

*Anomalia Italia*

DOSSIER

*Acado*   
associazione contro gli abusi in divisa - ONLUS

BRUXELLES, 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2016

IN MEMORY  
OF **GIULIO REGENI**  
VICTIM OF THE **SAME ARROGANCE**,  
VICTIM OF THE **SAME IMPUNITY**

# *the Italian Anomaly*

*by ACCAD Italia*

The **italian anomaly** happens in a country that signed, in 1989, the United Nations convention against **torture** and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment but had never approved any implementing law. In our country, there is an astonishing reluctance to the creation of a specific offence without time-limit for public officials. That is, in the Italian legal system the crime for torture does not exist and we can only find “scattered fragments” of the definition of torture in the Italian criminal code. And they proved to be insufficient. The parliamentary commissions only listened to the advices given by the police unions and we are now facing the risk of the Government approving a very weak text that would nullify decades of struggles for civil rights.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), created under the auspices of the Council of Europe and signed in Rome on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1950, specifically prohibits any kind of torture (Art. 3). Should an act of torture be committed in Italy, it is possible to present a case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) which has already taken several actions against Italy about torture (namely for prison overcrowding). **Italy appears to be the European state with more conviction than ever** and has already paid rich compensations to the appellants.

The **Italian anomaly** is about a country that, despite a general decrease in petty crimes, had to record the political and mediatic building of a **security emergency** functional to the construction of the war of the penultimate against the last, of the natives against the migrants, of the guaranteed against the unguaranteed. This is a typical feature of neoliberalism to substitute an inclusive and egalitarian welfare state with a social pact based on fear and competitions among workers.

The **Italian anomaly** it is public security officers recruited directly from the **armed forces**, among the veterans of the so called peace missions, **dropped from global war scenarios to those of the peripheries of our cities**. It is **police unions** that demonstrate, even showing off their muscles, in solidarity with the responsible of acts of police brutality, no matter how violent they could be. In Naples, they sieged the public prosecutor's office to prevent the detention of public officers accused of abduction of dozens of protesters during the global forum in March 2001. The National Congress of the SAP, the second police union with openly right-wing sympathies, welcomed the four officers responsible for the assassination of Federico Aldrovandi with a standing ovation, even if already sentenced by three levels of courts. As shown by the firsts studies on this cases, together with a solid international bibliography, the training of police corps and special units plays a determining role in the formation of what Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School define as a “fascist and authoritarian personality”. That is, violent. More empirically, the press and the information circuits of Italian activism have detected an increase in the public show off of nazifascism and racism sympathies among members of the police force.

The **Italian anomaly** is a **Criminal Code** built on the basis of the fascist **Rocco Code** and on the **emergency regulations used during the 70s**. This is why Davide Rosci, appearing too close to a burning armoured vehicle in a picture, is facing a ten years long detention while the carabinieri who shot and killed Carlo Giuliani wasn't even prosecuted

publically. The “legitimate use of weapons” has been repeated hundreds of times in the courtrooms in defence of police officers who have tortured and killed. In the meantime, in the last 15 years at least 18.000 people between workers, students, antifascists, houses and self-managed social centres occupiers, human rights and NoWar activists have been through justice proceedings because of social conflict-related offences. On the contrary, bringing a police officer under trial in Italy is as hard as for a rapist, since it triggers that same process of criminalization of the victim, that “secondary victimization” careless of the UE recommendation of 4 years ago. This behaviour has been denounced by the Diaz Trial, when they asserted that processing a man in blue is as hard as processing a mafia clan member since we have to face that code of silence called “esprit de corps”.

The **Italian anomaly** it is the hundreds of families brought to the public scene by a dramatic and irrevocable incident, demanding nothing more than truth and justice for the killing or torture of a family member by public security officers. It is women and men that have never thought they had to defend themselves from the State and that, like other hundreds of families of the victims of the state sanctioned massacres of the 70s, had to go around and across the country to break their loneliness and to build that framework of solidarity and that public space of counter information and mobilisation needed to build up a critical mass to try and stop the abuses.

**Acad, the organization against abuses in uniform**, was born after this needs and, with the toll-free number, wants to be a useful tool for the families and for everyone who received an abuse by public security officers. However, Acad is also a public place for movements, citizens or scholars to wage a wide struggle for the building of a common sense of solidarity that, by demanding rights and justice, will defeat the prison of fear in which neoliberalism hides women and men.

Every week the emergency number for reporting abuses receives at least a dozen calls. Every day delegations of activists and lawyers of Acad are present to the hearings of the several and exhausting judicial process around the State. On the local scale, Acad creates centers for listening and moments of social exchange, participates to study conference, promotes information campaigns.

However, **Acad** did not come out of nowhere and has its roots and connections in the struggles against repression, for the human rights and against any war. We are anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-prohibitionists and against every war. This is why we came to Bruxelles on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, **International Day Against Police Brutality**, to meet with the European parliamentarians who would like to listen and work with us and to meet our brothers and sisters who, right here in Bruxelles, are working on the same issues. Because the European is collapsing and the state of emergency, not only in Italy, is utilitarian to build the internal front of the global war between the poor, and it uses abuses and police brutality to get to his objective.

# *Victims of Police Brutality*

*by ACCAD Italia*

CIRO LO MUSCIO, 39 years old, has been hit and killed by a police car the night of the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2015. Allegedly, the police car was driving along Corso Grosseto in Turin at high speed without any siren nor lights. Ciro is just a 39 years old random passer-by getting off bus number 2 on the line towards Don Bosco. Corso Grosseto is a go/return boulevard and has a central alley of three lanes (of which one is the public transport fast track) and a one-lane service road with parked cars on the side. The incident happened in the three central lanes of the boulevard. The investigation is still ongoing but it has been classified. Three eyewitnesses declared how the police patrol that ran over ciro was driving at high speed and that they didn't even tried to brake.

ANDREA SOLDI, 45 years old, suffered of schizophrenia and died on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August after being subjected to an involuntary treatment. It all happened in Turin. Andrea was sitting on a bench in Piazza Umbria, not far from the city center. He didn't have any hearth condition, never had any hearth troubles. he died of hypoxia, a lack of oxygen, induced by a compression on the neck. The histological examinations ordered by the Turin Public Prosecutor and led by Dr. Valter Declame, a forensic expert, confirmed this hypothesis. His death, says the Prosecutor, has been caused by the measures taken by local police officers during the arrest, while getting him on the ambulance and by the lack of assistance when his conditions got worse.

MAURO GUERRA, 33 years old, died after a carabinieri shot him in a field of brushwood not far from his house in Carmignano di Sant'Urbano, around Padova. Mauro was bare feet and wearing only his underpants when he was shot and in the following days, the media published a large variety of different explanation about what happened. The carabinieri who shot him has been put under examination and transferred to the Veneto Legion. After a week, we've been informed by the local press that other two carabinieri went under medical treatment and obtained a medical report concerning a fracture of the metacarpus suffered during the scuffle with Mauro. They claim he continued to beat them even he was already injured and dying.

MASSIMILIANO MANZONE, 39 years old, dies during an involuntary treatment. He was hospitalised in the psychiatric service of diagnosis and treatment of the Sant'Anselmo Hospital, in the province of Salerno. When remembering what happened on that morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of May, when local police and the doctors went to Massimiliano's house, the family highlights that "with more awareness, our brother wouldn't have died". His brother explains how "it was almost like a kidnapping, they blocked his way out and this triggered his reaction. Indeed, Massimiliano attacked the local police car with an iron bat even if "he didn't try to drive over a doctor", his sister says in opposition on what has been written on the press.

DAVIDE BIFOLCO. The sad story of Davide takes place in the Traiano neighbourhood in Naples the night between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> of September. It's 2:30am, Davide is out with two of his friends and the scooter they were driving meets a police car. The police officers allegedly recognised one of the mas as a previous offender and order them to stop. As the scooter didn't stop, they chased it. After a while, the scooter has

an accident and the three boys fall on the street. One of the carabinieri gets off the car holding a gun when a bullet is accidentally shot hitting Davide on his hearth. He is then put on an ambulance but dies by the time it takes to get to the hospital. According to eyewitnesses, there were no police road block that night and one of the two carabinieri, precisely the one who shot, was supposed to end his shift at midnight. We still wonder about what he was doing two hours later on a patrol car with the gun loaded.

**RICCARDO MAGHERINI** The night between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March Riccardo is out for a business dinner. When coming back home on a cab, something happens and scares him so much that he gets off the taxi leaving all his personal belongings behind him. He is going through a panic attack but manages to get to his neighbourhood, Borgo San Frediano in Florence, looking for and calling for help. Many people then call the carabinieri to report just a plain help request from a person in distress. Once they arrived, the carabinieri blocked and handcuffed Riccardo, forcing him on a prone position. It all happened in the street in front of several eyewitnesses who will report about the kicks Riccardo received when he was still face down. Some people get on their windows and record the entire scene on camera. We can clearly hear Riccardo shouting for “help”, “I’m being shot”, “Help me, help me, I am dying” and someone else shouting “No, not the kicks!”. Later, reconstruction the most heated moment of the intervention, a lot of omissions and gaps came to light: at 1:21am one of the officers calls the Operation Headquarters explaining how they had to take actions on someone “totally out of his mind, bare-breasted, shouting loud”. At around 1:24am, the emergency calls for intervention and an ambulance gets to the place from the nearby Red Cross Headquarter with three volunteers on board. At 1:31am the Operation Headquarter of the carabinieri calls the emergency unit again because the officers can hear the siren of the vehicle but the ambulance is still not on the place, and the arrested “is still acting like crazy”. At 1:32am, the emergency tries to get in touch with the Red Cross Headquarter and, a minute later, one of the volunteers calls the emergency to communicate he is on the spot and explaining how the man “had a violent reaction, there are two persons on top of him and they request the intervention of a medic” to sedate the detained. We will later be informed that when the ambulance arrived Riccardo was already laying on the ground silent and motionless. This specific condition of Riccardo has been ignored and omitted by the volunteer when talking with the emergency, which later got in touch with the EMS car. However, his real conditions were clearly serious but they have been ignored until the tragic conclusions to such an extent that the operator joked about it on the phone saying “we need two strong men, we have someone who threw the handcuffs back to us. He will not get cold because he has two officers on top of him”, disregarding of the imminent tragedy.

