

Capriccio Siciliano

Part four of the Soviet's explosive investigation
of the JFK assassination

In this section

This week *Executive Intelligence Review* concludes its exclusive translation of "Capriccio Siciliano," a four-part series of articles on the links between political assassinations and the drug trade by Julian Semyonov which appeared recently in the Soviet youth organization's weekly magazine *Ogonyok*. The series is significant not only for the new light it sheds on such matters as the Kennedy assassination, the Mafia, and the activities of the Maoist Chinese intelligence apparatus, but also because it sets forth a new, sophisticated Soviet perception of the inner workings of British and Knights of Malta-linked intelligence networks.

Part one of our serialization dealt with the links between Lee Harvey Oswald, the purported assassin of President John F. Kennedy, and Jack Ruby, the man who killed Oswald; the links between Ruby and the Mafia and drug-running; and presented evidence linking Chinese intelligence to both. In part two, Semyonov detailed the Mafia's ties to Italian fascism and Western intelligence networks, and in part three he showed how those strands led to the illegal narcotics trade and the sometimes murderous politics of international oil.

In this, the fourth and last portion of his series, Semyonov draws all the threads together to reach, if not answers, then certainly the defined avenues along which further investigation should proceed. Notwithstanding his sometimes misinformed secondary evaluations (for example, of Jimmy Hoffa and of the Kennedy family's political role) Semyonov has made a powerful contribution to dragging the British-run international "black networks" to justice.

(Note to readers: Ellipses in the text are all as employed by the author in the original Russian, except where enclosed in parentheses —(...) — which indicate occasional small deletions by the editor for purposes of abbreviation.)

In the spring of 1962, the FBI arrested Joe Valacci for dealing in heroin. Known within Cosa Nostra by the nickname "Cago," he was the trusty lieutenant of Tony Bender, Genovese's assistant.

When Joe Valacci was sentenced, the police sent him to jail in Atlanta, to the very same cell block where the "boss of all the bosses," Vito Genovese, was imprisoned. The boss had ideal conditions in prison. His food was prepared by a cook who knew Don Vito's tastes. On bath days a special masseur kneaded his body, before handing him over to the barber and the pedicurist. Inmates who wanted to talk with Don Vito submitted a written request. The audience lasted not more than 10 minutes, and questions had to be prepared beforehand. No flights of lyricism here, just business.

Once Don Vito came up to Joe Valacci and asked him what he thought of Tony Bender.

"I think Bender is a fine man," answered Joe.

He did not know that Bender had just been killed on orders from Don Vito, who had decided that his "little son" was siphoning off his profits.

Genovese sighed, smiled at something and remarked:

"When you find a bruised apple in a basket of nice red ones, or, even worse, a worm-eaten apple — you have to throw out that apple mercilessly, don't you agree?"

Joe Valacci looked into the softly smiling eyes of the godfather and was overcome with horror: "I am under suspicion!"

"If I've done anything wrong, even once," said Joe, "and you have proof I'm guilty, give me a pill. I'll take it right here in front of you. I'm not afraid of death, but I can't stand disgrace."

"What are you talking about, my son?" asked Genovese with the same soft smile, "I don't think you understood me. Let me kiss you as a sign of my trust in you. We have the same life behind us. Are we going to just forget about the past? Only crazy men forget about the past, or people who have decided to get friendly with nonpeople. But you wouldn't do that, would you?"

Don Vito kissed Joe on the forehead, kissed him with the tender kiss of an older brother.

And after that kiss, the whole Genovese "guard" looked on Valacci as a condemned man: they openly suspected him of betrayal, for they all knew how many murders and kidnappings he had behind him and yet he had gotten a short term, while Don Vito, the boss, got 15 years.

Joe Valacci, a faithful Mafioso, didn't handle this terrible suspicion well. He couldn't sleep. He stopped eating, for fear of poison.

Things came to a head when during an exercise period he seized a length of metal pipe and bludgeoned the petty swindler Straup on the head, because he thought Straup was sneaking up on him with a knife.

Joe could look forward to the electric chair, for Straup died without regaining consciousness.

