

The Red and the Black: Rebels, Patriots, and Outlaws

1 APPOINTMENT IN TERNI

Elchide Trippa. This is the true history, because it's the history I was told, the tradition, from my grandfather. He said that his father told him that his grandfather was a *carbonaro*¹ that took part in the rebellion in Naples in 1827–1831. He had to flee, sought refuge first in Apulia, and then he crossed the border between the Kingdom of Naples and the Pope's states, and came here. Which, I thought it was some kind of fairy tale; but my grandfather was perfect, sharp, a lucid memory. He knew the Divine Comedy by heart. He told me the exact place where his father told him he had crossed the border; after the war, I hiked up the mountain, to the Salto del Cieco [Blind Man's Leap], and I personally verified what my grandfather had told me. The border, the stone that separated the Kingdom of Naples from the Pope's states [was still there]. So I have no reason to doubt my grandfather's words.

When Elchide Trippa's ancestor arrived there in the mid-1830s Terni was a rural, "second-class" market town, with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.² "Our first families—the Simonettis, the Setaccis, the Manasseis—were nothing but farmers. They may have a title of nobility, but they were country people. There were a few mansions, I guess; but even those...they were not elegant residences" (*Ilario Ciaurro*). After the withdrawal of the French in 1815, Terni reverted to the papal government. One of its first acts was a *sfamo del popolo*, a distribution of bread to "appease the hunger

of the people.” In 1816 Terni was ravaged by a typhus epidemic, only alleviated by alms from the clergy and the aristocracy.

Arnaldo Lippi. My grandmother, to get a kilo of bread—back then, they made the rounds of patrician houses on Saturdays to receive what they called the *centesimo*.³ You know that the Manasseis, the Castellis, every Saturday gave out alms. My grandmother was a wreathmaker, that is, she wove the flower wreaths that were sold on holidays; she sold manure from the stables, she’d carry bundles of wood for sale. There was nothing else back then, so they had to buy firewood from the donkeys that brought it down from the brush. They unloaded the wood, sold it, collected the stable refuse, paid a penny, and my grandmother made manure, and money. Meanwhile, she wove wreaths—she was a blasphemer, an absolute atheist. Also, they say my grandfather, my father’s father, was an anarchist. He was a shoemaker. He could feed his children only when a horse fell and died; he’d go with his shoemaker’s knife out to the *scortico*⁴ at Porta Romana, and get some horse meat. That was the only meat they knew.

Around 1830 Terni was a tangle of narrow alleys, orchards, a few palaces, many churches, unclean and unlit. In 1850 it became a district seat; in 1853 the population had grown to 13,000. It boasted a few new buildings; a wool mill and an iron mill stood out among a web of small tanneries, weaving mills, flour mills.⁵ “My grandmother died at ninety-one, poor woman, she’d leave the house at 5 a.m., because the lords of Terni made her attend masses for their dead, God damn their evil souls. They gave her five, ten pennies for each mass she went to. Every morning, that poor woman went up to Saint Peter’s or Saint Francis’—to recite the prayers. And then, if one of them died, they’d give you a penny or two for each child that came to the funeral, so they could claim that there was a big crowd, that they were important” (*Aurora*).

“We couldn’t help but grow up as rebels, with grandmas like these” (*Arnaldo Lippi*). Located on the border between the Kingdom of Naples and the Pope’s states, connected to Rome through the Tiber river valley and the old Roman roads—via Flaminia, via Salaria—Terni became a natural hotbed of liberation ferment during the Risorgimento, Italy’s struggle for independence and reunification. In 1831 the liberals attacked the Vatican fortress at Rieti; in 1847 a revolt broke out “against the clergy and the aristocracy, who are the cause of famine and hunger.”⁶

One of the leaders was Giovanni Frosianti, a small farmer from the nearby hamlet of Collescipoli. “He was supposed to be studying for the priesthood, and he ran away from the convent. He never said why; I guess he no longer believed. There was a price upon his head; he ran to the woods. And Garibaldi came by; and he joined Garibaldi” (*Alba Frosianti*).

He lived in the woods, on the mountaintops, among rocks and ravines, coal sheds and caverns, always alone, always on the run. A feared avenger, an elusive fugitive, he ran off singlehandedly bands of armed men who pursued him to hang him...He slept with the hero [Garibaldi] on heaps of gold after they conquered a kingdom and fabulous beautiful cities. He died on a straw pallet, asking for nothing for himself but a branch of the pine tree that grows on the steep hillsides of the isle of Caprera [where Garibaldi lived and died].⁷

Actually, Frosianti only joined Garibaldi in Rome in 1849, when he rallied with dozens of other men from Terni (including future Terni mayor, Pietro Faustini) to the defense of the short-lived Roman Republic. After Rome fell to the French and the Pope was reinstated, Garibaldi took the road to the north and was greeted as a hero in Terni: “those few men who were still in Terni, we would pass on the information in secret, about what we could do to help the *garibaldini*.”⁸ In 1853 count Federico Frattini led a small group of conspirators in a failed insurrection; he ended up in the Pope’s jails for 13 years.