From this sentence only, it is pretty clear that at least two carabinieri kept on stepping on Riccardo’s body even after he stopped to shout and to try to free himself: Riccardo was already dead.

**FRANCESCO SMERAGLILOLO**, 22 years old, arrested on 1<sup>st</sup> of May for a robbery. He has been through 39 days of jail who cost him 16kg of weight loss first, and his own life afterwards. He died in the Monza Prison on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> of June and his mother, Giovanna D’Aiello, wants to see clear about this. This is why she addressed several associations such “**Antigone**”, “**A buon diritto**” and “**Acad**”. The hypothesis of a suicide has been already discarded because of a letter to his girlfriend, shortly before his death, wondering about “our projects together”. The autopsy, ordered by the magistrate, allegedly excluded that the death could have been caused by violent acts or by drugs intoxication. The medical response has been the same: “death cause by a cardiac arrest”. No further explanations were given by the State Prison about the death, happened on the afternoon of Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> of June. Allegedly, the youngster got sick and an emergency red code was activated. The prison warden only commented “There’s an inquiry going on, we have to wait the results”.

**BOHLI KAYES** A suspicious death, a frightening photo and a “crow” in the barracks. This is the case of Kayes Bohli, a 36years old previous offender from Tunisia who died in the Sanremo hospital shortly after his arrest. It is 7:05pm, an anonymous call informs the carabinieri about a drug dealer in the area. The carabinieri rush to the place in Riva Ligure and meet with Bohli, and old acquaintance of the police, who tries to run away. Then we had the guardrail Bohli couldn’t bypass, the fall and the attempt to avoid the arrest which led to a scuffle. “One of the carabinieri was sitting on the ground holding the face of the Tunisian between his

thighs, facing down. At the same time, he was putting pressure on his back to try and keep him still". This is how an eyewitness described the arrest and the locking up of Bohli to the Public Prosecutor of Sanremo. The man died because of the pressure on his back suffered during his arrest. The following suffocation weakened him at first and then killed him in about two hours. The Chief Prosecutor, Roberto Cavallone, said without mincing words "This has not been like the Stefano Cucchi's case. It lasted for only 3 minutes but at least one of the carabinieri exceeded in the use of force and the State has to bear the weight of this death and apology to the family of the victim".

ETTORE STOCCHINO left his house at 3:45am on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2012 and was found dead at 9:30am of that same day. His father declared "what is strange to me are the methods, the more-than-strange definition of suicide and many background events that the judge didn't took into consideration. A month before, Ettore was stopped and threatened by a police patrol from Segrate few metres away from the place where he has been found dead.". Both the carabinieri and the press support the thesis of the suicide as Ettore's father is a transgender under hormonal therapy who declared "I will not comment, for now, whether he could have a reason to commit suicide or not. However, also the methods have something strange because I inspected the place right away".

MARCELO VALENTINO GOMEZ CORTES was a young man from Chile living in Milan and with some previous offences. Marcelo that day was guilty of running, of running away from a bar brawl. The destiny made him meet with Alessandro Amigoni, a Milan city police officer. According to the first reconstruction, the officers says Cortes was armed and that, with the purpose of intimidation and aiming away from him, he fired a shot from a distance between 10 to 15 metres. Instead, the expert opinion ordered by the Public Prosecutor found that the shot was fired from a distance varying from 50 centimetres to a maximum of 2,80 metres. Following the investigations, it reached Cortes on his back while he was running away and exit from the hearth.

CRISTIAN DE CUPIS 36 years old from Rome, lived in the Garbatella neighbourhood and was suffering from various sanitary problems. He was put under arrest on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November in Termini Station for insulting and obstruction of a state official. When brought to the emergency of Santo Spirito Hospital the men, with shearing on his forehead, reported to the doctors about being beaten by the officers who arrested him and that he had already filed a charge. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November De Cupis is transferred, by ambulance and under police escort, to the protected building of "Belcolle" hospital of Viterbo where he gets through all the usual exams, CAT included. The next day, after hospitalization, the arrest would have been validated and the house arrest would have been set up. However, on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> of November De Cupis dies. His relatives have been informed about the arrest only after the death. The people who met him in the days of hospitalization said he changed from an upset to a lucid condition, anyway not in such conditions to think about a premature death.

ILARIO AURILIA It is about 4am of the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2011 when Ilario Aurilia dies after a crash with his scooter. According to the relation of the police, the young boy died because of the serious injuries after he crashed against a street light while driving his 50cc scooter. This version has been considered reliable by the public prosecutor who was leading the investigations following to the charges pressed by the relatives based on rumours about a car chase. After few weeks the prosecutor asked for the dismissal of the file as "a tragedy, solely caused by the victim's driving behaviour". The Investigating Magistrate has not the same advice and, after the several inconsistencies presented by the lawyers of the Aurilia family, rejects the dismissal request, orders a new set of investigations and orders to resurrect the body to carry out an autopsy. The Aurilia case shocked Torre del Greco in the August of 2011.

MASSIMO CASALNUOVO dies on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2011 around 9pm. He arrives agonising to the hospital of Polla after a crash with his motorbike. The boy was driving a scooter without wearing any helmet but (contrarily of what has been said) didn't die because he hit his head but because of a strong hit on his chest. Massimo had just left the mechanic's workshop where his father works. He had just repaired his motorbike so it was a while since he last drove it. He went for a ride and was coming back home without his helmet, but everybody does it Buonabitacolo. That night, Marshall Giovanni Cuntolo and Corporal Luca Chirichella are out on patrol and they decide to stop the who is not wearing the helmet. They stop Elia Marchesano and Emilio Rossi. The police officers park the car sideways as to create a kind of roadblock. Unfortunately, they are behind a turn. The "scene" takes place in the main road of the town, Via Grancia, that leads to a small square where the city people use to gather in the evening. Cunsolo is sitting inside the car and he is writing the ticket. Massimo is coming by with his scooter Beta50. Since the very first moments the version of the two boys and that of the officer are in contrast. Cunsolo will say that Massimo, once arrived by the road block, speeds up almost driving on him and then fall hitting his head on a stonewall. The two boys, questioned the night of the "accident" by Public Prosecutor Sessa from Sala Consilina, gave a different version: Cunsolo was inside the car and he gets out when he sees Massimo, kicking his motorbike and making him fall. It is that kick that makes Massimo loose his balance and fall, dying. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 the court acquitted Marshall Cunsolo, charged of murder aforethought, because the fact does not exist.

BERNARDINO BUDRONI has been killed by a police officer on the highway. It happened on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2011 on the ring junction of Rome, but almost no one is aware of this because the press used misleading words such as "gunfire on the Junction", "car chase of a stalker" and someone compared it with the movie Shine. His name was Bernardino Budroni, but for his parents, for his sister Claudia, for his brother-in-law and for his nephews he was known just as Dino. The calibre 9 bullet went through his chest perforating hearth and lungs. The facts happened at the 11<sup>th</sup> kilometre, around the Mentana Junction and the police officer who shot him was 28 years old at that time, only 12 years younger than Dino. That night, nobody gave the order to shoot, not even on the tyres. The First Class Officer, apparently, was sitting on the wrong side of the car. He was supposed to be driving #10Squad Car, not to be on the passenger's seat. What kind of "emergency" occurred in order not to make him drive? Two days later, while in court, he declared that he had fired two shots after a 10 minutes long pursuit. The non-lethal shot missed its target and went through the door foil. Two other squad cars, "Beta-Como" from the police and another one from the carabinieri, joined the operation of #10Squad Car during the pursuit. It was around 5am of the summer peak and the Ford Focus driven by Dino was almost struck on the right of the lane. The carabinieri squad car was parked sideways in front of the car, the right door barely touching the Ford Focus pressed against the guardrail. A small trace of paint, as big as a nail, is still present to testify the incident. Few metres away from the picture and the flower planted there to remember him.

ABDERRAHMAN SAHLI is a 24 years old Moroccan living in Montagnana, in the Padova province, who was found dead by a river with strange bruises on his forehead. It is said how the carabinieri in Montagnana have the deplorable habit of throwing drunk immigrants in the river to "bring them to their senses". It is not possible to determine whether it is an urban legend or based on real facts. The certain thing is that three carabinieri have been put under investigation for the death of Abderrahman. The three military, the night of the Ham Festival of Montagnana, allegedly arrest the young boy to prevent him from disturbing a group of women. Lately, they brought him on the bridge over the river Frassine and threw him into water. After the treatment, the officers left the bridge leaving Abderrahman to his own fate. His friends waited for him until his body was found along the riverbank of an irrigation channel on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2011.



MICHELE FERRULLI, 51, was born in Bari but was living in Milano where he worked as construction worker. He and his family were occupying in a social housing in Via Varsavia. According to the people who knew him, he was a mellow and generous person involved with the squatters of social houses with the objective of obtaining regular and law-entitled housing. The life of Michele is interrupted the night of the 30<sup>th</sup> of June in the same Via Varsavia. A neighbour reported to the police about a group of people gathered in the street listening to loud music, urinating on the shutter of a pub and jelling and gagging. Michele and his friends are part of this group. Two squad cars get on the spot, and the officers declared that Michele insulted them and tried to aggress them in response to their request for ID. The policemen respond with the force, blocking him down and handcuffing it on the ground. The operation lasts for several minutes, maybe too many for the hearth of Michele. The Police Headquarter states that the death occurred because of a heart attack. However, the accounts given by the witnesses' report of a beating by the four police officers. Some of them even claim that Michele was repeatedly asking for help while being wildly beaten. This circumstance has been confirmed by the new videos presented by lawyer Anselmo, which differ from the previous for the presence of the original audio. In this video we can clearly hear the yelling and the help request of Ferrulli, the background comment, in a foreign language, of those who filmed the scene and we can clearly see the punches and the baton beating.

CARLO SATURNO was 22 years old when he was found hanged to a blanket in an isolation cell of the Bari State Prison. He died on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, after a week in a coma. He was detained for a robbery but he was sent to isolation for obstruction and insulting of a public official. Putting it simply, he had arguments with the prison guards. According to an anonymous letter sent the day before of the suicide to the Prosecutor's Office on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, that argument was instead a beating of Saturno. At present, an inquiry for instigation to suicide against unknown persons is still ongoing. We cannot ignore the fact that the signs on his neck have been declared compatible both with a hanging than with a strangulation. "He always told us they beat him all the time and that he lost his eyesight after receiving a punch in the eye (and getting a detached retina). He told us how they perforated his eardrum with a slap and how the next day he found his pillow full of blood. He was terrified by the guards and never recovered from that period. He suffered from anxiety, panic attacks and had to go under medical treatment". Moreover, Carlo filed a complaint against two police prison officers for acts of violence happened years before in the juvenile detention center of Lecce.

