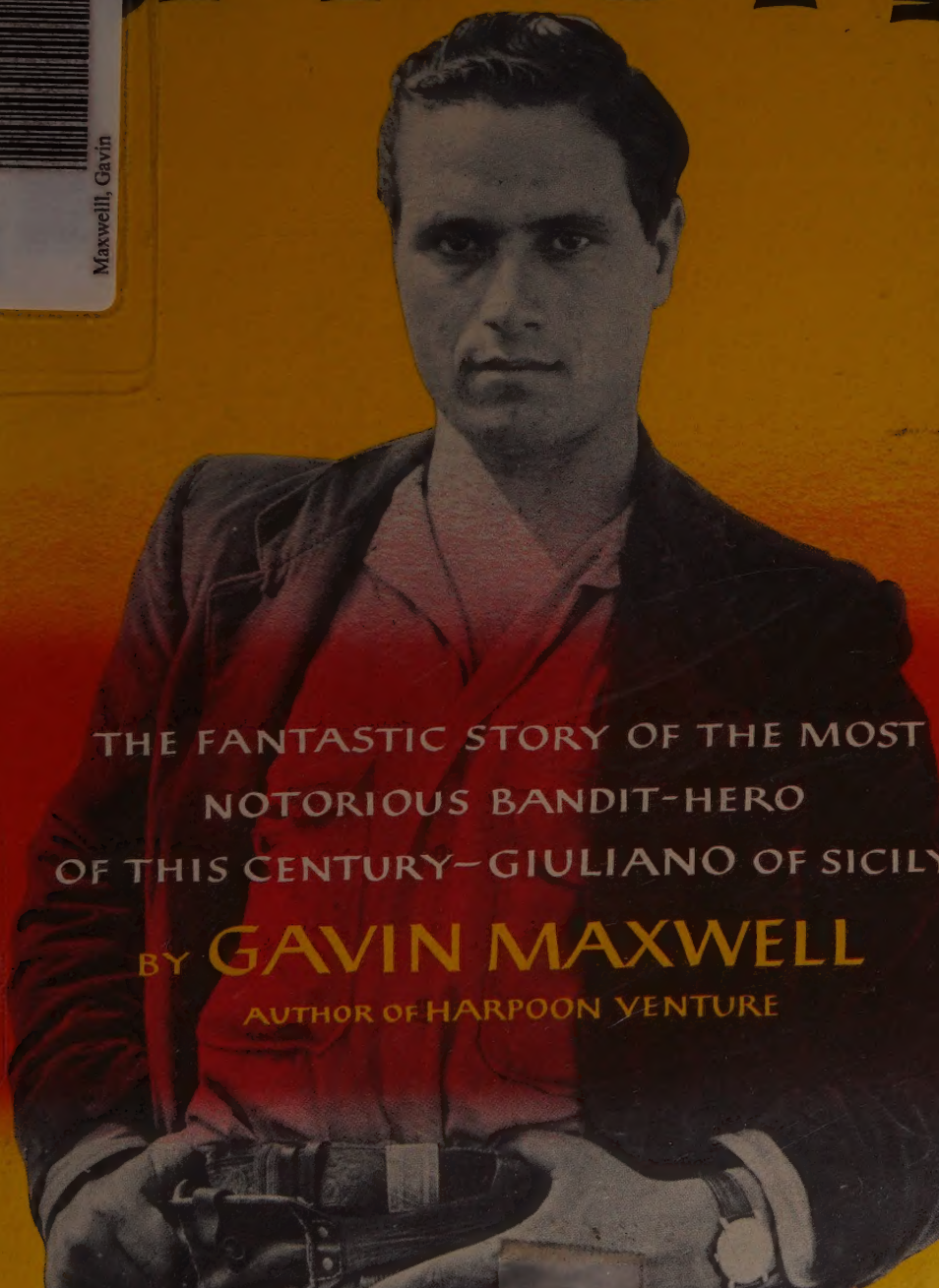


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Maxwell, Gavin

BANDIT



THE FANTASTIC STORY OF THE MOST
NOTORIOUS BANDIT-HERO
OF THIS CENTURY—GIULIANO OF SICILY

BY **GAVIN MAXWELL**

AUTHOR OF HARPOON VENTURE

BANDIT

by Gavin Maxwell

The Greeks had a word for it: hero. Hercules was a hero; Achilles was a hero—men who actually existed, whose exploits and personalities so far exceeded the ordinary in boldness and brilliance that undying legends sprang up around them.

This is the story of such a hero: Salvatore Giuliano, the Sicilian outlaw, who was killed in July, 1950, at the age of twenty-seven, and whose bullet-ridden corpse now lies in an ornate and honored tomb. To the historian, Giuliano's life and death may rank as episodes of purely local importance; and whether he was a kill-crazy brigand or a reckless patriot is essentially an academic question. What matters is that he was a hero: he was fabulous before he was twenty; he was brave; he was beautiful; he could shoot as fast and as straight as Wild Bill Hickok; he could disappear from sight while a crowd watched; he was the subject of songs, ballads and epic rumors; he inspired the most impassioned loyalty, and he was betrayed.

What Gavin Maxwell has given us here is not only the entire chronicle of this hero,

(continued on back flap)

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by GAVIN MAXWELL

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NEW YORK

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BANDIT

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FIRST EDITION

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This book is published in England under the title of

GOD PROTECT ME FROM MY FRIENDS

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For the lemurs and all the ghosts who keep me uneasy company.

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INTRODUCTION

SALVATORE GIULIANO was only twenty-seven years old when he was killed in the summer of 1950. In seven turbulent years he had become the most famous outlaw of his century. According to the tinge of political thought coloring the onlooker's vision, he appeared as a brigand or as an idealistic rebel leader, as a vicious criminal killer or as a just but ruthless Robin Hood, but his name and the rumors of his spectacular exploits in Sicily reached every part of the civilized world. The newspapers claimed him; he became a legend, and because few facts about Giuliano were of sober color they became inextricably interwoven with the garish fantasies of press and propaganda, of worship and of hatred. His image became as a tree smothered by gaudy and luxuriant creepers, the true form of trunk and limb no longer discernible, many of the parasitic leaves so nearly identical with those of the tree as to make distinction impossible.

Because in this welter of foliage it has been impossible to follow every tendril to its roots, and because the tree itself is surrounded by "Do not touch" notices in a variety of menacing characters, it must be a foregone conclusion that the false and the apocryphal have here and there found a place in this story. I have done my best to separate fact from fiction, but to avoid a tiresome and repetitive modification of every statement by "it is said" or "it was reported," I make

this more general qualification at the outset. About every incident in Giuliano's life there are a dozen conflicting versions; even in his own village of Montelepre, where I have lived and talked with his relations, his enemies, and his friends, many of whom had served prison sentences for complicity or as members of his band, the details—often even the main structure—of each story vary from mouth to mouth. There is, of course, always the "official" version of any incident or period, but for reasons that will become clearer toward the end of the story, this is usually the least reliable of them all.

While it would have been impossible to have produced a coherent narrative without personal research in Sicily, I have consulted all the written material that I have been able to trace, ranging from propaganda pamphlets, Sicilian ballads, and the great bulk of the Italian press, to certain official documents and police typescripts that I was fortunate to acquire. Two published books also contain a single chapter on Giuliano: Eleanor Clark's *Rome and a Villa* (Doubleday, 1953) (which first inspired me to go more deeply into the subject), and Michael Stern's *No Innocence Abroad* (Random House, 1953); to Michael Stern I am indebted both for permission to reproduce photographs taken during his personal visit to Giuliano and for valuable verbal communication. In the chapter dealing with Sicily's historical background I have leaned heavily upon Francis M. Guercio (*Sicily*, Faber, 1938), and for detail of the Island's condition at the time of Giuliano's rise to power I have referred frequently to Muriel Grindod's *The New Italy*, published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and to *Italy in Transition*, by G. R. Gayre (Faber, 1946).

My particular thanks go to Miss Joan Hurst for her in-

valuable work in research and collation of Italian press material, and to the Sicilians who were near to the heart of the story and have done so much to help me.

For many reasons it has not been possible to include in this book all the detail that has come to light in research; and in particular it has seemed desirable for the purpose of narrative to ignore altogether many minor characters, the addition of whose names might be confusing to the reader.

Mules are very numerous in Sicily. . . .
The mule is a poor man's beast. He rides to
work on a mule or an ass.

Murders in Sicily are not rare. But foreigners
are never murdered, murder being reserved
for vendettas and quarrels.

Extract from Alphabetical Guide to Sicily
by Douglas Sladen, 1905. Methuen & Co.

PART I

“I can look after my enemies . . .”

The Battlefield

IN 1947, Salvatore Giuliano, a Sicilian outlaw not yet twenty-five years old, wrote a letter to President Harry S. Truman asking that "this splendid Golden Shell" of Sicily be annexed to America as the forty-ninth state. In the four years since he became a bandit, the peasant boy had become headline news throughout Italy, and news worth recording in nearly every country in the world. The war, a history of mass action in which the exploits of even the most spectacular of individuals became quickly obscured, had left men hungry for single figures with whom they could identify themselves. Victory and defeat had seemed barely separable in result, and the power-wish was left unassuaged on either side; secretly many still longed for violence, provided that it was vicarious and that it was committed by someone whom they could admire idealistically. War is iconoclastic, too, and there were many pedestals vacant, especially those that had supported symbols of youth and resurgence.

Giuliano had all the obvious qualifications. He was young, savage, violent, idealistic, and crudely beautiful. He inhabited the mountains and descended upon the rich cities of the plain, robbing the wealthy and giving to the poor. He was a

killer, but a just killer—a thing that any worshiper of the God of Abraham and of Isaac must find it a little difficult to resist. He was tremendously powerful, ruling as a despot over Western Sicily; and, finally, elusive as any dream of Orczy, he could be neither killed nor captured. That was the image as it reached the public of many nations, and it was hardly to be wondered at that he commanded the sympathy of identification as directly as any film star. Some of these qualities he really possessed, and with a natural flair for the spectacular which the press was all too anxious to encourage he was quick to exploit them. For the bobby-soxers who pinned his photograph by their beds he had the added appeal of inaccessibility; it must have been disturbing for them when a woman journalist managed to visit him without prearrangement and apparently found the reverse.

He has never been removed from his pedestal, for those who attempted it were worshipers of images less fundamental and universal.

He died violently in his twenty-eighth year, a center of mystery, intrigue, and betrayal which served only to formulate anew the myth of a lost leader.

He was conceived in New York, and born in Sicily. His parents, Maria Lombardo and Salvatore Giuliano, had achieved the ambition of every Sicilian peasant, and had emigrated to America. For eighteen years the father had lived in the United States, latterly working as a brick carter in Brooklyn, but in the summer of 1922 they sailed again for Sicily on a cargo boat. They already had a son and two daughters, Giuseppe, Giuseppina, and Mariannina. Maria came home carrying dynamite in her womb, the embryo of Salvatore Giuliano. He was born in their home village of

Montelepre (Sicilians say "Muncialebre"), in the mountains some seventeen miles from Palermo.

Palermo is in a flat basin of fertile land, called the Conca d'Oro, or Golden Shell, between the mountains and the sea. To the north is the Mediterranean, a deep-toned changing pattern of blue and purple and green; everywhere else the mountains form a continuous uncompromising ring, notching the hard blue sky like the points of a fever chart. To the southwest, where they come nearest to Palermo, Montelepre lies on their reverse slope, looking out over another and wider fertile basin.

To reach Montelepre from Palermo the road runs straight at first, a few miles of level surface heading right for the wall of mountain. The roadside is fringed with a straggling growth of cacti—the prickly pears and spiky sisal that are never far out of sight in Sicily; the only ugly heritage of the long occupation of the Spaniards, who brought them over from South America. (Each tapering sisal leaf ends in a long black spike, hard as ebony and sharp as a needle. In Sicily it is illegal to carry a pointed knife; the blade must be sawed off square at the end, and it must not be more than two and a half inches long nor the haft more than three inches. Yet any one of these sisal spikes is a weapon as deadly as a dagger.) The passing cars and carts stir up the smoky dust, and it settles upon the grotesque cacti leaving them dead-looking and grayish-white. The simplest representation of a prickly pear leaf is a rubbery ping-pong bat with balls stuck round the edge of it, but when they lean out over the road or stand at a distance in silhouette they look entirely human, stubby-fingered beckoning hands or dead men's feet sticking out of a hedge. On either side of the road, behind this grotesque frieze,

are olive groves and orchards, vines and bamboo thickets; but the land, despite their foliage, looks dry as a desert, for nowhere is it covered with grass.

There is no gradual slope to the bottom of the mountains; the road reaches their foot and begins to zigzag upward through the Pass of Rigano in hairpin bends so tight that a car may have to reverse to get round them. Just below the highest point of the road, looped in the tight zigzag of the ascending corners, stands a square building, small, isolated, and white amid the tremendous desolation of its surroundings—the Bellolampo Barracks. It is one of hundreds like it built to house a platoon or so of law-enforcers in a rebellious country. Had the phenomenon of Giuliano been foreseen each of these *caserme* would have been built to accommodate a battalion rather than a platoon. Here for five years the hours of darkness became for the tiny garrison a mind's-reach of fear and suspense.

From the top of the pass, where the peaks are still two thousand feet above, Palermo looks bright and dazzling and very far below. The squalor and evil and beauty, the dark alleys, the mosaicked palaces and fabulous fountains, are obscured in big sweeps of vivid color—deep blue sea, pale golden city, and the green of the vast surrounding orchards. In front, toward Montelepre, the road winds on through a wilderness of bare limestone mountains paler than the sky. For mile after mile the lower slopes, even some of the higher, are terraced for growing buckwheat, laboriously built-up steps no more than a yard wide; the slow, patient labor of ultimate poverty. One seldom sees anyone at work here, but that is one of the characteristics of the mountains—they are silent, empty, and enormous, and one would say that their slopes would not offer cover adequate for a mouse, yet where

they seem barest they could hide an army, for the great pallid sweeps that at first glance seem so smooth are crusted over with chalky white boulders, each large enough to hide a man. Often they are man-shaped too, and when the eye first catches them a near skyline seems suddenly alive with furtive figures peering over it. Screened by the boulders are the entrances to caves that honeycomb whole hillsides with connecting systems of tunnel and chamber. The mountains are a guerrilla's paradise.

There is very little apparent life in them. Sometimes in the distance a herd of grazing black cattle shows as an ink spatter on white paper, but the herdsman is invisible; scattered stones on the road, sometimes even boulders, show where a flock of sheep or goats has started an avalanche high overhead. A raven flies slowly through an empty sky, or in the distance a great bird of prey wheels a taut arc above the peaks. There are very few small birds.

Underfoot the ground is harsh and unfriendly. Between the limestone boulders there is a scant vegetation which is, without exception, prickly or knife-edged. There are tufts of dark-green *esparto* grass whose blades are as sharp as a razor, a profusion of dry rustling thistles of many species, and a plant carrying little spirally-fashioned spiked burrs, intricate and beautiful and needle-pointed. Where corn has been grown and cut, every stubble stem carries a dense cluster of small white snails; they fall to the ground with a faint dry rattle as the foot brushes through them. Even the sound itself seems muffled by the chalky dust. In the summer there is no trickle of water anywhere in the mountains.

They say there are wild dogs in these hills, whose ancestors have forsaken the villages to live in the caves; they are silent and savage, and creep up behind a man to pull him down

before he can turn to defend himself. Otherwise there is nothing but a few rabbits, a host of reptiles and insects, and, appropriate because they are characteristically spiny, porcupines. The reptiles are everywhere; always as the human foot moves a rustle precedes it through the parched papery herbage; no yard of ground is untenanted by lizards of many kinds and colors, big and small, brown and green, and one, a species called gecko, that has the appearance of some obscene embryo, huge-headed and colorless, with arms astraddle like a crocodile's. There are long black snakes among the stones and there are insects everywhere, big bright butterflies and dragonflies and hornets, legions of twittering grasshoppers, and a myriad ants.

On the map there seem to be villages, but the road to Montelepre does not pass through them. The roofs of Torretta, just to the right of the road, lie two thousand feet below, with olive groves beyond and a sea horizon; then the mountains close in again, crumbly but towering, and the road runs between them in a long winding descent to Montelepre.

The road dives into Montelepre as into a tunnel. Dominated by a huge Norman tower, it lies in a fold, a crease as it were, of the mountain slope; so that the road turns steeply downward at right angles to enter it. The houses begin and end abruptly, without suburbs or outliers. It is a square village, perhaps a quarter of a mile long by the same width, and it holds some seven thousand people. There is only one street properly capable of carrying wheeled traffic, and at its widest there is just room for two cars to pass abreast; from this main thoroughfare branch other streets, steeply sloped, often stepped, and paved with cobbles in the Spanish style of three hundred years ago. The houses, each with its bulging balcony of swan-neck iron railings, are painted with washes of pale

pastel blue, pink, yellow, or plain white. On the walls of many of the houses hang bunches of myrtle to bring good fortune; characteristically, too, many carry a patchwork quilt of small electioneering posters, for politics are never far from the Sicilian mind. The signs represent a bewildering number of parties, many now defunct and their slogans partially defaced.

A vista up one of these streets is a view of a separate world and culture. If a side street in Northern Europe shows any activity it is that of the passer-by or the vendor; here in Sicily the life of the family is lived outside the house during the daylight hours and inside it during the hours of darkness. Table and chairs and household goods are taken outside the door, and the street becomes alive with a hundred activities. Mothers bathe their babies, dry figs and make tomato paste on the ubiquitous bamboo frames, do their washing and ironing, sort through mountains of the thick plaited grass that is sold to stuff mattresses and cushions, chatter, slap their children, and swat at the swarming mass of flies that cover everything. A miscellaneous crowd of livestock wanders among the humans; their ownership, to the outside eye, is indeterminate. Turkeys, hens, goats, cats, and dogs gobble and squawk over small piles of refuse; donkey carts, paneled and gaudily painted with scenes from the legends of the Crusaders and of Charlemagne, the donkey or mule caparisoned and brightly plumed with high garish feathers at brow and pommel, are unloaded at the doors.

The unmarried women take little part in all this bustle; for, a relic of the Moslem occupation, they may only show their faces in special circumstances. This lost its religious significance when Christianity became universal, but remained as a social convention, so that now an unwed girl at a table

outside her door must sit with her back to the street during daylight hours. After dusk she may turn her profile to the passers-by, so that the strolling boys and young men may assess her desirability. This is more or less strictly observed from about the age of puberty onward, and is carried by habit into a white-haired old age by those whose profiles have proved insufficiently attractive. The only other legitimate way in which an unmarried woman may appear in the streets is when going to church, and that only under chaperonage. In practice other girls of her own age are considered chaperon enough, so that going to church at odd moments becomes a strongly social activity because of the opportunities it offers for exchange of glances and scraps of conversation on the way. There is no socially acceptable way in which a boy can get to know well a girl whose profile he admires; he must make up his mind about her from his necessarily slender knowledge and then approach her parents with a view to marriage. Marriage is said to have become much later during the past thirty years, but teenage marriages for both partners are not uncommon.

Despite these intense social taboos in Western Sicily, clandestine sexual intercourse is said to be no rarity, and only some 70 or 80 per cent of girls are virgin at marriage. Some village priests still require proof of virginity after the wedding night, and a girl's mother is usually prepared to display linen stained with blood of some sort; if it is not human, the priest is no forensic analyst. Many boys begin sleeping with women at the age of fourteen or fifteen, either secretly with some compliant woman or girl of a household, or openly—when they can afford to—with the few registered prostitutes who visit most communities for a fortnight or so in rotation. The Northern concept of sexuality as something to be

ashamed of is utterly foreign to the Sicilian outlook ; Priapus towers over the island unabashed by the increasing dominance of Western Powers.

The number of children is astounding, both because of religious restraint upon contraception, and, as a Montelepran friend of mine explained, because there are no cinemas. When one remembers that even in the summer it is quite dark soon after seven in the evening, the argument is convincing. The size of a man's family is a matter of jealous pride, as though his virility were impugned by every year that does not produce another child, even though both his premises and his earnings may be quite inadequate for those he already has. The Giuliano family, with only four living children, was exceptionally small ; nine or ten is a common number, and often there have been others stillborn or who have died in infancy. The largest family of which I heard was of twenty-two living children ; seventeen was still boastworthy, but eager mentions of thirteen and fourteen were dismissed as false claims upon notoriety.

Children, especially boys, are worshiped in Sicily, and this has a profound effect upon Sicilian character. From birth every one of this teeming horde is the object of an unrestrained emotional affection, which may, if the child has unusual charm or good looks, approach idolatry. The boy leans upon this worship as he grows into maturity ; that adoration is the security from which he draws the astonishing assurance of his adult years. It is responsible for the quick spring of enmity ; the hair-triggered Sicilian temper, which is essentially that of the thwarted child ; for the return adoration of the mother-figure, *la mamma*, who personifies the worshiping congregation of earlier years, and for the violently responsive warmth of emotion in friendship. Among

the peasants, anyway, it colors a whole attitude to life, and every action that attitude may produce.

Margaret Mead has written of another community in which children are given the security of adult worship, the Arapesh of New Guinea: "The child is given anything it cries for, which often results in its breaking its mother's earrings or unstringing her necklace. . . . This whole attitude was vividly illustrated when I showed them a red balloon. It was the clearest and most beautiful piece of color that the people had ever seen; the children screamed with excitement, and even the adults held their breath with joy—for a moment. Then, 'Better put it away,' they said sadly. 'You surely cannot have many such beautiful things, and the babies will cry for them.'"

But there is one very significant difference between the two cultures; the Arapesh children are taught that ill temper and resentment must be worked off upon inanimate things, never upon human beings. "The angry child is allowed to kick and scream, to roll in the mud, to throw stones or firewood about on the ground, but he is not allowed to touch the other child. This habit of venting one's rage at others upon one's own surroundings persists into adult life. An angry man will spend an hour banging on a slit gong or hacking with an axe at one of his own palm trees."

It is different in Sicily. Children who fight are almost always separated by adults, but there is no question of principle involved, and sooner or later the moment comes when one is no longer a child. The environmental habit of giving full and uninhibited rein to every emotion has its charms but its dangers too.

The children are noticeable in Sicily in the same way that a swarm of locusts would be noticeable, a hungry swarm that

has suddenly sighted a succulent tree. In the country places the interest is not predatory; the display of curiosity is simply as uninhibited as any other emotion. The numbers are bewildering. Even when one has accepted the fact that a family of ten children is quite ordinary, the idea that a little street of twenty houses a side may contain four hundred children is difficult to assimilate.

Despite the poverty of the island, its utter inadequacy to support its present population, the numbers are still growing. Disease, whose results man's enormous and perennial sexual desire must surely have been designed to combat and replace, has been greatly reduced during the last years, even in Sicily; and the increase in population is steady and hopeless. To keep her population in check, Sicily had depended in the past upon mass annual emigrations, mainly to the United States. Before the First World War nearly four hundred thousand Italians colonized the States every year, and of these by far the greater proportion were southerners and Sicilians escaping from an over-populated territory. In the 1920's the American government, alarmed by the wave of crime and gang rule that was attributed largely to this element in the population, imposed a quota; and showed a bias, too, in favor of Italians from the northern provinces. Throughout the 1930's an average of little more than twelve thousand immigrants were accepted for all Italy, and the figures for Sicily itself have remained negligible ever since. Practically no one leaves Sicily, but the peasant population, obedient to the doctrines of their religion, still breed at the same terrifying rate. This is largely due to the attitude of the women, for many men have a highly skeptical attitude to sexual aspects of sin; some have even got as far as claiming that the Catholic laws against contraception were originally designed to

increase the number of Catholics, and, because they are indiscriminate, are bringing disaster to the island.

Because of the great numbers who emigrated before the days of quota, nearly everybody has relations in America—aunts, uncles, cousins, and, among the elderly, brothers and sisters. Some of them come back, often as American citizens, to spend their old age where they were born, and in nearly every village one meets a few who have lately returned after a lifetime in the United States. These, with their tales of the glories and sophistication of the New World, do not allay the unrest of a peasant population that has great cause for complaint.

The Refugee Relief Act of 1953 fixes the quota at sixty thousand over a period of three years. But of this total forty-five thousand is allocated to displaced ethnic groups, such as Trieste Zone B, and the remaining fifteen thousand to Italians who already have close relatives in the United States who will guarantee their livelihood. For most of Sicily's four and a half millions there is little hope on the horizon.

Despite their swelling numbers, so great a part of the people is in mourning that one gains the impression of a terrible death rate, of a perpetual and mortal epidemic. The door of practically every house carries a diagonal black strip across its center, and the words "*Per mia madre*"—or *padre* or *moglie* (wife) or *figlia*, or even *zia* (aunt), as the case may be. The people themselves carry mourning symbols ranging from a black strip on the lapel of a jacket or the breast of a shirt to complete suits of stifling black cloth complete with black cap. The extreme discomfort of these clothes, in a country where the summer midday sun is like a burning-glass, is a traditional part of mourning like the hair shirt of pen-

ance; and though it becomes modified with the distance of the death, it is carried in some form for years rather than months. I saw one little boy of about eight years old who wore black shoes, black socks, black shorts, black shirt, and black jacket; he was in mourning for his mother, and I was told that he would be dressed like this for another five years.

The children, perhaps more than the adults, show their mixed racial descent from powers that have occupied Sicily in the past; the Normans, Saracens, Spaniards, and French are more recognizable before that scorching sun has tanned their skins to a uniform anonymity. That there appear to be more children than adults who are as blond as Rhineland Germans may have something to do with the successive occupations by northwestern powers during the 1940's.

In Sicily I was told—though it was contradicted by other sources—that the houses themselves, too, point to the origin of the families that occupy them, though the householder himself usually knows only that he paints his walls with the same color that his father and his grandfather did, and it seems to him no more than a family custom or preference. The white, the pastel blues, yellows, and pale brick reds do not vary. They are constant colors in every village throughout Western Sicily, and when a man changes his house he will repaint his new home in the color to which he has been brought up—white, it is said, for Norman descent, blue for Greek, red for Saracen, and yellow for the converted Jew. These last, too (more noticeably in nearby Alcamo than at Montelepre), have the traditional paneled doorway with a “hatch” entrance for greater security. The fact that nearly all the houses at the Greek-Albanian settlement of Piana dei Greci are painted blue seems to support the theory of racial house colors.

In each village, no matter how poor the dwelling, nearly every doorway is surmounted by a semicircle of open wrought-iron work, often intricate and of great beauty, bearing at the center of the design the initials of the owner.

The roofs are flat, and on them figs are split and dried, the inescapable tomato paste—a splash of red against the pale pastel colors—is prepared in droning clouds of flies, and varied brushwood is stored for making charcoal and herbal dyes.

Inside, the houses show great poverty and great pride, and the wealth of religious images shows a sense of final security beyond the passions and persecutions of the moment. Faith is superstitious and profound. For the men, it has very little to do with everyday action; there is, for example, no anomaly in a deeply religious bandit who consistently robs and kills, any more than when the more conventional Christian countries indulge in total war against each other. Belief is beyond doctrine, and embraces the older cults of Greek and Roman whose idols were ousted, in name but never completely in nature, to make room for the Christian hierarchy. As the early conquerors absorbed, consolidated, and rechristened the gods of the nations they overran, so that the Egyptian Ammon became treated by the Greeks as an ill-informed misnomer for Zeus, and Zeus in his turn seemed to the Romans but a heathen synonym for Jupiter—so in Sicily the image of the Virgin was but a re-presentation of the Mediterranean Mother-Goddess whom their ancestors had worshiped under other names and with changing ritual. Even some of the wayside shrines—and it would be hard to find a quarter of a mile without one—stand upon the very spots where the most nearly equivalent deities of other hierarchies were worshiped in the past, and there are unchanged statues of Ceres carry-

ing her infant daughter Proserpine that are now worshiped as the Virgin and Holy Child.

There is an effigy of the Virgin in the living room of nearly every house, very rarely of the adult Christ, who would appear to have become hopelessly ousted by His Mother and His innumerable army of saints. The images vary from the crudest type of reproduction of Victorian paintings to objects of real beauty, and they are constantly lit night and day. Since electricity came to Montelepre this is rarely by candle; a tiny flashlight bulb, crudely insulated and often dangling from a network of wires, supplies a more economical Vestal flame; if this should fuse, as it often does, there is a rush for reserve candles until the trouble can be traced. Despite the fervor of this worship, the Madonna is often treated with the jocular familiarity of the privileged.

Photographs of the family dead are sometimes lit in the same way; indeed a photograph seems of such enormous significance in Western Sicily that one feels that images of the Madonna would be even more deeply revered if they were photographic. Even Giuliano's elaborate marble tomb is decorated incongruously with two little unframed photographs that have curled with the alternating temperatures. One of the most notorious of Giuliano's lieutenants, a certain Rosario Candela, the credit for whose violent death was avidly but unjustifiably claimed by the police, looks down from the wall of the Candela living room from a photograph enlarged so far beyond its potentialities as to have made extensive retouching necessary; the final effect of Victorianism is intensified by the oval image in its broad white mount and wooden frame. The little flashlight bulb hangs from a wreath draped upon its shoulders. To the family—to his mother, a kindly white-haired old peasant woman who in a cloud of flies

is making tomato paste under the hot sun outside the door; to his father with the brightly painted donkey cart who works all day among the olives and figs and prickly pears; to his sister who is scrubbing her youngest baby in the corner of the room; to the other small children, one of whom has eaten a prickly pear inexpertly and whose mouth and lips have become a raw and running sore over which the flies crawl incessantly; to his 98-year-old grandmother, who sits with her hands folded in the dignity of an ancient priestess—to all of these he is a hero who died for a cause; to the criminal records department he is a gangster who died wanted for nearly fifty murders.

That house is typical of the poorer Montelepre dwellings, homely, squalid, intensely friendly and hospitable, swarming with flies and children. A turkey wanders in through the open door and is shooed out, probably only because it does not belong to the family. There is no sanitation; a house may have two rooms but rarely more, and many children sleep together in one bed. In our astringent Western communities we, with our inherently poor sense of smell, have lost one immediate contact with our species; we can no longer detect the odor of our own herd. In poor and cramped surroundings it is intensified until we can perceive it, odious at first because of our fear of the herd, and because of our desire to be separate and more powerful; then, finally, reassuring because it is the smell of an animal that is born human, and, as the common denominator of all our herds, is more potentially friendly and sympathetic than it is hostile. I think that no human smell, except perhaps the smell of death and putrescence, is as unacceptable to Sicilians as it is to northern Europeans. Human excrement, certainly, seems to provoke no revulsion; it is indifferent and means nothing. Only smells

which imply a violent departure from the routine of life have power to arouse distrust or nausea. All others are accepted as insignificant.