And then Joe Valacci made an offer to the prison authorities:

"Get me away from Genovese, I'm ready to cooperate."

A few months later, prisoner Joseph di Marco was transferred to Westchester prison. This was the pseudonym given to the new FBI agent, Joe Valacci.

Flynn, the rising star of criminal investigations, was appointed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy to work with him.

Joe Valacci told everything about himself. Flynn pretended that he found "di Marco's" testimony highly interesting. He fed him dried sausage and soft cheese, "di Marco's" favorites. And he unwound, slept comfortably in his single cell, and "the other side" no longer seemed so disgusting to him. "Among them there are people too."

Flynn, having softened up his prisoner, hit him right between the eyes:

"Joe, everything you've told me I've known for years. Don't take us for stupid, Joe. We're interested in you because we believe you can tell us all the names, the safehouses and how to get there."

"Get where?"

"Joe, Attorney General Robert Kennedy didn't save your life so that you could read me detective film scripts. You're alive because you can help break Cosa Nostra."

"You'll never break Cosa Nostra, because that's the second government of America, sir. You can't do anything to the Syndicate ... What are you going to do with Joe Bonanno? Formally he runs a real estate firm. In reality — he's boss of New York. What are you going to do with Joseph Profacci? He practically runs the whole import of olive oil. You love olive oil, right? It's good for your heart and all that. Well, Profacci is the second boss of New York. And what are you going to do with Carlo Gambino? He's the chief consultant of the Syndicate — but you can't pin him down to anything, even though our people don't do a thing without his advice. And Thomas Lucchesi? He's a clothing manufacturer and also a boss in New York. Vito Genovese? He's in jail in Atlanta, but every week he gets a report from Cosa Nostra and hands down

orders on the main questions of Syndicate strategy ... What can you do to them, sir?"

"In order to do, you have to know, Joe. You will help us learn, Joe. Everything, to the very end."

"Answer me just one question, sir, but answer the truth. Was Luciano CIA or FBI?"

The question caught Flynn by surprise, for the special relations of Luciano with the secret services was the CIA's "secret of secrets."

"You see," continued Joe Valacci (henceforth "di Marco"), "You had Luciano, the 'boss of bosses' on your side, and you couldn't crack Cosa Nostra. Or didn't they let you? Robert Kennedy is a powerful man, the President's brother — but even he is not all-powerful in this country. And if he gets stubborn on this one, they'll hit him and hit him bad, believe me."

All his near and dear ones turned their backs on Joe Valacci, when Vito Genovese gave the signal from Atlanta. His son publicly denounced his father, his wife demanded a divorce, and his relatives spread a story that Joe had gone crazy.

Joe Valacci died in prison from a sudden and unexplained illness. Remember the sudden and strange death of Ruby in prison!

"Any other traitor is going to get the same thing," was the word among Cosa Nostra people, when his obituary appeared in the papers. "Sooner or later our vengeance will catch up with him. No one dies his own death, not even in a single cell by his color TV and soft bed."

... To return to the relations between the Mafia and fascism: we must review a number of postulates which read as if they were specially formulated for the practical activity of the "secret order."

The first postulate concerns relations with the trade unions (Cosa Nostra is constantly looking for approaches into the unions).

"The national-socialist trade unions should by no means be organs of class struggle, but only organs of professional representation. The national-socialist state knows no classes. Both nationalist workers and national-socialist employers are servants only of society and carry out its assignments.

"The spirit of class struggle characterizes not trade unions as such, but only Marxism, which has made the trade unions a weapon in its struggle."

The second postulate has to do with the Mafia's "educational work" — how to prepare gangsters, how to teach them to obey blindly and carry out orders to the letter:

"For centuries, the magical power of the spoken word has been that factor which set into motion great historical avalanches, both religious and political. The broad masses yield above all to the power of the spoken word. All great movements are national movements. This is the volcanic eruption of human passions and spiritual sufferings. Only passion gives — and only to her

chosen ones — words which, like hammer blows, open the gates to the hearts of the people. He who is without passion, whose lips are sealed, is not the chosen messenger of the will. To the man who is only a writer, let us say: 'Sit at your desk with your inkwell and engage in theoretical activity, if that is what you have the ability to do. You were not born a leader and have not been chosen one.' "

The third postulate is about relations toward people, toward "the throng," "the herd," sometimes more politely called "the mass":

"The mass loves a master more than someone who merely requests something of it. The mass is more satisfied with a teaching that suffers no other than with the toleration of various liberal freedoms. For the most part, the mass doesn't know what to do with liberal freedoms, and even feels abandoned in such circumstances."

