that will be served for dinner and cut the cheese into little pieces, little white pieces on the green vegetables. They have their houses in order, these women, and they do not bother to un-

derstand what their husbands, sons, fathers are doing, when in the morning they buckle on their belts and check the safety of the automatic before putting it in the holster.

## **CV**

In the courtyard an internal staircase leads to a mezzanine floor. It is inhabited by workers and poor people who go to work punctually every morning. My man also has shabby shoes and goes around the shops in the neighborhood, with his mesh bag, a museum piece. It is still in use here. Then he comes back, brings the shopping home and goes out with changed shoes. Now he wears a long coat and combat boots. He has a wild look in his eyes, now he goes to his real job. He is one of the specialists in the dirty and smelly treatment of the intractable. He keeps his work tools in a kind of cellar where his superiors never come down. They have slightly better clothes and do not like the shit that covers the stone stairs that lead down, to the bottom. Often the guests take the steps all at once.

## **CVI**

The small restaurant offers only appetizers and wine, the owner is a fat and sweaty man in shirt sleeves, he is reading a newspaper while something boils in the white enameled iron pot with blue edges. Everything seems quiet, the place and the few distracted customers who eat slowly drinking tea. Yet a small signal would be enough to see them all jump to their feet, a gesture, a noise. Their calm face is too serious to be true, it is a mask similar to that of the owner. A creak of the stairs that lead to the cellar makes them all turn at once, it seems like the theatrical scene of a bad comedy. The silence is a curtain that hides the wickedness of this place. Swept away.

## **CVII**

A small, unfamiliar square. The man crosses it at a brisk pace, there are no cars, just a few people hurrying to the bus station. He certainly has another goal, he doesn't seem to have any uncertainties. He's going to work. At home he made the bed, changed the lamp, checked his service weapon and put it under his armpit. He won't use it, he's never used it, he takes care of other tasks, he's a specialist. He works with people's heads in chains, he uses them like those of articulated dolls.

## **CVIII**

The men with moustaches, sitting around the small round table, smell of resin. They are distracted, with their legs stretched out. They have no hats and all have a few dark hairs. One of them is drumming his fingers on the table top. Now one of them has crossed his legs and lit a cigarette. They seem harmless, with their larded

bellies, but it is not true, these gentlemen also have a heavy past. Among their specialties is clandestine hanging. They do not seem very different from many other secret butchers. The sun has only tanned them a little more, minimal details. After all, no one respects them, they are just mannequins. Tolerated in the tavern, the others pretend to look elsewhere, outside the white curtains. And yet they have incredible patience, they drink their glass of tea and wait, wait to go to work.

## **CIX**

He has raised the collar of his jacket, it is a reflex gesture that he always makes when he passes the knife shop, leaving the house and turning left. I do not think it is to protect himself from the cold. At this hour the city is depopulated, it is late morning, the employees are in the offices, the housewives still have to go out to do the shopping. This suburb of the city is as if it were drawn in black and white. The rare passers-by are in a hurry. His job is to listen to the silence of others, the whispers, the words said in a low voice, from the way I see him he resembles a sacristan. In the evening he crosses an external courtyard to enter an office with particular characteristics. He forgets nothing in his reports. Many have had to deal with those reports, hanging upside down.

(...)

## **Jews and absolute evil**

The systematic and organized massacre of large masses of people is widespread in human history. The example of millions of Jews killed in Nazi camps is only one of the best known. Regarding the Armenians, even today there is a debate to force Turkey to recognize the massacres carried out at the beginning of the last century. The Jewish genocide has some characteristics that are not found in other massacres, while it has aspects in common with others that it would be good to underline.

A mass massacre, to be such, must be organized, that is, it must have an ideological foundation, it cannot rely on the explosion of a moment that would exhaust it like a flame. Pogroms are massacres, they have an ideological basis, but only when they multiply in time and extend in space are they massacres of the type I am considering here.

A minority is often the victim of stronger groups. Financial interests, predatory activities and hoarding have often been covered by racial motives to justify the attack and keep the consequences

alive. Groups whose members gradually allow themselves to be penetrated by fables such as those relating to blood, homeland, sacred soil, race, end up finding a cohesion that they would not otherwise have. Cohesion gives the illusion of strength and the validity of their beliefs, so the group gains self-esteem and pours this new energy on its members who thus feed the fable heritage by detailing it and enriching it with pseudoscientific aspects.

Pure and simple lying is not enough. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were an element of hatred against the Jews, but they could not stand alone, a climate, a culture, a myth were needed. These three elements must be understood.

The anti-Semitic climate runs through much of history. Jews seem to have a sort of charisma to attract the antipathy of people who do not know them and do not accept them, precisely because of this lack of knowledge, but also because of some aspects of their tradition that are not easily understood. In ancient times, some of these elements were used by the Jews themselves to deepen their peculiarities and derive from this an economic profit or simple recognition as a separate unit, socially characterized by a different way of life. These are aspects concerning religion, language, clothing and even the way of providing for food. Every people has its own social habits and these characterize it, but the Jews have done something more, they have tried to be a component in their own right, even if in some aspects often peripheral, but they have never accepted total integration. This has certainly been their strength, which arouses my ethical enthusiasm, but which does not prevent me from considering how these strong choices have been the basis of the social climate that has consolidated around them over the centuries.

We can define this climate as the spirit of Judaism, not for itself, that is, as an objective fact dominating Jewish communities taken individually, or at a global level, but for others, for non-Jews, for spectators who grasp the details first and then the substance. The more these spectators, in history, have been unable to grasp the cultural basis of those discriminatory aspects established by Jews to distinguish themselves from non-Jews, the more the conditions for hysterical reactions of mass fear were created. It is on this aspect and on these reactions that anti-Semitic inventions and propaganda have been grafted.

The atmosphere I am describing today also includes two divergent movements, but not antithetical to each other, one towards the mythologization of impressions, that is, their referral to a complex of causes and effects rich in fantasies that are lost in the mists of time, in the myths of blood and race, another towards pseudoscientific coverage entrusted to sociological or biological inventions devoid of a minimum of seriousness. These two movements are equally fantas-

tic but produce effects on two groups of receptors, the less educated group and the moderately educated one. It is not difficult to rekindle the fears of the oppressed and, often, especially in moments of uncertainty or class division, lead them towards objectives capable of letting them vent at the expense of some minorities that by their very choice of life inspire fear. The moderately educated classes, especially the groups that draw on a culture made of opinions and approximations, are thus involved in a set of pseudotheories that have only the serious formulation of science. Science has many limits, and I have often underlined them, but that is another thing.

Cultural deprivation fuels the climate mentioned above and hides the small-mindedness of many who are for equality and fraternity, but only in words, having more need in substance to rely on myths and fables, not on concrete facts and ideas productive of actions. The Jews have a culture that must be known and studied in depth if one wants to avoid finding oneself for or against only by hearsay.

Mass massacres are only possible in conditions of cultural deprivation. Not only must the perpetrators be brutes, but the organizers must be as well, otherwise the individual explosions against minorities will be exhausted. A shapeless mass, as we observe today even in the so-called advanced democracies, can be regimented – to stay on topic – for and against the Jews with ease.

The fact that great intellectuals such as Céline, Pound or Heidegger have chosen anti-Semitic positions, more or less varied, does not deny the previous thesis, but it must be explained. The adventure of a great intellectual can sometimes evolve towards a progressive distancing from reality, from the concreteness of reality. The time in which each of them lives is then filtered by fantasies that end up becoming increasingly obsessive, the philosopher reinterprets the world and discovers that he is the only one who understands what escapes others and becomes immensely proud of it, the poet brings the epics of the past back to life and falls in love with them, the myths, heroes, symbols, alchemies and magic of an ancient time return in his verses, the novelist reconstructs a degraded world and immerses himself in it, demiurge and participant in the pain.

This is not an excuse and the abjection that the intellectuals mentioned above have stained themselves with cannot be erased, but neither can this latter be transgressed by annihilating it in their work. Here it must and can be kept in mind as an annoying companion of reading, because there is no division between what one thinks and what one does, but the greatness of the work remains the same. On this subject, since 1956, when I first read Pound's *Critical Essays*, I have never changed my opinion.

With due exceptions, the average mass of right-thinking intellectuals was and remains open to a superficial tolerance and an anti-

Semitism of ancient origins. Today there are many who think of the diversity of others, including Jews of course, but mainly in recent years the Arabs, in terms of integration. If they want to come to our civilized countries – so to speak – these people must accept our rules and give up their own which are not, in terms of civilization, comparable to ours.

One might object that, since the end of the Holocaust, Jews no longer receive strong pressure to integrate and that they are considered citizens like everyone else everywhere. Thus, we speak of an Italian citizen of Jewish faith and not of an Italian Jew, for example, but this terminological attention is not substantial, it pertains to the rule and only marginally touches the climate mentioned above. The generalized education of these last decades appears to be possibilist and democratic, at least to a large extent, but it is a patina that is easy to peel away, precisely because of its very inconsistency and superficiality that it shares with almost all other aspects of cultural education. Any event that sets off reactions of collective fear, a war, an excessive increase in prices, a considerable drop in employment, are enough for those racist reactions to overtake the anti-racist patina. The tale of the Jewish conspiracy is always around the corner.

For their part, the Jews lend a hand. Let's see how. A man of radical choices, the Jew either fully shares these choices or he is no longer a Jew, some irreversible marginal aspects of his original belonging fade away in a short time. But, in this case, it would be a racist accentuation to continue to speak of Jew. The authenticity of his being Jewish is therefore not in some chromosome or in the cells of his blood, but in his culture and in his way of life that is imprinted by that culture. And religion is an essential part of this culture.

I am not Jewish and, for a certain period of my life, I fought with weapons against the State of Israel, but I have never been against the Jews or, even worse, racist. I have seen Jews die and I have cried for them, I have seen others die and I have rejoiced at their deaths. The former were poor wretches who moved my soul, even hardened by circumstances and basic choices not devoid of ideological nuances, the latter were executioners among the worst and humanity could not help but rejoice at their deaths. Mine was not, and still is not, after more than thirty years, a clear separation. I cannot find, and I do not want to find, a sentence of acquittal for the good and one of condemnation for the bad. I am not a public prosecutor and I am not a defense attorney, but Jews stuck the tip of the knife in my genitals to torture me and Jews helped me, defended me and saved me. All men are the same, the difference I am talking about here is of another kind.

And it is not even true that the worst, the torturers and executioners, were rulers, upper class or defenders of alleged rights



to exploitation, they were often the most wretched and miserable, Sephardim who more than anything feared the end of the state protection they enjoyed. The frightened outcast is often even more miserable than the ruler, the royalist is more ferocious than the king himself.

Culture helps us to determine ourselves but, at the same time, it allows the determination that comes from above, it allows power and feeds it, even in the possibility of curbing its arrogance and arbitrariness. The prevalence of the ability to determine oneself characterizes culture in the positive sense of the word. But not all culture is a single and inextricable jumble, there are cultural formations that are quite well characterized, equipped with prevalent univocal connotations and identifiable homogeneity. Jewish culture is a substantial example of this.

4

(...)

## Notes on the differences

But how to say these differences? Because ultimately here we have before us, you and I who speak, the problem of what is unspeakable.

I must awaken the word to a different life, make it open to the infinite possibilities of destiny. This task is not to support any conclusion of life, to the reading of what has managed to move in the

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<sup>4</sup>Bonanno also included in *Palestine, Mon Amour* a critical letter about this section from Antonio Lombardo, (member of the Italian Anarchist Federation and archivist whose father was killed in the Holocaust) which criticized the piece for having too much of a victim-blaming aspect, not considering the case of the Romani people who also have maintained a separateness yet apparently without nationalism and who were also victims of the Holocaust, insufficiently criticizing assimilation in the way Bonanno does elsewhere, and conflating Jews, Israelis, and zionists, ignoring the economic/industrial character/motivations of the Holocaust, as well as holding a national and religious definition of who is a Jew as opposed to one based more in culture or self-identification. Lombardo here also seems to find comparisons of zionism with nazism inherently objectionable, defends the freedom of the oppressed to choose to collaborate for their own sake or run away, seems to deny the possibility of actualized genocide by either party in the conflict ever actually happening, and also seems to only support the respective, internal struggles of each side against their own authorities. Bonanno criticized a previous piece by Lombardo in another section of *Palestine, Mon Amour* for what he considered mystification on the question of complicity in the oppression of Palestinians. In an included letter, Bonanno says he agrees with most theses of Lombardo's article "Reflections on the Day of Remembrance and on Anti-Semitism", which Lombardo had invited him to read before responding to Bonanno's article, disagreeing however with Lombardo's characterization of Israel as a Western state just like the others, with Bonanno saying that Israel also has a uniquely overt theocratic character, which doesn't reduce the evil of the other states, also acknowledging elsewhere the religious inspiration of these other Western states, albeit more indirect. Despite these theoretical divergences, the two were affectionate in their correspondence with each other and collaborated on several written projects over the years.

direction of action, and not even in the sense of chance, any conclusion whatever, since they all lead to death. It is my life in action that the word must be able to say, not accepting the ambiguity of the detail or the effective blessing of what has already happened, far away, in the immovability of the unchangeable. Destiny speaks the word of action, not the superficial saying that one sometimes has the opportunity to find ready-made, it speaks depths that can only be reached if they are already present in myself, in the work of emptying every commonplace, every acquired certainty, every comforting tranquility.

The extreme point of destiny is the death rattle and this is the voice I heard coming from so far away, a voice that has nothing to say, by now, because everything has already been said. The depth of horror cancels out any depth, it simply becomes a banal affirmation of the temporary supremacy of brute force. The wisdom of those who have found themselves faced with the multiformity of horror is not adorned with words, not even destiny. The new possibility does not speak, it will speak later, when it goes its own way and will be something other than what destiny has assigned to the old sailor sitting on the dock waiting for a vessel that perhaps will never leave again. Perhaps there will be other possibilities, perhaps everything has been included, it is not given to know.

Fate does not educate, it cannot and does not know how to do so, fate leads to the end, where ships sink and rot slowly, silent monuments of an active way of transforming the world. At this point the problem of content arises between silence and the word.

The silence of destiny, the constriction, the voiceless scream of reality is the extreme extension of knowledge that, placed before the word, blocks it, enclosing it in its metabolic and codified expressive field. To descend into the depths of the word, in the sense in which I mean it here, is to do without knowledge, and therefore all the contradictions that ensue, to empty the archive, to become a wise and uncultured eater of concepts and remaker of cold dishes. Why does the word open up, in its intimate levels, only in front of wisdom? Because this knows how to ask questions in the right way and at the best time. Because it knows how to ask with an outstretched hand, giving lightly, without imposing a conquest and reducing the other to an instrument of its own constructions. This makes the word feel indispensable in being the other itself, in showing how the almost sayability is practically unsayability itself. Here is born the art of making the word speak, something more than a simple request, and something completely different from a frightening break-in. This secret is guarded by knowledge, but brought to light by wisdom. The construction of a new relationship between knowledge and word, such as to conclude for silence, the ancient stunned silence, much more than a simple negative critical interpretation, the first rudi-

ments of understanding the unspeakable are perhaps born in this terrain, but the process penetrates deeply into the very nature of knowledge, in the way in which it is disposed towards me as an acquaintance and towards the epistemological and ritual relationships that keep it standing.

About the functioning of wisdom that makes me grasp the unspeakable I know as little as the functioning of knowledge. Here the presence that calls itself by accumulating, there the rarefaction of contents, the silence of this or that notion, the abstention from imposing a path, a solution, the listening. I also know little about this listening, it is not the abandonment to the frighteningness of the approaching happening, but a search suspending my inveterate mania of slicing reality into specifics. The comfortable and pleasant sense, comforting in distress, that fills knowledge, begins to fail in wisdom, the wise man is mad because senseless, since he is founded only on himself, on the silence of what continues to be present but that has been taken away, left elsewhere, abandoned to the distances that collective fears try in every way to keep intact with the various "days" of memory.

The wise man thus begins to listen to the silence, full of another kind of content. Now he has found a different master, he no longer turns to the science of accumulation but to that of absence, he asks the word what the word does not want to say, he asks it to open up, to bring to light terrors that knowledge did not possess, regulated by its synchronies too perfect to arouse surprise. The wise man is surprised by life every day, by the sun rising and the rain falling, he knows nothing about it, what does he care about covering himself or getting rid of superfluous clothes, this is not what he asks of the word, he asks for a new relationship, a deep, intense friendship, an affinity and a complicit understanding, to listen to the saying that will not fail to arrive regarding action. The wise man opens his heart to the word, but the word cannot read the imprint of memory which is pure absence, he would like this to happen, but the word, opening up in its most intimate depths, draws a trace around the imprint using the traces of memory already existing and interpreting them in the light of the new depth solicited.

[2004]

## **The Message in the Bottle**

Children of the era that could legitimately be defined as belonging to the book, characterized by the book, we are about to witness the rapid disappearance of this object. A shocking affair for those who have placed the printed paper at the center of their lives, or at least

an activity that could not dissociate itself from the printed paper, finding nourishment and impulse from it. As disillusionment, not bad. The decline is before us, in the atmosphere we breathe, even if not many are able to capture its cemetery scent.

Silence. Here is the alternative. Now that the houses and streets are cluttered with rubble, it seems stupid to talk about Werther anymore. We could do it, but perhaps we are too bored for these games. We cannot help but listen to the suffering of the person next door, the rhythm of daily decisions, to whom we should say something, not just hint at our bankruptcy. The circle is about to close. Afterwards, what will we talk about? Here, not only have all the books been read, and not only is the flesh sad, but also all the books have been written. The tenacious and stupid insistence on faith in the printed page could hide a second purpose, less glorious but more practical, that of fleeing from immediate conditions, from the contours of reality, to seek the welcoming lap of imaginary feelings, hypothetical constructions, however docile and reasonable even when they leap with sudden angry outbursts.

The contradiction has always been there, in the unequal division between literature and life, between writing and action. All right, in the realm of finalism that despite everything sneaks into the best of analyses there is no difference, but in reality the difference is there, and how, for those who suffer the conditions of an ineliminable dichotomy. Theory inhabits one planet, practice inhabits another. Then, both, enter into communication. Nothing invented in one, nothing in the other, reality dominates unchallenged. But at what price? The rigidity, the rigorism, on the basis of which the outraged virtue, in the name of millennia of exploitation, dares to raise its judging hand. Here too, suddenly, the two planets meet again.

For better or worse, we have inhabited these two planets, and in the right way. Right, not better. Therefore, not giving in to literary or political solicitations. We have what it takes. No career, in any field, not journalistic, not academic, not editorial, not party. Purity first of all. All right, we can build a monument with all the purity that hovers around us. But here the problem is different. By delivering the books to the most advanced levels of preparation, I realize that now they run the risk of not finding a recipient. This was expected, at least up to a certain point, but not in the dimension it threatens to take. A collapse like the one that is looming over the next few decades was unthinkable. But it is also the right thing to think about, if you do not want to throw the empty bottle into the sea, without even the hypothetical message to the future. What future? What message?

The writing, however, is addressed to a hypothesis of human life, a probable life, not certain, but imaginable. A social context in which

the stimulus still has its function, the suggestion, the clarification and even the propaganda and the laughable testimony, have their function. Reasonable program, which moreover has entered from the first day in conflict with itself and therefore scaled down. But there was a basis of contact. The subverting proposal, that is, it imagined itself to arrive at subverting, the historical conditions of reason, this broad cloak under which the worst monstrosities of the world have been committed, therefore it also poured on itself the desecrating effects of its own elementary intentions. Everything was foreseen, formulas and all the rest, expedients, naivety and original developments. Everything in order, at least according to tastes, and even according to the means. But here the subject is something else again.

The book collapses, any possible book. In the current conditions of the world, with the great upheavals that take place every day, with the rapid monthly rewriting of history and geography, one looks to other means of expression. No longer to a means, not only old and outdated, but also compromised with the doctrine that has justified, and in part continues to support, this and the other world, every type of domination and abuse, under every flag.

People are fed up with libraries and morgues, fed up with history, fed up with anything that even remotely resembles the past supported by ideologies. They don't know that this too is an ideology, but no one can tell them, they wouldn't listen. They didn't listen in the past to the few scattered voices, then submerged by the uniforming tide of Marxist dialectics. They don't listen today. We can't pretend, writing, that nothing has happened in these last years. Trying to explain what happened, right as we explain it, we try to make it appear as if it had never happened. The task of analysis, of every analysis, is always this. To seal reality in the non-happened.

New ideological covers are necessary, and there are those who are taking steps to fabricate them. New means, adequate to the current developments of understanding, are being prepared, a new analysis of principles and practical applications, mechanisms and accumulations, institutions and ideas. Normal maintenance work, if it were not for the questioning of a means that seemed to have been eternally at the center of communicative attention. But it was evidently an illusion of the clerics, all intent on their classic chatter. A fictitious tradition, which obliquely reached beyond the ghetto, filtered by the large editorial organizations, to which isolated patrols of peripheral production responded, aimed at aping the conditions and forms of that profitable resemblance.

Fundamental humanism lived behind a misunderstanding that was never cashed in. The neutrality of knowledge, or at least the possibility of keeping it in the refrigerator, waiting for reality to do

the rest. A gallop under the branches, anything but neutrality. The shadow of the forest does not protect, it exposes. Not being able to do anything else, it sometimes exposes to ridicule. To the ridicule of the minimal experiment, of the roaring of the storm in a glass.

The refusal of the high-level ceremonies of the cultural machine, even at the most modest level of university commitment, has had a meaning in the lives of many of us, and I will not be here to question it. But, considering it now, from the shore of no return, it seems to me that a positive response has been lacking. We have been content only with the negative aspect. We should have developed that knowledge, which often twenty years ago was still to be built, on the theoretical and historical remains of an imprecise past that two decades after the end of the war they were unable to transform into a living thing. And we should have used it in our things, and in our tools. Without the machine and without its guarantees, this is obvious.

Were we able to do this work? I don't think so. What would the conditions of collapse be today if that work had been done? It is not given to know. Of course, they could have been different. But that is not the point. The truth is that we were not able to do our job, which was not only to say, but to say knowing how to say it, finding the way to say it, not putting aside problems of method in the face of the urgency of the contents, which, strange to say, now that we see things with the due clarity of distance, could also wait. We have fueled in this way the terrorism of the contents, the black soul of the rampant sense, so that insatiable provisional viscera could feed on their substance. Thus, we have borrowed for our exclusive benefit, of our small so-called alternative sheets, a ceremonial authority, coming from the recycling of objects produced in limited partnership with the enemy.

The revolution in the meantime was exchanging roles with power, terminology first and foremost. It supplied and received, highly active balance sheet, therefore at a loss. Selling a lot of this stuff, like "quality of life" so to speak, means losing money. Better to buy. But in the purchase it was necessary to show up with technical commitments that no one knew how to fulfill, given the sudden, and predated, reduction in flows. Reading a "statement" of claims gives you the shivers, and one can better understand today how these statements played their sad role in disguising a truly revolutionary energy, dressing it up for how it was shown, and therefore spectacularized and killed, over the course of fifteen years. They complimented each other, mutually. They showed off prefabricated intellectual muscles to a public of demented people, enclosed in academic, therefore also political, strongholds, who learned to read liquid ideology.

We should have taken better advantage of the dissonances, thor-

oughly explored the theoretical disequilibriums and bewilderments, almost not been afraid of them, a reverential fear deriving from the lack of congratulations from the managers of the current cultural order. So we never strayed far enough from the common road, even at the cost of becoming, this time with good reason, truly illegible. We maintained idylls that today seem disconcerting, exchanges that we could have avoided, signs of recognition of the compromising pieties of others, which ultimately indicated an uncertain awareness of one's own rigidity.

Only now do we fully understand the groundlessness of the scientific hypothesis on which we swore in the past, the superior validity of the facts. The new power was built on these facts, and we have worked well in this direction. By rationalizing we have been rationalized, as perfect rationalists. By seeking the truth we have found that of others, used by them to the perfect use and consumption of the best managerial intentions. The certainty of finding the truth for everyone, that of everyone, the truth that is revolutionary, has prevented us from looking where we were putting our feet. The little that we have indicated, critically, in this direction, has not been enough.

Had we tended toward methodological rigor, at least now we could have cried with one eye. We could have nibbled slowly on the porcini fruits, within their limits, for centuries to come. Here too we were not up to the task that awaited us. The others, poor idiots, behind their sacrosanct dialectical vicissitudes, could not even if they wanted to get to the bottom of anything, they seemed, and in many respects, despite the current general confusion, they continue to seem, theologians tied to the category of dogma. Of their rigor, which in some ways was more diamond-like than that of the others, that is, of the custodians of the previous academic tradition, nothing remains. The little that is there is unusable. But where is ours?

We have not castrated ourselves in favor of the reader, and we have done well, but we have not even brought him with us, towards a different orientation, towards the possibility of intertextual readings. By providing outlets and openings to the prevailing formalizations, we have not gone beyond witticisms, those of the best, certainly not of the worst, that imbeciles have never lacked, and this too must be said, but with witticisms one does not move towards in-depth analysis. The light and apparently juicy essay, capable of giving the impression of knowing reality thoroughly, cooked and raw, so much so as to pass over it with a bird's eye view, has remained the apodictic ideal to which we have always adhered, except for a few rare exceptions, moreover immediately called into question. The premises were there, but we have not been able to construct a Gaia science. None of us has had sufficient lightness of foot.

Now the word is put into crisis by a set of technological responses to the urgencies of domination. It declines in importance, tends to atrophy, to pigeonhole itself in sectoral jargon. End of an era, of a mirage, but also of a tool. The protocol passes to the computer, which requires a different syntactic structure. Style wanes, a new man emerges, the two things have never been separated. The classical faith in the printed page wanes with it. It is not so much replaced by the spoken word, as by expressive jargon, the noise dense with potential, explicable contents, inexhaustible forms, the automatic construction of the image, which the brain executes to perfection, without needing the model, indeed moving further and further away from it. When the journey is finally completed, seeing a house in the countryside, lost and forgotten among the hills, we will ask ourselves what that ruin is. Was the book a long episode? Is a return to medieval reductions of expression beginning, perhaps denser? We cannot know, no presumptive answer would stand up to the rapid and implacable feedback of the decades. The millennium could end with a death sentence.

It is not true that only analysis needs writing. Or a mathematical formula. Even the anxiety that distills from intuition needs it. The narrow dimension of writing is discipline, therefore a constraint to express oneself. You pay a tax, that is true, but you can negotiate the amount. During the negotiations something comes out, even something alive. For goodness sake, nothing exceptional. A book, for better or worse, can still be hypothesized in this way. A set of occasions, nothing more.

Mind you, providing occasions is not intended to be a sort of nihilistic version of the *Werk*, but an attempt to recover expression without claiming completeness, without delimiting the world around us, codifying it strictly within the necessarily harmonious limits of a book. Thus nihilism, saved from the naivety of an authentic expectation, becomes again a nihilistic expectation of a conclusion that cannot be, having denied the certain foundation from which to start. For the word, written admission is as inescapable as dogma. When we want to disperse it for fear of obeying the latter, we must cut out unilateral episodes, incapable, as far as they are concerned, of photographing our work in a faded image of immobility. Opportunities are provided and are provided to us, without our choice, which is always provisional, constituting a thread from which to start to seal the sarcophagus. We take on new and different responsibilities, we also take with us fear, the ancient traveling companion, that the convention of writing exorcised from the first lines, laying the foundations of the communicative method through which to pass the contents. Now, suddenly, the commitment to welcome expressions as attempts at refusal seems irreplaceable. Refusal to express



sentences, judgments, absolutions and condemnations. Refusal of the constituted and sealed world, to which the word belongs, in any case, in whatever way it is packaged. A continuous refusal and a continuous acceptance. Speaking outside the truth, finally aware of the irretrievable gap, without preconceptions for the unsuitable, the inexpressible. Conversing with the mask. An uncertain program, which in realizing itself programs itself for further missed realizations.

Less shyness, finally. The search for the interlocutor, beyond the ruins, is a manifest need for support. It takes courage to seal the bottle before throwing it into the sea. The courage of faith, a bad thing for atheists. Faith in the unburned reason, capable of crossing the territories of silence. Faith in the word eye of fire, capable of giving birth to beauty and death. Faith in the consciousness oblique eyes, which sparkles in its unnatural light. And, again, dignity, refusal of the angelic reflux. Thus, every question gets its answer, even from the emptiness of the other shore. Everyone refused to ferry, the journey went by in vain. Unburdened of its tasks, eye of fire has laid down the oar. Now the writing flows lightly, devoid of complex justifying motivations.

(...)

[Pamphlet printed on yellow paper and attached to Alfredo M. Bonanno, *Anarchism and Post-Industrial Society*, Catania 1993]

(...)

## Going away

Consider what has been abandoned, suddenly put aside, left in place like a meaningless object. Everything comes without warning. What I have been doing for a long time, for so long, several days is a long time, now I can't do it anymore, I have to go elsewhere. Elsewhere can mean a few dozen kilometers or on another continent, I never know with sufficient warning where I will be.

I am deprived of the experience of witnessing the disaster, the conditions in which I find myself cannot endure for long, to feel this disaster, to see it, to live it. Last night, before the departure, I deluded myself into thinking I could be satisfied with a stable circle of life, with a home, with a family. Every now and then these blurred, remote images return. I have to ward them off, perhaps this is the worst danger to face in a place like this. The indefensibility of the place is suffocating, everything here reminds me of forty years in the desert, the proscription, the damnation, the burning bush, even those who dedicate themselves as always to the works of a lost country farm have a sense of impermanence, I imagine them sleeping with their suitcase under the bed.

They are here for freedom. I am here for freedom too. Who has been deceived the most? Is there a privileged physical place where the defenders of freedom are placed? I do not believe there is. No one is born a slave and no one is born a master, many conditions contribute to the formation of these categories and these same conditions fragment in a thousand ways the apparent homogeneity of the results. Everyone sits on their claim as if on a throne and does not care, feels safe and does not know that everything shakes, thrones more than anything else in the world. I have come to the world of madness, where everyone is right and everyone is wrong, where everyone thinks that their reason, having more strength than that of the adversary, will end up triumphing. But this reason, and the others, are all based on commonplaces, tradition, the originality of the long and the land, the nation, the language, the suffering, the millions of dead, the first wave of settlers who cleared the land almost with their hands, the trees of the righteous, hospitality, working together, the dream of a nation sister to another nation without barriers of region and language. I have brought all this with me, dragged in my ridiculous baggage, and now I watch it cut to pieces before my eyes, on this dusty road, under an unimaginable sun, a spell that is gradually crumbling without managing to shake my deep-rooted conviction of being right.

No one is born exploited or master, the external conditions participate in this distinction and due to their enormous variations produce a very varied deployment. I have seen photographs of camps where long wooden barracks lined up one after the other with common fountains for pigs and men. Other photographs have shown me similar conditions in enemy camps. The masters are nestled in safe places, on both sides, they do not wear the ragged clothes of the proletariat. On one side the need for forced hospitality, on the other side the myth of the first wave of settlers, work in common, sacrifice as a reward for daily bread. What am I doing here? The condemnations of the beyond, once widespread, now a little less capable of worrying, have been replaced by those of side, providing far greater pain and injustice. Months pass and I realize, or at least it seems to me, that I am trying to escape a judgment of condemnation. Like any responsible person, I only wish that my responsibility does not emerge, I am not a bearer of freedom, not for the ideological support that I know so well how to offer myself. Guilty and innocent of all this I am in equal measure, no matter what I do. The massacre is so evident, I was in Shatila, unable to decide on this atrocious dichotomy. One must be aware of one's limits and one's possibilities. Here, courage is a commodity that costs little because it abounds everywhere. Throwing an accusation of cowardice in the enemy's face is ridiculous.

The great force of life, this too is seen everywhere, even in open-air cemeteries, even in front of corpses torn to pieces. Beyond there is the renunciation of all this to accept life, to not become a piece of dead flesh. If it were to happen to me, I wouldn't even notice. Death is also an inflated commodity, as if I wanted to indicate to myself with a sign of incorporeality, I live here, in this hole, and I have nothing outside of myself, not even the space that I temporarily occupy with my corporeal mass, strictly speaking, belongs to me, I borrowed it. I possess absolutely nothing. The gadgets of offense and defense like foreign bodies would bleed dry into disillusionment while remaining silent in hope. The shouts of victory that they raise to the sky in the orgy of ideology tell me so little that on those occasions I cover my ears. I want to penetrate only into freedom. In what I carry with me, only in my sole possession. A small possession equipped however with a great harmonious structure that envelops me like armor. And with this loving possession I share my destiny, including all the dangers and misunderstandings. When I confront it, there are moments of merciless analysis. Why did I come here? What to do? What can transform a free stone, as heavy as a load of ideology, it remains only a stone, but it is a stone capable of unleashing all the gradations of good and evil. I did not run away to hide behind a thousand alibis, first of all my social position, my wealth, so as not to be annihilated. But I chose to expose myself where annihilation is more openly easy. Perhaps it is a way like any other to escape one's responsibilities, to put oneself under enemy fire. Dying on a battlefield is the most stupid thing in the world. Dying in an ambush is even more stupid. There are no certainties, only provisionalities.

I'll leave tomorrow, or this evening, with a lighter load.

[2006]

## Without

Possessing something is an index of perfection, even a small, tiny thing, a stone, an object, an old, tattered notebook with pencil notes: I cannot trust a pen that could fall to the ground and betray me. The pencil is safer. I am someone precisely because I am in perfect possession of this pencil and this notebook. Without them I would not be perfect. They are my perfection. They remind me that I exist on this side of this place, that I am on this side, or on the other side? In short, I existed in a world where there was a book and where there was something to study. Not that there is a lack of study here, it is indispensable and necessary as any other study, but it is a different kind of study. It is about movements, changes in perspective, long paths in single file, one behind the other, one checking the other.

A study of centimeters and hundreds of meters, of certainties and second thoughts, of climbs with breath in the throat, of descents at breakneck speed.

The courage of nature, my courage, has been subjected to a careful selection, I spoke to him at length, I had him sit in front of me, like a friend (not so much a friend) and I told him clearly and roundly that this was not a question of the audacity of youth, which is no longer unripe, but of an involvement of everything that constitutes me, of the totality of myself. He has lapsed a little, as millions of people lapse when they come face to face with the truth. There is no way to go back, nor to move forward without clarifying this essential point. Courage is the totality of myself, I cannot rely on any prosthesis. Even the technological one, which is not exactly shocking, is treacherous, and fails at just the right moment. Courageous and fervent, burning with the sacred fire of freedom. This is how I set up my discussion with the interlocutor who was somewhat dazed by this bombardment of words. I alone will fight, I alone will fall, I thought of the great poet who wrote these words in a terrible poem, and they didn't come out of my mouth, I was a little ashamed, so much the better.

To face a risk, even a great one, a mortal risk, a risk in which the possibility of giving up one's life in exchange for something is highly possible, but not knowing what one is risking it for requires the awareness of an even greater risk. Freedom is certainly a beautiful project, but my criticisms of determinism could not have remained without effect. Behind the word could hide the ghost of another form of domination of the will. Wanting freedom at all costs, even at the cost of one's own life, is a very dangerous commitment, not so much for the almost certain death, but for the deception that can hide behind the word.

For this reason I made courage rise from its chair and invited the bearer of freedom to sit down. This young man resembled me in an uncanny way. He spoke and directed his outstretched arm towards me, his intelligence was lively and many words ingeniously tried to hide it so as not to offend me, so as not to put me in difficulty. It seemed to my understanding that this young warrior did not want to become an instrument in the hands of conquerors, future and present, it could not seem acceptable to him. Dark states of mind pushed me to speak with him, to ask questions, to show off to him, just to him, my culture, my means of knowledge and even my real courage, not the fake one of the barricades. Who knows why I remained silent and listened. But the young man with the black hair had finished speaking, now he was looking at me fixedly and it was as if he were waiting for something, not a word, he too, I think, did not know what to do with words, but a nod, a movement of the face,

one of those that touch the heart, a few contractions of the lips, a grimace capable of winning me over to him, to his cause.

By now the mutual silence was becoming awkward. I hoped he would grab my hand, shake it, as if to declare with this gesture of friendship that we belonged to the same group, the same tribe, to the followers of silence, if nothing else. But there was no handshake. The fact that we were both adversaries of glory, which is a follower of those who love possession, could not need any explanation.

My shortcomings hold me so tightly that I feel like a powerful figure, agile and strong, and yet the fight has not yet begun, the true and final struggle with myself to wipe out the fortresses of control of the will, everything that I myself have prepared to make my possessions impregnable. Liberating freedom is the most difficult battle imaginable, it is a continuous and exhausting commitment, to avoid falling into one's own trap, becoming an adventurer where change, even radical, is nothing more than a question of words. This fight does not allow reductions in commitment, nor does it allow deception, falsehood or lies. The truth, like freedom, must be flushed out from its hiding place, from the altars where it is preached and incensed, it must come out into the open, strengthen itself in the lack of possession, and thus not be the freedom of anything but freedom, and neither even the truth of anything but the truth.

This is the fight I will face and to which I will dedicate my life. That is why I have a notebook and a pencil with me. One note too many, in this kind of fight, could be a betrayal.

[2006]

## Escaped

Many are revolutionaries, they come here believing they are offering something, what they have. Only that most of the time they are wrong about their possession. They believe in a change in the social order, but they have no ideas about the order they would like to replace the old one. Seeing with their own eyes what happens when the order collapses, any order, even the most ferocious, they go into fibrillations and allow themselves thoughts of curious combinations and adjustments to set up, botched up as best as possible, any other form of order, as long as it works, at least in the immediate future. The most ready to clarify their ideas in this sense are the Marxists.

They are ready for underhanded maneuvers and the small-scale policies of superficially shifting the same things around, they do not easily become disgusted with either the former or the latter. This does not mean that some strictly limited practical actions cannot escape catastrophe. Generally, these are short-term actions, in which courage prevails over judgment or intelligence. In these actions the

main characteristic is to start something, and to need someone who can then continue and develop it further. They may also contain elements of agitation and disrespect for current morality, but these are only ideas, never conclusions or statements that can lead to conclusions. Every hypothesis based on the non-existence of something specific at the moment, in other words, every proposal that had the characteristics of utopia, was accepted for the sake of discussion, then subjected to a terrifying deboning, which left only simple and crude ghosts alive, not difficult to eliminate or devalue, as they were devoid of all those articulated meanings that make a proposal substantial and therefore acceptable at least in part. You can't take meat off a skeleton.

Reflecting then on the present condition, on the possibilities of liberation in a desperate situation, in the face of an enemy a thousand times stronger and hidden behind the splendid and luminous flag of the holocaust, one could see only exhausted faces, dull expressions, faces stiffened by pain and surprise, visible discouragement. On the other hand, on the level of things to do, there was not even time to reflect too much. For the first time in my life I found myself learning and putting into practice at the same time. A mass of technical notions, universally indefinable at first, took shape before my eyes, immersed in a pit of flattened, labyrinthine feelings, where there was no room for my elite courage, for my pure soul, for the time of my uncontaminated nature. I did not see any fairy dens in those parts, all my ancient dream material materialized in nightmarish images. I do not remember here what I saw because it would seem incredible. In a corpse there is always the uniqueness of the life it has lived, even if it is a poor life, a small, negligible flash, but there is also in dead flesh this pride, which ends up emerging if you take a good look. Here, this was missing, there was nothing but dead flesh and no hieroglyphics marked the itinerary of my dreams. Everything was visceral, carnal matter, constantly putrefying. There was no time to bury the corpses. The contents of the guts, as soon as they came out, wrapped themselves in an original, unpredictable outline, you could look at the physiological matter for hours fascinated without discovering either life or beauty, only the repugnance of repetition. I understand how professional corpse handlers get used to it.

Many had died fighting with their fingernails, with knives, with a spatula, a piece of iron, a cooking skewer, and they had died fighting against the machine guns of tanks, not in some medieval battle facing a catapult. Everywhere almost an obsession with corporeality and vitality, both embraced in the only reality left, death. To take with you, in your heart, something to use against these massacrers, you have to record this reality, without trying to understand it, without asking too many questions that would only get naive answers,

too involving to be remembered. By identifying too much you are first taken by a feeling of rejection, by physical vomiting, by uncontrollable retching, then by an almost disrespectful calm, a sort of boredom that is a kind of stupefaction, the muscles of the face and mouth contract in a sort of meaningless smile, as if to say: "What am I doing here? Why hasn't the same thing happened to me?" It was just a matter of time, a few hours, maybe not even a day, and we couldn't have done much against the tanks either.

I am here and I am afraid of being too interested in my way of breathing, a sure sign that I am still alive, I am ashamed of the dead, as if my unstable feelings could disturb them. I feel hypocritical, I, liberator, in front of this open-air cemetery. Here everything is the opposite of the moral principles for which I was obliged to come here. A hard lesson. What we hide here under the stars. Barbarism changes its flag easily and it is not easy to chase it to fight it. It hides behind long-term commendations, behind centuries-old exploitations that have finally come to us and are capable of producing further barbarism. Here there are no asocial or psychopathic types, there are very normal people who disembowel and cut into pieces old people and children. Very normal from their point of view, of course. Only by examining this point of view of theirs am I able to step back in my disgust at what they did, while I feel less sure about the motivations that pushed them to do what they did. My being a liberator makes me fragile in the justification and too linear in the condemnations. It almost forms a crust over me and keeps me warm. This crust disgusts me.

[2006]

## **The kingdom of death**

It is run by the ancient tortured, who came here to torture, using what they have learned very well elsewhere. In the background, the communitarian utopia of the ancient deluded, of the fathers of all this. In the present flesh, in the blood that flows in the veins of all, very little of that utopia remains. A few frills here and there, the avenue of the righteous, the wailing wall, the synagogues, the alleys and grand streets similar, too similar, to those in Europe. The marginalization, evident, the distance and the racism, even among themselves, there being whites and blacks. The misery of man finds here an exact, unforgettable reflection. Even more than a visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau.

The rustling and the suffocated breathing of the ancient chases, of the night raids, the fear made substance of one's flesh, have not yet been erased after so many years. This is why ferocity has replaced ferocity. Not that the unforgivable should be forgiven, only

that ferocity should not be incorporated into one's way of seeing things, of organizing society. What happened to the ancient libertarian inspiration? It was necessary to do things differently, to talk about that ferocity, not transform it into an indistinct buzz that penetrates everywhere and burns too much talking into a form of chattering silence.

There was no need to materialize the ancient ferocity into new military power, so that what had happened for centuries would never happen again. Military power is the mother of a world in which you cannot raise your head without being hit. You cannot live rigidly always in fear that the filthy system of the past will return. You must loosen up and not assume that the whole world is against you, because you are part of the chosen people. There are too many errors in this reasoning for all of them to be corrected, but you have to start somewhere. Living is going beyond, beyond conserving the past, some figures, specially delegated places, books by historians, schools and universities where the same things are always repeated, eyewitnesses who gradually lose their memory and trample and frustrate their own desire to remember. In the end, either silence reigns and reconstruction that takes into account the needs of the other, in a common effort without distinction of race and origin, or one rebuilds in ferocity and fear.

The ferocity towards the other, even towards the horrible torturer who must be brought down and cannot be forgiven, always hides a shred of fear, that's why these operations of low justice cannot last long, but must be resolved in the shortest time possible, otherwise a new world based on ferocity and fear is built. Once what must be done is done, trials and sentences are unworthy farces that ape a justice that cannot stand on the shoulders of the massacrers, we must not think about it anymore, we must not erect mausoleums or paths of the righteous. All this twists the knife in the wound and presents the danger on the horizon, fueling feelings of revenge, of defense at any cost, even at the cost of injustice and ferocity. In this way the circle never closes.

In defense of one's own security, defensive walls are erected, one encloses oneself in circles of iron and fire, and so one ends up being wary of everything that is not tangible and controllable, provided with precise contours. But life cannot be made to flourish in these internal gardens, in these artificially heated greenhouses, devoid of breathable air. Life is a wonderful fresco that changes day by day, that shows different characters and attitudes, that makes man different every day, even when he manifests his dark and sensual unsuitedness to peace and calm. The fight is good, it renews the strength of man and his conscience, it pushes the world to a radical improvement, but ferocity is not, it makes it a programmed and



fearful instrument that retreats as soon as the rules that set this ferocity on the basis of market productivity are missing. The struggle is life, the ferocity in the struggle degrades it to inhuman repressive behavior, stupid application of models studied at the desk by a few know-it-alls irresponsibly determined in their pseudo-scientific mind.

Here the ranks of those dominated by ferocity have not disappeared in the night of the storm, they have not gone away definitively with the philosophical categories of a thought ridiculous in its infantile mechanicalness. They have returned, with their shiny helmets of a different shape, with their step cadenced in a different march, these troops have returned without even waving new moral categories, only cobbling together a cover so as not to lose face, a cover based on the defense of, "We have taken so much and now it is time that we give it to someone", the army that thousands of years ago made the world tremble with the help of God.

A place to live alongside another people, collectively, in agricultural or technological communities, working in peace, this is the utopia of the first wave. The second wave, which they try to lump together with the first, consists of simple colonizers who forcefully chase people from their lands, sometimes using the indirect and well-paid help of foreign armies. The helmets have changed but the heads that wear them have not, they have remained the same.

That's why I'm here, because I'm a liberator. But it's so hard to be a liberator, because under every helmet hides a head that seems different from the old one, that could be hit with all conscience of the heart, this head reasons differently, at least it tries to reason differently, it opposes elements that are based on its own survival and not on pure oppression in the name of racial purity. After all, the racist is a ferocious enemy but more linear, his reasoning would be facetious if it didn't make you vomit, this guy in front of me is not a racist, this guy has a different helmet, and he reasons differently, even if he does the same horrible things as the old owner of the helmet with the swastika. He does them but he talks about them differently. Can words change the things you do? I don't know, sometimes they can, and many fall into this equivocality. I myself have often felt my index finger tremble on the trigger.

[2006]

## **The truth**

It is the truth that has pushed me here. The truth. Like a child I raised the flap of what I did not know and discovered the truth. So I rebelled violently against all those who wanted to convince me that I was prying open only one edge of the truth. And the other edge?

I do not care what the other edge hides, it cannot hide the truth. It is only one, and if it is on this side, how is it possible that it is also on the other? It would be a stupid relativism, and I have fought every philosophy of the kind starting from neopositivist epistemology,<sup>5</sup> lockpick with which I broke open Croce's safe.<sup>6</sup>

Truth and freedom are the same thing, said with two different words. I cannot be free without being true and, vice versa, I cannot be true without being free. But no one, that I know, not even myself, is free, absolutely, he can have a little bit of freedom, even codified by law, but he is never completely free, therefore he is never true. He can be partially true, in what he does or says there will always be a little bit of freedom, and this little bit will have its value, but there will never be freedom.

I came here to seek the whole truth. There are extreme situations in which there is only you and the truth, the rest of the world disappears. When you have a person in front of you with round, dark glasses holding a stiletto that he is using to poke holes in your balls, there are no more uncertainties. The truth is there, in front of you, he has the slightly swollen face of this stiletto handler, the whole world is summed up in the force that he is applying with his wrist to the handle of his stiletto. Will he push it all the way in, will he just poke little holes in me to test my strength of resistance to pain? In any case, everything is there, your life is there, there has never been a before and there will never be an after. What could happen that adds a nuance to this absolute truth? Am I fooling myself? Am I in front of a guy who sadistically loves to use his stiletto and is practicing on my balls? Am I here by any chance? Yet I know that the person looking at me from behind his thick, round black glasses is a Mossad agent and that the exercise of the puncturer is what these torture specialists do to get people to talk. I also know that it's a matter of minutes, that in a few minutes I'll try to talk, to make up some story, as they say in argot to sell a pair of old shoes. But I'm not a good salesman and I've never found myself in such situations. Who knows how I'll get out of it?

I am afraid, a detached fear, as if I were watching from the outside what is happening to me, a cold fear that originates inside me, in the flow of blood in my veins. The speed of this race is slowing down, I am in the grip of a kind of delirium that began as soon as the first blows arrived, a strange delirium that borders on a craving

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<sup>5</sup>Translator – Philosophical position holding that only statements verifiable through direct observation or logical proof are meaningfully true, informative, or factual.

<sup>6</sup>Translator – Reference to Italian idealist and heterodox liberalist philosopher, historian and politician Benedetto Croce, (1866-1952) influential to both Marxists and fascists and an opponent of positivism.

to try out the most significant lunges. It is not a particular appreciation of my courage, rather it is the beginning of a doubt about my strength and therefore also about my courage. Maybe I have not really put it to the test, maybe all the chatter I have made, and that has been made to me, was not going in the right direction. I notice that the tension of my nerves, not the flow of blood that is starting to wet my legs, is making me sweat. Is this perhaps the seal that soon I will scream in pain and desperation? In the nearby swamp a batrachian<sup>7</sup> makes itself heard, I know it is appreciating my behavior. A few minutes and it is all over. The man with the round, black glasses no longer has the stiletto in his hand, he is gasping for air and falling backwards as best he can. He is missing half his head from the nose down.

Maybe I wouldn't have resisted. Millimetric agreements that are impossible to deny emerge from nowhere and dictate the law of chance, the good and venerated law that intervenes at the best moment. When it doesn't intervene, no one can start arguing about its lack of intervention. The truth had suddenly crumbled into a thousand hypotheses. The man with the round, black glasses, now with his arms wide open, is no longer the truth, he is a hypothesis, he is inscribed in the possibility that things went a certain way, that the comrades arrived before he continued his chiseling work and before I began to shout like an opera tenor. Who can say? If the first was the truth, the second is the lie of life, me puffing out my chest like the batrachian that signaled the arrival of my saviors, guaranteeing my revolutionary integrity, declaring before everyone, even before myself, that I would have preferred to be cut into pieces but not to speak. I don't know. Where the truth lies, I don't know. Good intentions are hooked and tightly tied to bad ones, intertwined they form the deep fabric of our tales, of the stories we tell in the evening by the fire, to awaken the dormant attention of those who listen to us. Appearances dress the truth with their multicolored lights and hide it, they do not allow it to see the light. It is my chatter that brings into play some stuff perhaps a little twisted, but certainly quite well-founded. And if things had gone differently? How far would I have been able to get? The papier-mâché hero turns in his cardboard armor and cannot sleep.

[2006]

## **I did not leave my prejudices at home**

I promised and I didn't. After so much time spent looking at the mistakes of others, the imprisonments inside epistemological fortresses,

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<sup>7</sup>Translator – Derived from the former clade Batrachia: a subset of amphibians which includes the frogs, toads, and salamanders.

the all-out defenses of points of view taken by chance, attached with a pin, now I thought I had arrived here, inside this infernal heat, with little baggage. It's not true, the baggage I still have left is always too heavy. Not that the truth would be an empty suitcase, the rejection of every unproven dogmatic assertion, while probabilistic statements are good for the liver, I've never thought of anything like that. These too are sick with prejudice, a disease that takes root everywhere. I know how to get out of it, but it's not a given that my cure will work. Action is the immediate and compact summary, the totality of a man's life, it does not allow carryovers or postponements, it does not accept compromises that could be resolved in the future in a new way of adjusting the contradictions. Reading into the statements of philosophers, big and small, there is ultimately no difference on this point, everyone agrees to keep a barrier erected, a protective distinction. Thinking is one thing, doing is another. On this point one might even agree, but acting? You cannot merge doing and acting. There are moments in a man's life where everything is summed up in a shining tick, in a diamond so thin that it would cut the air and make it bleed. That diamond is made of flesh and blood, it cuts my enemy but also wounds my heart. The dangerous global freedom that this action enjoys is due to the fact that all distinctions are false, prejudicial hypotheses that suggest striking blindly rather than carefully seeing where to strike.

The enemy I am talking about is the enemy of life, therefore of my life as well as his. He does not know it, because he is immersed in the cotton wool that covers his ears and cannot hear my words, moreover he does not know how to read my language too tender for his eyes accustomed to the complex treatises of the great logical deductions. With all this I am left with an infallible enemy. Before placing him in front of me, in the clash that will determine his or my prevalence, I still try to speak, but it is like swinging slashes in the dark, you only hear the blade whistling, you can neither prepare nor parry the blows. The whole clash is artificial, deformed by the world that surrounds me and surrounds my enemy, a world of puppets who imagine they are living.

If I impose my life, as it appears to me, worthy or not worthy of being lived, then the other is forced to oppose me with his life, his whole life, or to run away. It is not a question of being right or wrong, it is not a judgment that I am talking about, it is not the truth that is being cut into a slice to put in greaseproof paper. Life cannot be cut into slices, it exists all at once, it either exists or it does not exist, and there are movements that support it and others that weaken it. It is a question of seeing to what extent the strengthening of life, of my life, can come from an affirmation of strength or from a renunciation, from an affirmation of weakness.

I had a moment of weakness in my life. I was young, too young, but this that sounds like an excuse is just a mere anagraphic fact. I said no to life. Then I promised myself not to do it again, to always accept the challenge of fate with my head held high, with open courage. Have I kept this oath? I don't know, there are moments in life in which the line between courage and fear, between strength and cowardice, is so thin that you never know if you are in the realm of courage or in that of fear, if you are a coward or a brave person. At bottom, courage itself is a way of not admitting to being afraid.

Unfortunately, philosophers have taught us, malevolent owls, that the many limits and many rules, the correspondences and relations that constitute and perpetuate the world, are so indispensable to life that without them life itself would not be possible. What a grave crime these old toupées have committed. What a crime against life. Frequenters of the negative have deluded themselves that from nothing something could arise, only to then return to nothing. But why this waste? Quality does not originate from quantity, any more than the latter can originate from the former. The two movements are together and are separated to give life to a fictitious world, that of perception that no sold-out soul of a philosopher can truly consider real life. The search for the other is a search for unity, for recomposition, to the extent that this can be achieved by man in the world.

The rest I did not put in my luggage, and I was right.

[2006]

## Out

Hiding has many aspects, many masks and many truths. There are truths that serve only to hide. Freedom as a value is one of these truths. I have become a bearer of truth and I have hidden behind this enormous boulder. Thus I have seen many brave men pass by for fun, puppet soldiers, ready to flee at the first sign of danger. I have always been very suspicious of the troublemakers and the vociferous, verbal transgressors who are always somewhere else at the right moment. Intruders make me feel sick, especially when they try to get inside me with questions: "What do you think of Leopardi?"<sup>8</sup> Casual occasionists who thus provide themselves with cheap opportunities to talk about what they read the night before. I have met them in the midst of danger and they reacted in the same way, they raised the stakes without having enough money to cover their bets.

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<sup>8</sup>Translator – Reference to the celebrated, highly radical and challenging Italian poet and philosopher Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), a heterodox Enlightenment figure influential to Romanticism and philosophical pessimism. His highly lyrical, classicist-informed works addressed proto-existentialist themes and frequently dealt with materialism and sensualism.

Reckless, not courageous, incapable of hating, when to attack the enemy you have to be capable of hating him. To then forget about it, without spending your life hating him, and remember it at the right time, and then go back to thinking about the beauty of life, of love, of the longing for love, not of a little late-night chat at a crossroads.

I hide because I don't want to know myself, I don't want to know myself because I would have to come out, in the open, face the danger, and my acting big is a cover. I have seen it at work, and perhaps I have put it into effect, I couldn't swear to it, but I am almost certain of it. I have been a bearer of freedom and I was proud of it. This simple fact should have made me suspicious. Being proud of something that is being done, when it hasn't been done yet, is a mortgage that precludes any future exit, I will necessarily have to be proud of it in the future, no matter what happens. This is why I am refined in the search for justifications, multifaceted in my references, delicate and subtle in my differentiations. But everything proceeds the same way. Even now, when I feel weak, I still intend to break a person's neck with two fingers. I wouldn't be capable of it, but I demand it, and that is why I am a buffoon disguised as a liberator. Better people than me have reached small conclusions and now they will die to defend them and I cannot be there with them, nor do I want to.

[2006]

# And we will always be ready to storm the heavens again: Against the amnesty

(Excerpts)

(...)

## The ethical value of violence

Only in this way do discussions about violence make sense. Certainly not in the abstract idiocy of those who speak of an absolute value of life. As far as I'm concerned, the life of exploiters and their servants is not worth a cent. And making differences - as they have been made - between the end of Moro and that of Ramelli seems to me a specious prelude to a discourse of emptying.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Translator – Aldo Moro and Sergio Ramelli were both famously killed by members of the extraparliamentary left in Italy, in 1978 & 1975 respectively, during the period of intense revolutionary and reactionary ferment, massacres, and armed struggle between left, right, center, various factions of various governments and intelligence services, capitalists, organized crime, and authoritarian and anti-authoritarian tendencies within many of these, often referred to subsequently as the Years of Lead. Aldo Moro was the center-Left president of the conservative, ruling Christian Democrat party and former prime minister in favor of historic compromise with the institutional and reformist Italian Communist Party who was shot dead by the authoritarian vanguardist communist 'armed party' of the Red Brigades after 55 days in their 'peoples prison' following his kidnapping and a 'peoples trial' sentencing him to death. Sergio Ramelli was a 19 year old fascist student militant who was ambushed outside his house by a group of leftists and beaten with wrenches and iron bars, falling into a coma and dying after 47 days. Ramelli was killed by members of Avanguardia Operaia, a crypto-Leninist, movementist recuperation of workers autonomous organization away from revolutionary rupture, which was also influential in diffusing militant antifascism in the context of a quickly escalating exchange of killings between fascists, anti-fascists, and police. Both of these killings were quite controversial. This piece was published in 1984 in reaction to the public discourse in Italy at that time in favor of orienting struggle, armed or pacifist, toward the demand of amnesty for political prisoners, of which there were thousands at the time in the aftermath of brutal, indiscriminate mass repression (which struck Bonanno as well) in response to the peaking of the Years of Lead. Amnesty was often in exchange for voluntary, pub-

An adaptation of liberatory violence to the conditions of conflict is never possible. The process of liberation is by its nature excessive. In an overabundant sense or in a deficient sense. When has a popular insurrection ever hit the mark by clearly discriminating the enemies to be struck down? It is a tiger's paw that tears and does not distinguish.

Of course, an organized minority is not the insurgent people. So it distinguishes. It must distinguish. But it is also in this obligation to be careful that it finds both its own limit and the sense of a possible opening. In this sense it is something other than true revolutionary violence, in this sense it is an "in vitro" experiment, in this sense it can transform itself into a laughable storm in a glass.

But the distinction should not be made in terms of the decipherability of the action, but rather in terms of its reproducibility. The two things, if you like, are not separate, because they are different. The decipherability of the action is something other than what the minority itself can achieve, in that it remains tied to the intervention of the mass media and therefore to the distortions of power. Reproducibility is an intrinsic fact of the action itself. Power, in order to deface it, must silence it, because even in the most daring of comments, the fact itself – naked and raw – cannot be questioned.

We therefore have that this intricate problem unravels as follows. The attack on the class enemy is always justified. The life of those who oppress us and prevent us from living is not worth a cent. This attack can be carried out in a general way, therefore with a massive intervention of the people, and then it is not measurable to the real conditions of the conflict: it always turns out to be disharmonious, excessive, or reductive. This is the maximum dimension of revolutionary violence, creative and destructive at the same time. Vice versa, in a minority dimension, one always tries to measure the blow, to adapt it to the real limitations of the conflict. Each of us believes he has precise ideas about what the level of class conflict is and therefore suggests recipes and draws boundaries. In practice what guides us is decipherability. We are pedagogues in search of disciples. Instead, reproducibility should be the yardstick by which to measure minority violence, because, precisely, from minority it becomes generalized.

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lic dissociation from armed struggle and denouncing of the conflictual project, with some militants also given asylum in France under similar conditions under the so-called Mitterrand doctrine. Many snatched on their former comrades, found success, power, and prominence in collaborating with reactionary projects, became yuppies or fell into apolitical gangsterism or narcotic self-destruction, or made gratuitous public statements of repentance. This turn was in many ways a predictable response of historically determinist, authoritarian 'revolutionaries', quick to declare defeat in the face of restructuring and shifts which evaded their narrow cognitive-representational political models, but also involved autonomists and some anarchists.



The rest is just priestly chatter.

## The party's simplification project

Among other things, there is the illusion that the party can simplify the model used to construct the action. The decipherability is then entrusted to the propaganda organs that draw up horrible junk called proclamations or programs or communiqués. The language becomes standardized like the actions. Everything is repeated. Everything becomes familiar to everyone (except the people). The great mass acquires familiarity through the interpretation of power. The results are prepackaged models of action. The others watch and are satisfied with the thrill of paid risk. The model finds a fortune, like the crime novel or the horror film. But no one would think of cutting a man to pieces in their own bathtub to see how it is done. They prefer to see it done at the cinema.

And it is not true that it is a question of fear of involvement. Many people run far greater risks with a steering wheel or a syringe in their hand. It is a question of distance. Of romantic distortion of reality. Of sacralization built around liberating practices that have nothing exceptional. Of preclusions, often of religious origin, that we perhaps never completely overcome.

The party claims to clarify all this from the outside, to build a pre-cooked model of reproducibility. It does not realize, in this way, that it is doing the same work as the State. Proposing a distorted usability. In the distance from the real scope of liberating violence, the two poles touch. Power and counter-power walk parallel and mutually support each other. What communication are they talking about?

For a diffusion phenomenon, the incendiary effect of the example should have been propagated. But the action remained indecipherable. Little initiative in this sense. The rest had to be done by the mass media.