ROBERTO COLLINA Shortly after the end of the fireworks for the festival of San Matteo, patron saint of Salerno, Roberto was dying on the hard and concrete ground of Largo Campo, historical center of the city's nightlife, right by the fountain of Vanvitelli. He hit his head after a brawl with two plain clothed and off-duty police officers. One of them is serving in Naples and another one in Tuscany. The press reported how Roberto was clearly drunk and that he bothered the relatives of one of the two officers. This is supposed to be the reason why the two police officers tried to block him and why the brawl started. Dozens of people assisted to the gruesome show and an ambulance and a squad car were called into action. The body of Roberto was left on the ground for almost 4 hours, until the magistrate who opened an enquiry got to the place. The mother of Roberto was called and, once she arrived, she burst into tears by her son's body screaming several times "You've killed him, you've killed him".

DANIELE FRANCESCHI was arrested for a cloned credit card. He was detained in a prison for month, and died without a reason. His mother, demanding justice, was beaten by police officers and got a broken rib. The body of the young boy handed over to his family at an advanced stage of decomposition and without internal organs. This didn't happen in a remote tribal area, but in "grandeur" France that still hasn't given any answer over the death of a fellow citizen and over unacceptable behaviours, suitable for the worst dictatorship. The three suspected persons, a doctor and two male nurses, have recently been indicted for involuntary manslaughter on the basis of negligence leading to the death of the inmate. "They beat me

until they broke three ribs”, says Daniele Franceschi’s mom, Anna Cira Antignano, masking strong accusations against the French authorities.

**AZIR AMIRI** The Amiri Case was brought into light by the United State Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, who reserved an entire chapter to Italy in the in the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World. The night of the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2010, Aziz was in a car with a fellow countryman in Mornico al Serio. A carabinieri squad car, assuming they were drug dealers, stops at few inches from the back of the Peugeot, blocking the escape route. The two policemen, on plainclothes, get off the squad car and set in front of the doors of the car driven by the young boys. The carabinieri stated that they just wanted to carry on a road block but it is not clear why they decided to intervene. At this point, the driver of the Peugeot drove in reverse gear trying to ram into the squad car in order to create a way out. The carabiniere apparently lost his balance and, feeling in distress, he holds his gun up. The Beretta .36 calibre that killed Aziz Amiri is not a service weapon equipped by the carabinieri units, but it is a personal weapon apparently brought in the operation by one of the officers. A second element is the disappearance of the Peugeot driver, the only other witness of this story except for the two carabinieri. Inexplicably, after the murder of Aziz he managed to run away under the nose of the carabinieri. Another relevant element is that the carabiniere stated that the shot who killed Aziz was accidental and due to the fall of the agent. A witness, never heard in court, states verbatim “I heard three gunshots. Afterwards, they... they said you’ve killed him, you’ve killed him or something like that”. The investigations on the carabiniere suspected for involuntary manslaughter have been entrusted to the carabinieri themselves, and the ballistic fingerprinting to the RIS of Parma, which is still part of the carabinieri Corps.

**SIMONE LA PENNA** 32 years old, dies on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2009 in Regina Coeli, one of the prisons of Rome. He was detained for drug related crimes and suffered from anorexia nervosa that caused him a weight loss of 20kg over two months. After a month of detention, Simone La Penna started to lose weight very fast, the puking was recurring and the analysis indicated an imbalance in the presence of potassium chloride. He was then transferred to the penitentiary hospital of Belcolle in Viterbo where, thanks to a rightly guessed therapy, he started to show signs of improvement. But every time he returned to the prison he started to vomit and to lose weight again. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 he is transferred to the medical department of the prison. Here, his malnutrition situation became much worse in just a month. So much he had to be hospitalized in the Sandro Pertini hospital for two days in order to get under a specific treatment. Then, at 8am of the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, two male nurse of Regina Coeli prison found themselves practicing resuscitation on the body of Simone, who died ten minutes later. At the moment of his death he was weighting 49kg, and Public Prosecutor Albamonte is getting ready to call the medic who were didn’t report his mental and physical conditions into accounts for his death.

**STEFANO CUCCHI** The story of Stefano Cucchi ends when he is arrested in the Parco degli Acquedotti, in the Casilino neighbour of Rome, for possession of drugs: 25 grams of hashish, a small quantity of cocaine, anti-epileptic pills sold as ecstasy tablets. After the arrest, Stefano declares to be living with his parents and a house search is issued, with no results. In that occasion, his parents remember him as in good shape and without any signs of violence on his face. After the house search Stefano is brought to the carabinieri station where he spent the night. In the evening, the emergency is called in to perform an analysis of his health but, apparently, Cucchi refused to be visited even if he seemed to be suffering. On the following morning he is brought into court where and delivered to the Penitentiary Police. The Penitentiary Police calls for another medical visit that reports low entity bruises in the eyes area with a purple colour. The medical report talks about pain and lesions in the sacral area and on the legs, but the patient refuses to be visited. After the validation of the arrest, Stefano is brought to the Regina Coeli prison where he is subject to the entrance medical visit, in accordance to the prison regulations. The doctor orders his immediate transfer to the emergency of the Fatebenefratelli hospital where Cucchi refuses to be hospitalized. He is

discharged from the hospital with a L3 vertebral body fracture diagnosis on the left side of the body and the fracture of the 1<sup>st</sup> coccygeal vertebra. Shortly, Stefano was safe and well at the moment of his arrest but has several blues, two fractured vertebrae, has walking problems and need hospitalization on the next day. According to police reports, this is all due to a fall from the stairs. Stefano is then brought back to Regina Coeli but on the next day, because of a total incompatibility with the detention system, he is brought back to the hospital. This time the hospitalization is imposed and Stefano ends up in the protected area of Sandro Pertini hospital. During the days of hospitalization, the penitentiary administration prevented any form of contact between Stefano and his family. He will die at 6:45am of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2009 after a week-long judicial and sanitarian calvary.

FRANCESCO MASTROGIOVANNI was a 58 years old primary school teacher who, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2009, died in the psychiatric division of the public hospital "San Luca" in Vallo di Lucania after an abduction and an illegal restraint (tied hands and feet to a cot) lasted for over than 80 hours filmed by the CCTV cameras of the hospital. Francesco has been hospitalized to the psychiatric division to enforce an involuntary treatment order<sup>ed</sup> by the Mayor of Pollica on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July. Strangely, this order has been executed, with a large deployment of forces, in the territory under the jurisdiction of the city of San Mauro Cilento and not in that of Pollica. Francesco has been chased by the police since 8am of the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, a lot of time before the intervention of the medical personnel. Previous to the involuntary treatment order and from the judicial documents it is hard to find that state of necessity set out in Article 54 of Italian Criminal Code that would have justified the behaviour of police forces. On the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2009 his niece Grazia, visiting the psychiatric division, is not allowed to meet with his uncle because according to the doctor on duty, Francesco was quietly resting and the presence of relatives could have upset him. The lower court condemned six doctors for kidnapping, death occurring because of another offence (the kidnapping itself) and falsification of public documents with a 2 to 4 years conviction, a 5 years ban on exercising the profession and to compensate the civil claimants and to pay court costs.

STEFANO FRAPPORTI an artisan from Rovereto, was found hanged in his cell in the local prison. He was a mild man and he started his day with a bike ride with his friends. A carabinieri squad car is investigating the area over a suspected drug traffic and they block him with the accusation of cutting lane and they mistake him for one of the drug dealers. They search him and find nothing but, allegedly, Stefano voluntarily admits he has a small amount of drug at home. During the home search, hidden in the only furniture they searched, the two carabinieri find 99 grams of hashish divided into two blocks, enough to consider Stefano as a drug dealer. Unfortunately, there are no records of this events. When brought to the prison, Stefano allegedly signed a document with which he renounced to inform his relatives about the arrest. When entering the prison, some penitentiary policemen describe him as quiet and playful. Few hours later he will be found hung in his cell. The family could only see his body after two days, shortly before his body was cremated in a hurry, thus preventing deeper analysis. The custody records talk about a crime being committed and refer to Stefano as a drug dealer, even if he wasn't. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2009 the Public Prosecutor obtains the dismissal of the process: according to the judges, Stefano is a drug dealer and Stefano committed suicide because the small amounts of THC in his blood had depressive effects. The case is officially closed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2010.

CARMELO CASTRO was found hung in his cell in the Prison of Catania, Piazza Lancia, 4 days after his arrest of the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2009 for an alleged participation to a robbery. He arrived in the detention center after having been through the carabinieri station in Biancavilla and in Paternò. Officially, he died of suffocation and the Investigating Magistrate, following the request of the Public Prosecutor, dismiss the case on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2010. Carmelo's sister, Agatuccia Castro and other relatives report a different version. Once they arrived in the waiting room of the Paternò station, they clearly hear the cries and yells of Carmelo coming from the upper floor. They tried to walk upstairs but they are blocked by the carabinieri. The women stay in

the area of the carabinieri station and they see Carmelo brought into a car, with several bruises and marks on his face. Organisations such as “Antigone” and “A buon diritto” demanded three further investigations over the cries and yells heard by the relatives and asked for a new forensic examination. During the detention, any personal interview is forbidden because Carmelo is in solitary confinement but in the official documents there are no records of this measure nor about the mandatory medical visit. During the interview with the prison psychologist, Carmelo showed a state of psychological prostration and felt threatened by the other inmates and, in further interviews, showed signs that could have led to act of self-harm. Lastly, in the third complaint, it is pointed out how the blankets and the cell haven’t been seized for further investigations. A new forensic examination is then provided in order to verify the compatibility of the suicide thesis. Carmelo is 175cm tall but hung himself to a 170cm bunk bed. The Prosecutor of Catania orders new investigations on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, the same day in which the vanished blankets shows up. Lately the case is definitely dismissed.

STEFANO BRUNETTI Arrested on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2008 for a brawl, died on the day after his transfer to the emergencies from the Velletry State Prison. According to the police, they had to call the medic to sedate Brunetti because he was harming himself while in the detention room. Around 2am, he is hospitalized and when doctor Claudio Cappello asked him “Who did this?” he answered “I’ve been beaten by the cops of the Anzio Station. He passed away few hours later.