Through the open doorway of the Candela house there is a long perspective: first the life of the little back street; then, over the tiled rooftops, the hazy plain below stretching away to Castellammare del Golfo with the sea at its right, and beyond the flat land another ridge of mountains twenty miles away.

In the foreground, a few paces distant, another family sits round a table at their door—on a cobbled terrace, for all this part of the town is on a slope—weaving bamboo baskets. Over their heads, upon cord stretched between an upper window and the branches of a fig tree, are bamboo frames covered with split figs drying in the sun. Bamboo is used for everything; it is as though it were the raft that keeps Sicily afloat, and without it the island would sink under the sea. It is used for baskets and for the frames that dry fruit and riddle the seeds from tomato paste; for fences and for staking all growing plants from tomatoes to vines; it makes brooms and matting and chicken coops and donkey-whips and cattle-goads and toy penny whistles and, at the sea villages, fish traps of great beauty—its uses are endless. A bamboo plantation is part of every *campagna*, which above Montelepre are terraced small-holdings each of an acre or two on the steep slopes that lead upward from the town. Each has a shelter or hut—usually of bamboo—a few olive, almond, or fig trees, sometimes lemons and pomegranates and more exotic fruit, and prickly pears and bamboos. Cattle and goats eat the leaves of the prickly pears, indifferent to the hair-like protecting spines, while their owners eat the sweet seed-filled fruit. (They are eaten only in the early morning and late

evening, for by midday they have become tepid and unappetizing.) When the leaves of the prickly pear fall to the ground the rubbery flesh rots away and leaves only the skeleton, layer upon closely-pressed layer of coarse white lace, brittle underfoot.

It is these trees and plants, too, that make up most of the vegetation of the long plain that stretches away below Montelepre, where many men of the villages go out to work for the equivalent of some seven dollars per week. The villages—Giardinello, just below Montelepre, Partinico, Borgetto, Alcamo, and at the end of the plain Castellammare—were the very heart, the core, of Giuliano's country. Each was a battlefield in a land of ambush and enfilade, where the driver of every brush-laden donkey cart, the rider of every mule carrying wine-filled goatskins, was a member of a vast silent army.

To the left of the plain are the limestone mountains and to the right is the sea. The road is white and dusty. It winds between vineyards, orchards, melon and corn patches, and olive groves older than those at the Garden of Gethsemane; the gray trunks hollow and whorled by age into the same spiral pattern as the horns of the goats that graze among them on ground seemingly without vegetation. The bamboos rustle and move in the breeze, and the hands of the prickly pears gesticulate from the roadside. Like the cacti, the bamboo silhouettes have an un-vegetable quality, a look of up-reared predatory insects with waving legs, kin to the big black ants that scurry through the pale soil about their roots. When the wind is stronger the shape changes; the stem bows, and the leg-leaves fold over it in a gesture of self-protection.

The road crosses watercourses, each bridge labeled by the

name of the river, prefixed by *fiume* (river), or even more grotesquely, *torrente*, for in summer their channels are as dry and dusty as the mountains, and the bright lizards flicker through the chalky stones of the river bed. The road passes no water but the wayside drinking places, where archaic stone faces of timeless knowledge, brought long ago from Greece or Crete, spout a clear jet into a trough before them. The expression of their lips and eyes alters as the sun moves and the shadows change; sometimes they look smiling and benign, sometimes leering and evil. Elsewhere the water is far under the dusty soil. Mules, bony and blindfolded and harnessed to the end of a long pole, tread the weary circumference of its circle; at the center an endless chain of clanking containers dip into water a hundred feet below the surface and come up to spill it cool and glittering into tanks or irrigation courses.

The road is perilous, because many drivers of the painted carts still keep to the left of the road, traditionally to keep their sword-arms free. The trumpeting motor-buses that ply between the villages may round any corner to find the road before them completely blocked; two carts, each laden with brushwood to the bulk of the bus itself, facing him abreast in representation of the ancient and modern rules of the road. Custom changes very slowly in Sicily.

Yet here and there are startling reminders of Sicily's affiliation with the modern and industrial North. Near the road from Partinico to Castellammare, on a low hill rising from vines and olives and bamboo clumps, towers an advertisement so monstrous that it is as though the maker had considered that nothing less than this enormity could awake Sicily to the voice of the mid-twentieth century. This is a cunningly three-dimensional representation of a popular tire, no less

than fifty feet high, and the group of pasteboard figures who stand near by, looking admiringly up at it, are more than twice life size. During the past year some upper sections of the tire have disappeared—possibly taken for firewood or some other practical purpose—revealing the scaffolding behind, and the group below seem worried now, as if they were considering the impossible problems of repair. Sometimes this tire seemed to me of huge importance; if it were ever completely restored it would be a symbol of Italy's final dominance over Sicily.

From everywhere on the plain Montelepre is visible, looking down from its fold in the mountains. It looks wary and unrestful, like the wicked eyes of a ferret glowing from the dusk of its hutch; it looks ready to bite. In the afternoon clouds begin to form, big white cotton-wool clouds whose shadows pattern the mountains with a changing dapple. As a shadow passes over the town it seems to shrink further into its crevice; then, as the cloud passes, to edge softly forward, watchful and waiting. In Rome someone said to me: "They should change the name of that village, really—anything else but Montelepre would do. No one can look at it straight or think straight about it now—it just means Giuliano."

Siciliad

THE phenomenon of Giuliano was that one young peasant, only twenty-five years old at the height of his power, should have risen from the litter and rubble of the Mediterranean war's ending to dominate the imagination of an island of more than four million people—an island, moreover, where bandits had always been two for a penny and where Dick Turpin would have passed unnoticed among a thousand like him. This was not a rule of terror alone, for throughout Sicily, and especially Western Sicily, the fear that he inspired was mixed in many people with an admiration tantamount to worship. However much the Italian press—in the Government's final campaign to erase his political significance and his romantic halo of a rebel general—might insist that he was nothing but a common criminal, he remained to Sicilian peasants what he called himself, their appointed leader. He came to represent the power of the slave to rise above the master, and to symbolize in the minds of everybody all the bright hopes, illusions, and ambitions that tarnish so early and yet can never be looked at again without some sadness. When an army of a thousand picked men were sent to fight against him the Giuliano legend was secure forever.

Giuliano belonged absolutely to Sicily; he was more unmistakably a product of Sicily than anything that grows from her soil. In Northern Europe he could never have existed; in America he would quickly have become a true member of the criminal underworld, flourishing rankly as a successful racketeer or hunted as a rat to a reeking death in the sewers. How Sicily nursed him, fostered his growing megalomania, worshiped him, and finally *con molto dolore* killed him, is something that it is impossible to understand without knowing at least a précis of the island's historical background, the astonishing mixture of races and cultures that composes her people, and the way in which their outlook has been shaped by a constantly changing alien occupation.

The earliest inhabitants of Sicily were the prehistoric Sikelians and Sicanians in the core of the country, and the Elymians of the Neolithic period in the west; archaeologists have argued the origins of these peoples without reaching agreement. Colonizing by the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Cathaginians began many centuries before Christ, and in the fifth century B.C. the last two were fighting savagely between themselves for mastery of the island, the Carthaginians in the west and the Greeks in the east. The Greeks were victorious, but for the remaining two hundred years of their occupation the war against Carthage, raid and counter raid, returned like a recurrent fever. By 200 B.C., after a treacherous change of allies worthy of any later century, Sicily was conquered by Rome and became a Roman province.

The Romans cut down the oak forests that had covered the island and grew corn in their stead, cultivated by hordes of slaves whose early ill-treatment led to bitter reprisal and repression; but at length Sicily settled down under the Roman Empire. Rome ruled the island for nearly seven hundred

years, until the middle of the fifth century A.D., when the Vandals and Ostrogoths, Teuton races from the plains of Hungary, swept down through Italy and occupied Sicily and parts of the African coast. Their rule, however, lasted less than a hundred years, for in the middle of the sixth century Sicily was conquered again, this time by the Byzantine Empire. The conquest was complete and not unwelcome, and a hundred years later, in A.D. 663, the Byzantine capital was actually transferred from Constantinople to the Sicilian port of Syracuse.

The Byzantine occupation lasted three centuries, more or less continuously harried by raids from North Africa. These Arabs and Berbers at last made a determined invasion of Sicily early in the ninth century, and, though there was much quarreling between the two conquering races, had in a few years almost completed its occupation. The island was now under Moslem rule for two hundred years.

Next came the Normans. At about the same date as they conquered Britain, they drove out the bickering Africans from Sicily (the campaign opened with the characteristic act of betrayal that has become so familiar in Sicilian history) and ruled for a little more than a hundred years. Their domination of the polyglot mixture of race and creed that the population of Sicily had now become was, with a brief exception, benevolent and constructive, and there was a surprising religious tolerance. While the new conquerors waged a more or less perpetual war against several previous occupiers of the island, Sicily itself remained peaceful, and as a kingdom it extended far up the southern mainland of Italy. In that twelfth century A.D. the island probably came nearer to prosperity than ever before.

All must have seemed undone when the second Teuton con-

quest came in 1194, for the first German king proved violent and sadistic to the point of madness. His rule, however, lasted only three years, and the son who succeeded him, though tinged with the same cruelty, was as civilized and progressive as his father had been the reverse. But the German occupation lasted less than a century, for in 1266 Angevin Frenchmen of a very different type from their Norman predecessors took possession in a turmoil of blood and destruction. This savage conquest was followed by a repressive occupation of brutality, butchery, and torture so great that for the first time the Sicilians themselves rose against their conquerors—a reflection of how far the island's fantastic mixture of races had become unified in the past two centuries. It began with the form of propaganda that is still a powerful weapon in Sicily, and played a large part in the creation of the Giuliano myth—the Sicilian Ballad in the vernacular. These early ballads, circulated, recited, or sung wherever men were out of sight or hearing of their conquerors, told of the tortures, atrocities, and deprivations inflicted upon the people by the French, and urged the oppressed to rise and kill. For sixteen years this hatred grew, until in 1282 it culminated in the massacre historically known as the Sicilian Vespers. As the bells of Palermo began to ring for evening devotion, the Sicilians turned on the French with all the ferocity of the three continents that had given them birth. The war was long and savage. The Sicilians called to their help Peter of Aragon, and proclaimed him King of Sicily. He died before the French were finally driven out in 1302, but the monarchy remained, and Sicily had one century of independence.

At the beginning it promised much. Frederick, Peter's successor, reigned wisely and ably for forty years, but the racial

rivalries on the island were too much for his successors, and when the last of these died childless in 1412 the unity of purpose shown in the Sicilian Vespers had long been forgotten and renounced. In an effort to stave off a threatened civil war between the barons of older occupying powers, a congress proclaimed Ferdinand of Spain as King of Sicily in 1412.

Spain ruled for three hundred years, mainly by viceroys. The Inquisition came to Sicily, killing, converting, or expelling the large Jewish population. Spain fought her wars with one hand while she held down Sicily with one finger of the other; protecting her, too, against the raids from the east—the Turks now—that since prehistoric times had sent Sicilians to the clifftops at dawn, searching the sun-dazzled sea.

Sicily absorbed Spanish ideas slowly, but, although there was never any real feeling of unity with Spain, culture, architecture, and even the countryside itself became during those three centuries essentially Spanish. It was the longest rule that Sicily had had since the early Romans, and it was brought to an end only by the war of the Spanish Succession.

By the treaty that followed, the Duke of Savoy was made King of Sicily, but he reigned for only five years before exchanging the island for Sardinia.

The new master was Austria, whose ally the Duke of Savoy had been against Spain; but the Austrian period lasted little longer than his had, and ended sixteen years later, in 1735.

Now Carlos Bourbon, son of the King of Spain, became King of Sicily and southern Italy, as a single kingdom called the Two Sicilies (a name said to have been invented long ago by the Saracens who had been driven from Sicily into southern Italy, and consoled themselves by christening their new refuge the Second Sicily). Governing from Naples as the cap-

ital, King Charles opened the Bourbon dynasty with a capable and progressive leniency; but when after twenty-five years he succeeded to the throne of Spain and his son Ferdinand took his place, the rot had set in. Sicily began another long period of corrupt and indifferent government and periodic revolution, which, apart from a ten-year occupation by Britain as a strategic move in the war against Napoleon, lasted until her conquest by Garibaldi in the *risorgimento* of 1860. It was only then that Sicily became part of a nominally unified Italy and assumed the official status that she has now.

Although within a few months of Garibaldi's landing Sicily became part of the New Italy by vote, his invasion was a full-scale military campaign, and was far from unopposed by the Bourbons. Landing at Marsala, in the southwest corner of the island, his redshirts fought and won a pitched battle at Calatafimi, and went on to siege and capture Palermo a fortnight later. Little of this campaign would have been possible without the co-operation of the Sicilians themselves, who were by now ready to support any attempt to overthrow the Bourbon dynasty.

They were early disillusioned. The memory of the new Italy seemed short, and no recognition was shown of the part Sicily herself had played in the *risorgimento*, or of her voluntary vote of allegiance. The government in Rome was far away, and now that Sicily was conquered appeared to have little further interest in her problems. It seemed that the blessings of the new era were to be for northern Italy only, while troops as of an occupying power quelled the discontent which every Sicilian felt. The first cartoons showing Italy as the foot contemptuously kicking away her new conquest began to appear in the Sicilian press. Military conscription was

introduced for the first time, taxes were increased, and no money that came out of Sicily ever returned to it. Sicily entered the twentieth century in bitter discontent.

The First World War came and went, and, though Italy had been among the victors, the years immediately following it left Sicily in a state of chaos not unlike the caldron of unrest and violence that Giuliano came to symbolize after the second. In the province of Palermo, which embraces Montelepre, murder or attempted murder was something that happened literally every day, and highway robbery several times a day. The sound of gun fights in the alleys of Palermo itself had become a regular accompaniment of the night, and sometimes of the day also. Sicily, never a law-abiding island, had reached a crescendo of crime that was perhaps only rivaled in Sardinia.

Mussolini, recognizing that strategic importance of Sicily which he was to see so disastrously demonstrated in 1943, began at once on a long-term policy for taming the island. New schoolbooks were issued, or in some cases the old ones were clumsily added to, proclaiming Sicily's racial and cultural ties with the mainland and her necessary dependence upon the New Italy. These, by bland and magnanimous implication, invited the Sicilians to forget their contrasting ancestry, and welcomed them to the protecting bosom of Rome. In fact, Sicily had been an Italian possession for no more than sixty years, and was as far from true unity with Italy as she had been with any of the changing powers who had occupied or fought over her dusty soil for twenty-six centuries. In that time Sicily had changed hands no less than sixteen times.

Each of the major cultures had left its visible mark upon the island and the people.

The Greeks left temples and theaters as glorious as any in Greece itself; the Romans, though they bequeathed little enough for their seven hundred years of occupation, left altars and amphitheaters and mosaics, all three linked by an earthy *motif* of blood and animal violence. The Byzantines left frescoes and mosaics of a gentler kind whose symbols rest timelessly in a glittering bed of gold; in building the Saracen era fused with the Norman to produce the unique splendor of church and castle whose towers rear above every hill town and village.

The prolonged Spanish rule threw, as it were, a mantilla round the shoulders of the island: the patterned cobble paving of the streets, the watch towers that jut above every promontory, the strange cacti from their South American colonies; and in the cities a luxuriant growth of baroque palaces, churches, and fountains, an elaborate and voluptuous architectural abandon.

Each had added, too, to the speech of the country, which, while remaining recognizably a Latin language, contained a liberal sprinkling of Greek, Arabic, and French words, and a pronunciation entirely its own. (Sicilian is something between a dialect and a language. It contains many words of its own, varying even among different provinces of the island, and it is often unintelligible to mainland Italians. Even in words that are essentially Italian, the direct substitution of one letter for another distorts the sound beyond recognition: *l* becomes *d*, *o* becomes *u*, terminal *e*'s become *i*'s. Thus a sentence composed entirely of Italian words, "*Questo paese è bello*," is in Sicilian, "*Stu paesi'è beddu*.")

Finally, each successive conquest, occupation, and misrule had contributed something to a specifically Sicilian attitude of mind, a viewpoint from which the occupying power and its

government seemed always alien and fundamentally hostile. During the Second World War some *maquis* men of all nations forgot during the long years of German occupation the motives of patriotism for which they had originally stood, and their outlawry became not only outside the laws of the occupying power but beyond those of their own people too, so that at the end they were only armed robber bands without political significance. In Sicily it was as though a perpetual Resistance Movement, whose underlying spirit was centuries old, reached an organized maturity under the disastrous Bourbon rule. This maturity, while technically criminal in function, represented and still represents the true brain and actions of Sicily—the *mafia*. So far it has been beyond the power of any of Sicily's temporary masters to stamp out; the *mafia* remains the ultimate Sicilian government.

No one has been able completely to define what the *mafia* is, and even the origin of the word is obscure. To say that it represents on a grand scale the "protection racket"—as exported by the Sicilians to the United States, and notably to Chicago—would not be far from the truth if the structure of Sicilian society resembled in any way that of America, which it does not. To ignore that qualification is to ignore both the valuable aspects of the organization and also its permeation through every layer of society; for the *mafia* is by no means confined to what western Europeans would call the criminal classes.

Nearly all the activities of the *mafia* are duplicated by more constitutional forms of government. The "protection" aspect, which is the most noticeable, is a much more efficient organization than most police forces, for whose maintenance money is also demanded with menaces by the Inland Revenue of the country concerned. A state police force, after all,

guarantees neither immunity against burglary and theft nor recovery of stolen goods, while the *mafia* (with the exceptions implicit in this sentence) does. In return it exacts "protection money" from landowners and householders who in their opinion are able to pay it. Those who can afford to pay and do not, either in cash or in kind, may be in for an exceedingly unpleasant time—but in other countries that is also true of those who refuse to pay income tax.

This exchange of security for money, so often stigmatized as blackmail, is the most easily discoverable of all *mafia* activities. An Englishman settling in Sicily would, soon after his arrival, be approached in discreet circumstances by one or more men describing themselves as *vigilanti* (watchers), who would tell him the amount of annual payment required for his protection. The implication that there are two sides to the coin, that non-payment would mean not only absence of protection but a special liability to robbery or kidnaping, is tacit but plain. One Englishman whom I knew protested that the demand was far more than he could pay, and that if there was really no other solution he must leave Sicily and settle elsewhere. After long discussion a mutually satisfactory figure was reached and the first installment paid. The negotiation was conducted with courtesy on both sides and the *vigilanti* gave the Englishman a telephone number to call if he was ever in trouble. Several years passed; he paid his annual subscription and remained unmolested. Then one day his dog was stolen, in the streets of a great city. He telephoned to the *mafia* number, reserving, as it were, his defense against a possible accusation of frivolity by a joking and self-deprecatory manner. (In fact this was unnecessary, for while an Englishman abroad looking for a lost dog remembers chiefly the British reputation for being ludicrously

attached to animals, dogs of sporting breed are highly prized in Sicily because of the extreme enthusiasm for *caccia*—that is to say shooting, of everything from rabbits to sparrows.) The voice at the other end of the telephone was apologetic, and said that the matter would receive immediate attention. Presently there was an incoming call; the dog had been traced to a village some fifteen miles away and would be returned immediately.

Fascinated by this conjuring trick, the Englishman approached the *mafia* again when later on he lost six cans of gasoline from a small yacht. Again the results were rapid, but this time incomplete. With profuse apologies he was told that, while five of the cans had now been returned to the yacht, the sixth had unfortunately been used, and would be difficult to replace until the next American warship came into harbor.

In this way, with varying degrees of criminality and violence from district to district according to the character of the local *cosca*, or cell, the *mafia* rules Sicily by a fierce internal law whose penalties include capital punishment. Many of the Sicilian "murders" are in fact death penalties imposed by the *mafia* under a code both older and more efficient than that of the occupying Italians. (Italy abolished capital punishment after the Second World War.)

The numbers of *mafiosi* (members of the *mafia*) vary considerably from district to district; in poorer villages there may be none at all, for money is the basic diet of the organization. In Castellammare del Golfo, with a total population of eighteen thousand, I was told that there were between forty and fifty *mafiosi*; in Partinico the proportion was said to be higher. (Population figures in Sicily are at first sight misleading, owing to the great number of children.)

The son of a *mafioso* is as a rule brought up in the tradition, and eventually becomes a full member of the organization himself. Since the status is thus to some extent hereditary, the number of *mafiosi* in any one district will depend partly upon the size of *mafia* families.

The association of the *mafia* with the strictly criminal world is intimate and intricate. While robbery and violence are nominally no direct part of *mafia* activity, both may be "permitted" to be perpetrated upon those who do not subscribe, or who offend the system in some other way. Since the thief also pays the *mafia* for his right to thief from the "unprotected," and pays in strict accordance with his gains, the *mafiosi* acquire capital as well as power.

In cases where protection money has been neither demanded nor refused, stolen property may be recovered by the *mafia* in return for a percentage—usually about a third—of its value. When recovery is undertaken it is almost invariably successful, whereas under this form of internal government it stands to reason that the police of the occupying power have been almost invariably unsuccessful. No police can succeed against the *mafiosi*; they can succeed only in collaboration with them. The existence of this uncomfortable working arrangement became obvious to much of the outside world only after the volcanic eruption of Giuliano. When the excavations started many important people were revealed petrified in intimate and embarrassing attitudes, like the people of Pompeii when centuries later the blanket of lava and time was lifted from them.

The indestructibility of the *mafia* is based largely upon a conception which, though undoubtedly reinforced by fear, is at least partially idealistic. This is a quality called *omertà*. It is an extreme form of loyalty that makes the betrayal of one *mafioso* by another an unthinkable infamy even when

the two are deadly enemies and may already have tried to kill each other; it is equally true between families who wage vendetta from generation to generation by murder and counter-murder. Even the injured themselves become, when brought into the witness box, hard of hearing and semi-imbecile; questions are not understood, or answered with the random significance of a schizophrenic. This is one aspect of *omertà*, but the word implies a great deal more than loyalty. It is the whole code of a violently touchy sense of honor by which every insult, real or fancied, must be avenged, and by which the individual has not only the right but the duty to act independently of the law—for the laws imposed by occupying powers have not only been traditionally resented, but can in themselves be interpreted as an insult. Those who try to enforce them are to be treated as the cross-questioner in a criminal court, with a complete lack of understanding and ignorance of the proceedings. This is carried even to the revealing of an apparently innocent address; children are brought up to look half-witted if a stranger should ask where in a village their next-door neighbor lives, for the stranger is potentially hostile—he might be anything from a tax collector to a policeman. This tradition may have begun as early as the Roman occupation more than two thousand years ago.

Since the denunciation of a *mafioso* by an ordinary citizen would be suicidal, the barrier of silence surrounding every crime is absolute and unbreakable. In any case, all question of *omertà* aside, the truth has from the Sicilian viewpoint no merit other than purpose, and is employed only to serve some definite end. The orthodox Christian conception of truth as a virtue in itself is recognized as bizarre and unintelligible, even hysterical—at best it is something barbarous, uncivilized, and to be despised. In fact this conception is intelligible only from a standpoint of rule and dominance. Truth is a

power currency; its exaction is a first necessity in the acquisition of power by one individual over another; to withhold the truth is to refuse subjection. It is small wonder that priests of so many religious cults demand truth from their adherents under pain of mystic penalties. To the Sicilian, much of whose religion is far separated from his everyday life, it is hard to understand how anything so indefensible, so destructive, can be regarded as an end in itself.

With this background knowledge of Sicilian outlook it is hardly surprising that the Italian police have often found it convenient to arrive late on the scene of a crime, for there was nothing much they could do when they did arrive except to make notes for one of those voluminous reports, garish with colorful adjectives and lush descriptive passages, that are so startlingly unlike the official documents of Scotland Yard. If the crime were connected with the *mafia* no one in the house would have seen or heard anything, even if several of their family had been blown to pieces by a hand grenade in the same room. If the clothing of the survivors were blood-stained, it had no connection, it must have been from that chicken they had killed two days back to celebrate their daughter's wedding. Occasionally the *mafia* have given information to the police about non-union crime, but hardly ever on the spot, and more usually their reprisals are direct and without intermediary. A former prefect of police in Palermo is reported to have said: "If a cross were placed over every spot where a *mafia* victim was buried in the plain of Palermo, the Conca d'Oro would be one vast cemetery." It seems to be a tacit understanding, however, that occasionally the corpse of the offender may be dumped at a time and place convenient for the police to claim the killing.

The elusive gossamer mesh of *mafia* is thrown over all the island, village and city, peasant and civil servant; many

people in the highest offices of all kinds have been, and still are, part of the network; and, because nothing important is possible without *mafia* co-operation, still more have threads connecting them directly to it. Whereas the organization may have lost some of the unity shown during the first years of this century, there is every reason to suppose that it is today a society of more potential power than ever before, for the two world wars and the Fascist attempt to bring Sicily finally to heel were disturbances from which the *mafia* is only now finding leisure to recuperate and reorganize.

The First World War brought the beginnings of what is now an established characteristic of the organization—the existence of an old *mafia* and a young *mafia*. In 1914 the older *mafiosi*, by reason of their great influence if not actually by that of their age, were for the most part able to dodge conscription, while the younger generation had for the first time to accept Italian discipline and fight on distant battlefields. These men returned at the end of the war to find their elders grown sleek in important and profitable positions, and they resented an apparent unwillingness to welcome them back into the arms of the organization. The extreme familiarity with firearms that the young *mafiosi* had acquired led to a genuine warfare within the *mafia* itself, and this meant in turn that the organization as a whole had much less opportunity to perform its own function as crime regulator. “Unlicensed” bands of robbers and cattle thieves—incorporating many of the disgruntled young *mafiosi* besides many criminals who were simply taking advantage of the *mafia*’s diverted attention—began to spring up through the whole of Sicily.

Into this picture, in the early 1920’s, strutted Mussolini. He chose for his advisor a northern Italian called Colonel Cesare Mori, who had had a long and intimate connection

with Sicily and Sicilian crime. The Duce himself came to the island for a week; he called it the geographical center of his empire, made speeches in which he represented the *mafia* as a handful of criminals denying the Sicilian people their right of unity with the great glittering Italian Empire which was to be, denying them, too, the protection of the law; and he called upon every citizen to defy the *mafia* with his own mighty support. He made Mori Prefect of Police, with the special task of erasing the *mafia* utterly from the island. There was no room for *Fascisti* and *mafiosi* in one country; for, he said, all forms of graft were utterly unthinkable under a Fascist régime. "Gentlemen," he said later, "it is high time to show you what the *mafia* really is. First I want to divest this brigandish association of the glamor and poetry of which it is so unworthy. If we speak of the *mafia's* gallantry and nobility we insult all the population of Sicily."

By 1928 Mori reported to Mussolini that the *mafia* had been cleaned up; that Sicily was now the center of the Empire not only geographically but spiritually.

Much was made of the success of this campaign and of the originality of his methods. He had rounded up hundreds of cattle thieves in the mountains, he had deported whole families—sometimes almost whole villages—to the islands of Ustica and the Liparis, he had used psychological means to ridicule the *mafia* and make it a laughingstock. He had also used the good Fascist tactics of imprisoning a man's wife and children until he himself surrendered. The people, he claimed, now regarded the laws of Fascist Italy as having superseded those of the *mafia*, and henceforward they would seek redress through the proper authorities.

It seems strange that subsequent historians seem to have believed all this; and that the *mafia* was really dead. Even Francis Guercio, a Sicilian himself, wrote in 1938:

I shall conclude these remarks on the *mafia* by giving a brief account of its memorable suppression by the Fascist Government. . . .

The radical thoroughness of Mori's campaign was also shown in the way he enlisted the influence of schools against the incipient *mafia* mentality of Sicilian children. Sicilian schoolmasters have cooperated, since 1926, with the O.N.B. (Opera Nazionale Balilla) in teaching that *omertà* was not manliness; that the laws of the country were greater than private vendetta, and in short that the traditions of the *mafia* were retrograde and wholly unworthy of the ideals of Mussolini and of the New Italy. Such teaching was and is, of course, merely the particular form which the careful, painstaking remodeling of Italian youth by the Fascists has taken in Sicily; but nowhere have the results been more of an unmixed blessing.

Most young Sicilians of today have a new civic consciousness: they find as much pleasure in obeying the laws as they formerly did in breaking or evading them, and their physical energies, in place of old outlets of mischief and vice, have found a new and adequate field of endeavor in sport. Palermo now counts as many football fans as Manchester or Liverpool, and its *tifo* (literally "typhus"), or enthusiasm for its representative teams, has infected every class of Palermitan society. And the same enthusiasm, one might almost say mania, pervades in varying degree every town and village in the island, each of which possesses its football team and its running, jumping, cycling, and motoring champions.

Thus the fundamental appeal of the *mafia* to Sicilian youth has been replaced by new interests and fresh goals. Sport now offers the youth of Sicily a new field of romance, and in a manner which redounds to the advantage of society, instead of to its detriment. The virtues of the *mafia* had long been swallowed up in its vices; it had ceased to be anything but a terrible anachronism; so that even the most skeptical must applaud Mussolini's answer to the question of how long the campaign against the *mafia* would have to last: "Until the very memory of it has been effaced from the Sicilian mind." *

* Francis M. Guercio: *Sicily*, 1938.

The "careful, painstaking remodeling of Italian youth by the Fascists" was soon to be followed by an equally careful and painstaking remodeling of Fascist youth in Sicily by the Allied Armies of Occupation. Poor Sicily! As for sport, Giuliano, a football fan himself, was to lend it a fiercer interest by threatening death to a center-forward who scored against his favorite team.

In fact there is little evidence to show that Cesare Mori achieved anything more than the same temporary working arrangement with the *mafia* that others have made before and since. It seems probable that he enlisted the aid of those *mafiosi* who were prepared, in return for their privileges, to co-operate with the Fascist Government, and with their help eliminated both a very large number of free-lance criminals and some discredited *mafiosi* who by their disaffection had forfeited the protective silence of *omertà*. Many of these he undoubtedly sent to exile in the prison islands that blot the west coast of Italy, but they returned after the fall of the Fascist régime to take up, as nearly as possible, where they left off.