(The author of these "postulates," so precisely applicable both to the rightists, and the Maoists, and the Mafia, was Hitler.)

A series of investigations

... I found no place to stay over either in Palermo or in Termini. The hotel prices were sky high.

"Go to Cefala," I was advised. "It's a pretty little town, an old one right on the coast, and it has a few hotels of different qualities."

So I went to Cefala.

I stopped at a gas station and decided to get another 20 litres. Usually people don't get very much gas at a

time in the West, since they have gas stations all over the place, and gasoline is expensive. Nobody wants to waste money, and if two or three litres evaporates, that's quite a bit of money. But I, accustomed to our huge distances and few gas pumps, filled the tank; people stared at me with their eyes popping out, especially when gasoline bubbled up around the gas cap. In Sicily they conserve every drop, just like a pastry chef decorating a holiday cake with very expensive icing.

The left rear tire on my Fiat was a little flat. I opened the trunk to find the jack and couldn't believe my eyes: there was no jack and no spare tire either!

I immediately figured out in my head how much it would cost to pay for the missing jack and tire ("You live and learn, but die a fool" — I should have checked the car before I left Syracuse!), compared this price with how much money I had left, and began to feel somewhat uncomfortable. There might not be enough.

I was in a very low mood when I arrived in Cefala. I tried to fix my mind on the town, which is famous for its "coastal Mafia," but I couldn't get my head clear. An unpleasant thought, especially when it has to do with the next day, is like a pebble in your shoe. It's always there.

I checked in at a medium-cheap hotel, went down to the pizzeria, and ordered Italy's tastiest food, Neapolitan pizza. It's very similar to our Batum khachapuri, but it has tomatoes instead of eggs.

There was only one table set in the pizzeria. Five adults — two men and three women — were sitting at it, along with a dozen children, incredibly friendly, noisy, and laughing little Italians. The children were

Who's got the news that's fit to print?

Apparently word of the Executive Intelligence Review's exclusive translation of "Capriccio Siciliano" is getting around. For the New York Times's lead editorial of Nov. 16 includes a vigorous denunciation of conspiracy theories in general and of an especially outrageous such theory on the Kennedy killing from the Soviet Union in particular.

Huffs the Times:

If the United States keeps reopening investigations of the assassination of President Kennedy, a New Republic writer recently suggested, well then let Italy reopen an inquiry into the assassination of Julius Ceasar ...

Such acid comment was prompted by the House Assassination Committee and was surely justified by the way it began investigating the murders of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. and the conspiracy theories generated by both. Poisonous feuds and lurid leaks soon made the committee look even more irresponsible than the fearful fantasies.

But then came a new chairman, Representative Louis Stokes of Cleveland, and a new chief counsel. G. Robert Blakey, of Cornell Law School. Abruptly, the leaks stopped and the committee's work became disciplined. If it continues on its prudent course, the committee will make two impor-

tant contributions after all.

The first concerns the billow of conspiracy theories generated by the Dallas assassination: the Russians did it; no, the Cubans; no, the Mafia. A Soviet writer now claims it was *Peking*, in cahoots with the Mafia ... Instead, the committee put the conspiracy theories on trial — and found them invalid ...

In an upcoming issue the Executive Intelligence Review will present the story behind the Stokes Committee coverup, and the role of whiskey king Edgar Bronfman and his Permindex organization in the Kennedy and other assassinations. What will the New York Times say to that?

running around the pizzeria, the women were talking nonstop while furiously knitting, and the men had their eyes glued to their newspapers.