The Public Prosecutor Luigi Paoletti orders an investigation that lasts for 2 years and the direct committal for trial is justified because “the four police officers are accused of having caused, jointly, the death of Brunetti Stefano while under arrest and until the delivery to the prison center, with acts aimed at committing the offence of beating or personal injuries...”. According to doctor Marella, the death occurs because of the injuries happened in the previous 18-20 hours, that is during the period spent in the detention room of the carabinieri station. The death has been caused by an internal haemorrhage due to the fracture of two ribs. The trials begin on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 at the Assize Court of Frosinone and ends on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 with the acquittal of the accused. This judgement has been confirmed by the Appeal Court.

NIKI APRILE GATTI is a 27 years old IT technician who worked in a small company of which he also was a minority stakeholder. On the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, Niki meets with his lawyer and when he exits his office he is arrested with the accusation of “computer fraud”. Let’s keep this accusation in mind as it will result important later. He is transferred in the superprison of Sollicciano while other two arrested are brought to the prison of Rimini, a more logic destination. His mother Ornella contacts the company’s lawyer who tells her Niki is in solitary confinement for few days and it is therefore useless to try and reach him. A series of calls and various kinds of pressures is then exercised on Mrs Ornella in order to make her change her lawyer. But she is very firm, she wants Marcolini because he is the company’s lawyer and knows better than anyone else the company events. However, at 20:58 of the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, niki receives a telegram reciting: “You need to choose lawyer X”. The telegram comes from Niki’s house that, in theory, was supposed to be seized. Niki is not aware that his mother is contrary to this choice and, facing such a peremptory invitation, accept to change lawyer.

On the day of the trial, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, Ornella is informed that his son has changed his lawyer and go back home. Still, without meeting with his son.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, at 13:15, Niki’s mom receives a phone call: “This is the State Prison of Sollicciano, your son has committed suicide”.

GIUSEPPE UVA dies on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2008 in a room of the Provincial Carabinieri Headquarters in Via Aurelio Saffi in Varese. He was there, together with his friend Alberto Bigioggero, after a detention for

“annoying or disturbing to rest and to human activities”. The two men were blocked in Via Dandolo when, in a student-spirited mood, they decided to move the road barriers and close the road. A police squad car gets to the place with Superintendent Paolo Righetto and Chief Corporal Stefano Del bosco on board. Bigioggero quotes the words of the superintendent “Uva, I was just looking for you. You’ll pay for it and you are not going away with it today”.

Uva is chased by the superintendent who reaches him and throws him on the ground and starts beating him. Other two squad cars get into actions and Bigioggero, asking to stay with his friend, is threatened with a baton. The two men are then brought to the headquarters into two separate cars. At the police station, Bigioggero can clearly hear the screams of his friend but he is constantly threatened every time he asks them to stop. He then decides to call the emergency from his mobile phone to ask for an ambulance.

The emergency calls the police station to have a confirmation of the call but they are answered that it was just two drunkards who made that call.

Shortly after, it will be that same police station to call the emergency again in order to bring Giuseppe Uva away, already dead.

VITO DANIELE dies at 2pm on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2008 on the A1 Highway between the province of Avellino and Benevento, crushed by a passing-by car hauler. He was stopped after a car chase with a Finance Guard car driven by a plainclothes agent. According to the officer’s version, Vito got hit by the car after getting off the car to show his ID., According to the records, the reason for the arrest was for excessive speed (around 180km/h) but there are no evidences about it and that road section is very hard to reach high speed because of the several turns and the strong presence of lorries. Later, we get to know that the police was conducting antidrug controls, but Vito’s car results clear after the search. The events around the arrest are questionable: Why a lonely agent, on plainclothes, proceeds to an arrest? How could he do it with the signalling disk and in safety conditions according to the regulations in those conditions (180km/h speed, turns, strong truck traffic and before a tunnel)? Why Vito gets off the car? The wife has been ordered not to kick up a fuss looking for truth and justice over her husband death, while witnesses of the incident were not heard in court and other evidences, such as the highway ticket, has just disappeared.

GABRIELE SANDRI is hit by a bullet while in his car in the service Area of “Badia al Pino Est”. He was travelling with three friends towards Milan to attend his team’s football match. According to the procedural acts, a brawl breaks out on the service area’s yard between Gabriele’s friends and a group of supporters of another team. Other witnesses report the presence of a third group of supporters. Gabriele and his friends take cover in the car and drive away. On the other side of the highway, in the Badia al Pino Ovest service area and over 100metres as the crow flies, two police squad cars are informed about the brawl taking place on the other side of the road. Apparently, Police Officer Spaccarotella fires a warning shot without a direct effect. Another police officer turns the siren on and, on the other side, the car with Sandri on board exits the service station. At this point Spaccarotella, running parallel to the highway, follows the car, takes aim and fires again. The bullet passes through the rear window of the car and strikes Gabriele deadly to his neck. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2010, Spaccarotella is sentenced to a 9years imprisonment by the Court of Appeal of Florence for murder with possible malice.

ALDO BIANZINO is arrested, together with his partner Roberta Radici, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2007 with the accusation of illegal possession and dealing of drugs because of a few plants of marijuana in the yard of their country house in Pietralunga. At that time they were living with their son Rudra, 14years old and with Aldo’s mother, 90years old, which are left alone in the following days. Bianzino and his partner are brought to the prison of Capanne and separated into different departments. On the next morning, at 8:15am, Aldo will be found dead in his cell and his death was notified to his partner by a prison employee. After ambiguous questions about heart illness or fainting (while Aldo was already dead) he tells her she could see him after the autopsy. Convinced since the beginning that it all happened because of a beating, Roberta

committed his last months seeking the truth about Aldo, before dying for a tumour a year later. It was the forensic expert nominated by Gioia Toniolo, Aldo's ex-wife, who first talked about a special beating, brought on with military techniques that don't leave external marks but cause internal injuries. Aldo presented a large laceration on his liver, four hematomas on his head, two broken ribs and lesion to his spleen. The first phase of investigation highlighted a death for violent causes. In the lower court, a penitentiary police agent was sentenced to a 1 year and 6 months detention for duty to rescue and omission of official acts. The judgement was reduced to 6 months by the Court of Appeal, confirmed by the Supreme Cassation Court on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2015.

**RICCARDO BOCCALETTI** dies at 38 years old on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2007 in the State Prison of Velletri. He was an unconvinced prisoner for drug related offences. During his detention, he lost 30kg in few months with loss of appetite, vomit, weakness and anorexia. Notwithstanding his clinical status, no specialist intervention was ordered for his alarming physical conditions. According to the family investigations, the death occurred for a poor circulation and irregular heartbeat in a subject with a congenital long QT syndrome, not detected in the cardiology visit in prison on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007. For Riccardo's death, the prison cardiologist has been committed for trial.

**RICCARDO RASMAN** dies in his house on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2006 for a positional asphyxia during the intervention of two police squad car. Riccardo was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia after episodes of hazing during his military service in the air force for which he is dismissed for environmental incompatibility. After this events he had developed a terror for the uniform. In 1999 he is victim of an act of police brutality. Two days after a report to the police for the loud music and noises, two policemen show up at his house. A brawl burst and Rasman gets a traumatic brain and face injury. In the October of 2006, a similar event happens but with a tragic result. On that day Rasman, marginalized by the rest of the village because of his mental illness, was celebrating his new job with his family. Once back home, he receives the visit of two policemen that held him responsible for firing firecrackers down the road. Rasman panics and refuses to open the door, shouting "If you get inside I will kill you" to the policemen. Another squad car is called on place, as well as the fire brigade that break down the door. A violent fight erupts and Rasman gets hit with kicks and punches. He is blocked against the floor, a chair is broken on his back, he gets muffed and his ankles tied with an iron wire. The chair mysteriously disappeared from the house but the doctors discovered its marks during examination. Only three of the policemen on the scene will be sentenced to 6 months of deferred sentence and a 60.000 provisional for manslaughter. The Court of Cassation confirmed the judgement.

**FEDERICO ALDROVANDI** was coming back home from a night out with his friends on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2005. While walking along Viale Ippodromo, he is stopped by policemen Enzo Pontani and Luca Pollastri. After a short time, a second squad car with policemen Monica Segatto and Paolo Forlani gets to the place after a woman called the police to reports about cries and yells down the street. According to Aldrovandi's lawyer, Fabio Anselmo, these cries are those of the fight between the policemen and Federico during the arrest. On his body, the forensic examination found 54 injuries and two broken batons were collected after the arrest. The cause of death is positional asphyxia occurred while he was pressed against the ground, as the last act of a long series of violence. Enzo Pontani, in the recording of the call with the police station, states literally "we fought for half an hour with this guy, we batted him the hard way". False leads, omissions and false testimonies during the investigations will prevent the indictment of the policemen for murder aforethought, leaving it to manslaughter. The 4 policemen will then be sentenced to 3 years and 3 months of detention, reduce to 6 months by the 2006 amnesty.

Monica Segatto will face only a month of detention, thanks to the "empty the prisons" law of 2013.

Enzo Pontani was put under house arrest after a month.

All four of them, after only 6 months of suspension, will be able to wear the uniform again. All this happens notwithstanding every judgement of the various courts and on all levels talked about an “unjustified violence” first and a “concealing of truth” later and the policemen are described as “crazy broken elements”.

STEFANO CONSIGLIO was killed on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1989 when he was 16 years old by a gunshot of a policemen who was chasing him in the streets of the Brancaccio neighbour in Palermo after stealing a car radio. The policeman was arrested for the murder of a minor and Stefano Consiglio, shot at point-blank distance, died three days later in the hospital.

CARLO GIULIANI died on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2001 in Genoa. During the protests of the Genoa Social Forum against the G8 meeting, the crowd was repeatedly attacked by police and carabinieri while marching along the authorised path of Via Tolemaide and 300metres away from the agreed limit. During the charges, considered as extremely violent by the numerous witnesses, the police forces used tear gases, water cannon and several gunshots are fired. It is hard to run away, with a 10.000 people crowd pushing on your back: who falls gets hit by three, four, even five officers altogether. The protesters tried to resist by building barricades. A group of them, after an aggression from a side lane, tries to create a way out for the protestors by following a platoon of carabinieri withdrawing towards Piazza Alimonda protected by two armoured vehicles. Inexplicably, one of the cars stops against a garbage bin and a gun appears from the rear window and a large part of the protestors runs away. The gun first aims at a young boy who bends over and runs away, then refers to Carlo Giuliani who has just arrived on the place holding a fire extinguisher. He raises his arms and the gun fires two shots, hitting Carlo in his face. After the shots, the vehicle is on reverse and passes, notwithstanding the cries of warning of the people in the square, on the body of Carlo. Then, driving on his body again, moves away towards Via Caffa over the line of police forces who assisted the scene without taking any actions.