It was a disruptive period in *mafia* history, and a schism in view between the old and the young *mafiosi* still exists, but it was no more than an incident in the continuous development of the organization. At the end of the Second World War the *mafia* rose again resplendent from ashes that were not its own but those of its *soi-disant* suppressors. Giuliano rose as a rebel leader against the Italians only on *mafia* sufferance; he remained at liberty by *mafia* protection; and he was invulnerable only while he kept faith with the *mafia*. From the moment when in his growing pride and power he turned on a local *mafia* chief and killed him the end was inevitable.

Birth of an Outlaw

BETWEEN the time of Giuliano's birth and that of his power twenty-five years later there was much resemblance; it was as though some demon child of his unconscious recognized its true environment and furled up the sham years between, for there was nothing in his childhood to forecast the violence of his seven years of manhood. The mythmakers have recognized the value of this contrast, for the child Giuliano is painted noble but serene—if a little too radiant—against the monstrous power figure of the man.

He was born on November 16, 1922, the youngest of a family of four, and his life followed the normal pattern of peasant childhood in Sicily. He went to the crowded little school on the slope above the village. His schoolmaster, Don Caiozzi, seems to have found him unusually quick at learning, but when he was thirteen his brother Giuseppe was called up for National Service, and his parents took him away from school to work with the family. He was sentimental and emotional, and at this age tasted the pains of pubescent calf love for a girl a year older than himself. He wrote to her—a letter found by his sister Mariannina—asking that if his love were not returned she should do nothing in reply; and because of

the great suffering it caused him he would try to avoid meeting her. He was literate, even if little more, a point that in later years his detractors were eager to dispute. In fact, though his spelling and syntax remained shaky, he became fond of reading when in his early teens, and because of this somewhat rare trait he was nicknamed "*il dottore*," of which "the professor" would be a closer translation than "the doctor." He read the tales of Charlemagne and of the Paladins of France, and, it would seem, practically anything that he could lay his hands upon, for the quoted lists include Manzoni's *The Betrothed* and other curiously heavy works. He was also fond of mechanical things, particularly of watches and, it must be admitted, of guns, for he shared the Sicilian peasants' passion for *caccia* and spent long days shooting rabbits and birds in the mountains around his home. He became an excellent shot, but it was many years before he drew any blood more dangerous than that of a rabbit.

The picture of Giuliano at the age of fifteen, as drawn by the Monteleprans who knew him best, is a collation of superlative adjectives without much incident or anecdote. He was, primarily, a *bravo ragazzo*, he was *molto sincero*, *molto religioso*, *serioso*, *gentilissimo*, and *molto bello*. In summary, he was particularly honest, kind, sincere, serious, religious and handsome. Sicilians worship physical beauty in childhood and youth, but it is very much more common in Sicily than in England, and it seems questionable whether the beauty of his eyes and his smile would have been remembered had they not become so bitter and accusing during his brief manhood. But he must have been unusually good-looking at all ages, and it is certain that at no stage did he show any characteristic of the incipient delinquent. He was like many other Sicilian children, but a little more responsible perhaps, a little more

serious, a little more dreamy, and a little better-looking. One individual characteristic he does seem to have had, and it may well have resulted from reading of so many knightly deeds. He had a romantic hatred of injustice in any form, and a corresponding admiration for what he considered to be noble or generous. Thus we see him surging to the rescue of a man whom some boys were taunting with his known cuckoldom; refusing to betray a card-cheat who had also given him a broken lip, but beating him over the head with a billiard cue at their next meeting. "You thought I should denounce you?" he is reported to have said. "You are mistaken. I am not a coward; I shall give you what you gave me."

From the beginning there was a fierce animal love between himself and his mother Maria, extending even beyond the violent matriarchal feeling that pervades the island, beyond the fact that in this matriarchy he was her youngest and most beautiful child. Perhaps because of the place of his conception he became for her an embodiment of lost hopes; whatever the reason she seemed always to accord him some of the worship of the Madonna for her child, and he responded by turning to her for something that the rest of his environment could not give, a need arising from an irreconcilable quality in his makeup.

Maria herself was not beautiful in feature. She was a small peasant woman whose hands and body were coarsened with hard work and childbearing; her features were somewhat squat, but in her big, dark Sicilian eyes and her wide mouth there was a capacity for tenderness, passion, and violence.

Her husband Salvatore was small, too, a quiet independent man of old peasant stock, already middle-aged when Giuliano was born. There were three other children: Giuseppe, Mariannina and Giuseppina. Even the choice of Christian names

shows a little of the tremendous feeling for family unity, for a banding against the outer world, that is so characteristic of Sicily—Maria and Mariannina, Giuseppe and Giuseppina, and the two Salvatores.

The infant Salvatore was nicknamed "Turridu" to distinguish him from his father. Journalists have been put to great ingenuity to trace the reason for this name—that he was called after the hero of the Sicilian opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*; that it is derived from a Sicilian word *iddu* meaning "himself"; that it is connected with great heat, as from the root of "torrid"; but in fact it is the normal Sicilian "short" for Salvatore, varied sometimes by "Toto."

When he was eighteen he fell profoundly in love again, this time with a blonde blue-eyed girl of fifteen, Mariuccia, whose father was in America. He serenaded her with simple songs of his own composition, accompanied by his much-loved guitar, and worshiped her with the whole of his emotional being. His feelings were unchanged two years later, and the situation ended only with his outlawry. Mariuccia went to America, and married a year or two afterward. It was the last time he was ever said to be in love; at the height of his power six years later he said: "I don't remember those childish things any more."

Turridu worked on his parents' land for four years. On the surface Sicily was then a quieter country than it had been for centuries; overt crime had been greatly reduced by the activities of Colonel Cesare Mori, *mafia* activity appeared to be at a minimum, and few dared to criticize openly the doctrines of the New Italy. This did not mean that Sicily had accepted either the Fascist ideals or her own unity with the northern mainland, but only that as so often in earlier centuries the people found it convenient to bide their time.

Turridu's father worshiped America, and with the natural peasant tendency to represent the past as always excelling the present, the boy grew up to tales of the wonders and riches of New York, a glittering city of fable, whose streets were paved, if not with gold, at least with chromium; and all this in contrast with the parched poverty of Montelepre. This idolatry of the New World became something deep-rooted in his being, and to the very end he believed, in face of all evidence to the contrary, that salvation lay in the West.

Faint echoes of Mussolini's preparations to enter the war on the crest of the German victories reached Western Sicily. In all the more remote parts of the Italian possessions communications were entirely inadequate, and plans for a wide extension of telephone services were put into immediate operation. The lines were to be taken west from Palermo, through the mountains, to Montelepre and on to link the villages of the plain below with Castellammare and Trapani. In this enterprise Turridu took his first job when he was seventeen, and earned enough money for his father to pay a laborer to work on the *campagna*.

Something of the thoroughness, the purpose, that characterized everything in his life seems to have gone into this job, for within a few months, when he was just eighteen years old, he became head of his small unit. But it seems that the older workers did not like taking orders from a boy, and in discussing the question with his foreman Giuliano was unwilling to surrender the position he had earned by his own efficiency. There were quarrels and disputes, arising, it seems, from Turridu's intolerance of injustice, and after changing employers three times he went home again to work on the land. When his call-up papers came he expressed preference for training as an air-force mechanic, but he had taken no part

in the war when the Allied landings in Sicily began on June 10, 1943.

The Allies met with an entirely unexpected welcome. They had imagined empty streets and drawn shutters, the furtive eye pressed to a crack, the elusive and silent population. Instead, they were greeted with flags and bunting and cheering swarms of children and adults, both behaving in much the same way. This attitude was not specifically Sicilian; it was common to Southern Italy, too, an expression of the basic difference in outlook between the North and the South. For a long time now the people of the South had regarded Fascism as utterly unsympathetic to their whole way of life—now the Americans were coming, the whole fabulous chromium-plated world with which their lucky relations in the States had tantalized them all their lives. The vast majority of Sicilians were wholeheartedly on the side of the Allies (the British achieved a little reflected glory from their association with the Americans) but they were living in rosy dreams of the future in which no practical details were discernible. They were like children dancing and singing of impossibilities; children, however, dancing amid the ruins of their home.

Even before the invasion the state of poverty and corruption in Sicily had reached a point at which life without recourse to the black market was only theoretically possible. This form of trading has never been regarded with a puritanical eye in Italy; it is a steady tradition even in peacetime, and by 1943 in Sicily it had become the only means of livelihood. The official rations, had they been available, would have been just sufficient to maintain life (they were as low as half a pound of bread and five ounces of *pasta* a day) but these rations had originally been based upon total production figures for Sicily, which were no longer of any significance.

There was no incentive for a corn-grower to sell his grain to a control center at control prices when he could with absolute impunity get nearly ten times the price through the black market. This applied to nearly all of the island's products. The necessary bribing of the *carabinieri*, Italy's militarized police who were supposed to enforce these laws, was not an important consideration, for a *carabiniere* normally earned in a day little more than half the price of one loaf of bread on the black market. Under these conditions any peasant who did not engage in black market was heading for direct and physical suicide. In Sicily it was called *il intralazzo*, the tangle. Throughout the country every shade of nefarious trading went on every minute of the day, ranging from grand-scale criminal racketeering, in which millions of *lire* changed hands in a deal, down to pathetic haggling over the price of one loaf or a few ounces of spaghetti. It was simply a way of life which, never foreign to the nature of the people, had now become, on its lower scale, a necessity. The unreasonable laws of the occupying power were to be thwarted by any means possible, as they had been for twenty-two centuries.

The arrival of the Allies could hardly have been expected to improve the situation. Five weeks after the landing (July 13, 1943) AMGOT (Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories) began to function and a month later, in mid-August, Axis resistance in the island was at an end. The country, however, was in a state of utter chaos, a lawlessness in which nearly every member of the community shared voluntarily or involuntarily. There were practically no food supplies because there were practically no passable roads; bridges had been demolished and not replaced; precarious water supplies accidentally or intentionally destroyed. It

was every man for himself, in a struggle that was sometimes for power and sometimes for simple survival—the battlefield that Sicily had been two months before, on which, like a chessboard, the opponents were clear cut and recognizable, was suddenly a free-for-all in which friend and enemy arbitrarily swapped uniforms at whim and could no longer be distinguished. There was violence on every side, and no shortage of arms; the weapons of four armies were just another black-market commodity to be hoarded and sold to those who would pay highest.

With the Fascists gone, the *mafia* was struggling to reorganize, but was not yet in a position to regulate and check the spreading ground-fire of crime; and since AMGOT had not unnaturally failed as yet to weed out the politically undesirable from Sicily's twenty-two thousand civil servants, all true law enforcement was practically at a standstill.

The raising of the firmly-planted Fascist boot had revealed a crawling mass of political parties both adult and embryo; but with Mussolini still in Rome, and the possibility of Sicily's reconquest by Italy not to be discounted, many preferred for the time being to remain anonymous, adding yet another undercurrent of unrest and deception to the vast problems of AMGOT.

This possibility of the Allies being driven out of Sicily added enormously to the difficulties of separating *fascisti* from *antifascisti* among those in administrative position; not all those who had been genuinely anti-Fascist were prepared to risk denunciation as traitors to the régime if Italy were to return, and many who came forward at once to protest their hatred of the Axis were those without political conviction, who would have been opposed to any stable form of government. Many of the anti-Fascists, too, were violently anti-

clerical as well, regarding the Church as the root of oppression, and were astonished and horrified to find that the liberating army had uniformed clergy attached to it. The strongest and oldest anti-clerical body of opinion lay in the universities and among the intelligentsia, among whom the two orders of Freemasonry were prominent. At a time when all schools were closed and no child could learn anything, fierce arguments would rage as to whether the new schools ought or ought not to contain crucifixes. Much was made of an incident in which a country priest was found to be both hoarding German arms and selling barrels of olive oil that were water to within an inch of the top. All this ineffectual bickering among the ruins did not help AMGOT; for the hierarchy of the Church, as the only organized body left in Sicily, was both the easiest with which to treat and still carried great weight with the peasants.

In a surface atmosphere of almost childish friendliness that formed the crust on a quaking bog neither of the liberators, Americans and English, escaped opprobrium. The Americans were said, unlike the English, to have bombed Palermo indiscriminately, killing three thousand people in one raid; English troops were accused of rape and looting, but particularly of rape; while both, unused to the dull heady Sicilian wine, were rumored to be perpetually drunk. (A little later, in Naples, a high-ranking British officer was found passed out in the gutter, clutching a formal letter of protest, signed by himself, on the drunkenness of American troops.) To say that allegiances were indeterminate would be an understatement.

The arrival of the Allies—and in all fairness it must be said particularly the arrival of the Americans, because they received much higher pay than the British—gave a tremen-

dous fillip to the black market. Prices rocketed to the figures that the Americans were able to pay, and these were very much higher than most Sicilians who were not profiting on the black market could afford.

AMGOT, a comparative handful of British and American administrators working together as a unit under Lord Rennell, found the obvious near-impossibility of their task still further magnified by the Sicilians' long traditional experience in the rôle of the conquered. The Allies had of necessity to employ the *carabinieri* to enforce the laws that they enacted; and the *carabinieri*, so recently working for the ejected Fascist Italy, now appeared to many Sicilians as an unscrupulous army of mercenaries. They were to be fought or bribed according to the capacity of the individual who found himself obstructed by them.

It was in this atmosphere that Salvatore Giuliano committed his first crime, a crime like hundreds of others all over the island at the time, but whose echoes are not even now stilled, though it was more than a decade ago.

To force the release of hoarded foodstuffs, and of grain in particular, a law had been enacted making illegal their transport between one province and another. *Carabinieri* picketed strategic points along province boundaries, and searched every passer for contraband, but in most cases only a little greasing of the palm was necessary to ensure a blind eye. Thus it was only the smallest and the poorest who were caught, those who could not afford the petty bribe—a child slipping through the bamboos carrying a pound of butter, an old peasant with a bag of *pasta* whose resale among his neighbors would bring him no profit beyond the portion of it that would keep his family in food for a few days. For these it was a pathetic furtive business that often ended in jail as the only alternative to a fine that they could not pay.

For some time past Turridu and his elder brother Giuseppe had been organizing the transit of grain to Montelepre, in necessarily very small quantities, for they had no horse, and they could transport only what they could carry on their backs—sacks of something under a hundredweight that had to be lugged many miles across country. It seems that the grain was distributed mainly among friends and relations, and it can hardly have been a very profit-making racket, for it was many months before they had saved enough to buy, for the equivalent of about forty-five dollars, a mule lately derequisitioned by the army. With this mule he could carry as much as five sacks at a time, keeping to the cover of the bamboo thickets, and crossing furtively the dry water-courses that usually form the provincial boundaries; tethering the mule at a safe distance from the crossing and slinking forward to reconnoiter.

But on September 2, 1943, Turridu was careless; there was no reconnaissance. Accounts differ—some say that he had already been stopped, before he had acquired the mule, that a large cheese, as orange and significant as a harvest moon, had been confiscated from him with a threat that the next time he would be arrested, and that he had replied: "Next time you try to take from me what is not yours I will kill you." Others say that there had been no previous encounter with the *carabinieri*, that the lack of reconnaissance was no act of bravado but the carelessness of a very young man tired out by too much work.

He knew well that the *carabinieri* could be bribed, but he either could not or would not do it. He had watched whole truckloads of grain and black-market meat driven through the *carabinieri* pickets on payment of a few thousand lire, he had taken advantage of these transactions to slip by himself,

unobserved and on foot; but whichever the reason, for him there was to be no compromise.

He was returning from the village of San Giuseppe Jato, some ten miles across the mountains due south of Montelepre, when at a point called Quattro Molini he found the way barred by two *carabinieri* and two *guardie campestri* (a sort of agricultural sub-police who guard vineyards and farmlands from petty theft). His identity card was demanded, his two sacks of grain confiscated, and he was threatened with the *bastinado* if he did not reveal from whom he had bought them. (The *bastinado* consisted of beating the victim with rifle-butts until his will broke or he lost consciousness.) Giuliano refused absolutely to betray the farmer, a friend, who had sold him the grain; and begged them to let him go as a criminal charge would involve his family in expenses they could not afford without selling their small property.

At this moment there was a diversion; another grain-laden mule appeared, all unsuspecting, barely more than a stone's throw away. The picket called upon its rider to halt, and three of them went over to him. Giuliano was left guarded by one *carabiniere* with a Beretta submachine gun.

It seems to have been the sight of his captors accepting a bribe from their new quarry that touched off the hidden explosive in Giuliano. Probably he had never had any intention of enduring the agony and humiliation of the *bastinado*, for he carried a pistol in his right sock, where it could be reached easily as he sat in the saddle. Now, dismounted, it was in a useless position. He attacked his guard with knee and arm simultaneously, crashing his elbow upward against the barrel of the tommy gun and knocking it from the *carabiniere's* hands. He turned and ran for the cover of the bamboos; but

before he could reach them three guns had opened fire behind him. He was hit once and fell as he reached the edge of the thicket, but recovered himself, and from a kneeling position drew his pistol and shot at the nearest *carabiniere*. That he killed him must have been a freak of chance; had he missed, his life would have ended then and there and the whole incident would have been swallowed up in hundreds like it, shoddy pitiable murders born of poverty and misery and other people's wars, in an island where tempers run high and find free expression. But he did not miss, and in the moment's diversion following his shot he succeeded, wounded as he was, in reaching cover. He was losing a tremendous amount of blood, but how much the survivors of the patrol could not know; they knew only that he was armed and hidden, and as dangerous as a wounded tiger. After a short debate his pursuit was abandoned. His identity card lay on the ground near the dead *carabiniere*; if Giuliano did not die of his wound he could be rounded up at leisure. Seven years leisure it took, thousands of men and millions of lire, to round up the sick and bleeding boy who dragged himself on all fours from the scene of this pathetic crime. All for two sacks of corn.

Giuliano lay not far off, waiting for nightfall. He tried to stem the flow of blood with strips torn from his clothing, but when dusk came he was very weak and in great pain. In Sicily all peasants are friends of the oppressed, and when later in the evening he dragged himself to a neighboring farmhouse, he was taken by mule to the village of Borgetto. Some doctor, whose name, for obvious reasons, has never been divulged, attended to his wound. The bullet had passed clean through his body on the right side between the ribs and the hip, and must just have missed the liver, for though he was very ill at

first he made a steady recovery.* He lay for many days in the house at Borgetto; at the beginning it seems that he was too sick to remember that he had lost his identity card, and thought that the *carabinieri* had no clue as to who he was. He spoke of going home, and of how long it would be before he could work again, for his family would need him. But messages had been sent to them, and now he learned the truth, that he was wanted for murder, and that his home had already been searched. He was a *fuorilegge*, an outlaw, and the place for him was the mountains. When he left Borgetto he went to live in the caves of Calcelrama, a hill that shelters Montelepre from the east, and looks down upon the town.

All over Sicily the mountains were far from uninhabited; there were thousands of other outlaws skulking in the *maquis*, deserters from several armies, political criminals in the eyes of one party or another, robbers and bandits in the old Sicilian tradition, as yet uncontrolled by the *mafia*. Turridu lived among these, and by night his father, his brother, and his cousins, the sons of his Aunt Rosalia Pisciotta, would visit him and bring him food. As yet there was no plan, no future, no objective beyond the evasion of those whom, characteristically of Sicily, he even then referred to not as the *carabinieri* or the police, but as "my enemies."

But his mother, Maria, he did not see, and her presents and anguished messages were no substitute for the physical presence of that fierce maternal love. From his mountain he looked down on Montelepre all day; he could see the people coming and going, small as ants but ants from his own ant-hill; he could even see his own house, the nearest one in all

* The Memoirs of Mariannina, Giuliano's sister, published in *Epoca*, November, 1951, contain a different account of the hours following the incident at Quattro Molini, but I have chosen what appears to me to be a more likely version.

the village, and the black dots that must be his own family about their ordinary affairs. Nostalgia and longing grew in him until it could be contained no longer, and one moonless night in late October he came down from the mountains, crossed the road high above the village, and, while his brother and his cousin Gaspare Pisciotta kept watch, he crept down the valley to his home.

When the storm of emotional greetings had died down a little; when Maria had kissed him and stroked his hair and wept over his newly-healed wound; when they had heard every detail of his story since he had left home on that bright September morning two months before, they began to grope for a loophole on the blind wall of his future. If he gave himself up he would get twenty years' imprisonment in the normal course of events, ten if he was lucky. If he could get out of the country it was difficult to see how he could ever come back again, and he said: "No—I will never leave you to be served as I have been served—I shall stay here until the day when I am no longer regarded as a criminal."

There is little doubt that then and for long afterward he would have wanted nothing more than to come back to his old life—it was the idea of pardon that obsessed him; that and the injustice of his outlawry. In the violence of his protestations that he had been in the right, and in everything that he did from then on, there is a spasmodic ferocity, a recurrent suggestion of persecution mania. The actual fact of having killed a *carabiniere* probably did not plague his conscience very much; the thing could not in itself have the significance that it would hold for a northern European. Men are born and men get killed; a woman conceives and it is an act of God; someone dies and it is an act of God. A man may have played an obvious part in both events, but his is

not the final responsibility; the circumstances in each case would have been unavoidable. It was the inescapability of his outlawry and the effect on *la famiglia* that concerned him; the essential injustice of the responsibility being pinned on him. His cruelty alternated with acts of appeasement, and his killings were glazed with an idealism designed to excuse them not so much, fundamentally, in the eyes of others as in his own, for he must be able to see himself as just and noble, as one of his remembered Paladins, and not as other men are. At this time he had only killed one man, and though conscience in the ordinary sense would not torment him, his unusually blameless adolescence was too close behind him for him to think beyond justification and restitution.

It was the counsel of others that persuaded him early in the following year that this could only be achieved politically; only by services to some party that would presently rise to power could he hope for free pardon and amnesty. His was essentially a character that must always have a purpose, a definite objective, and when he had taken this decision he began to plan immediately, all the bitterness and resentment in him canalized into a single channel.

Meanwhile, Giuliano made plans to spend Christmas of 1943 with his family, whom he had taken to visiting more and more frequently in secret. He took precautions, but he believed the day to be one of tacit amnesty, and probably he never really expected to be molested. The feast day and the family remained in his mind separate from this new life, beyond the scope of law, and he was not yet ready to accept that they were forfeit. A few days before Christmas he came down from the mountains to his home.

The *carabinieri* had, in fact, counted on his doing so.

Turridu's father was on his way to church when he was

stopped in the street by a party of *carabinieri*. The *maresciallo* (corresponding roughly to a sergeant) demanded his name, and when he replied: "Salvatore Giuliano," said: "You are the man we're after. Come back with us to your house." He knew then that because of the identical names they had confused him with Turridu. When he reached his house, the last in the village, he called up to his wife: "Maria! Get up quickly and open the door—can't you see the *carabinieri* are here?"

Giuliano was in bed. He scrambled into his clothes, took a gun, and slipped out by the back of the house, through the prickly pears and vines of the little terrace that led to the open country. By the cobbled back alleys of Montelepre he made his way to the church in the *piazza*, and waited in the shadow of its half-open door.

Meanwhile his sister Mariannina had noticed that the bed was still warm from his body. She bundled his possessions under the mattress, undressed, and slipped into the bed herself; as she did so she heard her mother's voice on the stairs saying: "Please don't frighten my daughter—she has a bad heart and is in bed." From the door the *maresciallo* called to the muffled figure: "Are you a man or a woman?" "I am a woman," Mariannina replied. "Then get up out of that bed." Mariannina protested that it was indecent to dress in front of a man, and the *maresciallo* consented to wait outside the door. Mariannina hid Giuliano's effects more securely.

The *carabinieri* searched the house and found nothing. They threatened Turridu's father with summary arrest if the hiding place were not instantly revealed, and old Salvatore replied: "I do not know where my son is, but if I did know I should not tell you. I have never informed against any man in my life. I shall not begin with my son."

Uncle Francesco intervened. "Why are you so certain that Turridu is hiding here?"

"I know that he is here—because I am well-informed."

"Then look for him," replied Francesco, "but you will find nothing, because he is in the mountains."

A little later, Giuliano said: "He believed that he was well-informed. There was a spy somewhere among us." It was a new idea to him then. Four years later he said: "I have never killed for pleasure—I kill my enemies in war and I execute spies and traitors; even to them I give time to make their peace with *Il Signor* (God). Not one of them has ever escaped me." But this first spy escaped him for a little while.

Drawing blank in the Giuliano household, the *carabinieri* began to search the neighboring houses and those of his friends and relations. They began with the Lombardos who lived opposite, and when they left they took with them Turridu's first cousin, Salvatore Lombardo, arrested on suspicion of complicity. From house to house the same story was repeated, until more than a hundred people were marched down the street to the waiting *carabinieri* trucks. Turridu saw his father and his uncle Francesco go by with the others, covered by submachine guns; only Giuliano himself had escaped—displaying the eel-like quality that was one of so many, real and imaginary, that went to build his legend.

To him this was the first challenge of his outlawry; it was injustice, and must be righted. In addition, it was a further insult and outrage against *la famiglia* on this of all days. Alone, he ambushed the *carabiniere* vans on the outskirts of the town as they carried the prisoners to jail at Monreale and Palermo.

The surprise was complete, but when its first shock had worn off he found that there was little he could do with one

gun against seven better-armed *carabinieri*. He killed one and wounded another; then, when the shooting was fiercest, he did what he was to do so many hundreds of times in the future, he vanished. As a rescue the ambush was a fiasco, but it was a token, an assurance to his friends that he had not forgotten them.

A short time later there was a mass breakout from Monreale jail. Giuliano had received a smuggled note from his cousin, Salvatore Lombardo, in the prison, telling him of the possibility of escape by a certain indicated window if a "silent" metal file were provided. Giuliano, somewhat perfunctorily disguised as a gardener, passed the file through a cell window, and when at night he waited for his cousin to emerge, Lombardo did not come out alone but with a dozen or so others, who carried with them a large part of the prison armory. These men were to become the original nucleus of his band. But while he had liberated his uncle Francesco, his father remained in prison in Palermo.

Even in Sicily rescues from prison are not common, and this incident enormously enhanced Giuliano's reputation. His successful attack on the jail was, in fact, the first of his long series of spectacular outrages—an impudent accomplishment of the apparently impossible.

The Separatists

THERE had for long been a strong "Separatist" movement in Sicily—that is to say a movement to separate the island from her "new" Italian masters (Sicily had been an Italian possession for only eighty-two years) and set up as an Independent Republic. Some observers among the Allies put the following of this movement as high as 70 per cent of the entire island, though in doing so they probably overlooked to a great extent both the sycophantic and the utterly impractical attitude of many people to the new British and American conquerors. Whatever the actual figures may have been, the Separatists certainly had a strong following, and it would seem that Sicily had little for which to thank Italy up to that point in her history. The arguments were familiar: that the Rome governments had treated Sicily as a poor colony, to be taxed and drained of her resources, while none of the money that was taken from the island ever returned to it. For this last complaint there was much foundation, for the figures of the Bank of Palermo showed a steady seep to the mainland. Later, Giuliano claimed that ever since he was of an age to read he had at heart belonged to this party, but that a poor peasant boy in a country held down savagely by

the Fascists had been in no position to do more than dream of a separate Sicily.

In the early days after the Allied landings in July, the Americans had naturally done everything they could to foster this movement, in order to secure a fuller co-operation against the enemy, Italy, and the four German divisions that were garrisoning Sicily. Under the auspices of the invading Allies a guerrilla army had been formed, at first controlled by a certain Canepa, lecturer in law at the University of Catania. This "army" was known as EVIS (*Esercizio Volontario Indipendenza Siciliana*), the Voluntary Army for Sicilian Independence. Members of EVIS, and the political leaders of the Separatists, had at first been held in high regard by their sponsors.

But events in Italy moved so fast and unexpectedly that the position of the Separatists in relation to the Allies became, to say the least of it, invidious. The fall of the Fascist Government of Italy and the arrest of Mussolini only a fortnight after the Allied landings in Sicily took England and America utterly by surprise; so, too, did the decision of Marshal Badoglio's anti-Fascist emergency government to continue the war against the Allies. Only a month later, however, he was conducting clandestine negotiations for an armistice, though this had to be kept secret from the Germans who were defending Northern Italy and on whose side he nominally remained. In fact, on the very morning after Giuliano had killed his first *carabiniere* on September 2, 1943, and was lying semi-conscious in the house at Borgetto, an envoy of Badoglio's, a certain General Castellano, flew to Sicily and signed an armistice at Allied Headquarters.

But the pace never flagged. A week later Mussolini was freed by the Germans, and the Fascist Government came back

in full strength. Italy was divided into two, Mussolini and the Fascists as enemies in the North, and Badoglio and King Umberto as allies in the South. The southern party declared war on Germany on October 13, and became a fighting partner of England and America.

The Separatists, and their army, EVIS, could no longer be officially sponsored by the Allies, for to do so would have been to incite civil war in the territory of a co-belligerent. The Allies never believed in the possibility of Sicily's reconquest by the north, so that there was no excuse for any continued support of the Separatists. The result was that a negative attitude was adopted; the Separatists were left to look after themselves without official support or overt condemnation, and as the aims of their leaders were not in every case the same, there was a certain amount of confusion. But on the whole they were content to band together for the moment and separate in the scramble for power when Sicily should become an independent nation.

The most conspicuous figure among them at the time was a politician called Finnocchario-Aprile. He was not, in fact, a Sicilian, but came from Tuscany, and had at some time been Under Secretary both for War and for the Treasury. His past political status lent him a support that might otherwise have been lacking, and at least temporarily he included in his following such figures as the Mayor of Palermo, Signor Tasca, and the vice-Mayor, di Napoli. The Chief of Police in Palermo, Inspector Ettore Messina, who was to become an important figure in the story of Giuliano, was rumored to have sympathized with the party, and it was said that he would have become Minister of the Interior in a free Sicily if the Separatists had realized their ambitions. Many of the more important and established of the party, however, were

inclined to keep an eye on events on the mainland, and the degree of their devotion to the cause varied with the war news.

Finnocchario-Aprile, however, was outspoken. With another politician, a deputy called Concetto Gallo, son of a former Mayor of Catania, he headed the movement known as MIS (Movement for an Independent Sicily), and was chief of its committee with which was linked the fighting unit of EVIS. They wanted, above all, an independent Sicily, and then for the new State either to be incorporated in a United States of Europe or to have its permanent independence guaranteed by America or England or both. Should neither of these alternatives prove possible, they were prepared for the island to become a protectorate of one or both of the English-speaking Allies. The aristocratic and so-called reactionary element was represented chiefly by the Duke of Carcaci and Baron Stefano la Motta.