One night we raised a pole at least fifteen meters tall in the middle of the square, and placed the tricolor flag on top. The next morning everybody was gazing at it, bewildered, and wondered what that flag meant.

Two days later, a unit of “Spaniards” [the Pope’s mercenaries] pulled the tree down and began to search and arrest. But one night, some petty officers had a fight with the “Italians” [the patriots] and several Spaniards who had been found drunk in the taverns were caught and dumped into the wells.⁹

Arnaldo Lippi. In Terni they had the so-called *carbonari*, and early, vague ideas were in the air, based on the thought of Giuseppe Mazzini.¹⁰ In fact the last man guillotined in Terni was this guy they called Sorcino; and he killed the priest at Montefranco. He was one of the *carbonari*, conspirators for Italian unity. To the Church he may be a bandit, but he was no bandit. They had it all arranged: as soon as they shot this priest, those who we now call comrades, back then perhaps they called them friends, they would give them

an [alibi]. This is Terni history, for I heard it from my father, who was born in 1860, and one of those who went to jail was an uncle of his, he spent 12 years in jail. The perpetrators were Sorcino and a comrade of his; his comrade got religion, he was guillotined [first] and Sorcino was guillotined next. To tell it, it seems like a fairy tale.¹¹ There were no graveyards then; you know [people who had been executed] could not be buried in churches, so they had to inter him at the Passeggiata, the public park. And we were not allowed to go under those trees because they were haunted by the ghost of Sorcino.

Ilario Ciaurro. A memory. A tavern, a wine cellar across from the Passeggiata. One night some of these petty customers, a barber, a shoe-maker, they were talking about the ghost. "The milk lady at San Martino saw the ghost and she rushed home and had an abortion, from the fright she took." And this guy, a master mason, he was bored by these tales, so he gets up, pays, and goes up to the park.

The mason's name was Viola, and he was Sorcino's accomplice, just out of jail. "So Viola, he was my father's uncle, he says, 'All right, I'll go talk to him. We knew each other well, we were conspirators together...'" (*Arnaldo Lippi*). On a bend of the road, he glimpses something white, perhaps the moonlight in the trees. "He walks on; when he comes near this vision, this sheet stirring in the night, the ghost speaks. First he speaks of heaven and hell. Then he says, 'Stay away, can't you see I'm a ghost?' But Viola could see the lime on his shoes: 'Since when do ghosts work construction?' He hit him with a stick, and the ghost crumbled and begged for mercy: 'I do it for my children, to earn a piece of bread...' He says, 'How about working, for your bread?' Viola picks him up and takes him to the tavern. 'Give him a drink, he needs it. And if you're not on the job tomorrow morning, you're in trouble.' This is the story. I didn't make it up. I wish I had, because it's a good one" (*Ilario Ciaurro*).

In 1860 the Piedmontese soldiers, the vanguard of national unification, entered Terni, greeted by the songs of the girls from the wool mill.¹² Ironically, Terni—situated in the very inland core of the peninsula—was now a frontier town between the newly established kingdom of Italy and Rome, still under the Pope. Cut off from its market outlets in Rome, no longer protected by the Pope's customs, Terni's economy was hurt by the change. As a frontier outpost Terni became the jumping board for sorties to liberate Rome, which Garibaldi's followers pursued against the will of the Italian government. "They came to Terni from all over Italy to join. My

uncle Nicola, I'll show you his photograph, he fought [with Garibaldi] in the battles of Montelibretti, Monterotondo and Mentana" (*Agata Trinchi*).¹³

In June 1867 105 men started toward Rome from the Faustini country home; some were stopped by the Italian army before they reached the border, the rest were rounded up by the Pope's soldiers. On October 13 Menotti, Garibaldi's son, led a column to Montelibretti; on the 20th, the brothers Enrico and Giovanni Cairoli started out from the Fratini home to join a rebellion that had begun in Rome; the rebellion failed, they were killed, and are remembered as two of the most cherished martyrs of the Risorgimento. Two days later, Giuseppe Garibaldi gathered an army of volunteers in Terni; in a few days they occupied Monterotondo, on the Sabine Hills facing Rome, but were tragically defeated in a battle at Mentana, where seventeen men from Terni also fell.¹⁴ The tradition of the *garibaldini* would later be reinforced by immigrants that came from traditionally republican Romagna, to work in the factories of Terni.