The 13-year-old waiter, glancing over the men's shoulders at the newspaper, whispered something to the cook, who was baking pizza in a huge oven like the ones in the late Aleksandr Row's films. Wiping his hands on his long white apron, the cook took off his chef's hat, came up to the men, and also peered at the paper until the little assistant cooks, standing by the stove, started shouting at him. Evidently my pizza was burning.

When the party left, their newspapers were left behind. Twenty-some pages is a nuisance to carry.* I picked one up and looked at the headline: "Scandal of Giuseppe Peri, Police Commissioner." I don't read Italian, but if you know English, understand some German, and are studying Spanish, you can get the general sense. The story was about a group of Mafiosi tied up with the fascists. I wrote down the police commissioner's name in my notebook, ate my somewhat scorched pizza, went back to the hotel, and flopped into bed. After a Neapolitan snack, the next day's nightmare — of paying for the credulous bungling of a man used to relying on an outlet's prestige, on account of its being a government facility and therefore highly responsible — was not as acute as it had been an hour earlier.

("Maybe he'll take responsibility" — still, you must agree that it's a fine thing to be able to count on it ...)

Later I obtained documents on Commissioner Peri, which were published by the Italian magazine *Europeo*. This material is of sufficient interest to be discussed in great detail.

Journalist Roberto Ciodi, who reported on the inquisitive Commissioner, claims that Peri had no doubt of the connection between "neofascists, Mafiosi, and gangsters."

Peri is currently investigating four cases. On the surface they appear to be unrelated, but he thinks they are internally linked into a single whole.

Among other names, Peri is carefully studying Pietro Luigi Concutelli, a Mafioso whom the bosses relocated to northern Italy. He was arrested in Rome in February 1976 and 11 million lire was found in the room where the police nabbed him. This was money he got from Mafioso Renato Vallanzasca: the ransom for Signore Trapagni, who was kidnapped on orders from headquarters. The chain led to the neofascist Placido Morgante, who, in order to frighten the kidnapped Luppino, cut off his ear: "If they do not bring the money, I will cut you to pieces."

Commissioner Peri insists that it is Concutelli himself who shot Judge Occorsio and Pietro Scoglione, the General Procurator of Palermo. He insists on this because 30 .24-caliber cartridges were found not far from the scene of the murder. Exactly 60 cartridges of

the very same caliber were found in the car used to kidnap the banker Corleo, and in Concutelli's secret apartment 339 cartridges of that same caliber were confiscated, along with armed forces instruction on how to handle explosives and two blank ID cards, complete with seals and signatures, from the Italian Defense Ministry.

The four criminal cases which concerned the commissioner above all others were the following: the murder of some court officials; the crash of a DC-9 airliner in the mountains of Sicily in full view of a crowd at an electoral campaign meeting near Palermo; four bold kidnappings; and a series of bandit raids on the western seacoast of Sicily.

Europeo underscores: "These are all links in a single chain of plots, the goal of which is to inspire fear in the population, to discredit the state authorities and to use the chaos thus created to impose their own criminal ideology. It is no coincidence that many of these crimes were perpetrated on the eve of the elections with the support of a certain section of the Mafia, which would come up 'winners' in the event of a power turnover."

Commissioner Peri studied the technique of the organizing of the kidnappings, which were carried out in order to finance the movement of the fascist organizations *Ordine Nero*, *Avanguardia Nazionale*, and *Ordine Nuovo*.

Kidnappings, like political assassinations, are thoroughly planned and even rehearsed several times.

The first stage, the process of the kidnapping itself — the riskiest part of the operation — is entrusted to the Mafiosi living in the same region as the victim. In this way, the perpetrators are up front: "Look, there they are, the scoundrels. We know these characters; there's no need to look any further."

The second stage: if they do not succeed in channeling the investigation toward the obvious man, the up-front man, in order to distract the law from seeking the true criminals, from the headquarters which does the planning and knows what the planning is for, then comes the time for retribution and the small fry are sacrificed to the authorities. The perpetrators are little fish. They are not dangerous, they know nothing, they can't spill anything. The chain linking the headquarters to the perpetrators is many-layered and interfaces with the criminal world's connections to the police through informers buried within the apparatus.