They were as reasonably well-organized as any other party at the time, bearing in mind the constant possibility of having to go underground altogether at a moment's notice. They edited a journal, *L'Indipendenza Siciliana*, which specialized in revealing political skeletons in other party leaders' cupboards, and contained convincing but sensational arguments against their three worst enemies, Communism, Monarchism, and Clericalism; they distributed leaflets and painted slogans upon the walls of towns and villages. They adopted as their propaganda song a passage from Verdi's *Sicilian Vespers*, recalling the massacre of their oppressors six and a half centuries before, and at public entertainments such as theater or cinema they would end the performance by singing this song while scattering leaflets from the galleries. They had a sign, too, much like the English V sign, but with three fingers ex-

tended, representing the three joined legs that are the symbol of Sicily.

The party was, however, perpetually short of funds, and in the case of a pitched battle EVIS boasted no commander of stature or resolution. Giuliano now proposed to fill this gap.

He approached the leaders Aprile and Gallo, who found in him just such a man as they were looking for, a potential fanatic, young and serious-minded, with a bitter resentment and hatred of the *carabinieri*, yet without the type of criminal history that might be easily used as a lever against the party.

In the farmhouse of two brothers, by name Genovese (later famous members of Giuliano's band) near the famous *carabinieri* barracks of Bellolampo, at the top of the pass of Rigano as one climbs the mountain road from Palermo to Montelepre, Giuliano had his first meeting with the Separatist leaders. Here he met Concetto Gallo, who proposed that he should command a new western contingent of the Separatist Army with the rank of colonel. Giuliano was promised that if the party were victorious he should hold the double post of Chief of Police and Minister of Justice in the new régime. The prospect of this last office must have been irresistible.

To a second meeting at Ponte Sagana, midway between Montelepre and San Giuseppe Jato, came the Duke of Carcaci, Baron Stefano La Motta, Giuseppe Tasca (son of the Mayor of Palermo), and others of the Separatist leaders. They discussed details of organization, and asked Giuliano how much money he thought necessary to found a new army under his command. He replied that ten million lire (now about seventeen thousand dollars) was the minimum figure;

probably it was the largest sum of money he had mentioned in his life.

To this one of the deputation suggested that he should raise the money by kidnaping and ransom. But Giuliano refused scornfully, saying that he was no bandit.

In the end they reached a compromise; Giuliano was given a million lire, the promise of uniforms and arms beyond what this sum could buy, and was formally invested as colonel of the new Western Army.

Gallo had been a convincing talker, and if Turridu's political convictions had been unformed up to date he now became, as far as his conscious mind was concerned anyway, the servant of an ideal in whose cause any means was justified by the end. He remained convinced, however, that the movement could not succeed without American or English help, and this stumbling-block was overcome only by the production of a letter signed by a certain Italo-American colonel, which gave assurance of aid from President Truman. (This colonel had been parachuted into Sicily as a special agent some time before the Allied landings. He had made contact with the anti-Fascist Bishop of Monreale, who in turn suggested to him as an able help a man from Castellammare del Golfo. This was Matarella, who figures later in the Giuliano story, and who became a prominent member of the Italian government. Matarella, it is said, arranged with the colonel to signal to the Allies from the ruined temples on the summit of Mount Eryx the position and numbers of warships in Trapani harbor. The left-wing press claims that Matarella is a *mafioso*, and rose to political power only through the menacing influence of the *mafia*; the same is said of Scelba, also a Sicilian and the present Italian Prime Minister

(1954), who played so great a part in the affairs of Giuliano.)

On Giuliano himself his investiture as colonel had a tremendous effect. If he killed now it could no longer be called murder but war; not a blurred impersonal war such as the soldier of a nation wages against an enemy of whom he has barely heard, but a fight against those whom he hated with all his heart and soul and strength. From being a criminal outlaw he would become a heroic rebel general, and at the end of it all he was promised pardon and honor and a seat in the new Sicilian Parliament. In the unlikely event of the party's failure, he was assured of protection and cover for his crimes, and of emigration for himself and his family.

He was in no position to assess the validity of these promises. He was young and inexperienced, however far his reading may have gone beyond that of the average peasant; and though he had killed a man and perhaps fathered one, he was by comparison to his political associates a baby still wet behind the ears. Perhaps he thought that a sort of *omertà* existed between himself and his employers, such as exists inside a Sicilian family or when peasant people unite against oppressing authority. The photographs of him at this age show the face of a boy, resolute, certainly, but without the bitter lift to the mouth or the furnace of frustration burning in the eyes. If he knew the proverb that one of his later associates was to have carved upon his gun-butt, "*God protect me from my friends*," he had not yet learned its meaning.

The work outlined for Giuliano as the Separatist's Western Generalissimo was, in broad terms, the dirty work of the party, though he did not see it in that light. He was to strengthen the Separatists' striking force by recruiting and

by collection of arms; he was to subdue by demonstrations of power and violence all manifestations of the extreme left-wing menace; and, pending the time when the Separatists should be ready either for a *coup d'état* or a decisive *coup de main*, he was licensed to carry on a guerrilla warfare against the *carabinieri*. Later, though he did not as yet know it, he was to divert money from the rich, through kidnaping and robbery, to the party funds. At this stage, since the party was not officially outlawed, the strictly propaganda activities, such as the painting of walls and hoardings with inflammatory slogans, could be left to more cautious elements in the movement.

Remembering the time and the place, and the resentment and dissatisfaction that most of the peasant people understandably felt against all authority, most of this work was comparatively easy. Recruiting was perhaps the easiest of all; in the Montelepre district high-spirited young men came to him with the enthusiasm with which their British counterparts had thronged the Commandos and parachute regiments. Some were genuinely convinced of the Cause, some were personally attached to Turridu, some were high-spirited adventurers. Others joined because they had neither land nor work, and Giuliano promised a livelihood and an ideal. There were thugs and other kinds of criminals among them as time went on, but one must remember that the records of many individuals in the Special Forces of the Allies would have borne no closer an examination.

Arms, too, presented no special difficulties. They could be bargained for, or simply stolen from those who were hoarding them for sale, or best of all taken from the *carabinieri* themselves. Given the men and the arms the kidnaping that became a later part of his work was child's play.

To start with, Giuliano's recruiting was, like most other things in Montelepre, very much a family affair—his cousins, and their cousins and their friends and their friends' cousins, and so on until, when any of them became significant in later years, there were often half a dozen others of the same surname involved, even, sometimes, of the same Christian name. Relationships (again like much else in Montelepre) are not easy to discover, and a stranger may know two men well for some time before he finds out that they are brothers.

At the beginning they were not paid, this nucleus of the band, for there was little with which to pay them. They were given arms, and the emblem of Sicily to wear, three human legs arranged in a shape reminiscent of a swastika. The "uniforms" had arrived, too, loose tunics of which one side was yellow and the other red, with the emblem sewn onto each breast, light on the side which was dark and dark on the side which was light. They had something of the appearance of preparatory school football shirts, the colors and badge of St. Wulfric's. There were anti-*carabinieri* songs to sing, too, one that Giuliano had written in the caves of Calceclrama; and as time went on there were others, with whose composition his mother, Maria, whiled away her time in prison. To add to all the obvious advantages and attractions of his new position, the movement must have held for the young Turridu the appeal of a school secret society.

A society, however, perpetually harried by the masters. Giuliano was not yet powerful or protected, nor at this stage was the band strong, and while the Separatists as such were not yet an illegal body, he himself was still being hunted for the murder of a *carabiniere*. In the glowing dream of his future he was apt at times to overlook this.

Meanwhile the ultimate future of the Separatists as a

party was becoming more and more perilous. On April 27, 1945, Mussolini was again arrested, and the following day was executed by his own countrymen. Before the week was out the German armies in Italy had surrendered. In July Italy declared war on Japan, and acquired exactly the same status as the other Allied belligerents. Unless something very unforeseen were to happen, it was clear that the Separatists could expect no more help or encouragement from England or America. If the party were to do anything it must be now, before Italy could acquire a government stable enough to get the island under control.

The "army," consisting of something between four and five thousand men, was divided into two main groups—one commanded by Giuliano with its nominal headquarters in Montelepre, and the other under Concetto Gallo, at San Mauro Caltagirone, in the province of Catania.

The first serious risings of the eastern, Catanian army, started in the last days of September, 1945, though the university don, Canepa, who had originally organized EVIS, had already been killed in a skirmish with State forces at Randazzo three months before. This rebellion never looked like being a success, and ended in fact in complete rout of the Separatist forces. On October 3, 1945, Finnocchario-Aprile was arrested in Messina. Concetto Gallo, himself a fugitive from justice, issued a *communiqué* expressing the Separatists' solidarity with Giuliano, and calling him the "hero of Sicilian Independence." By the end of the year Gallo had been arrested, too, with many of his men, and the movement was left without significant political leadership. The party was proscribed, and all Separatist propaganda made illegal. Aprile, Gallo, and other leaders were sent to exile on the Neapolitan island of Ponza.

Giuliano, however, had waited until the last week of December to open his main offensive, and had met with very different results. His tactics laid down the pattern for the whole of his four-year campaign. He would not allow himself to be engaged and fought to a standstill; he was essentially a raider, a master of hit-and-run tactics, with the whole dusty waste of mountains as his hiding place. He usually employed very much fewer men than he was credited with, and his "positions" when they were attacked contained nothing but empty cartridge cases.

His attack opened on December 28, 1945, when with about eighty men he descended upon the *carabinieri* barracks at Bellolampo. The operation was characterized by tremendous speed and *panache*, though there was little bloodshed on either side. The barrack doors were blown in with explosives, and the place ransacked from top to bottom; the entire contents of the armory and every document in the place were removed in bulk. As a touch of the picturesque that Giuliano could never resist, the barrack walls were painted, inside and out, with Separatist slogans.

With all more regular financial sources finally closed to him by the arrest of the party leaders, he had now come round to the idea of kidnaping for ransom; and the following day, while the *carabinieri* were buzzing like an overturned beehive, two of his men—the Genovese brothers—carried out a spectacular holdup in broad daylight.

While the strictly political leaders, Aprile and Gallo, were already imprisoned, it was nevertheless the beginning of a runaway—if enigmatic—victory for Giuliano over the *carabinieri*.

It was clear to the new Italian Prime Minister (Alcide de Gasperi, who had formed his first Government on December

9, 1945) that if the Separatists as a party were to be eliminated by force rather than by a possibly perilous election—a policy already established by his predecessor, Signor Parri—Giuliano's western "army" must be attacked and routed as the Catanian contingent had been. At first the Government forces were composed only of *carabinieri*, and they came very badly out of it. Throughout January, 1946, Giuliano and his men carried out an almost daily series of raids and ambushes in all the country from Montelepre down across the plain to Castellammare.

On February 18 the officer commanding the Palermo *carabinieri*, General Branca, sent to Rome a detailed report on the whole subject. "It is to be noted," he wrote, "that the Separatist movement and the *mafia* have now made common cause, and that the chiefs of EVIS must be sought more and more among the *mafia* chiefs of the Island. . . . All the chiefs of the Movement have recently revealed to General Berardi, commanding the military forces in Sicily, their part in the mobilization of EVIS, and have accompanied this revelation with a prayer that for the moment no action should be taken against the 'army,' which they are trying by every possible method to dissolve and send home, thus avoiding useless bloodshed. At the same time they have put forward to General Berardi proposals for easing the critical situation in Sicily, by a general amnesty to the youths who have attached themselves to EVIS; leaving only the common criminals—Giuliano and the others—against whom the police action should continue. The Separatist chiefs would further be pledged to give to the movement a Monarchistic flavor, guaranteeing that all their adherents would engage in propaganda for the Monarchist cause. It would appear that General Berardi has given his full support to these proposals,

and an assurance that in the meantime no action will be taken against the armed forces of the Separatists." General Branca went on to a denunciation of General Berardi's political ambitions, and those of a general commanding a brigade in Catania, who, he said, should be charged with collaboration with the outlawed Separatist leaders. He denounced, too, the honorary chief of the Sicilian *mafia*, a retired colonel named Carlo Vizzini,* as wishing to recruit for reactionary political ends all the disaffected elements of the Island.

The actual number of casualties in Giuliano's campaign at that time was in fact very small, the greatest number in one day being the death of five *carabinieri* in an ambush near Montelepre itself. The danger of these ambushes was so great that the *carabinieri* now moved from place to place only in armored cars. This was a setback for Turridu, for whereas his armorer Vitale could manufacture land mines and perform conjuring tricks with loose explosives, he could not make armor-piercing bullets. Probably owing to this annoyance, he allowed himself, on January 7, 1946, one pitched battle from a hill position where the enemy's armor was useless, but since neither party was in the least interested in losing or gaining ground as such, it was an excuse to fly the Separatist colors rather than an action which could reach a conclusive issue. The Separatists, headed by Giuliano dressed in the party uniform and wearing his silver star, chose their position carefully in advance, and over it hoisted with all the bombast of the middle ages an enormous scarlet and gold flag. This was on the summit of Monte d'Oro (Mountain of Gold), a huge conical peak overlooking Montelepre from the north, and so called because of the quantity of gold coins,

* Died, aged 77, July 12, 1954; was then under prison sentence for complicity in shooting the Communist Senator Li Causi, but released on account of failing health.

currency of some long-forgotten city, that had been found upon its loose and crumbly slopes. Some ten years before this, too, a peasant clearing boulders from his steep terrace on the hillside had stumbled upon the complete skeleton of an elephant, dating from Pyrrhus' invasion of Sicily in 279 B.C. "Scratch anywhere beneath the soil of Sicily," an educated Sicilian told me, "and you will find the skeletons of the centuries before Christ. But we have no money with which to scratch."

The Separatist flag billowed and flapped tauntingly for a week, while a few thousand rounds were exchanged on each side. In the early winter dusk of January 15 the flag and its defenders—estimated by their opponents at something over a thousand but probably no more than a handful—vanished as completely as though the whole episode had indeed slipped through from an older century. The garish uniforms, the flag, the mountaintop position, all belonged essentially to an earlier age that disregarded camouflage and considered battle a thing of panoply and plumes. It was a prank, typifying all that remains medieval in Sicily, and had it been backed by no deadlier successes it would have had little effect. As it was, taken in conjunction with the precision and ferocity of which Giuliano was known to be capable, it had an endearing heraldic impudence.

It is doubtful whether at this stage Giuliano was at any particular pains to build up artificially a reputation for the anachronistic chivalry that characterized so many of his actions. That and his fanatic thoroughness were merely what the events of the past few years had made of the unusually courteous and industrious child who had read so much about the Paladins. It was natural to him now, though later it may have been cultivated for its own sake.

Early in the new year, 1946, on January 26, he held up the Palermo-Trapani train, near Partinico. Even at this time his information service must have been good, for more than one man on board was carrying an unusually large sum of money. Among the passengers were a British officer, an Italian journalist, and a number of women. These were treated with the elaborate courtesy that Turridu felt due to their several statuses in relationship to himself, and to the journalist he gave a short interview—stating, among much else, that the novelist John Steinbeck was his favorite author.

A picture of Giuliano was beginning to take shape in the public mind, a sort of arbitrarily alternating image of the God of the Old and of the New Testament. Generosity, mercy, heroic courage; those were the words that were even then forming the solid structure of the Giuliano saga. An army captain, stationed at Partinico, one day expressed his intention of going out in search of Giuliano, alone with one cadet, and putting an end to this nonsense forever. He set out in an army car along the road to Montelepre, but had not got far when the front tires were punctured by a spatter of bullets, and he himself was hit in the arm. The car came to a perilous standstill, and a young man armed with a submachine gun stepped from the undergrowth at the side of the road. "And who are you looking for, Captain?" he asked. "I am looking," answered the Captain with the remains of his official dignity, "for the bandit Giuliano." The reply was typically theatrical. "He is standing in front of you. Now lay down your weapons." Giuliano dressed the wound; and when he had done so, the Captain said: "Now that you have tended me, do you mean to kill me?" "That," said Giuliano, "would be an underhand action, and Giuliano is not underhand. Give me your weapons, and you may go."

His tenderness and gentleness toward little children probably made less impression in Sicily than elsewhere, for there the sight of childhood tears is a natural subject for immediate pity and consolation. There is the story, for example, of how one day he saw through his field glasses two little girls crying by the roadside. He went to them and put an arm round each, comforting them as even quite small children in Sicily comfort their brothers and sisters who are even smaller. When they had stopped crying he asked them what the matter was, and was told that they had been robbed of sixty-four thousand lire that they had been carrying for their father. No doubt they had been flaunting the paper money with the swagger that its possession could lend a seven-year-old. Giuliano gave them rather more notes than they had lost and said: "Cheer up and go home—you have not lost but gained, for you can tell Mamma that from now on you are under my protection."

When they got home one of the children told her mother: "He was the nicest man I've ever seen."

The American magazine *Time* quoted the bedtime prayer of a little boy in Rome: "God bless mother and father, and save Giuliano from the police."

There was, however, the other side to the picture; that of the pitiless killer shooting in cold blood a boy of seventeen who had been his friend. It showed a strangely clear recognition that in Sicilian history it has always been the whispered word, the furtive meeting in the dark, that has been the true threat, not the exercise of superior manpower and arms.

The *carabinieri* had begun to realize the need for a better information service, and to employ, for miserable wages, a number of petty spies in Montelepre. The first of these was a

boy of whom Turridu had for some years made a considerable pet. The degree of poverty in Montelepre at the time can be judged from the size of the bribe offered him—no more than two thousand lire. It seems that he offered his services to Giuliano, and was told in reply that he might be called upon later. In the meantime he hung round the Giuliano household, listening at windows and doors for scraps of information. He was inexpert, and one evening Turridu slammed open a door to find the boy cowering behind it. He had a story ready, but it was not too plausible; he had seen Giuliano come down from the mountains after dark, and had just reached the house to stand guard outside it. "I am only here to defend you, Turri," he pleaded, "you know yourself we have always been friends." A year or two later Giuliano would have killed him on the spot—now he hesitated. He cuffed the boy savagely, and left him, saying: "Never again try to do anything so dangerous without my orders; you are a baby playing with the affairs of men."

It should have been enough, but Giuliano's reputation was not yet established. A few days later the boy was caught again, and this time there was no room for doubt. Turridu put him up against a wall and shot him. It was done ritualistically like all the subsequent executions. The victim was given time—compelled, in fact—to say his prayers, and shot after pronouncement of the words: "I, Giuliano, kill you in the name of God and Sicily." To the body the executioner pinned a note: "So Giuliano will deal with all those who spy against him."

Giuliano had always been well-liked in Montelepre, and now the seeds of two other vital growths had been planted, those of admiration and fear.

A few weeks later a second spy was found dead, but this

time the note pinned to his breast was more flowery. An officer of the *carabinieri* had come in disguise to Giuliano, posing as a Separatist who wanted to join the band. He, too, was killed in the name of God and Sicily, and his body found propped against an olive tree. This time the note was in rhyme.

Others were to go the same way. The hundreds of *carabinieri* who were by this time stationed permanently in Montelepre were not endearing themselves to the population, and among those who had wavered there was now a solid landslide of feeling toward Giuliano. As a result of this spreading popular sympathy, the work of a spy was becoming very difficult. In a place like Montelepre, where many thousand eyes are huddled into so small a space, it was not easy to give information to authority unobserved. In the *taverna* and the *gelateria* the passing of a written or verbal message to a *carabiniere* would certainly be detected by a neighbor, for those who consorted with *carabinieri* were suspect and were watched. As time went on there were few places where meetings could take place with apparent innocence.

Frisella the hairdresser, executed by Giuliano some two years later, had enjoyed unique opportunity. Leaning over a *maresciallo's* head as he lay back in the barber's chair, massaging oil into the sleek dark crown or deferentially snipping at a coarse black hair or two sprouting from his ear, Frisella could whisper into it sentences inaudible a yard away. He cultivated the habit of whistling through his teeth as he worked, a meaningless hissing sound that could change suddenly into articulate words. He was paid according to the *carabinieri's* estimated value of those words, and it was little enough that he risked his life for, a pound or two pressed into his hand as he brushed down his customer's coat.

Frisella received no warning; he and his wife were killed by submachine fire as one day they were about the ordinary affairs of the shop; their son and daughter were there, too, and there was a customer who had been in the act of leaving. The parents were killed instantly, and the daughter (now married to Sapienza, the custodian of the cemetery) was hit in the thigh. The boy was unharmed, but the shock unhinged him, and as a barber he is unorthodox. The shooting had been carried out by Giuliano and three of his men, but it is perhaps not surprising that the boy Frisella and the customer had, when questioned by the *carabinieri*, been unable to recognize any of the attackers. The neighbors had seen nothing; they had only heard a burst of shots somewhere. There was no time for the regulation note to be pinned to the bodies, but it came next morning: "So perish all who spy against Giuliano." The knot of admiration and fear was being drawn tighter every day.

Often Giuliano baited the *carabinieri* with the dead bodies of the spies sent against him. On the steep slopes above Montelepre, near to Monte d'Oro, there is a huge cave called Grotto Bianco, directly surmounted by a cliff some forty feet high. It was the nearest thing to a permanent headquarters that Giuliano ever had; part of it, in these early days of the Monte d'Oro action, was walled off and contained a cache of arms, and in the other half the band slept, guarded by sentinels on the hilltop above them. Across the mouth of the cave they had planted a row of sisal cactus, and from the cover of these they shot at any *carabinieri* who approached them from below.

The cliff face above the cave was well visible from the town, and against its pale surface Giuliano derisively suspended the bodies of the executed. When the *carabinieri* attempted an

encircling movement, however, they found the cave empty and the bodies already cut down, lying with the now-familiar notes pinned to their breasts.

The government-supporting newspapers published a different account of the Frisella incident, by which it appeared that they were openly against the Separatists, and had earned their death by an innocently comic imitation of Giuliano as a wild boar at bay with the hounds closed in. There is no foundation for this version; they were killed for petty espionage like others before and after them.

The *carabinieri* found it increasingly difficult to enlist enthusiastic amateur help. There were other spies later, but few if any escaped. Even the final arch-betrayer was to die when he seemed safest, and one can picture the ghost of Giuliano tiptoeing into the silent mortuary carrying the ritual slip of paper: "*Così muoiono i traditori contro Giuliano.*"

Giuliano's band was growing, but so far there had been no robbery or kidnaping on a scale to demand attention from the still disorganized *mafia*, and not everyone who was working with him was doing so on a full-time basis. Some went about their ordinary everyday work, but could be called upon for action when required; still others were merely relayers of information. There was an inner circle, however, who remained the apparent core of the fabulous army until the very end, most of them young men barely out of their teens. Gaspare Pisciotta, his first cousin and co-chieftain, was then not yet twenty-two, wearing a duplicate of the silver star, and later of the heraldic belt buckle, worn by Turridu himself. These were of solid gold, showing in deep relief the figures of a lion and an eagle; they had been made specially for Giuliano by a skilled member of his band named Giordiano. In the center of Pisciotta's buckle was framed a tiny photo-

graph of Giuliano, in symbol of allegiance, but the frame in Giuliano's belt was empty. With Gaspare Turridu exchanged blood from his wrist in a primitive pact of eternal fidelity. "Without Gaspare Pisciotta," he said, "Salvatore Giuliano cannot exist."

Gaspare plays as great a part in the whole story as Giuliano himself. He was the elder son of Giuliano's maternal aunt, Rosalia Lombardo, but there was only superficial likeness between the mentalities of the two. While at the beginning Gaspare certainly felt himself to be working for an ideal, he was neither as single-minded as his cousin, nor had he the compulsions and complexities of character that elevated Giuliano from the mass. He was handsome and dandified, wearing his thick wavy black hair unusually long and very carefully brushed; his eyes were as heavily lashed as a woman's, and his mustache was always trimmed to perfection; the lips were sensual and a little cruel. It was a face of violence, but of a looser, less formidable kind than the taut danger in Giuliano's eyes; yet with all that it was not only a scornful head but a proud one, the head of one who in face of all the evidence to the contrary could years later shout at his accusers with utter seeming conviction: "I have not sold my soul, though I have been offered millions for it!"

It would seem that Pisciotta was at home in deeper waters than his master. In bargain and intrigue he was unhandicapped by the shadowy irreconcilable figures who struggled in the dark corners of Giuliano's mind; he was a natural actor, too, and could adapt himself quickly to circumstance.

Pisciotta acted as treasurer besides second-in-command, and was responsible for putting into effect much of Giuliano's detailed planning.

There was a musician named di Lorenzo, who gave Giu-

liano guitar lessons; there was an armorer, Vittorio Vitale; there were two leaders of already established outlaw bands, Cucchiara and Terranova, who had brought their men with them. Among names that were to become notorious there was Frank Mannino, the best educated among them; Passatempo, Candela, and Badalamenti; Giuliano's future brother-in-law, Pasquale Sciortino; Castrenze Madonia (who had carved upon the two sides of his gun-butt: "I can look after my enemies, but God protect me from my friends"); the brothers Genovese, and the brothers Cucinella. These names stand out from the long list of those who years later stood a trial lasting literally thousands of hours.

This, then, was the general shape and character of Giuliano's Separatist "army" in the early spring of 1946. There were skirmishes in which a *carabiniere*, or more rarely one of his own men, was killed, a few robberies and ransoms. As a power, Giuliano was not yet known outside his own district.

Probably he had been given "go slow" orders by the political leaders, who kept a wary eye on the changing situation in Italy. He himself felt dedicated to a war of independence. Some, anyway, of his followers believed in the future as wholeheartedly as he did; others found the idea attractive because as adherents of the movement they would receive a protection and a status otherwise lacking.

In November of the previous year the Allies had handed back control of the Italian Army to Italy, and now regular troops were sent to reinforce the *carabinieri* in the area of Palermo and Montelepre. Early in February there was another indecisive clash between Giuliano's Separatists and these forces, but it was evidently not engaging his full attention, for it was sandwiched between successful and very prof-

itable holdups of rich civilians. At each of these Giuliano appeared in person, and each added a little to the legend, for this very handsome young man treated the women with an exaggerated gallantry that they were quick to recount when they got home. His immunity was already becoming a public scandal, and on February 15, 1946, a reward of eight million lire was offered for him alive or dead.

He could not have got this far without the co-operation of the *mafia*. He had entered into comprehensive negotiations with them, by which they made the actual ransom demands from his victims, deducting 10 per cent or so for the service. In addition they were to receive very substantial protection money, and a right to call upon him for strong-arm work when required. In return, he was guaranteed the full protection of the society. Much of his work, therefore, was carried out with direct *mafia* co-operation; furthermore, any informer against him became automatically an informer against the *mafia*.

With the true rulers of Sicily in secure alliance, there remained officially in opposition the two main law-enforcement bodies of Italian police—the *carabinieri* and the *polizia*, or true police. (The municipal police, who carry out such duties as traffic control, the customs police of harbor towns and villages, and the *guardie campestri* were of no great significance.) Between these two main organizations there had long existed a spirit of rivalry, represented by the Government as a healthy and stimulating competition, but in reality approaching in some quarters nearer to a jealous hatred. Neither body has ever been popular in Sicily, but the *carabinieri* tend to be regarded as oafish hybrids between soldiers and traffic policemen, while the *polizia* are held in dread second only to the *mafia* itself. Their mobile units, the *celere*,

Giuliano's poster representing himself severing Sicily from Italy in favor of attachment to the United States of America. © Michael Stern



The gold belt buckle of lion and eagle worn by Giuliano and his co-chieftain, Pisciotta. © Keystone Press





Salvatore Giuliano. © Michael Stern



Giuliano's mother, Maria Lombardo, with the Separatists' "uniform," a red and yellow shirt with the three-legged emblem of Sicily. © Michael Stern



Giuliano's cousin and co-chieftain Gaspare Pisciotto. © Meldolesi, reproduced by permission of Pietro Pisciotto



Giuliano's father (left) with U.S. journalist Michael Stern and Giuliano (right). © Michael Stern



Two street scenes in
Montelepre, home town.
Giuliano





The center of the battlefield, Giuliano's home town of Montelepre in its setting.



The site of the massacre at Portella della Ginestra. In the background,



On the morning of July 5, 1950, Giuliano's body lies in the courtyard in Castelvetrano where, by the official account, he was killed in battle. © *Stella, Castelvetrano*



Giuliano's mother throws herself to the ground and kisses the bloodstains where his body had lain. © *Vespasiani*



A part of the swarm of Montelepre children who waited for Giuliano's coffin on the steps of the church. © Vespasiani



Giuliano's first grave—the shelf with his name scrawled in the wet cement that seals the niche. © *Keystone Press*



The present shrine of Giuliano.

or flying squads, have acquired a reputation for reckless brutality; it is said that when controlling crowds, even crowds with no hostile intent, they strike about them without regard for broken limbs or even broken skulls. Both in planning and in execution the whole hierarchy of the *polizia* enjoys a reputation for ruthless thoroughness equaling that of Scotland Yard, but never for integrity or scrupulous methods.

All branches of the police are controlled by the Minister for the Interior in the Rome Government, a fact that was later to assume a major significance. At this time the Minister was Signor Romita; a little later in Giuliano's career it was the Sicilian Signor Scelba who was to become Prime Minister of Italy on February 8, 1954.

Giuliano's status with the *polizia* was a subject for much speculation at the time, both in Sicily and on the mainland, though it was years before this question was raised in the press of other nations. The exact extent of the link will probably never be known; in the witness box at the Viterbo trial in 1950 there was such a babel of accusation and denial that the truth, if it was spoken, became obscured. Perhaps the position at this early stage can best be summed up by the existence in Giuliano's band of a certain Salvatore Ferreri, aptly nicknamed "Fra Diavolo" (brother devil). Fra Diavolo was not a Sicilian but a Florentine, and carried a false pass in the name of a Florence street, Rossi Salvo. He had other aliases as well, and for a long time was identified only as "Salvatore of Alcamo." He had gone to meet his father in Florence on the latter's demobilization from the army; there they had obtained papers from an influential Roman and were put into touch with the Sicilian police.

According to the official version, Fra Diavolo had been planted in the band by the police, as a spy. (It will be re-

membered that Inspector Messina, Chief of Police in Palermo, was rumored to have strong Separatist leanings, and to be the most likely candidate for Minister for the Interior in a separate Sicily.) This spy, however, escaped the fate of others who spied on Giuliano—he was not found dead with a rhyming note pinned to his breast; in fact, when he did die, much later, it was at the hands of the *carabinieri*. For while Messina called him a police spy in Giuliano's band, Giuliano regarded him as his go-between with the police. Gaspare Pisciotta said from the witness box: "We were all hand in glove with the *polizia*; it is the *carabinieri* who are responsible for this trial." But as the Giuliano story unfolds it is clear that Fra Diavolo was not the only character who was playing a double or even a treble role.