Isolina Bastoni. Grandma was a Socialist, she always fought for her ideas. She came from a peasant family, near Ravenna. The Bastonis [my father's family] were well to do, they had two cardinals and a bishop in the family, and my father's father was the only one in the family that was for Garibaldi. He joined Garibaldi, and went away with him on the day he married my grandmother. She was fourteen, and he was eighteen. They eloped, because his family didn't want him to marry her, she was a peasant, she worked in the fields. After the wedding he gets dressed and says, "I'm going out to buy some meat. Wait here." Instead, he ran into Garibaldi, who was on his way to Sicily with his band, and he up and went to Sicily. That poor woman remained three days, locked in the house, waiting for her husband who had gone shopping for meat. He came back after a long time. He had been in the war. Then his family disinherited him. And they came down to Terni.

Joining Garibaldi is always remembered as a break from the family. The Trinchi brothers "joined Garibaldi without telling their parents; they left a letter and went" (*Agata Trinchi*). Giovanni Froschianti "bled" his family fortune by giving it all for the cause. The *garibaldini* "were wild, irregular," says *Gino Paiella*, parson of Collescipoli, they broke family ties to join an adventurous rebel in his wanderings all over Italy. In time, however, these stories that started with a break from the family become mythic narratives of family pride.

"Some say that Garibaldi was joined only by people in search of adventures...Not so, because our family was not like this, was not like this.

They went because they yearned for this patriotic cause” (*Agata Trinchi*). “What we boast about,” says *Silvia Bonifazi*, teenage descendant of Federico Fratini, “is not his conflict with the Pope [who kept him 13 years in jail], but his friendship and affection for Mazzini, Garibaldi, and all. His time in prison—this great-grandfather fell ill in jail, he refused a pardon...—we don’t talk much about that.” At the time, the followers of Garibaldi and Mazzini were perceived as radicals, rebels, enemies of the Church and the King. After independence and unification, their radicalism and anti-conformism (which had been shared by most of their Terni followers) was forgotten and the *garibaldini* were turned into harmless patriotic icons. With time, the veterans of the wars of liberation and unification were reduced to a boring, slightly ridiculous institution, paraded on public occasions, fewer and fewer each year.

Ilario Ciaurro. I only met the very last survivors. They were a bunch of madcaps, of Republicans. We made fun of them, I admit. There were *garibaldini* who had never been with Garibaldi, but every holiday, they’d shout: “red shirt!” In school, we had a janitor who claimed he had been [in the battle of] Villa Glori. His name was Mancinetti, and we’d jeer at him —“Mancine’, is it true that when the beans were all eaten you turned around and walked home?”

“They didn’t understand a thing, politically. Only thing, they wore the red shirt, they were *garibaldini*, and this was all. My grandfather had one, full of holes that I think he made to pretend they were from bullets” (*Giuseppe Giovannetti*). But they were also the ancestors of future rebels: Giuseppe Giovannetti, the grandson of a *garibaldino*, was a founder of Terni’s Communist Party.

2 NO PRIESTS AND NO CROSSES

Arnaldo Lippi. We were part of the Pope’s state. My father, the worst insult you could tell him, was if you called him *papalino* [a subject of the Pope]. He was born in 1860, March 13, after the *regnicoli* [the Italian Kingdom dwellers] had come. A Republican, yet he’d rather be called the subject of a king than the Pope’s. Consequently, growing up in this kind of environment, I could only grow up a rebel. Partly by instinct—because my family was poor. My father, for instance, five children. I, son of a 40-year-old woman: my mother died after she made me, trying to get an

abortion. I wouldn't call it anarchism. Rather a sense of independence that had no real sense of direction...

In 1889 Terni had its first (short-lived) working-class paper. It was called *Il Banderaro*, the flag bearer, in memory of the revolt of 1564, when the bourgeoisie and the people invaded the homes of the aristocracy and killed a few, in protest against the abolition of the *banderari*, the representatives of the non-aristocratic classes. The memory of merciless repression operated by the Pope's envoy, Monte dei Valenti, lives on: "How many he killed, nobody knows, guilty or not. He exposed the skulls of the beheaded on the City Hall gate, as a warning" (*Guerriero Bolli*). "Terni's *banderari*," wrote the paper named after them, "are the sons of the same people who rise again today in the spirit of modern life, with only one thought in mind: to restore and reaffirm the strength of the working classes."¹⁵

Ilario Ciaurro. I went to the church of San Giovanni before they tore it down. And I saw those ancient gurneys, hearses, a whole lot of trash. And I picked up a *pace* [a "peace maker"], one of those crosses they gave to the condemned to kiss before they executed them. "Put it down, put it down, it's stained with blood!" It was a beautiful piece: bronze, silver. And the workers [that were demolishing] the church, the masons—"Put it down put it down, it's stained with blood."