The story of the DC-9 explosion is yet another proof of how small fry are sacrificed. There were 118 passengers on the Alitalia airplane. One of them (obviously a hit man) was not identified. The remaining bodies, although torn to shreds by the explosion, were identified. The relatives flew in, and received urns. Only one urn was not picked up — the mafia bosses, of course, don't like parading around in the open. This was the man who carried in his suitcase the little package given to him at the airport, having no idea that it was an explosive and that the timer

* Pravda, the biggest of the dailies Semyonov's readers use, is usually six pages long — ed.

would set it off at the very end of the trip, as the mountains of his native Sicily slowly and majestically went by under the wing of the airplane. . . .

Peri stresses in his analysis: "In the event of landing gear failure, the pilot has several seconds in which to signal the flight control and security workers on the ground. Then the 'black box' record remains. But this pilot didn't report anything, meaning he did not have that second. There was the explosion, then dead silence, and nothing more." ...

(I should note that until now no one has researched yet another not unimportant circumstance: on board the airliner was also Ignatio Alcamo, deputy general procurator in the Palermo appellate court. What matters came under his jurisdiction? How many people connected with the Mafia were waiting for a summons to his office? What level were these people?)

The ultraright — neofascism and the Mafia, united by their shared interest — strikes hard, and the stakes are uncommonly high. Judge Scaglione, the Palermo general procurator, was shot. The investigation of this murder — the first assassination of this type — was carried out by the general procurator of Genoa, Francesco Coco.

They shot Procurator Coco, and two of his bodyguards also were riddled with rounds of ammunition. This happened after Coco met Occorsio in court, and a very important exchange of opinions transpired between them.

Commissioner Peri concludes: "The headquarters in Rome, to which all the threads of the plot led, was very active, but remained above suspicion. There existed and still exists a powerful machine whose particular business is organization of kidnappings. (280 million lire was paid for a Mr. Mariano, 2 billion lire for the banker Perfetti, 700 million lire for the industrialist Campizi.) The idea-men of the organization must be looked for *in political circles which are above suspicion*. The weapons, gear, and military instructions found at Concutelli's clearly reveal the main goal of the heads of the organization, who do not disdain to use the powerful support of the Sicilian and Calabrian Mafia. . . ."

... It is clearly worthwhile to analyze thoroughly (although this is devilishly difficult; the "open" society knows how to cover up its secrets) shifts in the economic structure: without economic shocks, fascism, as the highest manifestation of nationalism, is practically impossible, since it is not profitable for capital. It becomes advantageous only in a critical situation, I would say, in a "choice" situation: Either the victory of the leftist forces or the emergence of the ultraright, which can be controlled. Isn't that why the various Krupps and Thyssens depended on Hitler in the difficult years of economic crisis and the upsurge of the leftist movement in Europe?

Let us return to the tragedy in Dallas, to the story of the death of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Because this

was a crime of many levels, we must remember that Charles Luciano, "the narcotics king," CIA agent and "boss of all bosses" of the American Mafia, spent several years in Havana, turning the capital of the dictator Batista into a transshipping center on the "Asia — Mediterranean — USA route."

It follows that in Havana tremendous amounts of money were invested. After all, it was a world center of the gambling business as well! Remember how the Mafia bores its way into banks, gets itself legalized, and penetrates into all the pores of the System. Thus the Mafia had the interests of respectable capitalists and bankers. The Castro victory was a blow against bank accounts! And to this they know only one way to react — attack! Those who planned the landing of Cuban counterrevolutionaries in the Bay of Pigs were connected in one way or another with the financial groups who had a financial interest, a real interest in getting Havana back. Castro closed all the casinos, which cut deposits into American banks by millions, even billions! And for that, they'll fight you to the death, as the history of imperialist wars clearly illustrates. But previously the Mafia had not penetrated so deeply into the pores of legitimate business. Now a paradox arose: the bandits and Mafiosi, embedded in the banks carried along with them the very financiers who pay enormous sums to an army of journalists, directors, actors, and professors to turn out propaganda against narcotics. Narcotics interfere with the system of exploiting the workers, dissipate their strength, and, moreover, hurt discipline in the armies, which are supposed to defend the class interests, the economic interests, of the strong men of this world.