ALDO SCARELLA, 24 years old, dies on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 in the impact between his motorbike and a car. The car driver is acquitted, but the dynamics of the events cannot be reconstructed because the policemen on the spot omitted to fulfil the procedures laid down by Art. 354 of the Italian Criminal code that establish how “police officers and judicial police take care that the traces and objects related to the felony are taken into custody and that the conditions of the site and of the objects will not change before the arrival of the Public Prosecutor”. The evaluations were taken by Genovino Moschella who declares that “the car was moved after the transit of other vehicles was authorized, because at the moment we didn’t realizes how serious the situation was”, in contradiction with the reports made by the carabinieri that states hoe “two ambulances with their medical staff were on the place. A young boy, apparently about 25 years old, was lying down and the medical staff was providing medical assistance to another biker. The young boy lying on the ground, already dead, is identified as Spina Carmine Aniello”.

CARMINE SPINA hanged himself in an isolation cell of the Buoncammino Prison in Cagliari on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 1986, leaving a sign with the words “I die as an innocent”. He had spent 185 days in prison, in Oristano first and Cagliari after, without being interrogated by the investigating magistrate and without having met with his lawyer nor with his relatives. The cause of the arrest was a presumed involvement in a robbery that turned into the murder of a shop keeper, few metres from his house and for the which he was completely external.

# *Never alone facing abuse in uniform*

*by Giuliano Santoro*

The phone lights up and vibrates. It rings three times. If nobody picks it up, the call is automatically diverted to another phone, for another three rings. If still there is no response, the ringing bounces to another number and so on, cascading over a list of users.

Until one of the operators presses the green button on the phone and receives the request for aid. This is the basic structure of the toll free number for the Association Against Abuse in Uniform, known by its Italian acronym ACAD. The group references the acronym that manifests street gangs' distrust toward the police, ACAB ("All cops are bastards"), transforming it into a support structure against police brutality. The group turns two years old this month.

The group receives about 10 calls a week for prompt intervention against abuses of power. These calls are the emblem of a broken silence in a country realizing it has a problem with law enforcement. Rattling off the rings of this chain means retracing a Spoon River of violent deaths.

It means telling stories that would have drowned in isolation if this process of sharing and mutual aid had not been set in motion. "Each time the ACAD's toll free number rings, it is a blow to the heart. I hope every call is just a generic request for information or even a silly joke. I hope with all my might not to find myself for the umpteenth time across an unacceptable tragedy," an ACAD volunteer told il manifesto.

Yet these two years of painful experience teach a lot. "The few hours right after the abuse are the most important," says Luca Blasi, who works at the Roman chapter of the association. "The victim needs a lawyer immediately. In the event of death, the expert's opinion is a crucial part of discovery, as well as making sure that the autopsy is carried out properly."

ACAD employees and volunteers realized that in addition to the technical issues, the communication aspects are also important. In other words, it can be crucial to forcefully and clearly tell the story, to undermine lies in the official version as quickly and widely as possible.

For example, Davide Bifulco was 16 years old when was shot dead during a traffic stop by police in Naples in 2009. The authorities later said he was transporting a mafioso on his Vespa; in truth, the man with him was just a friend. And Federico Aldrovandi, a teenager from Ferrara killed after his arrest in 2005, was described by police as a drug addict who killed himself by literally throwing himself onto a nightstick, breaking it. His mother, Patricia Moretti, was forced to defy decency and put his tortured body on public display to pierce the information wall (three policemen have been definitely condemned for the killing but they are all still in service).



Ilaria Cucchi, whose brother, Stefano Cucchi, was beaten to death while in custody in 2009 (some Carabinieri are now on trial in Rome), was forced to do the same: show the black scars and broken bones of her brother's body to the press. After a torchlight procession through the streets of Rome, authorities reopened their investigation and an appeal is now pending.

The same loneliness against the authority was managed by Lucia Uva fought the same lonely battle against the authorities after her brother, Giuseppe Uva, a 43-year-old carpenter from Varese, was found dead after a night in Carabinieri custody in 2009.

Such cases "have allowed thousands of citizens to realize that there are people of flesh and blood behind the boast of having beaten up 'a junkie piece of shit,'" Blasi said. "Hidden behind this horror is not an abstract figure. There is even a smile."

ACAD grew from a simple intuition: to make available to large numbers of people the legal, communication and political skills acquired over years of battles against repression and prison. No longer is securing justice a niche operation, but a civil right.

The organization held its first public event in January 2014, in Bergamo. "Union is our strength. If we remain alone we can do nothing," Domenica Ferrulli said that day. Her father, Michele, a 51-year-old laborer, died in police custody in Milan in 2011.

"About Ferrulli, we must remember one important thing," ACAD volunteers say. "Handcuffing a person, putting his hands behind his back, and then leaning on his body with the knee, belly to the ground, is very dangerous."

Aldrovandi also died this way. "That position causes suffocation or compression of the heart. That maneuver should not be taught in police academies any longer. But for all we know, it is still the normal practice."

There are families who have the strength to act, to give speeches and to challenge the authorities. In those cases, ACAD performs support tasks. But often abuses occur in gray areas, in difficult situations, in particular environmental contexts and social conditions. It is not easy to be a victim and at the same time be flung at the media. Here ACAD steps in, taking matters into their own hands, providing legal support, financial assistance and running dogged communication campaigns.

ACAD also lobbies for policy changes that may prevent abuse in the first place. For example, they're asking for a bill that punishes torture – Italy has no specific law on torture, even though the European Court of Human Rights has requested one. ACAD also demands that police have identification numbers (to hold officers more accountable) and that police be suspended or fired if guilty (it is not uncommon that an officer who kills someone remains on the force until the end of his career).

In the view of the 10 ACAD chapters scattered throughout the country, there is also apparently an excessive use of TSO, the Italian acronym for mandatory health treatments that are sentenced, often too easily, to people unconscious or perceived as "crazy."

But a TSO can be the opposite of healthy. Andrea Soldi, one of the victims of abuse under ACAD's care, died last August in Turin after a TSO because of an "atypical strangulation": The suspects are three policemen and a psychiatrist.

Many cases have been reported at ACAD's toll free number about beatings at the reception centers for migrants and abuse of power against people forced under house arrest, excessive repression in the name of urban decorum on the edge of notorious "nightlife" neighborhoods and mysterious deaths in custody.

ACAD follows the case of Nicolò and Tommaso De Michiel. The two brothers were in their early 20s in 2009, when they were victims of a police beating in Venice, where they lived. They were taken to the police station, Tommaso among many men in uniform. His case is catalogued in the "Survivors" dossier at ACAD, because the young man escaped with "only" a broken rib, another rib cracked, testicular hematoma, facial trauma, bleeding in the eye, swelling of the lips, and injuries to the wrists caused by dragging.

His father stopped the assailants by entering the station and showing his ID: He was also an officer. He was subsequently suspended from duty for participating in a demonstration to show that not all policemen are like those who beat his children.

ACAD's [Facebook page](#) has collected over 40,000 "I like." On the website [acaditalia.com](http://acaditalia.com) you can find the materials and campaign updates of cases ACAD is following, in addition to information on how to join and support the activities of the association. The toll free number to denounce abuses and find support around the clock is +39-800-588-605.

"The ACAD association," as stated on its website, "stems from the desire to provide support to the families of victims and those who have been abused but who have not given up and did not accept a legal truth that too many times has proved to favor those who try in every way to hide with impunity behind a uniform. ACAD is anti-fascist and anti-racist, values of freedom and equality that we want to lay claim to."

# “*Pump!*”: *The Construction of Fascist Personalities in the Italian Armed Forces*

*by Charlie Barnao and Pietro Saitta*

Through ethnographic analysis of a paratrooper brigade in Italy, we contribute to the study of cultural transmission from the military to the police. In doing so, we recuperate a classic but controversial theory of the authoritarian personality (Adorno et al. 1950). The specific attention to fascism here is necessitated by fascist self-representation in the military and police, and its historical roots in the Fascist regime. Though, owing to its multifaceted and protean nature, no comprehensive definition of fascism is possible (Eco 1995, 5; Payne 1983), fascism can be understood relative to esthetics, political affinity, and racialization. In contemporary Italian armed forces, fascist symbolism and folklore (salutes, marches, songs, tattoos, etc.) are widespread. This accords with a typically fascist esthetic based on romantic symbolism, a positive view of violence, and the promotion of masculinity and charismatic leadership (Renton 1999). In terms of political affiliation, 23.4% of soldiers define themselves as far right and 39.6% as right-wingers (Caforio and Nuciari 2011). The struggle for nation and race supremacy is fundamental to fascists (Ebenstein 1964). The military and police, still overwhelmingly comprised of white nationals, are thereby loci within which a cult of nation and race can be practiced.

Fascism, then, is an ideology, a world view, and a set of practices and attitudes that are part of Italian political and civil culture. It lives and changes as it is reproduced within democracy. Gobetti, a witness to its rise, saw fascism as “the autobiography of a nation.” All the ills of Italian society and politics—rejection of liberty, the desire for order, and privileging authority over autonomy—were embodied in it. Despite its revolutionary claims, in sum, “[f]ascism is the legitimate heir of Italian democracy” (Gobetti, cited in Martin 2007, 117). This contextual specificity does not preclude the relevance of this case study to phenomena and events elsewhere in the recent past. A main motivation for our work is to explain violent liberal-democratic state repression meted out to protesters over the past decade and a half, principally in North America and within the European Union. To that end, our research is a way to shed light on the dynamics that have made those dramatic events possible and, arguably, similar across liberal democracies. It is also a way to explain the social process triggering violence in circumstances more ordinary than mass demonstrations.