After Italian unification and independence, the anti-Church resentment of the popular classes was echoed by the lay liberalism of the elite. Anticlerical organizations ran for office on platforms of "Anticlericalism and change"; public religious functions outside churches were forbidden.¹⁶ "The *garibaldini* ran all the taverns, they sold the wine. Actions against the Church went on as long as these old people lived. The Republicans were hard drinkers, often drunk; but they fought the Church hardest of all" (*Giuseppe Giovannetti*). Throughout the last decades of the century there were attempts against Church institutions; a priest was attacked for not ringing the bells on September 20, the Republican holiday that commemorated the liberation of Rome from the Pope's domain. *Gianni Colasanti*, a Catholic priest, sums it up: "In the late years of the nineteenth century the Church had an underground existence in Terni, like the catacombs. The Church was afraid to appear in public, so all its life was carried on inside the church, without preaching. This left the Christian people somewhat lacking in religious culture; it was more a ritual religion than one that engaged the

cultural, the theological, the social arenas.” Yet, the Church retained a hold on education and on assistance to the sick and the poor. *Il Messaggero*, a (then) liberal Rome-based daily, wrote in its local page that priests “with admirable patience, are slowly trying to regain lost ground even in this town,” taking advantage of poverty and the lack of public charities.¹⁷

“You might see some rare priests slinking close to the walls, lest someone dropped stuff on their heads. Worse still, people didn’t go to church anymore. So they invited famous preachers to town. People went, heard the sermon, appreciated the eloquence, but wouldn’t go to church. So they resorted to less noble expedients. Virgin Mary appeared on top of a walnut tree. Everybody went, they watched it, drank a quart of wine, went home, and never went to Mass. Then, the blinking Madonna, the icon that’s in the cathedral. People went to look at it, I remember, with smoked pieces of glass to check if she really blinked. They staged rituals, processions, I saw them myself, before 1900. And people would say, ‘Get them lousy priests off of me, get them lousy priests off my back.’” (*Ilario Ciaurro*). “Once they had the nerve to stage a procession, with the school children all in a row. They started from the Cathedral and came up to the square then to Corso Tacito.¹⁸ So five or six comrades bought a bunch of candies and stuff, and went up on the rooftops. When the children marched by—they saw candy maybe once a year, if ever—[they dropped them]. It was a shambles, kids climbing on top of each other... That was the end of public processions” (*Riziero Manconi*). Only on rare occasions—the death of one of the founders of the steel works, or the killing of King Umberto I by anarchist Gaetano Bresci¹⁹—did the authorities allow public celebrations.

Workers, however, remained ambivalent toward religion. In 1914, the syndicalist paper *La Sommosa* [The Revolt] complained: “Too many mothers, wives of comrades of ours, without their men’s consent, send their children to church, to communion, to confirmation...” Vanda, a textile worker, replied: “You anticlericalists don’t allow your wives to go to church and beat them if they do, but it never occurs to you to discuss your ideas with them.”²⁰

Angela Locci. I was the godmother of the [red] flag. They dressed me in red, with a bow, and set out sandwiches, donuts, wine. They put me on top of a table, I made a little speech, and I was the flag’s godmother. I said, “I love the flag as I love my mother; I love the flag and I love Socialism like a mother loves her children.” And they all embraced me, and all. I mean, I was a child.

As late as 1951, Lucilla Galeazzi, a steel worker's daughter and one of Italy's finest folk singers, was "baptized" with a bottle of wine and a red flag in the Communist Party local. Yet, her brother Franco Galeazzi recalls: "We were Communists because we were instinctively opposed to the arrogant, oppressive behavior of certain dominant classes; but our culture was Catholic, in our family we didn't question the sacraments as some bourgeois families did. I remember that they made us take the first communion, and we would make the rounds of churches for seven weeks afterwards." "The few times you saw men inside a church were baptisms, confirmations. Because you do baptize your children, confirmation was a grand feast. The confirmand was driven to the cathedral in a carriage. And nobody would do without this because it was a matter of status" (*Guerriero Bolli*). "I was the chaplain of the steel works and the Papigno [chemical works] from 1966 to 1976. All workers valued their children's sacramental lives. When I made the rounds of the factory for the Easter blessings, I never found one who was not nice to me—they'd call me from the top of a gantry crane, say, 'Don't leave me out!' I wondered how much of this was just ritual, or a sense of the sacred? I believe that deep in their souls there was a sense of mystery, of the divine, even though perhaps faint, vague" (*Gianni Colasanti*).²¹

To counter the appeal of the Church's pomp and ritual, "the suggestions of the supernatural and of mystic choreography," the workers' movements created their own rituals. The cultural class struggle was waged over the rites of passage of the life cycle (baptizing, naming, funerals) and of the year's cycle of festivities. The working-class calendar was marked by such secular dates as the anniversaries of the Perugia insurrection against the Pope's government (June 20, 1859), Garibaldi's battle at Mentana (November 3, 1867), the liberation of Rome (September 20, 1870), the founding of the Roman Republic (April 30, 1849) and, after 1885, May Day. The struggle over rituals and dates often took tangible and dramatic forms. In 1902 the striking farm workers and tenants in nearby Narni demanded "the right to celebrate May Day."²² Arnaldo Lippi remembered when the workers of the Grüber wool mill asked the manager to give them a day off on November 2—day of remembrance of the dead—rather than November 1, All Saints' Day. The manager refused.