But what can these vehicles of the ideology of power communicate? Precisely what power wants. But isn't the party also a mini-power, if only in formation? And, in fact, at least at the beginning, the reasoning went ahead. Power itself pumped out an exaggerated (and therefore distorted) image of the real attack against the enemy. But it was precisely for the purpose of digging the furrow, of making it ever deeper. Of transforming the tiny reality in formation into a general, and illusory, theater of death, with all the paying spectators in their places, with the appropriate atmosphere of silence and uncertainty: all the elements of bourgeois drama. Then, when the distance had become enormous, the total closure, the interruption. In the fantasy of the consumer the mysterious fact expanded beyond

measure. Something between the Bonnot gang and Jack the Ripper.

And the timid attempts at generalization? The mass illegalism that stammered here and there? The small practices of sabotage? The thousand fires, the hundreds of anonymous crippings, the broken windows, the truly proletarian looting? All swept away. Small stuff for charitable ladies. Knick-knacks for deviant boys. Outskirts sketches. At the center (but which center?) the great mother scene was played out, in the co-participation of the State and the counter-State.

Yet even in that mother scene, with all its limitations, there were the seeds of the most absurd degeneration and the seeds of possible dissemination in the territory. It would have been enough to silence the increasingly cumbersome militarism, the verbal terribleness of the past that had now moved into the equally illusory terribleness of sensational actions.

But to do this, real criticism was needed, not criticism in words. A field test, not at the table of anatomy institutes. A dead man is a dead man, no matter how you look at him. You have to get there first, build in parallel, show, not just point out cracks and fissures that no one wanted to admit.

(...)

## **Our concept of proletarian justice**

Even in this sense, with the prevalence of a critical or skeptical attitude, as a result of the bitter realization (but for whom?) that there is no "justice" in the clutches of the State, we have come to the conclusion that there is no proletarian justice, and we have no interest in its existence.

Here too we disagree. We believe that it is right to remember the exploiters and their henchmen. Remember for when the right moment comes, when it will be possible to discuss in terms of destroying bourgeois justice and building proletarian justice. Not to revive the old courtrooms modified and install new judges, new prisons and new prosecutors, but simply to execute those responsible. And executing here means, precisely, simply throwing a ball between their eyes.

If any innocent soul finds this program excessive, try to get your feet out of the water in time, you might catch a cold. We say these things today, in times that are also – in another sense – not suspicious, not because we want to be included in the register of those extremists who manage to say the most advanced thing, but because we are firmly convinced of the need for such a procedure.

When the revolution of 1917 awoke in Russia, the anarchist comrades organized the systematic shooting of all the stationmasters on

the Petersburg-Moscow line because they were responsible for the denunciations of 1905 that had led to thousands of anarchist railwaymen being sent to prison. Those comrades did not want to apply any pedagogical theory, they did not want to teach anything to the other stationmasters or to the people in general, they did not even want to wear the filthy cassocks of judges of a supposedly proletarian court of justice: they only had the modest and limited aim of shooting on the spot all the stationmasters responsible for the denunciations. Nothing more, nothing less.

This is what we mean by proletarian justice.

(...)

## **...in our mistakes there was no asphyxiation of certainty**

We did not commit them in 'good faith'. We do not know what good faith is. We committed them knowing we were committing them but considering it appropriate, at a certain point, to choose an error rather than a truth based only on a priori criticism.

All anarchists know from ancient experience the tragic error of the party and of the Leninist conception. But our criticism, faced with the concrete emergence of experiences of this type, has never been conducted in the abstractness of principles. We have preferred to conduct it in the concreteness of actions, in the very difficulty of specific organization, in the midst of the contradictions of doing. And in this windswept territory we have met comrades of great courage, of great heart, capable of facing the struggle with serenity even when the outcomes were more than uncertain and the means available more than doubtful. And this because we had faith in other comrades, in the possibility that an error of direction could suddenly transform itself into a criticism of fact, capable of upsetting plans and doctrines, of shaking mummies and programs. It was not so. But would it have been different if we too had worn the grim habit of the political censor? If we too had developed a critique of efficiency and doctrinarism?

(...)

## *The Unexpected Guest*

“FAUST

I have studied philosophy,  
law and medicine,  
and, alas, theology,  
from top to bottom, with all my strength.  
Now here I am, poor fool,  
and I am as intelligent as ever!  
They call me magister, they call me doctor,  
and it has been at least ten years,  
up and down, straight and sideways,  
less by the nose than the students...  
And nothing, I see, is given to us to know!  
My heart is almost bursting.  
I know more, certainly, than all the presumptuous,  
doctors and teachers, priests and scribblers;  
neither scruples nor doubts torment me,  
I fear neither Hell nor the devil...  
In exchange I am deprived of every joy,  
I do not imagine myself knowing what is right, I  
do not imagine myself teaching men  
how to correct themselves, how to improve.  
I possess neither land nor money,  
I have neither glory nor honors in this world;  
this life would not be wanted by a dog!  
For this I have given myself to magic,  
if ever by force and the mouth of the spirit  
some secret would reveal itself to me,  
and I would no longer have to sweat bitterly  
to tell what I do not know,  
and I could know in the depths  
what holds the world together,  
discover the seeds of active forces,  
no longer stir among words.

If only I could see, full light of the moon,  
for the last time my pain,  
you who waited until midnight  
so many times, keeping vigil at my lectern:  
then you would appear with a sad face,  
friend, on my books and papers!  
In your dear light ah! if only I could go  
to the peaks of the mountains, soar  
with the spirits around the caves,  
wander through the meadows in your brightness,  
tear myself away from the thick fumes of knowledge,  
regenerate myself in your dew!

Ah! Am I still locked in this prison?  
Damned moldy hole,  
where even the dear light of the sky  
penetrates darkly from the painted windows!  
Suffocated by piles of books  
eaten by worms and covered with dust,  
over which hangs  
a tapestry black with smoke up to the vault;  
disfigured by vials and alembics,  
crammed with decrepit instruments  
piled up by our ancestors...  
This is your world! This is what you call a world!

And you still ask why your heart  
tightens fearfully in your chest?  
Why does a pain you cannot explain  
suffocate every tremor of life in you?  
Living Nature does not surround you,  
within which God created man,  
but only amid smoke and decay  
the bones of beasts and skeletons of the dead.

Flee from it! Away into the vast world!  
And is this book full of mysteries  
by Nostradamus' own hand  
not a sufficient supply for you?  
You will know the course of the stars,  
and if Nature teaches you,  
in your soul will be born the strength  
of the spirit that speaks to another spirit.  
It is vain to think that arid analysis

can explain these sacred signs to you.  
Spirits, you hover beside me:  
answer me, if you hear me!  
He opens the book and sees the sign of the Macrocosm.  
At this sight, what a delight  
suddenly flows through me in all my senses!  
A sacred joy of life blazes  
like a young fire in my veins.  
Did a god write these signs  
that calm the tumult within me,  
fill my wretched heart with joy,  
and by a mysterious instinct  
reveal the forces of Nature around me?  
Am I myself a god? Everything becomes clear to me!  
I see in these pure features  
creative Nature opening up to my soul.  
Only now do I understand what the wise man says:  
"The world of spirits is not barred;  
your mind is closed, your heart is dead!  
But arise, disciple, and tirelessly  
bathe the earthly breast in the dawn!".  
He gazes long at the sign,  
how all things intertwine in the whole,  
and act and live in one another!  
How heavenly forces go up and down,  
offering each other golden buckets!  
With heaven-blessed and perfumed wings  
they traverse the earth,  
and the Whole resounds in harmony!

What a scene! Ah, but it is only a scene!  
Where can I grasp you, endless Nature?  
And where are you? You sources of all life  
from which earth and sky hang,  
you to whom this withered breast strains –  
you gush forth, you quench my thirst, and I pine in vain?

(He turns the pages spitefully and sees  
the sign of the Earth Spirit.)

How differently this sign affects me!  
Earth Spirit, you are closer to me;  
already I feel my strength growing within me,  
already I feel a new wine burning.

I feel the spirit to venture into the world,  
to bear the sorrows, the joys of the earth,  
to fight against the storms,  
not to tremble at the crash of shipwreck.  
A cloud hangs over me...  
The moon hides its light...  
The lamp flickers!  
Vapors... Red lightnings dart  
around my head...  
A shiver blows down from the vault  
and seizes me!  
You hover around me, O spirit whom I implore;  
I feel it. Reveal yourself!  
Ah! What a pang in my heart!  
By new sensations  
all my senses are convulsed!  
I feel my whole heart give itself to you!  
Yes, you must! You must! Even if it cost me my life!"

(J. W. Goethe, *Faust*)

## Introduction

Death and life. This is the subject of this book. To place oneself at the crossroads between these two realities is to look into the abyss without trembling, without being drawn downwards, in order to find any solution to problems that are too big, too distressing. Life can be an appearance – indeed it almost always is – but it is different from death. The latter is the absence of that same appearance, the zeroing of what comes out as a denial or refusal of being. It is too demanding to be and therefore we fall back on appearance. Life is therefore neither uniform nor necessary. There are people who live a life of the dead, a life of a corpse and when they really die they do not even notice what they have lost. We never think that our life is only one and that there are no replicas. Living is therefore a commitment that can access being and can remain a shadow projected on the wall of the cave of massacres. Everyone thinks of choosing their own life, of building their own possibilities. Despite every possible illusion, this is only partially true. There is no biological vocation that urges us to live, indeed we often instinctively behave in exactly the opposite way. We run daily risks, harmful habits, we close our eyes to every vital evidence. But this is a way of doing things that only leads - if assigned to careful control - to building a more durable machine, perhaps an unconscious death that lasts exactly as long as one's own life. It is therefore not the merely biological aspect that

captures the meaning of life. Perhaps it is precisely the opposite.

By putting oneself on the line, even dangerously – and this book is a rough indication of my having put myself on the line – perhaps one gains access to the conditions of life, one understands the intrinsic movement of living itself.

Am I going beyond appearances? Perhaps. These could be just wishful thinking, after all we need the means at our disposal. Mere will is not capable of freeing us, it nails us to daily doing and doing – however reckless it may be (it is a former motorcycle racer who writes) – is always under the control of will. Life is being and being is quality. Quality is not found in doing but in acting. Life is therefore action. Death, which will be spoken of many times in this book, is in action a moment of truth, a primary quality together with freedom. Irremediably in action I can meet my death and I can determine the death of the enemy.

This alternative does not shift the qualitative experience. In the case of my death there will be no different consciousness to arise on the horizon, in the other case yes. But the action seen in these terms is atrophied in a dichotomy that is too narrow, which is not indispensable to it. I have lived actions without the death of anyone and the qualitative experience has been equally rich. Death is therefore nothing but an internal accident to the action, for those who live this relationship with quality, but it can also be an artifact of appearance, an already dead that dies without realizing it was alive.

Bare life is a spurious concept that can cause considerable movements and disturbances in human sensitivity, but that is not what I would like to talk about here, even if, in the end, I will talk about that too. Anyone can kill; indeed, almost always, behind a pointed weapon there is a panicking imbecile. Obviously, I will not deal with this problem – which I have dealt with elsewhere – in this work. The figure of the unexpected guest is central and must be understood after reading all the pages of this book.

How can we oppose the enemy that looms over us, especially in conditions of extreme repressive concentration, those of military dictatorships or occupations by an enemy army? Obviously by fighting. And these are pages of struggle, but also of problematic considerations. Does anyone who attacks an oppressor, a jailer, a torturer, a tyrant, have the right to kill him? Is the power, even if reduced, that is implicit in this always possible decision, absolutely free from doubts? Is life, the bare life that in these cases is a concretely nefarious appearance, right to be nullified? Theory is on our side. The theoretician who has never held a weapon has no doubts. But does anyone who has seen a man reduced in an instant to a handful of rags, have the same opinion?

Legality is one of the many illusions that surround daily life.



Rules are made not to be respected by those who set the rules. Is extreme oppression the exception to the democratic rule? It is not so. Of course, there are more or less brutal manipulations but power legitimizes itself in all its forms, so it includes within itself the emergency that makes it resort to torture and massacre. No power is exempt from this indispensable condition. The administered whole itself is governed in such a way as to secretly produce this extremism, including it in its being rule and exception at the same time.

There is no single price to pay to guarantee power, any price is the right one, even massacre and betrayal. Those who dominate have before them the possibility of legally eliminating their most effective opponents, at least those they manage to catch in the act, and they do this because there are no rules that cannot be overturned into their exact opposite. All forms of power, from democracy to military dictatorship, have their secret tormentors and employ them without reserve, without worrying about the fate of the unfortunates who fall into their hands and without even giving too much thought to the fate of the tormentors themselves. This book demonstrates the extraordinary validity of these two assumptions that seem to exclude each other. And all of this, that is, the exception that reaffirms the rule, and is the rule itself, is absolute normality, nothing monstrous or aberrant.

It is the life that power plays, that of its subjects. This game has many aspects, from the flattening that makes existence mortal to the actual elimination, in any case it is a replenishment of the cave of massacres that is in progress. There are no ethical limits to this discourse of domination except on paper. In some cases, such as those discussed here, the very form chosen by power has allowed an aggregation of active resistance that would have been necessary even in other conditions of power, those that are not dictatorial. Only that the form that things take also has its weight, so it is easier to fight fascism and more difficult to fight democracy, even if between these two shades of power there are only marginal, apparent and not substantial differences.

Asking why this choice is easier deserves an answer. Democracy kills much more in a hidden way, standardizing and lowering the vital tension of those who endure this regime and generating a deadly process of habituation more easily. Biological tissue is more respected, but life is not only this tissue, it is first of all quality and this is slow to emerge in an environment in which everything is lowered to the level of chatter, of the most trite appearance and of nonsense.

The greater repressive difficulties of a military dictatorship end up making the same process of vital lowering more visible, which becomes so macroscopic that it is captured with fewer nuances, less

attention, less analytical capacity. The stupidity of extreme power is irremediable, so it more easily finds those willing to do something to overthrow it. In this last condition, life is not only lowered – as happens in any other form of power – but also massively destroyed, to scandalously intolerable levels.

It is this extreme condition that is being discussed here. A work conducted in highly dangerous conditions that has however had the opportunity to attack marginal boundaries, efflorescences too visible not to be identified more easily than elsewhere. These experiences have made possible a fight of containment in defense of peoples fallen under these forms of dictatorship or in a state of occupation and collective imprisonment.

Not that during these actions the different experience that came from them did not realize that similar defenses would have been necessary elsewhere, but it was only a regret, the choice had been made to strike in the most exposed and most scandalous point, others could do the rest and, as far as I know, something in this sense was also done against the so-called democratic powers.

It is obvious that these actions were made possible by intense preventive action, which is sometimes inadequately referred to here. And it is also natural that they were conditioned by the place and time in which they were completed, even if – as actions – they had neither time nor place. This is not a contradiction. As you read further, this point will become clearer.

How to understand my choice? Desire for freedom, first of all, freedom for all, so it was natural for me to think of myself as a bearer of freedom. But freedom is not something you do, it is a quality you experience by putting yourself at risk. No one can give it to another unless they are made a freedman, not a free person.

If someone lacks even a small part of freedom – the mechanisms of power almost always ensure that they don't even notice – I too am defrauded of something. Perhaps I wanted to re-establish a sort of balance within myself, since I can only understand the other if we have a common coefficient of freedom. Perhaps. If I speak of it now, as an old man, in this dark Greek prison, it is because the issue still burns my skin, it is not concluded and never will be concluded. There is still this terrifying tension inside me that makes my muscles ache and my heart beat the same way it used to, that still fills my eyes with tears, that takes my breath away.

It is not inside me the location of a secret receptacle where I continue to cook the same soup, it is outside of me, it goes around the world, it speaks and tries to say the action, the power of the action and the thought that breaks the bonds of the feasible in the attempt to say with the word what the word cannot say. Something of my action has passed into the brute reality of the doing that surrounded

me and continues to surround me, and has found the brute force of power that resorts – as always and under all skies and eras – to the extreme massacre to guarantee its own persistence.

It was a no-holds-barred struggle against appearance and its ghosts enslaved to the atrocious tasks of guarantee and legality, atrocious but essential, I would say irreplaceable for power. The matter of these repressive processes cannot be completely annihilated except by an epochal revolution, a resetting of the old world which as we know is founded on political slime, but can be opposed, partially hindered, attacked in its abject normality of execution.

It is under the protection of the law that these specters operated – and continue to operate everywhere with appropriate changes in the hierarchical symbols of command –, attacking them was, and remains, an outlaw activity. But is not he who accesses quality, in a world founded on quantification, necessarily an outlaw? Action is always against the rules because these rules are those of doing and action operates within the sphere of acting.

These specters in the service of state normalization cannot be countered with an efficient organizational apparatus based exclusively on doing, naturally of a contrapositive nature. Only preparatory work falls into this sphere, indispensable but not sufficient. If this effective confrontation were possible, an accumulation of a different nature would have to be admitted, capable of appearing as a counterpart to the specters hired by power, in short a clash of ghosts. Since this is not the case, we cannot focus everything on the element - very weak and controversial - of the non-compliance with the rules of law by power, which uses torturers capable of massacring in perfect adherence to the concrete rules of reason of State and not to the abstract formulas of guarantee, more or less now entered into all penal codes.

This is not the problem, just as nothing is solved by shouting scandal over the torture that continues to be perpetrated calmly, let's say in today's Greece - I can testify to this - as in fascist Greece of many decades ago. All this is normal and must be fought. All this has been fought, in Greece and elsewhere.

This book is a small light on the problem, but also on many other related problems. If there are no real rights for power, which can tear them up at any time, the solution is to attack with actions that are outside of doing, a sphere in which rights have the ambiguous meaning they have on paper. In action it is the quality that comes to me and that I experience, I am freedom and I have no rights on my side, I do not have a sort of safe conduct that enables me to attack with impunity. If I do it it is because I am freedom that cannot accept oppression and massacre. The unexpected guest cuts at the root, does not examine the legal treaties first, does not evaluate or

measure, this belongs to a previous task, a task of doing, to which he is a stranger. He takes the life of a spectre that produces pain and death on the orders of the hierarchy of power. He does not counter-balance or settle pending accounts. He is neither an executioner nor an accountant. He is destiny.

Rights are a poorly disguised fiction in dictatorships. This does not mean that they do not remain a fiction even in democracies. But the right to life? This too is a fiction for the power that massacres with impunity in secret, with greater brutality when public affairs are in the hands of the military. Is it just a question of nuances? Not to the end. There is a limit even to the abyss of horror. Why is the ghostly figure of the torturer disturbing? Because it is reflected in the mirror of normality and therefore denounces without a shadow of a doubt the ultimate nature of any power.

Thus this spectre that lurks behind the scenes becomes an emblematic figure not only for the executioner services it provides – necessary to maintain order – but for the simple fact of appearing in the fabric of domination. In this way the torturer is placed in a decriminalized area, not tolerated but protected in his task and justified, even if officially he is abandoned to his fate. State mobilization to defend him rarely goes all the way. That type of dirty work is entrusted to isolated individuals, equipped with particular characteristics, not exactly asocial but solitary, not necessarily of an aggressive nature but led to institutionalized aggression gradually, little by little. There is a trade that is learned and there are specialized schools for this purpose. Dictatorships sometimes let a thread of documentation slip through their fingers, perhaps out of excessive self-confidence, democracies do not, the latter on such topics are sealed.

My experience has led me to feel in these particular subjects a sort of nemesis of catastrophe, not a bad conscience, deriving from their work, but an often resigned expectation, as if that work imprinted on their personality a sort of irretrievable bewilderment. It often seemed to me that I had before me ghosts who considered their own life as a sort of usurped concession, something heterogeneous, too extreme to be understood even by themselves. After all, every man is also what he does and feels the need to reflect himself in the doings of other men who move in something similar. I am not saying that there are always choices of factual affinities, which perhaps do not exist, but at least of parallels, of corporate spirit, of belonging to the same operational module. Now, those ghosts could not build anything of the sort, they were isolated automatons, moved by mad hierarchies that played with them as with the pawns of a game essential to the maintenance of power. They were ghosts because they breathed and moved in a no man's land where to be recognized

as owners of rights they had to play a role other than their daily work. Now, this does not always succeed, in the long run it exhausts and automatically makes one slaves to repetitive modes, incapable of turning away from the abyss of horror where one looks every day. The deeper and more horrible this abyss is, the more difficult it becomes to escape its dominion. The life of these ghosts is therefore a survival. But survival is still life. I saw them walk, go to work, return home, depending on their specializations talk to people or remain silent, meet with their peers, in short do everything that a distant but trained eye does not let slip.

And this was life, their life. I don't think that if I could have questioned them they would have told me that they didn't care at all about this appearance, I think they would have found my question rhetorically superfluous. Exhaustion may also be preparation for death, aversion to an obligation that shakes any conscience, even the most brutal, but it is not the same as the desire for suicide. Their end is to be attributed to our actions, not to their ineptitude or, whatever you want to call it, resignation. And the actions built on our long and detailed preventive doing were our access to quality, our life put into play, not a simple ratification of their vital dissatisfaction.

These aspects that I will emphasize here, opened in me a series of particularly painful questions, but they never made me delegate my responsibilities to others. The unexpected guest could never have completed his radical work without us. Compassion for the pile of rags left behind did not erase the perfect different awareness of the great value of freedom in the face of the horrendous responsibilities of ferocious and insatiable repression.

Defending an oppressed people. I didn't worry about identifying a precise referent. People is too vague a concept and corresponds to the flattening that the concept of freedom undergoes in the context of doing. What I was fighting for was tangible only in the timeless and placeless instant of action, while before, in doing, there were only this or that person, this or that group, particular instruments of repression.

I do not believe that the oppressors themselves, whose political astuteness – especially for the military – was very much to be doubted, knew what they were oppressing. Superficial differences, as in the Palestinian and Irish cases, ultimately corresponded to class differences. The poor endured the greatest repression, even if the middle classes could also have some repercussions. It was the excluded who paid the highest price, even if at the time my ideas on this were not at all clear. The absolutely bare life of the Palestinian camps was so intolerable that it was not difficult to know who needed to be helped and, with help, freedom.

The characteristic of dictatorship – military or territorial occu-

pation – is based on a preventive measure aimed at eliminating all those who are supposed to be dangerous for the management of power. These people are taken without any legal procedure or shadow of guarantee based on law, and subjected to detention or forced to confess, under torture, perfectly legal behaviors or crimes imagined by the repressive hierarchy. Dictatorship, to summarize these conditions of high repression, is a forced normalization, carried out with brutal methods – generally of police origin – but falling within the substance of every form of power if not in its literal constitution.

The actions of the people in charge of carrying out these repressive projects were only a particular specialization, a secret branch of power. The men who carried out this action were state officials such as a judicial officer or a land registry clerk. Considering them as operating under a particular condition of an exceptional nature is an error that was very widespread even at the time to which these considerations refer – which are still very current. They did not make exceptional actions possible, placed outside of legal protection, they were absolutely within the law, the massacres for which they were responsible were one of the ways in which power, any power, is supported. The fact that the victim is taken without respecting the procedural rules does not make the taking exceptional at all, on the contrary it makes the legal rules more permeable and more fluid than a legal mind can imagine.

A provocateur who pushed young people full of hope and illusions to attack, almost always unrealistic, was a character who prepared the ground for his torturer colleague, always within the scope of normal police and repression work. There was no need for a suspension of legal procedures, they were - and are - sufficiently elastic to be disregarded whenever the power deems it necessary.

At the root of all this normality is the ferocity of man and the abyss into which his soul continually gazes. Of course, not everyone is sufficiently ferocious, but it must not be difficult to find these ghosts if they are never missing in any era or under any political regime. Within the legal norm there is therefore a secret place of its removal. This is possible because in any case, any power, like any historical or philosophical theory, fuels the massacre, only that the rule pursues other paths and the void of the rule still others, but the two paths complement each other and support each other.

I have long insisted on this problem that is reversed in the personality of the performers. Why did I call them ghosts or phantoms? I think I got this strange terminology from their gestures. Unable to extend the comparison to hearing the words - in most cases incomprehensible to me - it was on the gestures that I based some considerations. They were not casual gestures, even if they remained

completely regular. Naturalness had been removed from them due to the pressure of a hidden force that pushed these men towards their real status as ghosts and phantoms. The unexpected guest did not care to capture these gestures that for me constituted an entire discourse, the only possible one.

Without naturalness, those gestures were the sign of the impoverishment of reduced men, produced by a murderous hierarchy that generated abortions of humanity without being able to produce fully functioning automatons, mechanisms and nothing more. From a man, however suspended over the abyss, in the end you cannot take away all his humanity. Even the executioners are human beings and this is seen in their miserable gestures crushed by codes imposed by invisible forces. Emptied from within, reduced to the pure spectrum of normality, they had at their disposal only a catalogue of gestures, artificial and codified, to which they tried to remain adherent. Here they were therefore clinging to a few repetitive and easily catalogued movements as if to a lifeline. Each gestural trace contained, like the moment of someone about to drown, a sort of symbolic transfiguration. Normality and necessity were married in that moment denouncing the lowering to the level of spectral appearance. A pitiful spectacle, discernible only by our trained eye, capable of capturing and recording not only correspondences and measurements but also these flashes of anomaly which, without being able to be calls for help - I don't think any of these ghosts ever thought of changing profession - were still flashes of a humanity wounded and distorted to the limit of paroxysm.

In these gestures there was no occasional contingency, no unpredictable response to the surprise of a moment, everything was involved in the indiscernible necessity. Their gestural consistencies were pathetically repetitive, they were increasingly curled up in a sort of crazy and meaningless ballet. Repetition generates a more consistent, stronger, more homogeneous appearance, a mechanically assured doing, like slaves on the assembly line.

Inside this reserve zone, humanity fades so as not to disappear completely. The resulting puppet moves and suffers like so many other puppets produced by oppression, with the added bonus that its direct mingling with the lake of blood puts it in front of an abyss where it is forced to reflect itself daily. It cannot evoke any distortion, an escape route, a suspension of doing, all of this is impossible for it. It can only await its own destiny, playing its life on the table of probabilities.

I am sure that these ghosts were aware of a progressive hardening of their situation, and they were moving towards it with the gestures I am speaking of. Their life no longer had a temporal expectation experienced as a perspective but only an eternal present,

a maniacal repercussion that came from the massacre and was directed to the massacre. Their bodies had an existence regulated by work like so many other bodies, so they were normal bodies, of normal men, but I do not believe they were able to control the consequences of the abyss. This was visible in their broken, stiffened and mechanical gestures, even comically camouflaged by something else, as if they were wearing a false beard. Wax masks that were modeled in suitable places and then thrown into the world, both to carry out their horrendous task and to live that surrogate life that was assigned to them.

Every gesture was therefore dead, as if produced by an unspeakable mask, and alive in a residual and subordinate way, as if all its strength had been exhausted in the abominable undertaking of everyday life. This is why I spoke of exhaustion, which could not be the occasional lack of strength of an individual, but was a condition common to all, more or less perceptible and truly foreign to none of them. It was the memory of the abomination that reduced them to tired ghosts, and this also acted in cases of a habit of massacre taken to the extreme consequences.

In these people there was a kind of continuous epiphany of the cave of the lake of blood, and this was the ultimate reason - at least so I convinced myself after long observations - of the generalized exhaustion. Isolated ghosts, they were not part of a whole, even if they were perfectly regular officials of the power in charge, even if they constituted the last pivot of the dominion, perhaps the most indispensable. They were enclosed in a leper isolation, to which only our watchful attention approached. The unexpected guest found this gesture before his eyes and cut it off at the root along with the rest.

In every involvement in horror – and giving death is horror – there is always a bond at work between the giver and the receiver. This bond can remain a prisoner of doing or be surpassed in acting. This is why the horror of the torturer, or of the supplier of his high specializations, remaining a prisoner of doing, is an abyss from which one cannot escape, an abyss that annihilates people with its power of attraction and reduces them to a spectral state. Action is an immersion in quality and therefore it is not work but a unique, burning experience, endowed with a tension that does not allow for repetitions. Each time one acts for the first time and only once is each time the action. There is no repetition in action, therefore there is not that paralyzing power that only quantitative accumulation produces. One does not free oneself from action, on the contrary it is action that liberates, one frees oneself from doing and doing captures, produces nothing but habituation and exhaustion. This is the difference between an unexpected guest and a ghost reduced to a pile of rags.



The problem present in this book comes from the fact that action arises because a certain preventive doing makes it possible. And it is in this doing that facts and also doubts accumulate. If acting is the dream of freedom, doing is the nightmare of the compulsion to repeat.

In the end, the ghost's gesture did not even belong to the category of doing, it was an allusion related and assumed as a form of behavior emptied of meaning by the oppressive needs of power. The ghost's gesture was never an event for us, it was a sad contingency that we could not register. Other things interested us, measurements and correspondences, frequentations and constancies, uniformities and duplications. But for me - and for some of my companions - that gesture had a human content, it was like a signal for help, at least that's how it could be deciphered, without softening our rigid determination.

The ghost's doing was a monstrously horrible doing, our ethical sense of the world reflected it as inconceivable, but in the end we also had to admit that it was a normal doing, not at all monstrous except for the consequences, not for those who put it into action. And yet that doing evidently produced men who had the exhaustion and empty gestures of the ghosts we had before us.

What was the torturer's purpose? To force someone to confess the unspeakable? That's not true. No confession is as unreliable as one extracted under torture. The purpose was - and here we are talking about torture as a borderline case, albeit a very common one, not a rare occurrence due to the whim of a moment - to obey the orders of the hierarchy. But these orders were aimed at authorizing torture for the purpose of terrorizing. So this behavior, that of the torturer as well as that of the traitor, the informer or the provocateur, did not have its purpose in itself but in the idea of power, beyond the bloody conditions in which the cave of massacres was fed. The means thus spiraled in on itself and did not reach any end, nothing concretely logical was before the eyes of these people, only a use without any evident purpose, even without the possibility of being understood and therefore fully shared.

Similarly devoid of logical sense, these ghosts possessed a gesture itself devoid of purpose, not attributable to the obtaining of something. They were signs in the air, movements devoid of a concrete foundation, as if they were prompted by uncontrollable, alienating nervous stimuli. They were not means themselves, they were perhaps signals, incomprehensible to us, discarding the hypothesis - truly far-fetched - of the request for help addressed to the wind and the rain or to the sun and the moon.

There was an impassable distance between what we put together with our doing, aimed at deepening a peripheral and supplementary

knowledge, and this persistent and incomprehensible gesture. And there was also a remaining in suspense of the gesture itself, a cutting of the air in half, like something reprehensible caught in the act, a not being able to do that came to light, deformed and forced, to drown immediately in its own inconsequentiality. Did those gestures want to penetrate the ever-growing wall of mutual distrust and estrangement? I never knew. They were human signals, however, I was sure of that. But what did the unexpected guest do with my certainty in his action aimed at cutting at the root, leaving behind only a crumpled puppet?

Automatons devoid of content, and therefore of a consciousness even if immediately directed to a comprehensible purpose, these men were reduced to the pure status of means employed in a perspective unknown to them. They could not communicate anything, not even their emptiness, not knowing it except through progressive experiences - the individual moments of their doing - that followed one another devoid of meaning, with that spectral consistency that in the long run made them ghostly appearances. They could not put this condition aside even to have a coffee, even when having a coffee was part of their job. There was in this an arthritic, disjointed gesture, devoid of communicability because it had nothing to say, it was like a magmatic residue at the bottom of a fermenting cesspool.

The same goes for speech, even worse. Hence the silent, or almost silent, sense of exhaustion that emanated from these people but whose presence they did not seem to feel, even though they were continually characterized by it. Being silent because they were deprived of the possibility of containing passions or doubts, reduced only to a set of conditioned reflexes, the extreme edge of normality and the most representative of the repressive condition of power. How could they utter a single word regarding their work, even when speaking - as was the case with provocateurs - was the essential part of what they did? Here is the silence, even when their lips seemed to hint at a vital movement, whatever it was, there was in them the ecstasy of emptiness, the letting go of those who no longer know how to give content to their own life, because they see the latter as a banal accident played in a game whose outcome they know they can never know. And yet these ghosts were men, not the anchorite invention of a mad power. Over time, they perpetuated the improbably detailed plan of an elsewhere where the desire for control magnified freedom, making it a mess.

I do not know whether at the time to which the facts discussed in this book refer, I fully realized this reality. Perhaps I needed to dream of a possible objective justification for my task, that is, one free from doubts. But there are no such justifications. Action, where true and only objectivity is achieved, does not need it; doing can-

not go beyond objectivity. Perhaps it was a search for escape from my responsibility? Perhaps something more complex, for example, demanding a sort of independence of judgment when everything derived from the initial information that remained – as I said – outside of any verification that could be achieved during our work.

Mine was a resistance, limited if you like, a saying no, stubborn but consistent with the basic choices, at least with some of them if not with all of them. My efforts, illustrated here after so many years, were not only these, they included the defense of my concept of bearer of freedom. This is why I tried to understand the ghosts, to read their silence and their exhaustion, as human reflexes and not as the dull rumblings of obscene monsters whose meaning was not worth understanding.

Our fight was aimed at destroying these massacrers and, in strategic terms, the attack had to include an identification with the enemy's conditions. This is a golden rule of any conflict. But such identification was impossible, at most an approach could be achieved, the rest belonged to the measurements of times and places that I have spoken so much about and to the overcoming in the action where times and places disappeared by denying themselves. This sort of rubbing against horror, seeing it for days at a short distance from my nose, having to limit myself to observing the movements, knowing that every day more blood would go into the cave of massacres, was an effort without equal, much more difficult than any immediate open attack. The action was therefore experienced for what it actually was, the end of a suffering, a relief, a pitiful task.

What in the action was incomprehensible to the preventive doing, what I call here the arrival of the unexpected guest, was the essential goal and we had to cultivate it in our consciences, so that from their brute immediacy a qualitatively unspeakable diversity would blossom. My doubts had no importance in it.

Once the last resort of power is based on these specters, recruited to instill terror, it lays bare its inner emptiness of blind domination, its essential lack of meaning. The secret of power is its extreme brutality, bordering on the erosion of every remnant of humanity. Hence the need to conceal this secret by designating a surreptitious series of objectives that are all equally inconsistent, if not deliberately false.

By identifying pure terror, massacre and murder, torture and provocation, betrayal and information extracted with every kind of deception, as the immaterial fulcrum around which the political essence of forced action revolves, one sees how all power becomes a scene of ghosts, a jumble of bloody and stupid specters. Can death, inflicted sadistically with careful normality and without a purpose other than the simple subsistence of the power in office, can all this become something spectral? Wouldn't this lighten the responsibility

of the command hierarchies, depriving the entire chain of conscience and therefore of awareness of these horrors? In my opinion it is the opposite. A power in the hands of appearance, wanted because it is the only possible solution to its problematic existence, is in the midst of its moral responsibility. Massacres are not only horrible but also useful precisely for the maintenance of a condition that is forced to impose other massacres, *ad infinitum*. There is nothing more perverse than the becoming spectral of a mechanism that produces death on a large scale so as not to eclipse its own spectrality. All this has no consistency whatsoever, it simply kills, it exhibits this obscenity as little as possible, but for those with a trained eye there is no way to draw a veil of camouflage.

Ghosts are men dead to humanity, ghosts that produce deaths. A horrible circle that continues eternally to reappear always similar to itself. Power is made of ghosts that become less and less consistent and therefore more ghostly, as one approaches the direct suppliers of the cave of massacres. The ferocity of power is its most intimate composition, a non-ferocious power is a suicidal contradiction, it cannot exist, it would self-destruct. In the extreme territory of ferocity, when the blinding lights of torture and betrayal are turned on, there is almost nothing left to say. The ghosts are silent.

Even ghost hunters are silent, they organize themselves in their daily doing that makes action possible, they do not speak. This book is therefore a strange anomaly, born from my personal doubts, almost never fully shared by my companions, but with the intention - perhaps excessively oversized - of shedding light on the problem of giving death. Where is the place of (true) justice? In the same place as freedom, therefore nowhere. It is found in the non-place of action.

Here is the point, the impotence of the word finds its power a posteriori in remembrance. And yet, despite the efforts of remembrance and the space due to them, there is something else, there is a series of doubts. The word can be deformed until it enters the narrow door of remembrance, but it always remains a product of the house of language, a poor thing. It can be manipulated, it can be distorted, it can be badly said, it can not be understood, in the end even falsified. But the doubt nourished, its entire series composed of unanswered questions, remains.

Can a life reduced to a spectral appearance, weakened by a hierarchical organization of power that aims only to reproduce itself, be considered non-life, or a life of a lower level, which can be erased? This question cannot be answered affirmatively. Action experiences freedom and, in quality, experiences justice. It does not weigh or measure. It cuts straight. But what does it cut? It cuts a life. Does the above problem arise? No, it does not. In quality, it is the diver-

sity of consciousness that acts and nullifies the existence of what is the expression of quantity in the most empty of content and most horrendous form. It does not overturn in the hope of remedying an injustice, it does not put back in place what cannot be put back in place. It cuts. Ultimately, doubt needs the word to be expressed – therefore it belongs to remembrance – but it is something more than the word. It is part of the horror of looking into the abyss, for it is on the brink of the abyss that the unexpected guest appears within the action.

In the annihilation of humanity in the spectre, carried out by power for the purposes we know, the gestures of the mask are configured, characters who gradually lose the thickness of their own life to find themselves in the transparent appearance of the ghost. This insinuation of the mask is indispensable to allow man, called to the task we know, to cast continuous anxious glances into the abyss. Doing thus builds its own safeguard on the edge of the unspeakable, acquiring automaticity and persistence in horror until it becomes a habit. The exhausted gesture of the spectre is the product, or perhaps the intersection, of this accumulation of immense tragedies and a normality that lives them daily until they become a chisel of the particular, care and attention of an artisan of massacre.

What kind of individual biography can a ghost have? I don't know. Emptiness alone is not enough to fill a life, there are other things. Memories, for example. But which ones? Those of a distant time, when one's humanity, whatever it was, still throbbed, or those of a more recent time, when the horrors began to accumulate in the quantitative doing that produces them? Who can say? There are no neutral pieces of memory, everything ultimately mixes with everything else in the mind and, when something surfaces, a smell from the past, a scene experienced as a child, one's family where one grew up, everything is immediately amalgamated with what one is now, because memories are part of our feeling, of the continuous effort to grasp the reality that hosts us, not the one that hosted us, which no longer exists.

Now, if we reflect on this anguished problem, what memories can a ghost have? Every biographical experience is part of the present, so for the ghost it is immersed in the blood and horror of its spectral actuality, it has nothing human, every memory is poisoned by the current substance which is the phantasmatic one and cannot have an autonomous, clean, clear life, not even for a moment. The ghost is only present, a dull present aimed at contemplating itself in a tremendous effort of self-consideration that absorbs all its capacity to do. This is why the ghost is exhausted. This effort surrounds it and suffocates it, continually flattens it to its spectral condition. The truth of the ghost is its radical appearance just as for us, who fought

it, it was action with its equally radical existence. Being is opposed to appearance by displaying the various shades of falsehood that enrich the latter to the point of making it seem true. By resolving our preparatory actions into the action of attack, the fundamental difference between being and the spectrality of non-being was put into action, expropriated by power in order to allow its own survival.

In the end, these puppets that were spinning before our eyes, attentive to following all their moves, were as predictable as automatons whose programmatic limits are known. The bloody trail left by their actions was the only element that kept us constantly on edge, that urged us to speed up our work, for the rest, observing and cataloging them was a very poor knowledge, almost never rich in novelties or indications of human nature. My doubts were mine, they were not suggested to me by their behavior, perhaps with the tragic and heartbreaking exception of the Irish traitors. And they, my doubts, gripped me all the more firmly the more that spectral appearance risked resembling more and more the generalized humanity of which we too were a part. It was necessary to keep in mind the abyss of horror that opened up before the steps of those ghosts to see their spectrality materialize, otherwise one could see them as men and nothing more, perhaps as men with ideas different from ours, but first and foremost men.

Finally, their spectral consistency – produced by the task entrusted to them and by their frequentation of horror – could not completely erase their profound essence as human beings, here is the root of my doubts. Here is the crucial point. In the action they were men we attacked, not ghosts. When the unexpected guest left behind an inanimate puppet, we were all aware of leaving behind a man who until a short time before had been alive and who now found himself on the ground in the state of a little pile of rags. The radical cut is to a man who had taken his life.

The separation of the ghosts we are discussing, their isolation, their exhaustion, have a meaning in the globality of power, that is, in a project that is not such if it does not also include the senselessness of terror. Thus, the marginal cutout, to which is delegated the ambiguous and evil task of completing the founding perimeter of power, is manifestly hidden, almost like a shame, and in the concealment in which it is forced to operate, the sign of deprivation and isolation can be noted.

Some practices indispensable to power must remain hidden. These spectral particles do not communicate with each other or with themselves; individually they close up like a hedgehog and alienate themselves from the shared communicative logic. They do not have a common foundation with other men but possess a residue of a generically human essence, lowered and impoverished but in-

alienable. The exhaustion that distinguishes them is therefore much more significant than a banal observation of tiredness due to the nature of the work that these ghosts perform. The separation in the specificity of the disgrace, desired by power, flattens these ghosts in a matrix that makes them, at the same time, devoid of sense and indispensable.

Undoubtedly this void is felt by the spectre who looks at the world around him as if he were besieged by it, and is therefore forced to constitute himself as an autonomous unit formed essentially by appearance. The extreme nullifying veiling that transforms a man into an automaton at the service of the base needs of power is perhaps the most complete demonstration of how the latter tends to annihilate everything it uses for its own maintenance. The completed condition of this annihilation is the spectral condition, where the power of speaking disappears as it is no longer usable and is replaced by simple gestures.

The gesture – dull and inappropriate, almost always out of time and dissonant – is the most obvious reference to the total alienation of any linguistic rootedness that could even try to understand and therefore justify its own work, find in it a logic of support and salvation for power, always on the indications of the command hierarchy. Instead this same hypothesis – even in its grotesque incredibility – does not exist. There is no experience that can be expressed in words of the horror and the horror commanded to them. The ghosts are silent, they do not live in the word and their life cannot be referred to, even their gestures cannot be translated into content. The most disarticulating experiment of all this horror is precisely in the inability to speak of it, hence the impossibility of identifying its meaning.

Submerged by the nothingness that contains their doing, ghosts have no content and show themselves for what they are, pure appearance aimed at implementing in their doing only the will of power. The attack against these peripheral expressions of the phantasmagoria of domination is therefore an important but limited task, it would need a passage to the limit, that is, an insurrectional qualitative leap – as happened in Greece – which does not always happen. But even in this case, that is, in the democratic modification, power adjusts its aim, always directs a consistent part of itself towards the cave of massacres and, in this case, even the attack discussed in this book becomes much more difficult and often, for many, even incomprehensible. We must not forget that terror is always at the basis of every type of power, there are no exceptions. But insisting on the specificity of the conditions of a military dictatorship, or of a military occupation of a territory, is important to me – after all, this book is about me, about my life and my doubts as well as my few certainties – which is why I am pushing myself to twist the knife in

the wound.

The spectral condition, thus summarized, is still multifaceted, even if lowered and debased it maintains a certain content of humanity, it is still the condition experienced by a human being called to do a horrendous job that he could refuse. Here is another point. Why does he not refuse the spectre of being a butcher? Because he is a sadistic spectre, a monster of ignominy? No. He does not refuse because he has been educated to do that job, little by little, to consider it essential for the hierarchy that imposes it on him. Then the gaze into the abyss transforms him, like the gaze of Medusa, into a spectre. At this point he is ready for the decisive encounter with the unexpected guest, and he knows it. His evident exhaustion is proof of this.

All doing is immersed in appearance, the will presides over it and defends it. Only some men cut this Gordian knot and exist, access being in action. It is a model that I have illustrated at length and that is always capable of reserving surprises. In the opening to dazzling diversity, being lives its extraordinary life, outside of time and space, immersed in quality. In the closed confines of quantification, appearance lives its meager and meticulous life. In order to call this factual and illusory appearance life, man needs to be recognized, he needs a face that gives him a mask, he needs to be a mask, that is, a person. But this recognition is not constructed by him, his will leads him towards repetition and accumulation, others give it to him. Thus, in the long run, he adapts to appearances and clings to daily life, to his own status that marks him and does not recognize him except superficially, a fleeting glance that others throw at him like alms, busy in their pressing need, in turn, to be recognized. Everyone has their turn and their problems.

The face of appearance is therefore what others admit and allow to see, a sign, a path, it is not an opening but a seal that marks the quantitative operation in progress. If this seal is questioned, as happens in the overcoming, the strong impact with quality deforms it and makes it unrecognizable to quantity. That face that appeared now is the being that is and cannot but be in its power. No being can ever degrade itself to a mask, to a person, to a spectre. Whoever has lived the different experience of action will face life differently, will reflect differently on his extraordinary experience. The spectre denounces a lowering, a degradation that has occurred and denounces them through its face reduced to the state of a grinning mask. This face, appearing in appearance, deceives no one, it denounces in clear terms what lies behind, the defeat of a world reduced to a few shreds of humanity, forced to move on the edge of the abyss where horror bellows. It doesn't say anything specific, it's not even an announcement of anguish or regret, it's simply the sum of spectral gestures,



the place where the signals that the wounded beast continues to send intersect as if waiting for someone to interrupt in one way or another the hierarchical chain that binds him to that horror of the abyss, forcing him to do, more and more, his job as an executioner.

Many, discussing it with me, have supposed a sort of encrypted communicability. I disagree. There is no real content in the ghost's face, just as there is none in his gestures that are summarized in that face. There is nothing that proceeds from that face outward, just as there are no recipients appointed to receive those gestures. The ghost has no passions, so his face is only a mask, it does not reveal but hides. But what does it hide? The betrayal of man. Nothing can be said about this betrayal, it comes from afar and gathers the most bestial part of the human heart, overturning every judgment on original innocence. This betrayal is no longer a secret, it stirs in all of us, only the love of freedom can silence it, the love of freedom and the courage to face the adventure in quality.

Huddled in action, any good person continually caresses the ugly beast inside him against the grain, and is willing to accept orders without question. The effrontery of this willingness perhaps stops at a certain point, when one is immersed up to the neck in a lake of blood, but then there is no turning back. This is how a ghost is built, starting from a good person, respectful of order and laws, willing to accept superior orders and to put them into practice in the best possible way.

Sinking into appearance, the mask becomes parchment-like and spectral, gestures are tired and repetitive, life adapts to a condition of almost survival, work is the only source of worry and satisfaction at the same time. The executioner is tired but also satisfied to be an executioner at the service of those who know the mysterious and inexplicable - and unexplained - why of what he continues to do. There is no way back. The ghost knows very well that it can only go forward, grind out more massacres, once again look out over the edge of the abyss, and it also knows that sooner or later the encounter with the unexpected guest, this emissary of destiny, will inevitably happen.

No meeting of glances, which would have been an unsustainable and therefore suspect discourse. Eyes that wander in the absurd or that lower themselves, carefully searching for something that cannot be where they are sought. It is the gaze turned towards the unfathomable abyss, the one that opens in the cave of massacres. The recall by the spectre would have been a way of saying an availability that could not exist, an opening that was already barred from the start.

Appearance concerns only itself, it is to itself that it addresses itself. And it is to itself that it provides a justification. We all need it, even executioners. So these torturers modified their closed and co-

ercively codified world into an image of normal openness, absolutely non-existent but important to make their appearance appear in the context of a non-difference from a doing that could not be claimed because it was covered by a mask. Without quarter, this mask must be guaranteed as an irreplaceable, impermeable cover. The truth, the truth of the spectrum, is precisely this absolute correspondence, this mirroring that does not allow replicas, the automatism duplicated to infinity.

The ghost knows it is being watched, it cannot not know it, but it cannot denounce what is behind the mask, its truth is therefore mirrored according to the exact opposite of the orders received, an infinite duplication that the mask endlessly mirrors within itself. The fiction of validity was thus forgotten or muffled, put aside, otherwise it would have been impossible to continue in its effective capacity for massacre. It was an implicit fiction that no one spoke about, not even the orders received from the command hierarchy mentioned particular protocols, it would have been too strong a backlash for the fiction, it would have challenged the occult that must always cover the curse.

That exhausted, lost look, devoid of a justifiable objective, showed only the awareness of its own simulation. Paradoxically, a direct look would have broken a mechanism that was upstream - casting doubt on the validity of the generically received command - not downstream on hypothetical collectors or recipients of the look in question. This is why we were the only ones to perceive that exhaustion in the looks generically directed into the void, and this because only we knew the reason for that simulation, that cover, that mask. The essence of those looks escaped everyone, and this was the true content of the mask, its function of cover. It unequivocally eluded the danger of coming to know, of a tone of falsity contained in the look itself.

Truth as a mirroring is a not very intelligent variant of the false. After all, it was the mask itself that gave the gaze of the specter a meaning only for us. Without the specter knowing it? I asked myself this question several times. There are obviously many levels of awareness and not all have the same intensity. Our conscious consideration of the juxtaposition was different from the spectral one. How many of us were aware of this secret bargaining between mask and gaze? Not many. At the root of many of my personal problems, of many of my doubts, there was precisely the fact of not being able to discuss this point.

The appearance before us, through its gazes – tragically extreme those of the Irish traitors – manifested something, a semblance that betrayed the very task of covering the mask. And this something was an appeal of humanity coerced and lowered, reduced to the vi-

tal minimum but not completely destroyed. Each of those gazes had an indispensable impropriety, it clashed with the common context, with ours of attackers on the verge of striking, with theirs of automations on the verge of continuing to grind out massacres. To appear does not only mean to hide, it also means to do and not to act, to circumscribe oneself and to be circumscribed in a prisoner territory where one is forced to accept orders, it does not necessarily mean a mask, that is, duplication and superimposition, it means more often to filter one's life through the deforming alembic of power, to be reduced to a spectral state, a strong accentuation of the simple appearance. Of course, the ghosts dissimulated. But did they succeed completely? It is not so. They failed in their secondary task, saving their lives by hiding, their primary task remaining the massacre. The mask deceived many but did not deceive the trained eye of the unexpected guest. There could be no sufficient dissimulation nor change of attitude that could prevent the radical cut.

The spectral face is divided, therefore it is not real. The gestures that assist it are also divided, therefore they drown in the unspecified limbo of insignificance. Does this legitimize the use of radical violence? I am not convinced. There is no legitimacy that can make peace of mind reign supreme. Our entire organization faced a perverse hierarchical mechanism. I know. So what? Can I authorize my conscience, today, after so much time and so many reflections, of which this book is only a small part, to rest easy for having done its duty? No. There are no duties to be fulfilled, not even that of killing the tyrant or the executioner. Incidentally, in the Middle Ages, when these met, they shook hands.

If I want to place an absolute value in the overthrow of the torturers that I helped to achieve, I find myself with a false conscience in my hands, with something out of tune and out of place, to defend with trumpets in my head. We did not bureaucratize our task in due time and we did not even underestimate it. We were not facing real enemies, living a real life, but ghosts, living an apparent life. The fact is that even an apparent life is always a life, reduced to the misery of survival but always a sign of vitality, something tiny, in its nakedness gaping but always subsisting, capable of moving, gesticulating, looking and, perhaps, but I am not sure, speaking. It is this vital residue that we extinguished as one extinguishes an almost consumed candle stub but not yet completely exhausted. A crumb of life, someone might come up to comfort me, something negligible. No. No vital trace is negligible, and this is not for otherworldly or divine reasons, not for misplaced sacredness, but because it is life, the only life we have, all in common, all equally naked, and it is this that we cut clean, thereby cutting off a part of our humanity.

I know there are many objections, the clash, the repression, the

cave of massacres, the chain of hierarchy – for us insurmountable –, in short a broad and satisfying compartmentalization that warmed our hearts and made us go forward, but beyond, the void, the irreversible movement of the cut, the intervention of the unexpected guest. Entering this void was easy in action, because action has no time or place, but after the same remembrance – just like these lines that I am writing tonight in a cell of a Greek prison – at least for me it brought to light the essence of this nakedness of life. A fierce and unexcused conflict was unleashed inside me, much more difficult to face than the external one, in the burning heat of contact with the quality of action. I tried to keep my daily work, my preparatory work, separate in a zone of inappropriateness, I tried not to take into account the gestures and faces that paraded before my eyes, I tried to make myself tough to fight those who had made hardness a uniform and a new skin. But by doing so, didn't I also produce in myself a sort of abasement, didn't I dangerously approach the edge of that abyss where the spectre looked at the horror at the very moment in which it was enacting it? Atrocious doubt.

No. It wasn't possible. I was the liberator and they were the killers of freedom, why these obsessions? Because no one is saved from a glance cast into the abyss of horror. There may be extenuating circumstances, excuses, little words that help one live with abomination, but not to save oneself. We were dealing with monsters to be slaughtered like dangerous animals, so everything returned to its place in our immaculate conscience as liberators. I didn't like this balance, it seemed like an accommodating solution. Where were the monsters? In front of me I saw men lowered to the level of ghosts, not monsters, men with a stripped and impoverished life, not wild animals to be hunted down and killed in any way. The only lifeline was mutual estrangement. Faces and gestures, not words. There. Keep away from words, from their words, if these ghosts were capable of speaking, we never knew. The lack of verbal contact was the only way to keep the spectre standing, even and perhaps even more easily with regard to the provocateur. It was no coincidence, certainly, that the unexpected guest arrived in the most absolute silence.

The face of these ghosts, precisely because they were sometimes suspended to look into the abyss of horror, seemed to unravel as if an intrinsic threat of inconsistency were coming to the surface to denounce the naked life of appearance. And yet they were men with blood-stained hands, capable of carrying out the orders received, certainly not to make them the object of discussion or doubt. Despite this strong sense of having to do, their spectrality took over, making their face amorphous and insignificant, the face of bureaucrats accustomed to repetition and blind obedience, if in these cases

one can speak of a face.

But did the ghosts see us? I don't know. Our work, long and meticulous, could not always go unnoticed. What face did we present to them? I speak for my face. Did my decision announce itself through my gaze and my gestures? Had I sufficiently taken within me the abyss into which I too was looking? Or did I withdraw from it by closing my eyes to save my good revolutionary conscience? I don't know. Here I am entering territories unexplored at the time and can only allow myself conjectures. Not having to communicate with the ghosts, we had a sort of protective indifference, like that of the man from Clapham, but I don't know if this statement can be considered an answer. We stiffened in an artificially self-confident expression, typical of those who are certain of being on the right side of the barricade. There was also this rigidity, why couldn't there be? After all, with the burden of my doubts and this book itself, I still feel that I was on the right side. But didn't this certainty make us sink into a sort of mute and obtuse identity, incapable of looking at our own tail and busy only with hiding it? I don't know. The great repetitive work of control and duplication did not allow us many digressions, but it did not force us to defend our identity as liberators if, at a certain point, we were no longer convinced of it.

The fact is that the conviction of something and the persistence of a doubt are not able to cancel each other out, they remain in a sort of latency where they are perceptible but not thinkable to the full. The word would be needed, but this had no sense imprisoned in the doing, it was needed for the survival of the project and for the preparation of the action. Another word would have been needed, but we could not find this until after the action and, as I have often recalled, the remembrance was almost always crushed by the new doing to come, by the preparation of the next action.

Here our life was, at the same time, true in action and false in doing, but without this falsehood – which we shared as an appearance with the ghosts, even if on the right side of the barricade – there would not have been the true part and we would not have lived one or more different experiences but only dreamed of a doing that was banal survival.

By making quality our own – hence, from this angle, our truth – life, our life, was not spectral but existed concretely and, in the active moment, it was free, it grasped through the unexpected guest the reality of being that is and cannot not be and it cut cleanly the apparent life of the spectre.

Our fictitious appearance was therefore summed up in transformative action, it was this that put an end to the horrendous contribution to the massacre carried out by the spectre at the centre of our action. Our action was objectively aimed at grasping the truth, at

removing all doubt, at sealing in its improper casing the falseness of the appearance that we were attacking. The spectre was therefore no longer there, nor were our active concerns aimed at framing it in the perspective that was appropriate for it – torturer, informer, provocateur, traitor – but we appropriated its naked life, we grasped its putting into play, its going back and forth before our eyes, we eliminated the improper and the generically enemy by reducing it to the status of a broken puppet, a pile of rags.

Did we feel completely satisfied that we could stop this seemingly unstoppable will to falsify? No. Not completely. If we had stayed in the action, beyond the point of no return, we would have been, but that is another matter. Dissatisfaction was not self-excluded by doubts—I speak for myself and I suppose for others—and these emerged in remembrance. The unexpected guest did not seem very interested in this part after the action.

The meaningless expression of the ghostly glances depended, in my opinion, also on their being the last mechanism of the bureaucratic mechanism that forced them to do the atrocious work that characterized them as executors of low works of justice, as the practices of the executioner were once called. This inexpressiveness was therefore the daughter of bureaucratized terror, produced as if on an assembly line, a long hand of the tyrant. Of course it would have been better to cut off the tyrant's head (ironically in this very prison where I am writing the tyrant of those now distant times died a few days ago) rather than the hand of the executioner. But you can't always do what you want, there are insurmountable obstacles, even if some attempts have been made in this direction, without results.

Cutting off a hand was still an attack on a man's naked life, which led – at least as far as I was concerned – to consider the problem of a man's death up close. Similarity in the name of humanity? I don't know how to answer. I was led, like my companions, to consider those ghosts as inhuman, but in the long run I could not erase the similarity that united us. We were together, we, the liberators, they, the torturers, together in a confrontation that was a life-and-death battle, without half measures. The fact that our actions enjoyed the privilege of initiative guaranteed that we would almost certainly hit targets that – when we delved deeper into the comparisons and measurements – turned out to be exhausted. They were not just masks but men, hidden behind the simulacrum of a spectral appearance, naked appearance, but still men. To see them was to grasp the simultaneity of their life with ours, to establish a tenuous thread of contact, not to place oneself in safety behind a monstrously animalistic extraneousness. I don't dare speak of similarity but simultaneity is something that comes close to it. It's exactly like that.

The spectre was an exteriority, that is, an appearance, that came

and went before our watchful eyes, but behind the mask there was a life, and it was this that had to be attacked. If the spectre helped me to alienate my non-spectral humanity, that hint of naked life covered by the mask indicated to me that there was something more and it was this something more that had to be attacked and destroyed. Anyone can chase away a spectre by closing their eyes because the spectral object is a mental construction of the spectre, but killing a man is not done with the blink of an eye. It was toward this decisive threshold that the crossing was directed. The action captures the essence of the problem and removes doubts, but it does not stay with me, it concludes outside of time and space and leaves me with the tension of qualitative experience and with the newfound possibility of expressing my doubts.

Of course, dictatorships advance rapidly on the terrain of bloody repression while democracies struggle a little, but a police operation is the same everywhere and we were faced with specters who were essentially the lowest level of police degradation. The entire hierarchical chain was responsible for these massacres, but we were only the lowest level we could reach, and the fact of realizing this partial possibility of ours did not comfort us in solving - at least as far as I was concerned - the problem of killing a man.

All politicians are responsible for the massacres that continue to be perpetrated in the world, and with them all philosophers and historians, but this leveling of gradation, which I also did at the time, even if with less clarity than today, did not put me at peace with my different conscience in turmoil after the action. My eyes were full of disjointed puppets, left behind us and of the breath of naked life that had come out of men forced by the encounter with the unexpected guest to become little piles of rags.

Nothing has been able, in all these years, to erase that presence in my eyes, no justification has satisfied me, no apologetic speech on freedom has provided me with a solid point of support. Those who have seen the icy hand of the unexpected guest at work will not be able to rest until fate speaks its final word to them, the one that does not allow replies. And that is what I am waiting for. My eyes are tired and my body too, but my hearing remains alert, waiting.

Alfredo M. Bonanno

Finished in Korydallos prison (Athens) on 18 September 2010

## Note

I recommend reading another book of mine: *Palestine mon amour*, Trieste 2007, in particular pages 121-153 of the third edition. They are important pages, which complete what has been said here.

“FAUST

How does he not lose all hope  
who is lost in futile things;  
he digs with greedy hands in search of treasures,  
finds only earthworms, and is content!

Can such a voice resound  
where a flood of spirits surrounded me?  
And yet this time I thank you,  
the meanest of the sons of the earth.  
You have torn me from the despair  
that was about to confuse my mind.  
Ah, so immense was the apparition  
that I could not help feeling like a dwarf.

I, image of God, who already believed  
I touched the mirror of eternal truths,  
who enjoyed myself in the clear splendor  
of the sky, erased the son of the earth,  
I, more than a cherub, whose free force  
presumed to divinely flow through the veins  
of Nature, and creating to enjoy  
a divine life, how must I pay for it!  
A word of thunder has crushed me.  
I cannot presume to resemble you!  
If I had the strength to attract you,  
I had not the strength to hold you.  
In that moment of happiness  
I felt so great, so small;  
you cruelly pushed me back  
into the uncertain fate of men.  
Who will be my teacher? What must I flee from?  
Must I obey that impulse?  
Ah! Our very actions, like our suffering,  
slow down the course of our life.

In what is most splendid the spirit conceives,  
an alien matter increasingly penetrates;  
when we obtain the goods of the earth,  
the best are called deception and illusion.  
The splendid feelings that have made us alive  
in the earthly tangle harden.



Often the imagination with bold flight  
expands to the eternal with hope,  
but it needs little space when shipwrecked  
in the vortex of time is all happiness.  
Anguish already nests in the depths of the heart,  
it generates secret sufferings,  
restlessly it lulls itself there, disturbs pleasure, disturbs  
rest, covers itself with ever new masks,  
appears as a house, a farm, a wife, a son,  
as fire, water, poison, a dagger;  
you tremble at everything that does not seize you,  
and you must always mourn what you never lose.

I am not like the gods! I feel it too deeply.  
I am like the worm that rummages in the dust,  
that in the dust in which it feeds and lives  
the wanderer's step annihilates and buries.