Because many police officers go through military training, the study simultaneously addresses the making of fascist police officers. There is a direct line between those involved in war-making or preparing and those who come to occupy, say, city streets. This has major repercussions for any egalitarian post-capitalist futures and even the possibility of mass mobilization toward such futures. While the process of forming authoritarian personalities in the army and police may differ according to national context and may have already been studied, this work demonstrates the mechanisms involved so as to enable the formulation of strategies to counter authoritarianism. It is an inquiry into how institutional practices, through such processes as military training, encourage the generation and transmission of fascist values and attitudes. We focus more specifically on the disciplining of subjects to link this case study with similar findings by others (Csordas 1990; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). We aim to describe the process of re-writing the self and the mechanisms whereby an ideology of the scene—a set of notions about how one must be present in an environment and react to its challenges—develops and shapes the individual. The selection of an elite corps is a methodological strategy to bring out a “hyperbolic” scenario, in which radical practices, habits, and attitudes are flaunted and encouraged. We can thereby adduce the elements underlying the everyday management of situations that increasingly combine peace with conflict.

## Methodology

The research was carried out by one of the authors, Charlie Barnao, during his year-long military service (1993-1994) as paratrooper. The first two months were spent at the Paratrooper Training Barracks in Città della Torre, and the following months at the Regiment (RGT) Paratroopers in another town in Tuscany.<sup>3</sup> The case study is based on autoethnography, including daily unrecorded conversations and direct observations entered in a diary (Holman Jones 2008), archival research, and unrecorded interviews. Autoethnography involves examining one's own lived experiences, interactions, and relationships as "primary data" (Sandstrom, Martin, and Fine 2010, 26), displaying multiple layers of consciousness, "connecting the personal to the cultural" (Ellis and Bochner 2000, 739, italics in original). We use the term autoethnography instead of ethnography, because the author of the observation was not yet an ethnographer at the time the events described in the account were taking place. The concept of autoethnography entails the notions of a degree of distance from the object and from process. What makes this an autoethnography is, then, the initial lack of emotional distance between narrator and narrative subject and the subsequent distancing, through time and introspection, behind the processing of the observations recorded in the diary. It is over the course of this process that the personal becomes social, and it becomes clearer how social forces shaped the individual, her/his life trajectory, and so forth. The autoethnographer's honorable discharge also shows successful integration into the cultural context analyzed. His subsequent distancing enables insight into the learning process involving both the individual (the single paratrooper) and the entire body of combatants, whose training is to create a cohesive and undifferentiated group. Autoethnography, then, is a way of bypassing the type of distance that separates the researcher from his/her object and hinders the process of knowledge production by means of filters, untold truths, or unmentionable feelings. Autoethnographic analysis was combined with documentary evidence and unrecorded interviews (made in 2000-2001 and 2007-2009), which facilitated diary content analysis and the verification of correspondence between the training models applied in the paratrooper corps and those in other army units and in different branches of the police. Moreover, we collected material through participant's observation by means of online forums, chat-sites, and social networks<sup>4</sup> linked to Italian paratroopers. Documentary evidence and participant observation served to substantiate empirically the field observations and interviews.

## Police, Army, and Fascism

The training process and the formation of specifically fascist personalities that takes place in an elite unit within the Italian armed forces—a paratrooper brigade—is a privileged space for observing not only the training of a particular group of war professionals, but also the culture and background of as much as a third of police officers (in Italy, the police is mainly divided into gendarmerie, finance police, prison guards, and state and local police forces). Reinforcing this trend, most positions available in the police forces are, since the early 2000s, reserved for army veterans and personnel. This is of major importance relative to the police forces' recent composition and its internal repercussions, both of which need to be systematically analyzed.

One internal consequence is a friction among police officers. As a 40-year-old male police station vice-commander told us:

The former military are impolite. I know that this word is not right; but that's the word we use. They feel they are better than civilians. They consider us bureaucrats that have never been at risk. They always know better... You know, they question orders and are in general disrespectful ... When I attended the academy, I had graduated from the university and my roommate was an electrician. We were, literally, like two different worlds meeting. Today, I imagine that at night, in the same room, these people talk about rifles, M16s, the time they shot someone in Kosovo, or were under attack, and so on and so forth...

Another officer, member of a police union and regular contributor to a police bulletin, observed that:

By means of the new channels of recruitment, the police forces are going in a direction of remilitarisation and de-democratisation.

This refers to Law 121, which in 1981 granted new political and associative rights to the police, but also demilitarized it. Today, according to this police officer, the civilian part of the police has been sidelined by means of the new forms of recruitment:

We witness a regression, a de facto remilitarization that shrinks the rights of police members and aims at building a new kind of collective personality, within which democracy and critical sense are less and less welcome ... With regard to democracy, the current situation within the police is strongly influenced by the over-forty generation; in other words, those who joined the police at the end of the 1990's. Many of those officers chose this career in the aftermath of the killings of Falcone and Borsellino [two anti-mafia magistrates killed in 1992 by organised crime] and due to the emotional wave that followed these homicides. They had great ideals and, above all, didn't come from the army. That has been the last load of civilians. Afterwards, as you noticed, recruitment was reserved to former soldiers—people with a certain mentality.

These statements point to the ways professional military culture leads to the formation of authoritarian and, in the case of Italy, half-openly fascist personalities.

### Changes in and Increasing Violence by the Police and Army

Since the 1980s, Italy has seen a profound change in the structure of the army and police due to: a) the growing commitment to international war and peace-keeping missions; b) the abolition of military service in favor of professional military corps; c) the easing of transfer from the army to the police for those serving one to three years in the army, with a consequent increase of veterans in the police. These changes involve a double movement: policing action by the military and military action by the police (Dal Lago and Palidda 2010). They are probably at the root of a rising trend, since the 1990s, in police and army violence during protests, during police custody, in barracks or prisons, and in military missions abroad (see also Amnesty International 2011).

The infamous 2001 G8 meeting in Genoa is a representative example. During a massive demonstration, police murdered a demonstrator, injured about 500 people, and, without any provocation, clubbed or otherwise assailed thousands, including children and the elderly. After the demonstration, the police mounted an attack on independent media and other defenseless activists inside a school used as alternative media headquarters and lodging. To justify this, the police planted homemade bombs inside the school during the raid and used them as proof against the activists. In both hospitals and detention centers, demonstrators suffered devastating physical and psychological violence, while forced to give the fascist salute to the sound of chants such as: "1, 2, 3 viva Pinochet; 4, 5, 6 death to the Jews; 7-8-9 we're not sorry for the nigger" (Zamperini and Menegatto 2011). Another instance of police brutality occurred in Parma in 2008 when traffic officers arrested an Italian-Ghanaian citizen, Emmanuel Bonsu Foster, on groundless drug-dealing charges and beat him savagely while insulting with racist and speciesist slurs like "dirty nigger," "monkey," etc. (Ferri 2008). This parallels the Italian army's racist violence, including rape, during peace-keeping operations in Somalia (Razack 2005). Between 1987 and 1994, a police gang called "Banda della Uno Bianca" (The White Fiat Uno Gang) terrorized central and northern Italy, killing 24 people and injuring 102. The members, committing robberies, extortion, and other crimes, were not only motivated by money, but also by hatred of drug addicts, immigrants, and nonconformists. It is alleged that they were linked to extreme-right groups and even the secret services (Beccaria 2007; Cento Bull 2007).

Such violence against civilians bespeaks of deviance within the armed forces and of an attitude whereby:

enemies are not political opponents, but a sort of new "biological threat," and which appears to justify racism as the condition of acceptability of putting someone to death... within the frame of permanent wars (against terrorism, rogue states, the Mafia, "illegal" migration, insecurity, and acts of urban incivility) that alternate with ephemeral truces. (Palidda 2010, 125)

This appears all the truer if we consider that Italy has been governed for over a decade by powers that are openly xenophobic and infused with “zero tolerance” notions reserved only for crimes committed by the poor, and a violent security-fixated ideology traversing the entire institutional political spectrum (Bigo [1992](#)).

Violence has also characterized relations internal to the police and army. Violent initiation rites have been practiced for decades in the police’s Nucleo Operativo Centrale di Sicurezza (NOCS; Central Security Operations Service), especially so-called “anesthesia” or the beating of the initiate’s back to numbness and then inflicting a deep bite on the buttocks so that they tear from side to side (Angeli and Mensurati [2011](#)). Such brutality has also been recognized institutionally. In March 2012, during an official ceremony, the Head Military Prosecutor Antonio Sabbino remarked on the noticeable increase in recorded cases of “hazing” over the few years prior (Il Mattino [2012](#)).

### Military Culture and Rites of Passage

The increasing violence of army and police is linked to socialization processes. Numerous studies on barracks life point to its being a total institution (Foucault [1975](#); Goffman [1961](#); Ignatieff [1978](#)), with a system of practices, behavioral rules, and reference values (Shils and Janowitz [1975](#); Siebold [2007](#)). Socialization involves rites of passage from civilian to the military life (Cockeram [1973](#); Holyfield [2011](#)). According to Van Gennep ([1908](#)), such rites have a uniform structure made up of three successive phases: separation, transition, and re-aggregation. This is evident in our case study (cf., Burke [2004](#); Winslow [1999](#)).

During the separation or preliminary phase, a person abandons a previous social position and behavior. It involves a resetting of previously acquired habits and elimination of learned values and rules. This takes place during a series of ritual acts that, in the case of military service in a paratrooper RGT, concern train station reception, barracks entry, and initial “trainee paratrooper” treatment. The first few days are marked by processes of destabilization and homogenization, peppered by a series of disorienting rituals conducted by parachute instructors to effect separation. Corporal Instructors are paired and assigned a squad of 24 trainees. Orders are screamed, illogical actions are to be carried out, etc. The obligatory crew-cut haircut and wrong-sized uniform signal the embodiment of separation during this ribaltone (reversal) ritual, characterized by disorientation and suppression of individuality. The brutality of initial impact compels one to seek the comfort of camaraderie with those sharing sleeping bunks, a beginning of the process of aggregation. It is precisely at this point that the instructor orchestrates the ribaltone, performing it casually for efficacy. All new arrivals are ordered to change beds, sometimes even dormitory, breaking up any inchoate relationship and stability. The ribaltone, therefore, imposes uniformity as it actualizes new arrangements in an apparently casual way, so that everyone must start from scratch and live in existential uncertainty.