Arnaldo Lippi. They said: "Look, we have no saints among us, but we do have our dead. And we want to commemorate them." As he said this, my father was in tears, for in 1903 my mother had died. So they told him:

“Tomorrow morning [All Saints’ Day] we’re all coming to the factory gates to work.” The factory whistle doesn’t blow, the workers—mostly women—mass at the gates and find them locked. The next day, November 2, nobody goes to work. The gates open; nobody goes in. Next day, the boss declares a lockout. And it lasted, this lockout, for months. People went hungry.

“[Romeo] Magrelli, [Arturo] Luna [socialist activists] when they died [in the 1930s] were buried with nothing but a brick on the grave. Instead of a cross. When Luna died, his comrades were arrested, for being at the funeral” (*Bruno Zenoni*). In 1946, on Anarchist Federation stationery, Remo Borzacchini wrote his final will: “In case of my demise I do not want the priest to interfere with my funeral because I want my comrades to perform all that the anarchist feeling requires on such occasions...No *priests* and no *crosses*.”²³ Borzacchini insisted that “This will be read to my family so that they respect my desires.” Indeed, the struggle over ritual also divided families: “My uncle was a follower of Mazzini, he refused priests and all. But, his children, in secret, his wife baptized them” (*Emidio Pasquini*). “I could tell you that when my mother died in 1954, we asked both the Socialist local and the priest, because she was a believer. The priest refused and left, we had a lay funeral. It was the priest’s decision, not ours” (*Comunardo Tobia*).

Workers often refused to name their children after Catholic saints. They chose names like Acciaro (steel) or Diname, to express professional pride; Calferio and Bakunin (after anarchist heroes of the 1800s), Comunardo (after the revolutionary Paris Commune), Solidea (sole idea), Pensiero (thought), Libero (free), Germinal (from an Emile Zola novel), Menotti (after a Risorgimento martyr), even Dinamite, to represent their radical heritage. Patriotism generated names like Trento (a town retrieved by Italy after World War I), Vittoria, Guerriero (warrior: “I was born in 1915; only those born in 1915 were named Guerriero,” *Guerriero Bolli*). A proletarian is someone who owns nothing but his children; naming them was the only possible act of creative individuation by people who never possessed the fruits of their labor. They etched in their children’s names a dream of beauty, poetry, humor (Dazio and Consumo [Tax and Duty]; Finimola [vernacular for let’s put an end to this], for late female daughters of large families), or simply lofty-sounding echoes of literary derivation (Agamante, Alfeo, Orneore).

Comunardo Tobia. I am the youngest of seven children. [Their names] are a history in themselves: Ribelle (rebel); Veraspiritanova (true new spirit); Libero Avanti (free, forward); Pensiero (thought); Ideale; Vero (true); and

Comunardo. My brother was baptized under the red flag in 1904; the local secretary welcomed this child to life in the presence of the flag, with a bottle of wine, what they had. Of course, with the rise of Fascism this family was victimized. My oldest brother's name was changed by the authorities, from Ribelle to Renzo. I was called up several times to change my name; I'd just say, "Go ahead, change it yourselves." But there was a tax [on name changes] so I said, "I don't have the money." So I held on to it until the end.

The anarchist Remo Borzacchini named his son Baconin, after the founder of Anarchism. When the boy became a famous racing car driver, the name became an embarrassment. In 1930, under Fascism, after he won a race in the presence of the royal family, "they baptized him and named him Mario Umberto Borzacchini," after Prince Umberto di Savoia and Queen Maria José.²⁴ By then, the conflict between the Italian state born of the anticlerical Risorgimento and the Church had been resolved by the 1929 pact between Fascism and the Vatican; laicism and anticlericalism were no longer the doctrines of the state. When even the Communists voted for the inclusion of the pact in the democratic Constitution of 1948, anticlericalism also lost the official sanction of the workers' political representatives. Yet, it left a trace in the culture of the people.