Is it not the dust of a hundred shelves  
that makes that high wall cramped for me,  
the clutter of a thousand odds and ends  
that closes me in a world of moths?  
Must I find here what I lack?  
Must I perhaps read in a thousand books  
that men everywhere torment themselves  
and here and there one happy one lives?  
What do you sneer at me, empty skull,  
if not that your brain, misled like mine,  
was seeking the clear day, thirsty for truth,  
groping in the shadows of twilight?  
You, instruments, surely mock me  
with your wheels & joints, with your cylinders & handles:  
I was on the threshold, you were the key,  
but twisted minds do not lift the latch.  
Mysterious even in the clear day,  
Nature does not let her veil be stolen,  
and what from your spirit she does not want to reveal  
you will not be able to extort with screws and levers.  
Old alembic that I have never used,  
you are here only because my father used you.  
Old scroll, you have blackened  
while the lamp smoked dimly on the lectern.  
What little I possess, I wish I had squandered,  
instead of sweating under the weight of the little!  
What you have inherited from your fathers,

earn, in order to possess it.  
What is of no use is a heavy load;  
the moment can only benefit from what it creates.

But why does my gaze fix on that point?  
Is this little ampoule a magnet for the eye?  
Why does a friendly light suddenly illuminate me,  
as at night in the forest moonbeams shine?  
I salute you, unique vial,  
which I now take with devotion!  
I honor in you the genius and art of men.  
Quintessence of sweet humors that lull,  
extract of every force that kills with sweetness,  
show to your master your favor!  
I see you, and the pain is eased,  
I take you, and the longing is extinguished,  
the flood of the spirit little by little diminishes.  
And I am driven toward the open sea,  
at my feet the mirror of the waves sparkles,  
a new day invites to new shores.

A fiery chariot on light wings  
flies toward me! And I feel ready  
to soar through the ether to new spheres  
of pure activity, on a new path.  
This high life, delight of the gods,  
you, who were a worm, do you deserve it?  
Yes, if you turn without hesitation  
your back to the sweet sun of the earth!  
Have the courage, and throw open the doors  
from which everyone would like to turn aside.  
Here is the time to prove with facts that yields not  
to the divine majesty the dignity of men,  
not to tremble before the dark cave  
where fantasy alone tortures itself,  
to reach for the passage at whose narrow mouth  
the whole of Hell blazes all around,  
to resolve happily to take this step,  
even if at the risk of losing yourself in nothingness.

Behold, cup of clear crystal,  
of which I have not thought for so many years,  
come out of the old case and come here!  
At the joyful feasts of the fathers you sparkled,

cheering the stern guests  
when each offered you to the other.  
The rich frieze of artistic figures,  
the obligation for the drinker to interpret them in rhyme  
and to empty you with a single sip  
remind me of youthful nights.  
This time I will not offer you to the neighbor,  
I will not show off my wits by praising your art;  
inebriates too quickly this liquid  
that now empties you with a dark flux.  
The last sip that I have prepared  
and that I choose with all my soul,  
salutations high & solemn, offered now to the morning!”

(J. W., Goethe, *Faust*)

## One – forty-nine

1. – Behind the last houses, in a sudden degradation of the land, the wind had accumulated a part of the desert. The humidity of the night, surprising and unexpected, made the strangeness of the place and of why they find me there even more felt. I looked at the moon, a small slice, and I saw the window, open, and a sudden flash. Someone was waiting for me in some house in one of those black and abandoned streets. Not even a light, a small light, a sign of life, a help, nothing. The silence and the wind, two companions made on purpose to lift the poor veil with which I try to hide the restlessness. Could it be that people are sleeping in that house? It doesn't seem possible, so widespread was the glacial sense of death brought by the wind and accepted without objection. Here everything is impregnated with the presence of the unexpected guest, even that single open window and that flash. I squint my eyes to see better, I don't have my glasses. What sense would there be in wearing glasses here, in a place like this? I lie down on the sand. The wind has stopped blowing. I wait.

2. – Poverty has the face of a naked child completely covered in flies. A tiny room occupied by an immense loom for weaving carpets made from small, roughly hewn tree trunks. An old woman works as she has done in the past and as she will do in her short future. She spins the threads of many colors and weaves them, knotting them carefully. Next to her is a rickety sofa and a small table with a half-full glass of tea on it. The floor is made of dirt and sand. Nothing else. The child looks at me and I don't know what to say to him. I don't know how to justify my presence. I seem like the unexpected guest. I read this atrocious suspicion in his enormous, very dark

eyes.

3. – An unpleasant impression, as if there were someone or something dangerous in the next room. In the darkness, all my senses are on high alert. I hold my friend K in my hands to give myself courage. I advance slowly. The room where I am is empty and smells of piss. The next room should also be empty. But I am not sure. The whole suburb seems immersed in expectation of something. I am waiting, too. Then I leap forward and suddenly find myself in the room. Only a bed with two women. They are lying crosswise, one on top of the other, face up. Death. There is no reason to stay there. The unexpected guest arrived far before me.

4. – The liberator's dismay at the task that awaits him. Even a breath, a small, imperceptible breath, can change the arrangement of things before me. I have a secret spite in my heart, I feel inadequate, impoverished and a bearer of doubts not certainties. What do I do with my long studies? What use can they ever be in a place like this? I look around. The room where I spent the night without sleep is little more than a stable. I'm not complaining. Yesterday a defective bazooka took off a friend of mine's shoulder. I try to close my eyes and fall asleep. It's time to leave. I eat a pomegranate. I need some water but there's none. Maybe later I'll be able to drink, for now I have to be happy to move on. The unexpected guest didn't want to show up tonight.

5. – From the loose cracks in the shutters I look out onto the street. In front is the entrance to the camp where I am. A continuous flow of carts and the occasional van. Many walk with their hands clasped behind their necks, they look like prisoners headed for the gallows, they are just laborers selected for a small job in the nearby city. They must be searched. The light of day is now overbearing and attacks everything. There is no longer that sense of mysterious humidity that rushes in at night. The workers have gone, even the foremen who selected them on behalf of the enemy. Here you have to survive, you can't have fussy dreams. Even my discussions are feeble. I hold my friend K in my hands and he comforts me.

6. – Time has fallen asleep here on many objects that surround me. Trophies or trinkets, old weapons and pieces of glass tied together to make a necklace. On everything the temporary smell of the lack of memories, as if the past had been erased inside these objects and projected into a distant fantasy, in any case future. I look out through a window without glass, the breath of the sea not far away makes me think of something unbearably painful. I can't allow it. I must open my soul to the next commitments. Strengthen myself, give myself strength. I am not a man of decline, I am a man of liberation. Why these shivers of fear?

7. – A group of businessmen sit around a small round table, too

small for them. They don't seem to notice my presence. They talk in a hushed tone. It must not be about big business, but here every straw is always divided into four, lawyers by nature, all of them, they are busy with nothing, at least for what to me seems like nothing or little more. I shift nervously in my chair, drink my mint tea. I look at my companion's expression. He is intent on following the discussion but not a muscle in his face moves. We get up. We leave the place to its fate. It smelled stuffy. Others will take care of airing it. It was a den of collaborators. But how did they understand that? Perhaps from an expression in their eyes. I have never known for sure. Even now I feel a chill in my back, as I write these lines in a Greek prison.

8. – They were massacred recently. A feeling of dismay grips my stomach. The world is an atrocious void filled with corpses thrown mercilessly into the air, like inanimate puppets. One corpse has a bandaged head. How strange. It must have been a previous wound. There is not much light in the room where the bodies lie thrown haphazardly. I can't do anything about it. I bite my lips to scream. I can't afford it. I don't go into the darkness of the other rooms. Others will come after me and will take care of the burial of these corpses. The number is growing in an impressive way. My friend K weighs on my hands. I am dejected and stunned. These are not experiences to which one becomes accustomed.

9. – Spiders and mice. Other unpleasant little animals. Bedbugs and lice. This other daily struggle is not easy. You crush one and a hundred come. The room where I have been for a week is a breeding farm. We have to defend even the few things we manage to eat. It must have been a sort of leather warehouse, at least once. All that remains is the stench of rotten fish and a few strips of leather, a few moldy scraps. Poverty and violence have wiped out men, women and work activities. The setting of the sun brings no relief. Somewhere the cry of a lost bird. Painful, like everything that surrounds me here.

10. – The silent uphill road absorbed all my attention. I knew it every inch of it. Now I had to finish. The cruel freshness of the still unripe morning would soon be cancelled out by the relentless heat. The towering palm trees, immense columns in the blue sky, awaited my arrival in their emptiness of innocent objects, extraneous to the frightening responsibility of the man who lived in the last house on the right of the uphill road. Soon the feeling of oppression that was tightening my stomach would end. I knew it for sure. It is always like this when you carefully and accurately dot the i's.

11. – I have a few books with me. I leaf through them from time to time. English is not congenial to me, I pick up a few things here and there. This effort contributes to making me feel remote and alien. Alien to myself. I am a bearer of freedom, I repeat to myself, not a butcher. I remain perplexed on the bench where I am sitting to

reflect. The world around me is impassive in its pain and its ferocity, right or wrong, and it carries me along with it like a straw.

12. – The demonstration today was impressive. A disheveled and vague army, without head or tail, a boil that suddenly exploded in a foreign, enemy city, which should be their city, theirs too. A going back and forth. Sinewy arms of young Arabs dripping with sweat, screams, animalistic moans and lashes from dark-skinned policemen. Sephardim. Knobby hands swinging short whips and long truncheons. Everyone furious, everyone scared, especially the policemen. Madness. No trace of organization, no signs, no flags. What use are these symbols, aren't the open and bleeding wounds enough?

13. – I came with the presumption of issuing a challenge. As had happened to me elsewhere, I quickly had to change my mind. No literary adventure, just a water carrier, which is in short supply here, too. No illusions. I did not have the formula for freedom with me, just as I do not have it now. As the years passed – and since the moments I describe, many have passed – I realized that this formula does not exist. Here there is no coward to look straight in the eye. They came to hunt down courage even in the most miserable hovel and people had to invent it if they did not have it. There are only the eyes of some crafty person who does not want to accept his bad fate, but his sick conscience denounces him and for him there is no mercy. The others wait in consternation or act trembling for the uncertain future. There are no alternatives.

14. – Short of arms and legs, obese, he went out in the morning to go to his usual café, where he spent his days huddled under the internal portico waiting. He walked with difficulty in his sandals, always new and shiny, as if he had bought them the day before. He carefully guarded his secret work as an informer. Not that he took satisfaction in doing it, you could see it from his always scowling face, but it was his job and therefore he did it well, to the end. Every now and then, in the evening, after leaving the café, he did not go straight home but stopped on the avenue as if for an extra walk and here he sent out his old signal of understanding. He sat on a small, half-crumbling wall and left there a packet of chewing tobacco with his notes inside. Someone picked it up immediately afterwards. One evening, the sudden arrival of an unexpected guest changed his destiny. The message remained in his inside pocket from where it should never have come out. This time it reached its destination through the butchers of the morgue.

15. – The little house was cheerful and airy, a real exception in the midst of so much squalor and decay. The armored front door did not seem approachable. It would have resisted any break-in. It was not possible to get an idea of the interior, there must have been

at least four rooms, an exceptional luxury. Papyrus was growing on the terrace, water in abundance. But how did he manage to have all that water? On the south side, a balustrade with slabs showed some European camping deckchairs. The flowers were missing. At the entrance to the street a half-ruined barn provided a comfortable observation point. The man had a family, mysterious, like everything in these parts. He did not do the shopping, a boy on a bicycle brought it to his house and left it in front of the door, rang the bell and left before the door opened. Through a crack, which could no longer be seen, a female hand took the bag. That was all. All around were the traces of many melancholic shipwrecks. Only that little house seemed unassailable. One day like any other it ceased to be. The unexpected guest made his visit.

16. – I take a deep breath of the crisp morning air. The sky is clear, without a cloud. I am happy to be here, even though I have slept little and badly and I still don't like mint tea. I ate a sugared donut with sesame on top. I look at the nearby Catholic Franciscan church. My man should come out from there. I can't wait for him for long because I am not sufficiently covered and people are looking at me curiously. For this time, the tailing will have to be postponed.

17. – Bitterness, yes, but I am not allowed to be moved. I cannot cry. I must hold back my tears, and yet there are many reasons not to. It is increasingly difficult for me to think of the children massacred with daily punctiliousness. The persecuted of yesterday are the persecutors of today. This observation is not scandalous in itself, which everyone could make if only they opened their eyes. External support is of little importance. I see other bearers of freedom wandering like me in the camp and I know what questions they are asking themselves, the same ones I ask myself every evening, when my heart tightens even more. I cannot talk to anyone about these feelings, everyone here is trying hard to appear hard and pure. The ferocious sun searches deeply inside me, inexorably.

18. – Restless, eager to do, I have been waiting for several months. They tell me that my time will come. I repeat the same exercises every day and listen to the same words of the instructor. I know my friend K. a little better. They tell me that I will have to deepen my knowledge of him more and more. Moments of passing sadness. The pains of the closed world that surrounds me are settling in layers in my heart. How will I contain them all? Why? Where has my tough shell of a liberator hidden? I have no doubts about what I came to do and not even silly fears of not being able to do it. I just wonder, what does it mean to empty the sea with a spoon?

19. – My first stakeout. A tiny little man, frail under the wide flutter of his tunic. He seems to be vibrating all over as if he had a fever. Maybe it's fear? Does he know that someone knows? I see him

stop in front of an outdoor barber shop. He talks to the barber. He looks around. He can't have seen me. He seems reassured and it's as if he were apologizing to the barber who he must certainly know well. There are no nasty reports about the latter. There are about the little man. For him it will only be a matter of time. A short time.

**20.** – In the camp there is a German comrade of unique ugliness. The worst thing is that he is aware of this physical deformity. He never puts it in brackets but underlines it, almost as if he were throwing it in the faces of others. He always keeps to himself, his body bundled up in an Arab cloak, his head down and his shoulders hunched. Angry contractions shake him all over when he tries to explain in English his way of seeing things. The instructor does not tolerate him. No English soldier tolerates deformities, especially German ones. Here there is a bit of everything. The West meets the Far East and they do not always understand each other well. The aim is perhaps common, to help these people free themselves from oppression, but not everyone considers themselves an instrument to be put at the service of these disinherited, some think they can become architects of their destiny. The latter – as always happens in similar cases – are a minority but they have the best connections, they are bearers of concrete help from the East. Weapons and baggage.

**21.** – I slept badly. Dreams pregnant with nightmares. Agitated visions and cravings. Maybe the eating, maybe the colitis that's the consort of water. Waking up was terrible. My eyes are tired. I have been looking at the same reality for months, empty and monotonous, I would like to make it flourish again. I am here for this. Yet I have to wait for someone to decide for me. Soon. Here they also need people like me and they don't split hairs. The imminence of a concrete danger, a clash, an attack, would put my stomach in order. I am sure of it. At least I hope so.

**22.** – Hatred is a bad counselor. It makes you lack coolness and perseverance, two essential elements to complete an action and save your skin. Curled up in my Arabian cloak, I reflect on this maxim that I have tailored for my own use and consumption. And where do I put the growing anger? How can I stop this vortex and this tension that grows more and more every day? I am not an avenger nor an instrument of low or high justice, I do not want to rebalance the scales. I am a liberator. I repeat these words to myself mechanically. In the end they will become a conviction.

**23.** – We are inside a security service warehouse. Someone gave us the key. Here, underground collaborations intersect in unpredictable ways. There is always someone who knows something they shouldn't know. Nothing is as it seems around here. Everything is old and decrepit in here. They mustn't go in here often. There are all sorts of goods, cabinets with open doors, all sorts of tables, most



of them small and round, empty filing cabinets, chests full of books. Shelves, coat racks, chairs. Soon all this rot will be just a pile of ashes. There is also a small offset. It looks like it has never been used. It is missing its inking rollers. An unnecessary clutter.

24. – It is an unfair war, like all wars. Here we really hit rock bottom. It is not enough to identify and strike the extreme beasts, the material perpetrators of torture and massacres, we should go further. But beyond that there is the great mass of people who, like all the miserable, have a profound fear of losing the few benefits that make their misery tolerable. The worst are precisely the poorest, those who will never have access to positions of command because they are dark-skinned. How can we explain to them what freedom is? They confuse it with their uniform as a civic guard or firefighter, if not as a policeman, and with the possibility of striking with impunity what they consider the enemy. Other poor wretches chased away by force from their homes while the new arrivals ate what was left on the table and slept with their clothes on in their beds abandoned in all haste.

25. – Deeply convinced of my task, I have begun to acquire a certain practice in moving in a world that is completely foreign to me. At the same time, my persuasion has waned. I always feel the value of what I am doing, as I think a street cleaner feels all day with his hands in the mud. Clean the worst part, eliminate it. But it always grows, recomposes itself, closes ranks. I need a fluency that I do not possess to continue.

26. – My past life was closed, almost completely buried in work. And now here, an unpredictable life. It is not easy to face this change with coldness. The companions are cordial, the instructor irrefragable, in his own way unapproachable, the plans are confusing if there were ever any. I am not an adventurer or a military professional, I am an anarchist, a bearer of freedom. But where can I give it, and to whom, this freedom? Let's be fair, it would take years of explanations, while here we must immediately repair some flaw, make it clear that we are alive and not yet dead, that we are not afraid. In short, raise our voices. This is not the way to bring freedom. Everyone here suffers and has suffered, I take on a part of their pain. Am I perhaps a charitable Christian benefactor of the oppressed? No. I am offered an effectiveness that I do not possess and that perhaps, sooner or later, I will have. And after that? Does the recognition of an infamy enable one to raise one's hand to strike the infamous? I don't know. I do and I have doubts in doing. The two things – they tell me – are a serious contradiction that I must overcome. I don't know if I will succeed.

27. – The unexpected guest is always in the air, dominating all conversations and all thoughts. Everyone imagines it in their own

way. I often feel it suddenly emerge from something I am doing, even a banal preparatory shadowing, the measurement of times, the covering of distances, in short all the monotonous repetitions of the fight against an overwhelming enemy. In these comings and goings I often encounter it, I do not betray myself or show my emotion, I have become skilled at dissimulating. Otherwise who would have immediately prevailed? But I cannot help but see it when I grope my way through the invasive darkness of a secluded courtyard or an unknown house. The only way out of it is not to think about it. In the long run I run the risk of turning it into a nightmare and hosting it heavily in my everyday life. This must not happen. I must rush forward, towards freedom. But on which side is the road that leads to freedom?

**28.** – No distractions, not even a moment of inattention. This could be the last moment of my life. The instructor is a bird of ill omen. Or is he? I am squeezed on all sides. My existence is now divided between waiting and my friendship with K. I hold him in my hands and look at him affectionately. I have never had any particular interest in weapons. This is instead an essential part of my life. I have to count on his assistance day and night. This kind of dependence chills my veins. Yesterday I stood for some time looking at a balcony that showed no signs of life. A balcony like the ones you find in my area. I was tempted to jump out of my hiding place and end it all once and for all. The unexpected guest was not around there.

**29.** – I am amazed at the calm in me. Sometimes, more and more often, this whole absurd affair becomes a routine, a daily habit, a job. And I know what a job is. Years ago, when I was in the Greek resistance, I was still at work. I would be away for a couple of months at a time and would throw the bosses of the pharmaceutical company I ran into a panic. A double life that couldn't last long. Just nine months. Now everything is different. After a short rest in an old military bunk I wake up ready to get back to work. My home is far away, my loved ones are far away, everything else is far away. Only my friend K and the activities I will be doing are close by. I often realize that I am not completely ready for action, but I am not the only one in this situation, I think we all are. Let's replace preparation with determination, what else can we do?

**30.** – Today there is a strong wind coming from the desert. With every gust the precarious and damaged glass of the windows shakes and warns that they are about to fall. I use glue to attach pieces of paper where there are cracks. It doesn't work. Everything is about to fall to pieces. Then the wind, as often happens in these parts, suddenly drops. It is night. The door of the terrace still bangs with every small awakening of the wind, it warns me that I am still alive.

In the bunk next door a German comrade is sleeping. Two days ago he was wounded in a firefight in the hand. Luckily it didn't have to be amputated. He said he doesn't want to go back. I think he must have a fever because he is shaking in his sleep. There is a nurse here but I don't want to wake him for so little. After all, everything that happens here, even the work of the unexpected guest, seems like something of little importance. Death is in the air, impalpable but present. In the end we no longer pay attention to it.

31. – I cannot write. Not even a note. It is forbidden. They could find it and set off on a detective search for unpredictable conclusions. I have here my own name that I used in the Greek resistance. But this can never be a trace. So I reformulate in my mind the notes that I would like to put on paper, I give them an articulated form, quite similar to these lines that I am writing many years later in a Greek prison. My brain is really trained for this task. Years of preparation have made it a docile and effective instrument. Not so my body. It is on the latter that I must work. I thought about the pain. Would I be able to bear it? Certainly, I tell myself. But for how long?

32. – The wind has brought a great quantity of sand into the camp. The door of the hut this morning could hardly be opened. Everyone is very tense. Not because of the wind, which stopped during the night, but because of today's action. I am not chosen to go. Four of them go. We stay to daydream and eat our livers. In the afternoon I return. The action has faded. The man has been warned and has changed itineraries, or a chance event, damned coincidence has made him take a different route. I know well what the itinerary is, I have checked it for a few days. Always precise as clockwork. Not this morning. Everyone is tired and a little down in spirits. The coordinator has the intelligence not to expect much from all of us today. Tomorrow, perhaps. It is often like this. A great job, meticulously and expensively structured, goes up in smoke because of a triviality. Once again the unexpected guest was not in the game.

33. – Fallen from the third floor. He had gone to the terrace to escape but had no escape except to try to jump to the next house, too far to reach with one leap. Now he was a gruesome pile of flesh and rags. And yet he was still moving. I looked into his bewildered, stunned eyes, as if he were trying to tell me, why? Why me? The relentless sun allowed no illusions. It was not my job to help the unexpected guest. He had done everything. Now the lump was still. Perhaps no more than a couple of minutes had passed. The hood had slipped and from the split head something was coming out, held back by the gray hair, roughly tangled, curly. I remember the hands, stretched out on the asphalt, palms down, enormous. The hands of a torturer.

34. – The death of a wretched person does not bring joy. Death

is always death. Someone is there, in front of us, to remember with his extreme experience, more or less traumatic, what will be our experience. The face – when you can see it – sometimes sends a last message. Tiredness, almost always of tiredness, never of serenity. Tired life and the miseries that weave it certainly do not help to improve it. Death always disillusion, it is never what we expected to see at work. It is not a fact, it is something that has already happened, archive material, from the morgue. And yet we should be able to talk to a corpse, especially when there is something in common, something that binds forever and that no philosophical foundation can dissolve. It is not a question of being dismayed by what happened, after all, it was built, this last one, in detail, so it should not surprise. And yet there is something else, a dissatisfaction as of something badly done, that needs a thousand sophistries to hold itself up. It is a matter that drags on very slowly, for hours and days. Then it disappears or fades. But it comes back, from time to time, it comes back to ask, why?

**35.** – I couldn't imagine that political interference would reach all the way down here. They come, not many, but they come. Especially Czechoslovakians, from what they tell me. They check to see if their investments are going to yield something. In truth, they don't expect much but they haven't given much either. It's a dirty plan that doesn't touch me and doesn't concern me. It disgusts me just to see these shadows that wander around here and then leave to be replaced, after a few days, by other shadows. There is aid – I don't know how many would die without this aid – but it is given with a certain implied hairiness. A kind of blackmail. The local organizations push their way through each other to manage this aid. The leaders appear under escort and leave under escort. The massacres remain.

**36.** – It takes a certain stubbornness to keep going. It is not a question of theoretical foundation or of fundamental analysis, here it is always pounding water in the same mortar, with the results that can be imagined. In a certain sense this going forward has its own logic. Once the enemy is identified, it must be struck. This simple sentence is much more complex than one can imagine. It requires enormous work. An enormous repetitive and boring effort. Nothing burning capable of taking your heart away in an overwhelming and courageous rush of putting yourself at risk. Here everything is calculated, except for the unexpected. But the latter are, almost always, either accidents or disillusionments. After so much work something goes wrong and you have to start over again. You can be tested and experimented, but you can never peacefully accept a blatant setback against which there is nothing to do except go back and try to start over. In the meantime the lens has gotten wet – as they say in jargon

– and you have to wait for it to dry. Even greater inconveniences and more delicate and lengthy precautions. The unexpected guest sometimes takes a long time to arrive.

**37.** – An ancient city, eternal like that other one, now grown enormous, stupidly sumptuous, divided into many contrasting places of prayer and worship, in closed, forbidden neighborhoods, where it is dangerous to enter unless you are on the right side. A city that is industrious, wise, slow and capable of waiting. Trees where once there was only the air of waiting for nothing. And so much hatred, so much bitterness, so much mutual regret, so much suspicion. Nerves on edge. A low rustle can unleash uncontrolled, unexpected reactions. A city where it is not possible to walk under the moon, nor listen to the crickets chirping, everything always seems to be waiting for the next destructive event. A city that lives off a minority of disinherited people, guarded by second-class citizens. A city of rituals and rigid regimes respected with composed ferocity. Ultimately, a city where young people quickly grow old and old people offer a frightening example of rancor and bitterness towards everyone. Including themselves.

**38.** – The shopkeeper was a powerful, stocky type, with a bull neck and enormous shoulders. Yet he had an almost humble look in his face, surrounded by a long Orthodox beard. His eyes were wary, with fleeting flashes of cunning and attention. Early in the morning, arriving, after having raised the shutter of the goldsmith's shop, he swept the sidewalk in front of the door. Then he hid behind the counter waiting for the customers. Now, these last ones were the real problem, at least from what we had heard. The shop was a mailbox for the information service. Seeing these few haughty customers in the whole day, never more than four or five, you realized that there was something special. They were all men, which in itself was not suspicious, but they seemed tailor-made. It even seemed that they all dressed the same and moved with the same caution. Then the confirmation. We tailed some of them. They all enter the same café, not far away, where they sit at a secluded table, chatting with other congenial types. Summoning the unexpected guest is now necessary.

**39.** – In the Arab quarter the explosion caused a great deal of confusion. It wasn't a very serious thing, just a few broken windows, but the warning remained. The houses, poor and confused, on this side, had all shaken. My ears were ringing from the displacement of air, even though I hadn't been exactly close to the explosion. There was something in the air that didn't convince me. I couldn't hear the fire trucks or the police cars arriving. All this happened after a long time, as if they wanted to give things a chance to sort themselves out, to find their own intimate composure autonomously, without external interference. Strange coexistence of an ancient civilization

divided in two. Maybe in more than two parts. Who knows. This is the country of unpredictable nuances.

40. – The woman, elderly, had a dignified demeanor, as if she always knew what had to be done. A shawl was on her head, over her silver hair that covered her forehead. A black lace wrapped around her neck and remained tied under her chin. Her small hands had a few rings that could not have been of great value. Did she live in poverty? Not really. Her husband's job, a moneylender at a very high rate of interest, must have been quite lucrative. But was her way of dressing perhaps intended to divert attention from her husband's shady dealings? It had not been possible to understand how the clients were selected, by what means the information needed to grant the loans, never on pledge, was gathered. All one could see was a coming and going of poor people. They must have been small consumer loans, the most deadly. The report had come from the information gathering center and did not concern usury but a small collateral activity, support for a clandestine Orthodox organization. The two things married magnificently. One covered the other. This time too the unexpected guest arrived on time. The man had a pair of gold glasses that fell on the counter. The lenses remained intact. The safe too.

41. – A comrade was wounded in an ambush. Not a serious wound. The bullet went through his left arm. No risk because it came out right away on the other side. Now he wears his arm in a sling and a short bandage. He will have it for a week or more. He tells me that they were waiting for them right in the place where they were supposed to stop and observe the tall, bespectacled character who coordinates the scattered fringes used for a few cents by the service. Something must have gone wrong. It was the very first day of observation and there must have been no hitches. Instead, the character must have been carefully guarded beforehand because they feared something like that. Too exposed, him. Too exposed, us. A subtle game, the wounded comrade tells me, shaking his head. He is a man of about fifty with a long experience in various clandestine resistance movements. And so, he concludes, they put me out of action. Another day has passed. I can't sleep. When will it be my turn? I tell myself, without fear, as something more or less inevitable.

42. – At the back of the café an old man was sitting in front of his glass of mint tea. He wasn't drinking. On his lips was a perpetual ambiguous, enigmatic smile. No one knew what that smile was hiding. And yet the report he had received spoke clearly. The old man was waiting for messages to pass on to the services. Not important things, small news, and he was happy about the tiny commissions that would rain down on him for his work as a stupid spy. He never got impatient while waiting, that was his job, at the end of the day, if

there had been no messages, he would calmly return home, a hovel on the northern outskirts, where he lived alone. A thousand individuals like him acted as stable transmitters. The value of the news was of no importance. What for days and days had been a stupid and incongruous taking and reporting, in the end, suddenly, could reveal itself to be important. He would never have known. I never saw him cast an uneasy glance right or left. He never looked back on the way home. He didn't even turn around when the unexpected guest came to visit him. Perhaps that was what remained on his lips, the eternal little smile.

43. – In the scorched countryside, full of stubble, next to a steep path, there was a hiding place no larger than twenty square centimeters. The joyful shrieks of the birds guarded it until we discovered it, almost by accident. The old woman who went to get the contents of the hiding place, a small package, sat on a stone nearby, as if to rest. No one could suspect her. We never knew why she did it, perhaps because her son had died in the war and, in her own way, she continued what he had had to interrupt. Or for money. We never knew. In his place, for a while, we took the messages. Those who knew how to read them translated them into English for us. Nothing important, a small point in a large, vast network, which connected to maintain a capillary repression and control. In a word, what can be defined as neighborhood news. Departures, arrivals, strange behaviors, unexpected visits. Ordinary sad stuff.

44. – There is a great deal of excitement in the camp. In a few days we will leave to actually begin the first actions. We will leave behind us the enormous baggage of techniques and chatter. The instructor smiles, as an English instructor can, a sort of blondish mouse. He has never cared to seem different from what he has always been, a perfect war machine. I greet him while I am packing my bags. My English does not allow for long conversations. And he is not the type to start them to pass the time.

45. – The two monks are nice and unpredictable. Not so much for their philosophy and their gymnastic conjuring tricks, but as men. They always smile, they are always present and never lose their patience. It is not easy to understand what an oriental thinks. The height of indignation is a sort of half-composed bow, as if the mistake or the stupid statement were their own and not ours. After all, they too are instructors, more of the soul than of the body. For months they have trained courage without us realizing it, talking about our muscles and what the mind, by concentrating, can make them do. I know they will start again with others after us. They are impassively happy. They would have the same face if they were angry or even furious. I greet them with a slight bow. They clasp their hands, but I don't. I would feel ridiculous. As far as their art is concerned, I

remain on the side of ignorance. What I have learned is too little, and my pragmatic mindset prevents me from fully understanding it. I can touch a man with a finger and stop his breathing, but I don't know if I can do it at the very moment when it is absolutely necessary to do so. And this cancels out any technical advantage I may have stored up. I am not only a beginner, but also uncertain. I do not have enough determination. I hug my friend K and suddenly feel more confident. And this, as I have been told, is a sign of fear, a deeply phallic need for an aggressive prosthesis.

46. – The apparent peace of the desert at night could not inspire calm in me. I was nervous and worried that my anxiety would be seen and that my other companions would also suffer the consequences. My first active stakeout, as it was called when it most likely ended with an attack, could not fail to cause this pulsing of the veins and this beating of the heart that I feared everyone could hear. You could not see much of the track at the edge of which we were, near a bend. The most distant part, however, remained covered by a sudden rise in the ground, a sort of hump or hill. I remained absorbed in my attempt to control myself, to give myself an attitude. I held my friend K tightly, the only one in whom I could confide, but he did not speak, and that was a great thing. It was not the time for chit-chat. And yet I was there, totally there. No thought of anywhere else, no feeling foreign to my poor existence completely frozen in the crouched position in which I found myself. And that's where the unexpected guest arrived, not for us, but for the enemy. The wait, not even that long, could not have had a better outcome.

47. – To control, to dominate one's impulsive nature, to remain impassive while a fire blazes within, but how is all this possible? The monks had mentioned a sort of gesture, an imperceptible movement of the hands or feet, a slow and rhythmic winking of an eye, in short a point on which to concentrate one's attention. To count these movements, distribute them into groups and then keep them together in a double enumeration, one provided with numbers and one with objects present, as if the various groups of movements were resting on those objects and were lying there waiting to be removed. I recently, a few months ago, once again employed this method, while I was being tortured in the Greek city where I was arrested. It works to a certain extent. In those remote times, to which the recollections I am describing date back, I knew these techniques better. I cannot say whether they were, in a distant and recent past, truly useful.

48. – A proof of the stupidity of men, like any division based on the fear of the other, of the different. A proof of how starting from good reasons one can easily go beyond the bad ones, from outcasts to persecutors. And the political slime, everywhere. Even in the most



extreme misery. More divisions upon divisions, leaders and projects, one more extremist than the other, on paper, in the end you have to see things with the eyes of realism. Look, these have never been my eyes, and yet I realize that they are not even those of an idealist. I bear what I can bear, the rest I have to decide with my companions, otherwise nothing to do, I am not available. No one can destroy my ideas and these are not at the service of anyone, they are mine and are not available. We have prepared a magnificent fireworks display, details, means, and all the rest. Objective, very acceptable, nothing to complain about. It was not possible to achieve it. The political approval did not come. Reasons unknown. Who knows what balances we were about to unearth and upset. As good infinitesimal atoms we have overlooked. Here we cannot have revolts within us, it would be a bitter contradiction. Fighting among ourselves. It happened in the past and the consequences were very serious, they told me as if they were telling a terrible children's story. Today the situation is different. Today we are all more mature. We are all permeated by the incalculable miseries that surround us but above all political order, international balances and all the rest still reign. Out of respect for myself I try to think about the next action. I will certainly share it, the opposite is unthinkable. We are all in the same boat. But I also know that it is not just a question of form.

49. – There is a widespread acceptance of the conditions of misery in which we all, without exception, find ourselves. Poverty and disorder, confusion and filth. It is a miracle to drink, thinking of washing oneself decently is out of the question. Every now and then, going into the city, with appropriate precautions and using reliable acquaintances one can wash oneself. This is a problem that affects everyone but no one complains, it was known before coming here. I often watch the strange and silent consternation of the old people, crouched in front of the doors of the shacks waiting for the end. What do they think of times not so far away? What has become of the memory of when they were chased from their homes? What work did they do? Now they are mute objects. The old women are more alive. They often have dark, ferret-like eyes, and they get angry easily, they curse, they spit and run as much as their strength allows to get water from the well without saying hello to anyone.

“FAUST

In every garment I shall feel the torment  
of this narrow earthly life.  
I am too old to play,  
too young not to desire.  
What can the world offer me?  
You must renounce! Renounce!  
This is the eternal refrain  
that resounds in everyone's ear,  
that every hour throughout life  
sings to us in a hoarse voice.  
In the morning I wake with horror,  
I would like to weep bitter tears  
seeing the day that in its path  
will satisfy not one of my wishes, not one,  
that will empty with obstinate criticism  
even the presentiment of pleasure  
and with the thousand trifles of life  
will forbid it to create in my restless soul.  
When night falls with anguish  
I must lie down on my bed;  
not even there can I find peace,  
frightened by cruel nightmares.  
The god who lives in my breast  
can move the depths of my soul;  
he reigns over all my forces,  
and can move nothing outside of me.  
I feel existence as a burden,  
I desire death, I hate life.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And yet death is never welcome.

FAUST

Happy is the man who, glowing with victory,  
Death encircles his head with bloody laurels;  
happy is he who meets her after wild dances,  
clashed in the arms of a girl!  
Before the power of that sublime spirit  
would that I had fallen into ecstasy and expired!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And yet someone, that night,  
did not drink a dark drink.

FAUST

Spying, it seems, amuses you.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I am not omniscient; but I know many things.

FAUST

If he tore me from that horrendous tangle  
then a sweet and familiar sound  
and deluded with the echo of happy days  
a remnant of childish feelings,  
I cursed every allurement,  
every mirage that envelops the soul  
and with forces that blind and flatter  
the exile in this valley of sadness!  
Cursed be the high intention  
with which the spirit entraps itself!  
Cursed be the dazzle of phenomena  
that turns against our senses!  
Cursed be the hypocrisy of dreams,  
the deception of glory and of a name that endures!  
Cursed be the possession that flatters us  
like a wife or a son, like a servant or a plow!  
Cursed be Mammon, both when he spurs us  
with treasures to dare bold enterprises,  
and when he arranges cushions  
to invite us to idle pleasures!  
Cursed be the balsamic juice of the grape!  
Cursed be the supreme grace of love!  
Cursed be hope! Cursed be faith!  
And above all, cursed be patience!”.

(J. W. Goethe, *Faust*)

## **Fifty – ninety-nine**

50. – I have my own personal sense of justice. Harsh and rigid, like all anarchists. I am against this separate condition, the antechamber of death. And I am against those who feed the exclusively political ideology of throwing the usurpers of their land into the sea. Coexist. This is the initial solution, which then degenerated because of international interests and the increased military power of the guardians and custodians of exploitation. This place is a thicket of frightening contrasts. I do not want to enter into them. But I want to strike at the torturers, the politicians, the swindlers, the exploiters, the men

of the secret services, the truncheons, the right-wing extremists who here are mostly men of color. Rascals for whom it is right to facilitate the arrival of the unexpected guest. All my comrades share this choice.

**51.** – A small, clean-cut man dressed in European style. Sly little eyes but hidden behind a colossal pair of glasses. Carefully combed. A few hairs parted in the middle with a line that seemed to be drawn. Perhaps colored an improbable black. He didn't seem to care about being followed. He also had the appearance of an ordinary layabout, a layabout, one of the many frequenters of cafes. It wasn't like that. His specialty was the control of university students. I never saw him talk to any of them. He hung around the faculty and listened. He listened and reported to the right person. How this reporting happened was ascertained by chance, or almost. The friend, whom we had called John, made a mistake, he didn't follow the previous advice in the manual supplied with the service that time. He retraced the same route several times going to the cafe for his appointments, his deliveries. The unexpected guest waited for him under his house.

**52.** – The executioner of low justice looked like a plucked chicken. Tall and thin, he was disgusting just to look at, even to those who did not know his real job. A sort of hunchback made him always keep his head bowed, as if he were looking for something on the ground or as if he wanted to escape the gaze of others. He went to work in the morning, like all executioners, punctual and clean, a postal worker or a land registry man. Instead he slipped into the garage reserved for services, where, on the top floor, was located the school for prison guards. Many had passed through his hands and bore the marks on their bodies. I have known some. They had told me that in his work he always maintained a certain sharp, mocking, nonchalant chuckle. A sort of professional rictus. He loved his job, a true artist. The unexpected guest left his chuckle intact on his face, only that. The rest was no longer usable to do harm.

**53.** – We left just in time. When they arrived they gutted everything, women, men, children and things. Like all soldiers, they leave scorched earth behind. And these are incited by their religious leaders. In the name of a single and omnipotent god, everything is permitted. The extraneousness to any crime, even the most negligible, criminally speaking, of those poor people, was evident. Relatives or friends of our friends, a temporary and indirect support, completely marginal. A sin paid for with life. A heartbreaking death. How can such atrocities happen? With what heavy coin can such murderers be repaid? By murdering. Here is the irrevocable spiral that twists and turns and never stops. There can never be forgiveness, never peace, never can these scenes be forgotten. A hundred thousand are the same. And here the number is certainly more than a thousand.

54. – The captain was more or less a dandy with pretensions to accuracy in his dress. The uniform would have been modest in itself, but he tried to make it appear richer and perfectly coiffed on his athletic body, thanks to the art of a personal tailor where he left a good part of his not very generous salary. He had an energetic and self-confident step and the weapon at his side was clearly out of order, a deadly magnum. The man had a defect, small if you like, but which I have found in many lovers of efficient militarism, he liked young people available for payment. A not insignificant hindrance for him who in any case had to save face in front of his subordinates. So he frequented a certain very private place, and for us unapproachable, and entered through a door located in an internal courtyard which was accessed from a secondary road. A good place for a rendezvous with the unexpected guest. The magnum remained inactive in its sheath.

55. – The girl with the dark, intense green eyes, shaded by beautiful lashes, had shown up at the café where we were waiting, sitting at a table near ours. She spoke southern French, with a strong nasal accent. A tourist in every way, backpack included. Her black hair, loose on her shoulders, framed a pretty face with a completely regulation French nose. Nothing to say on our part. We had other things to think about. A lot to say on her part. Hence the beginning of a complicated conversation, anxious on our part, pressed by the delicacy of what we were doing, relaxed and curiously interested on her part. At the back of the café, on a simple shelf, an enormous teapot, never used I suppose, because in these parts they make tea in kitchen pots, and underneath a rickety sofa with our man sitting on it. On the walls, ugly prints of major Spanish and South American capitals. At one point the unexpected guest arrived and we both threw ourselves on the girl to flatten her on the floor covered in sawdust and spit. The man sitting on the sofa remained open-mouthed as he was presented with the final bill of his life.

56. – The university was a very complicated place. It was necessary to keep away from it. The political currents clashed openly there and it was not easy to identify them except the right-wing extremists, by their tangible religious signs. But the most dangerous, most of them informants for the services, did not give themselves away with these signs, they were only hired men, not blind and stupid believers. Not far from the main staircase there were two streets, the one on the left hosted a bookshop with university texts, the one on the right a café, a place designated for meetings and exchanges. The characteristic of this café was constituted by an enormous table placed in the centre of the room with a layer of dust a finger thick, never removed in living memory. The mixture of dust and tea spilled due to student carelessness had by now solidified. It was not a place

for us, but it had to be monitored to detect any exchanges of information. From here departed some good boys, dressed as students, and in permanent service as confidants of known executors of low justice. One of them, in particular, I remember calmly leaning on the august table waiting to cash the communication to be delivered home. He was squinting that morning and contracting his whole face, peeking around behind his nearsighted glasses. He was smiling at absolutely nothing with his yellow, sharp teeth, keeping his head bowed as if to support the heaviness of who knows what thoughts. He was moving his lips as if he were talking to himself, but perhaps he was reciting a prayer or a passage from his holy books. The unexpected guest showed up that very morning, the same morning of the idiotic smile and the yellow teeth.

57. – In the short time since I left training, I have changed a lot. I have not had the opportunity to think carefully about what I have learned, if I have learned anything. When I am in action, everything is so fast and instantaneous that it seems automatic. Often these actions are conducted in groups of four companions. One presents himself as the unexpected guest, the other follows a few steps behind him and covers his back, the other two are further away and cover the exit routes and the entry routes. Everything should work more or less as expected in the many tests and in the many shadowings and checks. Sometimes there is an unforeseen event. In this case the unexpected guest is invited to turn back and show up again another time. Or never again, if the work has gone awry in an open manner. In these cases the most difficult thing is to regroup and not lose your head. You still have to maintain control of the area and fall back in an orderly fashion.

58. – The motorboat was carrying coastal security men out to sea on patrol to prevent the arrival of illegal immigrants. Generally, they were Egyptian Arabs who wanted to reach the big city for their business. Or to lend a hand to one of the resistance organizations. It wasn't difficult to hide in the sand. It was more difficult to get close to the eastern port, which, although sheltered by a few rocks thrown there at random thousands of years ago, was still exposed. The small pier had a sentry box where a sentry was dozing. This operation immediately gave me a sense of dismay, perhaps because of the sea, perhaps because of my childhood memories. I don't know. I had to force myself to control myself. There were five of us. Four had to think about the military, one had to prepare the explosive for the motorboat. It was the first time we were in action with explosives and they had given us only seven hundred and fifty grams of TNT, five sticks in all, and a detonator as well as four meters of medium-velocity fuse. We waited for night. For a long time I watched the soldier leaning on his good national machine gun, almost dozing,

sitting on the floor of the cockpit. I knew he was a conscript, perhaps a Sephardic from what I could see. The unexpected guest arrived silently without giving him time to make a gesture. The device was prepared. The explosion made the seagulls that had been dozing nearby fly away.

**59.** – Here there are those who live in squalor and bitterness, in the horrible desolation of a double wrong suffered, that of the land stolen and that of their own misery, the latter suffered as a consequence of that theft. They are people who have no hope of improvement except the small subsidy from the organization that helps them not to die immediately or to get in line to go to work with a paltry salary for the enemy. What worse can happen to many of them? To blow up with their own load of explosives? And why must they consider this death worse than the so-called life they suffer daily in the camps? It is the judgment of those who have a full belly and warm feet, not of those who are suffocating crushed by a multiple oppression. Many decide to take the decisive step, a family decision, mind you, not an individual one, and then, at the decisive moment, they feel their spirit failing. They are not despised for this. They resume their place, sitting in front of the door of the hut and wait for courage to return. The greatest discouragement is to go back, but no one makes this defeat weigh. Everyone realizes that courage comes and goes, no one is the absolute custodian of it.

**60.** – Everything here has the air of a slaughterhouse for animals of little value. The very organization of a camp is a kind of collective suicide. The weakest necessarily succumb. Everything is reduced to the bare minimum. There is nothing that is not from some international relief or internal organizations. With all the provisional and sporadic nature of these procedures. Consulting the pile of brochures and leaflets in English it would seem that the whole world is trying to collect money to buy products to send to places like this, where I am too. If someone gets hurt, sometimes, there is not even a way to disinfect the wound. I always carry a gel with me to use in the event of a gunshot. You cover the hole and wait for someone to remove the piece of lead that is inside. If you are lucky you get an entry hole and an exit hole. In these cases you just seal the two holes and wait for a doctor, unlikely, for an equally unlikely drainage.

**61.** – Some more unfortunate than others have their brains completely deranged. They wander in the mud with a distant look as if they were looking for someone or something absolutely urgent. They talk in whispers to themselves, perhaps they tell each other stories about their lost happiness, their family, their children, their wives. I don't know. Perhaps they simply pray a little louder than usual. They seek a logic that is not here, and so they search for it with their whole existence. Without logic, what kind of life is life?

And theirs is a death that seems like life, that drags on for days and months and then ends suddenly. They are not surprised by anything. They look but do not see. Their eyes are remote, perhaps they have turned inward, out of horror and the inability to bear it. How much reserve energy do men have? I don't know, it is certainly not unlimited. Suffering in the long run destroys the strongest temperaments. The aid, our very presence that is not material but of another kind, they don't even see it, it has left for a journey of no return. And it is not a few, hundreds, thousands. The organizations hide this reality because they are afraid of it. Triumphalism, even with regard to our own actions, has always made me sick.

**62.** – The secret services must have recruited new recruits. A tall, pale young man with a waxy face, a conspicuous defect in his right eye, and a sleepy, absent air. If this guy had been anything other than what he appeared to be, well employed, he could have done a lot of damage. He didn't seem to be looking at anyone or anything. He sat on the steps of the University and waited. Was he listening? It certainly didn't seem like he was. Every now and then he touched his light moustache, as if it were fake. Maybe it was? Was this also part of the show? We kept an eye on him for several days without any results. He seemed to have been there by chance. But sitting on those steps by chance, and for several days in a row, was the last thing a sensible person would have done. Finally, after several days, he made contact. He handed a pack of cigarettes to an elegant, thin gentleman, around forty, with a long, slender neck, almost no chin. This was the one who had asked him for a cigarette and the other had passed him his pack. Important note. The loan had not been returned. The man with the long neck thanked him and went away. We followed him to one of the most renowned places among those used by the services. Our boy was making his first contributions. The unexpected guest could not be late in visiting him.

**63.** – The lookouts had taken turns. The woman was still there, in her previous place. She didn't seem to have any intention of doing anything. She wasn't looking around, she wasn't nervous. Dressed in European style, she didn't look Arab and maybe she wasn't, but you never knew. The lookouts were clearly Sephardic, even if they did something to hide it. The information recorded that they were actually checking our headquarters, the little house where our group had been living for just a week. They had arrived quickly. The services were always at the forefront, but like all organizations of that kind, they couldn't defend themselves from infiltration. Resentment and massacres take a long time to digest. The only sign of uneasiness was that the woman blinked every now and then. Then a short, bearded, dark-haired gentleman approached. His eyes were hidden by a pair of thick glasses. He also looked Sephardic but perhaps he



wasn't, many Ashkenazim can be confused or disguised appropriately. In fact, Sephardim in the slightly higher spheres of service, obviously, given the prevailing racism, are few. The gentleman exchanged a few words with the woman. We decided to move out as quickly as possible. After a few hours we were elsewhere while one of us remained to watch the house from afar, sitting calmly on the threshold of a half-destroyed shack. Many arrived, police cars and services. This time it had gone well. Their operation had a hole, the poles were not up to the task. Good for us.

64. – Nothing weighs on me, no bond solidifies in my heart, the suspension or the parenthesis – whatever you want to call it – I force it to work. Perhaps it is the greatest effort I have to make. I come from far away and I am going far away. But where do I come from? And where am I going? I cannot answer, I would open an unbridgeable gap that would put into play the small advantage that in the end I count on daily to survive. Do I lack a background? In short, an emotional reserve from which to draw to refine my skills as an acrobat? Perhaps, but I pretend not to feel this lack, and I succeed perfectly. I am more or less a snake that has coiled on itself and with a forked tongue hisses in the face of the world, this small, narrow and decomposing world, all its love for freedom. After all, if I have to talk about disorientation here I am in good company. I don't know about my companions, that is, I don't know what measures they adopt, but for the rest, here they are all disoriented, my co-religionists or almost, if not patriarchs of this religion of absolute solitude. I for love, they by force have suffered, on parallel tracks, the same eclipse of feelings, we have been forced to harden ourselves, to annihilate ourselves here, in the present, denying and denying ourselves, or rather denying and denying ourselves to better attest our only possibility of continuing to fight. Would a distant eye, enclosed in the noise of some well-heated café, find all this indecent? Maybe. I cannot criticize this far-sighted and calm eye, nor do I envy its calm gathered in the complacency of its own security.

65. – As I write these lines, after so many years, I reflect on a very simple fact that passed me by unnoticed at the time. Let's put it in the form of a question. Why have I never taken it out on God? And yet the terms of a daily and persistent curse – which it would have been naive to call blasphemous – were all there. I am not referring to the earthly reflections of any religion of which I had before my eyes manifestations in abundance, often in forms antithetical from a ritual point of view, but I am referring to God, precisely to that entity whose right to exist I, a lifelong atheist, did not recognize. Of course, the most obvious answer would be that I did not do it because I was, precisely, an atheist, and atheists do not believe in God, therefore they do not insult him for human miseries and atrocities. Perfect

rationalists, atheists know very well that these atrocities are entirely the fault of men themselves and of their vanity and greed. Of course, I know this reasoning, but it doesn't satisfy me. Didn't I want to engage in a fight "also" with God in those conditions, adding enemy to enemy? No. This explanation isn't satisfactory either. But neither does the answer that my vanity, stupidly unsatisfied, suggests to me, that I knew of God's extraneousness to all that horror, appease me. Didn't seeing the wretched among the most wretched on earth pray to their God make me go berserk? No. I didn't unleash my anger against the beneficiary of so much wasted hope, nor did I waste my time, and my concentration, to explain to those whose only asset was that one hope, the groundlessness of the same. I didn't do it. I would have been a bearer of freedom, but also a hypocrite, or a stupid and cynical rationalist.

66. – At times, in my nocturnal reflections, when I couldn't sleep because of the heat or the wind, I asked myself about my senselessness. Not making a comparison – dangerous and capable of emptying my determination from within – between the present condition and the past one, abandoned recently, just a few months ago. No, not that, but I was asking myself questions about my senselessness and that's it, obviously that of the condition I was in, not that of my choice that had led me to that condition. I can't exactly speak of a crisis of perspective, or of lucidity in the choice, but only of an immeasurable distance between the awareness of freedom and the observation of the enslavement that I was only making the smallest effort to remedy. Of course, they were ideological and not pragmatic reflections, I know, but who said that pragmatism is better than any ideology? I don't know which way the scales would tip. The fact is that I wasn't the one holding the arms of this scale in balance. Perhaps fate? Or are these reflections of today, made after so many decades, aimed at modernizing an anguish that I then put aside with a brusque gesture of the hand, almost as if wanting to chase away a bothersome insect?

67. – Was it a prodigious intuition of unconsciousness, mine, or simple luck? I never insisted on following exactly the precise indications of the plan, studied in every detail. For example, I arrived on site an hour early and took a short walk, slowly, with the attitude appropriate to my clothing. If I was a tourist I looked everywhere with my nose in the air, if I was an Arab I walked slowly with my eyes lowered and looked at everything fleetingly, if I was an Orthodox I walked placidly with my hands behind my back, as I had seen them do and as they had taught me. These deviations from the rule often caused internal discussions. Many found them useless or dangerous, I insisted and sometimes I identified precisely in this way some of our errors or some flaws in the enemy's defenses. With a cool head

I can now agree that these were real challenges to fate, but I had a kind of certainty in me, a feeling on the surface of my skin, that it was not a banal whim but a conviction that nothing could go wrong if I checked the place before starting the action, whether it was a tailing or a real attack. After a certain time this way of doing things had spread to others and so everyone did as I did, that is, they followed my risky intuition. From this point of view, things never had harmful consequences. However, this required greater control of one's reaction times and, since these are not all the same, there could be problems. A critical consideration not without sense.

**68.** – Something was not going as expected. My man insisted on turning back and looking to see if he was being followed. He was obviously alarmed. I suddenly felt a great responsibility weighing on me. What was I to do? Give up, with the risk of ruining the work of so many people for so many days, or continue until the catastrophe? That morning I had not had time to have breakfast, I was all vibrating with nervousness and also with fear. I also turned back, excited and out of my mind, my companion was not visible. I picked up three small pebbles and, pretending to tie my shoelaces, I placed them on the sidewalk. It was the sign of extreme danger. Something was not working. I remained behind my man anyway. The unexpected guest showed up punctually despite my worries and those of the objective which was thus perfectly achieved. I had seen the Madonnas. This is what I had to confess to everyone later, in the final meeting, and they had not seen my three pebbles. Better this way. Less nervousness about the future and, above all, never skip breakfast. Not abundant, but necessary.

**69.** – Sooner or later it had to happen. In the first outburst of my arrogant presumption, I had thought I didn't need it, but the technique required it and so I tolerated it with a shrug of the shoulders. In every action, the person in charge of finishing presented himself as an unexpected guest, but he had to have a double nearby, ready to intervene if something didn't go right. Well, I was stuck. I couldn't finish, I looked the man in the face – so I had given him time to turn around, the first very serious mistake – and he smiled at me in surprise, perhaps to ask me what I wanted from him, in any case he didn't have time to mumble anything, the double concluded the unfinished task of the first unexpected guest. It was irritating but that was how it had gone, I had become stupid in front of the smile of a butcher. For days and days I had a sense of being overwhelmed in my soul, something heavy and unbearable, I wanted to guide my inadequacy and I could not tolerate the parapsychological explanations of my companions. Their very indifference in the face of what for me was a real defeat irritated me instead of cheering me up. I thought of the guy, fallen stone dead to the ground, and of me who

had not even taken out my business card, my friend K, which I kept under my cloak.

70. – They had loaded all their riches onto that old cart pulled by a skinny donkey. Misery upon misery was visible in that jumble of remnants of all sorts. They had to move to their relatives in a nearby village, so they could leave the camp. The journey was neither long nor dangerous. The settlers did not like these movements, they endangered their usurpations codified by the government and guaranteed by the soldiers. All these protections were not enough, some of them, more stupid than the others, often used pump-action shotguns to give themselves their justice. So they nullified a small movement, wiping out an entire family. I do not want to think about what remained of those poor wretches on the crumbling soil of the road. Why is the human beast so evil? Why does it never give a break? Why does it always try to satisfy its desire to massacre? They were people from the area. It was not difficult to find out who the massacrers had been. For them too, the unexpected guest arrived. This time it was quicker than usual. The black and unknown solitude descended in this stupid way on two families. One completely exterminated, one in part. The nearby desert did not even notice. The wind continued to blow as usual.

71. – The feeling of impotence has returned. Empty the sea with a spoon. Here there are boils everywhere, in this thousand-year-old city blessed by the sun. Sometimes it is more acute, sometimes less. In action my heart beats faster and I have the impression of living and seeing myself live. I do not feel any particular tension. After the first misadventure I am the one covering for other companions. It does not seem strange to me, it is all a question of practice. Now I assemble the information and the inspections, I put together my own and the others' shadowing, then I draw conclusions. There are many apparently respectable people – a pharmacist, for example – who are then discovered as avid informers for the services. Why do they do it? Out of dedication to the cause? Because they always feel threatened and for millennia they have been accustomed to looking around like all spies have done since the beginning of time? For money? For profession? No, these last two eventualities are the rarest. Little money circulates here. The professionals are few and better known, so they operate on a large scale, perhaps internationally. Those who work near the camps, or in the big city, are mostly volunteers, faithful to conspiracy and denunciation. The unexpected guest never has mercy on them. It is interesting to read – they translate them for me punctually – the obituaries that circulate punctually in the days following the visit. Unspeakable anguish. Condolence. Lamentation. Person of the highest integrity. And the torture? And the mass killings? And the houses destroyed from the foundations?

And the ambushes in the night? And the throats cut? And the rapes? And all the rest? Just a general consternation, good for all tastes.

72. – As a liberator I am a disappointment. I am the one who is disappointed. I lead my anarchist idea of freedom along steep roads, where the urgencies are different, not those of the straight road I had dreamed of. They are urgencies of survival, of not being overwhelmed and suffocated, of not being slaughtered on the corner of a dark street or a highway in the desert, any obviously unlit track. The urge to equip oneself materially and psychologically to shoot faster and better than others, than the enemy. So I have loaded my idea of freedom with the burdensome task of low justice, I have put it in contact with my friend K. They don't get along, I know. The former does not understand the needs of my friend and the latter is a passive instrument in my hands as an artist. I cannot close my eyes to the massacres and go on, candid as a lily, talking about freedom, about the beauty of anarchist freedom. First there is something else to do, here and now. My patient and loving effort to coordinate the two is doomed to fail if I do not first accomplish this other task, clearing the way for the unexpected guest.

73. – The tailor was old and had a considerable hunchback, certainly due to the long habit of always working hunched over in the same position, sitting on the same chair without a back. He wore an Orthodox beard and the regulation cap. The icon of that kind is unmistakable wherever you go. Living in the big city and in the protected neighborhood, his already long life, it seemed, could continue for a few more years. But there is a secret in each of us that pushes us to go on as if something were pulling us by the hair. The tailor also had his secret. Passing in front of the shop where he worked behind a glass window, I often saw him with a fixed, motionless gaze, without moving his hands in the usual gestures of his work. He was obviously worried. We did not know much about him, only that, it seemed, someone had put him under pressure, that is, forced him to serve as a post office box. Every now and then, in fact, a young man would show up at the shop who would clearly never have asked for a product of the tailor's manual art. This young man would stay a short time and, after a chat, would leave. On the evening of this character's visit, the tailor, having closed the shop, would go out to go home, not far away, and systematically - after having looked around him, with discouraging naivety - would leave a small envelope, a business card envelope, in a crack in the wall of an old house, a few streets before his home. Shortly afterward, someone would come to collect the envelope. A man from the services. When we decided to act, the unexpected guest introduced himself to this last man in the chain and took, on that occasion, the envelope. The person who translated it told me that it read, "nothing

new for yesterday and today."

74. – I must cut out within me every previous memory, every affection, every recollection, fix my mind on what I am doing, only on the present. I thought I had arrived at this point but sometimes it is like a flash and the safety mechanism does not work. No past, no future. Every instant in action one lives one's life in its entirety, no detail is possible except in hindsight. These notes, written after more than forty years, want to bear witness to this sad necessity. A new self-consciousness in every action, a vigilant spirit, ready to grasp any modification, to profit from every false movement of the adversary, to unmask him just when he least expects it. Thus I build a new me every day, seeing men and things around me differently, taking an interest in them with my own single and monotonous secret aim, discovering their movements, understanding what they are doing, usually the opposite of what they seem intent on doing. For this a lightness of spirit is needed that cannot be achieved by having something behind us. Everything must be lived in the present, obtusely conjugated in the present. My friends, now, with whom I converse – apart from my companions – are the dunes of the desert and the dunes by the sea. I study their differences, I catalogue them, I collect them with an attention that I would never have imagined possible. I also study men. Soldiers, for example, I know their habits, their nervous tics, the places they frequent and I even feel the fear they have in their bodies. Here fear lives everywhere, even inside me. Why should I be an exception? It keeps me company at night when I try to fall asleep and helps me count sheep.

75. – Here they die, by the dozen, of fever. I am not a doctor but I think it depends on weakness and poor hygiene. No one tells us what that friend or relative of theirs died of, even though we saw them every day. Inquiring is useless. After long linguistic negotiations, we are left with some vague and unusable information in our hands. There are two hospitals in the camp, but they do not have enough resources to treat everyone. And then, the best cure would be to eat a little more. The problem of our money, for our work, cannot be solved only by financing the resistance organizations. We need to carry out expropriations in the city, hitting the wealthy neighborhoods. The jewelry stores seem the most accessible target. The banks would require harsher interventions that would immediately put entire neighborhoods under a real curfew. Let's start the research and the documentation.