... "The deputy boss" in the Maranzano group for many years was Francesco Saveria, known by the pseudonym "Frank Costello." He was sometimes called "premier of the underworld." The old Mafioso liked this nickname. He had made his career in 1930, when he concluded a deal with Louisiana Governor Hugh Pierce Long. Long gave Costello exclusive rights to the ownership of the "gambling business" in the state. Costello hired, for double duty as deputy and adviser, the old fox Dandy Feel.

Dandy rushed around America, putting together a block of "strongmen." He finally proposed to the "premier of the underworld" two powerful partners: a Mafioso from a "good Sicilian family," Carlos Marcello, and the boss of the group of Jewish gangsters, Meyer Lansky. A "pact" was formed between Costello, Lansky, and Marcello. They took over the casinos in most of the southern states: then the group began "the invasion" of Havana.

On the evening of May 2, 1957, Frank Costello dined at one of the most elegant French restaurants in Manhattan, L'Aiglon. Costello was famous as a genuine gourmet. It is thought that he financed the publication of the elegant leather volume *The Mafia Cook Book*. That evening Costello ate kidneys in red wine, "*boccacini da vitello*," country sausage,

“semifredo al listaccio” and a lot of strawberries — not canned, but garden fresh, with the leaves still on.

He ate well. His friends liked to watch Frank eat. Beautiful eating is a real art, a sort of invitation to your companions to join a festival of gluttony.

Costello surrendered to the food, during those hours, forgetting vain worldly cares. And on that May day he needed a rest, since an audit of his business was still going on; he had drawn the mighty General Motors into an interesting deal — \$10 billion; the competitors, of course, tried to block it and a scandal ensued. Oh well, what's done is done. When you've got money there's nothing to fear. The one who has something to fear is he who has lost and has to humbly borrow a lousy hundred thousand for his daily bread.

Costello left a tip (he always left \$25 in bills), asked for a taxi to be called, went out into the street, felt drops of warm rain on his face, got into the car at the curb and heard a familiar voice:

“Frank!”

The “premier” turned. A man walked up to him and said:

“It's you, Frank!”

And he emptied the cartridge clip of his Colt into the “premier of the underworld.”

At Roosevelt Hospital the doctors were astounded: the bullet-riddled man was alive.

When Costello could talk, the police came to see him.

“Who shot me?” Costello asked. “Look here, I have no enemies. I am an ordinary mortal, an old businessman, tired of this damned life. I'm telling you the truth, I never laid eyes on the man that committed this villainous act.”

He had seen the man. In fact, he knew him very well: Vincenzo, nicknamed “The Chin,” a former boxer from Greenwich Village, a “hit man,” whose connections can be traced to Vito Genovese, the second “boss of bosses,” Luciano's “truest friend.”

Costello thought fast: keep quiet and maybe survive; say a word and they'll get you. Don Vito Genovese doesn't know how to joke; evidently Don Vito cannot forgive Luciano the monopoly on Havana, and the reason for the murder attempt probably can be found in the obvious features of the General Motors scandal. Everything was precisely worked out, and a cover story was prepared to submerge the obvious.

When Luciano couldn't do anything to “get Havana back,” it was his turn: the Mafia, as we showed, had become a gigantic “network of financial interests.” A fearful chain: the secret narcotics plantations in China; couriers carrying the goods in suitcases with false bottoms; businessmen known as “spreaders”; the legal millionaires of the Mafia; investing the “heroin money” in banks; presidents of construction firms building casinos in Las Vegas with the money; factories for production of artificial milk for babies (billions of dollars of profits; a woman must preserve her figure, and breast-feeding is a barbarism from the

last century!); chairmen of movie industry oversight boards — porno films; directors of the biggest transport companies — the Mafia needs to have its people in transport ... (...)

When the counterrevolutionaries' landing at the Bay of Pigs failed, a thought had to be given to the future. The Castro regime had proved its vitality: Cubans were ready to fight with arms in hand, and “motherland or death” was not so much a slogan as a statement of fact.