Alberto Petrini. One day I was at home, I was reading an article in *l'Unità* [the Communist Party daily] that was a bit difficult—for me, at least. It was after lunch, I heard the bell ring. I was getting dressed, so my mother opened the door. I was still thinking about the article, trying to re-read it. And my mother—"What a lovely day, what a lovely day, aren't you going out? Such a lovely day..." She said it over and over, I got suspicious. After a while, the bell rings again. This time I got up and opened the door. It was the priest, all decked up [for the Easter house blessing]. I say, "What do you want?" "Well, the lady..." She had told him I wouldn't be home. "Here there is no lady, only the lord. And the lord is me: in heaven, on earth and everywhere. Remember my name and don't you dare ring at this door again." He blushed and left and never came back. He had the nerve to ask my mother, "Madam, is that how you raised your sons?" And she says, "Well, I raised them right, they're not criminals or anything, they're workers." And she never went to church again, after he insulted her sons. Some say we ought to put an end to these attitudes. Forget it. Dialogue with Catholics, me?²⁵ Let others do it, I never will.

Father Gino Paiella. All right, I'll tell you the story of this man, Tamburo, who lived across the street from the church. He and his wife, you could see them from here, they were at it all the time fighting, cursing, and all. He used to come to the village to get the dishwashing water for his pigs, and would stop a while for a game of cards. I used to walk him home, as a friend. So he falls ill, with a cancer in his stomach. The secretary of Catholic Action from Terni calls me and says, he already refused [the last rites from] three priests. "Please, go to him and try." I had this little broken down jalopy, perhaps you remember it, soon as I came up the lane to his door I got off and stood at his bedroom door. He says: "Are you here as a friend or as a priest?" I say, "Look, when I used to watch you play cards, I was there as a friend, and as a friend I come now." "Well, come in."

When his wife saw that he was dozing, she told him, "Tambu', now that Don Gino is here, why don't we get him to put us right?" Because they weren't even married in church. He gets real mad, and I say, "Take it easy, I only came to see you as a friend. Come on, Nina, forget it." Then I says, "I'm going home. If you like, I can come back tomorrow and we talk."

The next day, on purpose, I didn't go but sent my secretary. Soon as he sees her, "Wasn't that rascal Don Gino supposed to come? How come he didn't?" When I heard about it I said, "Thank you Lord, he is caught. It's done." After a few nights, I go, and he says, "Don Gino, I can't take it anymore. Put me right with God." I look at him—I was checking how far gone he was, too. And I say, "Listen, this is not what I'm here for. So far, I'm here as a friend. If you wish, I can come back tomorrow morning and we'll take care of it all." And I remember, I can still hear his words sounding in my ear: "Remember, if I die in this state, it's your fault."

He didn't sleep for the pains, and for waiting for me; and I didn't sleep because I couldn't wait for the dawn to run to him. At 6 o'clock sharp, there I was. I gave him confession, I gave her confession, I gave both communion, I anointed him with consecrated oil, and he lay down like an angel. "You made my peace with God, I'm so happy..." It was such a scene...But there have been many. In forty-three years as a priest and a parson, there were many. Thank God, I was able to accompany them to the doors of eternity—all.

3 EITHER A PRIEST OR AN OUTLAW

"They used to say, a farm boy, a village boy, if he wanted to get ahead in society had to grow up to become either a priest or a *carabiniere*.²⁶ I would add: or an outlaw. That was a way out of poverty" (*Guerriero Bolli*). "This

guy, Lelletto, he was a bounty killer, back then. He would kill for the highest payer. But in the end the bosses killed him, back then. They got him—my grandfather, may he rest in peace, was with him—they got him drunk, stabbed him seventeen times and dumped him down the creek at Cospea. The bosses killed him, the lords of those times” (*Umberto Catana*). “My father-in-law used to tell me about this outlaw, in the plains toward Viterbo, which are more fertile, so to speak, with outlaws. This young man came up and he wanted to join the gang. He says, ‘Try me, see if I can do things, try me.’ At some point, the mother of this apprentice outlaw came up, brought him his dinner, and turned around to go home. He turned to the [chief] outlaw and said, ‘Come see.’ He picks up his rifle, shoots his mother and kills her. So the outlaw says, ‘OK, you can join me, because you’re a man I can [rely on].’” (*Guerriero Bolli*).