76. – The language problem is central. Only a few of our action group are Arabs and therefore also understand the language of the rulers, for them it is a necessity that they have had to face since they were children. I therefore live in a state of subjection, even if in the street, dressed as an Arab, no one worries me if I walk down certain

streets and not others. Afterwards I have to change and return to European dress, adapted to the climate. These details have already caused enough catastrophes to be underestimated. In the end I build a constant fictitious identity that I feel is mine, as if truly lived. I am mute and deaf but I express myself with gestures. I have learned a few words with signs. No more than four or five. Enough for the moment. The expropriations are going very well and now we also have a furnace for melting metal and a fence who does not seem like a spy. He has good references and subsequent checks have given comforting results.

77. – The days follow one after the other. Apparently the two mechanisms work. We now have a certain financial autonomy but we do not want this supplementary work to end up crushing the main one. That is why we keep ourselves within the usual limits of survival, but at least we do it with a certain autonomy. Our initiative did not please the politicians of the organizations but they do not feel like coming against us harshly. They have raised many objections. At the first incident they will come back. In any case they are not informed about what is planned and what is carried out. Basically the same thing happens with low justice actions. The information is managed by them but, from the moment it comes into our possession, all the new reworkings, additions and improvements are not communicated to the organizations from which the information came. This is a safety rule, on the one hand, but it is also a practice of self-management, on the other hand. We build the action, we see it being born and developing until its completion, and we are the ones who decide whether to conclude or suspend, avoiding sending the unexpected guest. In this sense, our decisions are not subjected to critical review. We are part of groups that ultimately have some privileges and do not want to risk them.

78. – How different reality is from imagination. I had fantasized for a long time before arriving at the training camp and during the preparatory work. I had great strength and a certain melancholy. These two aspects have now flattened out. The strength has diminished and the melancholy too. My daily wandering has become a real occupation, I live in it, it is this proceeding always in the same streets for a few days and then suddenly changing, other itineraries, other people to follow, other filth to discover. Thus I descend ever deeper into the roots of the human soul and I know miseries that I would have thought impossible. Certain unlikely follies have as a corollary the unleashing of equally unlikely adventures. All this tumult has been my life for months, it is what I breathe and what I feed on and what I am called to give an account of to myself. Often they are substantial but very minute aspects, unimaginably negligible in appearance, but of unique importance. The development and

success of the action depend on them. This is the very complicated tangle of my life now.

79. – Every now and then we invent a different life. After a short time, never more than a few days, we are forced to abandon it. Yet these works of fantasy are not entirely unfounded. Nothing is invented that does not have some root that was actually experienced before, more or less deep, so that even the most extravagant things and attitudes can correspond to experiences from the past. More often it is precisely from past experiences that unexpected suggestions arise for images that are completely out of the ordinary, where it is not possible to discern the root beneath the surface that remotely recalls something experienced, something that for this reason alone is suddenly dear to us and we do not want to erase when it becomes necessary to erase it. Very small traces, gestures, thoughts, colors, clothes, that are slow to disappear, as if a part of our life were going away with them.

80. – A fictitious identity has consequences that are not easy to manage. A complicated interweaving of reality and ghosts mixes and produces a continuous tension that not everyone knows how to deal with correctly. Every time something is deposited from the previous identity, from the character played until the day before, so you never know if that gesture, that attitude, that way of looking or walking is the one appropriate to the present identity or is a sedimentation of previous identities. The need to keep this great variety of modules under control makes the behavior a bit stiff with something between a mannequin and a scarecrow. I felt like a whole invention forced into an alien reality where it needed to fit into a mosaic to which it was not adequate. Observing the lives of others I saw a continuity of minute and constant links that I lacked, so I was discontinuous and uncoordinated, like a puppet with broken strings. I certainly maintained a balance, but with what effort and with how many mismatches? I could not know. Yet my life and that of others often depended on this adherence to the character. I could continuously connect these discontinuities only with fantasy.

81. – I looked at people's faces, their most common expressions, some calm, others agitated, and I tried to imitate them, to construct acceptable facial movements. It wasn't an easy exercise. Sometimes I was good at it and expressed a feeling that seemed quite real to me, it wasn't mine but it worked anyway. Other times my fears, my sufferings, my hopes surfaced, and that wasn't good. How many men I followed to better learn to imitate them even in the way they blew their noses or cleaned their glasses, in the way they laughed or scratched behind their ears. I saw that I, the bearer of freedom, was forced to hide behind unlikely and ridiculous but indispensable masks, where I sometimes lost myself with a kind of amazement.



How good I was and how naive I was.

**82.** – What’s the point of punching my doubts? They rise up in front of me like so many barriers, nooses that try to wrap me up and tie me tightly, preventing me from moving forward. This happens to me with particular vehemence in the morning when I wake up. Then I urgently need to fall back on something, anything. A glass of milk, for example. But it’s not always possible to have it, sometimes you have to make do with a packet of very hard biscuits and a little water, this too precious. Do these tremors have a meaning of their own, or are they a symptom of something else that roars down there, somewhere? I feel empty and without a point of reference to which to turn my attention. Woe betide anyone who turns back. I have to look ahead, only ahead, right at the border line, of my border, where destiny lies, which for the moment seems distracted by other tasks. It doesn’t speak, it waits, but I don’t know exactly what it’s waiting for.

**83.** – Is there an intrinsic purpose to conflict? Precisely internal to its mechanisms, of which we know only a small part? I am speaking of conflict in general, not of this one that I have here, before my eyes. Or do we go ahead blindly, evaluating in the short term the conveniences that we pass off as justice and an asphyxiating project of survival that we present as freedom? Often, in this game of intertwined questions, we reverse the contradiction between project and trust and derive from it a fideistic vision of life that solidifies into a project without foundation. Intense, yes, with heart in hand, for goodness sake, no one questions this participation, but always lacking that substance that gives clarity to the process in progress. Or is it not so much the process that interests us but its individual moments, isolated movements of an infinitely extended, incomprehensible whole, where shadows projected on the wall of the cave of massacres, ghosts considered certainties and certainties held up by a blind faith in their own destiny, are agitated? Convulsive, improbable, broken movements, torn between dogmatic rigidity and mirrored metaphysical aporias. We go forward anyway, stopping would mean dying, going back, vegetating.

**84.** – Then the action. The unique moment, master of myself and my destiny. The moment of quality. A fullness that repaid the long work, the sacrifices and the false and artificial attitudes. A strong presence that entered my chest violently. I breathed deeply and for a long time after having held my breath, I felt relieved as if I had dropped a weight. Finally master of myself, if only as a facial expression. The air itself seemed to me of a different transparency, lighter and equipped with a capacity to give me relief that it had not possessed before. The very visit of the unexpected guest had become familiar to me. I now saw its necessary, even if horrible, aspects. I

remained on this side of the judgment of merit, I did not accept the principle of a sentence pronounced elsewhere, but I myself was able to evaluate, examine and decide. I and other companions. Never arose doubts about the validity of these works of low justice. I know that now, after forty years, or almost, I put many of those visits in the unbridgeable number of human wickedness. I know that sometimes you are forced to get your hands dirty with blood. I know all this. I know that I do not regret what I have done, but I also know that the unexpected guest is always the bearer of a ferocious calamity. I do not want to lighten my responsible decisions of that time. The impetus of the bearer of freedom did not veil me at the time and continues not to do so now.

**85.** – Not having a taste for lying, it was difficult for me to play a part. If you add to this the difficulty of the language, the thing sometimes reached unthinkable implications. The tourist character was fine in the big city, not on the access roads or in the fields. Here you had to rely on your local companions and their initiatives, acquaintances and everything else. Often you spent hours in line for the verification of documents at the access roads to the city and these were not the most peaceful hours. For this reason you tried to avoid these places and preferred underground passages, from one house to another, along the border or the barrier, or desert areas, where however it was easy to encounter army patrols.

**86.** – Everyone here comforts themselves with their own vision of life. Me too. But the refusal of authority is not a great comfort, on the contrary, it pushes you to become – in the eyes of others – a sort of assiduous frequenter of heresy, a rehasher of orthodoxies and a sewer of patches in the ideological dress that, for better or worse, keeps us all standing like puppets. After all, denial is a luxury that in the long run is eye-catching and attracts attention. You can't always play the role of the one who creates the world anew, every morning, from scratch. Is there also a failure of creation if it is repeated for a long time, or would it be better to speak of a devaluation for quantitative reasons? Today I know that they were cognitive anguishes, that's all. The human soul is a well that can only be explored with wisdom and the latter is not an instrument that is acquired in a manner parallel to the acquisition of knowledge. The movement is exactly the opposite.

**87.** – A bird without a nest adapts to finding shelter wherever it finds it. That's how I felt, with a touch of stupid pride. I had chosen that adventure and I knew its conditions, I couldn't recognize any shelter as my home, not even temporarily. My own equipment fit into a military backpack that I changed frequently for the most varied reasons. If I imagined conditions of truce, at least temporary, I only had to look around to feel immediately ashamed. And those

poor people I had come to free, could they grant themselves a truce? No, certainly not. It was my residual fantasies, my ancestral, cultural and genetic heritage, that made me imagine them. Here life slips through my hands like water, there is no forecast that holds up beyond the present and the very short term. Habits don't have time to settle. A blanket is never mine long enough for me to recognize it as such. In the long run I don't pay attention to it anymore, but it has its importance. The precariousness of everything around me makes me precarious too. I often feel suspended over an abyss that could suddenly open up. I am ready to face this eventuality. But this effective active response does not make me, just because I feel it inside me, any more calm. The objects we use are accumulations of memory, repositories of recollections, agglomerations of images that allow us to keep an identity alive. If these objects alternate dizzily before our eyes, even the most intimate and minute ones, in the end we are left with a restless identity. Of course, a new object can also be pleasant for certain characteristics that more or less correspond to the idea that each of us has of beauty or convenience of use, but this is too limited and, thinking about it, requires a great strength of concentration to focus only on these characteristics and not think about the void left by the lack of the others. Every time a new object, new clothing, new environments, new places to sleep or eat. In the end, the only one who remains the same is my friend K, silent and impassive.

**88.** – The protection provided by another is a great thing but, in the long run, it tires and requires disproportionate concentration and self-control. One ends up always living under the impression of not behaving in the right way so as not to attract attention, so as not to arouse suspicion, mistakes that would compromise work and commitments, as well as the life, not only of those who commit them but also of others. The days of forced inactivity suggested these melancholic reflections more than others. So, in the end, I, liberator, felt that I had to first free myself from the thousand threads that tied me to my previous life and that constituted a heavy obstacle, even claiming not to feel them. But was this possible? No. It was not possible. And so I went back to trying to devise empirical methods to rid myself of memories. So I tied myself more tightly to the same multiple changes of objects at my disposal. Finding in this whirlwind a strength to estrange myself from myself. But at what price? I shook off the melancholy, the memory of my children, of my home, and I made myself into a perfect automaton. Obviously with poor results. My super-consciousness told me that I could not accept these weaknesses. Okay, that helped a little, but consciousness is a construction of the mind like any other, an imagination that counters other imaginations and, in the struggle of the times, the outcome of

this clash is never a foregone conclusion. There is nothing definitive, nothing absolute that holds once and for all, my conscience as an anarchist and liberator was there, every night, before counting the sheep, and it answered me to the letter, like someone who repeats a lesson learned by heart. Even now, in this Greek prison, forty years later, my conscience speaks to me in the same way and puts aside the unexpected guest who sits silently every night at the foot of my bed. They do not speak to each other nor could they understand each other, they are two monads without windows, inaccessible to each other. My conscience speaks to me and the unexpected guest looks at me and I know he is there waiting. I am calm, here, now, chemistry helps me a lot, my age makes it indispensable. And I make this outcast's calm a shield for myself. I am not dead yet.

**89.** – Where is the starting point of all this? Not of what is in front of me but of what is inside me, a confused mix of continuous refusal and constant acceptance. I have to live and I fight life, this life that is basically only death in disguise. I can't find the answer. Perhaps in a passion for the truth? Or, more adequately, in the beauty of life, the real one, not this scarecrow in beggar's rags. Certainly in a conviction that makes me feel a profoundly qualitative transformation is possible, not a banal change and, within certain limits, not even a more than desirable improvement. A greater availability of food and medicine for everyone here would be a blessing, I don't doubt it, but it is not the rupture that I carry in my heart. I hate a truth that is content to mirror barely livable conditions, far better than this survival equivalent to a slow and prolonged death. I contradict myself and, at the same time, I know well that I do not contradict myself. The numbness of those who try to fix things by coming to terms with their enemy does not lull my limbs to sleep. I am always able to react.

**90.** – A coat of paint. This is what many are hoping for. Here too. Perhaps not exactly among us comrades but certainly within the resistance organizations there are these bearers of cheap dreams. These people enclose themselves in a less modestly priced, therefore more showy, mortuary shroud, but they still hide a rapidly rotting corpse. You cannot move forward by accepting to retreat, fortifying yourself in a slightly improved condition but which carries within itself the seed of the next worsening. At the same time, you cannot accept the thesis of the extremists in words, those of "let's throw them overboard", when everyone knows full well that they are facing one of the strongest armies in the world. Filling your mouth with big words is equivalent to denouncing your own inadequacy, to challenging the giant by tickling him. And the latter knows well how the balance of power stands and lets the other, the resister, vent his anger in this way, accepting the miserable fate to which he insists on

condemning him.

91. – Unfortunately, our limits dominate us and will alone is not enough to move them, it can only make our illusions cruel. Only by fully accepting them can we continue to fight effectively, striking based on what we can do – which is not very little – and not based on what we would like to do. Not fully evaluating these limits does not produce a stimulus but a suicide, which, sometimes, can reach levels of sublime dedication but remains a matter in itself closed, without outlets, started and finished in a single gesture. Beyond the obstacle, one does not throw one's heart to continue fighting in spite of everything, therefore the only response is the elimination of future possibilities. If alive I am almost dead, dead I am not alive for this reason, nothing can give life to death. And here we are talking about concrete matters that concern everyone, these are not philosophical syllogisms.

92. – More than forty years ago, at the time when I was more or less making these reflections, I would never have thought that I would be able to write these lines after so long, in a Greek prison. Life has surprises in store that it would be wise to take into account. Yet no one is wise enough to do so. That is why we are always unprepared for the visit of the unexpected guest. His arrival sweeps everyone away in the same way, the just and the unjust, the victims and the executioners. It makes no difference. The difference is us. It lies deep in our hearts. And if in the heart of an executioner, at the moment in which he realizes that the final appointment is materializing, the fog that has accompanied him throughout his work persists, too bad for him. He will not even be able to understand that his hour has come.

93. – I hated the rhetoric. The fanfares, the feeling of being a protagonist, but I felt like a liberator. What I hated I still hate, what I felt like – a liberator – I stopped feeling long ago. You can't fight essential feelings and desires, not to deny them, but not even to channel them in what you think is the right direction. You can't suggest taking your life into your own hands when people have nothing left to take except their own misery. My libertarian ideas, obvious elsewhere, in that condition into which I suddenly found myself could appear to be an intellectual whim. The anxiety of the moment was not conducive to making the shoots, the seeds of my ideas, flourish. Other suggestions, other objectives, other means were needed. Then, perhaps, in a better tomorrow, we could talk about freedom. For the moment, it was necessary to defend ourselves from the invader, to fight inch by inch for the smallest space of survival. To insinuate ourselves into interstices that elsewhere might have seemed negligible. If I had stiffened, I would have been completely sidelined. My ideas would have had the success of the old boastful rhetoric. I

couldn't run this risk. I had to move forward, get out of trouble, make organizational and decision-making criticisms. But from this point of view, things worked quite well. Actions were decided within the group and started from information received from the resistance organizations. The latter did not hinder the decision-making and technical autonomy, they looked at the results, and these arrived on time, so no political burdens came into play.

94. – I lived the freedom I had chosen in action, in the moment in which my being, the quality itself, was burning, my different consciousness no longer immediately desirous of adapting to the more or less imposed rules, for example, the very rigid ones of clandestinity. But this freedom, true, boundless, was mine alone, I could not share it with those who were almost completely deprived of it. I acted, after all, as a liberator of myself. For the others, once the action was concluded, there remained the result achieved, a very modest thing for them who observed it from the quantitative point of view, much greater for me who remembered it, that result, trying to grasp its quality, my individual experience in quality. Clarity for them – one enemy less, a damaged repressive structure, an exploitation plan ruined – from the point of view of quantity. Shadows and obstacles for me, from the point of view of quality. After the action I would stop to reflect on moral nuances that were fundamental to me, but obvious or inessential to them. I would observe how the events had unfolded – for me the action was the essential point – and I would discover that the intensity with which I had experienced what for others were facts, for me was the central nucleus of the action, its intrinsic liberating potential, the qualitative tension that was created within me and that I could not communicate except through brief and innocuous statements, in a difficult language that I had not mastered well, which made things even more difficult. I would see them participating with me, acting with me, and I would observe them being external spectators of what they were doing, even though they were imbued with the essential need to do it. For me there was a different construct, a completely different growth of my revolutionary consciousness, not corresponding to what the same things meant for others. Often these simple but terrible considerations made me feel lost in the midst of a group with which I had intermittent and circumscribed contact, a contact that from time to time was interrupted, leaving me alone, burned by my experience of quality, by my participation in the action brought to completion. This is why I often found myself disoriented and isolated after an action and did not participate in the considerations and reflections that were made about it. I did not find them pertinent or adequate. So many were the statements made in the din of the many voices that often spoke simultaneously, excited by the danger I had run, and I

felt extreme and remote, even if I tried to hide this strange feeling of mine so as not to seem like a disturbing element within the group.

95. – The illusion of being able to make myself understood in my true intentions, the hidden ones, undoubtedly founded on freedom, was, in fact, an illusion and had to remain such. I tried to give it space, making it live in my daily life, but then I happened to shake my head to myself. I was not discouraged but I did not agree to do, only to do. I tried to act, that is, to go beyond the quantitatively detailed and horrifying list that the organizations made sure to send to all the fighting groups. It was here that the illusion took over, at times, and imposed questions that I was forced to postpone until later, after the necessary tasks were completed. Were my fantasies clouding my vision? I do not know. I think not.

96. – He had a vague air, he always seemed to be lost in his meditations that kept him distant from what was happening around him. The tavern was dark and smoking. I am in another town, the same one where I am now writing these lines in prison, after forty years. He was old and seemed tired as well as vague. With his cap pulled down over his eyes he didn't look at anyone. He was there with his glass of coffee and water in front of him, the horrible Greek morning drink. And yet he had been indicated as one of the most effective servants of the new regime. He warned directly and naively by going to a nearby police station in the port area. How much he received from this hateful activity of his was not known, it couldn't have been much, and his instructions weren't effective either. Besides, the area wasn't among the most interesting from the point of view of the resistance against fascism. We decided not to let the unexpected guest intervene. A comrade approached him one evening in the street and with a long speech convinced him to live his old age differently. Perhaps he succeeded in his intent? We never knew, in any case he was harmless or almost, like many apparently truculent and ferocious things in this strange regime and in this extraordinary country.

97. – Things are going in a completely unthinkable way here. To speak of a lack of organization is an understatement. My contact did not show up on time, I had to wait for him for two hours in Piraeus. I did not know where to go or what to do. My French documents had been processed well at the border, but I had to leave the little station where I could not find the person who was supposed to be there. In the end he came. He spoke perfect Italian, he had studied medicine in Italy but had not graduated. He had some experience in dressings that could be useful. He took me to the center, to a house near the Polytechnic. He did not speak much, and this was a great asset when you were out, but at home it was a bit annoying to practically live with a taciturn mummy. The next morning two other

comrades came, also close to the socialist area, and asked me what I was familiar with. There were no training places here. Everything was based on improvisation and good will.

98. – Having to start from nothing, the first action was to use the few weapons available to expropriate a private armory. At the time, the firing pins were kept together with the weapons and not separated as is the case today. The operation went well and I realized that my companions, especially the one who lived in the same house where I was a guest, had a certain amount of practice. They were not specialists, but neither was I. They told me that there were groups close to the Communist Party that also included military personnel, not of high rank. I never had contact with them. Later I learned that the service had not yet organized infiltrators but was limited to using only occasional informants, paying them a truly paltry amount. But at the beginning I could not know this and so I preferred to avoid extending my knowledge to these groups close to the Communists. The first week, following the action of obtaining the weapons, was spent in pharaonic projects, all conveniently put aside.

99. – Except for a few people of good will, everything here seems dead to me, gloriously deceased like the immense ruins that are found everywhere. Right in front of the most august monument of antiquity is the hidden headquarters of the American service. And where could they put it? In a library. The height of obscenities from every point of view. It would take a lot of effort, certainly much more than we who resist the joint domination – Greco-American – can do to rouse people, to remember the proud past that even the humble paving stones here speak of. Once again the image of the child and the ocean of which my beloved-hated Augustine<sup>10</sup> speaks comes to mind. But I am here to act, I am not on the seashore, I am a thirty-five year old man and I am not a child. We can do something

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<sup>10</sup>*Translator* – Patron saint of brewers and printers, and often associated with the pierced heart, Saint Augustine (354-430) was a North African theologian and philosopher who made significant contributions to doctrinal and secular conceptions of the Trinity, just war theory, ideas of the city of god destined for victory in righteous opposition to the earthly city of sinners whose unjust laws were illegitimate, problems of the suffering of the righteous, the existence of evil, original sin, and the idea of divine grace as essential to human free-will. A well-known medieval story found in an Italian collection tells that one day while Augustine was walking along the seaside contemplating the problem of the Trinity while working on a book on the subject, he came upon a child who had dug a small hole in the sand and was sitting beside it with a spoon. After watching him for a while, Augustine asked the child what he was doing, who answered that he was going to scoop all the water in the ocean into the hole using the spoon. Augustine responded that this was clearly impossible, as the ocean was too big and the hole far too small, to which the child responded that this was indeed the case, but that nevertheless, he would achieve this feat long before Augustine could penetrate the mystery of the Trinity with his limited understanding. Augustine reeled in awe at this declaration, and turning back to the child, found the boy had vanished.



to awaken people's attention. The headquarters of the American service was a good choice.

“FAUST

Sublime spirit, you have given me everything, everything  
I asked of you. You have not turned  
your face to me in vain through the flames.  
You have given me majestic Nature as a kingdom  
and the strength to feel and enjoy her.  
You have not granted me a cold and astonished stay,  
you have let me look into the depths of her chest,  
as one looks into the heart of a friend.  
You bring before me the hosts of the living,  
you teach me to recognize the brothers  
I have in the air, in the water and among the quiet leaves.  
When in the woods the storm roars and roars  
and the tall fir tree falls, uprooting and  
shattering the nearest trunks and branches,  
and at the collapse the hill thunders dull and hollow,  
you lead me to the shelter of a cave  
and reveal me to myself: and in my chest  
secret, profound wonders open.  
And when the moon rises clear  
to my gaze and calms me, down from the rocks,  
from the humid bushes hover before me  
the silvered forms of the world that has already been,  
to soothe the stern joy of thought.

Oh, nothing perfect touches man,  
I feel it now. In this voluptuousness  
that brings me ever closer to the gods  
you have given me a companion, and now I cannot  
do without him, although cold and insolent  
he degrades me in my eyes and with a breath  
of his voice annihilates all your gifts.  
He ceaselessly kindles in my breast  
a violent flame for that beautiful image.  
Thus from desire I grope for enjoyment,  
and then in enjoyment desire consumes me.”

(J. W. Goethe, *Faust*)

## One hundred – one hundred and forty-nine

**100.** – Acting in the villages is easier. On the islands it is more difficult. But you can't restrict everything to the capital. Here there isn't even the excuse of greater redundancy. The press is under control. The effects of an action are born and die almost always close to its realization. We can't count on anything other than the distribution of some mimeographed leaflet, the circulation of which is not only difficult and dangerous but also often takes people by surprise who almost immediately make a gesture of refusal. Then maybe he takes the piece of paper and hides it carefully. Will he read it? It is not given to know. So the action reaches its own limit in itself. A torturer is always a torturer. People don't know him except as a father of a family, as an employee at the Ministry of the Interior, as a soldier in general of low rank. The arrival of the unexpected guest is a positive event, even if it is not easy for the issue to be extended to a wider fruition. Of course, one could count on a sort of clandestine word of mouth aimed at clarifying the activity of the slaughtered beast, but one had to stick to generalities, both regarding the perpetrators of the action and the beast's misdeeds. Even these latter could constitute a thread that the investigators could have pulled to arrive at dangerous conclusions. To be fair, I do not recall any indiscretions or morbid curiosities which, in an environment that loves gossip, constitutes in itself a reason of great value to underline here, in these late notes.

**101.** – Arriving in the morning at the usual café-dairy, in the center of the big city, I found a tense and unbearable atmosphere. Everyone was silent and looking at their drink or eating their honey yogurt. I held back, sitting near the door, ready for any eventuality. Only after a while did the silence break and the usual chatter begin again with several interventions shouted at the same time, as is the custom in these parts. With the chatter came my companion who told me to pay and go away. On the way home, he explained to me that half an hour before my arrival there had been a visit from the police and that many had been questioned but not arrested. I had been saved by a few minutes of delay and by the superficial repressive organization in place in the country.

**102.** – It is incredible how many impressions are recorded and selected in a shadowing. Any one, it doesn't matter which one. Out of ten jobs of the kind only one reaches, after much effort, a conclusion. These impressions recorded in silence and caution lie buried in the conscience and settle one upon the other, until they accumulate, constituting the concrete figure of the unknown person of whom one has only vague indications of manner. At the right moment this set self-organizes and leaps out ready to serve as an essential instrument

for the success of the action. A piano sound, remote, immediately forgotten, has instead remained there, intensely linked to the rest of the observations, recorded in a jumble that includes the streets traveled, the doors and windows glimpsed, the men, women, children encountered. The meeting places, the shops, a tire dealer, one or two newsagent's. All a set ready for use. Unique and inseparable.

**103.** – The intuition of a danger is something that cannot be seen only in the rational perspective of the measures taken or of the techniques known and correctly applied. There is something else. In front of a situation that seems completely normal, while the correspondences and the behaviors of the actors in the drama are all perfectly aligned, at that very moment the accident, the obstacle, the unexpected is maturing. Now, there is something in intuiting this deformity an instant before it becomes evident in all its extent, and this something is an imponderable sense of imminent danger, something that without knowing it dissolves before, just an instant before, the embarrassment and proposes a way out outside the same pre-established rules. Often breaking the rules leads to disaster, sometimes following them to the end causes the impossibility of preventing and overcoming it. The tension felt in these moments is similar to an anguished disturbance, to a physical suffering, as if one were receiving a violent blow, and this while everything is still proceeding perfectly well. This may depend, but is not certain, on a sort of aura that gathers the actors of the action and unites them in a single whole that evolves in the moment in which everything is accomplished, therefore outside of chronologically understood time. This movement has a duration of consciousness that can mean a before the maturation of events and an after. When one feels this tension, it means that one is acting with full awareness of oneself, that is, with a different consciousness that is made such by the quality that one grasps while acting, a thousand miles away from the drowsiness of immediacy that knows and understands only a posteriori and only what the fact throws in its face in the so-called evidence capable, in its opinion, of reflecting reality. I have often spoken of the burning experience of action, here I dwell on a powerful unpublished detail, a sort of premonition that approaches the one who acts without the latter being able to solicit it and without even realizing it. Many times this mysterious something has saved my life.

**104.** – The ceremonial courtesy, disturbing, harassing, the subservience that insinuates and hides the concrete and violent malevolence if not precisely the hatred. These are the elements where I was to breathe. After all, a repressive environment that was certainly not first-rate, loose, full of approximations, but precisely for this reason capable of surprises that no logic could have foreseen. Even the comrades, not having a real organization behind them, had to arrange

for the information, risking with their insistence, at times, to ruin an action, especially in the small towns where, preferably after a few weeks, we chose to operate. Here the informants, instead of camouflaging themselves and disappearing between the lines of their dirty work, took on an arrogant appearance, as if they were the ones who lorded over all and not just the instigators. But the deeper you descend into the moral straits of a person, the more he sells himself for next to nothing, and the more his conscience, in erasing itself, replaces it with a puppet similar to a scarecrow. More than once we were able to verify that some of these individuals were not informants if not imaginary, they assumed the attitude and the bravado that the atmosphere required but, deep down, they informed little or nothing and, consequently, worked for zero profit. It was not up to me to evaluate their willingness to do damage, I only had to note their actual effectiveness. If there was no damage, we had to move on. This country is full of Karaghiosi<sup>11</sup> and you can't knock them all down except with the balls bursting with sawdust that I used when I was little.

**105.** – They tortured and killed a comrade. The body was found in a peripheral town of Attica, on a country road. No information. Stuff to make you eat your hands. The impulses of revenge are always bad counselors. It would not be difficult to send the unexpected guest to one of the many chattering informants, but here something more is needed. Our group knew this comrade, even if he was part of a group operating in the north of the country. But the place where the body was found is in our area. It is up to us to decide what to do. Anguished perplexities, doubts, restraints and uncertainties cannot be tolerated. The unexpected guest did not take long to show up.

**106.** – We cannot tolerate tears in the fabric of action. This is put together with small patient gestures that evolve over time and that are not part of the action but make it possible. This whole concerns exclusively the doing around which we work and which alone can never produce action. Parallel to and extraneous to doing, an individual path of overcoming is needed, where the reservations, the shades of doubt, the obstacles and even human pity must be set aside, that is, they must be left in the dimension of doing and must not be allowed to penetrate that of acting. The burning moment in which one comes into contact with quality cannot tolerate the presence of the uncertainties that characterize the human puppets that fill the world with their vertigo and their dizziness, with their

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<sup>11</sup>*Translator* – Karagiozis is a traditional character of Greek folklore often portrayed in shadow puppet performances. He is a lewd and scatological trickster figure, a poor, deformed man of no loyalties other than his own laziness who duplicitously takes part in the oppressive machinations of the Ottoman overlords only for personal gain.

superficial and chatty undertakings.

**107.** – Tall and with sturdy limbs that he waved frantically as he walked with a strange and unbalanced step, the coffeehouse politician, punctual every morning, sat at his post as a paid provocateur. His criticisms of the fascist government were nuanced but biting and, in general, caused a certain emptiness around him as soon as he tried to strike up a conversation with anyone who happened to be within range. Always ready to offer a coffee, he had few customers who took the bait. Despite everything, he persisted in his attitude, stroking, while waiting for the next fish, his large graying moustache placed, as if glued on purpose, under a large and ruddy nose. In particular, with a companion of our group, he was full of ceremony, trying to involve him in his risky chatter, asking questions and waiting for answers that never came. The guy was evidently too stupid to be dangerous, so it was decided to leave him alone. Only in a small town could there be a certain space for such types, there was no need to waste the unexpected guest's time with him. Four well-placed slaps would have been enough, a figure that someone took charge of regulating in this way. That's all.

**108.** – Sufferings give rise to an excessively inflated idea of the help that one expects from others. It is human that when someone who is truly suffering sees a hand being held out to him, he tries to grab the arm. In the new situation in which I found myself, in a foreign country, without speaking the language, under a fascist regime, I could not give the impression that would have been congenial to me, that of a fully armed liberator. I had to step aside, proceed with caution, swallow the fiery words – incomprehensible to others, by the way – that came to my lips, be cautious. But I could not help but be indignant and this caused me a constant maladjustment that ended up having consequences also on my personal capacity to act. These capacities required, above all, a great calm, a deep inner tranquility. To obtain this indispensable condition I had to make continuous efforts of self-control. In the end I succeeded in removing the conviction of the liberator, and therefore the underlying misunderstood duty to sacrifice something to the goddess of freedom. There is no such goddess, she has never existed. I fought fascism because I hated its authoritarian and nationalist way of conceiving life, because I did not share any of its choices of value. Freedom was my expedient to stimulate my determination to become increasingly radical and advanced. Once convinced of this, I took on a completely new character, more flexible, more attentive to nuances, capable of descending into the ideological interstices of a political choice and of not stopping at the cadaverous rigidity of an a priori ideological coherence taken and maintained once and for all and to be maintained in any situation.

**109.** – A society waiting for something. This was the impression I continued to receive in the small towns, in the villages of central Greece. Fascism did not seem to be present, no parades or flag-waving, no nationalist forcing. And yet I felt something in the air, a suspension of breath, a different rhythm of life, a mutual looking at each other without speaking. Poor old men and poor women, perched near the church. Almost absent were the young people, who hastened to show off their job commitments, as if to say, here I am, I work, I am in good standing. This made it difficult for me to camouflage myself, since it was easy to make myself noticed as a foreign body, forced into a context that could not easily absorb it. A project was, in these conditions, not only difficult to carry out, but also to think about. The little information that arrived concerned objectives that were either too obvious or too undiscovered. In any case, requiring long investigations, difficult to complete. Were these limits ours, that is, did they depend on our inability and inexperience, or were they a consequence of the poor organization of the resistance? I cannot give an answer, even now, after so much time. I do not want to lighten my limits of the time or accentuate the defects of a context that undoubtedly existed. We felt imprisoned in a fog where we could not see any plausible objective. Then, finally, a more precise indication, easy to control and to fine-tune. The action found its space. The little light became a beacon and the objective and the way in which it could be attacked were better seen. A commuter of the fascist repression was spending the weekend in the countryside. We sent the unexpected guest. Everything took on a different color. We were on the march, they could no longer stop us.

**110.** – To seek means not to be, to desire to be. This is what I was seeking, the freedom that I did not possess and which I sometimes raved about in my soliloquies intended to keep me company. For this search I had lit my little fire, which no one seemed to be able to see in the indistinct night where good and evil were confused, where the boundaries of right and wrong overlapped. Did that little fire of mine want to illuminate the suffering of others or simply dazzle my fear, my solitude? This in Greece was my first clandestine experience, as such it presented itself with the illusions of the new experience and with all the extremism of the neophyte. I was not what I thought I was, I had to build myself, and this could only happen in action, by totally committing myself to the quality of action. The idea of freedom must be nourished by a collective experience, it cannot propose itself as the imposition of an abstraction concretized on the nothingness of a metaphysical a priori. I had a suspicion that I was doing something like that. Every now and then this miserable fire of mine would go out and then it was the disillusionment of survival. First of all, not to get caught. Hence the endless routine of precautions

and checks. This repeated until boredom without interruptions of continuity. A lapse in attention and everything could be lost.

111. – The most complex and sensational action, directed against the number three of the regime, was destined to fail. Yet it is the one that most engaged us and made us grow in experience and determination. The objective was well guarded. He rarely went out and always under escort. Various hypotheses were developed. Dynamite and armed attack. This combination, which could also be used simultaneously, if only as a cover, divided us for a long time and made us lose many of our hopes. In the end we had to convince ourselves that the intervention of several groups together was necessary. This opened a thorny chapter regarding the conditions of a possible collaboration. Some groups were available in theory but not in practice, others required the presence of comrades who had military experience. We did not agree. It would take too long to tell this boring story. The unexpected guest remained inactive.

112. – I wake up at night. A bad sign in the difficult conditions I find myself in. In the approximate silence that surrounds the street where I live, I feel a strange wonder, an extraordinary and unpredictable surprise. What am I doing here? A question that moves me. I came to bring freedom. The answer, like all answers, does not satisfy me. The light of the street that is not optimally lit enters from the balcony, but my room is right under the street lamp. What happened to my plans? The decisions I made? In the night, suddenly unable to sleep, they seem like distant fantastic luminescences, flashes of an exacerbated spirit, and yet I had experienced them as thoughtful decisions, personal choices of mine that involved the fate of my children, of my wife. Why did all this suddenly seem so unbelievable to me now? The reasons, the excuses, the hopes, the eager images of something that is happening now and immediately, where are they? I cower shyly under the sheet, trying to push these pernicious thoughts away. But what can I do? They don't want to leave. I get up and start reading one of the few Italian books I own. A book by Adorno on music. Daylight makes its way across the sky and the night thoughts go away with its arrival.

113. – I must convince myself completely and put aside my old illusions, I am not a bearer of freedom. I angrily clench my fists as if to defend myself from an intimate spasm, too personal to be understood by others. I see clearly the limits of my actions, even if they, each of them, even if they are adventures in quality, are not able to make me free, much less to give freedom to others. I get involved, I live my personal condition of going beyond, I can even remember its active concretization, within certain limits, discussing it with other companions, but I cannot capture the quality. It is this that captures me and engraves on my body the signs, the burns, of its contact, not

vice versa. The limitless freedom that I experience in action eludes me once my action is concluded and I am left with a few hints, a few words of remembrance, the intoxication of a powerful longing for the aftermath, extinguished and quiet, as if the tremendous and uniforming level of time had passed over it. A few minutes or a few centuries, what difference is there?

**114.** – I have as much inconsistency in myself as I think I maintain coherence in everything I do, that is, in what I plan to prepare myself for action. But the applause for this latest outcome cannot make me close my eyes to my initial contradiction, if I did I would make too many concessions to myself. Does what I experience in a few moments – time condensed in a non-chronologically noticeable way – enable me to erase my doubts? Certainly not. And yet I almost have the impression that somewhere, if only as a reward for my (noble) commitment, I could have some authorization in this sense. But from whom? From myself. Well, I seem to understand that I myself will never grant this authorization. In this way, with the contradiction persisting, it is like witnessing the sacking of a fortress that was thought to be impregnable by a horde without rules and without law. Why am I afraid of this assault? Shouldn't I also be part of this wild horde? What is it that my anarchist heart hides somewhere that is conservative and respectable? Perhaps more than my illusions are willing to admit.

**115.** – If I let myself go, accepting the turn of events, swirling and anxious to gather every crumb of my attention, I almost have the impression of assuming an indolent, reconciled attitude. I am on the right side of the barricade, and here, where I have pitched my tents, I must necessarily be happy. Why these incursions of doubt? Isn't it perhaps a way of teasing my own commitment, of continually repainting it until it shines in the sun of cruelty and ferocity? I don't know. It is certainly not with careful parsimony that I sip these doubts. They come up in spurts, like the commotion of an underground river that no tomb can seal. Or is it I who consider every kind of closure, of artificial systems to silence these doubts, a catacomb measure? Here no fictions can lodge. Here is the nakedness of misery and oppression. Yet here too there are spaces, many spaces, to rest, to stop and look at the sky full of clouds, similar to the one I looked at this morning while walking in this Greek prison that hosts me, in the same city as forty years ago.

**116.** – By insisting on my anachronistic and indigestible idea of freedom, I condemn myself to solitude. I must seek only my own company, the uncomfortable reflections that I derive from my disillusioned initial intentions. Here, now, in a country under fascism, the first step cannot be freedom but liberation from a hatefully repressive regime. A fine difference that I struggle to apply in practice even



though I understand it very well. I must cut off every opportunity to reconnect with references made before, dangerously dissociative, I must see the things that must be done here and the possible actions, nothing more. It would be a powerful disintegrating force, mine, and I do not want to break but keep united the group I have joined. They are comrades who like me risk their lives every day, I cannot play my eternal game of absolute freedom with them. So let's put aside the childish pretenses with which I took any pretext to raise and highlight the difference between what is done and what could be done. These notations did not put my sick conscience at rest and did not benefit others. Here I am therefore engaged in a struggle against the oppressor for a partial liberation, which I will not share in its concrete aspects when it is achieved, even with my commitment. Respect for the commitments made prevents me from addressing my vision of the world. It is therefore not a step backwards but a step forward, I do not fail to keep my agreements with comrades, I put in brackets a source of my ideas. After all, I am in a collective condition of united front, that is, of a set of heterogeneous forces, generically opposed to fascism in power. This is reality, here I wanted to fit in and here I find myself fit in, flattering myself that I could be something else is out of place.

117. – If it were up to me, I would have no objections to writing immediately, today, the epitaph of those responsible for this oppressive regime. Unfortunately, balances are difficult to maintain and, except in extreme cases of pure idiocy, even government officials realize that they cannot push the envelope too far. Even their American protectors have this feeling, and are not at ease. After the recent disturbances, not particularly significant, against them, the latter seem to have relaxed their open-stage applause. They work in profile, as they know how, that is, in a crude and often ineffective manner. Of course, there is always a day and a night side to power, and the night side, which we take particular care of, remains brutal and disgusting. We cannot point to those responsible for this massacre that continues underground in an uninterrupted manner only for future memory. Once this storm has passed – as is almost certain to happen – their names will be forgotten. Many here instead think that there will be a way to present them with the bill even after the liberation. There are many ways to delude yourself.

118. – In the parade of ignominies that I have seen here in the last two months there are no beasts particularly aware of their role as infamous. We see them – more or less all of us in our group – as bearers of ignominy, torturers and informers, informers and provocateurs, but deep down, from what I have been able to ascertain, in the context of my experience, they are not only small beasts but also surprisingly devoid of malice, so to speak, without foaming at

the mouth. Each of them, at least in their attitudes, and these are a fairly sure sign once they are collected with such accuracy as we do, consider themselves a kind of “subordinate worker”, seeing the disgusting sides of their “work” as an element of the profession, nothing abnormal. I am not writing this to justify them, after forty years and more, but only to note once more the depth of the cavern of massacres, the political slime and its levels, in short the pure and simple ferocity of these beasts. Such flatness, even in ignominy, astonished me and continues to astonish me.

**119.** – The spy remains such no matter how the client treats him. Often it is not a question of level of commitment, of the allure of secrecy or the size of the pay. These elements are certainly there but they are secondary. There is a naturalness in the spy that cannot be bought or sold, a devotion that is priceless, because if he is bought or sold he does not reach a truly significant level. In other words, a spy is priceless. He works hard not even for glory, which is denied to him by definition, but because he is profoundly a spy in his soul, in his vision of the world. His is a sort of faith in something superior, in the god of denunciation, and to this god he even sacrifices his own identity, which is important for anyone. The spy reaps his most significant laurels when he has no ambition or pride, when he surrenders himself body and soul to his master and, at the same time, agrees to duplicate himself in a thousand interchangeable facets, all however suited to the sole purpose, to obtain useful information for the power he has decided to serve. After all, his is an “irregular” service, behind official lines, and as such requires a particular mentality, alien to symbols or signs, to recognition or pats on the back. The humility of a servant of this type borders on the mysticism of obedience, the fanaticism of divine service, the asceticism of the stylite without even the pleasure of being able to look at the sky from a certain height. Grunting in the mud that is his natural environment, he does not notice, as time passes, how his features become more embittered in the scowling expression of the pig that grunts instead of breathing, of the snake that hisses instead of speaking, of the mouse that squeaks instead of thinking. A spy does not breathe, does not speak, does not think. A spy is a beast. A malicious and dangerous beast.

**120.** – I have been tortured several times, even a few months ago, by the police in Trikala, where I was arrested in October 2009, and I have known many individuals who were, in fact, torturers by profession. I watched them, the latter, as they went about their business, as they returned from “work” or went to it, in short I learned to know them, I recorded their movements, their small daily attitudes, perhaps their hopes of camouflaging themselves among the people so as not to show the mark that, I am sure, they themselves read im-

printed on their own faces, this very normal one, without exceptions. Can I venture the hypothesis of a common characteristic? They were loners. I do not know to what extent this hypothesis holds up, nor are the present considerations an essay in applied psychopathology, so I am only concerned with their verisimilitude. They had to be loners by force, in my opinion. Even their colleagues, with parallel but different specializations from theirs, must have felt a sort of embarrassment in associating with them. I think that, with a minimum of effort, they too could have seen the bloodstained hands, the traces left by the tools of the trade, in short they too, although similar but not identical to this particular human abomination, must have felt a kind of revulsion, or at least a shadow of this human feeling. The fact is that I am not at all certain of these considerations of mine, and it makes me feel bad. After all, man is an even more evil beast than I could have imagined.

121. – The list of scoundrels is almost endless. Even with the little information we have here, it grows every day. In the three small villages where we go from time to time, and where I have met some comrades, a total of about twenty have been identified. They are scoundrels who work blindly. They have been neither recruited nor trained, or at least we have no evidence of this. They embrace, from time to time, the general indications that they hear on the radio in the village bar. Thus they become champions of the new regime and cast their holey net all around. They collect people's attitudes and sighs of impatience and report them to the police. Apparently the local police take almost no notice of them or perhaps they subject these suggestions to a certain intelligent selection. It does not seem that these scoundrels cause significant damage. Only one seems more careful than the others, perhaps only more bold in his uncertain fate. This guy, from what I am told, speaks more than listens, and speaks favoring the fascist government in power, he does not even care to give himself a cover, he is not a provocateur, he is just a stupid scoundrel who causes dangers only for those who, listening to him, can no longer stand it and oppose him, thus showing their ideas. The unexpected guest showed up directly at the work of this guy who remained with his mouth open, as stupidly as he had lived all his life.

122. – Inconsequent and rigid in my inconsistency. This is how I am and I cannot be otherwise. I have built myself a shell that as the months go by – I am on my second visit to this fascist country – is becoming considerable. I no longer enter into my dilemmas, I stay outside of my perplexities. I am still a bearer of freedom, but of a half-service freedom. Excluded from my ideas, with which I no longer lived in conflict but with a heartfelt need to protect and defend them from the rigid armor that I myself was building around

me. I was not afraid of falling into the snares of incongruity, I was afraid above all of not being able to pierce the armor that I had made for myself to protect myself and of no longer being able to re-enter myself, live with my ideas. I feared that the logical process of the action, specifying itself from time to time, would make me experience freedom and not let me see it, would make it invisible and unapproachable, like a shroud that covers the corpse but of which the latter has no knowledge. The monotonous and uniform progress of the preparation, an essential part of the action, took over me almost totally. I was a work machine, a producer specialized in correspondences and findings, measurements, shadowing, checks, stakeouts. I was passionate about my work, which I carried out with care – and how could it be otherwise?, otherwise, the catastrophe – and I no longer even connected this preparatory work to the actual action. This would suddenly blossom, at a given moment, the fruit of that work and of my decision to go beyond, parallel and univocal with that of the other companions. Here I lived my quality, as they lived theirs. The recollection of these experiences, even tonight, as I write these notes, in a prison in the same country, after forty years, was not a big deal. Certainly this depended on a lack of rigidity on my part, aimed at underlining the distances between my idea of absolute, anarchic freedom, and that little freedom that the recollection made tangible in the action carried out. But it was not even a lack of mine, it was a collective condition that I lived, completely different, for example, from the Italian one, and these recollection defects were produced perhaps, I am not sure even today, by the distance between the experience in quality and the reduced social situation in which I was forced to place the action itself once it was completed. Whatever the question, whether mine exclusively or partly due to the objective conditions of the place where I found myself, I was torn apart all the same if I did not resort to an effective strengthening of the aforementioned armor. But every armor protects and by protecting weakens, makes faint-hearted and uncertain, this is the worst trouble of a cover too tight, too cautious. There were no alternatives.

**123.** – Almost broken in two, bent to the max, his old posture and wrinkled face showed his peasant past. He was an old, exhausted comrade, pale, tired, and yet in his eyes he had the shame of what his country was forced to suffer and the pride of not accepting this repression. He quickly became one of our points of reference. He knew the surrounding villages, north of the capital, like the back of his hand, and he wasn't the type to delude himself. He looked at the little things that could be done. Attacking the lines of communication – something he had done during the previous resistance against the Italian and German occupation – was his specialty. He couldn't

do it personally but his advice was always of precious help to us. He spoke slowly, resting his hands and chin on his stick, sitting down, and the comrades who understood him would then repeat his words to me in quick translations. These were directions and ways to find the material. Never an idle chatter, never a doubt or a worry, never an out of place gesture of exultation or exasperation. A down-to-earth man.

124. – When we entered the shop, a great confusion had arisen. From the back room, at the first hint of noise, two hunters came out with rifles in their arms, I presume unloaded, and they had to be taken on board our vessel as well. A girl fainted and fell on the nearby sofa. Had she really gone or was she pretending? Who could say? They had to lock everyone in a tiny room, where they were all practically jammed against one another. A friend grabbed me by the arm to tell me that there was a problem with the safe. It was locked. It was necessary to reopen the room, to let out the master with the keys, which he had silently put in his pocket, to take him before the monument of his treasure, to open it, to bring him back to the closet. All a great waste of time and confusion that in these cases can easily turn into tragedy. At the end of these operations we left a flyer explaining the reason for our expropriation action and what the money thus stolen would be used for. But in this case I did not want to leave any flyer, our clumsy conduct could be a very dangerous trace that the police would perhaps be able to decipher. After all, if I think about it, a useless precaution.

125. – Every action is different from the other, and yet they all resemble each other. We are the ants that try to prick the big animal. We are unable to understand to what extent these pricklings worry it. The supplies are not much, from what appears in the newspapers, a short article, no more than that – perhaps it is a centralized strategy, a government order, but I am not sure –, the attacks on communications are not even publicized, our demands are poor, they rarely achieve their goal, that is, to be read by the people, to push them to organize themselves to do the same thing. The elimination of torturers and spies is explained only in short communiqués, mostly circulated by the revolutionary movement abroad and then, by rebound, brought back here. These, after all, are the actions that best disarticulate the government's repressive joints, perhaps, it seems to me, because of their approximation. I rebelled against this inevitable ranking of importance that I did not share, not being very fond of low justice actions, but in the end I realized their importance. It is in this direction that I therefore directed, with furious impetus, my energies. The unexpected guest rarely remained inactive. After all, even in other contexts, this is the typical action of the clandestine movement that operates in conditions of extreme difficulty. Modu-

lating the struggle differently, limiting oneself to sabotage alone, has the consequence of strengthening the organizational structures of the power in charge, generally of a repressive ferocity not commensurate with the level of the attack. In these situations, an incident could not end with an arrest. It would have been a disaster. The clash was therefore always to the extreme consequences. These conditions themselves operated on us a sort of choice that went against and beyond our own choice. Often, when we decided not to invite the unexpected guest, the risks we ran were greater. However, it was a hesitation, a change of objective made at the last moment, and therefore in itself much more dangerous than its ordinary realization, capable of following in its various phases the program already studied previously.

**126.** – Despite my habit of daily work, I realize that I am experiencing moments of true astonishment. With a certain confusion I sometimes ask myself, what am I doing here? The fight against fascism, all right. But even at home I fought against repression which, if it did not bear the name of fascism, in essence was not very different. Why this extreme turn? Because I have always been extreme in everything I have decided in my life. But that is not an answer that satisfies me. Have I always been so eager to measure myself against myself? Perhaps. And the choice of freedom? That was not only for me, but for others. A sort of humanism disguised as resounding words? No, I did not come here to modulate more chatter. I am here to act. This, once these reflections have been made, causes me an anguished impatience that I must somehow master. Every morning I resume my work in the territory and, little by little, I find my balance again. I think less about my situation in general and more about the small tasks to complete. I'm not saying that I can open a parenthesis every day and get myself into it, nor am I saying that these relentless and mysterious wanderings across the territory are pleasant walks, I'm just saying that I am everything in this daily work of mine and in discussions with comrades I do my part without trying to impose a rigidity that would be anachronistic. Sometimes, suddenly, I get annoyed by the reduction to the bare bones of certain facts, by the a priori renunciation of pursuing a basic efficiency that is in any case out of the question, then I fall back into line and report my correspondence and observations as rationally as possible. With a wave of the hand in the air, that only I know, I chase away the annoying thoughts of my memories. I must move on. Fascism must be overthrown, this is indispensable. I know that later, here, they will establish another power, similar, but for the moment a military dominion is something that I personally cannot tolerate. This, after all, is the reason why I am here, I have to stop looking for other reasons. This reason alone is enough.

127. – There was a moon that evening, but only a little, and the stars weren't doing their job well. Not a cloud, not a single lamp in the little street on the outskirts of town. A deserted little street where every evening, returning from the police station, the local strongman, a sort of red-haired colossus, would venture. He was in charge of intimidating the farmers and filing them. His long arms gave him a somewhat ape-like appearance but his step wasn't heavy, he must have been a guy who cared about his physical fitness, unlike most of his fellow countrymen, both men and women. The observation post was excellent and the man didn't seem to have noticed anything in the many days of stakeouts and checks. All you had to do was jump out at the right moment and block him by disarming him. The police station wasn't far away but it wasn't very well-guarded either. A noncommissioned officer and three officers, plus our character in plain clothes, a professional executioner. We had noticed that every evening, when he arrived at the door of the house on the ground floor where he lived, he stopped to observe the little street, to look up, often turning his back to the door, as if he had no desire to return home, where there was no one waiting for him. Only twice, in a week, had he stopped in a nearby shop to buy a bottle of wine and something to eat, fruit and vegetables. On the last day I noticed that he was wearing a mourning band on his arm. Had someone died in the family? Perhaps his wife? Our always sketchy information had nothing on the matter. Had this mourning made him more ferocious, or had it slightly lessened? What strange thoughts for me, an executor of low justice. Now, but only after seeing the band on his arm, I noticed a mourning band attached to the door, black, like the pink or blue ones that are put on in my area for the birth of children. Not mourning printed in a typograph but a band of black velvet, a strip a couple of meters long. As he walked the last stretch of the lane each evening, our man seemed to slow down. As I looked closer, I realized that he actually slowed down. Was that a good reason not to send the unexpected guest? No, it wasn't. In fact, he was promptly sent.

128. – I was tired from the long wait and cold. I could see, not far away, my duplication, that is, my cover double, who was moving more than caution would have advised. The avenue was very busy, the city, provincial, was almost entirely filled with outdoor cafes, and it seemed as if the movement of those who were strolling bored and those who were watching this bored stroll would never stop. But, looking carefully, someone who was behaving differently could be spotted. After all, that was what we were there for. The guy in question was a young student with a beard. In itself, that wasn't strange. Few students wore beards and almost all of them had studied abroad. Our subject didn't seem to pay attention to the stroll

but was sipping his coffee and reading a book. Every now and then he would raise his eyes from the pages, always the same ones, and look in a certain direction, always the same one, as if he were waiting for someone. The information, as usual in this disorganized country, had been sketchy. A right-wing boy with fascist acquaintances in Italy. Nothing more. He could have wanted to set up a contact here too or, vice versa, he could have gone to Italy sent by a right-wing organization acting in league with the government – we didn't know of one but we assumed its existence –, there were no indications one way or the other. The student – let's call him that – had been under surveillance for three days already. More or less at the same time he sat in the same café with the same book in front of his eyes and, every now and then, he always looked up at the same point on the tree-lined avenue. And what if all this effort had been a waste of time? Now, after four days, we had identified the house where he lived, with his parents and a sister, we learned this by questioning the neighbors and some older comrades who were with our group came to tell us. But nothing more was known. The work could have continued forever. Then, suddenly, the turning point. From the opposite side to the one constantly watched by our student, a guy in a dark suit arrived, he looked just like a policeman. The student was happy to see him. He passed him the book after a short chat. The newcomer, with the book under his arm, stood up almost immediately and without even saying goodbye, left. Followed by his classmates, he was seen heading towards the local police station, not far from the tree-lined avenue. Our student had completed his task and now he looked satisfied, smiling almost as if he were talking to himself. One evening, a short time later, under his house, the unexpected guest presented him with the bill.

129. – There was a timid attempt at an anti-fascist demonstration right in the center of the capital. A brief and sparse gathering, a quick distribution of leaflets in which there was not even a hint of a response against the government and its anti-libertarian procedures, but only about the increasingly precarious and difficult living conditions of workers. The police arrived with considerable delay and were unable to stop any of the demonstrators. Our defensive armed preparation was not called into action, there was no need. Was there something intentional in this delayed repressive intervention? It is a very strange fascism that we are fighting. I expected something much harsher than what happens in Italy, but instead there was nothing. Here everything is kept quiet. In a people who love to talk, compulsory silence is the worst condemnation and, at least for the Greek tradition, it is the antithesis of democracy, true fascism. I was hoping for some more radical confrontation that would have given us a way to measure, among other things, our capacity for a clash



on the ground. I was disappointed. No confusion, no serious shock that precludes the harshness of the repressive intervention. Everyone went about their business. The police picked up some copies of the flyer on the ground and didn't even notice that some had been glued to the wall a few hours earlier. Later we learned that some comrades known as former trade unionists or former militants of the Communist Party had been arrested. The attempt to charge them with the responsibility for the demonstration was answered with two explosions of little importance. The claim didn't even manage to circulate in a restricted circle. A few copies, which disappeared immediately. Great disappointment, and not only for me.

130. – There were three of them on the terrace. They were talking excitedly, I don't know about what. It was certainly a topic that must have concerned their liveliest interests. The older man was wearing an old green coat that had seen better days. The other two were in jackets and ties, not exactly elegant but decorous, like municipal employees. None of the three were employed by anything, they all worked for the new government, paid troublemakers. To be more precise, provocateurs. The old man spoke in public places like a fascist, his two companions contradicted him with moderation. Often, in the cafes, usually sleepy, their presence caused a certain wave of chatter, conveniently reported to the police. The result was a certain filing and greater control of those who had let themselves go in criticism of the government. But now, on the terrace, all three seemed intent on weaving the plot of something else, and they did it in unison. It was not possible, on that beautiful winter day, to understand their plan nor could our information be of any help to us. The next day the usual scenario changed. The three figures did not show up in the downtown bar and did not hold court with their fake diatribes. Two weeks passed and the old man showed up again in the same bar, alone. Some of his companions, in the meantime, had been arrested and tortured for a long time. Our source attributed the denunciation to the trio, the torture to a specialist assisted by the old man. Certainly, at least one of these three had made a qualitative leap, had started doing harder work. The unexpected guest caught up with him as he was leaving a movie theater, he was not wearing his worn green coat.

131. – I had become disgusted by the magnificent panorama that was oppressive before my eyes. The stupendous landscape brought me no joy. What did it matter to me? I thought of my companions in prison after having passed through the hands of these thugs convinced that they were on the side of right and law. The ruins that obscured my vision, the gentle historical hills of Attica, which reminded me of the honey I had dreamed of as a child, now pushed me to rebel. Blind, I was surrounded by blind people who looked

at their feet as they walked with eyes empty of light, blind people who did not see the abjection and shame into which they had fallen. Subjected to the ferocity of the few, they tried to avoid the worst blows and adapted to the least bad. They threw them a piece of bread and rushed to go to work. Often, in front of the American library, I stopped to look at the people, the proud people who had started our civilization, to whom I too was indebted. They gave the impression, with their one-eyed eyes, of being goats on the point of death. These unjust considerations shook me from top to bottom and made me embittered, making me run the risk of becoming not a bearer of freedom, but one of the many mass murderers around. On the right side, that is obvious. Or is this consideration not so easy in its apparent obviousness? I looked at a guy who was looking at the most famous monument of antiquity. He had a poor appearance and a neck like a stork. He was looking intently. Here is someone who is not blind, I said to myself, at least there is someone who wants to see. But see what? Maybe he too was blind and was looking into space, and then, on reflection, he was looking into the past. And the present? If I had asked him this inappropriate question, maybe he too would have looked at me with his white, lightless eyes. Another guy, with a wooden face, was now looking at me, perhaps intrigued by my imprecise wandering, his long white moustache giving him an austere attitude, an ancient censor, at least in appearance. Certainly another goat about to close his eyes after looking at me. Perhaps he was quietly preparing to record my physiognomy of an out-of-time tourist, perhaps he wasn't preparing for anything, he was almost certainly thinking about his own business, how to make ends meet with the starvation pension he was supposed to have. Perhaps he also supplemented his income by providing small paid directions to those in charge, for a few drachmas. Perhaps.

132. – This long, short-sighted work is reducing me to a well-trained worker. I have a very limited vision of what I am doing, I only penetrate the surface of my actions. Most of what I do is a surplus of meaning trying to define it as action. I acquire and, little by little, realize a knowledge of what needs to be done strangely lucid, meticulous, like a continuous chiseling of the same work, without making too much noise, without being heard. I consider myself a bit of a ghost and a bit of the reflection of a shadow. I wait. Here is my constant and unnerving activity in what it can be summed up. And it is not true that it is an easy thing. I am not underestimating the difficulties of my work, I am only highlighting its repetitiveness and possible alienations. To bring it to a successful conclusion requires a not easy practice of the world, of this world in particular. A strange country in the grip of a strange fascism. It is not at all easy to follow for many days someone who suspects he is being followed.

Often the suspicion is only a hypothesis but it is always necessary to take it for granted. For many days I followed a character with a flat, leathery face, a gossipy nose, insignificant overall and overlooked at first glance. He never gave me the impression that he had discovered that he was being followed. Nor did I notice it from any attack on our group. Simply, without showing any signs of impatience, he continued his habits. The usual morning walk, the usual meeting with a man we did not know who he was, who limited himself to smiling at him and shaking his hand. They never exchanged anything, not an object or a word. Yet the old man passed information to the stranger, not about us but about a clandestine printing shop whose existence we also did not know. When the two printers were arrested our characters disappeared. I remember that the stranger, the last time I saw him, had cut his hair into a crew cut. The information about the arrest of the fellow printers arrived on the same day that we lost sight of the two. It was not until nearly a month later that the old man returned to his usual path. We later learned that another group of companions had sent the unexpected guest to him.

**133.** – I spent three days in a cabin in the countryside in the north of the country. Spring, good weather. Terrible food, better not to think about it. There were three of us in the cabin, all waiting for a signal that was slow in coming. Why the delay? What could have happened? Had something gone wrong? Or had they simply forgotten about us? Getting more supplies, especially water, was not possible. My backpack was almost empty by now, apart from a few underwear, and a shirt, there was my blond wig. So ridiculous that it gave me a feeling of stupid improvisation. And yet, under a cap, that wig had done its job well. On the fourth day we were picked up. The action to be carried out had been postponed and there had been no way to catch us earlier. That's all. Spending so much time waiting, pondering all the most dire possibilities, only to arrive at nothing, is a hard lesson that many bullies should learn, all those who imagine action as a continuous race towards the barricades. On the other hand, when action materializes, it always compresses into an instant, a moment in which everything is summed up and consumed in the experience of quality. The different consciousness emerges from this burning experience with a completely transformed immediacy, and all the previous doing, the efforts, the useless practices, the solitary doubtful comments, suddenly disappear, magnetized into the action.