Even at this early stage the contestants were becoming difficult to distinguish. The two main political leaders of the Separatists, Finnocchario-Aprile and Concetto Gallo, were in prison as rebels. But on March 4, 1946 (the same day that Giuliano carried out a spectacular attack on a Palermo radio station), Finnocchario-Aprile was set free from exile in the Island of Ponza. In a private conversation with Signor Romita, Minister for the Interior, he renounced his Separatist ideals and promised to conduct a peaceful electoral campaign. In a press interview he said: "The aims and objects of the Separatist Movement have been falsified by its opponents; the adherents of the Movement are, and intend to remain, Italian." He was later elected to the Rome parliament. He claimed that he had in fact wanted for Sicily no more independence than the Regional Autonomy that Italy was so soon to grant to her (May 17, 1946), and he denied any responsibility for Giuliano's campaign. It was rumored that Gallo was also changing his colors, and from prison was can-

vassing for public office. (In fact, he was released five months later, on August 16, as an elected deputy to the new Sicilian Regional Parliament.) "The same men," Giuliano wrote later, "who through my efforts have been elected deputies to the Italian Congress turned their backs on me, and I was left alone with my men"—and Pisciotta was to shout from the witness box: "Gallo killed eight *carabinieri* and yet is now styled 'Honorable'!" Neither Aprile nor Gallo play any major part in the rest of this story.

The Day of the Adder

"It is the bright day that brings forth the adder." JULIUS CAESAR

PROBABLY Giuliano did not immediately understand the completeness of the letdown. Perhaps he thought, or more likely was persuaded, that the Separatist leaders were biding their time, which would some day be his too; for if he had believed in their complete defection he would certainly have taken reprisals.

The degree of his *insouciance* can be judged from the fact that without a single responsible American contact he now formed a new "Movement" of which he was himself the leader: "Movement for the Annexation of Sicily to the American Confederation," whose Sicilian initials spelt MASCA. His faith in American support seems to have been based only upon the encouragement they had given to EVIS before Italy had capitulated.

Under a general amnesty now granted to all members of the Separatist Movement not charged with specifically criminal acts, a number of his less firmly attached adherents drifted back to respectability. He remained, however, undisputed overlord of a great many outlaws, including the bands of Terranova and Cucchiara who had rallied to his Separatist flag. His reputation for infallibility, idealism, and gen-

erosity to the poor was growing steadily, too, and this opened a terrible possibility in the minds of the authorities. If Giuliano as an unconvicted felon were, like Gallo, to canvass for political election under the name of a legal party he would almost certainly be successful, and under the intricacies of Italian law would become immune from arrest.*

In Italy it is unnecessary to arrest a man before trying him for the crime of which he is accused. The law recognizes neither time nor place; even death itself is no escape, for a corpse or a skeleton may be tried and convicted. This law is held to be logically essential, in that the object of trial is to establish responsibility for the crime. Through this loophole a quick shot could at least eliminate Giuliano as a legal political figure. With feverish haste he was tried and convicted *in absentia* of the murder of Antonio Mancino, *carabiniere*, at Quattro Molini on September 2, 1943, and condemned to twenty-four years' imprisonment.† Further, on March 20, his mother and his sisters, who on his advice had moved to Palermo and were living with a certain Caterina Pizzura, were arrested with their hostess and taken to prison at Termini Imerese, east of Palermo.

The effect on Giuliano of this bewilderingly rapid succession of events shows a sequence of alternating reactions. At first there was a blind fury at the outrage against *la mamma*, the kind of noble rage that is found in myth at the kidnaping of a high priestess. It was concentrated on the perpetrators only, an intensification of his former hatred of the *cara-*

* Electoral laws of March 10, 1946, Part IX: "No Deputy can be arrested, except in the case of *flagrante delicto*, nor subjected to penal proceedings, without the authorization of the Constituent Assembly. No Deputy can be subjected to police questioning or to domiciliary search."

† Giuliano was later absolved of this charge on payment of a lump sum to the family of the dead man. Other charges against him, it is alleged, were erased from the books under threats to the judiciary clerks concerned.

binieri, and now when they moved about the countryside they were safe only in their armored cars. In Palermo and elsewhere posters appeared over his name warning the public not to travel on buses or trams in which *carabinieri* were riding, owing to the danger of ambush; another of their spies was executed with the usual note. To his mother and sister in prison Giuliano sent banquets of rich food, and a message: "My dear ones—I advise you to hold yourselves in readiness, for I shall come to liberate you"; but this time it proved unnecessary, for they were freed after twenty-three days.

On April first, while the women were still in prison, *Maresciallo* Calandra, in charge of the Montelepran contingent of *carabinieri*, tasted Giuliano's sense of humor. He was ascending the pass of Rigano by car from Palermo, when, rounding one of the hairpin bends near the barracks of Bellolampo, he saw the body of a man, surrounded by much blood, lying in the center of the road. Dismounting from the car and bending over it, he had just time to see that it was a dummy, and to read the words "April Fool" before the shooting started. Calandra escaped intact but badly shaken; it is improbable that Giuliano meant to kill him, for he must have been an easy target.

When the first flame of anger at the women's imprisonment had died down, Giuliano's recurrent idea of pardon and restoration was again in the foreground. On May third he went in person to the Tribunal in Palermo, where the *Guida istruttore* was also a Montelepran—by name de Maria, but unrelated to the lawyer of the same name who appears later in the story. He found the office closed, but left a note screwed into the keyhole. It read:

"Giuliano has taken the trouble to come here in person to

invite you to burn the public lawsuits filed against him. Otherwise he will be obliged to force you to do so."

On the same day new posters appeared over his signature, announcing that the Palermo-Monteplepre bus might now run again without fear of being molested, as he felt guilty about the inconvenience and discomfort that this aspect of the campaign had caused to his fellow citizens of Monteplepre.

Now he was at least temporarily without serious political backing. The Monarchist Party was not a militant force, for in that same week, May 10, 1946, Crown Prince Umberto was proclaimed King Umberto II of Italy. Giuliano's compulsive need of justification for all his actions made it essential for him to become the champion of the poor and oppressed. In this part he was handicapped by the less scrupulous elements in his band, who did not greatly care whom they robbed.

A new slogan appeared: "Giuliano does not rob the poor." It was found, like its better-known predecessors, pinned to the breast of a dead man, one of Giuliano's own, who had stolen two barrels of wine from an old peasant with a sick wife. Others were to go the same way, a certain Leonardo Gritti who requisitioned cattle from a smallholder in the name of Giuliano, and a foundation member named Angelo Vitale, who was first formally expelled for "disrespect to the poor." "If you had any guts," said Giuliano scornfully, "you would rob those who would miss a million lire as little as they would the hats from their heads—but when you steal an ass or a sack of corn from a poor man you leave him in misery." Within a few weeks Vitale, too, was found dead with the same note attached to him.

One of the best of all the Giuliano anecdotes belongs to this *genre*. One day in the mountains he watched an old and miser-

ably poor man begging a farmer-shepherd for some curds to drink, and saw the farmer turn him angrily away. Giuliano followed the old man, gave him money, and then returned to the farmer, who inquired effusively of what help he could be, and produced bread and wine. "Do not disturb yourself," said Giuliano, "I want nothing but a cup of curds." The curds were produced immediately and with the deepest servility but the farmer was astonished to see that Giuliano, instead of drinking, was holding his submachine gun muzzle upward and tipping the liquid down its barrel. As he did so he caressed the weapon gently, and crooned over it, saying tenderly: "Are you thirsty, dearest? Drink it up, be grateful for the curds this kind man has given you; is that enough? Don't you want any more?" After several minutes of this performance the farmer burst out in amazement: "Why do you pour the curds into your gun instead of drinking them yourself?" "Because," replied Giuliano in the voice of menace that he so easily assumed, "you gave the curds not to me but to my gun because you feared it. If ever again you turn away a poor man and revile him you will have Giuliano to reckon with."

"I live by my conscience and I do nothing anonymously," said Giuliano. "I am willing to take full responsibility in the the eyes of God and man for all that I do. I have killed when it is just to do so, but never has Giuliano soiled his hands with blood for the sake of money."

His defense of the poor by summary jurisdiction entered a wider phase when he executed a Montelepre shopkeeper for extortion. This man, yet another of the clan Terranova, gave long credit to his customers at rates they were subsequently unable to pay without forced sale of their possessions. It was strictly speaking, a legal business, but it was not good enough

for Giuliano. His reputation as a righter of injustice was now great enough for one of Terranova's victims to send his complaint direct, and a day later Giuliano executed the usurer in the name of God and Sicily.

The next was a post office clerk, Salvatore Abate, also of Montelepre. For some time past he had been impounding letters and parcels that contained money or changeable goods, or exacting dubiously legal duties upon letters from abroad. These were mainly from America, where many Monteleprans had more prosperous relations. The decreasing flow of American mail caused suspicion, but at first it was thought that Montelepre was being starved out by security authorities in Palermo. Finally, one of Giuliano's own sisters fell victim to the racket, and, making inquiries through one of his "contacts," he discovered the cover-stories to be untrue. He took the detection, trial, and execution into his own hands, and within two days Abate was dead.

"I will never tolerate injustice; I am on the side of justice for its own sake," he said; though what he understood by the word he never explained except by action. *Giustizia*, that weird man-made conception that man has proved incapable of applying; that is so utterly against all natural laws; and in the end remains an emotional rather than an intellectual conception. For Giuliano, Giuliano was *giustizia*.

It was *giustizia*, he had now decided, that the rich should be robbed to give to the poor, and the poor began to benefit. An old woman, a pauper, who was to be evicted from her house the next day, found a thick packet of bank notes by her bed when she woke in the morning; a peasant whose crops had failed received a like present. Gradually this became a more general distribution among the peasant people of the two plains, the Conca d'Oro behind Palermo and the long

plain of the Golfo below Montelepre. Indeed, at no time during his whole career does he appear to have spent much money on himself, even when thousands of dollars were passing through his hands every week. Whatever was left over from his payments to the *mafia* and to his own men did in all likelihood go to his beloved peasants, for there is no legend of a great Giuliano treasure.

Some minor personal decoration he did permit himself, but it was a drop in the ocean of the money that he handled. This was the gold belt buckle, duplicated by Gaspare Pisciotta; a gold calendar watch showing months, weeks, days, and hours, to which he gave the reverence of a child to a new and long-desired toy; and a magnificent diamond solitaire ring that he had stolen from Duke Pape of Pratemeno.

The circumstances in which this ring was said to be acquired made so great an appeal to the public imagination that for many people it has been the only single incident remembered in connection with Giuliano, and it is characteristically inaccurate. Every journalist who has ever contributed a paragraph or two on him has found space to quote it; every Sicilian ballad-writer has exaggerated and redecorated the journalists' version, so that now there is clearly little of the original fact unobscured. Stripped of its most obvious enrichments, the story as told is not basically improbable, for it bears the stamp of the gentleman crook, the chivalrous robber, that Giuliano set out to be.

The Duke of Pratemeno had, as one of Sicily's richest resident landlords, been harried by Giuliano for some time. He had paid protection money to the *mafia*, but they explained to him with customary courtesy that the unforeseen circumstance of Giuliano had invalidated original contracts. No

final working agreement had been reached when Giuliano took possession of the ring.

It is said that he visited the household when the Duke himself was away from home. He walked into the Duchess's room unannounced but apologetic, dressed for the occasion in a suit of black cloth. He bowed and asked forgiveness for his temerity in coming to see her without appointment or introduction. He came forward and kissed her hand, as formal and correct as he knew how to be. "But now," he finished, "*I must* introduce myself—I am Giuliano."

The Duchess linked this name only with one of her tenants who had been ill, for it is not a rare name in Sicily.

"How nice of you to call," she cooed. "And tell me, how is your father? I have always found him so hospitable when I visit your house."

"I think there is some mistake, madam." One can picture the young Giuliano coloring slightly; it would be an insult that the name should not at once mean him and him only. "I am Giuliano the outlaw—the famous Giuliano."

"You are joking, young man. Please explain yourself."

"I am not joking. I am Giuliano, and I have come for your jewelry."

She believed him now. "You are unfortunate, sir. I cannot give you my jewels because they are in the bank at Palermo."

"Madam," said Giuliano, "I do not wish to doubt your word but I have been informed that you keep your jewels hidden in this house. And perhaps I should tell you straight away that my hard-hearted comrades have already kidnaped your grandchildren. They will be held as hostages until I have your jewels."

The Duchess gave way tearfully. She had some remarkable jewelry, including historic pearls. When all had been

handed over, Giuliano bent again to kiss her hand. As he did so he noticed the solitaire diamond glittering on her finger. "That, madam, is perhaps the finest of them all. May I have it, please?"

She begged and pleaded, saying that it was her engagement ring, her most treasured possession, and a reminder of her first and only love. "Then," said Giuliano, "I shall not sell it but wear it myself. Knowing its history will make me value it the more."

As he left he picked up a book lying on the sofa—a translation of Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle*.

"I shall borrow this," he said, "but unlike the jewels, I shall return it." After a month the book was returned with a letter:

My dear Duchess,

I am returning herewith the book which I borrowed from you. I do not understand how a reactionary like you could possibly appreciate it, and I was tempted to keep it. But when Giuliano gives his word he does not break it.

GIULIANO.

There was evidently something wrong with that story, for unless she was a very big duchess the ring would hardly have fitted any of Giuliano's capable fingers. In fact, while there is no reason to doubt the circumstances of his theft of the Duchess's jewels, the ring that was taken after Giuliano's death from the third finger of his left hand, and subsequently restored to the Duke of Pratemeno, had no place in the scene. Giuliano had kidnaped the harassed Duke less than a year before, and returned him without this ornament.

The great appeal of the story produced another crop of fiction, concerning his passionate love life with a duchess unspecified. A translation made for me by an Italian of one

of the Sicilian ballads has an engaging gusto: "The Duchess kisses, cuddles him, holds him tightly on her bosom, shakes him . . . telling him sweetly: 'I am crazy on you!' . . . She talks him into love with her limitless voluptuousness." And of another mistress: "She spent most of her time with him in the clinch of sweet love."

In fact, since Sicilians are not as a rule a very continent people, Giuliano's love life was an enigma that invited speculation and luscious rumor. Since his adolescent calf loves there was little enough that could be pinned on him. There were plenty of applicants, but none seemed to find favor; in Montelepre there were Pietra Genovese, Francesca Ferranta, and his cousin, Tonia Lombardo, all said to be weeping through the night for him, but he accorded them no more than the great courtesy he gave to all women. True, there was the woman known as La Pizzura, whose release from arrest he had demanded in the same breath with that of his mother and sister, but she was not said to be his mistress. In some quarters he is credited with a son in Montelepre, now fifteen years old, but the idea is based at least partly on a physical resemblance, and it is unlikely that Giuliano even knew the mother at that time, when he himself would have been barely sixteen.

His general attitude to women was that they were dangerous, that white hands cling to the bridle rein. To Maria Cyliakus, a Swedish journalist, he said: "I don't want to soil myself with contact with the creatures," and he laughed with derisive amusement at the many affairs with which he was credited. It seems that no woman other than his mother played a major part in his life.

One recorded incident, in which he stripped his cousin Gaspare Pisciotta, tied him to a tree, and beat him savagely for

alleged promiscuity and toying with girls' affections, may be more revealing of Giuliano's makeup than of Gaspare's, for it has the character of a compulsive reaction to the things his own mind had placed beyond reach. He always dealt harshly with those of his men who allowed their sexual life to override caution or discipline, and for the most part they were allowed only to marry relations of other members of the band, so that as time went on many of them became related by marriage.

Some in Italy who disbelieved the fictional stories of his love affairs inclined to the idea that he was homosexual, but there is no proof of that either. In fact, like many Sicilians, he was probably *capable de tout*, an attitude favored by the inaccessibility of women outside marriage or professional prostitution; but whatever its direction sex seems to have had little influence in shaping the course of his life.

It was impossible that the figure of power and popularity that Giuliano had now become should remain for long without political backing. In early June, 1946, after a reign of less than a month, King Umberto II was dethroned, following his offer to abide by popular vote on whether Italy should be a Monarchy or a Republic. The majority against him was slender, amounting over all Italy to about six to five, and once more the fundamental difference in viewpoint between the South and the North became apparent. The greater part of nearly eleven million votes polled for the Monarchy came from the South, while the industrial North recorded nearly thirteen million in favor of a Republic. By midsummer King Umberto had gone and Italy was no longer a Monarchy.

The birth of a militant Monarchist party followed logically upon these events, though a great number who had voted for the King were content for the time being to ally

themselves to Signor de Gasperi's Christian Democrat Government; for de Gasperi himself was known to have strong monarchist sympathies.

At this time there were at least two dozen nominal parties, though few of them were of any real or lasting significance. Individual ambition was the keynote, and for this reason the policy of the minor parties was painstakingly equivocal and nebulous; there was, however, usually some attractive catch phrase, one party having the engaging title of the Biftek Party. Their object was to ensure that every family should be in a position to eat beefsteak every day, though how this was to be achieved remained ill defined.

Between the extreme left and the extreme right were the Christian Democrats, who had amalgamated with the Liberal Party. They were nominally progressive but essentially Catholic, and connected with the Vatican both by mutual approval and actual agreement. (In Sicily there are people now who claim that, near election time, absolution from their local priest is absolutely conditional on their voting for the Christian Democrats, and that under the same sanctions women are compelled after an election to say for what party they have voted.) In the election of June, 1946, the Christian Democrats received eight million votes, the runners-up being the Socialist Party with four and three-quarter millions, and the Communists with something under half a million less. (In Giuliano's area, however, MIS, the legal successors of the Separatists, polled only a few less votes than the Christian Democrats.) No other party secured much more than one and a half million votes. A complete political amnesty followed this election, including all of EVIS who were charged with no specific crime under the criminal code.

Gaspare Pisciotta availed himself of this amnesty, no

doubt with Giuliano's full consent, for it was unthinkable that there could be any division of opinion between the two. From June till August Gaspare appeared openly in Montelepre, for he had not been formally charged with any civil crime. Then, one day in August, an officer of *carabinieri* laid a hand upon his shoulder as he walked through the street of the town. Like many others, Gaspare had been technically a deserter from the army, and in a panic he attacked the officer furiously with feet and fists, and bolted for the open country pursued by random rifle fire. Out on the steep ground of the *campagna* he ran leaping from terrace to terrace, intent on putting the greatest possible distance between himself and the *carabinieri*. Suddenly, as he jumped a dry water course, he was taken by a violent fit of coughing. He spat, and was horrified to see that what came from his mouth was blood.

Giuliano arranged for him to be X-rayed, and the examination revealed advanced tuberculosis. In his beloved Gaspare's misery Giuliano showed the whole warmth of his nature. He had read of the recent discovery of streptomycin, and since it was not then available in Italy he wrote to friends in America, enclosing seven hundred dollars. To Pisciotta he said: "Your cousin Turridu is always there to help you even if your cure cost millions, for to me you have always been more than a brother." The medicine duly arrived, and Gaspare said: "For this I shall be grateful to you for all my life, for I owe you my life."

Gaspare returned to the life of an outlaw. Others rejoined Giuliano's band with him, notably the notorious Frank Mannino; it had been a very brief period of respectability. Others, who felt the amnesty to be insecure, chose emigration to the U.S.A. rather than return to Giuliano; among them was

Francesco Barone, who paid a million lire for the necessary documents.

Already, it seems, there were the seeds of schism among Giuliano's men; for Terranova, who commanded a band within the band, wanted to call off the war of dedication against the *carabinieri* and become a true brigand, kidnaping for high ransoms until they were all rich enough to emigrate in security. Giuliano would not agree; however naïve were his ideals he was still an idealist.

In the political free-for-all that Sicily was in 1946, the influence of Giuliano could be great, and party after party wooed his support. He was an impressionable and emotional young man, and there was a fear in right-wing circles that he might turn Communist. It was one of Fra Diavolo's jobs to see that he did not, and in the light of later events Fra Diavolo would seem to have had able helpers. There is, however, no evidence that Giuliano ever had even temporary Communist leanings. His object, in so far as it could be reconciled with his still-smoldering ideals, was to ally himself with the party that could offer him the best hope of pardon and subsequent honor.

These were the Monarchists and the Christian Democrats, and where they overlapped was not always quite clear, for there were powerful members of the Christian Democrat Party who would have preferred a monarchy to a republic, but were not prepared to call themselves outright members of the Monarchist Party. In Sicily the *mafia* influenced the situation too; for the Christian Democrats, as the government in power, had to achieve some compromise with the real rulers of Sicily. In effect, they were able to offer Giuliano the protection of the *mafia* for himself and his family, while the Monarchists made more precise proposals and promises.

To prevent a split in Monarchist Party voting, its various factions had fused under the name of the National Freedom Bloc. Their stated beliefs were that the Monarchy was the only insurance against further dictatorship, and they gave primary importance to reform in favor of the workers everywhere. The nominal leaders of the party, Bencivenga, Selvaggi, Benedetti, and Bergamini, never appear in the Giuliano story; their role is assumed by a certain Prince Alliata, in whom Giuliano placed great faith, and on whose lands in South America members of the band were said to have been promised freedom in case of the party's failure. (Alliata's father had been commercial attaché at the Italian Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, and had married a Brazilian heiress; it was to this that their Monarchist son owed his great wealth and Brazilian properties. He is now Monarchist Member of Parliament for Palermo.) Other names mentioned frequently in evidence during the 1951 trial were Bernardo Matarella, with whom the American colonel had had earlier dealings, and who was by this time Minister of Transport in the Rome Government; Leone Marchesano, a lawyer who administered much of Alliata's property; and Geloso Cusumano, a member of the Sicilian assembly. At the same trial it was said that these, the Monarchists, were Giuliano's real friends whom he would never let down, while his connection with the Christian Democrats had always been one of expediency and opportunism.

With the Monarchist representatives Giuliano and Pisciotta are alleged to have held four secret meetings, of which three (at Alcamo, Boccadifalco, and Partinico) were at the houses of powerful *mafiosi*. The ex-Separatists, too, maintained a wary friendship with Giuliano, for in the course of

their association he had acquired much knowledge that might be made inconvenient.

Even at this early stage he was acquiring a political background from whose complexity there could be little chance of escape, and it is ironical that the deeper he floundered into politics the more surely he was labeled in Rome as a simple criminal without political significance.

In Montelepre itself the results of the June election, when Giuliano was still bewildered by the recent succession of events reflected his politics less than those of the Mayor of Montelepre, Stefano Mannino. This remarkable young man was also an idealist, but he was a scholar, a professor of modern languages, and had none of Giuliano's violence. He, too, was not yet out of his twenties; he believed in the future, and he was capable of the same absolute application. Physically he was strongly built, and as handsome in his own way as Giuliano, but in his face there is all the sensitivity and reflection that was lacking in the other's. They were two men who wanted to lead and reform their people; Giuliano is dead and all his violence for nothing, Stefano Mannino is schoolmaster in Montelepre's new modern school,* still a young man, who looks as if something had hurt him very much.

He did not dismiss Giuliano as a common criminal. He believed that he had acted misguidedly but in good faith, and that at this time of political amnesty he would come back to normal life if somehow his pardon could be arranged.

Turridu was still deeply religious, and it seemed that an appeal from the Church, if it came from high enough quarter, might succeed where an army could not. Cardinal Ruffini himself came alone from Palermo to preach from the pulpit of Montelepre church. He was an orator, and in a highly emo-

* Retired in 1954 owing to ill health.

tional discourse he called upon Giuliano to consider the state of his soul, to surrender himself and be purged from his state of mortal sin; to think of his eternal life hereafter rather than this infinitesimal moment upon earth.

It was a good idea, but it left one important factor out of account. It was true that Giuliano's faith was undiminished, but for some time he had come to doubt the necessity for an intermediary between himself and God. It was a long time now since he had said: "Father, I have sinned." His attitude had been reinforced by the violent anti-clericalism of many of the Separatists; now when he executed a spy there was no hypocrisy in his formula, for he was convinced that he had as much right to act in the name of God as any of the hierarchy of the Church. As always, he had, however, the compulsive desire to explain and justify his actions in others' eyes, and at length Cardinal Ruffini received a written explanation of why it was impossible to respond to the appeal. The legal system that would try him, he pointed out, could not be a truly Christian or impartial one, for it existed only to try people like him—it could not recognize the much greater guilt and bloodthirstiness of the *carabinieri* that an independent arbitrator would quickly establish. Such oratory as the Cardinal's would be better directed to them, for their souls were in greater distress than Giuliano's.

Stefano Mannino, however, extracted a real promise of the Cardinal's intercession for all members of Giuliano's band if they would surrender. Through an intermediary he arranged with Giuliano a night rendezvous at a *campagna* terrace on the slopes some three hundred yards above the town, below the Grotto Bianco on whose cliff Giuliano displayed the bodies of his executed spies.

To reach that terrace, now worked by Sapienza of the

graveyard, the path climbs steeply from the houses through other terraces like it, each with a clump or two of bamboos, a few olives, prickly pears, fruit trees, and vines. The ground itself is pale lumpy soil, utterly dry, except when the irrigation tanks are drained twice a week, so that the tomato beds through which the path winds appear miraculous. At night it is difficult to move silently, for the crackling dry fragments of bamboo are everywhere underfoot, and the vines and cacti lean out over the path. There is an endless singing of insects in the vegetation, grasshoppers and crickets by night and cicadas by day, so that it is never silent. Up here it is an undertone like incidental music; down in the plain below it occupies the darkness to the exclusion of all else, so that on the stillest night an elephant could crash unheard through the plantations. It is the aggregate of thousands of sounds, some small and some loud, but the dominant note is like the ringing of hundreds of little silver doorbells, urgent and insistent against a background of violin bows being drawn in monotonous rhythm across the strings. Before the moon rises it is as though one were deprived not only of sight but of hearing too; under cover of those multitudinous voices an enemy could be upon one without ever the crack of a twig being distinguishable.

From Sapienza's terrace at night Montelepre looks like a citadel of fable. The lights shine on the Norman castle so that it is floodlit against the dark encircling mountains, and the close confines of the town are picked out hard and sharp by other lamps, giving the appearance of a walled and embattled fortress. The sound of music drifts up to the terrace, the town's band or perhaps a big loudspeaker relaying dance music from Palermo or Tunis, but whichever it is the dark and the distance are flattering, and the sound and sight har-

monize into a treacherously romantic whole. It seems the focal point of all that is anachronistic in Western Sicily, the carts painted with crusading legend, the childish blood-pacts, the ferocious sense of honor and *omertà*, the trigger-happy yet not altogether bad young men of Giuliano's band. Perhaps he himself worried sometimes about this staging and its effect on the outside world that he wanted so much to impress. It was so easy to show it all in other lights; as a gangster story with its end as yet in doubt; as a Wild West melodrama complete with crook sheriff; as the tale of a brutal gang of young peasant robbers with a handsome megalomaniac leader. He had a habit of writing everything down—a matter of great embarrassment to his associates—and one can picture a page in one of those scrubby exercise books setting out the rules of conduct that would assemble the image he desired, the fighting idealist who would never wrong the poor nor break his word.

Stefano Mannino went alone and unarmed to the rendezvous, carrying with him documentary proof of the Cardinal's promise of intercession. He came as he had been directed, to the barn at the end of the terrace where two or three black cows were chewing their cactus cud in the dark. From the first he must have guessed that he had failed, for it was not Giuliano who waited there but Gaspare Pisciotta, as co-chieftain, and Salvatore Passatempo. (Passatempo was the worst of all the band, a bestial criminal who had nevertheless become indispensable by his efficiency. Later, Giuliano found his presence so distasteful that he gave him control over the Castellammare area, well out of his sight.)

Probably they had thought that Stefano had some further card to play, for they were contemptuous of the Cardinal's offer. Even if it were genuine and not a trap they were skep-

tical both of his power of intercession and of their subsequent safety in the hands of the law; a skepticism which in the end proved to be well-founded, though neither of them lived to see it justified. And if, indeed, the Cardinal interceded for them and they were pardoned—a most unlikely event—what had they to gain? Freedom? They were free already, said Gaspare, freer by far than those who must live under the oppressive and unjust laws of Italy.

Giuliano did not appear, though it is not unlikely that he was playing a double role of sentry and eavesdropper, lest the rendezvous should prove to be a trap. Had he spoken to Stefano Mannino he would probably have used more idealistic and less cynical arguments, and if he believed himself to be free now he certainly had not done so in the past. Perhaps in this the third year of his outlawry he had grown hardened to looking down upon the lighted town at night and no longer thought as he used to of all that he had lost, the nursery warmth and security of *la famiglia* and the problems that had been simple and defined; for he saw himself now as the future leader of a nation, who would treat on equal terms with distant kings and dictators.

If he had come to heel at the Cardinal's call his end could have been no different; he knew too much about too many people, and even then there was more than one waiting to kill him at the first sign of defection.

For two months after the June elections he appeared to be playing a waiting game, and there was relative inactivity in his band. He spent the time in negotiation with various shadowy political figures, and on August 15 he issued a public statement of his position. This took the form of an open letter to the Prime Minister, Signor de Gasperi, sent to

the Rome newspaper *l'Ora*. In this he stated that, as the electoral promises of the Deputies made before the June elections had not been fulfilled, his only possible course of action was to take up the fight for reform by forcibly robbing the rich and giving to the poor. The letter ended with an appeal to the *carabinieri*. They should realize, he said, that they, too, were brothers in misery, instruments in the hands of the rich made to fight against their own flesh and blood to protect the privileges of the oppressors.

The war continued. Indeed, whatever may have been going on behind the scenes, on its face value it could be called nothing else but civil war, for by now there were, between soldiery and *carabinieri*, nearly a thousand Government troops stationed in Montelepre. There were curfews, continual arrests, deportations and house-to-house searches; and, according to the Monteleprans, much ill-treatment of the populace. There was, however, an influence at work of which in all probability neither the rank and file of the troops nor the mass of the townspeople were aware.