“If you cross Castagna and don’t get skinned/Either Martorello dozed or Monicantonio was asleep” (*Settimio Piemonti*). Castagna, a mysterious place of witches and crimes, hangout of the mythic Sorcino, is a mountain pass on the road to Spoleto and Romagna, the main road for migrants and traders to and from Terni. Outlaws roosted on all the roads round the town. Between Piedimoggio and Marmore, on the opposite side of the Nera river valley, “between the river and the wood” (*Anita Menichelli*), outlaws ambushed the travelers that rode their mules from Rieti. Gangs roamed between Terni and Viterbo, on the shepherds’ trails from the hills of Sabina to the plains of Latium: “Gasperone²⁷ had taken to the woods; he followed the shepherds, and lived off them: ‘We’re outlaws, give us your cheese,’ ‘Give us a lamb.’ And they had to give them cheese or a lamb, and if they complained they were in trouble. The outlaws lasted until 1917, 1918, or so” (*Giovanni Salvati*). The most famous highwaymen—Luciano Cocchi and Angelo Sebastiani (a.k.a. Longhi) —haunted Castagna, but lived right in town, in the shadow of the steelworks.

Diname Colesanti. I knew them well: Longhi and Cocchi. They killed, they robbed, they stole from travelers. People disappeared. Once, they killed twelve friars in a convent. They made one of them, the prior, hold the basin that caught the blood, like when they kill hogs. They told him they wouldn’t kill him, but instead in the end they slaughtered him, too, and stole everything.

Settimio Piemonti. At the time of the [1907] lockout, my father had a vegetable garden, he rented a piece of land. When Sunday came around, eight or ten friends would work together, hoeing Piemonti's garden a week and someone else's the next. And one day, he joined them, too: Cocchi. They kept asking him, so he told them about the time he killed the *romagnoli*. The *romagnoli* brought wine [from Romagna] and brought back oil. The highwaymen were waiting, because they knew they had been paid but hadn't spent the money yet. So they followed them, and killed them. But all they got was small change. He said, "That's the only thing I'll repent of until I die."

Diname Colesanti. Grandma said that once a rich man who had gone to the fair in Terni went through Castagna, and he had a wallet full of money. He was riding grandma's father's cart. Along the way, they stopped by this *trattoria*, where everybody stopped. And it was the den of all these outlaws. Travelers would stop there, eat, and then [the outlaws] disemboweled them. They'd put them in the oven, the victims. So this man eats, drinks, and gets ready to pay—a wallet full of money. He climbed the cart, and two bandits jumped him and cut his head off—with an ax. They say that the head kept bouncing, on the floor, like a fawn. And then, suddenly, rain, thunder, lightning. A terror. So they swore they would no longer cut people's heads off.

Luisa Roberti. ²⁸ Longhi always said: "I, what I've done, I don't repent of anything, killing those twelve friars, nothing. I am only sorry for that little schoolteacher, her father and mother." He said, "I came in through the chimney..." The mother, holding the bag with the money, says, "Here is the money, kill me and my husband, spare our daughter." Instead, he unbars the door, lets all the rest of the gang in, they had covered their faces with sour-cherry juice, they were masked. They laid [the girl] down on the ground; what they did...And then they killed her. And then he killed the husband, and [the mother]. He said, "I've repented, it's always on my mind, all the time." He said this all the time.

Diname Colesanti. [Cocchi] was old, I remember him as an old man, with a beard this long, the eyes dilated. He was a fright, I mean. He wasn't ugly, though. A bit bent; skin as white as milk. You know what he did? He killed vipers, cut them open from head to tail, then with his knife he cut off all the fat. He smeared snake fat all over himself. He never caught pneumonia.

Mario Fagioletti. Longhi was an artist. He was an umbrella maker, a shoemaker, a mattress maker. I remember that I was five years old or so. He was a blacksmith, he had one of those forges you work with bellows. Behind his door, there must have been fifty rifles, the kind you still see sometimes, with bell-shaped barrels. Blunderbusses, like the outlaws used. He fixed them. He was a man of all trades; he learned in jail. [Cocchi] kept a snake in his garden, a big snake this long. The snake ate bugs and parasites. He kept it in a hut, fed it, and when he called it, it went. He walked around at night, after twilight, you'd see him walk this way, always carrying a stick, a juniper stick. He hits you with that, you're a goner, I mean.

Stories of buried treasures flourish around the memory of outlaws and highwaymen. For a long time, treasure hunters dug around the former wilderness near the steelworks; others believed that gold was hidden in the walls of the old town.

Giuseppe Lauretti. I own a storage space that is old and ancient; it used to be a tavern, it still has the grotto and the chimney. That is where the outlaws'd take their loot. At night, in there, they'd off someone; in the morning, the owner would come to the door—"fresh meat!" So one day I got a notion: I got a pickax and started tearing down the wall. Soon as I remove a stone, I see a niche—hooks, timbers...I say, "There may be pots of gold or something in here, I might get lucky." But it had already been stolen. You know the [...] family, they're big shots. They got rich by banditry. But there's a curse on them, though. They own land, they own palaces; their ancestors killed, and they inherited this fortune. And yet, it's three sisters; two are already dead, and the only one that's left will leave everything to the Church.