Pulling all the threads together

It's still difficult to say who personally thought up the idea of killing the President. The President who could not return Havana to its former proprietors. The President who tried to turn the country toward reality in assessing the new structure of the world. It was this, precisely this, that gave him his popularity. Well, but popularity too has its commodity value.

All it took was for Robert Kennedy, on the eve of the elections, to repeat that if elected to the Presidency he would demand a review of the Oswald-Ruby matter and begin an attack on the Mafia, and the half-mad Sirhan Sirhan appeared, and shots riddled the galvanized counter at the Ambassador Hotel restaurant.

... The morning of that tragic day I was in Angeles, in “Bobby's” headquarters, and I spoke with John Kennedy's former “press chief,” Pierre Salinger, who at that time was running Robert's electoral campaign.

What was happening in that enormous building was indescribable. Noise, shouts, laughter, ceaseless telephone rings; young girls were giving out records with songs hailing “Bobby's” future victory; a young Negro gave me a styrofoam hat with a portrait of Kennedy on it. “Bobby will win!” was written in red under Kennedy's portrait.

Salinger looked at this gay madness with a tired smile: he was only getting three hours of sleep during Robert's tour, and scrunched up in the seat of an airplane at that.

“Kennedy will win?” I asked. “Are you sure?”

“60 percent,” Pierre replied.

“Why not 80?”

“That's impossible in America. 60 percent for us is like 110 for you — an absolute overfulfillment of the plan. . . .”

That evening I returned to New York and was invited by Cronkite, the CBS television observer, to his program: the old ace journalist was giving his instant analysis of the likelihoods in the presidential primaries. Observing the television poll reports from Los Angeles on the primaries (Kennedy's opponent was outstripping him by several points), Cronkite said:

“Nonsense. Bobby will win. He's going to the White House, he's destined to.”

We left Cronkite at midnight; he collapsed in an armchair and a girl started to take his make-up off. On American television everything is real — the telephone really rings, rather than having an assistant off-stage with an alarm clock in hand; the computers really work, they're not just lights lighting up numbers prepared by the props people; it's only the chief that is artificially made up.

"Americans don't like old, ugly men," Cronkite explained. "The chief has to set a standard, that's all there is to it."

We said goodbye and parted: he went home and I went visiting.

At five in the morning Dmitri Tyemkin called, our old friend. (Remember the song "Green Hills"? The music for the film "A Hundred Men and One Girl"?)

"Kennedy's just been killed."

I drove over to CBS.

Cronkite was already there. He was trembling. He sat in his usual place, without make-up, gray, with bags under his eyes.

"When will this horror end?" he asked America. "When? Will we never learn to value and to cherish Man?"

I went out onto the street at seven o'clock. People were walking around preoccupied, exchanging smiles, stopping in front of shop windows, gathering around the tobacco kiosks, as if nothing had happened that night, as if the man they had applauded so much five hours previously had not died.

Heavens, I thought then, can it be that today's new tempos have made the world so indifferent? Or is the System of racing after the mirage of success making everyone feel stale towards one another, increasing egocentrism such as mankind has never known before? Or is it that here, amid the rumble and hubbub, the category of the coincidental has been made into some kind of everyday lawfulness, as the strategists of "terror and destabilization" have calculated precisely on this?

That morning in New York was cruel, cruel to the bitterest hopelessness.

I really began to "unravel" the story of the assassination of the Kennedy brothers at the end of 1968, when I summarized and systematized the material I had collected during my stay in heroic Vietnam, with the fighters of Ho Chi Minh and the partisans of Laos. It was then that I first noticed the quiet Chinese, those who were organizing — during the struggle of the Vietnamese people against American aggression — Maoist penetration, organizing little by little, for the future.

Then was my trip to West Berlin, with talks at the "Republican Club" with Mahler, the theoretician of the "RAF" (Red Army Fraction — the Baader Meinhof Gang — ed.) and his staff. At the time they were openly preaching the cult of Mao; their main ploy was to destabilize the West by terror.

(Listening to them, I always recalled Lenin's works

against the SRs (Socialist Revolutionaries — ed.), who relied on terror; the struggle of the communists against the theoreticians and practitioners of anarchy; alas, how few in the West know about these pages of history.)