The *carabinieri* at Montelepre were at this time commanded by the same Giuseppe Calandra who had been victim of Giuliano's joke on the first of April. According to his own evidence at a later date he had, during that early summer of 1946, been in a position to arrest Giuliano perfectly simply. He had spoken with Maria Lombardo, and had even had opportunity of meeting Turridu himself. Immediately that he informed his superiors of this, however, he had been suddenly transferred from Montelepre to Palermo without warning or explanation. (At this point in the trial the President of the Court intervened, and would not allow further questions to be put to the witness.) It was early evidence of Giuliano's influence in powerful quarters that persists to the very end of the story.

Among the lower ranks of the *carabinieri* one does not have to look so far for a solution to his immunity. They were underpaid, making bribery a foregone conclusion; they were cowed by his known *mafia* backing and his nebulous but formidable political associations, and scared for their own skins. Finally, not all of his messages to them had fallen upon stony ground, and some secretly sympathized with him and shared his published opinions.

It seems that until 1949 there were few times when he could not enter the town more or less openly. This I was told in Montelepre by those in the best possible position to know, and I was assured with absolute conviction that whether he appeared in daylight or after dark depended only upon the time of year, for all the enemy's establishments closed punctually at five o'clock in the afternoon.

"After that time," said my informant with a happy reminiscent grin, "he did what he liked. If it was summer it was light, if it was winter it was dark. I have seen him walk down the street quite alone with his thumbs in his belt and his head high like this"—he jerked his chin up till the pose had the familiar arrogance of the Giuliano photographs—"and he would pass a group of *carabinieri* lounging against a wall. They would say '*Buona sera, signor,*' and offer him a cigarette. Sometimes he would refuse it and spit, sometimes he would take it and drop it straight in the gutter and grind his foot on it. He was their master—*il capo.*"

Writing after Giuliano's death, the Reuter Rome correspondent, Cecil Sprigge, felt that even the baldest summary of his career called for an apologetic cough. "All this," he wrote, "makes little enough sense outside the peculiar atmosphere of Sicily—" It is impossible to improve on that.

The Massacre at Ginestra

THE autumn of 1946 passed without any outward change in the situation.

Giuliano's mother had been arrested for the second time, in August, and taken to jail in Palermo, and he wrote furious letters of protest to the press both of the Island and of Italy. Nothing else had the same power to enrage him as the imprisonment of his mother or sisters; it went on for four years, alternating arrest and release, and it struck at the very core of his conception of chivalrous warfare. This time his mother remained in prison until February, 1947.

By now practically every crime in Sicily was attributed automatically to Giuliano, unless (and sometimes when) there was definite proof to the contrary; and except when the crime was committed against the poor he did not often trouble to correct the impression. A second mass attack on the Palermo wireless station was certainly his work; and, surprisingly, he did not deny that he was responsible for the death of a rich Palermo businessman, Signor Antonino, for this crime could fairly have come under Giuliano's own heading of "soiling his hands with blood for money." It should have been an ordinary routine kidnaping for ransom, but it

was bungled, and the result was plain murder. When Giuliano decided upon a kidnaping he selected certain of his men from a list, and ordered them to carry it out; the details of the operations were almost invariably left to them, and they were not all equally competent. This had been in September; Signor Antonino and his wife were traveling one afternoon in a chauffeur-driven car between Palermo and their house in the country, when they found the road blocked by the rear view of an antiquated taxi.

The taxi disgorged the kidnapers, masked and armed with submachine guns, and one of them ordered Antonio to get out of his car. He refused, and when they tried to drag him out he resisted, struggling violently. Whether or not he himself was armed is not recorded, but he was shot dead in the scuffle, and his wife was seriously wounded. The taxi made off, leaving a dead man, a wounded woman, and a lot of blood on the dusty road. The chauffeur had never left the wheel; he had fainted at the shock.

It was not a pretty episode, but it stands as the only occasion when a plain ransom hostage was killed or harmed by Giuliano. It is, in fact, amazing that the ransoms were always paid, even though there was no precedent of execution *pour encourager les autres*.

Very few hostages were communicative about Giuliano after their release. It must have been part of the agreement that the ransom figure was not named; with very few exceptions the press were left to speculate, and figures were suggested that a little thought would have proved impossible. Sums up to a hundred million lire were quoted freely, but in fact there simply was not enough money in the Sicilian banks to have met these demands over a period of years. The most

reliable evidence is of usual amounts well under ten million lire, with an occasional twenty or thirty.

One of the few ransomed who gave the press an interview after his release was Signor Agnello, a rich textile merchant and film producer who was held prisoner for nearly two months in 1946. During my second visit to Sicily the police typescript of the whole Agnello episode came into my possession. It is a document longer than the whole of this book, being a verbatim record of interrogation and confession of the accused. Giuliano had given the order to Terranova for Agnello's kidnaping, and Terranova had in turn delegated its execution to others. Some of the accused had nothing to do with Giuliano's band either before or afterward; they were press-ganged into service at the last moment. One of them, by name Santo Giostra, whose brother had married into the Candela family, was a boy of barely nineteen; he co-operated under threats, and when he saw Agnello kidnaped, and understood the mess he had got into, he cried. He is still serving a term of years in prison for his part in the day's work.

Agnello was captured while alighting from his car in a Palermo street on the afternoon of June 17. As he did so he heard his name called, and turned to find himself facing three men * with pistols. One of them said simply: "Get into this other car." Agnello did not argue. He said: "All right, you win." (There had been an earlier attempt, but Agnello's car had eluded them in the traffic.)

"This other car" and its driver had in fact also been press-ganged only a few hours before, and the unfortunate man protested that he acquiesced only in terror of reprisal. "The police," he said, "offered no kind of security or guarantee,

* Frank Mannino, Angelo Taormina, and the boy Giostra. Taormina died later, a little mysteriously, when according to testimony "a hand grenade which he was holding blew up in his hand."

and bandits could do their work openly in the city." He made a full report to the police the same day, but he, too, remained in prison.

From the moment that Agnello climbed into the car with a pistol at his ribs the vehicle gave every sort of trouble; it wouldn't start; then, when it had been push-started, it suffered from fuel starvation, and the crying boy Giostra had to squat on the running board and work the throttle with the hood open. In this atmosphere of tragicomedy they left Palermo and climbed the Rigano pass. Below the Bellolampo barracks Agnello and his captors dismounted to make a detour on foot past the *carabinieri*; the car was to have picked them up a mile further on, but had a puncture as soon as it had done so, and its part in the proceedings was over. The driver returned to Palermo and tried to make his report to the *carabinieri*, but "I found the usual incomprehension, the usual bureaucratic sluggishness; I was taken to barracks after barracks in search of a competent officer." From that moment he was held forty-five days for questioning.

When the car had been abandoned, someone went for horses, and Agnello and his armed guard set off into the mountains. He was then hidden in a cave with a guard over him night and day; but it was some time before he met Giuliano, for it seems that Terranova tried to keep Agnello and his ransom for himself, and Giuliano, "*molto irritato*," did not at first know where to look. Terranova made the hostage write letters to his family begging ninety million lire ransom, but Passatempo and Gaspare Pisciotta, the latter weak from a recent hemorrhage, came to the hiding place and told Terranova that his throat would be cut if Agnello were not handed over to Giuliano in twenty-four hours. Terranova was

persuaded, and sent word to Giuliano, after which things took a more orderly course.

Agnello describes Giuliano as something of a courtier among roughnecks, handsome, distinguished, polite, and intelligent, while the other members of the band struck him as mainly common people with bad manners. Passatempo, he said, was the most brutal, constantly threatening his family with death if the ransom were not paid. It is said that Giuliano often entrusted his hostages to Passatempo, because he was without pity, unmoved by tears, and no captive could escape by softening his heart. To his men Giuliano was reserved and abrupt in manner, but courteous to Agnello and apologetic about the rough living conditions. In description these do not seem very terrible, but they must have been a shocking contrast to Agnello's everyday life. He was sometimes "forced to eat in a ruined hut or in the open air," and for forty-five days he ate no meat; whether or not he was given rabbit was a recurrent point of preoccupation when his kidnapers were interrogated. His diet when Giuliano was there was varied, if light, but in the absence of the leader he had to eat what every Sicilian peasant eats as he works on his *campagna* through the day—bread, cheese, and tomatoes, and the cloudy white wine of the district. He was moved about a good deal from one remote building in the mountains to another, and he complained of hard marches for which one can imagine his footgear and his figure to be unsuited. He met and lived with other hostages whom Giuliano was holding at the time. Among them was a diabetic whose insulin treatment Giuliano was continuing; Agnello increased the sick list by contracting jaundice, from which he made a slow recovery.

He was surprised at the variety of Giuliano's interests, for he discussed not only politics but questions of civil adminis-

tration, and even details of traffic control and street surfaces in Palermo.

Agnello spent the last fortnight of his exile in a cave in Calcelrama, while the final details of the ransom were arranged. The first demand for ninety million lire was reduced, after prolonged negotiation, to thirty millions and duly paid.

The ransom money was destined, as usual, mainly for political ends. A few months earlier Giuliano's sister, Marianina, had been invited to a meeting of politicians in Via Cavour, Palermo, and now devoted herself entirely to work of political propaganda. From ransoms Giuliano met her increasing expenses, paid the *mafia* and assisted the poor, increased his armory, and satisfied his own men. These were paid—no very great sums—according to their varying parts in the kidnaping and subsequent guarding, but also strictly according to the needs of their families, for this was an important aspect of the *giustizia* that was forever in his mind. On this occasion he said that no one who would not take part in a diversionary action against the *carabinieri*, designed to lead them away from the area where Agnello was hidden, would receive any reward at all for their part in the proceedings up to date. This was the subject of a further dispute with the insubordinate Terranova.

After Agnello's statements to the press quite a number of people felt that they would like to meet Giuliano if it were not for the various inconveniences involved.

Just as invariably as his hostages lived, however, spies were slaughtered without pity or remorse, and a month after this incident came the first group execution. It appears that five young men, all in their twenties, had been apprehended by the *carabinieri*, nominally for black-market dealings in soap, and had been offered some sort of immunity in exchange

for information about Giuliano. They had agreed, and were to be questioned the following day, but before that could happen they were all found dead, roped together, behind a roadside bamboo thicket—with the note: “So perish all traitors.”

A second execution followed almost immediately. Giuliano's suspicions fell on three of his own men, brothers by the name of Mariano, and a colleague of theirs, Misnarca, but he did not kill until he was certain. In the small hours of the morning he raided Misnarca's house, and dragged him petrified with fear to where the Marianos were sleeping. Giuliano knocked on the door, and when one of them asked who was there he impersonated the *maresciallo* of *carabinieri*, saying that he required their help at once to arrest the bandit Giuliano in a known hiding place. The reply that came through the closed door was obsequious and immediate. Outside, Giuliano waited grimly for them to dress. When they emerged he took the three brothers and their friend to the *piazza* of Montelepre for ritual execution. One brother managed to escape during the compulsory minute's prayer; the others were found dead there in the morning with the now-familiar rhyming note about the fate of those who spied on Giuliano.

“It was war”; that was a phrase so often on the lips of Giuliano's men when at last they were called upon to defend themselves. To kill had become a matter of habit, even of duty, a thing as insignificant in itself as it had been to men all over the world for six years before. But those had, for the most part, recognizable enemies in uniform, whereas here there were friends disguised as enemies and enemies dressed as friends; you shot at the first suspicion. With this habit of mind and the Sicilian temperament it would have been strange indeed if Giuliano's band had not produced a few whom the world could fairly label as gangsters.

Yet even now it is difficult to find one man in all that area who will give undivided judgment against him. This attitude ranges from a fanatical justification of all his actions to reasoned excuse and apology for the least justifiable of them, but no one will say outright that he was a bad man or a cruel one, or that his death was good riddance. "You see," a better educated man explained to me, "he was not cultured. He had good brains and a good heart, but to be sincere was not enough—he hadn't the experience to see the implication of things. He was let down again and again—by the Separatists, the *mafia*, the Christian Democrats, and other political parties, and finally both by his own men and by those in the police whom he thought were his friends. He could depend on no one, but he never knew it."

Perhaps sometimes he knew it momentarily, for once he said to his mother: "Outside this house I have only one friend, and that is my gun."

In October, 1946, General Branca, commanding the Palermo *carabinieri*, prepared a sequel to his spring report to his superiors in Rome. It was concerned largely with Giuliano, but this time he placed great emphasis upon the "bandit's" entente with the *mafia*. "The *mafia*," he wrote, "that hidden inter-provincial organization, whose tentacles reach into all social strata, whose entire aim is to enrich themselves at the expense of the defenseless honest, has reconstituted its cells (or 'families' as they are called in the jargon), especially in the Provinces of Palermo, Trapani, Caltanissetta, and Agrigento. The *mafiosi*, as in the times before Fascism came to power, have already succeeded in imposing themselves upon landed proprietors . . . and exact high sums for their protection; they have influenced the course of public life, exerting power not only over individuals but opposing by

threats of violence the recent gains of the workers (in division of agricultural products, concessions of land, etc.). The *mafia* is more dangerous than ever, because, represented at every level, they achieve high office through favoritism; and in this indescribable tangle they could not themselves define the extent of their power. This was obvious in the recent elections, no matter how well it was masked. Sicily travails under this criminal organization, which has firm footing in every branch of public service; the network has created a State within a State, whose object is to oppose the authority of the law by employing ferocious and uncontrolled assassins. . . .”

The first months of the New Year, 1947, produced another scandal, for while no branch of the police seemed able to get within striking distance of Giuliano he interviewed and entertained a prominent American journalist, Michael Stern.

Stern was a high priest of the sensational, with a record of scoops and *exposés* that ought long ago to have earned him liberation from the fleshly prison. Perhaps the saints are frightened of what he might cable back to his editors. In this world, anyway, he is not generally loved by those of whom he has written. “Such a pity,” he grates, “because I’m a peaceable guy, and I only want to be liked.”

At this time Stern was thirty-five years old, and after a lurid record, first as a New York crime reporter and subsequently as European war correspondent to an American group, he had become foreign correspondent in Rome. His editor cabled instructions to secure an exclusive interview with Giuliano immediately, and Stern applied his not inconsiderable mental agility to the assignment. He knew very little that was reliable about Giuliano’s political tie-ups, but he did

know of his undying hope of American aid, and guessed what a uniform might do. His past status as war correspondent had entitled him to wear the uniform of a captain in the American Army, and it was in this guise that he visited Montelepre in a jeep.

Communist papers have argued that Palermo's Chief of Police, Inspector Messina, must have known of Stern's intended escapade, and indeed there can be no possible doubt about it, for Stern called upon Messina as he passed through Palermo, and inspected the Giuliano file. "Just copying it took a full day. While I was working in the Italian version of a squad-room, special agents would furnish me their names and ask me to make some sort of favorable mention of their work because they had a brother-in-law in Cleveland, an uncle in Chicago and an aunt in Brooklyn." *

Stern went to Montelepre, and in the course of inquiring for the Giulianos' house met Turridu's father. He was taken there, and met Maria and her two daughters. A few days later, after an interlude in Palermo, he met Giuliano by arrangement. Giuliano's father accompanied Stern from Palermo to a point in the mountains midway between there and Montelepre. Gaspare Pisciotta met them at a roadside rendezvous and led them to a ruined farmhouse where Turridu was waiting.

The result of this interview was sensational even by Stern's standards. His scoop, illustrated by photographs, many of which, to prove authenticity, included himself, was published in a dozen languages, and did nothing to lessen Giuliano's popularity. Giuliano had handed Stern his letter to Truman requesting statehood for Sicily, mentioned in the opening pages of this book, and the letter set the key for the rest of

* Michael Stern: *No Innocence Abroad*, Random House, 1953.

the interview. No one reading of it could really regard Giuliano as a criminal. He told Stern of his ambitions, dreams, and ideals; he pointed out that if his motives were self-interest he could live like a gentleman for the rest of his life on the proceeds of a single kidnaping; that a recent train robbery could not have been his work because money had been stolen from the poor; he said that only when he, an honest man but a rebel, had been called a bandit, had he begun to use bandit methods to come to the rescue of the poor. Stern called him Robin Hood, the French newspapers took their cue with *Le Bandit Donneur*. It was an important stone in the edifice of the Giuliano legend.

"He was a nice guy, a sincere guy," said Stern when I asked him what his real impression of Giuliano had been. "He just had one thing wrong with him: he rather liked killing people."

By his own statement* Stern almost immediately exposed two of his own countrymen to death at Giuliano's hands. They were two journalists who, learning of Stern's success, thought they would follow his lead and beat him to publication; and they were already on the Rome-Palermo aircraft when he found out about it. He sent a telegram to Giuliano's home address in Montelepre, warning him that the two journalists were police spies in perfect disguise. It is difficult to say whether Giuliano believed this; if he had he would probably have allowed them entry and killed them, but as it was he merely ignored their existence.

It may appear incredible that the telegram was delivered to the Giuliano household in Montelepre, but when I queried this point with Stern he assured me that he subsequently exchanged correspondence with Giuliano through the normal

* *Ibid.*

channels, his letters being addressed without subterfuge to the house in Via di Bella. One letter from Giuliano to Stern was, however, intercepted. It was found in the pocket of one of Giuliano's men who had fallen into the hands of the *cara-binieri*, and it is much used in left-wing propaganda pamphlets. "The circle closes round me," it is quoted as ending, "and light arms are no longer sufficient to oppose my enemies. I must have artillery and mortars." It seems a strange request for Giuliano, with his known hatred of static warfare or fixed positions, to have made.

The publication of Stern's interview had many repercussions, but the more peculiar of them belong a little later in the story. The immediate effect was an uproar of protest on the mainland. It was the best possible type of ammunition for the extreme left wing to use against the St. Sebastian figure of the Minister of the Interior, Signor Mario Scelba. The whole thing, said the Communist papers, was a vast anti-Communist plot. However little other common interest they might share, Giuliano and Scelba were both anti-Communist and both Sicilian; the Americans were anti-Communist, too, and here was an American in uniform, obviously a secret agent of Truman, getting interviews with Giuliano. All three obviously represented a reactionary league against progress. In the Communist press it was openly stated that the *polizia* were in collusion with Giuliano; but all this was light stuff compared to the barrage that was to be leveled against Scelba as the result of the next few months.

Meanwhile, in that early spring of 1947, Giuliano was certainly not without political allies, and, though he had not achieved a fraction of the power he was to wield later, his position seemed secure enough. He had abandoned his own movement, MASCA, because: "I could not get aid from any-

body, particularly from the Americans for whom I had fought so hard, and since I have not been able to contact the American Government." To his mother he said: "I will consider voting for any party except the Communists, because they do not respect the law of honor, which is to me the most important thing." The Separatists, while they were now a legal party under the name of MIS (*Movimento per Indipendenza della Sicilia*), were no longer an attractive proposition, lacking powerful support either in America or on the mainland of Italy; moreover, they could not be used in the forthcoming Sicilian elections as a counterbalance to the growing mass of left-wing opinion. Giuliano retained contact with the party, but threw the weight of his influence onto the side of the Monarchists, who persuaded him that this was the only road to amnesty, and that a restored Monarchy would be a steppingstone to some form of separate Sicily, a gleam forever on the horizon of his mind. By this stage the two parties were in any case more or less hand in glove.

Giuliano's own personal propaganda slogans still decorated in enormous letters the walls of nearly every town and village; they read: "Death to the Communists, Long Live Giuliano, Liberator of Sicily." (Michael Stern, looking unfortunately like Bob Hope caught in the draft, had himself photographed beside one of them, and this was used as extra evidence of collusion between the two.)

In the April elections for the Sicilian Regional Parliament, Montelepre, as was to be expected, voted Monarchist almost to a man; but over the Island in general there was a terrifying cascade in the wrong direction. The People's Bloc, composed of the extreme left-wing parties, polled 590,881, more than 30 per cent of all votes. The Christian Democrats were second with 329,182, the *Qualcunquisti* (Everyman) Bloc

third with 287,588; while the Monarchists and MIS came fourth and fifth with 184,844 and 170,879 respectively. From the point of view of the right-wing parties, and therefore of Giuliano, it was more important to check this leftward rush than to pursue the policy of an individual party. Demonstrations against the extreme left, as represented by the Communists, must be immediate and decisive. Before they could begin, however, Giuliano had one previous engagement to fulfill, for the election results had been announced on the eve of his sister Mariannina's wedding to Pasquale Sciortino, a handsome blond young man whom she had met while prison-visiting in the EVIS days.

The wedding took place in Giuliano's house on April 24, after the enemy had knocked off work at five sharp, and was performed by the local priest, Father di Bella, a young man not out of his twenties. One of Giuliano's men came to the church after dark and told the priest what was required of him. Together they went to the house, but though the bride and bridegroom were there, Maria was clearly expecting some wedding guest who had not yet arrived, for she asked Father di Bella to wait a little. The electric light failed suddenly—no rare occurrence—and the priest became impatient. After a while the lights came up again, but still the family insisted on waiting. A little later they were left in darkness a second time; Maria brought oil lamps and at last consented that the ceremony should begin. In the middle of the marriage service the figure of Giuliano appeared standing silently in the semi-darkness behind the couple.

When the wedding was over the priest left as soon as he decently could, but first he made another effort to bring Giuliano home. He told him that he was in mortal sin and that there was a God for him, too, not only for Mariannina and

Pasquale; but Turridu laughed, and said: "When the time comes, Father, I shall put myself right with God." Giuliano seemed to show no sign of preoccupation with his campaign that was to open a week later. After the wedding there was a feast attended by many friends and relations, and the celebrations went on till dawn.

Later, the bridegroom claimed that he had been forced into the marriage more or less at pistol-point.

Years afterwards Father di Bella was asked why he had not told the *carabinieri* of his encounter with Giuliano. He replied that he bore them no love; that they had shelled his house, and that in any case they never ventured out after dark, so what would have been the use?

A week after the wedding, on May 1, Giuliano opened his new offensive against the Communists with a crime that became the most famous of them all, the massacre at Portella della Ginestra. Which political party instigated it; what were the real contents and signature of a letter brought to Giuliano a few days before by Pasquale Sciortino; which of Giuliano's men were present; how far the results were accidental; became the subject for one of the longest trials in Italian history.

Portella della Ginestra (the first word means literally a little door or gate) is the summit of a narrow mountain pass. The valley through which the river Jato runs, with ferocious peaks on one side and a vast *sierra* or ridge on the other, has only two exits at its upper end, Portella della Paglia and Portella della Ginestra; successions of giddy hairpin bends lead up to both. Beyond the Ginestra pass lies the village of Piana dei Greci, founded in 1488 by Albanian Greeks fleeing from the conquest of their country by the Turks under Amurath II. The people have kept their original speech and re-

ligion, the Greek Orthodox Church, and wear rich traditional costumes, often gem-encrusted, for ceremonial occasions; some of the painted carts are decorated with heroic scenes from those far-off wars against the Turks.

The Communists of the area had decided to hold their May Day celebrations at Portella della Ginestra, in the neck of the pass itself, so that people from the villages on both sides of the mountain range could attend without making the ascent twice. There was enough flat ground for the purpose, a few hundred yards lying between the "sentinel" mountains—Monte Pizzuta, a towering dust-colored cone on the north side, and the great naked cliffs of Monte Cometa to the south. It would be hard to devise a more savage setting for a massacre.

The intention, by Giuliano's own statement, was to interrupt the celebrations and to try summarily and execute before the eyes of the assembled people the Communist Senator, Li Causi. This plan was to be carried out by a force which was to assemble in the hills a few miles from the pass. Whether it was the rendezvous that was mistaken, whether the timing went wrong, or whether the task force got cold feet remains uncertain; but only a dozen men turned up, too few to put the original plan into execution. But there were three machine guns that were to have been used to cover the crowd during the trial and execution, and with these Giuliano decided to make a demonstration.

The names of the dozen men who took part will never be known with certainty. Though the correct number were judicially convicted years later, the evidence was conflicting and rested on the testimony of accomplices. Some of them had alibis. Gaspare Pisciotta was being X-rayed that morning for his T.B. by quite a number of doctors; Pasquale Sciortino

had been taken ill with appendicitis immediately after his wedding. Of the rest, few have ever questioned that Fra Diavolo took part, and the remainder are held to have been the Genovese brothers, the Pianelli brothers, the Cucinella brothers, Nunzio Badalamenti, Passatempo, and two or three less-famous names.

The band set out for the pass masked and on horseback. They were to take up position on the lower slope of Monte Pizzuta, overlooking the site of the *fiesta* at a distance of about three hundred yards. At a signal given by Giuliano they were, according to him, to disperse the celebrations by firing over the heads of the crowd.

It was evidently one of those days when nothing goes right. Before they could reach the agreed position they came round the shoulder of the hill to find themselves confronted by a party of four men on their way up to shoot rabbits; an entirely unforeseen embarrassment.

These four were wise enough to offer no resistance. They were disarmed and their dogs tied together, and a cousin of Giuliano's, one Pietro Licari, was detailed to guard them until the "demonstration" was over. They were made to lie face downward while Licari stood guard over them with a submachine gun. He was the only one whom they might have recognized when years later they stood as witnesses in the Court, and who might therefore have been forced into further admissions, but he did not appear. It is said that he died mysteriously while being driven from prison to hospital, an early precedent.

It was a few minutes before ten o'clock in the morning. Crowds were beginning to gather into the *fiesta*, peasant families and their children all in their best clothes; gaily painted donkey carts, the donkeys and mules brilliantly plumed and

ribboned, streamed in from the neighboring villages. It was a *fiesta* like any other, whether religious or political, an excuse for merrymaking and music and speeches and exchange of country gossip under the hot sun. Whatever the political convictions of the crowd, they had come here for entertainment, and brought their children of all ages.

At a quarter past ten the secretary of the Popular Bloc from Piana dei Greci mounted his platform for the speech that would declare the ceremonies open. Round the platform stood flagbearers flaunting the red banners of Communism.

He held up his hands for silence and the chatter in the waiting crowd died down, mothers looked round them anxiously to see that the smaller children were under control. On the dusty, boulder-scattered slope of Monte Pizzuta, looking down upon the scene, there was a last-minute fumbling with spare magazines for the machine guns, a resettling of elbows in the spiky ground herbage, a final alteration of alignment.

"Brother workers," began the Secretary, "we have come here together to celebrate the Workers' Festival, the First of May. . . ." At this precise moment the machine guns opened fire.

There are still a few people alive who must know whether or not a massacre was really intended and if so by whom, but at the time of writing they are growing rapidly fewer. The autopsies tend to reveal strychnine poisoning. It is possible that there was a genuine confusion of orders; perhaps a gunner, meaning only to fire over the heads of the crowd, misjudged the distance; perhaps in their supreme self-confidence they felt sure of killing the platform speaker only; possibly one of them, as sure of anonymity as a single soldier in a British firing squad, took a different aim from that of his neighbor.

The result, anyway, was revolting. It was no more so than any one of a thousand civilian air raids during the war; but here, paradoxically for the individual-eliminating Communists, it was the individual who was brought horrifyingly under the microscope, the irreparable shattering of baby limbs and the unstaunchable flow of childish blood. It was an outrage against separate humans, not against the party; it was monstrous only in individual human terms.

The first shots hit the standard-bearers, and the red flags crumpled up with those who carried them. A little girl of eight thought that the shooting was the beginning of a firework display, and began to clap; a second later a bullet shattered her right hand. Beside her, a girl of thirteen collapsed with one side of her jaw shot completely away. A boy saw the family's horse killed, and rushed toward his parents shouting: "Papa, papa, they've killed our horse!" but when he reached them his mother was dead and his sister wounded and screaming. A boy of twelve, who had wandered away from the crowd to where someone was selling fruit, was hit in the stomach; he cried, and his sister tried to comfort him: "Even if you need a blood transfusion I'll give you mine and make you well again." They carried him still conscious to a cart. "I'm dying, Mamma," he said. "What have I done? Why did they shoot me?" He died in the hospital the next day. Other children died; the father of a fourteen-year-old boy said: "When I saw my son fall I took him in my arms. He clung round my neck desperately, in the throes of his last agony. All around me people were falling, but I tried only to find shelter for my son who was even now dead in my arms, though I did not know it, and for the other little son who was clinging terrified to my side." A mother, fleeing through the pandemonium with her child in her arms, did not even know that

she was carrying a dead body, killed by a single bullet between the eyes.

It was not *giustizia*; Giuliano himself could not see it as *giustizia*. Years later Pisciotta said of him: "What happened at Portella made him feel even more excommunicated than he felt the Communists to be."

Giuliano took full responsibility; there were no instigators, he said, and there had been no intention of massacre. He had given orders to shoot over the heads of the crowd, and someone had blundered. He pointed to the results, to the deaths of the children, as evidence of his innocent intention: "Have I a stone in my breast in place of a heart?" It was certainly an uncharacteristic action.

Altogether there were eight dead and thirty-three wounded, and nine horses, donkeys, and mules killed; one peasant related how horribly the bodies of the dead animals swelled in the heat. The shooting had lasted in all about ten minutes, and some eight hundred empty cartridge cases were found in the emplacement on Monte Pizzuta from which the shots came. (These mysteriously disappeared after they had been collected by the police.) Those ten minutes are real evidence that the indiscriminate killing had been unintentional; men of that skill and experience could not have fired deliberately on a crowd for that length of time with so small a casualty list.

The people had said that they had the impression of being under crossfire, but the *carabinieri* searched the opposite hill, Monte Cometa, in vain. There were no more empty cartridge cases, no evidence for the widely-held theory that Giuliano's subordinate chieftain, Terranova, had commanded a synchronized attack from the other side of the valley, where some of the crowd said that they had seen other heads in silhouette.

After Portella della Ginestra there was a few weeks' lull in

Giuliano's overt activity. He said himself * that when he had read the descriptions of what had happened he had been horrified, and it is likely anyway that the incident produced real conflict in him. It was utterly different from the killing of *carabinieri* and spies; it touched, however vicariously, the sacred conceptions of *la famiglia* and *la mamma*. The fact that that form of warfare was never repeated speaks for itself.

But the offensive opened again on June 24, and on a scale he had not yet attempted. In one day the band attacked with bombs the Communist headquarters in all Giuliano's district, at Partinico, Borgetto, Cinisi, and the Socialist Party headquarters at Monreale; set fire to the Camera di Lavoro (Peoples' Committee recreation centers where relaxation was nicely blended with propaganda) † in San Giuseppe Jato and Carini; blew up an industrial plant near Palermo; scattered nearly ten thousand anti-Communist leaflets and painted slogans on hundreds of walls.