NOTES

1. A nineteenth century conspirator for Italian independence. *Carbonaro* means coalman, because they called their secret cells "coal cellars."
2. Luigi Bifani Sconocchia, "Terni nel 1831," *Terni. Rassegna del Comune*, III, January-June, 1961, no. 1-3, pp. 25-30.
3. A penny.
4. The "skinning" place.
5. Renato Covino and Giampaolo Gallo, "Appunti per una mostra sulla storia di Terni fra '800 e '900," *Indagini*, XVII, June 1982, pp. 14-18; Arrigo Bortolotti, *L'economia di Terni dal 1700 ai giorni nostri*, Terni, Thyrsus, 1960.

6. Elia Rossi Passavanti, *Sommario della storia di Terni dalle origini all'Impero Fascista*, Roma, Damasso, 1938, p. 439.
7. Italo Ciaurro, *L'Umbria nel Risorgimento*, Firenze, Cappelli, 1963, p. 175.
8. *Il Messaggero*, January 28, 1927, interview with Fortunato Saporà (b. 1827), one of the town's oldest citizens.
9. *ibid.*
10. On Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872), the leading ideologue of the Italian Risorgimento see Denis Mack Smith, *Mazzini*, Yale University Press, 1996.
11. "It is known through the memory of the heirs that Don Filippo Cattani, from Montefranco, ordained on January 26, 1848, was smothered to death by creditors in Terni": letter by Don Vincenzo Alimenti, parson of Montefranco, April 14, 1981. According to Don Alimenti, people in Montefranco connect this event to the outlaw Sorcino, but there is no documentary evidence. Arnaldo Lippi may be collating this episode with the killing of another priest in Terni in 1886, supposedly by Republicans (anonymous letter to the prefect of Perugia, ACS, ACP, m1901, b. 174, f. 15846). Rome was finally taken by the Italian soldiers in 1870.
12. Augusto Mezzetti, *I miei ricordi delle campagne del 1866–67*, Terni, Tipografia Cooperativa, 1901, p. 11.
13. In 1867 Garibaldi marched a column from Terni toward Rome. After defeating the Pope's soldiers at Montelibretti and occupying the key stronghold of Monterotondo, they were routed by better-armed French troops sent in defense of the Pope.
14. Andrea Giardi, "Il movimento garibaldino a Terni dalla Repubblica Romana a Mentana," in VV. AA., *Garibaldi e il movimento garibaldino a Terni*, published by the City of Terni, 1982. I grew up in the Collescipoli parish and went to school in Terni from the first to thirteenth grades. Not once was this history ever mentioned.
15. *Il Banderaro*, September 22, 1889. On the 1564 rebellion see Gianfranco Canali and Gisa Giani, "Evoluzione e involuzione delle prime forme di democrazia municipale a Terni," *Indagini*. XX, March 1983, pp. 33–40.
16. Francesco Alunni Pierucci, *Il socialismo in Umbria: testimonianze e ricordi: 1860–1920*, Perugia, Giostrelli, 1960, p. 73.
17. *Il Messaggero*, October 9, 1891; *L'Unione Liberale*, March 31–April 1, 1881.
18. The new Main Street, inaugurated in 1870, joining the main city square to the new railroad station.
19. Gaetano Bresci, an anarchist, had migrated from Tuscany to work in the textile mills of Paterson, New Jersey. He went back to Italy in 1900 and on July 29 killed King Umberto I, as a revenge for the massacre perpetrated in Milan by the army on the striking workers in 1899. He died in jail in 1901.

20. A. Tiberi, "Emancipazione della donna in famiglia," *La Sommosa*, June 26, 1914; reply by Vanda, a worker from the Centurini textile mill, July 19, 1914; *La Turbina*, May 25, 1901.
21. Pope John Paul II visited the Terni steel mills in 1981. Don Colasanti recalls that the expected tension between the Pope and the left-wing workers did not materialize.
22. F. Bogliari, *Il movimento contadino in Umbria*, Milan 1979, pp. 201–202.
23. ANPI, papers of Giuseppe Domiziani, 1946.
24. Remo Tomassini, *Borzacchini. L'uomo, il pilota, il suo tempo*, Terni, CESTRES (Centro Ricerche Storiche Economiche e Sociali), 1983, pp. 17, 47. The boulevard that leads to the city stadium is today named Mario Umberto Borzacchini. I asked the authorities to restore his real name, but got no answer.
25. "Dialogue with the Catholics" was the official Communist party line at the time of the interview.
26. A militarized police corps.
27. Antonio Gasbarrone (1793–1880), a famous outlaw from Lazio.
28. A pseudonym. The narrator asked not to use her name because she had sworn to the outlaws that she would never reveal what she knew of them.

Biography of an Industrial Town

Terni, Italy, 1831–2014

Portelli, A.

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