Then came Singapore and Malaysia, the notorious "eastern-style shops," the attempt to infiltrate Peking's ideology into Southeast Asia using trade, the creation of Maoist bases in the business world.

The more deeply I delved into the material, the more interested I became in two aspects: first, that *someone* was pushing the Mafia (at the end of the 1950s, as can be traced in the documents) into the oil business. Who? Second, that at exactly the same time the Maoists' narcotics supplies to the Mafia became a real "industry." Oil and heroin. Ruby, relocated by someone to Dallas, the oil capital; Ruby, without whose permission no narcotics were sold there.

Let's say what is *probable*. The first link: oil (that is, war) — CIA; the second link: Peking (that is, narcotics) — Mafia. Put it together and you get: oil — narcotics — CIA — Peking — Mafia.

It was not in vain that I studied the history of the interlock between the Mafia and fascism: they too had ostensibly been enemies, and yet look how they hooked up! Both the CIA and Peking, although exchanging propagandistic barbs from time to time ("Love is not complete without quarrels"), are both interested, from two standpoints, in one thing: in compromising the ideas of scientific communism, which has always been against terror and any other kind of pseudorevolutionary adventures.

I finished the rough outline of my version of what happened three years ago, during my trip to the USA. I am continuing the work. New facts will probably be uncovered, primarily, I should like to hope, by the Americans themselves. But I still have one question: why do those abroad only analyze the obvious, the superficial, the red herrings? What is it — American rationalism? Or is *someone* — again via the System (through which the Mafia germinated) — painstakingly, invisibly, and firmly *deflecting* the Americans from studying *all* the possibilities? (Who? Who benefits?)

What else is remarkable? The latest victims, who might have been able to throw light on the Kennedy affair, were connected to the Mafia: Sam Giancano was considered one of Chicago's most influential Mafiosi — he was shot at dinner, in the kitchen; Charles Nicoletti was a hit man in the Chicago Mafia — he was killed; the "CIA-Mafia" connection, Jimmy Hoffa, also disappeared; John Roselli from the Sam Giancano "family" perished.

Remember: Ruby was relocated to Dallas from Chicago. And it's the Chicago "families" which have the best-established contacts with the "heroin industry." Another link? A link in the chain which has to be broken, so that nobody will ever arrive at the truth. All these murders were organized after Mao

had already died; it is as if someone was wiping out the traces — the projected alliance of the vultures from the military-industrial complex and their guardian angels at the CIA with the Peking chauvinist anti-Soviets must be “irreproachable.”

. . . And in Messina, where I had to turn in my Fiat, everything worked out. The examiner didn't even look in the baggage compartment. I, however, said to him:

“For shame, you didn't provide any tools.”

The examiner answered in Italian:

“Non parlo inglese.”

“Oh well, so much the better.”

At night my neighbor in the next berth explained:

“Live and let live. If all cars were leased out equipped with spare tires and tool kits, then what would the ‘Autosos’ firm do? Declare bankruptcy? Or hire Mafiosi to force the leasing company to give patrons cars with defects?”

My neighbor took a small receiver out of his suitcase, raised the antenna, found Radio Palermo. They were transmitting music — it was tender and heavy and full of sun and warmth, languor and anticipation.

“*Capriccio Siciliano*,” said my neighbor, “the melody of a serene morning. Do you like it?”

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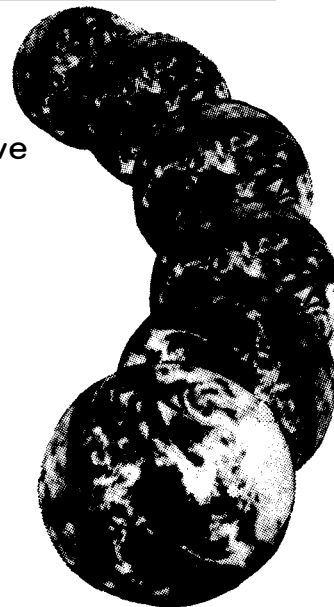
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