The transition, or threshold, phase occurs as a training period, corso palestra (gym course), involving a further selection process of those deemed suitable for the parachuting license. During this stage, the subject is forced into a state somewhere between “departure” and “arrival.” Van Gennep ([1908](#)) maintained that those at such a threshold may either be masked as monsters or completely naked. In the barracks, they are called “monsters,” “thorns,” “toads,” etc. until the paratroopers earn their parachuting license and terminate the first part of their training, at the end of which they are handed a role to fulfill for the rest of the military service. Trust is a key demand of the trainee paratroopers set by the instructors in a phase where relationships between comrades are not governed by clear rules. The only reference point is the instructor, the person with seemingly absolute power over the recruits’ daily life, as described in the following diary entry about an instructor of the “Scorpions” squad:

Milpar Barracks, Città della Torre, October 9, 1993

Yesterday evening Corporal Instructor Giovannini seemed a little more human. Before going to bed, after he had made us remake our beds at least ten times, he started up a conversation with some of the people who sleep near him. In particular, he was talking to Fancesco. He asked him



about his home, about his family. He asked him if he had a girlfriend. Francesco seemed really pleased by the instructor's sudden interest. Then Giovannini asked Francesco if he had a photo of his girlfriend. Francesco got it out and showed it to him saying that he really missed her. Giovannini took the photo of Francesco's girlfriend and said that she was really pretty. ... Then Giovannini made Francesco stand to attention because he was going to the bathroom with the photo of Francesco's girlfriend. He said that he was going to look at the photo and masturbate while thinking about that whore of a girlfriend.

The huge amount of power that the instructors possess at this phase should not be surprising. In fact, the everyday life of the trainee paratroopers is dependent on the instructors' moods and orders. Anyone objecting is loaded with tasks and risks being refused leave and, above all, being isolated. Those eschewing the instructors' protection are considered "zeroes," "monsters," "dead dogs," and can be subjected to isolation and states of uncertainty. It is during this phase, where the only reference point is the instructor, that new, violent rituals may emerge, often originating from below, from new "leaders" in newly formed groups. It is a sort of military Darwinism, where only those submitting to the instructors manage to get through unscathed.

The phase of re-aggregation marks the moment when a person is reintroduced into society in a relatively stable state and with precise rights and duties (Van Gennep 1908). For a trainee paratrooper, this phase begins by receiving a parachute license and lasts for the remaining period of service. It is marked by a multiplicity of ritualized moments, such as wearing parachute combat boots for the first time or entering new assignments in another barracks, etc. In Charlie's case, the culmination of the training course was the parachute license and transfer to the Parachute Regiment Nuclear Bio-Chemical squad in Palio, where an unusually tough phase of training was to be undertaken. In all this, the ritual that par excellence establishes and reinforces the transition toward paratrooper status and lasts until discharge is the ritual of pumping.

#### Pumping as a Process of Making Fascist Authoritarian Personalities

To explain the process of the making of authoritarian personalities, Csordas' (1990) notion of embodiment is useful in conjunction with the idea of Scheper- Hughes and Lock (1987, 26) that "[c]ultures are disciplines that provide codes and social scripts for the domestication of the individual body in conformity to the needs of the social and political order." Body techniques, then, are ways of shaping the individual self and constituting a collective ideology (a way of deciphering reality, individual roles, etc. by the members of a group). Individual responses to such processes are pressured into cohesiveness and conformity, especially in the case of warriors, whose success depends on abiding by certain rules of conduct and a shared morality. The question, then, concerns the type of ideology and values conveyed and associated with the training process. The above-described military culture, discipline, and bodily techniques provide tangible examples, but the ritual of pumping is one of the most important aspects.

We asked a paratrooper that served recently whether he knows about the pumping ritual and whether it is still practiced in the army: "Sure... We are still tough, man!... Can you imagine a paratrooper who doesn't pump?!" Whatever its origins, "pumping" is one of the most important traditions for Italian paratroopers. It crosses all ranks—from generals to privates—and all roles—from office workers to squad operatives—even in the most intimate instances of barracks life. It is a practice internalized by paratroopers and performed even after leaving military institutions. This is the case, for example, of former comrades-in-arms when meeting on special occasions, during which collective pumping is compulsive.<sup>5</sup>

Pumping can be considered an institutional ritual (Bourdieu 1982) in the sense that it affirms exclusivity. Only a real paratrooper can pump and can make others pump. Pumping consists of a series of push-ups, not necessarily continuous, which the paratrooper performs under the direct orders of a superior. The duration is variable and depends exclusively on the orders or volition of the superior. Only when the superior gives the order to stand up can the paratrooper finally rise to his feet. Generally, pumping lasts longest at night, when the superiors are particularly angry or somehow manage to fall asleep after giving the order to pump. The order to pump follows specific military jargon. The most commonly used orders are: "pump," "push hard for the old man," "the old man is tired," "flat on the floor," "let's do a bit... monster," "I've dropped a

coin... look for it,” “flex and reflect... monster.” When the superior is particularly “tired” (senior),<sup>6</sup> he gives the orders without speaking, but simply by miming the action of a push-up. Upon receiving the order, a paratrooper throws himself on the ground in compliance with precise rules. If he refuses, he can incur all sorts of reprisals. The worst of these is to be called “dead dog” or

“infantryman” by other paratroopers.

Receiving the order to pump must be met by immediately dropping to the ground. During his descent, the subordinate must clap his hands two or even three times (once in front, once behind his back, and then again in front), if so ordered. The superior can make him repeat this operation as many times as he wishes, until he is satisfied that it has been done correctly. Once flat on the ground, the paratrooper immediately carries out as many push-ups as he wishes, after which he can rest, as long as his superior is satisfied with the quality and number of the push-ups. However, he can only rest in the sexually charged face-down bridge position, where only the toes and the palms of the hand are allowed to touch the ground. If the superior is not satisfied with the first series of push-ups, or if the pumping has been carried out for serious disciplinary reasons, the pumping, as well as the moment of rest in the bridge position, is accompanied by kicks and punches aimed at the upper back area of the paratrooper on the ground. The series of push-ups and the resting in bridge position continue until the superior gives the command to stand up. At the end of the pumping, a truly “tough” paratrooper takes off his shirt and goes to the mirror to check out the number of bruises on his back. The greater the number of bruises, the “tougher” the actors in the ritual (superior and trainee paratrooper) have been.

Pumping is divided according to the form of execution and motivation. Punitive pumping is dispensed for insubordinate behavior, generally when a trainee is deemed a “slacker” (not carrying out an order or doing so inadequately), does not show due respect to a superior (even outside the barracks), or, worse still, does not observe a tradition upheld in the barracks. The reason for the punishment is explained to the trainee during the first series of push-ups. The more serious the insubordination, the longer the trainee is kept on the ground and subjected to kicks and punches. Only the superior giving the order to pump can actually beat the trainee, and it is not rare for a superior to be particularly violent and sadistic during this type of pumping.<sup>7</sup> “A real paratrooper is big and angry” is a motto repeated by paratroopers of all ranks, especially during the hardest sessions of punitive pumping. He is “big” because of his capacity to resist pain and because he needs strength to beat others. He is always “angry,” because this gives him the energy he needs to react to difficulties and to resist any violence he must endure. The paratroopers’ pride in their capacity to resist pain is evident when, after pumping, for example, they show other brigade members the bruises on their backs inflicted by their superiors.

Milpar Barracks, Città della Torre, March 22, 1994

The morning training session begins with the usual run of six kilometres around Siena. Then, an hour at the gym: weights and self-defence. The newcomers seem quite fit. Marco is a 19 year old from Rome who was a car mechanic before leaving for military service. Perhaps he has a few extra kilos, but moves well and seems to bear fatigue well. Luca is from Belluno. He is 20 and was a bouncer at clubs. His body is slim and chiselled. He’s not very tall, but you can see right away that he will give a lot of satisfaction to our team. This morning, after Lazzaro made him pump, he ran immediately to the mirror and looked with pride at the bruises that his superior gave him by kicking him on the back.

Sadism and masochism are combined in this type of pumping, reinforcing each other in a common sentiment of admiration for the power shown by the ability to make others pump, to inflict beatings, and by the capacity to resist pain.

Pumping to respect seniority or same rank integrates paratroopers in the spirit of the corps and group identity. Whenever a paratrooper sees a comrade, whether of superior or equal rank, he must “go down” (immediately begin to pump). If there are paratroopers of different ranks on the ground pumping, the “stand up” order will be obeyed in order of rank: first the most senior



ranks will get up and then, gradually, all the others in order, up to the newest arrivals. Underlying this type of action is the inculcation of respect for hierarchy. Often pumping is done spontaneously and without worrying about duration. The higher the officer's rank, the higher the number of paratroopers that, upon seeing pumping taking place, will join in throwing themselves to the ground. Even when a General jokingly "touches the ground with a finger"<sup>8</sup> in front of the lined-up platoons in the barracks parade ground, all the paratroopers present throw themselves to the ground to start pumping.

Pumping is also obligatory whenever a paratrooper's beret falls to the ground. He then has to pump a minimum of 20 push-ups, out of respect for the beret. The beret is retrieved with the mouth during the first push-up, and gripped between the teeth for the whole duration of the exercise. This is the only case in which pumping to respect seniority or the same rank does not apply to bystanding paratroopers. The importance of the red beret is as a totemic symbol (Durkheim 1915).<sup>9</sup> "Always respect the beret... it is colored by the blood of all the paratroopers who have died in battle" is one of the very first rules that the instructor teaches the trainee paratrooper. "By washing the beret in a pool of blood, it became the symbol of all the paras [paratroopers]" is a line in one of the most famous paratrooper songs, which we sang to the top of our lungs every day during the march on the way to the canteen. Magical powers and superstitious beliefs are attributed to the red beret, the "vanguard of glory."<sup>10</sup> "Those who disrespect the beret will be punished... even if nobody sees." Such beliefs are related to an "extreme" lifestyle, especially psychologically, and continual fear of injury during training activities or missions ("peace-keeping," public order, etc.). The beret becomes a magical object aiding paratrooper survival. The belief in the values symbolized by the red beret "for which many paratroopers have died in battle," is so internalized so as to elicit pumping even when one is not aware of being observed. The worst fear is that any lack of respect for the beret may bring bad luck or compromise a paratrooper's strength.