**134.** – A typical Greek banquet, still in use in the villages. Dances and costumes. Fried fish and salad with feta. Everything in order. Eggplant in milk and frightening spaghetti swollen like a ten-day-old corpse. The tavern was on the sea and had about ten meters of sand separating it from the shore. Here to celebrate, among other

things, the unfulfilled ambitions of an army sergeant, used, according to the information in our possession, as a torture technician. The unexpected guest came from the sea on two small wooden boats, approached the executioner in uniform for the last time and then took off in a car waiting in front of the tavern door. The banquet was over.

**135.** – The small lawyer's office was cramped. As often happens, it resembled the gentleman who used it as a meeting place for some comrades from the village, something without pretensions, for goodness sake, a series of exchanges of opinions on the fate of the new government and on what could be done to help it. From the outside, you could only see three windows in a somewhat old building, but almost in the center. The curtains were always drawn, so you could barely make out the shadows of those who arrived and sat down or stood up to leave. The building, small and rather poorly maintained, was from the middle of the previous century, when they built with living stone, not brick. It looked stocky and robust, as if it wanted to show more muscles than necessary. The lawyer, on the other hand, was small, skinny and completely bald. He always carried a blue briefcase made of old and rather dirty velvet. He walked, this repulsive individual, as if he were hopping and was almost never alone. Civil lawyer, he practiced in the capital but did not seem to seek much clientele, more or less he belonged to that political fauna that thrives in every undergrowth of power, in an atrocious manner in fascist regimes. The information gave him as a peripheral organizer of consensus, he did not seem to have direct political ambitions, he tried to eke out an existence in the shadow of some powerful person more or less placed in the new civil category of support for the military. At night we entered the office. A comrade had practiced with the keys to open a lock that was not exactly complicated. Those of us who were able to read spent a good half hour leafing through the folder of clients and the copies of the reports that the man addressed to the police station in the capital. He did not seem to work in depth. There were no complaints, his specialty was a sort of capillary organization of farmers, a kind of yellow union or, better still, a kind of gangmastering and campesino as was used in the last century in Calabria. But everything out in the open, without pretense or subterfuge of any kind. Our man I think was in good faith, he was just a stupid servant of torturers and in his dullness he did not realize it. Suddenly, that night, the studio caught fire and was completely destroyed.

**136.** – I have always been for quick things. If I had an idiot in front of me, sooner or later, I felt the obligation to make him understand, if not to actually tell him. If someone said something stupid, I had an uncontrollable itch to underline it and make him feel the weight of it as a sign of his ignorance. Wherever I was, I

could not give free rein to this rebellious acrimony of mine. I had to accept the uncertainties, the approximations, the hesitations. I had managed to put this mania of mine to sleep a little and I suffered the pains of it. Sometimes I racked my brains to find a calm and non-corrosive answer, then I realized that I myself was an imbecile and ended up staying silent. This exercise of self-control, contrary to what is believed, did not make me stronger, on the contrary, it weakened me. Having to be careful with every gesture or word of rejection, I ended up being uncertain and inadequate to what had to be done anyway. Sometimes I was short of breath. Afflicting oneself over other people's stupidities is stupid - I told myself - so I'm in good company. Then I tried to tackle a theoretical problem a little more complex than the simple organizational model for groups that the resistance had adopted, let's say spontaneously, and I found myself up against a wall. What a struggle for everyone, some available and incapable, others incapable and ill-mannered. I left the discussion halfway, set on useless tracks with no outlet, and went out for a walk. If this happened in the evening, my two steps could be dangerous - the controls were not as suffocating as one might think, but they were there - and so I ended up going back and going to sleep. Was it the situation that produced this stalemate? I don't know. Was it the skeletal condition of the resistance? I can't know. Of course there were also language problems, but mainly I think I can say, after forty years, that the main problems were mental closure. People didn't want to get theoretically involved, they didn't want to think with their own head and they didn't admit their theoretical limits - very evident even just listening to a few apodictic statements - and they preferred to close up like a hedgehog, give up on discussion and move forward trying to cement the unity of the group in practice.

137. – An existence suspended in the void and the unexpected. Every day we had to invent a new behavior, adequate to the task to be completed. It is not easy to silence the tumult of the heart when one would like to act differently, now and immediately, and one is forced to restrain one's instincts by immersing oneself in the monotony of a practice of balances and correspondences. The crudeness of certain behaviors was never evident in all its nuances. Whether due to a lack of information or our inability to evaluate, some repressive aspects escaped us in fictitious relationships, in unclear images, each shaded in a negligible gradation of responsibility. How far did we have to go to be morally certain of a repressive event to be struck? Often I found myself faced with an uncertain, approximate indication, balanced between denunciation and simple chatter, both attributed as guilty attitudes to the same person. Often in places enclosed in the asphyxiation of the province it was not always possible to identify in an indication how much malevolent malice had had its

weight, if not exactly how much jealousy or envy. Always trying to regain normal awareness of reality and not to get entangled in backyard squabbles, the decision was not at all easy. This required additional verifications, comparisons, specifications, rethinking, checks. All this work weighed on our group more than any real action. At least it weighed enormously on my responsibility as an anarchist. I did not feel like contributing to striking ideas, however confused or prolific of disastrous effects they were, while I was more than willing to strike particularly brutal repressive acts, torture in particular. But this distinction, apart from the fact that it could not always be based on reliable statements, did it not run the risk of appearing too philosophically convoluted? Wasn't this a kind of deception that my immediate conscience played on me to allow me to advance, by smuggling, my anarchist distinctions, my claim to be a liberator and not just any resistance fighter capable of providing limited help to a people under fascism? I don't know.

**138.** – I withdrew from these considerations that could take me too far. I then immersed myself with renewed energy in the daily reconnaissance, in the preparation of the next action. In this way the objective imposed itself on me with all its objective heaviness. The evaluation of responsibilities thus tended to pass into the background, as if it were a possible cause of distraction. This objective ended up objectifying itself, becoming the only thing to evaluate, to study in all its aspects. To avoid being assailed by my usual moral dichotomies, I cut it off sharply, I did not mention the particular considerations of my conscience. Only in the case in which the information received and that which we had gathered had really very little foundation, the work concluded either with a renunciation or with a light intervention, a sabotage of things or a letter of explanation trying to put the guy in front of his not very serious responsibilities, suggesting that he change his life. Generally this model of intervention, considered minor, obtained an immediate effect. But many comrades did not agree, for them the intervention of the unexpected guest was always the only preferable conclusion. I have never agreed with this radical thesis. Uniformly applying a practice of low justice seems to me a horrible flattening of revolutionary consciousness, very similar to the notches that gunslingers once made in the butt of their weapon for each enemy eliminated. I often heard these statements and saw that many shared them. As a rule, these people, comrades of mine in all respects, even if not anarchists, participated with little interest in the theoretical discussions and in the same commemorative insights of the actions brought to completion. And, usually, an important consideration, they were all with an immoderate passion for weapons. Was it a coincidence? I do not know. I think that there must be a relationship on this union, not well clar-

ified but there must be. Those who love a prosthesis are not courageous men, generally it is from the prosthesis that they expect the courage that they lack.

139. – Reflecting on what has happened, on what has happened to me, in many places, in many remote places in the world, is not the purpose of these notes. They are words of remembrance, not reflections on events that happened to me or, worse still, memories. That they are uncommon events is an incorrect way of looking at things. Even before I finally left my job as an industrial manager I managed to be absent for weeks and months. After all, my relationship was falling apart and I didn't care if I didn't respect my commitments. I took care of what only I could do, for example the financial management of the industry, new investments and relations with the tax authorities. A few days of work, every now and then. In the meantime I was preparing to cut ties with a world of ordinary horror, the one I had lived daily for seventeen years. Not that I had discovered in my new commitments, be they my clandestine interventions in Greece, or the anarchist conferences and rallies that I was holding all over Italy, a world without shadows, a wonderful world of freedom, I was not deluded to this extent, but I understood that I could no longer remain in my previous world, I had to move forward, throw my heart beyond the obstacle. And it is that choice of forty years ago that has brought me now, at the age of seventy, to a Greek prison, while at night I write these notes with my hand no longer as steady as it once was, but with my courage intact even if encapsulated in an old and very battered body. I could have, from time to time, remained where I was, in Palestine, in Greece, in Ireland, in Africa, but I have always moved forward, seeking what perhaps was not possible to find and grasping every trace of resemblance, even remote. Every action was a living of my life all at once, haphazardly, but one, in quality, so that it entered my body with its innate violence, without pretense or distancing. Sometimes, once the action was over, it was the joy of an understanding of myself never reached before, sometimes it was a sort of consternation eager to say, always to myself, the meaning of what I had achieved by acting. Remembering. That's the point.

140. – In acting, I often encountered the unexpected guest at my side. One never gets used to seeing him at work. To crush, uproot, destroy a life, this is his way of being, his unexpected existence, desired by no one, imposed as a hateful but necessary service of low justice. Dealing with him requires a long preparation, not technical, for that is the least of the worries, but personal, intimate, moral. His presence disturbs and fascinates at the same time. Someone who until a moment before was a living being, full of life, capable of hating, loving, planning, procreating and everything that the time to come could propose to him, suddenly, because of the encounter with

the unexpected guest, is no longer able to do any of these things, he lies on the ground crushed, like a puppet with broken strings, a rag, an inert mass of flesh that will rot in a few days. Where did that disruptive potential go, for better or for worse? It went up in smoke, the unexpected guest seized it and took it away with him. This sudden and rapacious transaction does not allow for a habit except for professional butchers of war, not for comrades fighting for freedom. The action often summons the unexpected guest and places him in front of monsters that have been worked on in advance. Torturers, informers who have allowed the killing of many people, responsible for atrocious crimes, proxies for other even greater atrocities. Well. All this is upstream. It is behind the unexpected guest, but in front of him is that poor thing on the ground, crumpled like an old coat together with all its hopes, its illusions, its affections and its misdeeds. A fallen demon is no longer a demon. A fallen enemy is no longer an enemy. One can console oneself that that demon, that enemy, will never again produce the damage it has caused up to that point. But is that sufficient justification? No, it is not. The unexpected guest goes away, after having done his job, but he leaves a trace in the heart, a bloody path that no justification can heal. And this trace is added to the other traces. Forever.

141. – There is something automatic in a dichotomous judgment, on one side evil, on the other good. Life is never so clear. Of course, there are extreme points in the line that divides good and evil in two that cannot be ignored, but however evident this extreme placement, the monster on one side and the holy man on the other, could the latter perhaps arrogate to himself the task of a low justice? No, this cannot be the answer. The decision is always narrow and lacking in possible openings, it has few elements at its disposal and on these it rests as on an inevitable pedestal. The consequences are part of a mechanism designed to silence doubt. But this does not let itself be put aside, pushed back it always rises again, as if no one could completely extinguish it. In the most obscene monster, in the cold-blooded torturer, in the intelligence agent who poked me in the genitals with an awl, is there only this obscene will to hurt? The fact that the unexpected guest took away a quarter of his head solved the problem of my pain and my life but it didn't even touch on the other side of the question. Who was this torturer? Is it enough for me to know that he was an enemy? Not just mine but of an entire dispersed people, deprived of their own identity as well as their own land? No, it's not enough for me. Put a stone on this experience and move on. Good. But why so much haste? For fear that inside me, and inside my companions, a mechanism will be triggered capable of opening a small crack to doubt? So everything comes down to who shoots first? But isn't this, bare and raw, the logic of war? And



yet nothing can convince me otherwise that the work of the unexpected guest is a great responsibility, not legal or juridical, that these aspects don't even touch on my problem, but moral. English: Life is a germ that has a thousand connections, by extinguishing it you do not settle the accounts with the sins of the one who succumbs under the blows of the unexpected guest, but you sever the relationships that that germ had with other vital germs, relationships that on the other end suffer a punishment that is almost certainly not just, in any case not taken into account in the documentation that precedes the intervention of low justice and which therefore opens the big dispute of doubt. This is what I ask of the unexpected guest who now, in this Greek prison, practically at the end of my life, sits at the foot of my bed at night. And I have no answer. I cannot add to my question the silly and insipid justification of having always been on the side of the liberator or the operator of low justice. And it is not the remorse of something unjust - however great and unbearable that something is - that urges me to take up a problem of this kind tonight. Rather, it is the astonishment that I feel, that I have always felt, in the face of the blindness of those who should also ask themselves this same problem. It may also be that they ask themselves this question and I know nothing about it, but it doesn't seem so to me, something would have leaked out. Many have drowned in enthusiasm, in self-admiration, I have never felt in my shoes, I have always felt a deep sense of unease in the face of these problems. I know that no one has lost or won and that the accounts have never been evened. I know that, by insisting on this point of view, let's say purely accounting, one would have had to resort to the unexpected guest much more, almost continuously and en masse. Which, in itself, is technically impossible. But even admitting its possibility, would it have been right? I don't know. In action these problems are not asked, you act and go away. But here I am before my definitive remembrance. Too many years have passed and too many comrades have died for this problem not to be able, here and now, to emerge in its highest moral dignity. The seduction of action destroyed, then, not now, by the sadness of the need to move forward. The dream of freedom for all, soiled by the arrogance of ferocity, or by the stupid acquiescence, of the few and the many. The awareness of a preventive work well done, such as to exclude any errors or excessive approximations. Nothing to be done. Doubt resurfaces, not only tonight. A rag on the ground, alive shortly before, loaded with more or less defamatory guilt, a great distance passes between these two conditions. The first throbbing - even if of ignominious intentions - the second flesh for worms.

142. – The stability of certainties is a vain thing. It should not be forced too far if one does not want to crumble it. And we all need a little certainty. To avoid the vertigo of indecision – the deadly com-

panion of my work – I must therefore adapt, accept the emptiness that sometimes begins to surround me and stop on concrete, very concrete questions. I must make sure that time settles and that an aura of completion brought to a good end surrounds me. Everything that needed to be done has been done, even the water in the nearby fountain has been carefully observed, as has the strange and incongruous cracks in the pavement and the patches on the sidewalk. I must immerse myself completely in this inventory and connect it with the other, equally merciless, inventory of facial expressions, somatic characteristics, nervous tics, repetitive gestures, tastes, which coffee, which newspaper, which tobacconist and other junk shop. An action depends on these small archivist tricks, otherwise everything is delivered into the fragile hands of improvisation, a splendid vision but a bad advisor. There are no mysteries in this preventive work that should not be clarified, brought out into the open. Leaving them where they are means blocking the action or transforming it into a collective suicide. But how can you evaluate the importance of a detail that is apparently minimal and negligible, avoiding considering it as such, placing all the nuances on the same level of value? The same reconstruction of the different aspects of the action must be, in turn, like a new detail, completely detached from the elements that compose it, subjected to deconstructed analyses of the same type. It is built starting from the details and, once an overall completeness has been achieved in what is the action, it is then broken down into its parts to return to the initial components, even to the information that came before all this work. There is no moment of the coming and going in which you can say that you have done enough, you must do everything. Now, this whole, being a technical, cold and detached whole, then, lastly, needs a further step forward, the courage to carry the action to a successful conclusion, and this step is not part of the previous inventory, it is something absolutely different.

**143.** – I always try to get unanimous approval when it comes to starting to organize an action, even the simplest one. Putting up a hand-written poster against the fascist government in the city center can be expensive in this country. The police arrive, maybe not as fast as lightning, but they arrive. People are also quick to read. Therefore, it is necessary to write short texts, just a few lines, so as not to expose the reader to a greater risk than necessary. We discussed the structure of these texts. The attack on the regime must be given at the end of the text, it cannot be at the beginning, and in a smaller font, the larger font must be reserved for the problem to be addressed. A rise in prices, a parallel lowering of wages, the closing of some laboratories – here there are no real large industries, except for the shipyards, but these have internal control totally in

the hands of the regime. Ultimately, the driving force remains in the hands of the students. But the most exposed have fled abroad, especially to France. Only a few are in hiding and have almost no contact with the present student action cells. I am an anarchist and I have spoken at length about clandestine organization, but these are just discussions between us, also made difficult by the language problem. I raised a bit awkwardly the problem of the unexpected guest, of the proportion of the use of this means in relation to the damage and danger caused by a certain person or an organization of the regime. After a short time I had to realize that I could not be understood, just like that, on the spot, while we were working to complete the preventive system of an action. I had to choose another moment, but which one? Here we work constantly and an action, small or large, to be studied and implemented, requires a minimum of a week to a month. From a trip to the capital, from other comrades, I learned a distorted interpretation of my problems, as if I had doubts about the intervention of the unexpected guest in any case whatsoever. It did not seem to me the case to go into in-depth studies devoid of practical outlets. I said I had no doubts, they were just critical working hypotheses. Nothing else.

144. – Sometimes the logic of efficiency seems false to me and disgusts me. How could it be otherwise? I spent many years studying books to realize that theory cannot be put into practice except through a profound transformation of man. In suffering and oppression, everyone – or almost everyone – adapts and dreams, some of liberation, some of greater oppression for others and therefore a more consistent privilege for themselves. Narrow but inevitable logic. The advent of fascism in this country was a slightly traumatic event, the troubles came as they went along and people almost didn't notice. Then, little by little, they got used to obeying and putting aside their dreams of freedom, dreams that are in most cases vague and abstract. The fascist power in power uses this confusion as a shield and justification. The plots that are woven never reach the oppressive fabric of Portugal or Spain, here there has not been, now, at the end of the Sixties, a real civil war. There has been a military coup, more or less accepted and imposed with American support or acquiescence. Everyone - except those most exposed on the left, who have almost all left - has closed themselves in the comfort of their family, has thought to reconstruct the native virtues of an ancient people, as if somewhere the sacred fire of the past had been kept. So everything has fallen into anonymity. Whoever just sticks their nose out of the amorphous mass is reported to the right person and immediately registered, checked. In case of greater danger they are captured, often clandestinely, tortured and forced to confess to plots and participations that no one knows about because in most cases

they do not exist. This is the importance of information to carry on the fight, and this is precisely the most delicate point. In the absence of a solid resistance organization, there are many groups, more or less in contact, but the information management leaves much to be desired. This is a terrible threat that hangs over our activity, because by insisting on the work necessary to deepen, or even to procure from scratch the information, the risks are accentuated beyond that level that should be acceptable.

**145.** – The professor was surly and rude, that's how the students had described him to us. He taught mathematics lessons but, more often than not, he slipped away on the slippery terrain of political analysis. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the new regime which he found too light-hearted, especially in terms of the fight against student movements, not exactly officially visible, but always in progress, with disruptive actions, leaflets and posters written against fascism. The information report, coming directly from the students, was, this time, more detailed. Tall, with graying hair and a policeman's goatee, the professor was single and seemed to have no recognizable female relationships. The walk from the house to the school was short and he never stopped to talk to anyone, nor was he seen going to the cinema or to a café. During the days of the tailing there were only a few small variations because he had stopped to do the shopping in the nearby shops and to buy the newspaper. The house was in a three-story building. The professor lived on the top floor, a balcony jutted out onto the street and gave light to two rooms. But was his activity limited to banal fascist propaganda between lessons, or did it go further? That was the point. Those who launched into exaggerated praise of the new regime were many, legion, you couldn't attack them all, and then the limits and defects of fascism were not long in appearing even to the least trained eye, especially they were very evident in the student environment. It was chance that made us discover an outsized appendix in the propaganda work of the distinguished professor. One evening, in the many stakeouts near his house, we saw a man we knew arrive, a policeman specifically assigned to the political control of students. Evidently he came to get the news directly from the source that for some time had been bringing many young people accused of subversive activity to the police station and to prison. In particular, there had been searches, even in a house near the one where our group lived. The dangerousness of the professor was thus clear. The unexpected guest was waiting for him on the steps of his house a few days later.

**146.** – A comrade brought three pieces of news. The first was that we had a load of dynamite, about fifteen kilos, the second was documentation regarding the number three of the regime, the third

was that a detailed plan had to be studied to attack two cars that every morning, traveling along the road to the ministry, took this character home. It was not a mistake, just like that, he worked at night and returned home in the morning. This last point, which at first seemed negligible, became a key element in the failure of the action. In the morning the route was tightly controlled and full of people. The idea of loading a car and having it stop along the route – possible given the traffic of the time that cannot be compared to that of today – would certainly have involved many innocent people, passers-by, children, etc., in short the hypothesis was immediately discarded. Furthermore, we lacked an electric detonator for remote action. When this was finally found, an attempt was made to locate the car under the character's house, but after a few checks, it turned out to be impossible because it was constantly guarded with changes every four hours. They were expecting an attack. After a few days of stakeouts, we noticed that the car that was taking him home followed at least three alternative routes, taking two secondary streets and always returning to the main road but entering it from different entry points. After a lot of work, this operation was suspended; perhaps other groups took it up again later, but I'm not sure. The unexpected guest remained inactive and this was one of those times that he would have fulfilled his task without us finding anything to object to. Or maybe not?

147. – The failure of the action I mentioned above made me think a lot. It came after many other actions had been carried out and at a time when the movement was preparing to give the coup de grace to the regime with the November insurrection. We did not have the capacity to hit a larger target, and this was evident, but was it not also evident that we were hitting smaller targets precisely because these were the only ones within our reach? In other words, we were content with crumbs, and what if we had made these crumbs bigger, just to give ourselves the possibility of acting? Here is a reflection regurgitating bitterness. In fact, I could not say to myself that things were not exactly this way. However much attention was paid and the greatest possible scrupulousness was put into the selection of primary information and subjected to maniacal checks and correspondences, the doubt always remained. A small fish is always very different from a whale, for this simple reason it is easier to catch it. How much of this ease was based on his responsibility? I don't know. Operating with this low-level mass production, one continued to have the impression of emptying the sea with a spoon. These reflections - which I had to keep to myself - constituted a real torture. I continued to commit myself to the work but I could not ignore them. Could the unexpected guest knock on the wrong door? And if this was possible, and in theory it was because no quantitative anal-

ysis can simply be transformed into a qualitative conclusion, I felt personally responsible for it. Could the mass murderers in uniform face each other with dignity and morality with the mass murderers without uniform? The monstrosity of the question dwelt in my heart and still dwells there, forty years later. There has never been a jolt of wind in me capable of providing me, like a sudden illumination, the certainty of being right. The libertarian ideal, throbbing and luminous, ran the risk of becoming irremediably dirty every day. Just one mistake and I would have felt like a mass murderer. And the possibility of committing this fateful mistake led me to accentuate to a maniacal level the precautions and checking, sometimes beyond what was strictly necessary, if not to deny the evidence of behaviors that were not only suspicious but blatantly conniving - proven torturers in the first place. This made my wait anguished and the relationships with my companions uncertain. Many of them did not accept my request for additional investigations, maintaining that it increased the danger of being discovered and that they had enough certainty in hand to make the unexpected guest intervene. They did not understand my drama and often mistook it for uncertainty if not for pusillanimity. I thus found myself forced to give in at a point that I thought was not yet sufficient and to often take the greatest risk in the action precisely to demonstrate that I was not afraid and therefore reassure them.

**148.** – At the moment of action a terrible silence is unleashed. Since there is no unit of time that can measure it, there are no real events in it as we are used to considering them in everyday life, as facts. Only facts follow one another in time, action is a single element that is unleashed in the quality of acting and here absorbs the totality of the existence of the one who acts. One could say that even breathing is suspended in that silently total experience. Of course, there are elements that subsequently lend themselves to its temporal and progressive decomposition, but this is a recourse to the game of remembrance that can be achieved with words. The absolute dismay of that unity of being only what one is cannot be restored except with a further involvement, in a new tension, born from a new overcoming, in short in a new action. Many balk at these statements of mine – only mine, mind you – but in action, these pure souls who celebrate, or think they celebrate, the divinity of mirroring, behave in the same way. They enter the unique and unmeasurable moment of quality and realize their relationship with this absolutely chaotic concentration of being, of their own being. They are what they are even if they will never admit it, returning to the appearance of always, victims and executioners of the active buying and selling. This universal condition is suspended for a moment outside of time and this suspension cruelly cuts the flesh of those who experience it, even

if they are not willing to admit it. If in preparation I was sometimes forced to clench my fists and grit my teeth to get on with my work, once in action this was no longer necessary. Afterwards you feel a lightness, almost a shock, an unexpected muscular relaxation. The atrocity even disappears, sucked into the act accomplished, complete in itself, without smudges, incapable of indignation or acquiescence. Remembrance gives life to a ghost that mimics something that is elsewhere, that has been elsewhere, that cannot be contained in the words of remembrance. The unexpected guest can be described in this way, if he was present in the action, but he cannot be known in this way. He remains enclosed in that ferocious silence that no noise, even mortal, can disturb.

**149.** – The anxiety, the anguish of not succeeding, not the real fear as people imagine it, but the tremendous effort to control oneself, all this belongs to before the action, is part of the pantomime of doing and here finds a thousand devices to muffle itself and make itself harmless. And yet the action is born from doing and in doing, therefore these devices are not banal extemporaneous and compassionate expedients. It is in this phase that my reflections have magnified bringing to myself a notable contribution and to others only occasions of doubt or perplexity. I did not approve of the lightness with which they faced – sometimes, not always – the preparatory work and almost always, or better to say each time, the mistakes made. This problem of the mistakes, preceding and following the action, was essential but was always postponed, as if facing it could contribute not to strengthening but to disintegrating the group. For me it was exactly the opposite.

“FAUST

In misfortune! Desperate! Long wandering in pain on earth and now a prisoner! Like a female villain locked up in prison with horrible pains, the sweet unhappy creature! Up to this! To this! – Traitor, unworthy spirit, this you have hidden from me! – But stop, stop! Roll your devilish eyes angrily in your sockets! Stop and confront me with your unbearable presence! A prisoner! In misfortune without remedy! Abandoned to evil spirits and to judgmental and heartless humanity! And meanwhile you lull me with foolish pastimes, hide from me its growing torment and let me perish without help!

MEPHISTOPHELES

She is not the first.

FAUST

Dog! Foul beast! – Change him, infinite Spirit, change this worm back into his dog-like form, as he often liked to skip before me in the nocturnal lingers, to creep between the feet of the harmless traveler and to jump on his back after having made him fall. Change him back into his favorite shape, so that he may crawl on his belly on the ground before me and I may trample him, the infamous one! – He is not the first! – Torment! Torment! No human soul can conceive that more than one creature has fallen into this abyss of misfortune, that the first in the anguish of his agony has not done enough for the guilt of all the others before the eyes of Him who forgives forever! I am shocked to the marrow by the misfortune of this one, and you sneer calmly at the fate of thousands like her!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And now we are again at the edge of understanding, there where your human brains evaporate. Why do you associate with us, if you cannot carry it to the end? Do you want to fly and are not safe from vertigo? Did we come around you or you around us?



FAUST

Do not gnash your ravenous teeth in my face! You disgust me! – Great, magnificent Spirit who has deigned to appear to me, who knows my heart and my soul, why do you chain me to this companion of ignominy, who feeds on harm and revels in ruin?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Will you make an end of it?

FAUST

Save her! Oh woe to you! The most atrocious curse upon you for ever and ever!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I cannot loosen the bonds of the Avenger, open his chains.  
– Save her! – Who dragged her to ruin, I or you?

FAUST

(Looking around wildly)

MEPHISTOPHELES

Will you take up the thunderbolt? Thank goodness it was not given to you wretched mortals! To crush the first innocent they meet is the way tyrants vent their anger when they are in trouble.

FAUST

Take me there! She must be free!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And the danger to which you expose yourself? Know that the debt of blood shed by your hand still weighs on the city. On the spot where the slain fell, spirits of vengeance hover, watching for the murderer's return.

FAUST

This again from you? Murder and the death of the world upon you, monster! Take me there, I say, and set her free!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I will lead you; and what I can do, listen to it! Have I all power in heaven and earth? I will blind the door-keeper, take the keys and lead her out with human hand. I will watch. The enchanted horses will be ready and I will carry you away. That's all I can do.

FAUST

Come on, let's go!"

(J. W. Goethe, *Faust*)

## **One hundred and fifty – one hundred and ninety-nine**

150. – The bus station is one of the most closely monitored places in the big city. Fascism believes that incoming movements, especially those of students, should be monitored. The many plainclothes policemen, scattered on the various benches as if waiting to leave or for someone to arrive, keep their eyes and ears open. There are no moves of impatience or irritation. Their work is methodical and daily. Our information has identified about ten of them who alternate on different days of the week. It seems like second-hand work, surprising already known faces or identifying speeches against the government, but it is not. We have noticed that often one of them calls from a booth in the station and describes a boy or a group of boys, reporting the place from which the bus comes. This call is connected to an unmarked police car that begins a tailing with results that are not easy to predict. This group of policemen who work at the bus station also has a small office here, at the back left, officially intended for luggage storage. Nothing was ever concluded with the research done here, perhaps because of the lack of information, perhaps because the characters were not extremely dangerous. The unexpected guest remained inactive.

151. – The massacre is not necessarily a quantitative fact, it pertains to some characteristics of ferocity and gratuitousness that have no connection with what the unexpected guest mows down. Behind the radical blow, by which life goes away, cut short, there is the most

terrible spectre of why. Why does human pettiness make so many proselytes? Why does it sow and reap so much fruit from its own idiocy? And yet the massacre is there, dark, cold, hard, unacceptable, unjustifiable. The sudden impact against the unlikely softness of human flesh, a poor thing, presumptuous and arrogant, stupid and loaded with other massacres, but still alive, throbbing with desires, hopes, feelings that will no longer have a future. The unexpected guest cuts at the root with his scythe, he does not worry about these aspects that are marginal to him. And also marginal to me. Yes, but not non-existent. There is an intrinsic ugliness in the unexpected guest's cutting action that cannot be mitigated by the validity of the decision taken previously, by a very scrupulous verification of various balances of responsibility. This is not a question of accounting, the problem is different. The bloody ugliness remains ugly, brutal, immediate, irrevocable, even if it takes shape in the action, that is, in quality. Now, this contradiction either exists or it does not exist, there is no middle ground. In acting I do not need to carry with me the accounting that preceded my action, if I did so I would weigh down the action by blocking it on the very edge of the threshold of crossing. This is why there is a long work of doing that must precede the action, and this is why this long and tiring work is never satisfying nor can it ever justify the massacre. But on the other hand, in the action there is no massacre. The unexpected guest acts in purity, he does not counterbalance or equalize, he does not smooth out wrongs, even if his work, seen in hindsight, in the same remembrance, can be considered a work of low justice. Acting in quality, the facts that led to the action are no longer there, they remain on this side, they accumulate and shout their presumptuous justification. But this does not convince me. It does not convince me in hindsight, in remembrance, while I realize that my companions are there to make the accounts add up. This research has proven to be well-founded, those correspondences have been well addressed and controlled. What do I care? A tireless demon works inside me, I feel that the executioner's flesh is the same as my flesh, that there are no differences in the blood that is quickly coagulating, it is always the same blood of the human beast shed by another human beast. After the action, burning and immaculate in its qualitatively free, just, beautiful completeness, afterward there is the massacre that returns before my eyes. The site of the massacre, a dark staircase, a room, a crowded street, the hall of a doorway, the confusion of a café, the equivocal atmosphere of any neighborhood dive, a shoemaker's back room, a professor's library, a teacher's classroom. Places that enter into remembrance and grasp within them the lifeless rag of someone who is now only meat for worms. But the encouraging answer arrives promptly. He was a torturer, an executioner, a hateful instru-

ment of repression, ready to cut, burn, chisel, drain blood, electrify, massacre. Yes, I know all this, but it doesn't convince me. I know the validity and the caution of preventive attitudes, I know the need for something to be done for a people subjected to suffocating repression, and I know that the unexpected guest does his job well. And yet there is something that eludes me, around which I continue to rack my brains without respite.

**152.** – Across the lawn, the little church. The grassy space had a few rare trees and two benches. Not far away was a small cemetery. You could hear the bells of the microscopic but long bell tower with its round spire. The two of us sat for several days, following with our eyes the cautious movements of some young people who had been reported to us as right-wing activists. Muscular, stupid specimens certainly out of time and even out of place. We had learned that the dictatorship tolerated these groups, not numerous by the way, but did not support them either financially or as protection against possible repressive excesses. Some of them had been in Italy, where the services of these characters were evidently more in demand by the strategy of tension of the time. At vespers<sup>12</sup> the voice of the bells gave us the signal to clear out, there was nothing left to see. These kids, most of them students in the big city not far away, met in a room on the ground floor near the little church. At night a sudden explosion blew the wooden door of the place off and damaged the interior. There was no one inside, as we had taken care to make sure. It was a signal. A leaflet was distributed in the city inciting, as always, to revolt against the regime. I never knew anything about the police investigations. The newspapers published nothing. These actions, which if generalized could have had a good effect, were systematically stifled in silence. In the end, faced with this wall of silence that fascism erected in front of these actions, many of us came to the conclusion - very simple - that in any case the only means of giving meaning to our actions of attack was not the leaflet and that it was better for the actions themselves to become more and more radicalized by striking fascist leaders of particular weight. The gaze became more and more directed at the unexpected guest, his intervention considered more and more decisive.

**153.** – Still my doubts, not about the actions, but about their deep meaning. Now I was able to speak coherently, even if too concise and in broad terms. I felt an unnatural satisfaction inside myself, as if doing was tenaciously joined with acting, closing the arc of my libertarian tension, my qualitative yearning. This sort of surrogate satisfaction took hold of me and forced me to reduce my critical yearning, it was at the same time a light to move forward

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<sup>12</sup>*Translator* – Late afternoon or evening church service.

and a brake that prevented me from going deep into my problematic thoughts, separating what I shared fully from what I accepted as a lesser evil, as an ungrateful task that had to be completed anyway. Sometimes – in the preparation phases – I felt my heart light, my mind was lulled serenely in the artificial haste of things to do and looked for others, more attentive, more detailed, capable of cementing certainties and providing guarantees for action. I was not so indiscreet as to question the action itself, where I found my overcoming in quality, my personal experience of the different consciousness. It was afterwards that I could not coherently remember everything. The previous doing, the action and the reminiscent considerations. There was a continuous uncertainty in me that frustrated my conclusions. Leaving behind a pile of rags is always a shocking experience that I could not make mine. The unexpected guest provided me with reflections that did not coincide with my theories or even with my facts, even if I had to admit that his presence in the action was flawless, even if I agreed – almost always – that from the very first moment, therefore in full active construction of the preventive conditions, it was he who was being aimed at, it was his work that was being expected. I breathed a gloomy air that everyone tried to justify as necessary, an inevitable sacrifice in the repressive conditions in which an entire people lived and against which we had to fight. And this air prevented my personal aspiration to the dream of freedom. The price I was paying seemed excessive to me, in any case it seemed too flattened on a maximalist register, capable only of resorting to massacre. Didn't the cold and impassive inanimate stupidity that faced us every day prevent us from grasping nuances of action that we could have modulated differently?

154. – What role did I want to play, after all? Distinguishing is fine, but to what extent? Doesn't distinction run the risk – as my old readings of Benedetto Croce had taught me – of getting bogged down in its own agility of continuation? It would require a sense of balance that not many possess and that, in any case, is sometimes a harbinger of defects rather than merits. Those who have little way to go should get to the end of the path, since the panorama they could stop to admire changes little. Perhaps I had the defect of carrying too much of my past with me? It is not easy to answer this question without panicking. Can one exist in timeless time? Or does the fear of losing oneself in a vague and indistinct nothingness make us continually camouflage ourselves in something that has all the appearance of existing, but only the appearance? Countering shadows with another shadow, as conscious of oneself as one wants, ultimately runs the risk of building a cynical and mediocre mask. Efficiency needs these two components, and it wraps itself in them, justifying its theorems. Efficiency and mediocrity, two components

that go very well together, even if many say otherwise.

**155.** – There has always been a destructive force within me that called into question any career I intended to pursue. The refusal of a status, whatever it was, definitive and detailed, called into question any plan for advancement, no ranks, of any kind, not even revolutionary ones. I have never known for sure whether there was in me a conscious refusal or something unmotivated, perhaps deeply hidden, and therefore I have never been able to complain. No light that showed me a privileged path. Freedom does not have artificial illuminations with it, nor is the road that leads to it paved with bad intentions. Being peremptorily affirmative produces nothing but new doing, industrial quantities of massacres, certainties and pompous self-affirmations. Doubts belong to another category. Living with them is difficult, especially when at night you toss and turn in bed unable to sleep.

**156.** – The practice of death brings with it an irreparable detachment from daily events. These seem to suddenly lose importance, to sink into their own provisional dimension which is that of talking, of accumulating justifications, of always staying on the edge of the wave, a game of ridiculous and superficial balance if measured against the irremediable detachment. The things to be done must certainly be done and they are considered valid in themselves, concluded in their unassailable validity, while they are nothing but the approximate and uncertain announcement of something coldly founded in which there is no possible raving. Doing, limiting oneself to doing, is an atrocious spite to action, which is why I find myself here, fighting against fascism. But I do not limit myself to doing, I go beyond the limits of quantity, I find my way towards the overcoming. I consider all this with that detached attention that characterizes the desire for preparations. Putting the objects in order, one after the other, checking their efficiency, repeating the outcome of the correspondences and checks ad nauseam. Then, the action. I am here to act, and for me acting means coming into direct contact with the quality, being what I am and then, with new burns on my skin, reflecting thanks to the recollection. Each in his own way reflects on the action just completed. My reflection remembers the quality but does not leave out the doing that preceded the action, it does not want to justify everything in the fire of acting and does not want to contract everything in the miserable pettiness of doing. In the end my doubts dance a dangerous pantomime in my brain. They transfigure the correlations of doing, they deform them and insert moral evaluations that to others seem out of place. Why do they not seem so to me? Because in them I find an ideal foundation that is hidden to others or that, seeing it, they consider negligible? Remote philosophical clouds? I do not think so. I often respond with furious

outbursts of anger, I would like to discard these doubts, to grasp or be given by fate a dullness that I do not possess.

157. – In certain deep recesses of myself I find a wonder that shocks me. Why all this blood? Why these massacres? I know why I am here, even if I know that I do not achieve what I would like to achieve. But the others? The professional massacrers, why do they massacre? To acquire power? I do not think so, those who physically torture and kill are executing scarecrows, low-level laborers. Perhaps for money? Maybe, but I do not believe that these monsters have exorbitant gratifications, let's say so much per decapitated head. For the love of ferocity, for the smell of blood, to see, to feel, the flesh give way, to show its painful inconsistency? For the pleasure of taking a life and erasing it, disfiguring it, to mock the universe by wiping out this wonder hidden in the deepest layer of a human being? Perhaps because they are afraid of what this amazement can produce that is wonderfully subversive, because they think that by letting it act, by letting it live, that same amazement would erase, by annulling it, the world that justifies and supports their frightening emptiness, a life that is also life but buzzing animalistically like a big bumblebee? A life that beats and breathes like all human life in this world populated by massacrers, but which is miserably empty if it needs to fill itself with cruelty and sadistic perversion to feel alive. Outside of the massacre, their life is an empty bladder, brutally dressed in the usual human features, more or less similar to so many others, yet profoundly different. They live on massacre, I run the risk of drying up on massacre. Theirs is a filling up of horrendously quantitative contents, like a box where objects are hidden that must not be seen because they are obscenely immodest. My adventure is first of all an adventure in quality, velvety and unspeakable, all mine, which has no relation to any task aimed at putting things right, at completing a work of low justice. All this comes first, in the preparatory phase, and comes after, in the remembrance phase. And yet I cannot see those three moments as clearly separated from each other, and that is why I ask myself these atrocious questions, why I subject myself to terrible analyses that shake not my conviction as a bearer of freedom, but my life.

158. – I have always given the image of a decision maker, this has always been a good method to encourage myself to commit, to go beyond the obstacle, to prevent any kind of hesitation. But I am not a decision maker. I have never managed to coagulate into a solid and stable concept of myself. Like in a flight of mirrors I have always posed an infinite series of possibilities, even if then I have had the strength to go ahead anyway, sometimes letting things decide for me without suspending my attention on their evolution, that is, without letting them escape into a chaotic confusion devoid of sense. This

has never happened without a profound restlessness that at times reflected the extraordinary mobility of my way of being, aggressive and capable only of choosing the most difficult path to follow. For this reason, I have lived many moments of uncertainty, never in action but always in preparatory doing, with a certain sense of anxiety if not shame, even though I knew them as spontaneous impulses of my turbulent and darting soul, eager to do and grasp a thousand things at the same time. I have often thought of it as a duplication of my being, especially when the evening before an action I felt led to write not my impressions but philosophical insights that had nothing to do with the action now at the center of all my efforts. Why? Why this being neither in heaven nor on earth just when there was the greatest need to keep my feet firmly on the ground? It's that I have never much loved those who made, and continue to make, a point of pride of the firmness and stability of themselves, of their own feet. Then the action. Burning, lived to the full. Mine, absolutely mine, in which there was neither time nor space for reflection nor – even less – for hesitation. The action, center and coagulation of all previous doing, reason, cause and objective of my revolutionary commitment, incredible in its clarity, which filled me fully, which completed me. And after? After the remembrance. That's the point. Even now. These words are remembrance words, they are not efforts of memory or games of hagiographic justification. They are elements that do not want to take up too much space, certainly not more than they did at the time when they first came to mind, still under the electrifying effect of the qualitative experience recently concluded. They do not want to be noticed, these remembrance words, especially these, with the tone they are taking, forty years later, feeling finally free to speak openly. They fill me with wonder, and yet they are not new, they do not put me in front of a critical rethinking or something wrong that I see today and did not see then. No, what I see today is the same as what I saw then. What I feel quivering inside me is the same disgust that I felt then. There is no way to mitigate this disgust, neither with habit nor with the validity of the work of low justice. My beard has turned completely white and my eyes can no longer see well, yet my heart is still the same, strong and solid as it once was. I am not afraid. Disgust is something different, it does not pertain to fear, it belongs to the rejection that we all have – no one excluded – for the work of the unexpected guest. At night, in this cell of a Greek prison, I wake up and see him sitting at the foot of my bed. He waits for my body to decide to go with him. But that is not the point. I question him about many events of the past, here in Greece, or elsewhere, in Palestine, in Ireland, in Italy, in Africa. But he does not answer me. He cannot speak. He can only do one thing, he knows how to do only that, mow. And so it is I who speak



to him and mention something of this remembrance. He knows very well what I am talking about, I a little less, often I was his action and often I was not, sometimes I was himself and sometimes not. But these matters of detail do not concern me and I know that they do not interest him either. There is a kind of fascination, a mysterious attraction in the unexpected guest, deeply contained in his silence and his patient waiting. I do not have the heart to throw my indignation in his face, it would be unfair. I speak to him of doubts, of my doubts, and of how a life can, in an instant, transform, crumpling into a heap of rags. I remind him of these frightening experiences and his silence irritates me, irritates me a lot.

**159.** – Nothing in a clandestine activity is genuine, there is no correct style, no way of conducting things that is better than another. There is an organic kinship with recitations and with theatrical activity, only that here different aims are pursued, the clowns act out a tragedy, the roles are always covered by a mask but are substantially inverted. The aim is to get rid of recognisability, of the ever possible identification. This is a rule of caution but, in the long run, it also modifies one's way of being. One becomes a slave to the gesture, to superfetation,<sup>13</sup> to addition. All attitudes are subjected to constant control and therefore every whim or spontaneous manifestation of the soul, so innate in human beings, is condemned to disappear or to be looked at with suspicion and, as far as possible, chased away. Artificiality thus seeps into daily life and deforms it, opens breaches in the very way of thinking, which becomes prudent and suspicious in the smallest nuances, cruelly exposing every weakness, every lack of solidity. The mastery of appearance duplicates the series of shadows in which one is, from time to time, incorporated, but all together these shadows have no life of their own except in function of an external purpose, the objective remains the action which is completely detached from shadows and ghosts.

**160.** – The symmetry of formal operations continues to give rhythm to my life. I am becoming convinced that rooting myself in this brutal reality guarantees me from being wrapped up in a problematic that is destructive to my own conviction. Every doubt has a certain level of power in me, it grows from minimal dimensions, increases in intensity, escapes or tries to escape the sterility of unanswered questions, then collapses for fear of coagulating into an idol alchemically capable only of justifying itself and nothing else. It is not true that this constant asking myself the meaning of what I am doing depends on the fact that my activity, my acting, is placed on the borders of humanly conceivable experience as something normal. I am reluctant to abandon myself to the normalization of all

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<sup>13</sup>*Translator* – An excessive accumulation or superfluous accretion. Also refers to the occurrence of multiple, overlapping pregnancies.

this, and it is here that doubt arises, and it is here that I am forced to fight it, without for this reason leaving the ultimate borders of cold reasoning provided with the hallmarks of the logic of little by little. In life, the moment of action is an opening to destiny, from which comes the possibility of dialoguing with the latter, of understanding its strength and its foundation on the nothingness of a completeness that is only imaginable and not identifiable with certainty, at least not with the certainty of factuality.

**161.** – I am irreducible, I do not allow myself to be faced with accomplished facts, I want to contribute to conditioning them physiologically, that is, to realizing them, to endowing them with materiality. That something comes to me from the outside, impeccable contents and documentation, for goodness sake, is not enough for me, it does not produce a metamorphosis in me by changing me into a mailbox devoid of heart and conscience. I do not allow a laconic adhesion, even if I am forced to agree to a limitation of my luxurious objections. I realize that abandoning myself to them, to their labyrinthine capacity to branch out, would take me far, causing, first of all to myself, suffering and obsessions. So here I am in front of a broad, fluid, factual movement, which however does not take over. I am the one who imposes the rhythmic inspiration and I do not allow myself to be conditioned by a barracks-like repetitiveness. I am the barrier to the mediocrity of myself that these forms of guarantee intend to build, in the long run with my own consent, and perhaps without me realizing it in time. There is a stamp in me that does not accept all-encompassing conventicles<sup>14</sup>, I am always a stranger to forced uniformizations. An outcast who has strayed into the field of rules and theorems. As soon as possible, I look for another path, always and in every way.

**162.** – I have no obsessions before me but only one goal, to ask myself questions about the validity of the action. I do not want to restrict the action or slow it down, but I am careful to seek the limits of its compatibility with my moral choices, because that is what it is. However, I am not sitting here waiting for someone to dot my i's. I do not ask for a revision, a higher authority, a moral sieve from outside, capable of pacifying my perplexities. I do not even want to irritate or exacerbate them gratuitously. I know they exist, and that is enough. I see around me someone with shortness of breath, as if he feared falling into anguish similar to mine, which he does not know in detail, since I have never been accustomed to making them public. And I also see that despite the panting this someone goes ahead anyway, without sighs and without suspensions other than judgment, it seems. I could give a little push, but it would be a cerebral exacerba-

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<sup>14</sup>*Translator* – A private, dissenting assembly, especially a tight sect of religious heretics meeting for secret, illegal worship and discussion.

tion, with repercussions that are anything but hypothetical, perhaps very serious. I am not Hamlet or Don Quixote. I am closed to education and obedience, important movements in conditions like mine but which make my blood boil, better to keep my eyes open and the determination to act always available to openness, to going beyond. Nothing can distort me more than an uncritical acceptance of what is placed before my eyes, my execution of a project is always critical, even if it never resorts to the impatience or delirium of someone who feels weak. Am I perhaps strong, even without knowing it? I don't think so. I just don't want these weaknesses of mine, if we can call them that, to appear silly or pathetic. They have a depth that hides them from the superficial eyes of those who are on the alert to discover them everywhere, not just inside me.

**163.** – I reserve my perplexities for recollection. Here the word, called to express the action, can also make an effort to reach the limits of the latter, not become only its exalter. There is no need for someone to read over the lines, and the word in these moments is instinctively led to do so, to magnify the consequences of a burning moment that in itself completely contains being and appearing, therefore it is absolutely nothing, once it is subjected to the hermeneutic penetration of saying. The risk of feeling the anxiety and overwhelming euphoria of a power of life or death is very great, it is therefore necessary to keep one's feet on the ground, and this disillusioning method must rest on the previous effective work, remote from improvisation, without allowing oneself to be impressed by redundancies or stage effects that on these occasions never fail to arrive as a side dish. Excess is the enemy of rhetoric, it is beyond any effect in itself precisely because it is outside of any extreme limit. If action has a characteristic it is precisely that of being the consequence of an overstepping. Admitting misunderstandings of omnipotence would be a sort of debasement, a cowardice, like someone who screams in the night to take courage. Having set foot in the darkness of the path traveled by the unexpected guest there is no way to take a step back, you have to go forward. It is an asceticism without hesitation and without justifications, a deadly face to face that knows no therapies against what has already happened, of which remembrance is called to give an account.

**164.** – Hiding behind extravagances is a good method, and it was the one chosen by our man. He assumed the attitude of a poet, an adventurer, a pirate, in a climate that was far from accessible to these disguises. In this semblance of light there was instead, in his way of doing things, a sort of greater obscurity that made the framing, for us necessary, of his way of life more inaccessible. Harmless? The documentation said no. But this universe reduced to the few lines of a secret communiqué was not enough. It was necessary to go

deeper. And here we found the cover of an appearance that was too exposed. In a climate where everyone seems to live with their head down this person walked with his nose in the air. He was always happy, he hummed to himself, he even jumped, from time to time. Was he really carefree? And yet he was hanging out with someone suspected of informing. Only suspicions, nothing else. Is the friend of a spy necessarily a spy himself? Who can say? Perhaps that superficial and playful life was a cover or it was his very way of being that prevented him from noticing the guilty activity of his friend. Coffee friend, of course. We knew nothing else. The efforts to delve deeper into the clown's behavior, however, led us to better see the unworthy practices of his friend. The unexpected guest visited the latter, leaving the former friendless, who did not for this reduce his innate contentment with life.

165. – I have been away for a couple of months – having returned to Italy to keep my employer at bay – and I find, more or less, everything as before. The military is still in power, the people still seem not to notice anything, the comrades still do the same old job and ask fewer and fewer questions. The atmosphere seems sleepier. A Greek sociology student committed suicide in Genoa a few months ago. It is the end of 1970. Here the study of sociology has been outlawed. Strange foresight of a system that is blind to so many other things. Who knows why? It is not easy to understand. Why was the bar association abolished? Who knows? The mind of a soldier has unfathomable recesses, his fears are inaccessible to a mind accustomed to reasoning with even minimal canons of freedom. We work around some university professors who we know are sympathetic to the regime. There are not many of them, just three, but the possibilities for error seem limited. They don't go out on a limb in their academic speeches, but it seems that they exert indirect pressure in private chatter and within the institutes. This work is proposed a bit blindly, we cannot carry out the usual shadowing, which would tell us nothing, nor draw information from students. In this field there are other groups that work and from whom we await news that never arrive. I have known these three figures from afar, they seem to be completely anonymous. Neither young nor old. I couldn't define them well, as much as I tried to do so. In the end they remained in their place, continuing to teach even after the end of the dictatorship. Everyone lives with their own corpses.

166. – The most visible result of this oppressive regime is that the air of Greece, so beautiful and so close to that of my country of origin, Magna Graecia, has become suffocating, thick to breathe, full of suspicions and things left unsaid, only half-intuited, left aside out of fear. Generalized fear generates a climate of cowardice against which it is difficult to fight. Every action, once planned, appears

lame, incapable of assuming a plausible meaning. There is too much distance between thinking in the privacy of a room, where utopia seems to hover, continually bouncing off the walls and well-closed doors, and what one breathes outside, in the large promenades, in the enormous squares, as well as in the small, remote villages with almost no real communications with the big city. From what they tell me – my ignorance of Greek persists undaunted – the newspapers are pitiful. The control of the press is absolute. Flattening and vulgarity in the same artistic and aesthetic taste. No works of art come to light in this period, everyone seems to be waiting for the comet, but they are tired even of looking at the sky.

167. – Was it me who was permanently placed in this precarious and contentious dimension with myself, or was it a moment of mine that I was living detached from my beloved papers, from my daily life, from my family? I couldn't decide. And this ambivalence led me to interrupt my participation in the struggle, return to Italy, then resume, then return once again to resume. Was there a constant confusion, a constant amazement inside me? Or was this return at times normal, due to work reasons not yet concluded? I don't know. Later in time, when I was in Palestine, not having these intermittent commitments, not going back and forth, as I did in Greece, I had the same tormenting reflections, the same and perhaps even more detailed and difficult to explain. Discussing with my comrades I discovered more things in what they were doing than I had imagined before, pleasant things and unpleasant things. In any case, my problem of feeling like a bearer of freedom for a people reduced to slavery, deported, impoverished, largely stupefied, in addition to often being in the hands of foreign politicians and statesmen who first of all looked after their own interests, drew little from these reflections. At times, the succession of events transformed everything into a whirlwind of anxiety and haste, as if the ground was slipping under my feet. I could not and did not want to complain about the extreme tiredness but I realized that in these conditions organized structures can fail due to the poor health of their participants, not due to technical deficiencies in research and information. Here, unlike previous years in Greece, the information was much more detailed and the checks and correspondence could be reduced in duration and intensity. Not that they became hasty, not that, but they could be carried out better and in less time. Even the actions were closer together, more objectives were achieved and the work of the unexpected guest was more intense even if not always conclusive. Sometimes, here, the objective had dimensions that could not be fully embraced, so one had to be content with reaching the part that was closest to hand. This kind of action tended to develop over a duration that could not be chronologically specified a priori, because it was always a question of units

outside of time and space, but which affected our different experience - and, as far as I am concerned, particularly in my capacity for remembrance - in a more complex and more articulated way. Involving myself in larger actions, such as those I am talking about, with the participation of many comrades, was a new experience for me, I felt driven by an impetus of revolt that contrasted with my usual determination constructed at the table and based on serious documentation. Not that these aspects were left out,; indeed they were necessarily better explored, but it was I who in the action unleashed destructive feelings that I had never felt. Perhaps this strange condition was partly prompted by the fact that I often found myself facing men in uniform, certainly belonging to army corps. I felt relieved of a burden. It was a stupid observation but, thinking about it, after so much time, it had its importance. The unexpected guest did not suddenly strike a man who was almost always unarmed, at least in appearance, did not catch him in the privacy of a house or on the lonely street of his daily journey, but faced an armed clash. Of course, even the hypothetically unarmed and solitary torturer, the executioner, the police informer, often had weapons of another kind and were almost never unprepared for what was about to happen to them, but they were still rags that curled up, flesh that was about to become putrefaction. The soldier also fell like a rag and would have been a meal for worms in a few days, but he caused me, in his impact with the unexpected guest, a different series of reflections. I felt more aggressive, on the verge of rebellion - not an optimal condition for confrontation - and this discharged me in many respects of the many tensions that the intervention of the unexpected guest always caused me.

**168.** – So many efforts to straighten out history. An impossible task. The distortions belong to man and are necessary to his vital construction, to everything he thinks and does. Who can say he is sure of going down the straight path? A trifle makes the storm break out in the light and superficial agreement that everyone puts together between doing and justifying doing. In doing one massacres and justifies the massacre. Can one comfort oneself with illusions? And do the executioners also harbor illusions? And why not? They also have their own families, they meet other people, they read the newspaper, even some books that teach how to better sharpen the axe. In short, they also breathe. Even though they are united with other individuals of their species, in the so-called work community - if we can talk about work (and why not?) - they also see strangers and towards the latter they must also raise some kind of discourse - talk about sports, for example - certainly not throw in their faces what are the best techniques to force someone to say what they do not want to say. In short, even torturers have a presence, they live in

the world that hosts us all in its daily life, they eat more or less what we eat, they think that their job, however unpleasantly out of the ordinary, is ultimately a job like any other. And they are stupid tools of those who are behind them, in uniform with more stripes and ridiculous frills, in toga and ermine, in the career of a leader who gives orders and does not get his hands dirty with blood. Himmler, visiting an extermination camp for the first time, felt ill and had a stomachache. It takes specific training to be an executioner, it is not a job for everyone. Let's reset the torturer. Here, we build a well-documented network that leads, little by little, indirectly, to locating him, isolating him in his daily activities away from the workplace and away from the axe. Let's isolate him, let's look him in the face. Does he have a repulsive face? Not always, with all due respect to Lavater. We are often the ones who lend him a hateful face. Almost always he has a face like millions of other faces. A normal nose, a pair of normal eyes in which we see an icy coldness that perhaps isn't there, a mouth full of teeth, or perhaps with few teeth. Can a torturer be toothless? No, he must have shark teeth. Thus we build a false portrait that helps us to carry out our task aimed at putting an end to his activity. We exacerbate his condition of isolation because we cannot think of a monster like him perfectly integrated into a social context, with friends, wife and children, with family problems, intent on correcting the homework of his numerous offspring. We must isolate him. Woe betide if our correspondence were to uproot this tombstone and bring to light a duplicity of behavior. Butcher at work, carefully intent on cleaning his sharp tools after use, father of the family then, returning home. If we discovered this double behavior our original determination could suffer, we could dangerously waver at the decisive moment. And so, let's cut away, put aside, hide out of modesty towards ourselves. His responsibility remains unchanged, it's always him, the one who walks calmly in front of us on the street and who will soon be approached by the unexpected guest, he is always the torturer. Ours was not a search, the initial information was already enough to stigmatize him, it was creating a void around him and intervening in this void. We are facing the monster, at the height of repressive impudence, the denial of every principle of legality and humanity, we are facing a dangerous mechanism in the hands of unreachable assassins, so let's be content to render it harmless, to put it out of action. Why ask so many questions? Of course, it would have been better to reach the torturer's bosses, those who with clean hands and a calm heart smile while the axe massacres, set in motion by a subordinate appropriately trained in the executioner's profession. But, unable to reach them, let's hit him, since it is he who has cut, dislocated, disemboweled, raped. What more do we want? Let's stop casting sidelong glances at the

pile of dirty rags that the unexpected guest leaves behind after his intervention. Let's stop once and for all.

**169.** – At the bottom of the massacre, any massacre, a *commedia dell'arte* is played out, everyone wears their clothes and insists on the role they have chosen. Of course, at the basis of this choice, on the side of the revolution, there are the principles of freedom. But the simple opposition of these principles to those of oppression is not enough, tools and facts are needed, and on these, constructions and verifications are needed, a whole daily universe of obligations that envelop and suffocate, imposing themselves with their inevitability. How can we do without them? And in the name of what can we do without them? In the name of anarchy? In short, here we are dealing with problems that are not at all the same as those examined in the privacy of a room, leafing through the pages of a book, here we are dealing with seeing life in its concreteness, and in particular the life of some people who have chosen to be responsible for nameless atrocities. And we must put this life under the microscope, examining it in its most stupid and anodyne unfolding, presupposing - also on the basis of respectable information - the atrocious activities that are being discussed. But under the microscope is a man who has his own human characteristics similar to many others, he walks, sits, gesticulates, talks, gets angry or laughs like millions of other men. And yet he is the one under my microscope and from these analyses nothing of his atrocities emerges, on the contrary a familiarity of behaviors emerges against which one must be on guard, be wary. And so I learn to look beyond, but I see nothing except punctuality of encounters, simultaneity of frequentation, repetition of gestures and paths. This long and perilous analysis is aimed at paving the way for the unexpected guest, it does not serve to morally justify his intervention. This aspect, essential to me, escapes me and belongs to someone with whom I have no contact other than cautious and approximate. This alienates me from my work, I am left alone with my companions to polish and perfect an action whose source I do not control. These are the conditions of the work, take it or leave it, you cannot seek information that only others possess. The only thing that can be done is to go beyond everything in the action. Any personalization of my commitment in the field of doing must therefore be banished, considered an excess of zeal, a dangerous luxury. Approval of the work brought to a successful conclusion, ready to carry out the action, did not seem to me to be an adequate response. Usually, before concluding, another companion, the same one who had provided the information, contacted us and examined the results obtained, the set of shadowings and checks. The ones who carried out this verification – which also lacked the power of judgment – were several companions who took turns, perhaps depending on the part



from which the original information came. I never knew this, nor did the companions in my group know it better than I did. The division of responsibility into watertight compartments is one of the essential conditions of the clandestine struggle. And yet my questions, now posed only to myself, in my growing solitude, persisted in demanding an ever-larger space of their own. Why did our massacres absolve themselves? Why did they have the imprint that distinguished them as works of justice, however low? Why did they try to settle accounts with the oppressors and their abuses? Too easy, too simple. No one can settle a score on behalf of an entire people, even by striking as high as possible. The same unsuccessful attempt to strike the number three of the Greek fascist regime would not, if it had been carried out, have changed my perplexities much or answered my questions. Even now, in the evening, before falling asleep, looking at the unexpected guest sitting at the foot of my bed, I feel like a boulder on my chest. It is not a question of questioning the choices of my life, which would be a vain euphoria of impotence, but it is the thought that goes by itself to those distant experiences, to the exciting actions accomplished, to the burning responses of quality fully felt on my skin and that still manage to tell me something. But this something is remembrance and remembrance is making use of words, opening one's heart to the different experience and making it speak. And she continues to tell me that a pile of rags that was once a living man is still a pile of rags. But what other way can there be to stop a monster from continuing to bite?