The reactions to Portella della Ginestra had been immediate and widespread, but they had been as a mere flick of the eyelid to the hysteria produced by this mass assault. There were protest strikes throughout Italy, stormy scenes in Parliament, a special debate in the Senate; the central leader of the Communist Party, Togliatti, opened a violent campaign in the left-wing press. The Communist Senator, Li Causi, whose execution the band had intended at Portella della Ginestra, proclaimed that the Police Inspector, Messina, was in league with Giuliano, and denounced the Minister for the Interior, Signor Scelba, for allowing him to remain in office. Despite an official police report to the High

* Letter to the court at Viterbo, 1950.

† Known as "Dopo Lavoro" under the Fascists, and afterward taken over by the extreme left.

Commissioner, calling the massacre a combined action of *mafia* with Giuliano for strictly political ends, Scelba, according to Li Causi, made a statement in which he said that it was ridiculous to look for a political motive in the incident. The Communist press became hoarse with speculation; links were suggested between Giuliano and the Prime Minister, Giuliano and the Vatican, Giuliano and America.

America, of course, was represented by Michael Stern. He was "Truman's special agent in Italy," he was responsible for the whole campaign. Things came to a head somewhat later, when *Unità* flared a headline; "American Spy Stern Furnished Giuliano with Arms." Stern replied to this with a criminal libel charge against the paper, which came back quick as a flash with one of the photographs that Stern had been at so great pains to secure, showing himself and Giuliano together. "Let Stern deny this photograph if he can!" gibbered the editor. It was the last thing Stern wanted to deny; on it rested the whole authenticity of his interview. Stern proceeded, and won his action.

The several branches of police, variously accused of complicity, venality, and inefficiency, did their best to retain face by exhibitions of conscientious flurry.

Giuliano's mother was again arrested; but she pleaded that the charge of associating with and sheltering bandits was unjust, since Giuliano was first and foremost her son, and a mother could have no choice in the matter. It was an argument to appeal to any Sicilian, and when as a result of it she was set free, she took to the magistrate a present for his infant daughter. This was an expensive modern doll which opened and shut its eyes and said "Mamma!" and she told him that Giuliano had bought it especially for *la sua eccellenza*. His Excellency, however, did not find it possible to

accept the gift, probably because he thought that one day it would blow up either in his face or, just as dangerously, in the left-wing press.

Still further reinforcements were sent to Montelepre, there were hundreds of arrests and questionings among the comparatively innocent. Some members of the band took temporary refuge in North Africa, in the Casbah of Algiers, in Tunis, in the French Foreign Legion. Giuliano's new brother-in-law, Pasquale Sciortino, fled ungallantly to America; * carrying with him, it was said, a box of top-secret documents entrusted to him by Giuliano himself. These were said to compromise so many august personages that the Italian Government would fall if their contents were ever made public. Like many other documents in the case, they disappeared.

Fra Diavolo made his last and most dramatic appearance. On June 22 he had kept a rendezvous with the enigmatic figure of a certain Colonel Paolantonio, an ex-colonel of *carabinieri* whose connection with the true police, and therefore with Fra Diavolo, remains obscure. To him Fra Diavolo had given certain information, which may or may not have been dictated by Giuliano. There was a plan, he said, to disguise a corpse as the body of Giuliano, to spread the news, and then to ambush the high-ups who would come to identify it. On the subject of Portella della Ginestra he suggested that the Pianelli brothers—there were three in Giuliano's band—might be helpful. (They were not; a meeting was arranged but they would divulge no names.) He suggested the arrest on a minor charge of Giuliano's brother-in-law (husband of

* He was arrested in the United States five years later. He had joined the Air Force and married an American girl; he claimed that he had believed his first marriage to be annulled, and said that he would certainly be assassinated if he were returned to Sicily.

Giuseppina), Francesco Gaglio, subsequently nicknamed "Reversino" (Turncoat). He was arrested on July 9 (by the same *maresciallo* Calandra who had been so mysteriously reposted to Palermo when preparing to arrest Giuliano a year before), and it seems to have been a good tip, for "Reversino" gave information leading to a number of other arrests. "If you value your life and your family's—stop questioning my friends and relatives," wrote Giuliano.

On June 26 Fra Diavolo made the final exit which his multiple role had made an ultimate certainty.

He and his father, with two of the Pianelli brothers and another of the band, were engaged near Alcamo by a detachment of *carabinieri* under the command of a certain Captain Gianlombardo. In the ensuing gun fight all four of Fra Diavolo's companions were killed, and he himself wounded. He was arrested later and taken by Captain Gianlombardo to the local barracks for questioning.

Fra Diavolo treated the captain with scorn. "Do not dare to touch me!" he shouted. "I am Inspector Messina's secret agent." He showed his false passes, and insolently refused to answer any more questions. A captain of *carabinieri* is not accustomed to being treated in an offhand manner; he came round the table and slapped Fra Diavolo's face, American fashion, with the back and front of the hand alternately. Fra Diavolo liked disrespect no more than his questioner, and he reacted. He made a grab for the captain's pistol, but he was too slow, and the captain got there first. When the smoke cleared away Fra Diavolo was dead.

The incident did not make headlines; it barely reached the front page, under the caption: "Bandit Killed in Gun Fight with Police." There was no mention of Fra Diavolo's interesting life, nor of the piquant circumstances of his death.

The captain got a sharp rap over the knuckles, and retires crestfallen from the story.

In September, Giuliano wrote again to the press, recapitulating his aims and his conditions. The letters were badly written and misspelled, but perfectly coherent. In the first, to *Mattino di Sicilia*, he said again that he was no bandit but an idealist who had been forced through the stupidity and criminality of others to resort to ransoms and robbery for funds in the war he waged for his people. The letter ended with a demand for the immediate release of his sister Marianina and of the woman La Pizzura. If they were not freed within ten days, he said, he would begin his war against the *carabinieri* again: "He who fears neither Italy nor her troops will open hostilities in such a way that should he die it may be written over his tomb: 'Here lies the Hero of Sicily.'"

The second letter came three days later, to *Voce di Sicilia*:

Dear Sir,

If, as I am led to believe, we are not enemies, I ask you to publish the following in your newspaper.

In following the latest news in the papers I am startled into fury by the way my name is being used in the mouths of the shameless. Perhaps they believe that a so-called bandit loses all right to moral dignity. . . . Perhaps it is because there is no real freedom of the press—particularly when I touch the police or some Rome petty landlord on the raw—and also because, not having a literary culture at my disposal, they believe that I shall not be able to defend myself against the many accusations they bring against me.

And so it is legitimate for them to attribute to me whatsoever they think fit, for it is valuable to them to have some scapegoat. They can sleep peacefully while it is in no one's interest to bring to true light all the crimes imputed to me, for a so-called delinquent cannot be defended in any way.

If I should meet with some understanding, I would ask "How

can Giuliano, a lover of the poor and an enemy of the rich, go against the working masses?" And if I were subsidized by the rich, what reason would I have to sacrifice myself, capturing hostages, incurring such responsibilities, and facing such charges? With regard to the latest measures taken against me, I cannot understand how a government is not ashamed to sink to these depths; fighting with all their equipment of war against a handful of men, and now comes this final baseness—imprisoning my sister in a convict jail in the condition she is in [she was pregnant] under accusation of protecting me and my band. I should like to ask one simple question of the gentleman who has given this order. . . . How can an Italy enriched with thousands of years of civilization fall into this spongy, stinking moral mud? What will the world say of it? Traitors and moral outlaws, your perfidy has reached a pinnacle. . . . I am an outlaw, yet I have never used such methods. I have been a killer, yes, but I have fought in these glorious mountains, against thousands of men, against machine guns and armored cars. If the day has gone against my enemies I have treated them with respect; if they have surrendered I have even dressed their wounds, which they do not deserve from me. Now I will show no more chivalry, no more mercy; I will pay them in their own currency. Let the Deputies and the law enforcers get it into their heads that they have a tough nut to crack . . . for I can be impressed neither by armored cars nor by the whole Italian army—I would rather die than surrender to your base and underhand injustice. Now I warn all those who occupy ringside seats in the families of the police and of the deputies; I warn them to give up these seats and to go, because in ten days from now I declare war without quarter, and shall show no mercy to the families of my enemies. This war will end only when my sister is set free, and when they no longer arrest the families of those whom they cannot capture.

GIULIANO.

The two women prisoners were not immediately freed. There was some reshuffling of officials, but it did little to still the left-wing press.

In response to this outcry Inspector Messana was removed from office, and Inspector Coglitore, who had been Mori's right-hand man in the Fascist drive against the *mafia*, was put in his place. His term of office lasted only a month, and he left without explanation; his successor, Inspector Modica, had been another of Mori's men, and lasted little longer. After Modica came Spanò, who survived a few more months; chiefly, it is said, because his feet had got stuck so firmly in the mud of Sicilian intrigue that it was difficult to extricate him without making an ugly noise.

There was much whispering of scandal and corruption in high places, but through the fog of rumor the figure of Giuliano loomed huger than before.

Poison—Hunting Forbidden

MARIANNINA was set free from prison in Catania on October 25, and it seems likely that Giuliano had been given some assurance of her release, for he did not carry his threat of total warfare into action. In this he may have been influenced too by the fact that he had worked, or thought he had worked, for the Christian Democrat Party among others, and it seems that he believed that if they were again returned at the National Elections in the spring they might give amnesty to himself and his band. According to the evidence of his men, it was not until the following April, 1948, that he realized finally that there was to be no hope of public pardon, and decided to go all out for victory. Now, in November, 1947, he wrote again to the press, calling upon the government to give amnesty to himself and his men so that they might return to the honest lives of peasants.

In the meantime events followed what had by now become a routine; a few attacks on *carabinieri* barracks, a few kidnappings, a few more protestations of his true character to the press. The son of an eminent surgeon, Professor Orestano, was killed by tommy-gun fire in the street, and there was a fresh outcry about the criminality of allowing this mad wild

beast Giuliano to remain at large. The facts, however, were not allowed to emerge, for Orestano had been surgeon to Giuliano's band, and in fact had recently removed Fra Diavolo's appendix at Inspector Messina's request. The Professor and Giuliano had reached serious disagreement; Giuliano made one unsuccessful attempt to kidnap him and then sent three of his men to bring him in dead or alive. In this second attempt his middle-aged son Luigi was with him; he resisted furiously, and was shot dead on the steps of the clinic.

The New Year, 1948, opened on a note of farce. Giuliano kidnaped a prominent person whom he believed, despite his title, to be a Communist, but after a fortnight's intensive screening the victim convinced his captor that it was all a mistake, and was released with apologies.

The April elections came and the Christian Democrats were once more successful—one of Giuliano's earlier Separatist associates, Varvaro, now rather startlingly appearing metamorphosed as a candidate for the extreme left-wing Popular Bloc—but there was no official pardon for Giuliano. Through intermediaries, however, he had formed an ambiguous relationship of alliance with the new Inspector of Police, Verdiani, who had now taken over from Spanò. Giuliano's men themselves later claimed that Verdiani had helped to arrange the transit of some of them to North Africa. Quite a number of them went later in the year, for there was a final disagreement between Giuliano and Terranova. It seems to have been a difference in policy: Terranova had at last wearied of Giuliano's indecisive heroics and wanted either to launch an offensive that would take over the whole island at one swoop, or for the band to devote itself to strictly profitable activities; Giuliano, still clinging to the idea of pardon and honor and a trusting alliance with the Monarchists,

would not agree to a flouting of their views. In a huff Terranova rallied the men of his once autonomous band and took them with him to Tunisia. He himself, with the group that formed his inmost circle, sailed from Castellammare del Golfo in a boat named *Rosita*, nominally engaged in fishing as a cover to an intensive tobacco smuggling trade. Some, including Candela and Frank Mannino, joined the French Foreign Legion, but Terranova had not understood that they could be arrested on French soil and sent back to Italy. "I had taken the advice of those who knew these things," he said, "but either they made a mistake or they tricked me." After a few months he and a number of his men were arrested, and for those it was the end of the war.

At home in Montelepre things remained as they had been. There was no departure from routine; there were clashes with the *carabinieri*, ransoms, execution of spies, and always the heraldic slogans and proclamations of Giuliano's stumbling nobility. The Swedish journalist, Maria Cyliakus, reached him and spent three days in the mountains; when she came back she wrote articles for the French weeklies under the title "My Beloved Bandit." An Italian politician said plaintively: "Reading this sort of thing does no good—every time that man gets into print everyone begins wondering whether perhaps he isn't in the right after all."

"La Zilliacus," as she is called in Montelepre, attempted a return visit to the hills a day or two after her first meeting, but was arrested; after reading her articles one wonders whether Giuliano may not have had a hand in this. She, anyway, certainly didn't think so; she broke up the furniture in the police station, smashed the windows, and swore that Giuliano would make them regret her treatment. She eventually

reached Rome rather dishevelled, but her story was a great success.

The behavior of the *carabinieri* who swarmed in Montelepre appeared to the people to be arbitrary, irrational, and brutal. In the little *piazza* by the church, where people congregate, the hated figures would suddenly arrest a dozen men at random and carry them off to the jail, often to be kept without food or water for many hours before they were transferred to Palermo prison for trial. The charges were of collaboration or refusal to give information, and since practically any of Montelepre's six thousand inhabitants could have been charged with these offenses, no very great selection was necessary before arrest. There were house-to-house searches, too, and third-degree cross-questionings; but what angered the population was that the *carabinieri* seemed always to wait until they were certain their man had gone before they began to look for him. They did not dare, the people said, to search a house when they knew that one of Giuliano's inner circle was inside it; they must wait until they were certain that the enemy had left before making a farcical but brutal show of engaging him—an engagement in which the women suffered as much as the men.

On the night of October 12, 1948, Gaspare Pisciotta was in Montelepre with one of his more famous colleagues, who, to save his family any possible embarrassment, may be disguised under the name of Giuseppe. They spent the evening at Giuseppe's home, with his elderly mother and his sister. The *carabinieri* saw them enter, but they waited to raid the house until well after they had seen the two leave. Then came the gun-butt on the door, the accusation that Pisciotta and his friend were hidden in the house, the mock search, the savage questioning. The two women kept a scornful silence.

Finally they were hustled out of the house and led in the darkness to a deserted piece of *campagna* outside the town. To the accompaniment of shouted demands to know the hiding place—demands that could by now have only a ritual significance, since the house had been left unguarded—the *carabinieri* rested their submachine guns upon the women's shoulders, and fired whole magazines past their ears. "Tell us," they shouted through the noise of the shots, "where the bandits are hiding." At the end of this unnerving performance the *carabinieri* retreated to a little distance and threw tear-gas bombs at the shaken women. To be equipped with tear-gas bombs and have no target for them invited this sort of incident. The women collapsed choking on the unfriendly ground; one of them fell upon a broken branch of prickly pear. Before they had begun to recover they were told that they were out after curfew hours and would be arrested on that charge if they did not return to their house at once; this was a huge joke.

This was not an isolated incident; these things happened almost daily. Whether from conviction, admiration, or fear, the people of Montelepre had chosen to side with Giuliano, and these were the consequences. They had long become accustomed to the indignities of the curfew and lock-in; these were now a subject for angry pride, setting them above the undifferentiated masses. The curfew had taken many forms. Always it had been from dusk till dawn, immobilizing the whole terrifying Sicilian night. As early as 1946, two years before this, there had been a period of ten days during which nobody might leave his house except between two and three o'clock in the afternoon; then, in 1947, there had been days of total curfew when for the whole twenty-four hours a man could be arrested for showing his face outside his door. Land

had gone untended; during these days, Monteleprans say, some of the *carabinieri* plundered their crops and nameless crimes were committed in the shadow of the law. The last total curfew was on May 8, 1948.

By this time the sound of shooting in some quarter of the town was never a matter for surprise, rarely even for conjecture. Some of these shots, again quite arbitrarily as it appeared to the Monteleprans, reached the newspapers as "Gun Fight in Montelepre—Several Bandits Arrested," but these were not in any real particular different from the others, and the "bandits" were usually small fry on the extreme fringes of Giuliano's pack; sometimes they were defined as "collaborators" or even as "suspected collaborators." How far it was all rehearsed, how far the overt battles were *mises en scène*, must always be a matter for conjecture, but the lack of concrete results at this time suggests certain reservations, the furtive wink between rounds in the ring, the whispered word in the ear during a clinch. On March 13, for example, the *carabinieri* surrounded the house of Francesco Pisciotta, on information that a number of Giuliano's men, perhaps even Giuliano himself, were there drinking and talking. (Francesco Pisciotta was an elder cousin of Gaspare's, whose family have since taken possession of that house; it still carries the letters F.P. in the wrought ironwork over the door.) There was a lot of noise; the "bandits" escaped through the windows in a crescendo of tommy-gun fire and grenade explosions. None of them was taken, alive or dead, but later several "suspected collaborators" were arrested.

Fundamentally it differed from other cold wars only in that it was noisy; it resembled them in that no party seemed anxious to force a conclusion, for the future held too many imponderabilia. It was the frustration and dangers inherent

in this situation that had driven Terranova to North Africa.

In the midst of this more or less static crowd scene Giuliano, the central figure of the composition, committed an outrage. It had more significance than anything he had done in his life. It had all been on an ascending scale, the playing with firearms and politics, the gradual recognition of power, the uniforms that had become imperceptibly unnecessary, the personal slogans that had supplanted them. It was as though a gangster game that children play had in a moment become serious; the toy pistols, real pistols, and "Bang—you're dead!" became a statement of quite new significance. The plaything phallus of Sicilian childhood became suddenly the poisonous phalloid fungus that kills; a deadlier, more equivocal image of power, beyond childhood, beyond appeasement.

Giuliano killed a *mafioso*. He did more, he killed five *mafiosi* with whom he or his political backers had quarreled, including the *capo-mafia* (chief), one Fleres, of Partinico, at whose house he had in the past held meetings with the Monarchist leaders. From this moment, in 1948, everything was changed.

It did not mean that all the *mafia* in Sicily turned against him, for the organization was loosely-knit and without central direction, but it did mean that a section of the *mafia* in the heart of his own district became his enemies. They in turn had friends and relations who were *mafiosi* in other districts, and the hostility spread.

It was confined, however, to the "old" *mafia*, for ever since the First World War the existence of an "old" and a "young" *mafia* had been a growing characteristic of the Society. In country districts the "young" *mafiosi* were often sons or relations of the less educated "old" *mafiosi*, but many tended to forget their humble origin; they went to universities, and became lawyers, doctors, and professional men of all

sorts. Others of them were reactionary, and followed their fathers' peasant way of life; these, with the "old" *mafia*, bitterly resented the Communist policy for Land Reform, and had provided Giuliano with much of the local inspiration for his policy of Communist intimidation. Only the better educated nonconformist element in the young *mafia* remained as allies of Giuliano now that he had broken faith with the old *mafia* by this fantastic outrage of killing a *capo*.

It followed automatically that the Christian Democrat Party, who had for so long flirted with Giuliano from a not altogether safe distance, blushed at the *gaucherie* of their *enfant terrible* and finally disassociated themselves from all his activities. They had come to a working arrangement with the "old" *mafia*, as every Italian government in power must, and even secretly they could not lend support to the prodigy who thus dared to flout the true and ancient rulers of Sicily. No public act of apostasy was necessary, for the alliance had never been openly acknowledged; but whatever the truth may have been about the previous relationship between Giuliano and the Rome Government, the Minister for the Interior was now unequivocally his enemy. This was Signor Scelba, who later (February, 1954) became Prime Minister of Italy. From that moment Giuliano hated him as if he were not only the personification of all the *carabinieri* but of all the betrayals and desertions that composed the last five years; Scelba became part of an ocean-depth of hatred that is accorded only to the broken ideal. On July 15 Giuliano's mother was again arrested, on grave charges connected with extortion and kidnapping, and three months later his two sisters, Mariannina Sciortino and Giuseppina Gaglio, were hauled in, too, together with the now patient hostage Caterina Pizzura, and Giuseppina's husband. After two months

la mamma and Giuseppina were tried and convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Francesco Gaglio received the same sentence, and Giuliano's father was condemned to a further five years upon the Island of Ustica; only Mariannina was allowed provisional liberty, to look after her baby. A detachment of *carabinieri* moved into the Giulianos' empty house.

Turridu's strongest friends now were the "young" *mafia*, the Monarchists, and certain powerful elements in the police; his significant enemies were the Italian Government as personified by Scelba, and potentially the whole of the old *mafia*. To some of the few who understood these shiftings of alliance it seemed anybody's fight, but they underestimated both the ultimate power of old *mafia* and its representation in Rome.

At this time there was an almost incredible disparity of public opinion on the size of Giuliano's band. Some put it as high as a thousand men, others as low as twelve. Speaking of that autumn a British resident in Palermo said: "In 1948 he had Palermo ringed; he had men stationed in all the mountains surrounding the Conca d'Oro." The mistake in all these estimates and calculations was that they tried to be too definitive. Indeed it was not easy for speculation to be accurate, for Giuliano's followers were not organized like an infantry battalion which could be shown on parade or whose encampment could be observed and assessed from afar. His true army was the mass of peasants who were not of the left wing, right across the two plains and to the fringes of Palermo itself. Some were paid permanently from the enormous ransoms that passed steadily through Giuliano's hands; others received lump sums for particular co-operation; many, especially the distressed, benefited by Giuliano's creed for the redistribution of wealth. For most country people Giuliano

was simply their King, whom, for a whole variety of reasons, they would not dream of betraying. But of active members who carried out holdups and robberies there had probably never, even before Terranova took his men to Africa, been more than fifty; and the true inner circle that formed, as it were, his court, consisted of little more than a dozen men. In a sense he had Palermo ringed, but it was not by armed bodies stationed at strong points in the mountains. "A man cannot stand alone," a Sicilian explained to me, "any more than this visiting card can stand alone. But look, if I take many of them and lean them against each other so, I can make a big structure that stands even when I shake the table. And if I were rich I could pay money to make sure that no one did shake the table much."

The emphasis on the mountains as his hiding place was also largely misleading; his headquarters, some said, were now in the caves at the very summit of Monte Cuccio, overlooking Palermo. In fact, to have had a headquarters at all would have struck at the very roots of Giuliano's elusive technique. There were innumerable places in the mountains that he used as rendezvous or for temporary shelter—caves and disused buildings that were momentarily convenient for storage or for some particular operation—but there was no headquarters, and Giuliano spent many of his nights in decent beds under sound roofs. Above all he was perpetually on the move; when the *carabinieri* were combing the mountains Giuliano was sleeping through the heat of the day in a town or village; when the towns were searched Giuliano happened to be in the mountains. He had happened, often, to be in his own house until the *carabinieri* occupied it in the autumn of 1948, for he had constructed a secret tunnel to the open country—a fact that was not discovered until much later.

The rank and file of the *carabinieri*, sweating up the dusty mountains in the heat of the Sicilian sun with the certainty of the operation's utter futility, became dispirited and inclined to insubordination; what British colonels call a "bad moral tone" prevailed. In the morning some officer of *carabinieri* would see through his field glasses a group of figures high on the slope of a distant mountain; an elaborate encircling movement would be prepared, the organization of which was observed with interest through equally powerful field glasses by the group in question. After several agonizing hours of sweat, blisters, and profanity, the task force would draw their net tight to the top of the mountain, only to find it completely empty—or, occasionally, containing a conspicuous and offensive note signed by Giuliano. Sometimes, too, their trucks were ambushed on their return journey to barracks, adding injury to insult.

The legend that Giuliano lived in the mountain caves had taken firm hold, and people of other countries wondered impatiently why the particular cave was not discovered and besieged, since it was clearly a gigantic cavern, lit by pitch-flare torches and loud with the sounds of feasting and medieval revelry. One of the finer flights of journalistic fantasy in this connection came from a North African newspaper, which related the personal adventure story of a young lady kidnaped by Giuliano. She had been traveling on a bus with her father; the bus was held up by a masked band who forced the passengers to dismount at tommy-gun-point. The leader of the masked men divided the party into three groups—males, unattractive females, and *jolies demoiselles*. The first two categories were relieved of all their valuables and hustled back into the bus; the *jolies demoiselles* were whirled up into the saddles of their captors and borne swooning to the cave.

It proved to be even larger than anyone had dreamed. The ante-chamber was an armory containing weapons of every shape and size, but not only an armory either, for there were tracked vehicles such as Bren-gun carriers parked in rows. Beyond this chamber was another, a great stone hall vaulted like a cathedral, hung with priceless tapestry and looted *objets d'art*. Here Giuliano discarded his mask and introduced himself with his customary courtesy. From great chests that stood around the walls he brought out fabulous dresses of silk and brocade, and (with less than his customary courtesy) personally supervised the re-dressing of the pillaged maidens. This was the first installment of a lengthy narrative that with each succeeding chapter went on to ever wilder and more shameless excursions into unreality.

It was strange contrast to the caves which Giuliano did in fact occupy for a night now and then; mean tunnels and piled boulders and the parching gray dust; the ants that would find their way to the bread and cheese; the lookouts always on guard while he slept or scribbled; the shadowy figures who came silently out of the darkness to report on an ambush, lead in a hostage, or bring news of intrigue and defection.

Other, more serious newspapermen were to visit him later; it was a repetition of the old scandal. Two notable Rome journalists, Rizza and Meldolesi, spent many hours in his company, and Meldolesi took a documentary film of twenty-four hours in the life of Giuliano. The left-wing press, and later Pisciotta himself, claimed that this was organized by Inspector Verdiani to spite the *carabinieri*.

All this had now become a familiar pattern, and many were surprised that Giuliano's outrage against the *mafia* had no more immediate and spectacular repercussions. This was a misunderstanding of *mafia* methods; not for them the pyro-

technics of united violence or sudden mass betrayal, but the slow lingering poison of "protection withdrawn," as fatal in the end as the bullet in the heart to which it may lead.

There has been a plague of foxes in the Montelepre mountains; now, over the waste heights where Giuliano's pack roamed, notices are painted in bold letters on the rock faces: VELENO—CACCIA VIETATA (POISON—HUNTING FORBIDDEN).

Suppression of Banditry

AT THE beginning of the New Year, 1949, there were nearly two thousand *carabinieri* stationed in and around Montelepre. Four hundred of the townspeople were in Palermo jail, and the total number from the whole surrounding district who were "held for questioning" was five times as many. The near relatives of nearly all Giuliano's inner circle were in prison or exile.

In this apparent stalemate Giuliano still had nothing to lose and everything to gain. His aims were amnesty, legal power, and a separate Sicily. A restoration of the Monarchy held the only possibility for the first two, and might prove a steppingstone to the last. For these reasons his alliance with the Monarchists was absolute. All this he wrote down in a massive memorandum which included a history of his band from the early Separatist days onward; it was written closely on both sides of the sheets, so that no word could be added to distort the meaning of any part. It was a dangerous document, inculcating not only all of his men but all those in high places who had formed either temporary or lasting alliances with him. Later, there were known to be forged copies of this work; the final fate of the original remains obscure but extremely significant.

He wrote other things besides this history. He wrote the saga of his life in verse, of which authentic fragments remain; he wrote a treatise on how the movement of the tides could be harnessed into perpetual motion, which was corrected for him by a "young" *mafia* lawyer in Castelvetro. He wrote his own strangely moving epitaph; he exchanged vicious stanzas in the newspapers with a lampoonist who, during Giuliano's lifetime, hid behind the nom-de-plume of "Errant Cavalier." The first of these poems to catch Giuliano's attention mocked him as a rustic Casanova, making much of his reputed love affairs with infatuated women. The reply came in rhythmic verse, typed, but with the authentic signature of Giuliano.

In sense, it read:

TO THE ERRANT CAVALIER

Errant Cavalier that you are
 New Dantesque poet of the Christian régime,
 You are a poet of the comic vein—
 So comic that you even make the hens laugh.
 You are most superbly cultured
 And to be compared with a de Gaspari or a Scelba;
 It hurts me to see you so unlucky
 As to have to scribble for newspapers all day.

You want to see us hanging from the gallows
 Or die seated in the electric chair—
 But it is to us that all the nation are looking,
 While no one cares if you should die like a beast.
 Why don't you dare to sign your name?
 Why do you use your boasted intelligence
 For scribbling this kind of rubbish?

So I make love under the stars
 With actresses, signorinas, and old maids?
 I pass my life dreaming of great things;
 When I write I sign my name—GIULIANO.

You, always crowing like a cock,
Are no more than a timid rabbit.

In Giuliano's mind there were the strangest short cuts to amnesty and honor. In April of that year, 1949, he wrote to the Premier of the Sicilian Regional Parliament challenging him to a duel; he, Giuliano, to win pardon and premiership if he were the victor. There were ten days allowed in which to consider this proposition. When no reply was forthcoming, Giuliano wrote another letter to the press, proclaiming total war on the *carabinieri*, and decreeing that anyone entering his zone of operations must wear a white armband or be shot on sight. He offered pay of \$112 a month to anyone who would join his army and fight for freedom.

In Rome, Scelba was becoming seriously worried. Giuliano had sent to him an emissary, a deputy of the Sicilian parliament, with the message that the whole war would be called off in exchange for amnesty and release of those held prisoner. Scelba replied in public that he "did not treat with bandits," and put a reward of five million lire on the head of Giuliano. Giuliano riposted with an even higher offer for the person of Signor Scelba; then challenged him, too, to a duel. The terms were generous; Scelba need not fight Giuliano alone, but might enlist the whole Italian cabinet to make the odds more even. If Giuliano won he would demand the reins of Government; if he lost he would give himself up to the police—but in either case his mother must be released from prison. Scelba was getting both ends of the stick, for the left-wing press accused him of having used Giuliano as a mercenary assassin of the Sicilian Communists. Exasperated, he set up at the beginning of May, 1949, a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry under the Chief of Police, d'Antoni.

The spring passed with even more frequent attacks on

carabinieri barracks, ambushes, and kidnapings. The arrests were announced of Terranova, Candela, Giuseppe Badalamenti, and of one of the Cucinella brothers, handed over by the French Police in Tunisia; Licari, who had guarded the hunters at Portella della Ginestra, was taken in Montelepre, betrayed by the *mafia*. The *carabinieri* began the somewhat pointless operation of blocking and destroying by explosive a number of caves and tunnels in the Montelepre mountains; more troops were ordered into Sicily from the mainland.

On the evening of May 2 Giuliano visited his old home in Via di Bella. The house was in use as a *carabiniere* barracks, a fact that might have made the visit embarrassing had he not come dressed for the part, as a captain of *carabiniere*. As the highest-ranking officer present he was treated with due deference, and his inferiors stood to attention while he inspected the barracks. They saluted him as he left, but he returned the salute with a burst of submachine gun fire. One man was killed outright, and another died later of his wounds.