Finally, paratroopers pump as playful activity, a way of "raising morale" during training. The orders come from the most senior in the group, and sometimes whoever gives the orders also pumps with the others. Usually, it is executed by groups of paratroopers throwing themselves to the ground simultaneously, positioning themselves as far as possible so that they can look into each other's eyes. Normally, push-ups are synchronized with counting done aloud. Pauses in between are accompanied by roars from the most senior officer, who shouts out three times the name of the squad, platoon, company, or RGT. At each cry, paratroopers reply by shouting at the top of their lungs the name of the brigade. Playful pumping is so important that it forms a part of the final moment of barracks life, "the last order to break ranks," and thereby defines the end of the educational process.

The day before discharge it is customary for commissioned and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the barracks to help trainees prepare the departure ceremony.

River Barracks, Palio, September 5, 1994

Today, we started organising the discharge ceremony.... At last, it's coming to an end. I'm tired of it all.... I'm tired of these fascist songs. I'm tired of the offensive jokes made about Blacks and Jews. I'm tired of all the hate felt by these kids who don't even know why they are saying these things.... Yesterday, in the dorms, I said that I didn't want to hear any more insults about Jews, because I was Jewish!... "See my nose?" I said, "My family has Jewish origins." Anyway, I'm squad commander now, I'm leaving and they can't do anything to me... they can't retaliate. If they say anything I'll make them pump alright.... I still can't believe that many of them, people I thought were friends, people I've been going out with in the evenings for the last six months, don't salute any more, they don't even speak to me any more since I told them.

This ceremony, prepared each time a squad is discharged, involves marching, poems, solemn speeches, and, above all, paratrooper songs sung while marching around the barracks parade ground ending with a collective pump. The final and most important part of the ritual is singing "Avevo un camerata" (I had a comrade).

It is remarkable that the word “comrade” (camerata) is, in Italian, closely related to fascist culture, both in the original fascist party and neo-fascist organizations. Despite the military connotation of the term, it is rarely used by soldiers. The word undergoes re-signification on special occasions, such as in the use of the above-mentioned song. Officers and NCO informants insisted on keeping the song within the barracks’ confines, as it is “a little too nostalgic about the past” (i.e., the Fascist dictatorship). They reasoned that “others” (i.e., the non-military) might “be unable to understand it.” Some of those about to be discharged might know the song is the Italian version of a Nazi song (“Ich hatt’ einen Kameraden”), made famous through Field Marshall Rommel’s funeral (De Marzi 2005), even though it was not originally a Nazi song. Nevertheless, inside this barracks, it was regarded as the ideal song to mark the end of a year-long training course, whose main objective, made evident by all the above-described practices, is the formation of authoritarian and fascist personalities. Thus, the re-signification of the term “camerata” and the mystification of the song’s origins are made possible by a shift in meanings relative to context. With the singing of “Avevo un camerata” and with the final group pump ending with the collective cry of the brigade’s name in the barracks parade ground of the River barracks in Palio, on the night of the September 13, 1994, the military service of the 9th squad of 1993 officially ended.

## Discussion and Conclusions

In spite of criticisms leveled at the Frankfurt School’s behavioral theories (Smith 1997), we see the above-discussed training process as a profoundly authoritarian form of education ideal containing many of the elements of the Fascism or F Scale proposed by Adorno et al. (1950). Accordingly, fascist characteristics comprising this scale include: (1) respect for convention; (2) submission to existing order; (3) lack of introspection; (4) superstitious behavior; (5) stereotypical beliefs; (5) admiration for power and toughness; (6) cynical and destructive tendencies; and (7) obsessive attention toward sexuality. Pumping manifests and reproduces all the principal elements of the F Scale. Sadism and masochism (especially in punitive pumping), respect for convention (pumping whenever the beret falls), and submission to the existing order (as in pumping to respect a superior) are just some salient examples. It is through such ritual practices, shared by the Armed Forces generally, that many of the elements forming the model of an authoritarian and fascist personality are transmitted and reproduced through the daily socialization processes within the barracks. What we might define as a substantial authoritarian, fascist type of education is woven into the way of life and then reproduced against a background of rules and values which is, in turn, made up of what we might designate as historical and cultural authoritarianism-fascism, characterized by a series of formal cultural elements (traditions, rituals, symbols, swastikas and/or Celtic crosses tattooed on the body, the roman salute, disparagement of Jews, Blacks, etc.) which are more or less directly inherited from a Nazi-Fascist ideology.

Our findings therefore point to two main conclusions:

1. The acquisition of aggressive traits inside the military corps is desired and controlled by the institution in that it is deemed necessary and functional to the final aims of that very institution. Socialization is structured as a passage from one phase of life and social status to another, inserting the subject to a new reference culture through a series of practices centered on stress and aggression. After the first training period, socialization into the new culture is carried out by means of training practices, the pumping ritual being among the most important. It is a ritual desired by the institution (all paratroopers pump, from Generals to the lowest ranks) and one that becomes a privileged relational model used for transmitting those values, rules, and behavioral models believed to be fundamental for the efficient running of the same institution.
2. The educational system within the barracks aims at forming authoritarian and fascist personalities which, in stressful conditions, lead to sadistic and uncontrollably violent behavior. The model around which pumping ritual develops contains many of the elements characterizing authoritarian personalities. It is a model of psychological fascism mixed with the values and symbols of historical-cultural fascism.

Extending these conclusions to the police might seem extreme to some. The police, after all, are not homogenous. There are highly trained members, often coming from war situations, working together with individuals with minimal military preparation or with an entirely different background. Police entry exams notwithstanding, a large number of places are reserved for former soldiers (Law 226/2004). Thus, at least one-third of officers hired over the past decade come directly from the army, and many of these come directly from contexts of war. Moreover, the main differences between the army and the police lie more in the intensity in respective training methods than their content. Indeed, for both, the problem is about forming a certain kind of mentality and values (Nattero 2011). In a study on police training, Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce (2010) observed that paramilitary features undercut the notion that community policing—a common concept in the current debate on security—is “real” police work. Continued emphases on the structure of authority and deference, in-group solidarity with us-them orientation, and performance under stress are important to police training. Della Porta, Peterson, and Reiter (2006) argue that relative to the degree of police militarization, there is more country variation in federal states where police training and organization are decentralized. In spite of the tendency to involve traffic officers and other local corps in the management of order, control in Italy remains centralized. Insofar as the 1981 reform partially demilitarized the corps and made its members less coercive, the training process appears to be pursuing an ideal of efficiency based on notions of physical strength, cohesion, and responsiveness. This is comparable with army ideals, the main difference being that of learning “on the street” (Carrar 2006). Moreover, as for the management of order and demonstrations, the years from 2000 onward were characterized by a crisis of negotiation as a means of guaranteeing peaceful protests (Della Porta and Reiter 2004).

Aspects of this change can be gleaned from the experience of one of our informants—a woman of 26 years who served in Afghanistan, occasionally employed in immigrant detention center security—who told us that:

After we came back from Afghanistan... a few days later... for the first time they trained us to intervene in demonstrations and riots, to “control the crowd,” as they had... in a centre for the identification and expulsion of immigrants.... It was a daily training... we were deployed at the centre of a field, within the headquarters... one group against the other. One group, composed mostly of veterans, impersonated the “No Globals,”<sup>11</sup> the crowd. The other group, generally composed of new personnel, impersonated the police. “You have to control the crowd...” Then, riot simulation followed ... I got wildly beat up.... They threw at us anything within reach... ice, pieces of wood, wheel tires, smoke-bombs.... When it was over, four people had to go to the medical office and one to the hospital for tests. I had a black eye myself.

Official reports point to the Carabinieri training yearly several thousand “anti-guerrilla” officers in secret camps in Italy and abroad (Galluzzo 2001). Moreover, other police forces have “elite” paramilitary troops, trained for special operations (antiterrorism, anti-kidnapping, etc.). People in these divisions are not mobilized everyday to carry out special operations, yet we find them engaged in normal activities. A major scandal surrounding one of the elite police corps, the NOCS, involved a group of officers going to the hospital where one of their comrades was receiving treatment (he had been stabbed during an evening intervention at a disco) to beat him up, since a NOCS member “does not allow himself to be stabbed by any old bastard.” This episode is enough to show the exiguous nature of the differences between military and police attitudes, at least in the case of Italy. But what complicates the picture further is that, at times, the army assumes some of the features of the police and vice versa. In fact, the military carry out policing tasks on many missions abroad, while the police and carabinieri perform tasks of a military nature both at home and abroad.<sup>12</sup> In such a framework, military and police know-how are combined, creating a hybrid indistinguishable in practice.

In a nutshell, the institutional response sought is based on the ability to be cohesive in moments of crisis and on an ideology of opposition (Rosen, Knudson, and Fancher 2002). This way of behaving in real situations is usually characterized as being top-down, authoritarian, and tending toward automatism. This mechanism helps to reduce complications and reaction times to the sorts of challenges confronted on the street. The problem is that these “challenges” are often of a very different nature than those the police are actually trained to deal with and go beyond

their interpretative abilities, beyond the fact that they are, in any case, a way of “getting results” and of gaining some sort of professional advantage. The violence shown during street demonstrations against “professional protesters,” the brutality with which young “misfits” are beaten in the streets, at police stations, or in police cells, probably corresponds to a definite (political) vision of the world and of authority, law and order (what we call fascism), as well as the perception that they—as police forces—are acting in the way that their superiors and society expect.

This is consistent with what the bulk of literature on state crimes has repeatedly reported (Stanley 2005). In fact, it is no coincidence that the number of police officers convicted for violence is very small and that the majority of “deaths due to police brutality” in Italy are covered in a veil of mystery, made even more confusing by the assessments of court experts and by the lack of collaboration in most higher-level institutions (police headquarters, prisons, etc.) (Chiarelli 2011). Despite complaints, the police usually have at their disposal the means, the cover, and the cohesion, which, barring exceptions,<sup>13</sup> are mobilized to defend the institution and its members. Ultimately, the police cannot be blamed. After all, their members have been programmed to respond precisely to the orders made through a chain of command and to anticipate what this same chain of command expects of them (Waddington 1999). Caught within a web of power, they can only take power themselves and exercise force, as well as derive joy, benefits, frustration, and a whole range of other emotions that this “profession of arms” has to offer. And if all this is true, then the profound, albeit naive question that we feel obliged to put to the civilian supporters of this complex apparatus of tyranny—aimed at the mortification of those who become its enemy, as well as those who work within it—is what on earth does this have to do with democracy, with freedom, and above all, with the defense of life?