**170.** – A thousand tricks are not enough, you have to get down to business, learn to dissimulate, to live mixed up with people but hidden, anonymously, an art of camouflage that seems easy but not only costs effort but distorts one's self-awareness. In the long run, this leads to profound frustration, the loss, or at least the fragmentation, of one's personality, the acquisition of a multifaceted appearance capable of adapting to the many and ever-changing situations. Putting on a show of oneself so that others do not notice the artifice, being an actor capable of playing different parts but always on the same thread, someone who observes from afar and seems to pay attention or do something other than what he is actually doing or observing carefully. A codified madness, to be strictly observed with the greatest possible seriousness, as if all those attitudes – always changing depending on the objective to be achieved – were a concrete life to be lived and not an absurd and merciless game, preparatory to a conclusion that was already discounted from the start. I could not consider myself a pioneer of an idea, as I had dreamed, of the idea of freedom, I did not advance, I carried out to the end, faithfully and to the best of my ability, what I myself, within certain limits, had helped to decide to bring to completion. Each dream of freedom thus ended

up being enclosed in the small envelope of a montage of details, important details of a larger work, but of which I did not master either the start, the initial impulse, or the conclusion, almost always discounted with the arrival of the unexpected guest. So I went on withdrawing more and more into my shell and tried to reorder my dreams conditioning them to the limited prospects of realization that I had before me. I could not take pleasure in overturning the order of things, the risk assumed looming proportions of such magnitude that it frightened me. Should I have affirmed my theses? Support the validity of my doubts? No, it was not possible. It would have been a cowardly defection. In the preparatory phase, moving forward, in return, became more and more of a torture. Inexplicable except when the action was completed. In the action, everything disappeared, absorbed by the impact with the quality. There was nothing but myself in the action, the evaluation of the objective and the observations that had made it actively perceptible, all merged together in the moment outside of time in which I was the action, I was the being that is and cannot not be. There were no more doubts or hesitations, only the action, the real truth of acting in its fullness, total freedom in the moment, the completeness of justice, not a simple equalization of imbalances. But the action is, for the simple fact that it exists, outside of time and space, destined to dissolve. Afterwards, in the very moment in which one is as if suspended between the overcoming of what has already happened and the conclusion that reopens the doors of doing, of the usual daily doing, obedient to the rules and the ordinary hesitations, here the life of a man, sometimes the existence of an object, was only a pile of rags or a pile of rubble. And this moment of remembrance was not simple moral fatuity, it was concreteness of method and objectives. Why must the life of men always be based on massacres? Why, in one way or another, must we all contribute, without exclusions, to feed the lake of blood that we trample every day without realizing it? It is true that this lake is underground and therefore our busy trampling is toiling on a filthy clod of slime that hides it and that allows us to keep our feet dry. But we know. No one asks the question. Least of all do those who believe themselves immune and safe, in their cliques, in their universities, chatting about philosophy, history, and do not know that they too are purveyors of massacres, not only those, many, who massacre for a living, and those, few, who massacre in the name of freedom. When will there be a plausible distinction? When will the moment come when the unexpected guest will be able to remain without a job? These were my thoughts from many years ago, but I could not articulate them, my familiarity with the character armed with a scythe, in his periodic persistence, prevented me. Will he have noticed? I do not know, I have never understood. Until a few

months ago, before entering this Greek prison, I thought not, now I am not so sure. I questioned him, at night, when he sits at the foot of my bed, but I had no answer.

171. – Hosting strange hesitations is not like me, it never has been, and I do not want to host them now. They frighten me, as if I were dealing with an unknown danger that I am not capable of facing, whereas in the face of a known danger I always know what to do. Just one hesitation, even now, practically at the end of my life, and everything is compromised, a filthy beast crouches inside me and takes up residence there. It moves in unexplored areas, where I have never penetrated, where the monsters of my past lie petrified, and the hesitation is among these mummies, it moves at ease, and points them out to me, explaining their meaning. Thus it breaks down inside me what I held firm, solidly bound in an indissoluble unity, it breaks down and dissects, analyzes and explains, explains my inconsistencies, my fears, my reticence, my boasting. It is not a surrender to the uncertain eventuality of chance, now that I lie here, in this bed of a Greek prison, it is not a letting go through weakness or physical pain – these are there but it is as if I had put them in brackets –, it is not of them that I am speaking, I am hinting at the frightening things that I have stored inside me, in well-aligned display cases, separated by category of time and place, labeled by voluntariness and involuntariness. Unexpected resolutions and considered decisions, all there, one after the other, rigid results that look at me with wide eyes and clenched teeth and do not speak. The masks are destined to fall sooner or later, they cannot hold up forever. There is something essential in being that is not there in appearing, there is no mask in action, before and after yes, it is necessary to wear masks, moreover of different shapes. A very remote feeling of repulsion stirs within me, not for actions, which are engraved on my skin, they are my true being, my protection against the anguished arrival of appearance, but for pretenses, lies, misrepresentations - all necessary tools, for goodness sake - and for the difficulties of making my own recollections understood, submerged by their own difficulties or involved in the alien and malevolent game of words.

172. – How does one enter into the living secret of things? I know well how to enter into action, to involve myself and to go beyond the immediate condition of doing, but I do not know how this doing can – partial and incomplete by nature – justify itself, provide itself with the basis for an absolute judgment, the same one that claims to impose moral validity in the face of another doing, a horrid product of massacres and torture, of repression and of the most vigilant power. Here my analytical capacity does not fail me, indeed it sharpens and mounts the pulpit, judges and sends according to

what it grasps. But I am not Cerberus, I am a man who seeks freedom, and freedom, like justice, is a quality that is found in acting, not in doing, like truth, equality, experiences that only the different conscience can make its own. And outside of action? Aren't those same analytical skills of mine, of which I am so proud, building a wall of deception around me, a rough terrain of traps? If the rules are rigid, perhaps less so because it is a somewhat bizarre way of doing things, if not downright different, and its purpose is not to provide answers but to propose questions. Well, that's not even what I'm talking about. My reflections are directed - and were directed - halfway, in the interstices of doing and in those of remembering. How is it possible to concretize the right evaluation - an eminent qualitative expression that is only experienced in action - before the action, so that it constitutes the foundation and building material of the action itself? It can't. Here's the answer. It can't and despite its intrinsic impotence, it must, there's nothing else to do, it must arrive at a right evaluation through doing, well before acting. Here is the sore point, the thorn that I cannot remove from my side, here is the basis and the core of the questions that I now ask the unexpected guest sitting at the foot of my bed. But he continues to remain silent. His empty eyes seem to look far away, into the past.

**173.** – The logic of life should be extraordinarily spontaneous, breathing, nourishing, reproducing, loving, letting oneself go to the most intimate impulses, to the solicitations of fantasy, of the blood that pulses in the veins. Instead there is the thought that remains on the spot, that does not retreat, that remains alert and attentive, that checks and examines and that confirms or rejects. The force thus thins out, weakens, and this while it seems to find better rooting, more substantial support. A few central thoughts, around which a thousand other thoughts remain, drawing from those justification and light, but no stable form. As soon as one of them crystallizes and claims dominion over the others, behold, it develops into an ideological agglomeration good for governing the world. What then becomes of the original ductility, fluidity, of the impetus that shocked me in the face of injustice and brought tears to my eyes. Over time the tears disappeared and the cold determination remained. Injustice must be fought wherever it raises its head, wherever it crushes the poor and the weak, that is, everywhere. A choice, well, a choice must be made, not being able to extend one's resentful intervention across the board. Choose where repression dresses itself in the most obvious trappings? Of course, for example Greek fascism was one of these places, beyond any doubt. But truly beyond any doubt? Or were there other places where human ferocity was exercised in a more atrocious and violent way. Of course there were. Why Greece then? Why within reach? Because there was a way to be guaranteed

a political presence, that is, because the opportunity of a political shield made physical presence materially possible without arousing suspicion or possible misunderstandings? This too must be taken into account. Nothing can be maximized in absolute terms. One must know how to be content, take what is within reach, not desire to go towards the impossible. Yet these thoughts cannot be eluded with this convenient conclusion. They cannot be satisfied by saying that something has been done, some infamous monster has been removed, some repressive instrument has been rendered useless. They cannot. They remain to torment me and I do not know how to silence them definitively. If it was a question of satisfying my desire to do, in any case in any case, why not turn to the humanitarian aid organizations operating in areas where there is always a need for help and support? Why did I choose to impugn my friend K? What was the meaning of all this? For me, not for something outside of me. For the eternal questions that stir my soul and find no answers. Here is an answer. Satisfactory? Yes and no. Action is life that meets the being that is, my being in the unique moment of quality. The chosen outside, the repressive condition experienced by an entire people, the responsibility of this or that massacre, elements external to the action, which do not enter into it, which do not pertain to quality, which always remain outside of me and my absolute involvement in acting, without being able to merge with quality, with my personal experience of quality. Ductile, flowing, plastic elements, not real but apparent, which envelop me in the soft ideological cotton wool of doing, which drag me into endless procedures and measures and correspondences and all the rest. Concrete time, lived daily, marked by the chronological monotony of spatial iteration is the exact opposite of action. I have therefore found myself living in two clearly separate universes, that of the sum of preparations and that of the completeness of the realization. My thoughts, even today, after so much time, resort to ancient dichotomies to try to understand them. In the evening, in this cell of a Greek prison, at the end of my life, I ask myself if what I am remembering makes sense. Revenge or liberation? These two feelings, both in agreement and co-present, cannot go together. I do not know. There is a prodigious rapidity in life that makes it difficult to stop and reflect on these problems. Even now, when I have many empty hours of the day before me, I find it difficult to recall an answer. And yet it is indispensable to do so.

174. – Revenge is a quiet gesture that brings peace where previously controversial motivations were debated. It can fill a life or just a brief moment of it. Or it can enter like a necessary condiment in a concoction not easily extricated. Being cut with an axe, either outside or inside, it does nothing but demonstrate every perplexity as

foolish and vain, every doubt almost an insult. However, it cannot, nor could it, be satisfactory. Opportunity yes, method and project no. There is in it something too contingent, almost reckless, that cannot walk hand in hand with methodical and far-reaching work, preparatory not for a single occasion but for many. The figure of the avenger pairs, in a ridiculous vein, with that of the liberator. If I dreamed of the latter, I did not even hypothesize the former. And then the action, in itself, in the spasmodic accentuation of its own total completeness, cannot rest on an external justification such as revenge. It would be as if one wanted to take revenge by doing and no longer wanted it by acting. A contradiction, a seeking and not finding or a finding of something different for which the remembrance would dismantle piece by piece the vengeful hypothesis by ridiculing its emotional foundation. The content of acting lies in quality and this cannot be the search for one's own completeness, unavailable elsewhere, not in any case identifiable in a simple putting things right, in a sort of double entry that in the end must necessarily make the numbers add up. Action is the excess of the being that is, of which I experience the fullness in the moment in which I live it, even if it does not offset anything, even if it remains below the wrong suffered - and how could it not remain there when the wrong is suffered by an entire people? - or if it hovers beyond, towering in the extreme rarefaction that the visit of the unexpected guest brings with it. The different conscience has extremely acute ones, unstoppable when they awaken, indomitable, inexplicable. And yet action produces an explanatory effect that expands and complicates in remembrance. Can this cursed appendix rise to a sudden vengeful fervor, so much so as to influence subsequent doing and acting? It cannot. If it does, it returns to the occasional accident, recurring but not capable of providing a direction for behavior. This is why I closed myself off more and more within myself, oppressed by a weight that I could not share with my companions, with whom I continued to work on the ever more accurate, almost maniacal, preparation of the next action to be carried out. Indeed, the more these doubts tormented me and put me in a strange exacerbated restlessness, the more I attached myself to the smallest aspects of what had to be done anyway. It was a sort of silent pity for my halved condition which, even if it rose to completeness in action, broke again in the inevitable remembrance. Everyone admired my way of working, meticulous to excess, increasingly concerned with details and no one noticed the sudden leap of the overcoming that made me full of being myself. I think something similar happened to others too, the action is permeation of quality because it lives it, it does not allow half measures, but can be lived and not understood. This strange combination produces a lack of remembrance. After the tension of acting, after the experience - for

some - unconscious of quality, one quietly returns to doing, putting a positive notch on the individual calendar of things to do. A comedy of errors.

175. – The perfection of doing, the thought of bringing to perfection, that is, to completeness, what by its nature is destined to remain a preparatory and partial instrument, a red carpet on which to let the unexpected guest advance with a sure step, gnawed at me more and more. The very admiration of my companions for my organizational skills annoyed me, proof in any case of the fact that they could not understand my problems and the dilemmas in which I was struggling. This recognition became an insurmountable barrier to every desire of mine to explain myself, to seek, to move towards a clarification, to represent in remembrance the anarchic world of my dreams. Astonished listeners, soon lost with an absent gaze, or attentive to following details of little importance. The finger and the moon.

176. – I found myself keeping surprising thoughts, one on top of the other, like a series of steps forming a ladder that could easily lead me to the improbable. I calmly thought that a hateful aspect was possible in my undertaking. Secluded in my building of traps I had the sensation of being a kind of enormous spider of the most poisonous type, not an open fighter. In Greece this sensation was stronger, here everything brought to mind a strong but invisible power, life seemed to flow peacefully, even if barricaded in a parsimonious poverty for the great majority of people. And yet that military power, apparently enlightened, captured and tortured in dungeons worthy of the inquisitions of the past. This bounced back violently in my face every time some good man, in a jacket and tie, was pointed out as a ferocious and bloodthirsty monster. To this unworthy being it was necessary to oppose something capable of stopping him in his malignant capacity. It was not possible to propose to him a clarifying discourse aimed at making him understand the abomination of his work, not a discursive intimacy but a violently definitive break, this was the conclusion we arrived at, and which I also reached with difficulty by making myself strong. The mechanism revealed itself to me to be contorted and simple at the same time. A preventive work, the action, the recollection. Why did destructive thoughts similar to mine not come to others? Or if they did, why did they not manifest them? Our connivance of choice was a solid foundation, not a patchwork, but it is conceivable to live experiences of this kind without this community of intent, and so why was I the only one who racked my brains in vain, proposing problems without solutions? Should I accept the standardized repetition or give up my dream of liberation, the latter being unattainable as my actions took care to make me know every day? My moral foundation rebelled against this alter-

native, correct, I myself retreated in horror. If I had interrupted my activity – as in fact happened from time to time – without resuming it, someone else would perhaps have replaced me but, at the same time, almost certainly, some executioner would have continued his work undisturbed. This equation, unsolvable but suspect of being well-founded, disconcerted me, in the face of the definitive interrogation I retreated to the terrain of less danger. If the monster had to be stopped it was right that it should encounter the unexpected guest, and this even if the petulance of my reflections showed no sign of diminishing. This well-foundedness, this justice, placed in the doing, watched over by others, also immersed in the doing, I did not find in the piercing flash of the action, here the quality told me something else, it did not take into account the preventive budget, it put me in front of being myself without delays and without persistence, without anticipations and without postponements. The sudden appearance of the unexpected guest was all contained in the moment in which the action is itself to the core, to the completeness of the quality of which it is constituted. The subsequent mania to connect it to the great preventive doing in an articulated but only partially perceptible discourse, that is, in the remembrance, was lost in a thousand artificially constructed conjectures. Can the extreme abomination be balanced with the zeroing of the monster that that abomination creates? Who can take on the moral burden of this settling of accounts? Certainly not a liberator. That's the point. I had come for another task and this was proving unattainable to me. I was called to carry out a different one, more modest and perhaps more urgent and indispensable, but ungenerously I was bumping into a moral reef. I didn't complain or try to minimize my responsibilities by increasing the faults of others, it's just that I didn't want to be the one holding the scales, also because leaning on one side of it - the one on the right side, for goodness sake - meant placing all the weight of the unexpected guest, his irreversible radicality, on it. No, these weren't philosophical tantrums of mine, there had to be something deeper at the base. The problem, after long reflection, presented itself to me in the guise of a contrast between freedom and punishment. A bearer of freedom cannot be a punisher. Or can he? Or does freedom consist in a progressive putting things right, cutting the most harmful and most visible weeds? No. Freedom is the quality of action and has nothing to do with the quantitative calculations of doing. This overlap is impossible.

177. – I felt ruthless with myself, eager to catch me out, while others were attending to the same matters as me with the continuity that comes from practice and were trying to do nothing but make the form correspond to the checks needed to move forward. Not so for me. I did not allow myself any respite or pretense, I did not accept



forms except to test them and perhaps find them corresponding to what needed to be done, but the point was precisely in that test, in that checking of one or more different opportunities. The contrast with the actions of my companions was not openly visible because most of these worries of mine were jealously guarded within me and, now cunning, I no longer shared them with others, not even in the context of recollection. Indeed, I had in a certain sense made sure that these reflections after the action, fundamental for me, remained only a personal matter of mine, no longer seeking either comparison or conflict. I realized that inside me there dwelt, distinct and mobile, two people. The first, proactive, accumulative, capable of working for hours and days to put together the separate pieces of what could then become an action, subtly smoothing out the obstacles, filing away the imperfections, presupposing the dangers, removing possible objections a priori, the second, doubtful, revoking in a discursive key, in which the umpteenth question asked was not the last, the entire work. The simultaneity of these procedures better specified my way of being someone who was still looking for something, while others gave themselves the splendid certainty of having found this something. Was theirs a fiction? Or was it mine, a fiction? Who can say? Even today, as I write these notes, I do not know how to answer questions asked so clearly. In the end, I think we are all made like this, only that each one seeks his own, personal way to find the strength to move forward, and in a job like the one in which the unexpected guest is involved, this way is particularly complex because it has to deal with the moral structure that towers inside us, dictates its rules, proposes its doubts, waits impatiently for the answers to its questions. Cunningly, each one knows how to deal with this intimate barrier that threatens to turn their life upside down, but in most cases, these are tricks from a comedy of errors. Suggesting an interpretation favorable to one's moral structure is very easy, but it risks being inadequate, perhaps effective in the immediate aftermath, then, after the action, in the remembrance phase, completely inadequate. That's why many did, acted and remained silent, to my great amazement. They lowered their heads and preferred to think about the next work phase, the next active commitment. Was it a way to not accept possible weaknesses? A way to gain strength beyond what they were allowed to possess in terms of courage, precisely because the situation demanded it and did not allow for opportunities even grazed by some hesitation? Maybe. Doing is a daily struggle, harsh, hard, a struggle that requires a tenacious commitment, without yielding, without hesitation, without regrets. What this struggle builds, element by element, is the essential condition for action to be made possible. Without this working premise there is no action that is not suicide. In the bluish and almost expression-

less eyes of one of the many executioners I have known, in his bony face, in his skin lined by the inevitable furrows of the trade, in his gestures on his way to work – as if he were going to the factory – or in those on his way home, to his family, there was – to remain with the example – no trace of the information received, for us the only point of support, the only and sole guarantee, a pole towards which to direct our active compass. We had to find something else, measurements, correspondences, repetitions, distances, frequencies, tics, and many other small things, collect this factual universe and make it a possibility of access for action. By proceeding in doing, in the accumulation of this data, we moved away from ethical evaluation, we were left with everything that could objectively be collected and made available to the unexpected guest. Nothing else. And this sometimes wasn't enough for me.

178. – To take care of the doing, this doing so demanding and detailed in the smallest details, it was necessary to restrict and force oneself to live according to its scansion,<sup>15</sup> excluding oneself from the real life that others led, friendships, loves, simple sympathies, a banal dialogue with someone met on the street, cutting out every curiosity that did not fit into the pre-established model to be checked and reconstructed from scratch each time, as if nothing had been done before, because nothing can be repeatedly applied blindly. It was necessary to start from scratch each time, thus guaranteeing oneself a secluded, shy existence, which strangers often considered disdainful or fearful of personal contact. In short, the doing we were dealing with had in itself the seriousness of the corpse preparers and the madness of the actors, that is, it contained an extraordinary mixture of seriousness and ridiculousness, of slavish and orthodox adherence to the tested model scheme and of invention to be realized on the spot in the face of an unforeseen eventuality. English: A trade of repetitions and petty vanities, of sums to be matched in numerical terms and of fatuous satisfactions for balances that returned exact with sincere surprise at times, with a sort of modest and painful habit at other times. And the perpetual yearning to delve deeper? Flattened by the same praise for the results achieved? Who could see clearly in these contradictions? Often, a suspicious glance, a gesture of fear, a sign that something had broken the rhythm of the intervention and the work as a whole ran the risk of becoming more dangerous or of completely failing its objective. This provided me with a sort of desired diversion, at least welcomed. The need to provide for a duplication of checks, a diversification of correspondences, or to suspend a certain model of preparatory intervention to

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<sup>15</sup>*Translator* – Scansion is the method or practice of classifying or graphically representing the metrical pattern of a line of verse in poetry, based on syllable length or the amount of stress placed on each syllable.

look for a new one, brought a different air. An upheaval and new solicitations then produced a different framing of the objective, and it was not rare for this to lead to a further deepening of the same starting information. Of course, at times, this upheaval was entirely based on false impressions and only imagined assumptions, but it didn't matter, it was still a breath of fresh air. The different figure that was thus consolidating, even if due to unreal overlaps, took on a more consistent body in itself, produced a practical commitment worthy of greater consideration. The new ghost constructed took on new forms, even took on clearer contours of responsibility, required, at least for me, less worry. It seemed simpler and more deeply known to me, it became more familiar to me, while it was only the same executioner as before seen from a different angle. But who can say in these processes which is the right angle? Every time an entire work could be thrown away for a simple misunderstood gesture, for a chance meeting with a stranger, for a signal or a nod. These threads, so thin, tied together an enormous applicative work to a project that would otherwise have been unrealizable. It was therefore necessary to be careful not to see the Madonnas<sup>16</sup> at every street corner, at every person looking out of a window, at every car parked on the edge of the road that the character usually traveled to and from his golden work. With all its limitations, some of which concerned only my personal perplexities as a disillusioned liberator, while others were shared by all the companions in the group, it was thanks to this bumpy path of doing that one arrived at action, there was no other itinerary that was not, in itself, banally suicidal. And this living a painful ambivalence – moreover often not even noticed by others – disappeared at the moment of action. Here, the overcoming was fully experienced by all participants. The overall outcome of the project realized in the course of daily doing, became in the action an instant of contact with quality, a different experience, a different consciousness, a punctual and each time unexpected consolidation of the being that is and cannot but be free in acting. The unexpected guest had nothing to do with the long previous active work, as it has little to do with the present remembrance.

179. – One thing seemed to unite all these characters who followed one another under the microscope of our model of active predisposition, they seemed lost in the very life they led, excluded from a common enjoyment, even if it was the labile enjoyment to which

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<sup>16</sup>*Translator* – Reference to so-called Marian apparitions; the Catholic phenomenon of miraculous visions of or communication with the Virgin Mary. Often connected to prophetic folk movements and a common object of amusement for its mass hysteric tendency such as in purported apparitions manifesting in clouds, stains, or in a famous 2004 case in the sear-marks on a grilled cheese sandwich, which subsequently sold for \$28,000.

everyone was accustomed. The more they tried to conform to the average of common behavior, dress, way of walking, tranquility in choosing or changing routes, frequenting public places, the more they seemed to acquire a particular tone, a kind of underlining, as if they were ectoplasms and therefore apparitions without roots. They were almost always alone, they had no children to accompany to school or to bring home, nor wives to take somewhere. Their meetings, and there were many, were systematically with other individuals of the same species, immediately detectable as soon as they approached them for a certain attention, or rather circumspection, in evaluating the details of what was at hand. Even their age had something standardized, they were neither very young nor old, around thirty or forty, they almost all dressed with a poor but austere correctness, more or less like gravediggers, and it was in this way that they could easily detect relationships that otherwise would have escaped a control that was not exactly sophisticated like ours, quite artisanal although accurate, taking into account the means available at the time. It was these same characters who imposed on themselves an unblemished reserve, a grim and impeccable self-vigilance in order to make everyone believe that they were exactly what they were not. The result, at least for our trained eye, was exactly the opposite. In the case in which, for reasons that almost always remained unknown, they were forced to change their itinerary or the places they frequented, they showed a very evident embarrassment and discomfort, as if they were dejected at not being able to integrate into the great mass of people who felt no discomfort at all in wandering around without a destination. They looked so dejected and irritated that one almost became alarmed thinking that they might have discovered something about our work of control and verification, which almost never happened. For my part, it was not easy to divert attention from a planned control and replace it with another. I was not – and am not – inclined to see impending dangers everywhere, but on those occasions I had to think in multiple ways, presuppose what the emptiness and solitude of the character did not even allow one to suppose possible. In the end, after many duplications of control, in two cases of this kind, it was decided not to record these variations with due attention, considering them as a whole as random. This decision, like all those that are taken once and for all, caused two failures that only fortunately did not radically destroy our group. The unexpected guest was expected and could not complete his work. A clash ensued from which we emerged almost unscathed in one case and with three seriously injured in a second case.

**180.** – The old wooden bridge that connected two small promontories that stretched out into the sea from the outskirts of the village

was usually occupied by a couple of amateur fishermen. After the bridge there was a small rudimentary staircase, now in ruins, from which you could get behind the house of one of these hangmen I am discussing here. His route was the direct one, so it came from the center of the village and arrived at the house located almost on the promontories, not far from the bridge. The observation point was on the staircase. There had been some dissonances. Once the character had calmly gone down to the bridge and started talking to a fisherman. He had never done so. But the fisherman did not arouse any suspicion, he was just the classic type of Sunday fisherman, patient and slow in his movements, never looking around, always with his eyes fixed on the float. At the time of the action there were two fishermen and they turned out to be police officers. Our movements had been discovered, or at least something strange had been detected. All our cover power was needed to get back safely. The guest was no longer unexpected.

**181.** – The encounter with the unexpected guest is dazzling, not in the action, which here cannot even be seen in its banal and repetitive guise, but afterwards, when the encounter with quality gives way to the necessary doing, in turn catalogued and foreseen in the smallest details. In the face of the radical cutting off of a life there is always some uncertainty, like an anguished unbearable suspension that cannot exist in action, indeed is cancelled out by the different experience of quality. There is in this curling up of a pile of rags, of what was once vital, an irreparable compromise. The unexpected guest cuts at the root, does not allow one to go back. When this does not happen, as in the case of the armed clash with three of our wounded comrades, he was unable to exercise his services, therefore he was as if absent, suddenly detached from the context. Was that the life of an executioner? Yes, it was. That I was not personally capable of accepting it as such was my own concern, that if I were in his place I would have been so ashamed that I would have taken that soiled life from myself. But it, in itself, blood and nerves and flesh, was still life. How did this life, caught in the fly in its presumptuous and rampant momentum, cut off in mid-air, relate to the sins that afflicted it and with which it had also stained itself as the information in our possession proved and which we also had to trust? Those sins exercised a deforming violence on it, producing a monster that became accustomed to its work, ending up considering it under the benevolent and superficial eye of things that must be done because such are the orders of superiors. But how did that monstrosity marry with the life that made it possible? There must have been a mystery. How was it possible that a man could end up torturing in cold blood? One could think of killing during a fight, in the heat of a fight, in an action, but in cold blood how could one carry out a job similar to that

of a butcher on the body of another human being? This could only happen by making that life dull and stupid, making it something vital only in an apparent way. The same for the informants who only on the surface seemed to be doing a job, let's say, lighter. Ultimately the result was always the same, their suspects always ended up in the torturers' room. So that violence lowered that life, made it unworthy of being lived. But it should extinguish itself, destroyed from within by the deep disgust of itself, if life were aware of itself, but it isn't, it's just animal impulse at this point, the same one that unites us all by making us brothers. Did crushing this impulse have something to do with those responsibilities? I wasn't so sure. This labored and rigid dilemma weighed on me like a condemnation, and yet capable of harboring so many problems within itself that they seriously embarrassed my actions and the reflections that recalled my actions. I became entangled in similar ambivalences, although not to the point of irresolution. At a certain point, forcing myself ever more violently, I forced myself to put my problems aside. It was certainly not possible to take the monster and tear out his claws so that he could no longer do the evil that for him was simple daily work. It was certainly not possible to talk to him, convincing him of his unworthy life, when he was the one who considered it a life like any other, with work that was perhaps a little more difficult than another, but not too much. It was necessary to cut short every delay. Get to the root immediately, we could not dawdle and put our lives in danger. It was also a sort of debt of loyalty not only to the companions of our group but to an entire oppressed people. How could I not see clearly where my philosophies were going up in smoke? It was certainly so. But I could see clearly, at the end of the action, only a disjointed puppet, a pile of rags, a shapeless mass devoid of life from which it was necessary to get away as quickly as possible. Freedom had had its share with our different consciousness in the action, the burning moment had been lived, the unexpected guest had done its work, my doubts resounded in the void.

182. – Something serious must have happened, a suspicion against us, a lapse in attention to the work – usually meticulous – had evidently been committed. A superficiality. The clash had been well held and the two wounded were not serious, but all the work in that place had gone to waste. At least two objectives had to be abandoned, and with that two monsters left free to continue their valuable work. Just the day before the action there had been a change of itinerary, which began with a delay at the first checkpoint, had then materialized in two missed passages and an apparently casual escort home by a colleague. Our superficiality? Perhaps. In fact, the preparatory work, becoming repetition and routine, fossilizes and therefore takes the form of habit, where the weed of carelessness

takes root. And yet those changes that we had seen before our eyes should have been evident, but they were not. Why? In the long run, one is astonished at how easy it is to deceive oneself, at how willing one is to turn a blind eye to the evidence if it threatens to call into question the tried and tested intervention model considered perfectly efficient. Yet the subsequent criticism, in my opinion, even if quite widespread within the group – which immediately returned to the capital – was not adequate. Everything, or almost everything, was attributed to chance and to some careless execution of the control model. It would have been the moment to call into question, I do not say absolutely but also partially, the entire intervention in its now repetitive process, but it was not so. After a few days, new information set us in motion right in the capital. The mechanism restarted without problems, as if nothing had happened. The wounded comrades were replaced by other comrades to whom the procedures were explained ad nauseam and everything ended in this way. My grumpy honesty could not make me decide to attack the problem frontally, that is, to put things on the table clearly, my worries and my doubts. So I circled the candle like a moth. A life in the shadows does not have many convivial moments in which one can speak freely, these are always reserved for the study of things to do and the verification or duplication of things already done. The mechanism is so rigid that it absorbs almost all the available energy, at least it seemed that way to me, so at times I remained within myself, closed, sullen, trying in every way to adapt to the things to do and trying, at the same time, not to lose the impetus towards freedom that I felt beating in my chest. And the things to do? Dark, taciturn, I certainly did not hold back. Doing, that's the point, doing what is necessary. At the end of doing, acting. After remembering. I still continue to do it, in this Greek prison, after so long, and the unexpected guest, sitting at the foot of my bed at night, certainly does not besiege me with questions. He has never asked questions, he has only formulated answers, a single answer, always the same, a radical answer. And perhaps, why not?, he has always been right. Every answer of his, in fact, and here lies my naive mistake, is beyond right and wrong, this is where his proud and imperturbable radicality lies. You cannot argue with him, you should do it a priori, within the choice of the objective. But stop and think for a moment. What is an objective in the sense used here? It is a person who has particularly odious responsibilities. A torturer, a classic example, who seems to lighten the problem and does not lighten it at all. But when does a torturer become a torturer? After one torture, after ten, after a hundred or a thousand? Who knows? Is it fair to say that a slap or a cigarette burn in some underground police cell is enough to be able to talk about torture? Fair enough. But then the

list would involve more than half of the police officers not only in this country under fascism but in every other country, even the so-called democratic ones. Of course, we need to have a more careful and appropriate model of choice. And it is precisely this level that our work was unable to reach. This decision-making part was up to others. Hence many of my doubts. Valid? I don't know.

**183.** – All was silent under the moon. In this noisy town, when silence falls, it is as if a disaster had happened, as if everyone had remained stunned, staring straight ahead. It was late at night and the character had not yet returned home. He was evidently working overtime. In these moments, often not exceptional moments of waiting and acute exercise of patience, I tried not to think about my personal reflections. With a technique I had learned as a professional poker player, I focused on a single detail and studied it in all its aspects, even the smallest ones. The cool May night favored this exercise, but I could not lose myself in the contemplation of the night itself, as a marvel complete in itself; I had to forget the white moonlight, fix my gaze on a door in the street, a simple double door, like the millions of them in my area. It was not the door of the character's house but another door, about ten meters away, on the same side of the street. The night and its silence were no more, now there was only the door, green, of peeling and aged wood, any door of any house in any Greek village in Attica. Suddenly, behind a small gate, the barking of a dog warned that someone was approaching the corner of the street. A few seconds of tension. Our man appeared calm with his usual slightly limping step. I felt the extreme tiredness that the tension accumulated for days transmitted to my body, weighed on my limbs, stopped like a fog in my brain. I could now hear, as the man came towards us, the rustling of the leaves of a tree that must have been behind the gate where the dog continued to bark. The unexpected guest immediately went into action, the character had no escape, he did not even notice what, mercilessly as the nemesis,<sup>17</sup> was coming towards him pushing a handcart, the kind used to transport vegetables. Under a sheet was my friend K.

**184.** – In the colorless dawn the wind blew angrily, as if it wanted to punish us for the trouble we had caused it by leaving behind us a small pile of rags. The unexpected guest had once again done its job. It was the last action in which I participated. During its unfolding outside of time the eternal certainty of quality had struck me as

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<sup>17</sup>*Translator* – This may also be read as 'its nemesis'. Nemesis is the Greco-Roman goddess of divine retribution and justice administered in response to mortal hubris or unjust fortune, she is the daughter of Nyx aka Night, and also has connections to fertility as just distributor of happiness and plenty in addition to vengeance. Can also refer to Satan, or the specific counterpart of a heavenly or infernal being ie. Christ and the Antichrist, God and the Devil.



all the other times, a brief whiplash on the skin, a bloody, irreparable incision. Now, as we were walking away toward the car that would take us far away, to the big city, to safety, the rain and the wind insisted on beating with obstinate violence on the entire universe and on that miserable handful of rags that we had left behind. The miserable remains of a man who had lived miserably. This was the positive judgment that I tried with all my strength to nail to my heart. Ahead, in the fast flow of the road, a timeless void, without events, only the banging of the headlights to right and left. The dry bramble hedges alternated with dry stone walls, put up as best they could. I was walking away. Every now and then a small tabernacle with a little light inside, right on the edge of the road. Signs of a faith also made of small things and junk. But hadn't I also worked with not dissimilar small things, with equally negligible and laughable details? Hadn't I built a trap with miserably practical materials into which to make a monster fall to tear out its claws? Now I felt like a wet bird that was going away lost with a timid flight. Everyone was silent in the car that was racing along, grinding out kilometers. Everyone should have been happy with the work of so many days happily concluded, but this contentment didn't seem tangible to me, perhaps it wasn't there. The radical work of the unexpected guest always brings with it a series of reflections on life that are not pleasant for anyone. Breaking this silence would have been like sneering at that miserable pile of rags that we had left behind. A cowardice. Each one of us, and never as I was sure of it that evening, carried in his heart a heaviness that was not easy to bear, that of living.

**185.** – Land of occupation. An army of occupation, particularly obtuse, as only the British army can manage with its centuries-old practice of colonization disguised as commercial activity. Northern Ireland, especially Belfast, was a land wrapped in barbed wire. Every street in the city was blocked and one could only enter on foot through a revolving door in the center of the roadway and after a thorough search. The IRA did not have the strength to face an armed insurrection, nor did the INLA, the group to which some anarchists belonged. Here too, our task was to give luster to freedom, showing how it was possible to attack the occupying enemy and the bases of its supporters, the privileged Protestant minority. Far from being a religious war. It was a clearly visible class struggle, the ruling class being exclusively made up of Protestant families who passed down the management of power with the protection of the British occupation army. Belfast Cathedral had on its right side and behind it a lawn with hundreds of small white crosses, each with the name of a member of the IRA or other resistance organisation killed by the Oranges (that is, almost always the UDA) or the British occupiers. The headquarters of the resistance, the party proper, was in

Dublin, the material – especially explosives – came in by the truckload on the many small country roads that linked the two Irelands, roads that could not be kept under constant control. Every police station, every pub, every public place, every hotel, every cinema, in fact almost everything that could recall normal life in any city not under siege, was surrounded by empty oil drums filled with solidified concrete. The nearby roads all had speed bumps. This more or less outlined the situation in which our group found itself operating for almost three months. The information came directly from Dublin and concerned, first of all, the traitors, then the infiltrators and informants, then the thugs who were agents within the army and the local police. This order had its own logic based on dangerousness. The sorest point were the traitors, those who had denounced militants and families of militants under torture. The British razed the houses of these poor people and imprisoned them all, the small children were entrusted to Protestant families, if they were just a little older they were taken to Great Britain and put in English or Scottish orphanages. The worst were the latter, all in the vicinity of Stirling. People were still living in the villages. The big city was dead. The tourist center distributed rooms in luxury hotels at the symbolic price of one pound, but there was no demand. Almost always these traitors tried to infiltrate, that is, to return to the groups they belonged to, and it was not easy to track them down. After all, it was their only chance of survival. Going out into the open, that is, starting to lose interest in everything after a visit to the police station or one of the many army barracks, was equivalent to self-reporting. But these infiltrations were almost all discovered after a certain time because of the misfortunes that struck the comrades known to these traitors. The British patrols arrived at the houses in full battle gear and destroyed everything, finally using bulldozers to raze the houses to the ground, a fairly simple task, in any case, since they were council houses, almost always terraced and built with wooden foundations and cardboard-like material. Tracing the traitor was therefore not difficult and, from another point of view, it was simple to check the general indication, coming from Dublin. This reduced but did not eliminate my long-standing doubts. Most of the time these individuals were already destroyed beings, emaciated, yellowed by fear, almost feverish. They went to meet their fate with a kind of resignation. More than anything it was their attempt – almost always useless – to recycle themselves to continue doing evil, which placed them in a particularly hateful perspective. They had a new home, furnished in a standard manner by their new employers, in many cases there was nothing in these squalid places, located in peripheral neighborhoods in multi-story buildings of public housing, nothing that reminded one of the personality of those who lived

there. It was evident that these people were dead even before the visit of the unexpected guest. They continued to move by inertia but without hope. A sad fate.

186. – The typology of these traitors was never interesting, poor wretches mixed up in matters bigger than themselves, ugly for their lack of firmness in the face of danger, torture. But how many of us would be able to respond coherently with our principles in the face of extreme pain, dislocated limbs, cut genitals, burned eyes? How many? Not many. Their misfortune was to have fallen for blackmail. To have put themselves at the service of the torturers, to not have had the preventive courage to smash their heads against the wall. To save oneself in any way, in these cases, is almost always to give in at the first signs of torture, making others aware of a willingness immediately put to good use. No one who has been able to face real torture could be considered a priori capable of taking on the ugly role of a traitor. These people know which people to manipulate, which are soft and which are not. They do not waste time with the most resistant. After a while they give up and turn to others. What is disgusting about the traitor is therefore his basic weakness and his being put to use. The possibility of immediately relating the troubles caused to the cause of these troubles makes the search very limited. Even if we wanted to use the character in other places, the movement information was well organized and identified him almost immediately. I am not aware of any attempts at surgical facial modification. The users of these wretches evidently did not take them into great consideration. They simply provided them with a different identity, that's all. I saw one wet, numb, not opening his umbrella, as if he no longer cared about anything. A small sign, if you like, but indicative, as of someone who no longer gives importance to the daily things of life. The dejected and impoverished soul of these remnants of an illusion did not provide them with any energy, nor did their clients provide for their protection in any way. For them they were squeezed lemons from which it was perhaps possible to extract a few last drops of juice, nothing more. This character I mentioned above, all wet, had a big doll's face and the haunted eyes of a madman, he was pitiful and was aware of the fate that awaited him.

187. – I had been following one of these individuals for a while, the duplication of control behind me doing its job. We walked in silence with no apparent goal, except to avoid the streets of the center, all controlled by barbed wire. Did he know where he was going? Did he have something to do? Or was he just walking, waiting for his fate? It wasn't easy to figure out. It could have been all three. Had they suggested a field of action? Or had they simply told him to return to frequenting the same circles as before? Who could know?

Given the low regard in which these wretches were held, anything was possible. In fact, he had left a miserable hotel on the outskirts, where he had taken up residence for a couple of days. The few times he looked up, he seemed to be looking around, disoriented and uncertain. He had taken the direction to leave the city and was walking slowly, leaning on a carefully closed umbrella. I could have stopped him and asked him why? Why this horror? But I couldn't. Because it would have been useless since he didn't even know why and then there could be duplications to check if anyone approached him. In short, it was an absurd idea. At a certain point he began to quicken his pace and to look back more frequently. Finally he entered a pub, an ordinary place not one frequented by Catholics. It must have been a special place anyway because it was defended by the usual cement blocks, sparser on the outskirts. What was he thinking about his life? How did he imagine it? Was he thinking of a future outside of that universe of troubles he had gotten himself into? Was he petty and dejected or did he not even realize that he was slowly sliding towards his own end? After leaving the pub he continued on his way east, that is, towards the nearest exit of the city. Then suddenly he entered a church. It was a small Catholic Franciscan church. He stayed there for a few minutes. We immediately thought that he wanted to slip away by exiting through some side door because he had spotted us. I don't know. I don't think so. He exited through the same main door he had entered through. He turned back and we looked at each other, he couldn't understand what was about to happen. He hung his head and continued walking. The unexpected guest was waiting for him on the corner of the street a few hundred meters from the church.

**188.** – It takes a certain amount of consideration to attack, you need to realize that the one who is attacked deserves the attack, wants to continue to hurt others, wants to defend himself because he has a vision of the future, even if it is despicable. But it is not like that with these traitors. They are human larvae, mud, slime where no sign of vitality can be found. You need to dress your actions with well-articulated motivations to strike people like this who no longer have anything to hold on to, ghosts emptied by individuals even more despicable than them. The naked truth is sad. They have done harm, so much harm, now they are wretches who almost hope to end their lives soon in one way or another. Flee. Elsewhere. I asked myself, but except in the case of a change of identity, which is not common, most of them are almost penniless. In fact, apart from their documents, nothing or almost nothing has ever been found about them. The final action in these cases had such a weak quality that it didn't even make you feel the difference in doing it. It seemed like a simple continuation of the preparatory work, not a leap in

quality. The unexpected guest was almost out of place, excessive with its constant radicality devoid of nuance, always the same. An injustice? No. Not this. Revenge? Maybe, but I wouldn't be so sure. Carrion? Certainly. But does it make sense to hunt carrion? I asked myself that for a long time. Here too, even in a context very different from the Greek one. The reasons for my doubts were linked to a sort of leveling that we carried out in collaboration with our real enemies, the real people responsible for that massacre. They emptied a person like a sack and put obscure pressure on his weaknesses, then they reaped immediate benefits. They didn't insist any more except for the form, a sort of very unpleasant game of massacre. They knew very well what end those wretches would meet, they didn't care at all, they were human waste. And here was my doubt. Why destroy what they had already wiped out? Why this sad connivance with the real perpetrators? Of course, even the latter, much more rarely, were targeted by our movement information, then it was another matter, more complex, more difficult, but more satisfying. We were closer to the source of the damage, to the real source, not simply to the second beat, we were right at the origin. Many of these people, of whom we had the description, were specialists who always lived in army or police barracks, had no family and did not have a normal life. They rarely went out and never alone, at least in pairs, and did not stray far from their nest of rats. Of one in particular, housed in the North Belfast barracks, we had an accurate description, photo, name and everything else, because he came from another city, where he was responsible for a famous Bloody Sunday, together with other characters of his ilk, all from the First British Parachute Regiment. Only a few months [2010] ago the government led by Cameron, at the conclusion of the second inquiry, after almost forty years, declared what was done in Derry to be "unjust". Transferred to Belfast he was no exception, no one saw him around, there was no evidence for our preparatory work. As far as we could tell he had no family nor did he cultivate cultural or sporting interests. He didn't go to the cinema or the pub. In short, he was one with his job, a real soldier. A full-time repressor. A slave job to enslave other men or kill them. Suddenly he was spotted one evening, near the North Barracks, alone. His case was opened through the constant attention we paid to this barracks, a known place of torture. We began our long and exhausting work of control, doubled and tripled. After twenty days we had accomplished nothing. We could not even equip ourselves for a sudden intervention, too dangerous. Then there was another sighting, we saw him enter a house on the northern outskirts, not far from the barracks and not even close. The correspondences, confirmed several times, gave acceptable results. Almost every week he went to that house alone, incredibly sure of himself and against all the rules

of coverage that these specialists applied with great care. The unexpected guest waited for him near the house and closed the account once and for all. For me it was one of the most satisfying actions.

**189.** – A constant consternation spoiled the calm recollection that would have been necessary for me. A reflection finally carried out to the end, without pretenses or hesitations. At the bottom of the calm and reflective reality there was still that pile of rags, that sudden collapse of something that first was and then was no longer. A puppet had replaced a living being. The puppet was now nothing more than a memory of what had been a wrong life, weak or ferocious, in any case wrong, but a memory for me who could not get the vision of the puppet's posture out of my eyes. Each of these little piles of rags had its own way of crumpling, some frozen on the spot, others stretching as if they were about to wake up to a new life, few movements, wide eyes, deep or truncated sighs. What did all this pantomime of muscles and nerves, of blood and flesh, have to do with life, the only one responsible for what was infamous and wrong in it? They were two clearly separate things. The bold splendors and the fearful anguish of the first were nothing but scarecrow postures in the second phase. In the middle the action had been realized, an extreme moment, this one alive, capable of making me grasp the quality without any safety gaps. But I could not tie myself to it, if I did not want to go beyond the point of no return, lose in the wind of carelessness my responsibilities towards my companions and the common project that we had committed to carry forward. Here, in the alveolus<sup>18</sup> of the action I would have been perfectly full, with the fullness of quality, I would have finally been myself, without internal pieces to hide as shame, finally free as I would have wanted everyone to be, finally true of that truth that is not a simple mirroring but being that is, right, beautiful, in short, I would have been my action as the others would have been theirs, each living it in his own way because the individual paths of the overcoming were different. But this was not possible. The action concluded, only a pile of rags or rubble, a going away leaving behind the work of the unexpected guest, punctual and precise as usual. Then the effort of remembering, like smoothing a cat against the grain. At night I would wake up and lock the experience I had just lived inside myself, forcing it to converse with me, or rather with my attempt at remembering. An icy bath, a fearful confrontation. I had to wear a mask, that of impassivity in the face of the evidence of a fracture that was becoming ever wider inside me, in the face of ever more pressing questions. Why? I felt impregnated with a stench of a morgue, of

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<sup>18</sup>*Translator* – A small, angular cavity or pit, especially in the body, ie. the tiny air-sacs of the lungs where oxygen/carbon dioxide exchange occurs, a tooth socket, or a honeycomb cell.

withered leaves, of damp earth recently turned over, of fresh burials not yet consolidated. A solemn madness. Didn't I see the misery that had been before me? Hadn't I watched his movements for days, dressed up like any other person? Hadn't I wished that the result of my own work and that of my companions would come to a good end? And what could this good end be if not a pile of rags, a heap of rubble? What other possible conclusion? If I had been given the choice of avoiding the end so foreshadowed, desired and taken for granted, would I have perhaps managed to reach a different conclusion? Would I have blocked the arrival of the unexpected guest? No, certainly not. Even now, at the end of my life, when I wake up at night in my cell in this Greek prison and find the unexpected guest sitting still and silent at the foot of the bed, I have no different answer, not even a muscle of his gaunt impassive face moves. I tell him about my old whims, he doesn't move, he doesn't even start to shout at me, he doesn't answer. He waits. I know very well what he's waiting for. I know he never gets angry, that he doesn't know how to rush and that he is patience personified. He waits for me. Not that I can, once again, leave with him for yet another action, not this, it's not that absurd, he is very rational and implacable in evaluating my current very precarious physical conditions. And me he waits for. He is not satisfied with my chatter, I know well that he has never liked chatter. He simply waits.

**190.** – The appropriate British provisions almost did not include the use of informants in the classic sense of the word. The traitors could not really be called such, they did not provide information, but were simply thrown away. A few rare examples were present, however, especially in the larger towns and cities, where there were no blocking apparatus and barricades like Belfast, but only speed bumps and oil barrels filled with cement. Here, in the Catholic pubs, after careful and long observation, the informants could be identified. Few and difficult to catch at work. The tavern provocateurs or the confused instigators were completely non-existent, they clashed too much with the general sadness, with the dark and unbreathable climate of the occupation, one of the worst I have ever seen. Returning to the informants, our group, in the space of four months, had two reports, both in towns quite far from each other. Apparently the technique used by these two characters was the same. They sat in pubs, at different times of the day, and listened in isolation without ever intervening in any discussion. They didn't solicit anyone to express themselves, they only served as a sounding board. I remember that the first one we spotted, again on the advice of the party based in Dublin, seemed to be asleep in front of his glass of dark beer. He didn't even look up from the ground. He didn't meet anyone, he didn't read the newspapers or seem worried. He looked like an Irish

worker, complete with regulation cap, with a dull, tired look, as if he had just finished his shift. We waited for him sitting at another table while the control duplication waited outside, conveniently positioned. The character had a dog, a good-natured and elderly setter, who sat patiently under the table waiting for his owner to decide to move his observation post elsewhere. When he did, the only oddity was that he went into a church and left the dog in front of the door, which, accustomed to it, would lie down quietly and wait for the return of the owner who, usually, stayed inside for a few minutes. Even in church, as the duplication of control could ascertain, he did not speak to anyone, he crossed himself with holy water and, kneeling at a pew, said a few prayers. We had to wait more than ten days to locate his contact. Another character, on the street, near a park. They met and began to talk incessantly. The latter was taking notes in a notebook, a policeman in every respect, even the civilian coat issued to Irish policemen, regularly Protestant. It remained to decide how and where to have the unexpected guest intervene. I proposed to intervene on the policeman first, leaving our character at the mercy of the decisions of his bosses. The group, however, ended up voting to intervene on the informant. In this way the policeman was lost sight of. The action ended immediately after yet another meeting near the usual park. The unexpected guest left a small pile of rags near a very neat flowerbed while the dog whimpered slightly crouched without even being afraid of the slight noise produced by the silencer. Driving away in the car we intercepted the policeman who had collected the latest testimonies. He was walking briskly towards his workplace. The second project can also be considered, with different arrangements of time and place, a duplication of the first. These people were truly mass-produced. This time too there was no need to even locate the house. From the pubs frequented we arrived after a few days at the exchange of information with another policeman near and then inside a bus station. The new character was gloomy and monotonous like the first, he had a dog and did not frequent churches. I don't know whether or not he was a good Catholic or why he did that horrible job for the occupiers, I don't even know if he was Irish, given the silence he could easily have been one of the many Scots involved in the army and the police. He had a calm face, like the first one, only that every now and then it was suddenly disfigured by a sudden grin, immediately repressed. The unexpected guest caught him on the bus, where his contact had recently left him. He looked like a puppet thrown there by chance, without any reason. And what could this reason have been?

191. – I was living in my own world at this time, illuminated by a sun of freedom that had nothing concrete. If I had continued in that direction, insisting on works of low justice, freedom would



never have risen on the horizon. It was I who basked in the rosy and empty light of a perpetual dawn, the beginning of a day that was slow in coming. The shadows, however, many shadows, were there, in front of me, palpable, inevitable, hideous. I could welcome and ponder my doubts but they were never truly faced head on, deep down I myself did not want it so as not to disturb the purest dream of my life. So I tried not to disturb everyday reality, made up of correspondences and balances, checks and particular attention given to all the nuances. This busyness prevented me from giving space to my perplexities while the action itself, in its realization, always caught me suddenly, a violent tear from all quantitative considerations and a timeless plunge into the deepest being of quality. Here the sun was always high and always illuminated my actions even in the middle of the night, no anguish, only the sensation of fullness and completeness, finally achieved in the action. I think the same must have happened to my companions, even if I never managed to make them enter into my recollections nor, I think, did they worry much about it. There were moments, when we returned from an action, with the unexpected guest perfectly conscious of his work, in which I felt alone, while the shadow of twilight fell on my eyes even in the middle of the morning. I thought about the precariousness of life, the race we all make every day just to get to the last meeting, the decisive one, to the last heartbeat, to the last cry strangled in the throat, certain and surprised at the same time of what must be a moment of particular intensity. A light that goes out? A sigh of relief? Or an anxious regret? Who can know? These thoughts moved inside me without wanting to. I felt incapable of giving them an answer. A mystery was there, within reach, and I did not know how to grasp it. This was unbearably painful to me. It crushed me despite the many speeches dictated by militant fervor. One less monster. How many tortures avoided. Similar to those I myself have suffered and others, unknown to me. A monster like that had no right to life. A phrase worthy of meditation. But who has the right to life? Those who behave well. But what does it mean to behave well? Applying the rules? No torture. Centuries of prison, executions according to the laws and all the rest. Does this mean behaving well? Is an executioner who kills behind a piece of paper signed by a judge less responsible than another executioner who kills by torturing because he was verbally ordered to do so? Come on, let's be serious. And if we have to be serious, then very few people would be left alive. Where is the dividing line? Who is responsible for drawing it? Is it clear? Or is it drawn at random, a little crooked, someone inside and someone outside? A laborious discussion, to take it to its extreme consequences. Who decides? Who carries it out? Instead, everything seemed easy, on that side, upstream, information was

accumulating - exact as you want but always produced by human approximation - against a fearsome adversary who produced new puppets as those in circulation were put out of action by the unexpected guest. It was therefore not a question of achieving a result or of influencing a perverse behavior. Always new monsters were manufactured in the specialized schools - the British are masters in these things as in so many others - and put into circulation. New information, new correspondence, checking, shadowing, an immense work of meticulous attention, then, in the end, the conclusive action, the arrival of the unexpected guest. This radical cut - with him our work ended - eliminated not only a human monstrosity - and only man can be a monster at this level - but every critical consideration. Every question remained unanswered.

192. - Even in our group there were companions who were determined about the validity of what they were doing and companions who were uncertain. Only this uncertainty was sometimes hidden behind a witty, tight-lipped laugh, as if they had understood everything and tolerated everything for lack of anything better. Certain discussions did not proceed smoothly but in fits and starts, like something that has been simmering in a pot for a long time without being cooked. Every now and then I seemed to see some sidelong glances towards me - a foreigner and not a master of the language, many nuances escaped me - some glances, in short, something different from the ordinary. Not that there was any cunning or malicious animosity towards me, but certain considerations of mine were not digested and perhaps raised too many problems. There was also the bait of curiosity in play. How could I raise doubts and then adhere perfectly to the work that the whole group was called to do? There could be something unclear. In fact, up until the moment of my departure, there was never an in-depth discussion. Even today, after so many years, I am not clear about what I mean. I think of the many interventions of the unexpected guest and I wonder if all those little piles of rags, all that rubble, had exactly the meaning we gave them. Does not an extreme intimacy with death degenerate into a profound misunderstanding of life? After all, the true task of each of us is to live, but is it life that coagulates, even for intermediate periods of time, that is, neither long nor continuous, in preparing the ground for death? Is not the monstrosity of some men, of some tasks, of some state services or of free hitters, paid slaughterers, perhaps a malignant plant that must be eradicated at all costs? At all costs? Of course, an evaluation of the costs is always necessary. One cannot be monstrously able to strike down monsters, in this way substitutions are made, or rather the massacres are duplicated. Therefore, discernment is needed. Is this discernment impracticable in the heat of the clandestine struggle? Inapplicable in the conditions in which

one is forced to operate in a country occupied by a foreign army? Perhaps. Or were there alternatives that were not taken into consideration? Greater attention to information? More accurate selection? Better selected targets? Wasn't there sometimes a risk of hitting the target closest to hand? Were there sometimes actions carried out just to pin an extra metaphorical star on one's chest? I don't know. I'm not saying that this actually happened, I'm saying that I've fueled doubts about it for years. Being a clandestine combat unit, we had to show signs of life. Work, accumulate checks and correspondence, carry out actions, make the unexpected guest intervene. What else could a clandestine combat unit possibly do? Look at its nails? But who gave us this supreme authority, delegated by us, after long and conscientious work, to the unexpected guest? Certainly not the information received from the Dublin movement, almost always limited to personal details, mere indications of location and a few photographs, in addition, but not always, to a brief history of the character's misdeeds. Did we give it to ourselves by establishing the monstrous behavior with our investigations, with our rigorous duplications, with the work of days and weeks? I don't think so. Ultimately, we thought we would find this authority in action, but this too was an idea of mine that was hinted at and immediately seemed, even to myself, unacceptable. If in action I felt seized by quality, finally free to be what I really was, the objective became clear to me, as one might say, under my hands. But these brief flashes did not add much to the previous work, they were a world apart, ruled by the intuitions, inapplicable in the previous work and not very comprehensible in the same recollection. So the authorization was in the belief of having before us a monster unworthy of belonging to the community of men, which unites us all, not only the bearers of freedom, like me, but also the slaves and even those who move the world of doing by exploiting the work of slaves. Well, that monster had to be placed before the unexpected guest because he himself, with his doing, had placed himself outside this community. A way of comforting oneself in the face of the incomprehensible.

193. – The time of fiery reprimands is long gone, of the stirrings of the soul raised by indignation for the fleeting consolations of those who floundered behind improbable discussions and distinctions from lawyers when in the world, everywhere, there was so much to do, so many injustices to correct, so many wrongs to repair. The wonder of why so many lukewarm spirits spoke well and practiced badly is long gone. I am old and I realize why those fearful ones hid their heads under their wings, the spectacle of massacres is something other than learning it by hearsay. Seeing it, watching what man can do to man, is something that generates a deep, violent pain, an irreparable transformation that continually cries out

for vengeance, that is not appeased by speeches and that demands blood for blood, massacre for massacre. Not on behalf of others, to replace a tortured people, who sooner or later find their way to act, but on their own, to provide for the limitless bitterness of their own heart, to do what must be done, not to correct or counterbalance, but to act. Entering into action freely is not easy, you have to prepare yourself if you do not want to face a disastrous suicide. You need preparation and patience, to look for the right contacts and paths. At the time there were at least two channels in Italy, one linked to the PSI and one to the PCI and that gave a hand clandestinely. I used both of them. You did not have to do anything exceptional, just go to a place where you could get training, if you did not have it, military training, or join groups already operating clandestinely on the spot. Palestine, Greece, Ireland, the African continent. I do not pretend to reconstruct my memories here, I am not interested, I want to discuss with myself problems that I have long pondered and that I have never stopped carrying with me like an increasingly heavy burden. These problems, rich in many facets, can be summed up in the question formulated thus, does one have the moral right to give death? A rabid dog must be put down. But a monster, a torturer, a spy, an unworthy person who fulfills the task of a paid executioner, with all that can be built up against them, are rabid but are not dogs. They are human beings, seeing them as beasts to be put down diminishes my humanity. I have observed many of these monsters, I have seen them walk, sit at a coffee table, talk, blow their nose, look around, scratch an ear, in short do everything that men usually do. And I was there watching them, intently, trying to catch something special, a sign in their eyes, a grimace on their face, a contemptuous expression, an unusual gesture. Almost always none of this came to me. The great pain caused by these monsters had not left a specific stigma on their body, there were no particularly repulsive signs. They were almost always normal men, neither too handsome nor too ugly, horribly average. They looked like so many land registry clerks, the most obvious thing a man's life can produce. Yet they were monsters who came from a monstrous job, carried out in suitable places, with suitable tools, and went home to rest. Or they made the reverse journey, from home to work. Other times they were monsters who indicated to other monsters who had to be hit, sucking information and transcribing it so that it could be used with the sole purpose of causing pain, fear, terror. All this in the name of order and legality of States that sometimes boasted the title of democracy and other times that of dictatorship, always in the name and for the well-being of the people. I was too tense to collect these testimonies with due attention. Once the character was identified, our work was not about the person but about how to intercept

him, so we had to provide an endless series of checks, daily, without stopping, duplicating and sometimes tripling the observations in order to be certain of some correspondences, habits, encounters, paths and all the rest. A painful and risky job that sometimes overflowed into routine, but prevented us from observing the man behind the monstrosity of the mask that had by now solidified. At the end, in the action, the unexpected guest was precisely this mask that struck. A little pile of rags.

**194.** – A triumphant sun of repressive barbarism cannot be found in the slime that one is forced to wade through if one wants to remove the worst parts, the most immediately harmful and revolting, even if in the end the real rottenness, the source of every monstrosity perpetrated in the cesspools of the police and barracks is found elsewhere. But how can one attend to this other monstrosity, far worse and more responsible? This gangrenous and smelly part was holed up in guaranteed super-secure rooms, while zombies deprived of every glimmer of intelligence and conscience were unleashed to carry out that terror on which all power ultimately rests. Were these public figures aware of the monstrous activities that were being carried out under their direct or indirect orders? Were we sure that this knowledge existed, indeed that there was a secret endorsement, an incitement to operate ever more ferociously to maintain the established order. This certainty was flaunted in the modest claims of the actions carried out successfully, some poor leaflet, immediately removed from circulation, read secretly with non-existent results, especially in the part intended to solicit the revolt. Ultimately, to conclude, these supreme individuals responsible for the atrocities of the material executors were safe and our information confirmed it by never concerning – except for one case in Greece – their persons. I wondered how they could live in their own quiet defensive circle knowing what was happening on their orders on the lower floors or in the cellars. What kind of men were they? Was this power? Or had they made it that way because they had been taken on the fly and not through democratic means? But didn't similar things also happen in democracies? I have been tortured now, in democratic Greece, and I don't dare to think what they would have done to me if they had captured me forty years ago. A question of nuances? A problem of levels of torture? I don't think so. Torturing a human being is degrading and only a monster can do it, a monster educated in these monstrous techniques. But is killing such a monster a just action? Of course it is, I repeated to myself every day, while I worked constantly and hard to create the conditions necessary for these killings to happen. This is the point around which these belated anguished considerations revolve. Many years have passed, too many, and in the evening, in this cell of a Greek prison, I ask myself if those actions had a just

foundation. And an informer? And a provocateur? I have described these figures at length, as well as the pathetic one of the traitor in the Irish condition, and I have not arrived, even now, at a solution, an answer, satisfactory to me. It is not regret or prudence that dictate these perplexities to me, I have always had them even when I was young and now that I am old I am neither regretful nor cautious, the proof is in the place where I am. No, there is something else, something hidden in those little piles of rags that the unexpected guest left behind. Something that was alive before and a moment later – a single moment – was dead. Something therefore that concerns life and death, a long silence that followed a long talk. Life speaks and justifies itself, it provides a foundation for everything, even the worst atrocities, death simply remains silent. The latter does not take the justifications of the former, does not listen to them, does not care, cuts at the root and moves on. This certainty of itself – irreplaceable and unthinkable otherwise – overturns any question, it cannot provide answers. I have questioned the unexpected guest several times, he has never spoken, he has never explained to me the reason for his task. The why belongs to me, or rather it should belong to me, in fact its presence was a consequence of the collective preparatory work. After all, the pile of rags was caused by that work, without which the work of the unexpected guest would have been impossible. The answer should therefore come from me, not from him, I am the one who participated in the construction of those correspondences and duplications and who, at a certain point, considered them sufficient to replace a life - monstrous and miserable as you like, but still a life - with a pile of rags. I cannot skirt around this responsibility of mine by endlessly questioning the unexpected guest. His silence tears my heart apart.

195. – This mass production of deadly conditions caused me an ever more acute rejection instead of leading me to that habituation to the profession that I would have expected. A dejection of conscience, perhaps, which immediately, and therefore with all its limitations, rebelled against an indispensable adjustment, a dismay at the vanity of my work, dreamed of as fundamental, antechamber of the revolution, discovered instead to be limited and dependent on the decisions of others, at least of those who provided the initial information. Was this dejection a weakness of mine, or did it belong to the specificity of the work? Death is always beside everyone, just and unjust, young and old, but here it was not a question of the death that accompanies life, but of the one that crosses its path and reduces it to crumbs. Chance distributes dangers equally and death follows, with minimal deviations, the law of large numbers, but here everything was different. The limit of the encounter was carefully prepared, studied in every detail, urged and realized. There was no

escape – with rare exceptions – if the preventive work was carried out according to the rules, and our task was precisely to apply these inflexible rules, so that nothing unforeseen could happen, so that even the slightest deviation was excluded. And all this busyness in the long run generated a cold and subterranean feeling, a tremendous necessity, a funereal kinship from which one could not detach oneself. Each piece was a step forward towards the fatal encounter, towards the dark necessity of the unexpected guest. And I saw this ineluctable deadline advance a little every day, step by step in every shadowing, in every control, in every duplication, ineluctably, while in my mind, parallel to the objectively verifiable facts, the correspondences, doubts and perplexities that took my breath away accumulated. How to manage the time that separated me from the final encounter, from the overcoming in action, where I would have only my encounter with quality, a different consciousness capable of acting in the final moment. Beyond any doubt and any perplexity. But after? Remembering the action? At this point I felt my throat tighten from an inexpressible sensation of inadequacy. But it was not only dejection, it was also anger and annoyance. The will dragged me away, overwhelmed me in a doing that multiple elements made me consider well-founded, right, necessary, the action reconfirmed my qualitative experience, but then came the doubts, since we left behind a pile of rags, a twisted puppet, a pile of rubble. And yet that will to do, that workload, was mine, I myself identified with it, I had freely recognized it as indispensable. But the questions resurfaced. I had no justifications, I did not let myself be dragged, it was I who decided. But what decision was mine? Wasn't I wrapped up in a set of threads that held me tight, responsibility towards my companions, awareness of the atrocities committed by the character who was the object of our particular attention, respect and irreplaceability of the rules? I couldn't do without these connecting elements without betraying the trust of my companions and without putting their life and mine at risk. The mechanism that I had helped in all conscience to make work now pushed me with all its brute, repetitive, blind force, and against it I couldn't oppose any exception to the rules, these had to be respected, and they – apparently extraneous and aseptic – came to flow precisely in the operational terrain from which my doubts subsequently emerged, like late flowers. Even in places where the objective conditions appeared clearer – as in Palestine – these doubts didn't unblock, they always remained in front of me as I looked at the reddish line of twilight sitting on the edge of the camp that hosted us at that time. I felt pity for those miserable and disinherited people, forced to live a dog's life in indescribable conditions, but the pile of rags that we had left that very morning in the capital, on a tree-lined street in the eastern part, would not

be removed before my eyes. Could a life cut short, even that of a monster responsible for speechless atrocities, counterbalance the suffering that I had before my eyes? I don't know. Even today, I don't know.

**196.** – Here, in Palestine, old and new motives are at play. The business and the present wealth, if not of all – for the classes in Israel are rigidly identified in the fictitious community of religion – at least in some are contrasted with the atrocious memories of the centuries-old persecutions, up to the Nazi one, the most organized and widespread. But also in Russia or in Africa they have been busy, even if with less organization and efficiency. The soul of the current persecutors is hardened and terrified. They cannot go back, especially the Sephardim, who are said to be the most miserable and the most ferocious. But at least the latter, constituting the shock mass of the police and partly of the army, are clearly visible. The Ashkenazim are not, they are the ones who direct the repression and our struggle is particularly directed against them. The specialists of the services have almost all been trained by the Americans and have nothing to envy of the British services, considered among the best in the world. Only here the clash is more open, there are no Cold War forms and subterfuges, here we meet and clash in the streets, in public places, in stadiums, among people. This allows us to reduce the difference that remains regarding the availability of means and the effectiveness of preparation. Despite the diversity of the terrain of confrontation, even here my doubts persist. Indeed, I can say that it is precisely here that they have drawn a very fine intuition for nuances and are able to penetrate, silently and vigilantly, into certainties that I have long considered unassailable. The revenge that the Jews are taking on their history is extremely cruel, and the one paying the price is an entire people forced to leave their land, their work, their home. The mutual secret curses and the requests for help addressed to the mutual hatred that all together, under different guises, unites them, do not shift the responsibilities of some and the misery of others by a millimeter. Everyone feels part of a right, on the one hand that of expropriating the space to live, on the other of not being suffocated in concentration camps similar to the Nazis. And our groups are here to help the most miserable, the disinherited, the abandoned and hunted, the locked up, to free themselves. But what to do? Here is the point. The preparation, moreover necessarily brought to completion in another State, has given us some means but has not - and could not - enabled us to identify the objectives. Either all these objectives are good, therefore they are equivalent, and then it is a massacre, a strike at random, and the thing cannot be accepted, at least by me, in these terms, or it is necessary to have the means to select them. And these means are in



the hands of the few leaders of the various resistance organizations. This causes a certain embarrassment in everyone, and in me also a sort of disturbance. My anarchist being stiffens and tries to understand the reason for this necessity and to find a possible alternative way. There are neither ways nor answers. It is necessary to accept the general information, as everywhere else. It is not a question of forcing or of an affront, nor of a party imposition, it is a question of a management of information that cannot be structured differently. Therefore, no hidden thoughts, no ideological mental reservations. Clarity on all sides. The work that falls to us, to our groups, is the search for the necessary conditions to make the unexpected guest intervene. Often the wild roughness of the countryside in which one was forced to live was cut short by the need for a long work in the big city, or vice versa, from life in the city one was forced to get used to a camouflage in the countryside, an operation that required completely different procedures. A specific peculiarity was the possibility of an open clash, a firefight in the center or in the open countryside, conditions unthinkable in other places. But this variant, at least for me, was always welcome because it took me out of my personal doubts and did not pose any problems of responsibility in choosing the target. Almost always the clash was determined by an error in the coordination work, by a mismatching, by a duplication that was not perfectly synchronized. This ruined the individual action and often our action had to be modified into a defense or a retreat with the least possible damage. The unexpected guest rarely remained inactive.

197. – Was life in the senseless animation of that rag doll, that little pile of rags? Was it perhaps in the skilled butcher's chopping of the flesh of poor wretches? Or in indicating to the specialists which of the many had committed the grave crime of cultivating opinions contrary to those of the government in office, more or less legitimate? Life could not be this stupid and sordid programming of massacres and horrors. Was life perhaps our choice? Was it in our daily commitment to pursue, measure, control, verify and then act accordingly? Or was it – the pinnacle of the incredible – the sum of our ideas of freedom? Was it hidden in my feeling that I was the bearer of freedom? No, absolutely not. Each time the Fates cut the thread and we started again from the beginning. But in this way did one possess the strength to know life? Or did one cut where best and most easily one could cut? And this since in any case one had to eliminate the monstrosity that was before one. Time was also put out in action, everything was concentrated in the moment, that one qualitatively charged with freedom, truth, justice. But after? Afterwards it was necessary to transfer to another job, preparatory to another action, the search for life. As if my questions instead of find-

ing answers were allocated in a near future, close, practically already begun, given that between one action and another there was no solution of continuity. Other shadowings, other days and other weeks spent in verifying correspondences and duplications. The darkness, the silence, the refusal to clarify, were, all together, the foundation of our strength to move forward. The sense of opportunity suggested to me to postpone, but postpone what? The main question was – and remains even today – what is life? Was what the man we were following carried inside him life? The man that the information showed us as a cold monster specialized in breaking bones, one by one, in the course of his work as a torturer? Was his life? I could see him clearly, after so many days, I could see his movements, his slightest gestures, the affectations that we all possess and that distinguish us, I could see his gaze – almost always remote and dull –, I could see his figure disappearing on the threshold of the house, or entering work in the morning in places that at first glance seemed more like government offices. Was this life? I thought about his habits – in general they were almost always people of habit and solitary –, his daily worries at work, the orders he received, the reaction he must have had in front of every new case that was brought to his workroom. I was sure that he must have had some reaction, of annoyance, of satiety, like every bureaucrat who sees the paperwork to be done piled up on his desk. Or not, not even this glimmer of existence shone in his motor muscle, not even this animal sign of life. Of course, it was convenient for me to accentuate this disinterest, this detachment, to imagine him devoid of emotions, a machine made of flesh and blood, but only a monstrous machine. But I knew that this was not the case. Neither could his possible negative reactions absolve him from responsibility for his work, nor could they make him guilty in the event of his absence, only in this case. Those were my problems, not his. He limited himself to smashing, dismembering, cutting, I knew all this, we in the group had all read the detailed information, I knew if he tortured, if he informed, if he betrayed, if he provoked, I also knew that he was a living man and that at the conclusion of our action he would be a dead man. This caused me, before the action, not during it, a continuous pounding of the heart, a sort of anguished expectation that could lead me to dangerously shorten the times, precisely to escape from my personal condition of anxious worry. Despite all this boiling of blood in my veins, I forced myself to rigidly follow the rhythmic scansion of the control times, of the preparatory operations, in short of everything that was necessary to prepare the ground for the arrival of the unexpected guest. My doubts remained such, what I had before me was a monstrously living life, the action we would have carried out would have transformed it into a crumpled puppet. After which the unexpected guest

would have gone away as always, without a word.

**198.** – How can a dialogue with freedom turn into a dialogue with death? What is the relationship between death and freedom? As long as men remain strangers to the latter, it is the former that must be spoken of. Closing one's eyes because one is tired of inconclusive massacres means giving free rein to other massacres, feeding the underground cavern where the lake of blood collects. What is the point of taking it out on bad human nature, on the mystery of its remote progeny immersed in pillage and rape? It is at the current hour and at once that one must look, and that is what I forced myself to do, fixing myself on that moment and present so remote in time, when I was not the old man I am today. But the dialogue with death is uninterrupted and I cannot persuade myself of the oblivion of everything past because it is past. It is here, beside me, together with the unexpected guest, and I can take it into consideration because it speaks to me while the other is silent in his glacial silence devoid of doubts. Where does ferocity come from? From fear, it has been said. The powerful become enraged because they fear losing power and commission the most shameful projects to ensure that power. In this way everything seems simple. The shadowy distrust of those who secretly train and arm the hands of paid monsters makes it difficult to grasp the exact point where the execution begins and the commission ends. Not that it would have been easier and more conscientiously correct to strike in full knowledge of this watershed, no, but perhaps it could have broadened the responsibility by eliminating the existence of so-called clean hands, guilty only of managing power with firmness and decision for the supreme good of public order. No, it is not like that, they are all miserable monsters and horrendous mass murderers, only that it is possible to strike only the base of the pyramid while the apex remains safe. This is one of the ideas that most dismayed my clandestine daily life. I knew where the clients lived, in super-protected barracks, or in solitary villas guarded by tall trees, guards and status symbols. These trees, which I often went to see on purpose in the evening, after work, stood out black and majestic in the sunset so rich in fire and reflections, as if they wanted to challenge my dreams. I felt inside those noble refuges a sadness without limits, the sadness of the silent intrigue, of the anguish of those who plot in the shadows, of those who delegate low butchery works. What monsters lived in there? How I would have liked to enter with the company of the unexpected guest and clean house. Instead I was forced to limit myself to working at the other end of the chain, on the side of the vulgar and obtuse material executor. This division has always been a chronic, irremediable evil, and my evening walk was to be considered a naivety - and dangerous, at that. Hiding my doubts, after the first clumsy and unsuccessful ap-

proaches, I showed that I didn't care at all. My dialogues with death remained closed inside me and, in the long run, had even stopped making me impatient. Every evening I thought about the last little pile of rags that we had left behind and I asked myself what his life had been and how it could have been so abruptly cut short in the course of our action. There was no regret in me, no remorse, I was happy to have fought the monstrosity with means that could not be other, because dictated and imposed by the very ferocity that loomed before us. The doubt was always that of life. I had worked so that the thread of life, of a life, would be cut by the unexpected guest. Without my work this action would have been extremely improbable, a real gamble, a suicide. Instead, thanks to my work – and that of my companions, who together constituted our group – almost always everything went smoothly, the action took place according to canons known a priori, reliable. No uncertainty for that cut thread, no doubt seemed to exist in our group regarding the crooked puppet that we had left behind after the arrival of the unexpected guest. Everything was covered and made equivalent and balanced by the responsibilities of the life that had animated that crooked puppet, no problem. Only my doubts and the deafening silence inherent to the unexpected guest.

199. – The character returned to a narrow, crooked and dirty alley. Not even a house worthy of the name. The job of an informer must not have been well paid, or he was an amateur who provided information in his spare time, for the pure satisfaction of doing harm. The ideological motive seemed absent, at least from what the information said. A small house, a small dirt road - this in itself was not an exception - but he did not seem dejected or desperate. He spent his days at the bar and on the street, in the center, talking and mostly listening. He had no trouble persuading his interlocutors. I did not understand what they were saying, other companions gave me information on the matter. Who made him do it? Why this anxiety to get people into trouble? He was not a naive boy but a man of a certain age, perhaps disillusioned and bitter, but this was certainly not a good reason or a justification. What did he live on in his solitary misery? Of a handout from his clients? These were not questions that should interest us. We would have entered too much into the territory of his living being, while we should have supported ourselves only with his activity as an informer, paid or not it did not matter. We should not even have considered the validity and the effects of his unworthy work, we should only have stuck to our task. Measure, check, match, duplicate. This considerable reduction of our task, on the one hand made the work easier and more adequate to our certainly not high possibilities, but on the other hand it pushed us to consider the character something similar to the dead puppet

that he would be in a few days. Essentialization and rationalization deprived us of a human evaluation of the person who walked, breathed, thought, did his dirty work in front of us. And this, in my opinion, seemed to me a loss of revolutionary conscience. Even the last monster, the most abject of human beings, before the encounter with the unexpected guest, had the right to be taken into consideration as a man and not as a pile of rags. Abandoning this principle, for the convenience of carrying out our task, we lowered ourselves to the level of executors of decisions taken elsewhere, we immersed ourselves completely in the daily work that that execution was supposed to prepare for as best as possible. Many aspects were thus made to fall by the wayside as superfluous, not worthy of wasting our time and our effort. I felt besieged by these problems and I tried to smooth them out as much as possible, trying at times, when I could, to impress on my mind the features of the man as well as his behavior or his contacts and his movements. I realized that these flaws gave me more conviction and more strength, it is not true that they made me weaker, they assisted my conviction and my passion, as much as I realized that I could not impose on others the same choices I had, let alone in terms of doubts or hesitations. So the character took on, sometimes, not always, a more consistent life of his own, more concretely visible and, sometimes, even nuances not included in the background information from which we had started, took a clearer shape and illustrated a more specific responsibility. But this was not my aim. It was another, it was to make him live before my eyes, with all his disgusting aspects, his fears, his cautions, his impudence, his naivety. This gave me the certainty of entering into his mind to understand the abjection of his task, how he could think of it, bear it, justify it and even boast about it, I do not know. Many times I seemed to understand that these people were never satisfied with their work, especially the informants and the provocateurs. The traitors - whose experience was limited to Ireland - were a species apart, they were not men, they were larvae waiting to die, and they were fully conscious of having been abandoned to themselves. Only the torturers had any kind of evaluation of their work, at least that was the impression I got when I tried to understand them just a little more as men. The unexpected guest was absolutely impartial.

“ATROPOS

This time they called  
the eldest to spin;  
thin thread of life,  
how much you give to meditate on.

So that it was flexible and soft,  
I chose the best linen of all;  
so that it was even and thin,  
I smoothed it with wise fingers.

If you want to let loose  
in dancing and pleasure,  
be careful! The thread has a limit,  
it could then break.

CLOTHO

To me in these last days  
entrusted with the scissors;  
our old woman was not behaving, they said, in an edify-  
ing way.

She stretched out in the air and in the light  
threads that were of no use to anyone,  
and cast severed in the grave  
the hopes of splendid successes.

I too in my youthful ardour  
made mistakes hundreds of times;  
today, to avoid making false steps,  
I have locked the scissors in the case.

It is a bond that I willingly accept,  
and I look upon this place as a friend;  
you in these hours without risks  
give yourselves over to mad joy.

LACHESIS

To me, the only reasonable one,  
it fell to put things in order;  
my reel, ever at work,  
has never run too fast.  
The threads come, they wind,  
I trace out each one's path,  
I let none be entangled,  
each one adapts itself to its course.

If I were to fail once,  
I would tremble for the fate of the world;  
count the hours, measure the years,  
the skein is taken by the Weaver.

## FEAR

Smoky torches, dim lamps  
flash in this confusion;  
and the chain, ah! keeps me bound  
amid these deceitful faces.

Go away, you ridiculous mockers!  
Your sneer arouses suspicion;  
all my enemies persecute me tonight.

I have glimpsed here a friend who has betrayed me,  
I have recognized his mask;  
and he who wanted to murder me  
slips away because I have unmasked him.

I would like to flee no matter where,  
away into the world, away from here;  
but down there death looms,  
and holds me in smoke and horror.

## HOPE

I greet you, my dear sisters!  
You have amused yourselves,  
yesterday and today, by dressing up,  
but I know, you will  
all reveal yourselves tomorrow.  
And if it seems sinister to us  
the glare of torches,  
then happy days will come  
and we can at our pleasure,  
now together and now alone,  
run free in the meadows,  
rest or work,  
as we please, without worries,  
never lacking for anything,  
satisfy our desires,  
always and everywhere welcome;  
certainly also the highest good,  
here or there, we will find it.

## PRUDENCE

Two of the greatest scourges,  
Fear and Hope,  
I have isolated and chained;  
make way! You are safe.

I drive the living colossus  
who climbs tirelessly  
through the steep paths,

with the tower on its shoulders.

And on the battlements of the tower  
there is a goddess with great wings,  
always agile and striving  
for success, wherever she may be.

A halo of glory surrounds her  
and radiates far and wide;  
her name is Victory,  
goddess of all activity.

#### MEPHISTOPHELES

Stay here, unhappy man! Seduced  
by a bond of love difficult to untie!

He who was paralyzed by Helen  
does not easily return to reason.

Looking around

If I look up, here, there,  
everything is unchanged, intact;  
the colored windows are, I would say, darker,  
the cobwebs are far more;  
the ink has coagulated, the paper has yellowed,  
but everything is still in its place;  
even the pen is still here  
with which Faust engaged with the devil.

And at the bottom of the quill there is still  
a drop of the blood I drew from him.

A unique piece, the luck of finding it  
I wish to the prince of collectors.

And the old fur coat hangs from the old hook,  
it reminds me of all the nonsense

I taught that boy back then,  
and which perhaps he still feeds on, now that he's grown.

I really feel like, smoky  
and warm blanket, wearing you  
to once again stand up as a professor,  
one of those who presume to always be right.  
The learned still know how to do it,  
the devil no longer, for a long time.

#### CHORUS OF INSECTS

Welcome! Welcome,  
dear old master!

Whirling and buzzing  
we recognized you.

In silence one by one



you have lost us;  
now by the thousand, father,  
we are here dancing.  
The scoundrel in his brain  
keeps everything locked away,  
the first to come out  
are the lice from his cloak.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What a joy and what a surprise these new creatures!  
Sown, in time you reap.  
I shake the old cloak once more,  
and something here and there flutters away. –  
Up! Out! Hurry and hide  
in a hundred thousand corners, my dears.  
There, among the old boxes,  
here among the smoked parchments,  
among the dusty shards of decrepit vases,  
in the sockets of those skulls.  
In such a chaos of rotten life  
there will always be crickets. Come,  
(he slips into his fur coat)  
cover my back once more!  
Today I am the boss again.  
But calling me that is no use;  
where are the people who recognize me?

FAMULUS

What a rumble! What tremors!  
The staircase swings, the walls tremble;  
multicolored panes vibrate,  
I see flashes of bad weather.  
The floor jumps, and from up high  
plaster rains down.  
And the bolted door  
is shattered by a prodigious force. –  
There! Fright! There is a giant  
in Faust's old fur coat!  
At his glances, at his signs  
my knees buckle.  
Flee? Stay? What should I do?  
Ah, what is about to happen to me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Come closer, friend! – Your name is Nicodemus.

FAMULUS

Yes, Excellency! That is my name – Oremus.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Let's forget it!

FAMULUS

I am glad you know me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I know it well, old student,  
musty gentleman! Even the wise man  
studies continually, because he knows nothing else.  
Thus a house of cards is created,  
modest, but not even the wisest one finishes it.  
But your teacher is very knowledgeable:  
who does not know the great Doctor Wagner,  
the first in the world of science!  
He is the only one who holds it all together,  
and increases its wisdom every day.  
Students and listeners, eager to know  
everything, crowd around him.  
He is the only one who shines from the pulpit;  
he uses the keys like Saint Peter,  
he opens the world of the underworld and the world  
above.

He burns and sparkles ahead of everyone,  
there is no fame, no glory that is enough;  
even the name of Faust is obscured,  
he is the only one, the true discoverer.

FAMULUS

Forgive me, Excellency, if I say,  
if I may dare to contradict you:  
not even a shadow of all this;  
modesty is his modest part.  
Of the incomprehensible disappearance  
of the great man who does not know how to  
give himself peace;  
since his return beg for comfort and healing.  
As in the days of Doctor Faust, the room  
intact since his distance,  
awaits its ancient master.  
I hardly dare enter.  
What stars govern this hour? –  
The walls seem to tremble;  
the hinges tremble, the lock gives way,  
otherwise you would not have entered either.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And where has the master gone?

Lead me to him, or bring him here!

FAMULUS

Ah! his prohibition is too severe,

I do not know if I can dare.

For months and months he has been working on the great  
work,

living in impenetrable silence.

The most sensitive of men of science

to see him looks like a coalman,

his face black from ears to nose,

his eyes red from blowing rage,

every moment tense in agony;

the screeching of the pliers is his music.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And would he really forbid me entry?

I am the man who hastens his success.

I have just taken my place here,

and there moves in the background a guest known to me.

This time it is from a very modern group,

its impudence will have no limits".

(J. W. Goethe, *Faust*)

## Two hundred – two hundred and thirty-one

200. – I couldn't even vent by writing, there was neither time nor place to do so, and then it would have really seemed like an intellectual's bizarreness. I saw before me a fairly well-oiled mechanism, especially in Palestine, but in need of improvement. Was it my ideological recklessness that made me dream of them? Or could they really be realized? No one could answer me and no one ever answered me. Because of this inevitable silence I received within myself continuous and solemn solicitations in the form of questions, the ones I have raised here several times. That man who had now entered the church – we are in Ireland – and was helping the sacristan to put aside the chairs with the bottoms of woven straw, was a traitor. A solemn warning had arrived from Dublin. Several houses had been bulldozed, leveled, some comrades tortured according to the rules of the art and imprisoned in the special prisons run by the British army. You couldn't watch that man as he moved the chairs, and yet there I was, kneeling in the church, intent on observing him. A wretch, a worker without a job, without a family, without a future. I didn't

feel sorry for him because I knew what his weakness had caused, but I was intent on observing him carefully as a man, as a human being crushed by a mechanism stronger than himself. The sacristan must not have known anything because he would have thrown him out and I think the parish priest would have done the same thing if only to avoid having to worry. It had been known of priests who had refused absolution to individuals of the same kind, rejected by everyone, perhaps by the representatives of their God. Who knows if that human ghost I was keeping an eye on had had the strength to do without intermediaries? I didn't think so, he seemed to be hanging around the sacristan to inquire about the parish priest's rigidity. The miseries of those who know they are one step away from their destiny. Now he was heading for the exit, he hadn't gone to the sacristy or even to one of the many confessionals, he had evidently given up on his hope of redemption, if nothing else in the afterlife. He seemed even more hunched and humble, he had the attitude of a beaten dog running away so as not to get any more. Outside his companions had immediately caught up with him. I went into duplication phase, since I could have been noticed in church. Now I could see him from a long way off. He was walking without turning around, heading towards the outskirts, he had pulled the hood of his coat down over his eyes because it was starting to drizzle, a gloomy and cold drizzle that made you want to give up on this poor wretch and go off for a drink in a pub. You could clearly see the painful effort he was making to keep going, to get home. In the morning he had been to the police station in the eastern part of the city, perhaps because he was forced to sign some document, or to ask for some kind of cover, a tenuous guarantee on life. We knew for sure that they did not provide any coverage or guarantees, they abandoned these unfortunates to their fate. That is why his shoulders were even more hunched under the cold and annoying rain. Did he know he was being followed? I never understood. In the case of these traitors I came over time to convince myself that they must have had a sort of premonition of what awaited them, and in them, in their anguished solitude, deprived of everything, sometimes thrown out by their own family – forced to do so – they were aware that they were living their last days. The thing, on reflection, became no longer a real action, an encounter with quality, an exhilarating moment to live in the depths of one's being, but rather an execution. The unexpected guest remained such, surprisingly unexpected, because not even at the point of death is man truly convinced that it is his turn to die, he always thinks that the experience of death is that of the other, not his. Nevertheless it was not a real action. The character was going home and never looked back, I who was coming towards him, could now see him up close in the face, under the hood, I saw his sorrowful eyes,

as if they themselves were asking to end it once and for all. The unexpected guest did not even notice this nuance that had seemed so obvious to me.

201. – Guilt-free? Who can say? No one is guilt-free, after all it is a question of balances. Ideals are flags that flutter in the wind, now you see them fluttering and now they collapse. The incurable rot has no ideals, it goes forward by its own strength, also driven by interests and a horrible predisposition of the soul. Where do they recruit torturers, cold-blooded, human-shaped snakes? I don't know. In the army, in the police, in the many more or less secret services, that's for sure. But what kind of torturer is there? Where does that rot emerge that makes him stand out from the others so that his superiors put a poor wretch in his hands to be stripped to the bone? We should shout out loud that man, yes, man, is capable of such misery, such baseness. It would be necessary for those who read these pages - if one day someone reads them - to try to penetrate this mystery of the human soul. The concepts of justice understood qualitatively are perceived as electric shocks in quality, then degrade into a casuistry<sup>19</sup> of correct behaviors, but correct on the basis of which rule? The rule set by power? A black book without written pages, all stained with blood. It cannot be read. The suffering, the pain, the death of thousands and thousands of human beings are nothing but the background of history, the logical key to philosophy. There is not a lane for the honest and one for the dishonest, the path is confused and all of society as a whole tends to confuse it more and more. Revenge corrects what it can, a minimal part, but it cannot turn back the toothed wheel of the tortured, the teeth of this mechanism have now entered his flesh, have tortured his nerves. To vent with words is hateful. I know many who do it, they seem capable of eating the world and they are just cowards. But considering the actions against these monsters in human form is this also a form of venting? Maybe it is. The fact that it materializes in an individual reset does not change the method as a whole by much, the overall account of a mentality that is inherent to power. By killing some of these bastards, will the others, in permanent service, be less ferocious? Will they be a little more afraid in sinking the knife into the wounds of the tortured? I have always had my doubts. Below is the educational myth that is hard to die. Revenge is something else. Approached in its realization and held in the hands it gives an

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<sup>19</sup>*Translator* – Casuistry is the system of resolving moral questions by extracting abstract principles from particular cases and applying them broadly to others. Rooted in Aristotle, casuistry was widespread in early modern Catholicism and associated with the Jesuits who were criticized for this by the Jansenists. Often implies the use of complex, rhetorically attractive, legitimacy-invoking and logical-seeming but false reasoning to justify moral laziness. Casuistry can also be used to describe judicial practices such as the use of precedent cases.

individual response, limited but significant. It does not extend to the concept of distributive justice, it does not intend to equate what human monstrosity has in some cases brought to the extreme of the conceivable. It does not get drunk on triumphs, it does not boast of its own rebellion. Recognizes the narrow limits of one's work and values them for what they are. An answer, possibly blow by blow – which is impossible in itself – but at least able to come close to this ideal result. A challenge. Our fight could have no other meaning, an impossible challenge. An atrocious reality faced with courage and with means that were sometimes too limited, but still able to produce certain positive results. A long and difficult challenge, played entirely or almost entirely on the precision of preventive surveys and on surprise. We were facing incredible unknowns. Each time, starting from the few data provided, we reconstructed the movements of a person who almost always took precautions and was certainly not willing to easily fall into a trap. A war fought almost always with pencil and notebook, as well as with my friend K. None of us stopped for a moment. Even my doubts and my perplexities – which I had learned to keep to myself – only pushed me to work better, without interruptions, without hesitation. In this relentless activity, almost always culminating in action, there was a sort of purification of ourselves, a feeling of being freed from the hateful task of preparing the ground for the unexpected guest.

**202.** – How many things you don't have to know in order to act. I have often wondered if there are more things you don't have to know than you have to know. Acting is certainly preparation, and here we are talking at length about this phase, but it is also going beyond, the moment in which the will suspends its progressive control over doing and leaves action free. The consistency of the information was always considered, by the group, sufficient to begin the work. But it never happened that from this work – long and meticulous – a denial of the initial information arose, a sort of doubt about the solidity of what was considered the past and the present of the person in question. His responsibilities were almost never detailed with precise references – except in the case of the Irish traitors – they were reduced to general statements, to underlining of infamous tasks, to generic references to torture or to indications of information supplies that had to be subjected, however, only in this case, to visual control, in order to identify the contact and strike it too. Everyone displayed a basic certainty that in the end no one was able to control. It could happen that during the checks one managed to glean an indirect and accidental confirmation. For example, a murmur from someone who in a low voice informed an unknown interlocutor, who happened to be nearby, of the job of the person in question. But even these poisonous statements, uttered softly through gritted

teeth, what basis could they have? Didn't they belong to the immense and transparent realm of gossip? It could also happen that the man being studied went to work in a barracks or in the police force, at least in this case one was sure of having before one an occupation soldier or a policeman. But the rest? Once again the validity of the initial information. A few other times - but these were very rare cases - one could gather the living testimony of someone who had passed through the hands of the torturer under observation, let's say for a short-term light treatment. In this case I felt heartened. At least that was the feeling I had. For the others I felt a sort of light satisfaction, since there was never a way to tackle the problem head on. Everyone tried to safeguard their own rawness of soul so as not to succumb to dangerous pietisms that would have compromised the work and our own safety. And I shared this choice while continuing to feed my unanswered questions. As the work took shape and I got closer to the action, the character also took on a new appearance, at least for me. I know well - having reflected on this point for a long time - that it was almost always my work itself that made that figure familiar to me. The feedback, the duplications, the correspondences, they allowed me to see live what on a purely moral level I considered a monster to be destroyed in any way. But I saw him walk, stop, blow his nose, drink tea, in short all those things we do every day. From the monster thus emerged the man, and I began to see them both together and to ask myself how a torturer could blow his nose like all the others, like the same men he had perhaps deboned that very day? A terrible question, constantly without an answer. How was it possible in my mind, continually dedicated to carrying on my work, for such a horrendous thought to enter and subsist? An empty and black question. And yet I insisted, almost with pain, on recording fearful concomitances. The character had a certain way of walking and of suddenly stopping to light a cigarette that, seen from behind, reminded me of my father. A pang in my heart. How was such a profanation of a memory that was in me linked to the un-failing filial feelings of love possible? It was the life of the monster that I glimpsed in the silhouette, and that claimed to acquire a space inside me that I was in contact with that monster for days and days. The unexpected guest, fortunately, cut clean through this dangerous duplication of image.

203. - The desire, but perhaps more, the need for a larger project, buzzed continuously in my head, intensely and precisely in Palestine. Here the limitations on our work were fewer and there was also the possibility, at times, of developing a simple piece of information provided by the movement into a more complex action than the linear identification and specification of a single individual. Although the opposing side was more aggressive than elsewhere, be-

ing one of the most powerful and best equipped armies in the world, there was room for actions in the city, often not limited to just men from the services or Arab informants who had gone over to the enemy. This situation sometimes determined a larger intervention and the collaboration of more groups. Study and preparation required longer times, sometimes months, but the results could be more effective. A plan could be studied calmly and methodically and there was no lack of competent people or groups willing to collaborate on a larger action. The capture of three men from the army was one of these most successful actions. It required more than four weeks and the use of about thirty comrades, with central coordination and the availability of adequate weapons to block a moving military convoy. It is one of the most complex and articulated actions ever attempted – excluding those considered suicide attacks. The findings were therefore not limited to measurements and correspondences but also included a military assessment of the territory and the movement of military vehicles over a distance of about a kilometer. It was not a question of putting a moving military vehicle out of action; this type of operation, while remaining very complex and difficult, is simpler from an organizational point of view. On the contrary, it was a question of blocking a moving column, detaching a part of it, the tail, through an explosion, and taking prisoners, something that had been attempted only once before, but with negative results. These soldiers, while having received adequate military training, were boys at heart and, once attacked, at least that time, did not prove to be up to their reputation. After a pro-forma response they immediately surrendered, exiting the armored vehicle with their hands up. In the meantime, the other comrades held off the rest of the convoy which, due to the terrain, could only stop or move forward. Although it can be considered an exception to the rule, there were no injuries or deaths. The unexpected guest remained inactive. The three soldiers taken prisoner were later exchanged by the movement for thirty comrades who were in Israeli prisons. The excellent result led to a reconsideration of our work and a new plan. But, in short, the exhaustion of resources, the loss of some comrades, the ruthless hunt conducted by the men of the services and the accumulation of information brought us back to the usual activity. The work did not take long to resume as before, equal and precise while the possibility of achieving a coordination of such magnitude as to be able to repeat the action described above was fading away. It was also necessary to go in the direction in which the wind was blowing, to do what was necessary to do, to strike headlong where it had to be struck. This is what I told myself reflecting on my more or less hastily disappointed hopes. The ideal of absolute liberation also had to pass through the narrow passage of these



peripheral actions, of disturbance, goads<sup>20</sup> for people accustomed to striking hard. It was enough to look at the widespread misery of an entire people forced every morning to line up and go to work for the enemy with barely a few pennies in pay, to realize that those actions not only corrected a monstrosity by erasing it from the list of the human race, but constituted a return for every suffering endured. Many of these wretches felt their chests expand when they learned that a massacrer had been hit. Who could raise objections to this feeling of intimate satisfaction, of compensation for the wounds that the body of an entire people was suffering? Who could arrogate to himself the right to stop the hand of the unexpected guest?

204. – Why these doubts of mine? Why do I want to protect my mission of freedom, arrogating to myself a sort of supreme court task? Why do I want to protect my ideological integrity? I should therefore be the one to decide the decisive intervention, not a banal piece of information received through the movement. Perhaps I suspect that this system is defending the inaccessibility of the leaders and therefore, as an anarchist, this makes me feel bad? Nothing is as remote as something that cannot be subjected to verification and I cannot verify the basic definition that characterizes the indication while I can base all my work on a continuous flood of duplications and correspondences. Where is my freedom of decision if I perceive this definitive barrier upstream? Yet these questions, however pertinent, miss the mark. They remain external, they make an indirect criticism of a method based on the division of tasks, they do not penetrate the true core of the problem which is that of life. It is not possible to arrive at a non-radical decision, it is not because a condemnation is already implicit in the initial information, the intervention of the unexpected guest is ineluctably foreseen. The basic information itself disappears, it is not the execution, the execution is us with our detailed work of control, it is here that the specificity of the character in front of us takes shape and with whom for a certain number of days we share much more than we would like to admit. Our reconstruction, slavish and meticulous, does not concern him, it concerns his doing, not his life. Of course, his life is his doing, from the torture chamber to his own bedroom, but it is not this life I am talking about, I am referring to the one that, cut short, will reduce him to a pile of rags. This real life of his, wrapped in the miserable wrapping of his monstrous task, does not emerge in our paths, in our particular attentions, in our long measurements of times and visitations of places. It remains crouched and does not breathe, does not

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<sup>20</sup>*Translator* – A long sharpened stick used for herding cattle or oxen, and an improvised weapon in peasant rebellions. Frequently referenced in the bible as a metaphor for the pangs of guilt or criticism or urging toward higher goals. Alternatively, can imply a sense of attempting to influence through provocation.

look at the sky, does not speak to its future, oppressed as it is by the frightening weight of the practical activity that envelops it and contains it, like a shell contains an egg. The only way out it has is the end, the encounter with the unexpected guest. The construction of all our action culminates precisely in this cut that separates life from the profession and separates it at the very moment in which it definitively extinguishes it. Everything that precedes is made of nooses that the character himself tightens around his own neck, gradually depriving himself, in the course of carrying out his profession, of the humanity that distinguished him like everyone else. These nooses make his own doing possible, they hold him and sustain him but, at the same time, they suffocate him and, in the long term, kill him. In the end he is a ghost that mimes a life emptied of content, that everyone keeps at a distance because they have a mixture of fear and disgust for it, a secluded being who is preparing his own shroud. After a certain time he cannot loosen these bonds that suffocate him, indeed he tightens them more and more, he becomes more and more what he does and does more and more what he becomes. It is a monstrously vicious circle from which he cannot escape. Only apparently, therefore, is his life the object of our interest. In fact, we are interested in apparent phenomena that are completely alien to the bonds that are suffocating him, indeed not only do we not worry about this frightening vital denial, but we do not even notice it, except for someone like me, who raises problems with different nuances. In essence, I can only speak for myself and not generalize, although I have long suspected that my other companions, although in a much more nebulous form than mine, harbored unconfessed doubts that were quite similar. There is before my eyes, attentive to the measures and duplications, a continuous anguish that I feel shaking the character in the most intimate fibers and that only the nooses that he tightens around his neck can stop. Perhaps it is my illusion. I do not believe that some of these executors of monstrous orders, at a certain point, have not felt the approach of their own destiny. Reality condensed into so many aberrations cannot help but remain to do damage even in the most hardened soul. I believe that the step of the unexpected guest has always been felt a few moments before.

**205.** – The comfort of a certainty does not guarantee future certainties of equal consistency. The starting hypothesis – the information – by its nature tends to elude any verification, it is just that, it cannot admit replies, otherwise the precision work that must be carried out tends to divide into at least two opposing sides with irreconcilable intentions. Around the character in question – inevitably beyond any possible doubt – an aura of dark responsibility consolidates. The information is, at the same time, his condemnation, there is no possibility that in the course of the work something will change

regarding the conclusion. There is no reason for it, there is no possibility. This is a crucial point on which all the work hinges. Our only responsibility is to methodically construct the objective conditions of a qualitative doing that cannot be different from what it is. The methods are always the same and they construct the possibility of approaching the action in the best possible way. The overcoming brings us into quality, but it is also a parenthesis that has no relationship with the previous doing, it puts us all in play and it is the active aspect of a doing that otherwise would always remain a possible conclusion, a continuous verification to infinity, without purpose and without completeness. Our work dramatizes a sign of condemnation, an abstract line of reference that comes to life little by little and it is in this growth and self-justification that the action takes root. Of course, the oscillations are there and also rather significant, often the work gets stuck in correspondences that do not correspond, in duplications that slip into unpredictable prospects, incapable of providing greater security. But these obstacles are taken into account, the procedure is also constituted by their punctual presentation and by their removal. Ultimately, nothing is added to support the original information. The imposing verification apparatus is a superfetation, useful for carrying out the action, but it is separate from both the original information and the action. I do not want to continue to emphasize here its separation from any subsequent attempt at remembrance, that goes without saying. The work that occupies us is not aimed at ascertaining the responsibility of the character, I have said this at length, but moves in another direction, eminently practical. The information subsists and does not change until the completion of the action, but the doing that is placed in the middle brings into contact whoever carries it out not with an abstract symbol of monstrosity, against which everyone would be willing to throw a stone, but brings before a human being. In this way the interminable sequence of facts of verification acquires, for whoever places it before himself as a procedure to be carried out, a meaning that it should not have. It should remain aseptic, and a thousand efforts are made by each of us, to ensure that it remains so, but this is not possible. Sensations and fears arise that immediately branch out and take shape, human beings are made like this. The abstract idea of monstrosity is one thing and the monster in flesh and blood is another, who always takes the appearance of a common man. Nothing is in fact more common than the most extreme monstrosity. These sensations develop to the point of making the atmosphere surrounding such a frequentation suffocating. The masacrers have the appearance of municipal employees, if they move to disgust, often, it is first of all for their anonymous ability to do the job of executioner. It takes years to get used to their suffocating appear-

ance, to not immediately leave them to their fate, to not abandon them, which is impossible because it would mean taking with you a significant portion of their game of massacre, being co-responsible without a shadow of a doubt. Every effort is therefore necessary to perfect the work of coordination and verification as soon as possible, but the haste that the retching determines is a bad advisor. It is disconcerting to have to admit that every effort to work on the preparation of the action brings the abstract character of the traitor, the informer, the provocateur, the torturer, closer to a known person and therefore to a sort of human relationship that cannot easily be camouflaged under the impassive mask of the liberator who removes an obstacle. The unexpected guest, in the end, is seen as a true resolver of impossible doubts. A beneficial certainty.

**206.** – Information remains a secret managed by a few. Once the character has been identified, it is not permitted to speak to anyone who is not part of the group about his specialty and his repressive activities. In the end, in any case, many people know something, no one knows everything. Several times, by chance, I have been able to see that some facets had escaped the source of our information. There are sometimes multiple activities of a monster charged with particular tasks that are difficult to carry out. When such an individual is put together, he is used to the best of his ability. True terror is always multiple and changes even as it acquires a specialization that is never questioned. The life of such a monster, although apparently normal in many aspects, let's say daily, often has shocks as if within it there were channels of particular intensification. The work is increased, it is used in more places and on a greater number of poor wretches, it is exploited to the maximum. This leads to a complication of control, to a search that is sometimes disrupted and called into question from scratch. The difficulties arise not so much because the character's habits or itineraries change, but because the shell of his normality, on which all correspondences are ultimately based, is broken and appears uncertain and multiple. The appearance of normality, once broken, because new tasks have overlapped, always gives the impression of a sort of new cover, aimed at diverting any attack constructions in progress. This is almost always not the case, but you never know, often it is necessary to start the work from scratch again. In any case, the real construction of the character takes on another meaning. However, no part of the work already done is definitively lost, it must be put aside and used as a duplication. Sooner or later the character returns to his old acquaintances, it is a question of time. In the end the threads and the concordances grow and intersect, proliferate among themselves without ever arriving at something transparent, absolutely indubitable. There is no definitive framework where the character is placed without differ-

ences. There is always some flaw or some uncertainty. These gaps are all the wider the more the human dimension has made its way in front of the miserable monstrous reality. Nothing is ever definitive, therefore there is always a solicitation to procrastinate, to review, to start a procedure capable of never stopping. Is it possible that life, even the bestial life of the monster, does not have a jolt worthy of being recorded beyond a simple object spinning? Extremely dangerous question. The rise of checkings and findings, generally, corresponds with the approach of the active conclusion, but sometimes a return to carefully prudent levels can occur, and this for various reasons. The first is the one already seen of the change of activity of the character, or a radical modification of his habits. In any case, one must also get to the level of action, and this at a certain point requires a qualitative leap, a crossing that cannot be measured in quantitative terms because it is not a fact like many others, it is an act. This break has its own justification only in itself, as an action, even if it is based on the enormous factual work carried out previously. For this reason it is the absolutely other, it does not participate in the doing and the doubts of doing, it is certain, it is complete, it is the action I have always spoken of and it is in the action that the conclusive intervention of the unexpected guest is realized. Even if the set of the work done and the action constitute a necessary connection since in the absence of the first there would be no crossing, they inhabit two different worlds. Time and its inexorable flow, which characterizes doing, is not in acting. The appearance that outlines the eminently detailed figure of the character, is not in the action while it fills the doing with itself. The same remembrance, and here while I work it is in this third part that I place my attention as an old prisoner, is something else, not entirely incompatible with the action, but not able to give an account of it. The task of the unexpected guest always remains wrapped in the mystery of his unfathomable silence.

207. – Where could we end up if the starting hypothesis were incontrovertibly true? In a closed universe in which everything is deterministically connected and is based on the validity of a main source, undoubtedly rooted in reality but not for this reason absolute. If the truth is monstrosity verified as much as one wants to the end, it does not become necessary for this. Then at the basis of everything there would be a truth founded on black and white, on unsolvable separateness, who goes to hell and who to heaven. Nothing more misleading. It is right to eliminate monstrosity, but this rightness will never be necessary or true. Lies and horror are the two great orders on which the world revolves, they spread their plots everywhere and strike everything. Is the hand that stops the murderer forever also a massacring hand? How can one answer this essential question with a firm no? I have never been able to. We,

freedom fighters, in contact with the filthy universe of slime, end up getting our hands dirty with slime. There are not two clearly separated worlds, that of the righteous and that of the wicked. Between this division there is a no man's land where to act one must advance without fear. Otherwise, by abstaining, one participates even more effectively in the massacre. One can think oneself free from guilt as much and however one wants, it is always a matter of coming to terms with one's immediate conscience, the one that presides over the continuous application of the will to do. But something always looms like a presage. The responsibility for the massacre. The elimination of the lake of blood. One is a massacerer in the first person precisely by abstaining, by carefully cleaning one's hands and brain every morning, by thinking oneself a stranger to the professional massacerers. Think of philosophers and historians and their enormous and irreplaceable contribution to the massacre. Nothing is clearer and more undeniable, and yet these good people keep themselves - they say - safe in their academic seats. They are not and they know it, and their bad conscience stinks of death more than a dangerous physical proximity to professional slaughterers. They do their dirty work, and trying to prevent this horrendous work, or at least limit the damage, requires an approach to the slaughter, a frequentation of the smell of blood, and this inevitably leads to a disgustingly deforming proximity. There are two hypotheses, the first accepts to slaughter and that's it, based on the initial information and the work of factual identification that starts from that. The other hypothesis tries to sculpt the human traits of the slaughterer, to understand how man can get to the point of cold-bloodedly torturing his fellow man. This second path opens a door to the unknown of the human soul, to its horrible wickedness, to the depths of abomination that it is capable of reaching. This door allows us to see a man dedicated to slaughter, not to lighten one's soul by replacing the humanity of that man with his substantial monstrosity. Talking about a monster lightens one's load of responsibility, but it is a lightening that always comes late. What's the point of playing with words? The little pile of rags that one left behind was a human life, not that of a monster. That that man, when he was alive, was a torturer for a living cannot deprive him of his humanity. If we deprive him of this common property, which he shares with us, it is to lighten our burden, to feel lighter. Thus we shift a gigantic weight that is loaded onto our shoulders, but it is a false shift, a prestidigitation<sup>21</sup>. It convinces only the weak of spirit, those who need some sort of viaticum<sup>22</sup> to move forward anyway, to close their eyes and not see. But those who want to

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<sup>21</sup>*Translator* – Sleight of hand, skillful and clever deception.

<sup>22</sup>*Translator* – Catholic term for the Eucharist given to a dying person, also more generally a supply of provisions for a journey or an allowance for traveling expenses.

understand, like me, who want to lift the veil that covers Atropos's thread, cannot be satisfied. The unexpected guest does not solve this kind of problem, he cuts at the root and goes away, he takes with him the life he has collected and does not ask for explanations. His silence is the same as fate. Both resonate in my soul like an echo of distant fears.

**208.** – The way in which I managed to discover that the monster before me was a man like the others, who had neither claws nor fangs nor drank human blood, gradually became an approach, a ridiculous familiarity that was completely secret, which belonged to me like an unspeakable vice. The process of doing, in its complex work aimed at the preventive perfection of a hypothetical destructive attack, was a machine that carried me with it and did not at all require this defect of vision. I was not sure whether my companions also had a similar problem. Perhaps not, I did not see them worried or nervous, I saw them completely in the things to do, from head to toe. So it was I who approached the torturing man, who forced myself not to give myself the comfortable alibi of his indisputable monstrosity, I put the latter aside so that he would not notice my approach. The mode of my inquiring gaze had to take on a different nuance once I treacherously shortened the distances. Of course, this shortening was metaphorical and not real, in essence the distances always remained those of safety, studied for a long time and now applied automatically. But the juxtaposition produced visions that in another perspective I would have discarded as useless fantasies. If there is a metamorphosis in progress it is in me, not in my man, it distributes the responsibility differently, defers a considerable part of it to the clients, without for this making that of the torturer on duty lighter or less appreciable. By exalting a broader responsibility I was able to grasp internal relationships in the enemy structure that added nothing to my investigation, but that allowed me to approach my man more deeply. I entered better into the meanders and mysteries of a mentality beyond all human compassion, cold, which it would have been crazy to take into consideration as an extenuating circumstance. This was not my aim. I tried to see how a man, however barbarous his profession as an executioner, could receive the order to exercise his arts on the body of a poor wretch who had ended up in his hands. I realized that this hierarchical relationship was not based on great discussions, certainly an allusive nod, a single word, was enough for the order to be transmitted, and it was still human behavior, they were not automatons or beasts, they were men who did those unspeakable things. It would be illusory to think of understanding this mentality, even making the effort to include the goal to be achieved, making the tortured person speak. I am not trying to justify anything, as should be obvious to everyone, I am only trying

to understand the level of degradation to which a man can reach, a man like so many other men, a completely normal man. And his normality lies entirely in the execution of his work according to certain rules, even if not within certain limits. Even an executioner has his own classifications and methods, and even those who give him the order to apply them have their own, and the difference is almost always a laughable nuance. The relationship between torturer and tortured is an eminently human one, there are no beasts that get in the way. One strikes and the other receives the blows. In both cases, two human beings function, the first master of the other at his mercy, the second who tries to make the pain as bearable as possible by venturing into the dark tunnel of fear and death. Of course, the executioner has the right look, and this can also be seen during the factual checks that develop over days and days, for weeks. But what is this right look? It is a look that is capable of investigating the physical resistance of the other, to progressively modulate the means to be employed. And this look is a human look, there is nothing feral about it. It enters the eyes of others and investigates without wanting to, like a conditioned reflex. Here our man, in doing so, even looking me in the eyes, and unwittingly scrutinizing my capacity for resistance, puts forward his being a man, and a torturer, almost provides me with his identity card. It is a right look and it is also sad, there is no bravado or arrogance, as one might expect from someone who is accustomed to breaking with his own hands, piece by piece, the life of another man. It is rather a sad look, as if even his eyes were aware of the abjection into which the owner of that look has sunk. The unexpected guest never looks me in the eye, destiny has no such weaknesses.

**209.** – The character we are chasing, and who changes from time to time, must be well framed starting from the initial information, usually concise and categorical. A few indications, a photo, his quality in the rainbow of human wickedness. It is the contact with our work that makes him more concrete, more detailed, that makes his habits and daily behaviors, his weaknesses and his idiosyncrasies flourish around him. Since these are individuals who carry out a job that is highly psychologically deforming, they are full of fears, they resort to adolescent subterfuges, if they look around with a bold air they cannot hide a gesture of fear. Or they sink their heads into their shoulders and go forward blindly, considering themselves candidates for a destiny of violent death. There is in them a sort of fatal attraction for the conclusion, almost as if they were running with open arms towards this destiny, some clearly – as in the case of the Irish traitors – others unconsciously, the latter unable to realize the atmosphere that envelops them like a funeral shroud. At times I seemed to sense around their daily activities a sort of silence that



no one could disturb, neither movement of the surrounding life nor sudden jolt of the soul. It is a symbolic sign of what is taking shape both with our work of connection and verification, and with their monstrously lethal work. They are two inexorable flows that meet and that find no way to interpenetrate. Each remains wrapped up in their own essential obtuseness. On the one hand, the power that expresses itself at the highest level of its shameless existence, on the other, the response of freedom that finds no other way than to attack by striking in a radical manner. Here is the seal of the intimate relationship between these two movements. It is useless and impossible to pretend to be extraneous, to be distant from the murderer, something dark is on the march and is taking shape in a physical and mental approach. Little by little I recognize my man's attitudes and if he were not closed in the cocoon of his destiny he could recognize my attitudes. Does he do it? Does he do it and doesn't care? I don't know. Sometimes I have the impression that he is waiting for a gust of greed to rain down on him. Minute and distant memories that now overlap with each other. Moreover these notes, so late, do not even aspire to be a true remembrance. They stop first and press on a painful boil to let out the gangrene that urges inside. Sometimes I would have the spontaneity of a sudden gesture that I let slip, a sign that my sudden startle sent to the other without wanting it, as if to tell him that I was there and that I would never go elsewhere, on another road, because I was his destiny. The mutual presence sends out continuous and involuntary signals. Is this perhaps the register of common humanity? I cannot know, I am only here to record these anomalies. His coldness could also have been self-confidence, surprising carelessness, but also anticipated submission, supine acceptance. My icy concordance of checks and duplications could have been a method now introjected or a simple model to hide my uncertainties and fears. Who can say? These long-distance encounters, repeated, even if differentiated in their modalities, ended up having an initiatory character. The man presented his most intimate misery, I presented the presumed correctness of an objective method capable of absorbing me without batting an eyelid. Each one fed on his own arrogance. On one side evil and on the other good? No. There is no clear distinction of this type. In the middle there was the impudence of two parallel procedures, destined to touch each other without fully understanding each other. The sense of doing aimed at building the active dimension of the attack had its limits in its own irreplaceability and indispensability. The sense of the torturer also wandered in a current event that was an end in itself, without active outlets, destined only to remain a blind butchery on behalf of power. Our doing had as its objective acting in quality, freedom first of all. The unexpected guest is in the action that took shape. Quality

cannot be expressed in words, that is why here I speak of something that cannot be said.

**210.** – The complex set of control and correspondence procedures, where our work was almost completely summarized, risked making us lose sight of the very purpose of our activity. The active transformation was, in action, too violent a trauma if compared to the methodical daily activity of preparation. This irreversible gradualness, immutable in its broad lines, was eminently a quantitative expression and therefore had no other destiny than to clash with the quality of the action. Here every evaluation of responsibility was nothing or little more than nothing, the same as the set of procedures that had comforted us before. The action breathed its atmosphere outside of time and activity. The object of our attention, which had previously been a man or a monster, depending on the individual ethical considerations that accompanied our actions, was now the action in progress, a crumpled puppet, a small pile of rags, the quick and anonymous passage of the unexpected guest, while for each of us the action engraved on our skin the different experience of quality. There, behind us, abandoned in his sudden (and perhaps unexpected?) distress, was a man. What had become of our awareness? And of his? I don't know. For a good part I had the physical sensation of relief of someone who has completed a demanding, uncertain and problematic job. For another part it was precisely that moment - at least for me - to ask myself the most acute and unanswerable questions. What had happened, the entire action in its timeless punctuality, was something that was entirely in our first informative steps. The unpredictable pattern of action was reflected in daily doing and made it nagging and indispensable. But if this was the case, why did we feel the presence of quality in action? Wasn't this proof of an illusion of ours, continually fueled to make us feel at ease with our liberator conscience? We were carrying out a sentence that had existed from the beginning, we had no way of mastering either our doing or our acting in either of these two phases. No. It couldn't be like this, because in this case we would have continued the quantitative doing ad infinitum and would never have had access to quality, which on the contrary we experienced firsthand. The remembrance itself, even these late pages, would not have had a way of existing and would not exist on this August evening either, horribly hot and oppressive in a small cell of a Greek prison. No. There were – obviously – slight oscillations, especially in Ireland, but basically the transgression was clear, the other side was there, in front of us, more or less aware of its own filthy role – there would be much to say about this, but to what end? – and it went its own way. As far as I was concerned, there was an irremediable but tolerable imbalance. I felt the need for a human approach to the shapeless subject before

me, not so much – which was impossible – to better understand and delve into his horrendous sins, but because I could not accept the immediately, healthily objective consciousness that, full of itself, hunts the monster feeling fully entitled to do so. It was not the gravity of the sin, roughly summarized in the initial information message, that most prompted this approach, nor even the sense of pity for human weaknesses, of which the experience of the Irish traitors was redundant, but something else. It was the process itself that forced me to feel close to them as men, not as monsters, and this closeness grew dangerously – up to a certain point – as the work went on. Everyday life allowed for a collection of normal, human behaviors that erased or put into the background the monstrous entity served by the initial information with all possible underlinings. The process had a hold on us, involved us, brought us closer, made us aware of a human life that was living before our eyes, so that we had to continually appeal to the standardized definition of a miserable worm, if not a monster, more and more as the unexpected guest's step silently approached.

**211.** – There is no doubt that the preventive procedure for action, in all its modalities, has an influence on the subject taken into consideration. This does not take into account the eventuality – here considered marginal – of the subject becoming suspicious, but only the influence of our work of spinning, of verification, of correspondence. The material object of this procedure undergoes a modification that recalls a sort of reduction to its essential components, around which behaviors and repetitions revolve. These components are of two types, that which comes from the information that we could define as identifying or cataloguing, and that which emerges in the course of the approach, which we could simply call human. These two moments do not oppose or integrate each other, they grow in parallel, so that the stronger the extremization of the accusations, the more a residue of humanity that wants to be taken into consideration presses at the door. This is the maturity of the action, its completion in which there is only quality, that is, truth in this case, without obstacles or pretences aimed at putting forward moral justifications. Maturity allows a clear crossing, without delays, as soon as the necessarily preceding factual operations have been completed. It is the purpose of the action, the arrival of the unexpected guest. At that precise moment the character is no longer anything but a flash of quality, participates in the absolute nakedness of the action devoid of time and place, even if all previous efforts have been directed at specifying paths and courses, that is, unities of time and space. In the action the character is no longer the torturer or the informant on duty but is the dazzling reference that quality places before the eyes of the different conscience at the moment that hosts it. In it there is no longer a separation between us who measure without the

knowledge of the measured object and this object that must be kept in the dark about the measurement. In this latter, outside of time, the whole world can realize what is happening. The old distinctions between the monstrosity at the service of repression and the freedom that wants to act to transform the horrible reality that lies before it fall mercilessly. The previous factual situation has an archaism that marks it as belonging to the world in which ghosts overlap and crush reality with their weight. In the action there are no longer the notions of investigated and investigator, of pursued and pursuer. There is no longer the monster that must be defeated and the one who must defeat it, the man intact in his shining moral armor of a knight of justice. And it is precisely the action that shows how these distinctions belong to a separate and now outdated universe. Here there are no definitions or rules capable of circumscribing scopes and meanings. The active situation is qualitatively neutral, indistinct, while from the essential point of view, its own, that is, qualitatively, is chaotic, it is chaos itself that yawns at the moment in which doing is surpassed. The original information is in the mists of time, in the cataloguing of doing, it is not accessible to quality nor does it belong to the motives of the unexpected guest. It is not a question of elusiveness, it is a question of being dislocated elsewhere, and this elsewhere has closed with information and also with the complex and articulated set of correspondences. Chaos protects itself by avoiding mixing with objective or psychological motivations that would tell it nothing and that, on the contrary, would try to impose some organizational and methodological reason on it. In remembrance, observing this condition from a certain distance, one must admit that one is faced - while still remaining in the chaos of quality - with an absolutely unique coherence. The unexpected guest is the silent messenger of fate, his purpose is first of all to ensure the supremacy of the unknown, then to get to the root of that moment out of time that the action assigns him, where even the physical place where the pile of rags ends up lying is nonexistent, and fate cannot be disturbed by some unpredictable movement, by an extraneous motive, by a second thought. All this is first of all time and happens chronologically. The unexpected guest is alien and incomprehensible to time, his silence has no scansions.

**212.** – It was not easy to reduce the urgency of humanity that emerged in the comparison, to allow a certain detachment indispensable for the verification of the correspondences. The object of our interest took his job seriously – except in the cases of the Irish traitors –, informants, provocateurs, torturers, all immersed themselves in their daily work and here found the strength to go on. From the outside it was not possible to grasp the true nature of these automatons, or presumed such, they were forced into the repetitive role of the ex-

ecutor of orders, blind and obtuse as ever, but it was a convenient role, which was convenient. After all, it was not easy to identify their single peculiarity, information was missing or some of these aspects were not considered important, therefore not communicated. These subjects were basically quite isolated even in their environment, it was not given to know if they had friends or personal acquaintances outside of work, when they came into contact with a person our attention was immediately focused on the latter, on the type of conduct, if there was transmission of informative material, we were not interested in finding out if there was any human relationship, of friendship, of trust, of respect between the two. These people had no sense of human relationships, they were cut off, isolated, at least these were the conclusions that we arrived at after a certain time. They were forcibly enclosed within their suffocating world in which the harsh laws of sadism and secrecy prevailed. Sometimes, from a sudden sign or an unsuspected deviation, it became clear that they were making impulsive moves to do something different, to get in touch with the outside world from which they were essentially cut off. These exceptions led them into a sort of intermediate territory, also desolate and ambiguous, in any case, for them, equally unsatisfactory. Uncertainties and deviations, as far as possible, never led them to deviate from the basic rules. They knew that this was unacceptable and certainly did not hope for a magnanimous concession from their mutual clients. An informer – ultimately a vague and intermediate figure – remained an informer forever, untrustworthy for the same manipulators who had to make allowances for the material made available to them each time. I think that the life of these people was dedicated with the utmost effort to being convincing, producing for them meant convincing. Nothing else found a place in their inner world. Even more restricted and codified was the life of the provocateur, from whom they expected visible results in terms of involvement, people to be compromised in false plans of attack against repression. It is better not to talk about the torturer. His profession, even more closed and atrocious, speaks for itself. In the final analysis their hierarchical relationship was abnormal, could not follow the regular paths where responsibility is directly and visibly discharged onto the superior. Here the hierarchy was shaded into allusive gradations, where no one put anything down in black and white, only automatisms, nods of agreement and sudden rebuffs. For all these people their superiors and therefore their clients were never exactly identifiable. Often in the pockets of the informants one could find written reports that were addressed in a generic manner to departments of the service, as if from nothing to everything. They were at a rung, the lowest, of the repressive hierarchy, but they did not know exactly where they were. The upper part of these gradations was a

mystery to them and it was also to us. This animated them with a psychic condition of losers. They were always waiting for the arrival of an event that would solve their problems once and for all. Individuals resigned to their fate? Certainly not all of them. For those who were not resigned, there were material obstacles that nailed them to their procedures, they were what they were for life and death. This ineluctable condition of the individual was reproduced, as far as I could understand, in the entire structure that was confusedly behind them. The doing that suffocated the executors was the same that suffocated the overall structure and made all their frightening work grotesque and terribly vague. The unexpected guest arrived silently on this emptiness and deprived it of the last trace of meaning.

**213.** – The whole of this half-submerged world is frightening, beings apparently capable of leading a normal life, like all other men, are instead immersed in a gelatinous skein that envelops them, forcing them to play a hateful and ultimately marginal role. If the delusions of grandeur of the few who hold the threads of the skein in their hands were not aberrant, they could not give life to this sort of animal with a hundred heads, incapable of fully understanding what it is doing. So our observations had as their object something that essentially remained suspended in mid-air, devoid of comprehensible reasons and purposes other than those of mere self-reproduction. Each cut – and our actions achieved precisely this with the arrival of the unexpected guest – made one of the heads of this cosmic animal pop off, but the rest compensated by rebalancing, so that the whole thing seemed not to feel the blow, at least not immediately. Since there was no public evidence - there were no interventions that ended up in the newspapers except as criminal and bandit attacks - and in any case only in part - there was not even a comment from the regime. Our own information rarely indicated anything about the results obtained or the difficulties caused to the enemy. Perhaps the enemy was closing itself more and more in its own secrecy and gratuitous malice, perhaps not. Who could say? In any case, we were not faced with a mechanism equipped with absolute self-regulation and the blows, in the long run, had to have consequences, even if we were not given to know them in detail. We went ahead blindly because we had psychic reactions only from the subjects on whom we continued to work, even after a radical intervention. And these almost never showed signs of disturbance. They continued with their habits, remained in their own little world like fish in an aquarium. A closed organism does not send signals to the enemy and, conversely, we did not send direct signals to the other side either. The communications directed to the people almost always had a generic content and concerned an analysis of the social and political conditions in which our action developed and of which it constituted a sollicita-

tion to rise up, even if small and sometimes even negligible. On the other hand, our struggle was a concerted one, it hit back the blows received and tried to take cover after the damage had been done. We could not take the initiative, the information was our active spring and except for very rare cases it indicated specific people or contexts restricted and determined in time and space. It would have been unrealistic to challenge military power in the open field. Here I am referring to repressive conditions out of the ordinary, particularly extreme, in which torture reaches levels of application a thousand times greater than those practiced in the democratic conditions current today. We did not therefore delude ourselves into thinking that we could surprise this cosmic animal and send it running away, we could taunt it, yes, create a long war of attrition, counter blow for blow, but not take the initiative ourselves. And then, this monstrous organism was aware of its means and its limits, in this undergrowth of specialized laborers in obscure tasks, it knew where to fish for new recruits, how and where to train them, how to motivate them. We only had the beauty of action in its punctual conclusion, which repaid us, almost without missing a beat, for the long efforts of preventive action. I realized that the more our characters were dangerous for their extreme ability in carrying out their hateful task, the more they managed to go unnoticed, it was easy to confuse them in the anonymity of the crowd, if they were true specialists they never had the aggressive or boastful air of those who presume to have the lives of their fellow men in their hands. Secret elements of a secret work, they were able to make even their personality secret, so I often wondered how that amorphous and anonymous being in front of me, with his watery and shifty eyes, could be a professional torturer. But the unexpected guest did not accept such doubts, he immediately went to the root of the problem which, for him, had only one solution.

214. – And yet this mammoth apparatus before us was an integral part of power, therefore of law and order. These two concepts would be meaningless if they did not include those extremes that good people call monstrosities. There is a secret pact between the limits that the law reaches and its overcoming, accepted and kept in mind as indispensable in certain cases. At the basis of this pact is the diabolical concept of secrecy, which we all share. Not everything can be done in broad daylight, not even things that fall under the law which, apparently, being the same for everyone, should be visible to everyone. And yet this is not the case, the pure contemplation of the rule diverts attention from the deviation from the rule and this placing oneself in an unlabeled elsewhere is an integral part of the rule itself. The law would not be conceivable without these aberrations. All men in power know what happens in secret rooms,

they also know that this happening is theoretically condemnable by their conscience but in practice it makes possible the existence of power which is based precisely on massacres, small and large, always on massacres. The punitive and intimidating capacity is therefore intrinsic to the rule, it does not constitute the exception, the above mentioned overcoming concerns the letter not the substance. A power prisoner of the letter is destined to perish, and it knows it. For this reason the strong powers have a wider and more frequent overcoming than the democratic ones, but the latter are not exempt, indeed they resort to more refined and perhaps more effective methods. Disturbing this order of things was our task because it was too extreme and because it aimed at maintaining a generalized repression of a dictatorial nature. When I found myself working in Italy - a so-called democratic country - the difficulties were greater, many were convinced that it was not necessary to disturb the repressive process because it was based on the laws of an anti-fascist democracy. Except for rare cases, the unexpected guest remained in this country idle. It is not important to deal with these rare cases here because I have spoken about them extensively elsewhere. The opacity of democratic power makes information work more difficult but does not bind to a management center that is the absolute master of the sources. Working in these conditions, always with the usual method of in-depth analysis and correspondence, one realized how the substance of things - laws and their overcoming - was ultimately the same. This gave rise to a suspicion, that the entire legalistic apparatus, visible and trumpeted, was nothing but a masquerade similar, and of reversed value, to any militaristic and dictatorial power. Sitting calmly in a cafe frequented by students, a provocateur or an informer did the same job in Italy or in Greece, in Ireland or in Spain. Around him the same available human material, the same hope for freedom, the same naive search for some indication to act. And these clowns, charged by their principals to play a part, all looked alike. Camouflage reigned supreme in everyday life. We applied it too - for the right reason, mind you - but weren't we all part of the same play, each with his own roles to play to the end? Hadn't I been wrongly in my need for freedom and my passion for liberation? Didn't I always run the risk of making the wrong gesture, of advancing with the wrong step? How could I recite a script that I didn't agree with, even if I knew it perfectly? Wasn't I a clown too, even if I wore a suit of different multicolored rags? Boasting about having completed my work of spinning, of checking, of duplicating, wasn't that a way to give myself a foundation of justice, to consider myself on the right side of the world? Was I decent in my behavior? Was I acceptable, first of all to myself? Of course I was, otherwise I would not have continued, I would have run away. But was this decency re-



ally founded, or did it find its strength only in the moment of action, when quality burns my skin and my heart? The unexpected guest was fortunately refractory to this question.

**215.** – There is something shameless in all these people, in different latitudes, only in Africa did the typology change radically, here there was almost everywhere a barbarously primitive innocence, a lack of double mentality, at least in my personal experiences which were not many. Here there were no specialists but amateurs who showed off their individual contentment in serving distant masters, remote colonizers now on the way out. Their activities, sometimes superficial and open, they paid directly and did not admit doubts with themselves, they expected their own destiny in a climate of the last days. They summarized the humiliations of an entire people – for example in the mountainous regions of Algeria – and they endured their work as a supplement of uncertainty and fatigue that they wanted to make as light and transitory as possible. They fled from themselves, as in Uganda, in an uncertain position, they served a regime in the process of self-destruction and tried to make what they did understandable to themselves, without acceptable results. As soon as the spinning of the thread became visible they fled and abandoned their condition of sellouts for the even more risky one of fugitives without a goal and nowhere to go. The unexpected guest almost never carried out his intervention, the African fabric was completely inadequate, it crumbled in our hands, except for a few colonial officials who still remained in their posts, without conviction and sometimes without directives. Here the most serious clashes were between liberation movements, but we kept ourselves away from any direct involvement. Many years later I saw an old comrade again and his story was one of complete disillusionment. He died recently in a car accident. The most significant experiences remain those of Palestine and Europe. It is here that I posed the most contradictory and lacerating problems because it is here that the action of the unexpected guest was broadest and most detailed. In these experiences I defended with all my might my attachment to freedom and yet, day by day, I was forced to give up a little ground. Thus I defended my ideal but also my survival, knowing full well that here, in repressive conditions organized at the highest level, any mistake could be the definitive one. So we defended our work even if on my part the usual doubts always surfaced. The ghosts paraded in their obscene daily parade and we felt obliged to consider them categories of aberration not men. The devotion to humanity which, as a common dream, is similar to hope and therefore slow to die, resurfaced at times as a monotheistic faith, obtuse and repetitive. It was necessary to put it aside, to pretend nothing was happening so as not to feel degraded, so as not to be lowered to the imaginary

role of ghosts ourselves, only with the sign changed. Too dazzling, in some cases, the horror of the situation to be put aside or to be able to support it. Hence the need for a middle way. Neither men nor monsters. A ritual attitude towards our work, perhaps not only ritual but devotional. The sight of certain individuals, seeing them walk in their normal gait as human beings, was often intolerable if one did not approach them as men, embedding them objectively in what they really were – at least in the information data in our possession – was too sickening, unbearable. Repulsive beings that one had to approach to document oneself, approaching them one found oneself in contact with men to whom one could not whisper something, scrape from their brains the rottenness that was taking root inside. Each time, in an acute and painful way, the scene of the approach was repeated, boringly and painfully, to the point of nausea. It was the repetition of a module in which different subjects were placed under the microscope of our factual attention. Only the individual in question seemed not to notice anything – and sometimes he really did not notice anything – for him they were always new and unpredictable signals. Or not? I have often had this doubt. Repetition is an obsessive neurosis and has two sides. Only the unexpected guest was immune to it, outside of time the heart of destiny beat in him.

**216.** – All these individuals had a strange harmony among themselves, even in different countries, they indulged in a gestural ritual that was surprising for its uniformity. They were a bit like caged animals, they who treated human beings like animals. They all had, except in the case of the Irish traitors, a sort of training that at times seemed more like domestication. Their innate ferocity was directed exclusively towards the objectives set by the hierarchy, then they fell back into a sort of quiet and distrustful drowsiness just enough to make a certain amount of attention necessary in our work. I have often asked myself what would have been if they had had a greater obstinacy of attention in predicting their destiny, or at least in looking at what was being built around them, if that had been the case our work could have become much more complex. Abjection crushed them into a sort of uniformity from which they did not seem to be able to detach themselves, they were priests of a religion of horror, consecrated to a nefarious and monstrous work, and as priests they behaved, there was nothing alive and anomalous, not even in their gestures or in their walk. Taking into account the necessary differences - marginal ones, however - they almost all walked and gesticulated in the same way. Their obedience to the task undertaken was stupid but understandable, one does not become what they were if not through an education in absolute submission. There was no light in their eyes, and perhaps not even a look worthy of the name, except that constant and elusive way of looking around

without truly seeing. And yet, at least some of them, that is, the informants, had to look carefully at the reality that surrounded them, being obliged to identify the subjects suitable for provocation or from whom to expect possible information, but it was a one-way vision, preselected, incapable of modulation. They were not eyes, they were filing cabinets or dossiers ready to be used to subsidize the work of the torturers, work that was closely linked to what they did. They saw only what they wanted to see, but they saw this thoroughly, you could almost watch them as they flinched at their prey, finally caught almost on the fly, and it was on this that their dull gaze acquired color and depth. They were not animals of prey, but subordinate jackals, incapable of running the risk of a real hunt, ready only to seize a weakling or to spot a slight sign of willingness. Once this sudden mingling was over, during which their concentration was of considerable intensity, they almost collapsed in the return to stupid and careless normality, as if an essential part of their life was extinguished. The body almost went back into itself, the shoulders hunched, the hands never found a place to rest. They almost always went away, looking for another victim or going home or going to the special services command. I don't have much to say about these last places. Their surveillance was expressly forbidden by the decisions of the movement because it was too exposed and dangerous. The location was identified by force of circumstances because our characters often returned to these places of horror. The satisfaction that sometimes appeared on their faces was the sign of having made a good catch or, for the torturers, of having obtained a good result with minimal effort. In these cases all or almost all reminded me of the happy movements of a dog that has been petted by its owner. This was the humanity that was poured out on us and with which we were forced to deal daily. Nothing flattering in the results of our work, repetitions and correspondences, everything according to the most classic precautions dictated by prudence. We were like actors who, knowing their part by heart, recited effortlessly and without worrying excessively about the script. Ordinary bad people paraded under our apparently unperturbed attention, then, after a few days or weeks – depending on the complexity of the case or the importance of the character – came the overstepping into action. Out of time and space was the moment of quality. The unexpected guest showed up on time.

217. – None of these executors was anything more than a simple particle. They were all inserted, in different capacities, into a mechanism larger than themselves that encompassed them but did not qualify them, tending on the contrary to flatten them, to reduce them to simple cogs in a gear. If it had been possible to question them about the purpose of their work, they would not have been

able to answer beyond the immediate placement in the relationship that placed them in front of the unfortunate person on duty. Making someone talk, for which it is obligatory to torture them, gathering information, for which one must keep one's ears open in certain environments, making certain speeches to solicit by provoking appropriate responses, for which it is necessary to know how to put together four prefabricated concepts. Nothing more. These were containers of slime that were used several times, while in the case of the Irish traitors the use, in general, was only one, before abandoning them to themselves. For each of them there was no personal history, individually they had never existed, ghosts or specters, they had had the opportunity to pass through the folds of a horrible montage of frightening human idiocies. This condition was so much made their own by these characters that it produced a phenomenon of calming, a sort of collapsing on their own responsibilities so as not to weigh them, so as not to keep them in mind. I can say that in none of them was there the awareness of a future different from that contaminated present in which they struggled without knowing it or without wanting to know. Lacking any recognition in the hierarchy of power that administered them, they were always suspended in mid-air as if at any moment a catastrophe could intervene to erase them en masse forever, even losing the memory of their horrible tasks. Of course, each one gave himself a short-term perspective, in other words they lived day by day, but this was precisely the expectation I mentioned, the intimate and personal vision of the possible collective catastrophe. Did they ever have the desire, the need to understand the process they were prisoners of? I don't know. Did they ask themselves the whys that every man with a conscience must necessarily ask himself when faced with an absurdly repressive behavior? It is not easy to answer these questions that I have asked myself many times. Understanding, after all, is a stimulus innate in man, however much he may be forced to reduce himself to the state of a brute. Yet I have come to the conclusion that they have never tried to understand, indeed they were happy with this renunciation, otherwise they would not have been able to do that job. Nothing is more exasperating than this conclusion, but nothing is perhaps closer to reality. Not understanding one's own life is something more profoundly stupid than limiting oneself to understanding only what one is doing, it means being disgusted with oneself, fleeing from one's own reality and taking refuge in the stronghold of what must be done by force because it is an order. It is the doing itself, at a certain point, which in the accumulation of its objectivity prevents understanding. In the same way it is as if we had limited ourselves to preparing the work of clarification and correspondence without ever arriving at the active concretization of the overcoming, without acting. We would have

been stupid automatons without being able, in a short time, to say what we were doing. At a certain point, a critical point of rupture but also of safety, the accumulative doing had to be stopped and we had to find ourselves beyond, in the overcoming, close the game or close ourselves in front of any capacity for understanding. From this immersion in quality came our ability but also our need to understand. And understanding our – or at least, to be more precise, my – continuous question, why? Why the humanity that was before us, that paraded every day before our eyes, with its ferociously grotesque attitudes of sad clowns, refused to understand. Not even the arrival of the unexpected guest could be defined as an opportunity for them – even at the limit – to understand. It was too separate, this intervention, too qualitatively different to be the basis of a future understanding. Death has no future, it only has a present outside of time, it denies time and place, it nullifies life, it cuts the thread of the Fates, it does not provide explanations or teachings to be used in the near future. Even the pile of rags that we left behind could not serve as a warning to the other characters in the circus of horror. The normality of their behavior was never disturbed by this nor could one discern the signs of any modification.

**218.** – These hidden servants of an infamous power had something in common in the very variety of their tasks, however distant the respective collaborative works to which they dedicated themselves might be. Some more than others, deep in their dedication to a cause that was lost from the start, they were all at the same level of lowest subservience, if they had compared themselves to each other – which was impossible because they almost always didn't even know each other – they would have all found each other equally repellent. That is, they could submit to our gazes as attentive observers of other aspects a sort of human normality that was very similar to that of everyone else, but they could not have deceived each other. In fact, they possessed secret stigmata, known only to them, that would have identified them implacably. They had an intrinsic poisonousness that was not easy to grasp and that only darted away at times and was grasped by us with difficulty. How could we access this secret of theirs? It was not possible. Once again the only thing to do was to fall back on the codified study of correspondences and duplications. As much as their behaviors were intended to assimilate them to the normality of the context that hosted them, they always succeeded badly in doing so. If I now fix the memory - but it would be better to say, at this point, the recollection - on any of them, I summarize in myself a petty figure that horrifies me, and this horror is greater precisely in the most apparently normal figures, less so let's say in the Irish traitors, surrounded by the ineluctable aura of their solitude. The succession of the factuality of these characters -

provocateurs, informants, torturers - was not directly accessible to us, we had to deduce it from some information, generally initial, or from what we saw in our daily checks, but they could not be identified with precision. Even if we had dedicated more energy to our research we would not have concluded much more by trying to understand what and who the provocateur had provoked or the informer transmitted. The obscene factuality of the torturer was even more closed. The general impression was that these subjects worked full time and that they were chosen from among isolated individuals, without many family ties, rejects of society itself, uprooted or accustomed to living as such. They had thus invested their entire life in what they did. The houses where they lived, usually in the suburbs, were almost all alike. Anonymous, normal, desolate homes, without a sign of personality or animation of any kind. This condition should not be confused with absolute dedication but was simply the consequence of a selection made elsewhere by a hierarchy of specialists accustomed to identifying people of this kind by enlisting them directly - that is, officially as far as possible - or indirectly, that is, by blackmailing them. Everyone has a similar path behind them, or one that can be compared to the same selective procedures. The result is the codification of a certain category of people who have no role, no history, no future in society. Naturally we never spoke to any of these people, it was absolutely forbidden to come into direct contact with them, but the very need to approach them - at least in me - caused a closeness that was not only physical but psychological. I saw them for days and sometimes weeks, I couldn't help but get an idea of their lost humanity, of their way of thinking, of what their eyes saw. What do the eyes of a torturer see as he opens the belly of a poor wretch and slowly pulls out his entrails? These questions threatened my days and left me to have an intimate conversation with myself, aimed at understanding. But how can one understand horror? One can only cast a frightened glance into the abyss and immediately retreat for fear of being drawn into those dark depths where monstrous but not inhuman beings move. The fear felt by those who look at horror is marked for the most part by the realization of their own kinship based on common humanity. Helping oneself by resorting to animalistic definitions is a comfort for children, not an element of judgment. These fears are in any case worthless as far as the work of identification and verification is concerned. The unexpected guest has no eyes for horror, cuts off the life in front of him at the root and heads towards destiny.

**219.** - What fate awaited the colorful characters we are dealing with in our absence? They would have continued their precious function for any power, perhaps changing sides in time without being caught off guard. Rarely do such people, who are used to working

in the shadows, fall victim to a popular uprising, this event does not even touch them, they return to their usual task as soon as the outburst has passed and everything presents itself again with changed duties, but these are nuances. The torturers have their nails filed down a bit, but their precious experience is always put to good use. With our foreign and detached presence, considered by many to be anachronistic with a certain air of sufficiency, an individual, partial, insufficient solution was emerging, but still better than nothing. This work of ours came from afar and proposed itself confidently even if it had to remain in the shadows by force of circumstances. The approach was unstoppable and the knowledge we managed to accumulate served to bring down a small part of these characters, a negligible part but which constituted an approach to the central nucleus of all power, the cave of massacres. It is on this place of political slime that we worked. We did not have much to say, even in terms of remembrance, because the subject did not lend itself to many considerations, apart from my perplexities and my many unanswered questions. The bill we presented arrived punctually, this was the most important aspect and it is in this direction that all our efforts were directed. We welcomed punishment - an inadequate but pregnant word for many of us - and paved the way. There were no recriminations except in cases of delay in verifications and correspondence or in cases of lack of information. The arrival of the unexpected guest is internal to the action and this is imperiously other than accumulative doing, indispensable but aimed at creating something destined to elude it forever. All the work preceding the crossing could not have access to the action, it was measure, time, place, quantity. The feelings that animated this doing were precisely those summarized above in the word "punishment", but the action was extraneous to the punishment, it was the quality experienced directly, outside of time and place, the dream of freedom finally realized, experienced firsthand. And the unexpected guest was this quality, not a partial corrective event, however founded and justified on the enormous preventive work, on quantity and measure. There was no sacred dice-throw of the morally correct operation, there was nothing to sacrifice in acting, it was simply a resetting of something that had to be reset, without superfluous reflections of a moral order. My questions arose within me, produced by the haze of quantitative tiredness. Too much juxtaposition, excessive moral evaluations, multiple excursions behind the mask of normality to search for man. Ultimately, quality was essentialized in a punctual action, it was summarized in a small pile of rags, in a banal momentary encounter, in a terminal identification, in a conclusion, in a message sent to destiny. From the overcoming to the remembrance there was only an instant, like the dim light of a candle that once lit

is immediately extinguished. There are no progressive approaches to death, these belong to the preventive period, to the accumulation of doing, even the approach to man and my many reflections on the intolerable dichotomy between man and monster belong to the world of doing, ultimately they are only appearances. Reality is that pile of rags. The total being of our action is there, everything that was done before was a game of mirrors, a suspicious alternation of ghosts. My perplexities were therefore linked to these appearances, they could not - nor have they ever had the strength to access further even in more recent times - be part of the action, they would have made it implode making the intervention of the unexpected guest impracticable. The signs of my personal maximum approach to the above-mentioned binomial could not be detected by the action, even if they obviously entered forcefully into the effort of remembrance, as they are doing on this sultry August evening in a Greek prison. That problem, important, lets itself be spoken of, grazed, barely touched, but it does not let itself be faced. Even now I remain deeply immersed in the dogmatic sleep of a moral validity of the work accomplished by the unexpected guest, but this does not shift by a comma or a little piece of rag what the action has achieved, the overthrow of one of the many foolish and obscene servants of power in its most extreme and revolting forms. The signs of my personal maximum approach to the above-mentioned binomial could not be detected by the action, even if they obviously entered forcefully into the effort of remembrance, as they are doing on this sultry August evening in a Greek prison. That problem, important, lets itself be spoken of, grazed, barely touched, but it does not let itself be faced. Even now I remain deeply immersed in the dogmatic sleep of a moral validity of the work accomplished by the unexpected guest, but this does not shift by a comma or a little piece of rag what the action has achieved, the overthrow of one of the many foolish and obscene servants of power in its most extreme and revolting forms. The signs of my personal maximum approach to the above-mentioned binomial could not be detected by the action, even if they obviously entered forcefully into the effort of remembrance, as they are doing on this sultry August evening in a Greek prison. That problem, important, lets itself be spoken of, grazed, barely touched, but it does not let itself be faced. Even now I remain deeply immersed in the dogmatic sleep of a moral validity of the work accomplished by the unexpected guest, but this does not shift by a comma or a little piece of rag what the action has achieved, the overthrow of one of the many foolish and obscene servants of power in its most extreme and revolting forms.

**220.** – For these ghosts whom we followed with such patience and attention, nothing mattered except their dependence on the hierarchy that administered them. It made them move and at the same



time, like a terrible disease, emptied their life from within. Equally anonymous officials, hidden in the rooms of the lowest power, took care of them and of the role they were to play in the world. We knew nothing of this organizational work, nor could it interest us; for us, the whole mechanism – which we assumed was behind it – could move by simple force of inertia. The order to be recited seemed to us, at least from our perspective, always the same, monotonous and apparently not rich in great events. We should be careful to keep the Irish traitors and the torturers of every latitude separate. The former were, as we have said, left to their fate, the latter pursued aims of which we only learned in hindsight and almost always only in part. There were no great tricks at play but an unnoticed repetition that was difficult for them to control, which continually exposed them to signs and indications that we did not fail to treasure. For the torturers, some additional information could arrive during the operation of correspondence and duplication, and then they were terrifying reports of ferocious massacres of which I tried, at least as far as I was concerned, to find any sign in the spectral figure that we approached, well, a sign never appeared, everything seemed to return to normal. There were no involuntary messages or visible traumas or suffering to look for in their impassively normal faces. From this point of view - that is, from them to us - no contact, and this was also true for the other categories of ghosts behind which we spent our days. The human mechanism, physical and mutable, is probably much more anguishingly profound than philosophers and psychologists think. A weak and desperate consideration, I know, but it is exactly what comes to mind now considering my past experiences and my many acquaintances - albeit distant - of these ghosts. Man is a ferocious animal that adapts to his own ferocity. He lives with it, he comes to terms with it, he finds a way not to think, he loads with meaning things that are always starting out and replaces them with those that should torture his conscience. In this way his ferocity is absolutely normal. This mechanism acts on everyone and is a way to survive by putting one's immediate conscience to sleep. In those spectral individuals this putting to sleep reached very high and absolutely necessary levels. How could they have continued their work if they had not achieved this acquiescence? After all, the way of seeing the world, typical of these people, is much more widespread than one might think. The bone cutter must perhaps lull his conscience longer than the philosopher and the historian, but all contribute to a greater or lesser extent to supplying the lake of blood. Thus the world turns a blind eye to the horrible mechanism that supports it and each maintains a balance that it calls by the high-sounding name of normality. Whoever opposes this normality is an outlaw, and we were in fact outlaws. We were attacking this normality, not a mon-

strosity to be disgusted. But we too needed to base our ethical justifications on this monstrosity because you cannot attack normality, even if it is normality itself, the excellent institution of power, that supplies the cave of massacres. Our fight was therefore a surface fight, aimed at striking the most visible part of the repressive system, those ghosts animated only by the desire to go unnoticed. The rest, the order of things, the ineluctable order of doing that builds the world daily on exploitation and murder, how could we have touched it? Were we not part of it too? Certainly not of that exceptionally putrescent mixture that we located in a given historical moment and in a given place, but of an order of things in general. No one can tear themselves away from this process that drags us all along, even those like me who have fought for a long time and who at the end of their lives still find themselves fighting without retreating a step. No one will get out of here alive. Otherwise the old world would destroy itself and it would be time for the much dreamed of revolution. The unexpected guest did not pose such problems. No one can tear themselves away from this process that drags us all along, even those like me who have fought for a long time and who at the end of their lives still find themselves fighting without retreating a single step. No one will get out of here alive. Otherwise the old world would destroy itself and it would be time for the much dreamed of revolution. The unexpected guest did not pose such problems. No one can tear themselves away from this process that drags us all along, even those like me who have fought for a long time and who at the end of their lives still find themselves fighting without retreating a single step. No one will get out of here alive. Otherwise the old world would destroy itself and it would be time for the much dreamed of revolution. The unexpected guest did not pose such problems.

**221.** – To be constantly vigilant in order to oppose power and strike it in its most extreme and brutal expressions? Is this perhaps a world order that replaces the previous one? No. They are too similar, and moreover the second, the better one, the bearer of justice and the leveler of wrongs, only touches the abyss that it thinks it is fighting against thoroughly, it scratches it on the surface because it cannot strike further, it does not have the means to do so despite spreading its desire as much as possible. What position would be more effective? I do not know. Many have shown me the limits of my actions and knew only a small part of them, they would have been very happy to show me the limits of that large part that they did not know. Yet this down-to-earth criticism does not convince me. It is too consoling while wanting to be cutting and even sarcastic. It is my criticism that most deeply grasps my problem, it is this intimate criticism that shakes every corner of my deaf and tenacious persistence, on the extreme edge of what I foresee as the end that

will certainly not be long in coming. I have never been happy with my long and tiring doing, only in the laconic punctuality of action have I found myself in the fullness of my being. This condition, of which I still keep alive the memory - even if incomprehensible to others - makes me see my limits and my lacerations well, but it also fills me with joy and fullness. Fate has been generous with me because I have not been indulgent with it. I know well that the mildness of fate is addressed only to those who are already exhausted, who have enclosed themselves in their own inconclusiveness - even if dressed up as if for a party - and therefore have not put up resistance. This mild and foolish understanding of fate has never belonged to me. I have put forward neither titles of merit nor justifications. In action we know together what we are and we cannot deceive each other. I have never been a bearer of good but of freedom, the two perspectives are radically different. Destiny knows this. Could we have done better, I sometimes ask myself, and could we have done more? Maybe. There have been cases in which a more careful organization would have avoided some disasters but these were never attributable to bad and determined carelessness. As far as I am concerned our productive work was without gaps, there were no shortcomings or superficiality, in our small way - and at times this lack of availability of means was truly despairing - we were always an organization full of life, dreams, hopes and even illusions. It was at times a great responsibility to feel the weight of an entire people in the process of annihilation on our shoulders. But we were never tired or discouraged. We almost never had the worry of crossing over into the terrain of unjustified excess. Perhaps there were some doubts for the Irish traitors, but not in other cases. We were a grain of sand that dreamed of blocking a ferocious and gigantic gear. This awareness of our work, even before becoming a different awareness, in the immediacy itself, made us feel in possession of an irreplaceable filter capable of making us grasp the evil that brushed us, sliding before our eyes in the form of a ghost. We were the ones who determined the way and the moment in which the evil - that evil there, tangible and circumscribed, but not for this negligible - was to be erased, we were the ones who provided ourselves with the means for this small event to take shape in the doubtless luminosity of action. In short, in the overcoming it was we who had our life in quality and this presented itself to us simultaneously as justice, truth and freedom. The conclusion of the previous doing thus extended into a qualitative sphere in which our different awareness opened to the concrete knowledge of what before could only be either preventive information or effective improvement, control and correspondence. The organization disappeared absorbed in the action. Each of us was the being that is and cannot not be, was the spectator and the actor,

the point of reference and the point of view, the uncertainty that became certain completeness. Each of us was happy with the arrival of the unexpected guest, it was the object of our desire and the goal of our organization. Only after the action the doubts, my dear doubts, returned to become pressing. But this was my problem.

**222.** – These ghosts were part of a specific organization whose sole purpose was to terrorize. But has power perhaps had another purpose in history? Was specifying this organization a superfluous or necessary clarification? Both at the same time. Superfluous because power is always terrorist, necessary because it was necessary to identify the specific people who carried out certain extreme tasks, particularly effective in bringing back to order the elements that did not want to submit to this order. Between the so-called administrative normality and these butchers' extremisms lies the bloody territory of power. They are parallel forces that support each other and keep the same building standing. In reality, there is no way that these ghosts could have a life of their own, that would be one of the most daring contradictions. They move, intrigue, denounce, massacre, but they are not living men, like all the others, they are already ghosts, dangerous appearances, shadows cast in the cave of massacres. They use their own means to ensure that the law is the law, so that the codified abuse maintains its own characteristic, which is that of authority without appeal, domineering and rooted, against which there are no legal defensive attitudes, with an opposite sign. If the task of these ghosts failed, power would be shaken to its foundations, the lake of blood would be upset by a terrifying wave, they are the pillars of the world. They thrive everywhere, the rest is a question of nuances. Escaping their power is a desire, a thought, a movement of the soul, no one can truly do it. If it were possible, and this dark side of power could be stopped, simply by refusing to accept it in the name of the same order that justifies and supports it, the world would remain lame, it would collapse because of the lack of one of its pillars. These were my thoughts and these are still today, after so many decades. The world has even now – I was tortured a year ago when I was arrested here in Greece – this mysteriously opaque surface that makes it factually acceptable. It is this slime that we continue to call everyday life, even though the military dictatorship disappeared here a millennium ago when the insurrection began inside the Polytechnic. So a thought is not enough, I must free myself from this infamous side of power, it would be ridiculously ineffective. We must fight today as then, as tomorrow. We do not need great philosophical thoughts, these at a certain point must give way to a planning process preparatory to action, otherwise there would only be fictitious clashes, theurgic movements, impressive as ferocious and harmless puppets. Those ghosts moved like men and were ghosts, identify-

ing them, living next to them for a certain time preparing an action, made us understand the stupid normality of the world, immersed in its senseless, disconsolate coming and going. For us it was the tiredness of an absurdly repetitive and at the same time dangerous task even if nothing suggested it. But even the ghosts seemed exhausted, as if they were forced to fight to maintain that appearance of normality that was their keynote. This common relationship did not impede our supreme attention, our total willingness to grasp every trace of dissonance, and did not block or delay the rhythm of their wickedness. They always seemed on the verge of raising their arms in disconsolate surrender and instead they went on as if everything was always a simple modulation of normality. Was their normality a sort of acquiescent drowsiness, a preventive and obvious acceptance of their fate? Who can say? In the face of an overwhelming act of impudence and ferocity, in the face of something so atrocious that they could not have exact knowledge of the consequences - and this also with regard to the work of the torturers - there was only silence or the total annihilation of conscience. Perhaps both of these conclusions, equally sad and defensive, perhaps inescapable. For them the epiphany of the unexpected guest was ready and perhaps they realized it even if nothing transpired from their looks and their attitudes, often distracted or generically interested in the nothingness of their life.

**223.** – The unexpected guest was the completion to the otherwise incomplete doing. One could continue endlessly accumulating data and measurements without ever being able to say one was fully satisfied. In the same way one could find many justifications for not intervening, if nothing else the most banal of worries, the one dictated by fear. The decisive arrival was therefore the most powerful expression of a corrective intervention in the face of the compact order of the world. And the torpor that could be found in the characters under observation corresponded to the normal modulation of this order that presented itself as disorder while it was a precarious balance of doing that insisted on itself as a realized model to continue to realize. That those ghosts were shady people could be felt in the midst of their normality. They were instruments made capable of carrying out a disgusting task but they did not present the masks of executioners, they were convincing like any other person, without particular characteristics. We almost never heard their voice, a hoarse final rumble, nothing more. But in the preparation no power seemed to give any sign of itself, no sign of life if the word is precisely this sign. We certainly saw the informants and provocateurs move their lips, because talking was an essential part of their work, but the words did not reach us, they were whispered, they belonged to them who kept them like a secret or a code. Theirs was a silent

role even when they evidently spoke. Even the torturers spoke, or at least one had to assume the possibility of it. And yet this brotherhood had a certain uniformity of behavior, a frightening mixture of stubborn normality and repulsive abjection. They all belonged to power, they were instruments of power, not men animated by a life of their own but puppets moved, often clumsily, by mad puppeteers. Is power a huge bubble of lies? Perhaps. But it is also something more. It is not only appearance and deception, it is also appearing and deceiving. Even those ghosts were made to appear and were deceived, they were told that the dirty work they did had a value. But is holding power a value? Is being one of the pillars of power a value? No. Value is life, only life, and the quality that makes you grasp the meaning of life, its being that is and cannot not be. But were these stand-ins, capable of the worst atrocities, living beings? Only nominally. The basic deception had killed them before the arrival of the unexpected guest. But since they continued - even when dead - to carry out their terrible task, massacring, it was necessary to kill them a second time. Had it ever occurred to any of them to ask themselves if the fact that the heart pumped blood meant something vital, that is, if it constituted the foundation of their living? I don't think so. The basis of their appearance was all contained in the task they carried out, ineffective as it was bloody. Deceived, they deceived. If they had not been deceived they could not have deceived, they would have unmasked themselves miserably in one way or another. What made them strong and dangerous was precisely this mixture of a double deception. This is where the double need emerged. Theirs to play the part of massacrers to the end, ours to play the part of liberators. But liberators of whom? Of an oppressed people. Certainly this was our belief. But were we right? Or in the illusion of being levelers of wrongs, repairers of injustices? If lying is the order of the world, our actions were also inserted in this order, therefore they were also lies. The deception spread unstopably. And so it was, certainly, except that our doing - deceitful and mendacious as you like - was necessary to prepare the action. It was therefore the action that was the corrective chaos of the order of the world, the punctual moment completely extraneous to any bargaining or agreement, to any lie. The experience of quality concluded in itself, it was our aim and the objective of preventive doing. In the action we were no longer a part of the lie deriving from the order of the world but the truth, the beauty, the freedom, in short the unexpected guest had nothing to do with our doing and with my questions, he went straight to the root.

**224.** - These characters who have occupied so much of my life had all, in one way or another, taken a step further in collaborating in the massacre. This step had lowered them to the level of the

world order which, above all else, is the rejection of humanity as a conscience and as a morality. They had entered into something more advanced than the usual appearances that regulate everyday life, they had crossed a threshold, that of infamy, so now they had absorbed the rules that hold together the world of forced action, ferocity and detachment. They were in a certain sense these rules themselves, or they were their extreme and most condensed personification. Inconspicuous in themselves – as their work required – they had something metaphysical in simple brutality, they understood to the core what power is, in fact, as perfect brutes incapable of distinguishing, they made it alive and prosperous. Their very exhaustion was the best sign of this deep introjection, they were made of power in its simplest and most banal state, without superfetations and without pretenses and they showed the disgust that power causes. They had an empty brain, their mind hosted only the order of the world, the massacre in its elementary state, I would say primordial, without the philosophical and historical justifications that cover it on other occasions. They were not able to think, puppets empty of thoughts and full of orders, capable only of producing a fog that allowed them to go forward in their work, a precious fog because it prevented them from seeing the appearance of themselves, the emptiness they had suffered, the inconceivable competence they had achieved which otherwise would have horrified them. Ghosts? Yes, but capable of ensuring that the world could maintain the precarious balance of doing. Necessarily existing, they were the personification of the lie that feeds power. They deceived by scheming, cheating, breaking the bones of poor wretches, and this lie was solidified in the practice with which they fed the lake of blood. Even appearances kill and they do it in a senseless and ferocious way, melancholically senseless, a way capable of reaching peaks of practical excellence precisely because it was made up only of pure ferocity, no hesitation, no worry, neither preventive nor subsequent. Their doing was therefore a somnambulistic doing, as if they were spring-loaded automations, they were the quintessence of power, its obtuse blindness, its stupid perseverance, its incredible lack of scruples. In a word, normal individuals who had been convinced of the normality and, above all, of the necessity of their work. Awake, even for a single instant, the world would have undergone an unprecedented oscillation. Not the single spectre would have met the unexpected guest leaving everything else able to continue its terrible task perfectly, but the order of the world would suddenly appear before the newcomer and ask why he was there. And the unexpected guest would not be able to answer. He has no answers, he is always like destiny, silent and inconceivable. But no ghost can wake up. This is an absurd hypothesis that if thought possible would nullify the world by wiping out its or-

der aimed at massacre. In fact, this completely imaginary hypothesis could not happen, not even in the extreme case of the Irish traitors, lost in the mists of their already taken for granted non-existence. Even my unusual problems, my doubts and my journeys on lands of perplexity not explored by others, were nothing but a constant disposition of my being that claimed to present itself as a liberator and therefore underlined to itself the incongruities of a way of doing that was completely impracticable. But these perplexities did not lead me to a possible different behavior, the codifications always remained those required by the preparatory work, even if in the active explosion of quality each one was burned differently by his own experience. No commemorative conclusion - where my perplexities took shape again - could be shared by others. The circle closed and everything started again from the beginning. The unexpected guest never found, in his conclusive and radical work, a poorly prepared ground or following approximate or imprecise codes.

**225.** – These ghosts that we followed and codified were in the law, completely absorbed in the law, and at the same time they led it back to its extreme, necessarily paradoxical consequences. Their existence had the law as a sort of implicit and therefore superfluous framework. It was never able to emerge to some awareness, to a higher level in which the limits and puerilities of the law can be glimpsed. But it was not a question of formal respect – indeed even of the opposite – since executors of low works they were first of all outside the law, in its merely literal guise. No respect but not even an evasion conscientiously lived as such. Their life was a continuous administrative practice, regularly codified and abandoned on the rough terrain of normality. I was not in front of philosophers or historians, who were also massacrers, without a doubt, but through a proxy, I was in front of millenary customs bottled by force in human appearances, capable of doing their job like any other normal state employee. The order that lurks in the background provided a supporting framework, to which they clung, eager for a secure foundation, while everywhere they were seen as shaky figures not perfectly acceptable, that the same power more than anything else tolerated and tried to hide as much as possible as a shame. And yet these ghosts in their exhaustion and solitude had the charm of the limit, that is, the maximum level in which factual reality, precisely because it is miserable and naked, becomes almost true, as is true the tautology that hid their continuous pursuit of a possible cover, a camouflage happy to hide them. I never knew anything in fact of their doubts or fears - and there had to be some, every man has them, especially when a mechanism crushes him and forces him to do what they did - but I felt a sense of impotence and approximation in their sometimes senseless movement, or equipped with a



logic that was not easy to grasp. Perhaps they wanted to maintain a fair and conscious distance, very similar to our correspondences and our cautious approaches. But this did not produce answers, only an air of dissipation and weariness, while on the contrary our distances accumulated facts that, appropriately codified, would then make action possible. However, we could not underestimate these attitudes and consider them amateurish. We were facing professionals - at least almost always. So, why this weariness and this tangible form of dissipation? The only answer I could give myself was that their work was the cause of everything. Loneliness and distrust produce such professional distortions. No one is saved. Our strength was all in teamwork and in the conviction of being right, even if this second part remained in mid-air and received its consolidation only in action. At a certain point in our work of coordination and correspondence were we able to grasp the possible crack in a solid and certainly tested barrier? I don't know. Sometimes, moving forward, tightening the circle, I felt - but not everyone shared it - as if an increase in the exhaustion of these ghosts, as if many sufferings and anxieties of a personal nature had managed to make their way into that residue of immediate consciousness that as men - and not monsters as many with an acquiescence wanted to call them - they must have. Was this sensation a signal directed at us, specifically, or at the hypothetical executors of a destiny that was easy enough to predict? I don't want to talk about a concrete communication, even if relegated to a signal of sad consent, I want to refer to something more impalpable, a light dance step, a human gaze lost in the vague universe of normality, a movement of the head as if it now wanted to retreat into the shoulders to hide its own shame. None of these hypotheses were verifiable nor were they found, but I continued to notice slight modifications in behavior as we approached the moment of action. The order of the world remained always the same and those ghosts, extreme and indefectible pillars of that order, were now ready for the arrival of the unexpected guest. No accident only the voice of necessity, destiny has no other way of coming forward.

226. - Order is based on rules but also on the need to go beyond them for an excursion into the field of the lack of rules. This need is at the basis of order as much as the maintenance of rules and their legal respect. The two movements interpenetrate and support each other. Taking the measure of these ghosts was a job that had to keep in mind the principle just stated. We could not consider the characters before us as either an expression of the law or exclusively outlaws. In their most brutal excesses there was always the shadow of legality, as in every alleged legality there is always the shadow of abuse. These behaviors are close to and cross over into each other. The men behind whom we spent our efforts and our

days had developed a perfect adaptation to these continuous transgressions, they were officials and monsters, legal and illegal, normal and abnormal. Being all these things together they no longer posed the problem of a threshold to cross. Perhaps they had posed it once or more times, then, in the long practice of massacre, never again. This is an automatic device that makes you feel quite good and reduces the risk of giving in to nervousness and perplexity. Their long resistance to certain behaviors that would have horrified anyone else was their deepest vulnerability. They thus placed themselves at the center of a territory of normal concreteness that clouded them, making their life a monotonous – apparently safe – succession of automatic gestures. Everything in them was spontaneously subjected to a preventive selection of control, words, gestures, thoughts, desires, hopes, illusions. The future was therefore absolutely flattened in the present and presented no potential variables. Neither disturbances nor real stimuli. The order of things had captured them and kept them in a sort of suspension of judgment where every exacerbation or every sensitivity was channeled and forced to be summarized in doing their work, in direct collaboration in the massacre. No possible residue had to exist placed somewhere, potentially it would have disturbed the overall order of things and this surprising attitude could not be tolerated. Certainly – although we had no evidence to that effect – the hierarchy had to look at these ghosts with a particularly concerned attention. The technical evaluation of the practical results achieved through their work could not be the only possible evaluation. Many negative aspects had to arise in the attention of the principals. But what was the real relationship between these principals and the technical results? I do not believe there was a direct relationship. The results obtained were certainly used by other hierarchies with which there were no methodological commensurations. In other words, these latter users looked at what was placed in their hands, not to the methods used to obtain it. On the other hand, the other hierarchy, the organizer of the unedifying movements of the massacrers, did not care much about the fate of this lowly workforce, it simply demanded results. In the end, the ghosts were practically left to themselves, often incapable of calibrating their own activity to the results obtainable. Thus the essential necessity of the work of these characters, who were the object of our most careful attention, escaped any control, whether preventive or subsequent. They were rabid dogs that once unleashed could no longer be called back, brought back to a hypothetical docility. This objective situation, as we saw it operating before our eyes, should not be considered an alienation that someone could have corrected. It was the clearest and most consequent result of the rules that govern the order of the world. It was, in other words, the operating necessity, the best

condition for seeing power at work, without cover and without compromise. Considering these completely normal beings as monsters led – and, as far as I am concerned, continues to lead even today in changed political conditions – to understand the monstrosity of what everyone calls normality. To undermine those phantasmagorical entities, pernicious but not abnormal, was therefore to undermine one of the pillars of power. This was the task of the unexpected guest and our preparation was directed to this task.

227. – Talking about ghosts and spectres is fine. These men had lost the human condition that once had to distinguish them. Talking about monsters is not fine, it is an alibi to justify our ferocity with the greater ferocity of the enemy. A clash between differently quantifiable ferocities is the last of my desires and is in no way sustainable. Thinking back, I realize how much this alibi influenced the long effort to fight those ghosts, but it cannot be justified. Their brutality was within the rules of the law, it was the law, because it is the law to presuppose the possibility of building one's foundation on something extralegal, a support outside the rules, secret and guaranteed. We must fight the law not the abnormality, if we limit ourselves to fighting the latter we arrive at an attempt similar to that of the cat that wants to grab its own tail. In other words, we try to hit only what illegally founds the law, allowing the latter to find a new, differently illegal arrangement. A question of movement, nothing else. The rules of the law cover the entire territory of action, even ours – preparatory to the decisive action –, they extend everywhere and there is nothing but their iron application. There is no need to justify them, they are the order of the world. Thinking that these activities are an expression of a degeneration of power that is based on those rules is a mistake with a considerable trail of consequences. Working on the identification of our characters – ghosts or phantoms, this last terminology concerns their human consistency not the abnormality of their actions – we took on the most extreme part of power, that part that is not put under the public spotlight, without being any less significant and important for that. They were sufferings and anxieties that fell on an entire people, even if we took them on as a small, not very numerous and completely marginal group. For this reason, and for many others that I have examined before, we closed ourselves up like a hedgehog on the character of which we had only a little initial information. This guide was only initial, then it was missing. The secret of each individual spectre we had to discover by ourselves with our work, continuous, insistent, duplicated to the point of boredom, dangerous. And each character, while remaining in its very normal uniformity was a show in itself, had its own significance that had to be highlighted in order to constitute an overall picture as complete as possible. Often this work suffered slowdowns

caused, as we have seen, by sudden eccentricities, but other times we ourselves decided to speed it up, without for this failing to respect the precautions that the method required to be respected. Personally, I felt a sort of intolerability in surrounding with attention a character whose fate was sealed sooner or later. I often ran the risk of getting involved in the prejudicial view of moral condemnation and therefore of attributing to a gesture with a banal meaning contents that it could not have. Aside from the danger of such an attitude, it must be said that I also made the other companions in the group run the risk of forcing the work beyond what was strictly necessary, of ruining it or of unleashing a series of conflictual consequences for which we were not always adequately prepared. Speeding up the times, as far as possible, was also an unconscious way of erasing as quickly as possible any necessary association with the ugliness that we had before us. The disgust had its weight and there was no way of chasing it away with a recourse to the factual objectivity of the guerrilla manual. Parallel to this urgency there was another of exactly the opposite sign. The juxtapositions sometimes caused a sort of startle, a sign of humanity that seemed to move under the shell of the normality of the massacrers. Sometimes their singularity emerged, in small things – gestures, attitudes, tics, glances – so that it was suddenly more difficult to maintain the safety distances and the indispensable objectivity preparatory to action. There was always the danger that these ghosts would vanish into the depths of their normality, taking shape as men, thus mocking all our precautionary measures of approach. In these cases, going beyond in action was the only possible solution. The unexpected guest radically resolved all the problems that disappeared in quality. Freedom razed the rule and its tormentors to the ground. A pile of rags behind their backs.

**228.** – Ours was a reckless struggle, all things considered. Important and fundamental, to send a tangible sign that an entire people was not dead, that it was reacting to the arrogance of power, but disharmonious and reckless. We were faced with the nakedness of domination, with pure and simple bullying, crushing, crumbling. No watertight compartment separated us from the abyss that walked normally every day before our eyes as if everything was in order and, perhaps, precisely because everything was in order. Our reckless impudence put its finger on the wound and exacerbated it. No one seemed to notice. Of these actions there were only claims made by the movement, certainly not by us. But what did the comrades who had not participated in the work from the first moment know? Only that a spectre had been erased from its apparent existence. Too little and too distant, I would say remote, knowledge. These actions, in the dead calm imposed by repressive power in its maximum expressions, immediately took on the guise of a legend that no one

had seen materialize but that many told with that touch of fantastic embroidery inevitable in these things. A fate had been concluded, the destiny of a man had found its point of arrival, there was not much to say. We who had lived that action and, even before that, prepared the long work that had made it possible, had nothing to say. My recollections - the written ones - are all much later, some, like the present ones, border on impressive epochal distances. I certainly incessantly asked myself unanswered questions, I intertwined my active and preparatory thinking with my doubts, but they were glimmers that I glimpsed as if they were critical suggestions, the dream of a more self-conscious doing, less dependent on primary information. I had before me ordinary men who massacred - something more common and widespread than so-called decent people suppose - who fed the cavern of the lake of blood. I looked at them in their intimate exhaustion, as they pretended to show off an ordinary life, but I knew that they were only ghosts, unworthy and miserable remnants of a vanished conscience. They had no hope of victory or defeat. The completion of their work filled them with indifference, they were spring-loaded dummies who gradually faded without acquiring any awareness of the horror of the role. It was not a question of exposing their faults, these were out of the question, it was a question of assuming them en bloc as sporadic and deprived entities, incapable of asserting their own personality, all subjected to the same uniformizing treatment. The measures were objective factual movements, they did not penetrate the ghosts, they remained at a distance, they limited themselves to recording their correspondences, their concordances, any discrepancies and sometimes duplicated all this work for greater safety. The ghosts remained prisoners in the background. Even the sporadic combinations, which gave me so much anxiety, were occasional and nonfunctional, they might not even occur or, if they did, go unnoticed. My personal disappointment was due to my way of experiencing this progressive approach to action, an approach of a completely different kind. I had to remain inert in the face of these solicitations of mine, but I did not always succeed. The flow of thoughts, during the time in which the preparatory work was carried out, always returned insistently to the presence of the unexpected guest, to his arrival at the moment of action, to the pile of rags that we would leave behind, to a man killed suddenly and irremediably. I know that it is strange to talk about the irremediability of death, but this thought is strange only for those who have never experienced the sudden death of someone. They were not just doubts about the justification for our action, they were painful ramifications that added to each other. Questions I would have liked to ask the unexpected guest, but this one had no answers for me.

**229.** – I became aware of the humanity of these ghosts as the need for control grew, the irrepressible necessity that was the prelude to action. If I had kept my distance, I could continue to see them as shadows on the wall of the massacre cave. The approach – which was necessary, by the way – ended up involving me emotionally. I realized that something similar must have happened to my companions too, if, as the correspondences and checks increased, everyone ended up almost in a hurry to finish the job. This hurry had a meaning, as if we were all trying to clarify our doubts in one fell swoop, a decisive blow. Many tricks were used in our preparatory work, but this sort of acceleration was an unwanted trick, it was internal to the control mechanism itself. After all, the exhaustion found in the ghosts could, at a certain point, reverse itself in spite of all our security methodologies and deploy its opposite, an armed and organized response. If there was ever an attempt at a response – rarely – it was due to our error or to superficiality in the application of the method, not to a reversal of the exhaustion of the ghost in question into dangerously incisive initiatives and responses, and this even when it remained incredible that he did not notice what was being built around him. An indirect form of consent? A putting his own head under the axe? I don't think so. Furthermore, news of past actions had to have leaked out, but no new or more effective protective measures were visible, almost as if these – apart from the personal weapon of each individual ghost – were not even taken into consideration. Of course, the unexpected guest showed up without warning, but could the enormous preparatory work not arouse even the shadow of a suspicion? As incredible as it may seem, more or less, with negligible nuances that varied depending on the places and the people, it was just like that. A sort of resignation? I asked myself that many times. It was not possible to resign oneself to dying, at least not for people who lived next to death, who procured or aided death. Perhaps the reason for this exhaustion was more subtle and deeper, it was to be found in the work of these murderers and, even, but it seems impossible to me, in the awareness of deserving an end like the one we were preparing. Certainly this last consideration is quite plausible for the Irish traitors, less so for the other ghosts. Even if I insisted on seeing the latter plagued by a thought if not of this type, at least similar. We were the ones besieged by an enormous burden of things to do, they were normality, the stupor of repetition. They seemed animated by a closed-circuit solicitation. Their work was monstrously circumscribed and efficient, and then the exhaustion in the face of everything else. They lived inside a sort of protective fog that isolated them from the world, they were precisely appearance, and for this reason I so often continue to speak of ghosts, specters and shadows. Did they understand exactly the

moral responsibility that crushed them? In my opinion, no, but you don't have to understand to be crushed by what you do. Do you get used to the horror of the bottomless abyss? I don't know, perhaps even the most trained executioner can have his vertigo. Did they sometimes fall back into a dream of humanity without torture and without denunciations or provocations? Who can know? These were the unanswered questions that tormented me in my comings and goings without gaps within a methodology tried and tested ad nauseam. These were my doubts about their substantial humanity, hidden under the rigid veneer of the normality of paid torturers. Perhaps they were trembling inside, or had they already reached the catatonic unawareness of the corpse that no longer cares about anything? In this extraordinary way of showing their willingness to be vulnerable there was a sort of resignation. Exhausted, disappointed, without a future, oppressed by disrespectful hierarchies, what could the ghosts do? Disappointed and exhausted, were they perhaps waiting for the only possible novelty, the definitive solution, the arrival of the unexpected guest? I do not know if these questions of mine are well-founded, I can only say that they were produced by what passed before my eyes.

**230.** – The imposing mass of the hierarchy of orders weighed on the ghosts that took turns before my eyes as a methodical observer and attentive to cataloging. But this weight, which clearly weighed on their shoulders, was for us, especially for me, only a malignant hypothesis. I could have ignored it and looked at the single peculiarity that was in itself more than enough to stir indignation and revolt. But I wanted to see further, I wanted to approach that irreducible singularity that I seemed to be able to presuppose, which always reacted differently to every attempt at uniformity. And instead every effort of mine was almost systematically frustrated. Uniformity coincided with normality and this with that. The orders were carried out because the recipients of these orders had been reduced to the condition of spectral appearances that makes execution possible beyond any possible doubt. The improbability of this condition, still human, was absolutely before my eyes and the resistance to accept it was my personal reluctance not a mechanism jammed somewhere. I had a protocol recording in front of me and I wanted to insist on peeling away what I thought was a patina, but the more I incised in the observation and comparison the more I was forced to admit that there was no patina but the compact consistency of normality, absolutely unassailable. Humanity can easily reach these levels of obtuse cruelty without disturbing distorting definitions. The executioner is a man like all the others who looks into the abyss as if he were looking out from the balcony of his house. He is himself, an executioner. But is he aware of it? Here is a question that cannot have

a certain answer. Who knows? Of course, the exhaustion I found in these ghosts gave the sign - if I wasn't mortally mistaken - of a feeling lost in desolate lands, where even the most credible human sensibilities had been crushed because they had been ground down by habit and the established order. But was this exhaustion able to justify everything? No. It was just a signature that I thought I could find by looking more carefully. Were they men transformed into ghosts, ghosts in occasional human form? I don't know. They were certainly cells isolated from the world, inserted into a fictitious context, called to carry out one of the essential tasks of power, hidden repression, therefore more bloody and ferocious. Can such a condition be explained? No, one can accept it as a fact, a particularly verminous excrescence of human nature, but still belonging to man and understandable - not justifiable, that is obvious - within the framework of a total explanation of what man is, of his depths of horror and his sublime capacities for dedication. Man is all this, and it would be stupid - or convenient - to consider those ghosts as monsters and us, who were there to prepare their end, as men. One is not a man only when one is on the side of freedom. Even the murderers are men and to kill them means killing men. And this experience is the worst thing that can happen. It enters the veins like a deadly disease and one never gets rid of it. Silence is a motif common to the prey and the hunter, to the ghost and the distance measurer. It is an unheard of event when one experiences it for the first time. The ghost gave signs of life, but was it a life or was it only the spectral reflection of a life? Even when we got as close as possible during the measurements, this life gave signs of itself of an automatic nature, there were no signs of what could perhaps be defined as vitality, as a desire to live, as an awareness of being alive. In the end one had to conclude that no signs of life were coming from the ghost. But how can we tolerate this silence if not by accepting it as an acquiescence to death, a desire - the only human desire to the core - to end it all once and for all? The preparation of an action is always a lively moment, full of surprises and tensions awaiting the crossing. Nothing can be compared to this contrast between prey and hunter, to this unreasonable relationship based on the lack of relationships. Only the unexpected guest knew how to read that silence and listen to it.

**231.** - My awareness of being in front of the wreckage of humanity came from the series of additional observations that I carried out to answer my perplexities. The rigid scheme that was suggested to me was that of the massacrers who had to be eliminated. But my attitudes towards these ghosts could not benefit from the direct vision of the massacre in progress, I had to force myself to imagine this vast operation, or remember the personal tortures that I had suffered and perhaps multiply them to excess. But with this deductive process



what was I looking for? A justification for my actions in preparation, a foundation for my cautious and repetitive behavior? I could not stand by for days watching a character who almost certainly, on his way to work, or coming from it, was going to torture or had tortured. It was intolerable, I would have been led by my character to attack him immediately without waiting for all the security protocols to be respected. How much blood would this certainty cost, starting from the factual data provided by the information we had in our possession? But touching that appearance without respecting the rules of approach and verification could cause it to dissolve forever, allowing other and bloodier massacres. These decisions seem easy and obvious but they are not at all. The gaze lost in the void, which these ghosts often allowed us to glimpse, had a meaning, it was provided with content. It showed the intimate essence of power, its careless emptiness, its superficiality that recovers and justifies everything. The ghost was thus an extreme and irremediable expression of emptiness. It was empty and looked into the void. Power is empty and is full of emptiness. Emptiness is the absence of being, pure and simple appearance. We are all partly appearance, and therefore we are empty, but if we become aware of it and try to go beyond this empty immediacy of ours in the fullness of being, that is, in action, then we are what we are and we cannot not be. There is no way to slip through this empty doing to which our own will condemns us if not by attacking, therefore acting in quality. And this contravenes the very procedures of approach, however necessary they may be to arrive at action. Of course, there is a fundamental difference in doing, however much everything as a whole can be traced back to appearance. There is the forced doing that supports and justifies power by sometimes fulfilling the extreme task of massacring and torturing, indispensable elements of domination, and there is the doing that prepares the path in the forest to arrive at the overcoming in action. There are no sure instructions for escaping from a well-guarded prison such as the one that is sealed by the logical continuity of doing, but there are indications, signatures on the path in the forest. One must know how to decipher these often hidden indications. Action is, ultimately, what can never happen, what the entire framework of doing conspires not to happen, but then, suddenly, it does. If it happens, if the overstepping occurs, nothing can stop quality. The unexpected guest is in the quality that operates, outside of time and space, in the punctual dimension. He is not able to circumscribe the extent and the modalities of his intervention, these are always variants of preventive doing. He has no voice, therefore he cannot grant delays or negotiate reductions in intervention. He does not try, does not seek, does not attempt, has no mental reservations or doubts. He cannot ask questions nor does he intend

to inquire about the status of the work in progress. All this does not exist in action. There is no place for hesitation in quality. Here everything is what it is. Freedom is freedom, not a palliative divided into crumbs. Justice is justice, not an arithmetic calculation. Truth is truth, not a reflection of what is. Beauty is beauty, not a correspondence of harmonies. The unexpected guest knows all this when he cuts the thread of the Fates.

**[Finished in Korydallos prison (Athens) on 2 September 2010]**