Inspector Verdiani of the *polizia*, with whom Giuliano had strengthened his enigmatic alliance, heard a rumor that Giuliano was living in a monastery near Borgetto, disguised as a monk; the inspector, no doubt with his tongue far into his cheek, visited the monastery and stripped the outraged fraternity in search of a scar corresponding to Giuliano's.

The list of the kidnaped became more and more impressive: political deputies, barons, dukes, and princes. The Prince of Valdina (Duke Francesco Pape of Pratameno) was added to the list and returned having paid a supposed ransom of fifty million lire, without his diamond solitaire ring. On August 25 the left-wing press reported the *carabinieri* captured near Catania a carload of arms being driven to Giuliano by a member of the *polizia*.

A waiter in a Palermo restaurant found a note left under a customer's plate with the tip. It read: "This is to show that Giuliano, the champion of Sicily, can still come into Palermo when he likes."

On August 26 the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry announced the result of its deliberations. The destruction of Giuliano was to be placed in the hands of a new and special force answerable only to the Minister of the Interior, Signor Scelba. This body was to be called *Corpo della Forza per la Repressione di Banditismo in Sicilia* (Forces for Suppression of Banditry in Sicily); even the name was designed to belittle Giuliano and obscure his political significance. It contrasted oddly with the simultaneous statement by the Prime Minister, de Gasperi, that the causes of the Sicilian situation were political and social and could not be cured by repressive police measures only.

The new force, known from its initials as the CFRB, was to be commanded by a colonel of *carabinieri*, Ugo Luca, and his A.D.C., Captain Antonio Perenze. Luca was not an unknown figure. During both world wars he had been connected with high intelligence work, and a record of strange successes in remote parts of the world had long before this suggested to the press the title of "The Italian Lawrence." He was a small quiet man, now middle-aged and balding, with a deeply-lined face and an expression that seemed at first sight apologetic. Like Giuliano, his private hobbies lay among watches and mechanical things. Captain Perenze, his second-in-command, was very different; a large fat man in his late thirties, bald-headed, with a young bombastic face and well-tended mustaches. He had been promoted from the rank of sergeant-major in recognition of special merit, had served

most of the war in North Africa, and had been taken prisoner by the English.

Luca almost lost his life at the very outset, while still on reconnaissance and before the setting up of the CFRB had become an announced fact.

It had always been one of Giuliano's pet tricks to ambush reinforcements, and it had rarely failed. It was like the plan to disguise a dead body as himself and waylay those who would come to identify it. It was a simple formula—create a disturbance, ambush the road from Palermo at a suitable point, and wait for whatever should come along. Now he knew that it would be Luca, for he was well abreast of current events.

On August 20 he launched a terrific attack on an auxiliary *carabinieri* barracks at a farmhouse near Bellolampo. Luca himself accompanied the reinforcements sent out from Palermo; beside him sat Inspector Verdiani and other high-ups, including General Polani, commander of the *carabinieri* brigade. It would have been a rich haul indeed.

On the outward journey Luca and his *entourage* traveled in the second vehicle, and the convoy of military cars was unmolested. They left Palermo, along the few miles of flat straight road leading to the foot of the mountains, and climbed the long series of vicious hairpin bends that breast the hill face. At the summit they inspected the damage, left reinforcements, and laid plans. Then they began the steep descent to Palermo; but this time, since the coast seemed now to be clear, the high-ranking staff officers traveled not in the second car of the convoy but in the first. They were almost at the foot of the pass when Inspector Verdiani, who had a cold, suddenly asked that the windows of the car should be closed; Luca did this, though the day was suffocatingly hot.

Within seconds of this happening the truck behind them, containing eighteen *carabinieri*, exploded a land mine. Four *carabinieri* were killed outright, three more of the numerous wounded died in the hospital. An incendiary bomb was thrown at Luca's escaping car; it struck the splinter-proof glass of one of the closed windows and fell, igniting the road but not the car. Luca was saved by the closed windows and the quarter-minute interval between himself and the following truckload of *carabinieri*, for those who had laid the ambush had watched the convoy on its outward journey and believed that he would return as he had gone, in the second car.

As a result of this incident a further 115 arrests were made during the following week.

There was another attempt. Mussolini had long ago ordered that all the roadside walls in Sicily should be reduced to a height of one meter, but an odd one here and there had escaped the leveling. Where the suburbs of Palermo thin out and finally die away on the Montelepre road, there are walls on both sides more than two yards high. From behind these, with the familiar sequence of decoy and ambush, Giuliano's men tried to kill Luca, the newest tangible enemy, by sub-machine gun fire, but again it was only the *carabinieri* who suffered.

In view of the left-wing public speculations upon the relationship between Giuliano and the Government, it was clearly necessary to Signor Scelba that the CFRB's campaign in Sicily should receive the widest publicity. Thus at the outset Luca's tactics were represented as being very much less intelligent and more spectacular than they in fact were. Prominence was given to his force of shock troops, his detachment of parachutists, his reconnaissance aircraft, to the long-neglected precaution of mounting searchlights upon the outer

walls of *carabinieri* barracks, and to the hand-picking of every man of his "army." These, it was said, were utterly different from the *carabinieri* who had previously garrisoned Montelepre; they were northern Italians, mainly bachelors, whose families could not be intimidated, who were incorruptible by bribery, and were in any case receiving active service pay; and they would not be guilty of the brutalities of the past.

The change in character was not, however, noticeable to the people of Montelepre; they say that the new force behaved as the old did, taking furniture for firewood, robbing, accepting petty bribes, and arbitrarily shelling outlying houses by mortar fire.

But the strong-arm tactics were only the façade behind which Luca worked secretly among the dark and hidden corridors of Sicilian intrigue. His advisor and confidant was the same Colonel Paolantonio who had in earlier years held secret meetings with Fra Diavolo, and who knew from what quarter help must be enlisted.

Giuliano wrote his last letters to the Sicilian press before Luca, realizing the danger of public opinion, finally closed this platform to him. On August 29 there was a letter demanding twenty-five million lire ransom for a hostage he held—an indication, some said, that the *mafia* was no longer performing the role of Giuliano's "collectors"—and proclaiming that he felt insulted by the poor quality of troops sent to fight against him. A second letter, published the following day, demanded a plebiscite on whether he should be treated as an outlaw or a hero. It concluded with an ultimatum: "Unless the *carabinieri* call off their fight against me, and release my mother and other relatives now held prisoner, I shall

within fifteen days open a campaign of greater intensity than ever before."

Then Luca closed the press to his letters; an editorial appeared: "This is the last letter from Giuliano that we shall publish. Once we felt that he might be more mistaken than guilty. That time is past!"

The war now entered, in the autumn of 1949, upon its most intense and violent phase. There were almost daily ambushes and clashes with the *carabinieri*; there were more multiple arrests, which, through the hostility of the *mafia*, began to include actual members of Giuliano's band rather than mere sympathizers. After any spectacular incident Sicilian papers would run special editions; one such carried headlines: "Giuliano Launches New Offensive; Forces of the Law in Great Alarm (*Grande allarme*)."

Giuliano was not unaware of the dangers of Luca's underground maneuvers. "Luca uses intelligent tactics," he said. "He moves his pawns cautiously and shrewdly, but he will never get me. I will never leave this island until my mother is free from prison." His platform, now that the newspapers would no longer publish his letters, became the walls in the heart of Palermo. At dawn one morning hundreds of placards were found to have been pasted down the streets in the center of the town; they were in pairs, still damp, an address to the people and an appeal to the *carabinieri*. The first read:

Citizens, I send this proclamation to you in this way because the use of the public press is now denied to me. I hope that my intentions will not be misunderstood, and that civil war can be avoided. In my appeal to you I renew the defiance I have given to the Italian Government. The responsible men, Scelba and de Gasperi (Prime Minister), who in the past twenty years have done nothing for the welfare of our people, helped the defeat of their country by collaboration with invading armies; while I

have earned my own reputation by skill and courage. If I wish I can continue to fight from the mountains, where I am sure of my life.

Members of the Government have forgotten that they were outlaws before me. Like myself, they considered Mussolini's Government tyrannical, because it considered them outlaws and arrested their families. Again and again I have proved that I am no blood-thirsty murderer; I kill to defend myself. Citizens! Who is the greater murderer—the Government who hunt me like a wild beast, or I who defend myself against them? If this situation does not change, defend yourself as I also take up arms again.

GIULIANO.

And to the *carabinieri*:

Carabinieri! I hope that you will receive this message that I send you in a fraternal spirit. Do not take arms against me just because I am fighting for my Mother. Whosoever despises this humanitarian principle should be considered mercenary and a traitor to himself. A family without a mother cannot exist, neither can a country without a family. If you love your mothers and your country, give up this fratricidal fighting. Your duty consists in serving the country in justice. Because of some self-seeking people in the Italian Government, the honor and behavior of this whole country are misjudged by the rest of the world. I am no bloodthirsty man. After the National Elections I appealed to that Pharisee Scelba, but his only reply consisted in his abominable methods. He is the bloodthirsty one.

Think over and reflect carefully upon your actions. I feel what "Mother" means, and therefore I shall never surrender to your efforts, for I consider them to be against maternity. It is not only my experience that helps me in my fight against your propaganda, but God himself, whose aim is to protect the cherished love of our life, the Mother, from destruction.

GIULIANO.

Perhaps to lend color to the picture of Giuliano as one

who wanted no unnecessary bloodshed, eight *carabinieri* had a few days earlier been held up in the dusk near Montelepre and allowed to go unharmed on surrender of their arms. "I could kill you," he said to them, "but I shall not, because you do not deserve to die. You who are today my most ferocious enemies have families too, and I shall let you go free. You obey your orders, and I understand that; therefore you shall surrender me your weapons and return unharmed to your barracks."

The public of all Italy learned of these unseemly happenings, and anxious messages from Rome began to reach the CFRB. How soon could results be expected? How was the public to be kept quiet while Giuliano seemed to be having things all his own way?

Besides directing the suppression of Giuliano, Signor Scelba was at the time much engaged in a campaign against the wearing of indecent bathing dresses on Italian beaches. The offending garments were described as being all those which went beyond the irreducible minimum and used covering for provocative decoration rather than for concealment. The definitive word was "*lo slip*." Now a cartoon appeared showing Luca in conference with Scelba: "Let Giuliano wear '*lo slip*' just once," Luca was saying, "and I'll clap him in jail!"

Luca refused to be hustled; he had originally asked for a year to complete his task, and he would say no more. He expressed complete confidence in the outcome; he and Giuliano used almost the same words in their published pronouncements that they would never yield.

Meanwhile, to reinforce the picture of steady progress, Luca was able week by week as the autumn wore on to announce quite an impressive list of arrests, many of their names long known to the public as members of Giuliano's

active force. Luca had recognized from the beginning how powerful a weapon the old *mafia* could be in his hands; now, one by one, many of the band were betrayed by them and captured. "Pretty Boy" Giuseppe Cucinella provided the sort of fodder the hungry newspaper readers required. On October 14 information was received that he was sleeping with a girl in the suburbs of Palermo; the house was surrounded and a terrific gun battle ensued. No one could accuse Cucinella of lack of courage; his handsome impudent young face and his leap, when he was already wounded, from a second-story balcony in a last effort to evade capture, were good publicity for the CFRB. (What the newspapers did not report, however, was the treatment of Cucinella after his arrest. With a broken leg and other wounds he was removed from the hospital and questioned under torture, his interrogators tearing with their hands at the half-healed flesh and bone. His brother, Antonio, who had been sent back from Tunisia by the French, was treated in the same way; he said that he was tortured until he spat blood and was reduced to a condition "in which I would have said 'There is no God.'")

They captured Giordiano, too, Giuliano's jeweler who had made the gold belt buckles for him and Pisciotta; week by week more of Giuliano's men were added to the growing number behind bars. Some, fearing the *mafia's* death penalties more than life imprisonment from the law of Italy, chose to give themselves up; a few of these, who had ignored Giuliano when he told them that they would never be allowed by "the Pharisees" to live and to testify, died mysteriously as they did so.

Despite these successes, however, Luca seemed to get no nearer to Giuliano himself, and against the CFRB's long roll of arrests, Giuliano was able to show during the same period

an equally impressive list of successful ransoms, holdups, and public proclamations planted with impunity. It seemed an evenly-held balance, with Giuliano possibly promoting new members to his inner circle as fast as the old ones were eliminated.

Neither the overt actions of Giuliano nor of Luca had, however, any real significance; all that was to decide the future was being done silently and in secret. Each of the two protagonists was engaged, separately and respectively, in intrigue so utterly improbable as to surpass the wildest journalistic fantasies of the past years. The only essential difference between the two plots was that Luca's logically involved the death of Giuliano, while Giuliano's did not involve the death of Luca.

For a long time past the *polizia* Inspector Verdiani had been in contact with Giuliano through intermediaries. The most notable of these was the powerful *mafia* family of Miceli, and its ramifications, in the town of Monreale. It was they who had arranged for Gaspare Pisciotta's X-rays for tuberculosis on the morning of Portella della Ginestra, and it was in one of their houses that he had been examined. Subsequently they had arranged the escape from Sicily of some of Giuliano's men who were in danger. Now, through the Micelis, Giuliano and Verdiani entered into prolonged negotiations that lasted into the New Year, 1950.

Giuliano prepared for Verdiani a memorandum on Portella della Ginestra, to exculpate as far as possible the growing number of men who were behind bars, and whose trial for participation in the massacre was now a certainty. (One of them, Sapienza, had blurted out much of the truth when he was first arrested, but Giuliano had used his influence in certain

quarters, and Sapienza's evidence was destroyed. Like many other confessions, true and false, it had been extracted, said the prisoners, under torture by a brutal sergeant at the prison. Italian "third degree" methods are said to range from crude beating up to extreme refinements; the victim may be placed in a large refrigerator until he can endure the cold no longer; electric shocks may be passed through electrodes applied to his testicles; or he may be suspended head downward with a splinter of wood wedging his mouth open.)

The omission of certain public names from this memorandum may, as has been alleged, have been part of Verdiani's terms, but there is no direct evidence to prove this. The exchange of correspondence between Giuliano and the Inspector now gave place to actual meetings, first with Giuliano's emissaries and then with Giuliano himself. When Verdiani's inspectorship ended in December, 1949, he retired to Rome. One of the Micelis flew there on Giuliano's behalf, and held long discussions with Verdiani in his own house; then Verdiani himself flew to Sicily to make final arrangements with Giuliano. The meeting took place in the Micelis' house in Monreale; when Verdiani arrived both Giuliano and Gaspare Pisciotta were waiting, wearing the twin gold belt buckles and silver stars of chieftainship, and both embraced him in greeting.

The points at issue were simple. The incarceration of Giuliano's mother had assumed in his mind such proportions that her release must come before all else. "I know what 'Mother' means," he had written in his proclamation, and the desecrated image of *la mamma* must be restored even before further vengeance could be planned. With this in mind he had written to Colonel Paolantonio, confidant of the late Fra Diavolo and now Luca's advisor, and asked for an interview;

but the colonel had replied: "The only talk between us can be with machine guns." The approach to Verdiani was, in view of Giuliano's long *entente* with the *polizia*, both easier and more likely to bear fruit, and here was Verdiani in Sicily to discuss the details.

Verdiani was prepared to use his influence to secure Maria's release under the Holy Year Amnesty. If he were successful he would demand in return that Giuliano should finally call off his war against authority and disappear from Sicily. It seems that Giuliano agreed to this, provided that Verdiani would arrange the details of his emigration and subsequently that of his mother. The pact was sealed.

On January 23, 1950, Maria was released, and his sister Giuseppina was sent home too, nominally for reasons of health. Giuliano may have visited his mother in secret, the first time that he had seen her for more than a year and a half, but of what passed at that meeting, if in fact it ever took place, there can be no record. Sicilian ballad-makers have made much of the reunion and of the words spoken by Giuliano, but they do not disclose the source of their information.

The war was one-sided now. Luca's forces mopped up a few more of his men, but there was no retaliation; no ambushes, and no more hostages. "All the world is waiting," the newspapers wrote, "to see whether, now that his mother has been set free, the bandit Giuliano will give himself up or leave Sicily according to his published promises in the past. We recall that he has so often said: 'Giuliano does not break his word.'"

In March Miceli flew again to Rome, to discuss with ex-Inspector Verdiani the details of Giuliano's emigration.

In that spring of 1950 a silence fell upon Western Sicily,

broken only by occasional blustering announcements by the CFRB, like spring thunderstorms, describing further arrests. They were not always accurate, these reports; the death of the notorious Rosario Candela on March 12 was a fair example of the confusion that had always intentionally obscured the actions of the law no less than those of Giuliano's band. Long ago Candela's arrest in Tunisia had been publicly announced; now his death in armed combat with the CFRB near Partinico was claimed with the same simple fervor. There was no attempt to reconcile the two conflicting statements; later the men in prison testified that he had indeed been arrested many months before but that for scandalous reasons the police had found it more convenient to release him. Now there were photographs showing his body on a bank by the roadside, armed to the teeth and with a hand grenade clenched between his dead fingers. But a careful study of the photograph suggests that the paraphernalia of violence had been arranged round the inert young corpse, much as the weapons of dead warriors of the past were ritually placed by them for burial; and in fact, despite their claims, it was not the CFRB who had killed Candela. They found his murdered body early one morning, and quickly chalked him up on the list, with a routine description of the half-hour gun battle in which he had died. This sort of thing was necessary to Luca, for now that he really had a plan, and necessarily a secret one, it was becoming more and more difficult to convince the public that he was doing anything at all.

Indeed there were not by now many of Giuliano's old inner circle left to be accounted for; the players had dwindled to a manageable handful for the last act. By the beginning of summer the press announced (inaccurately) that only four remained at liberty: Gaspare Pisciotta, Frank Mannino,

Badalamenti, and Passatempo. Even these, it was said, would, with Giuliano at their head, have continued a desultory sniping warfare against the *carabinieri*, but there was no more shooting, and, strangest of all, there were no more placards and proclamations over the familiar signature. It was not for another year that the public learned of Giuliano's meeting with Verdiani, and the hush that was so strange a contrast to the summer before, when never a week passed without some major incident, gave rise to much speculation.

It lent color to the many rumors that Giuliano was no longer in Sicily. Some said that he had fled to North Africa, where in the past so many others of his band had taken temporary refuge either in the French Foreign Legion or in the nameless yet closely-knit Freemasonries of underworld or waterfront, where the figures keep to the shadows, where the wharf lights show only the swaying garbage on the water's surface and the rat stops on the berthing ropes of the ships; some said that he was in Spain raising an army for the conquest of Sicily; others that he had gone to America to treat secretly with Truman, or that the Government had connived at his escape to the New World where he was conceived.

The trial for the massacre at Portella della Ginestra was due to begin in a few weeks' time. After deliberation it had been decided to be too dangerous to hold in Sicily, and the thirty-two accused were taken to Viterbo, north of Rome. It was unavoidable that there was a school of thought believing that Giuliano, too, was in Viterbo, planning to liberate the prisoners; he would rescue them with the same *panache* as he had freed those first twelve, long ago at Monreale, and the *carabinieri* barracks would be blown wide open as all those in the country round Montelepre had been in the past. In sup-

port of this theory it was stated that he could not risk the cross-questioning of the prisoners, that his trust in them was far from absolute, and that at all costs he must protect the names of the politicians who had instigated the massacre.

The majority, in one way or another, believed that Giuliano was planning some *gigantic coup*, and that soon he would return as a presence more terrible than before to the silent limestone mountains of Montelepre.

It was between acts; the curtain was down, and the audience fidgeted and chattered in the auditorium. Out of sight the scene-shifters were at work, carrying away the grayish-white mountain background with its distant view of a blasted barracks; removing the foreground of olive groves, vineyard, and prickly pear, and the furtive bamboo clumps sheltering the wings; gathering up implements of rustic poverty that had leaned against the wall of a *campagna* hut—assembling, in place of all this familiar setting, a street scene in Castelvetro.

This was to be no longer the hard light of noon with its staring opaque cobalt sky, but the pale mysterious splendor of an early Mediterranean dawn, the shadows still long, so that the form of court and archway, step and broken masonry, was still intimately defined.

In the dressing rooms one actor was changing his makeup; for Luca, too, had held a secret meeting, with one man at dead of night, and had dictated the part that he was to play.

PART II

**“ . . . but God protect me from
my friends ”**

To Bury Caesar

CASTELVETRANO is a provincial town some thirty-five miles southwest of Montelepre as the crow flies, more than fifty miles by road. Whereas Montelepre is almost on the north coast, Castelvetrano is almost on the south, only an hour's walk from the sea and the desolate acropolis of Selinunte, where the great capitals and architraves lie in a tumble of decayed majesty, grown over with the soft, blue-gray, thyme-smelling shrub that the Sicilians call "*salve*." "It should have been here that he died—it would have been better," said my Sicilian companion; and then spoiled it by adding: "It would have suited you better."

At heart Castelvetrano is probably no more respectable, by northern European standards, than is any other Sicilian community, but on its surface one senses the faint bloom of bourgeoisie; the shop windows display conventional clothes and radio sets, there is a tourist hotel with two baths and a shower, and in the restaurants a young woman with lipstick and nail polish excites no comment. Paradoxically, the ruined glory of the Selinunte temples, Demeter Malophoros, Hera and Apollo, have bred mediocrity and vulgarity; those splendid fallen columns have drawn to them the *topolino*, the

people's car, with the appurtenances of the picnic—the tartan rug and the portable radio; among the aromatic *salve* and the curved wedges of broken potsherd are empty red packets of Pall Mall, cigarette stumps, and dubious balls of screwed-up tissue paper. Of all the ancient hierarchy of the gods, only Venus is worshiped here now. Below, within sight of the acropolis, the village of Marinella has formed a *plage*, complete with crimson canvas awnings.

To reach Castelvetro from Montelepre the road runs westward at first, across the long plain through the vineyards and olives, through the familiar territory of Giuliano; Partinico, with the fierce outthrust of naked cliff rearing above the ruined barracks; the white dusty road to Alcamo running parallel to, but a mile or two inland from, the seaboard, where the invading sand dunes pile higher against the futile bulwarks; Alcamo, where Fra Diavolo met his untimely end, with its painted houses and paneled doors and the children playing naked in the cobbled streets; then south to skirt the wall of mountain that rises beyond Castellammare.

The roads level, a chalky white worm upon a long plain of corn land, plowed earth as dark as chocolate, and pale glittering stubbles where the sheep are closely packed, each standing or walking with head lowered almost to the ground, into the little sliver of shadow cast by its neighbor's body. (Children often wonder why the sheep in biblical illustration have always this hangdog look.) Then the road begins to climb again, a new and longer mountain ridge, punctuated, as it were, by the fantastic silhouettes of fortified villages, Santa Ninfa and Partarina, before winding down to Castelvetro and the sea. The landscape changes, becoming wider, but the near view remains the same; the laden mules and donkeys, the grotesque silhouettes of the prickly pears, the

drooping tendrils of the vines ranged along the roadside like weary question marks that expect no answer; the little red hawks moored motionless on a point of hard blue sky or racing taut and tensed down unguessed air currents.

Castelvetro opens with a broad shabby street of low houses—colorless but for a group of gasoline pumps and some garish advertisements—which, after a couple of hundred yards, divides, as though a wedge had been driven into it from the far end. Here the main town begins.

The right fork, the narrower, leads through better-class shops to the square; the left, Via Serafino Mannone, is a street of residential houses whose appearance, despite their wrought-iron balconies and painted sun shutters, somehow falls short of prosperity; the walls, here as everywhere, plastered with faded and peeling electioneering notices, slogans of political parties long discredited whispering among the clamor of the last election's candidates. Many of the houses are separated one from another by a little space, scarcely dignifiable by the name of courtyard, onto which several doors open—a shabby affair of uneven beaten earth or rubble surface, where the washing is hung out to dry, robbing the streets of the air of perennial carnival common to those northern villages where brightly colored laundry festoons like banners from window to window across the street.

In one of these courtyards at dawn on July 5, 1950, a young man lay relaxed as though in heavy sleep. He lay half on his side, half face downward, one knee drawn up and the right arm flung out; on the third finger of that hand an enormous solitaire diamond glittered in the light of the early sun. He wore a sleeveless singlet, drill trousers, socks, and sandals. His hands were clean and manicured, but his hair was rumpled with sleep and he had not shaved. At his right hip was an

open pistol holster; the pistol itself lay a few inches from his face in a rivulet of blood that had partially soaked into the dust, and close to his right hand lay a Beretta submachine gun. The singlet had been white; now it had the appearance of the Separatist shirts, one half light and the other dark, for over nearly all one half a gigantic bloodstain had dyed the material scarlet.

At 6 A.M. in Rome the Chief of Police, General d'Antoni, telephoned to the Minister of the Interior, Signor Scelba. It is perhaps hardly surprising that this conversation was avidly overheard. D'Antoni, if he made any effort to conceal his excitement, was unsuccessful, and the coldness and brevity of Scelba's reply was an implied rebuke both for this and the unconventional hour.

"Sir, at dawn this morning the bandit Giuliano was shot dead at Castelvetro, in battle with the Forces for Suppression of Banditry."

"Very well; we shall meet later in the day at Vimmale, and I shall hear your report."

Scelba was in his office by eight o'clock and not long afterward the Prime Minister, de Gasperi, arrived to congratulate him. Shaking hands in an emotional silence, together they perused the official report of the death of Salvatore Giuliano. Later in the morning, after d'Antoni's visit, he gave a press conference to a horde of journalists who by now were baying like a pack of unfed foxhounds, but his replies were so evasive and unsatisfactory that within an hour representatives of nearly every Italian newspaper and half the Foreign Press Association were scuttling—or flying—in the direction of Sicily.

As the man to be held at this moment ultimately responsible for the victory of the State over what had assumed the

proportions of a civil war of seven years standing, Scelba had been astonishingly and disappointingly reticent. He had praised Colonel Luca for the 'triumphant conclusion to his campaign, adding that his promotion to the rank of general was under immediate consideration; he expressed the conviction that the presumed end of Giuliano meant the end of Sicilian banditry, and that the forces for its suppression would therefore be disbanded forthwith; he ended flatly and unequivocally with the hope that the newspapers would print no more about Giuliano. That sentence has not yet been forgotten.

Most of the journalists who went to Castelvetro got a story of some sort, and most of their papers printed the stories they cabled, but in the structure of these stories there was a regrettable lack of cohesion. The experienced reporters knew what was required, a story based on two facts—why Giuliano, if it was he, had been in Castelvetro at all, and how he had been killed. To these questions there was a surprising variety of answers; you paid your money (literally) and you took your choice.

Castelvetro was in an uproar. Its very limited hotel accommodation was packed out with journalists of many nations, its telephone wires had a waiting list hours long, the streets were overflowing with uniforms. The maddened reporters learned that Colonel Luca was giving a celebration luncheon at the Hotel Selinus, and would not see the press. The still unidentified body was already in the mortuary of Castelvetro's cemetery; the newspaper offices in Palermo, Rome, and Milan wanted news and wanted it quickly. You paid your money and you took your choice.

Four reasons were advanced for Giuliano's stated presence in Castelvetro, far outside his normal operational zone.

The first, though far the least credible, found a wide acceptance among the newspaper men. Luca had found the chink in Giuliano's armor—his vanity. He had put about a rumor that a film company, making a film of Sicilian life, wanted Giuliano to play a role, or at least to allow himself to be interviewed before the camera. To support this rumor Colonel Luca had commandeered a cinema van, on the sides of which were painted the names of the cinema company Luce, the newspapers *Gazetto Dello Sport* and *Il Paese*, while an unused area of coachwork carried the words: "*Le Aventure di Paperino*." Its crew of camera men were *carabinieri* in disguise, and in this egregious vehicle Captain Perenze and a group of his men had begun to tour the region of Castelvetro. (This was true, though the real purpose of these antics did not become clear for a long time. Even now I find it difficult to understand why this truck was apparently equipped with a perfectly visible wireless aerial.) Giuliano had sniffed the wind and found on it the untainted smell of his favorite food.

"*Attracted by this publicity stunt Giuliano did not take long to make an appearance. . . .*" By night he had come down from his mountains as a leopard to the tethered goat, silent, wary, but unsuspecting; keeping to the shadows of the underbrush he had circled the bait, while the hidden hunter sat in the *machan* with nerves tensed to a jangle, the rifle at his shoulder and his finger on the trigger—then the click of the searchlight switch, the leopard caught in the white glare, the roar of the rifle, and the beast sinking to the ground in a pool of blood.

A slightly different version of this story substituted for the cinema truck a chain of vans painted with the names of prominent newspapers. Patrolling a wide area, and in constant

intercommunication by wireless, now stopping, now advancing, they had shepherded Giuliano into Castelvetro as sheepdogs round up and corral a stray ewe.

All honor and glory, said both versions, to Luca and Perenze for these brilliantly conceived and original tactics.

"So the notorious bandit fell victim to the passion for publicity which he could not deny himself, and, blinded by his vanity, walked into a trap that would not have deceived a child."

It did not, in fact, deceive any Sicilian child.

Some of the reporters realized that, if the body were really that of Giuliano, even the reading public might find this story a little indigestible. Fortunately there were alternatives.

"Now for the first time a woman enters this story. . . ." She enters but she makes her exit with unseemly haste, for by the time the reporters had reached her house in Via Gagini she had already disappeared. She was a prostitute named Maria Caradonna, and counted amongst her best clients a sergeant-major of the CFRB stationed in Montelepre. The credulity of the public was indeed being strained.

Luca knew Giuliano's weakness. Like a beast in rut he had lost all sense of self-preservation; he had passed the night of July 4th with her, and was known to be returning for more on the night of the 5th.

(Prostitutes in Sicily are registered, and their cards regularly stamped. In a community of eighteen thousand where I stayed there were four, and they were changed at frequent intervals. "How much do they earn?" I asked. "About two hundred lire." "No, I mean in a week?" "Ten or twelve thousand lire—it is not much, but you must remember the number

of children in the population, also those that are married, and that the people are poor.”)

“The Inspector of Police and the CFRB had information from many prostitutes with whom the bandit slept from time to time. . . .”

“At 2:30 A.M. Giuliano left Maria Caradonna’s house in Via Gagini and directed his steps to the house in Via Serafino Mannone. . . . When he entered the courtyard he became aware of the presence of the police. . . .” What did they think, the Sicilians who read this; who knew how much Giuliano distrusted women; who knew that even in legend he had not slept with a prostitute since he became an outlaw; who knew how he had punished his men for affairs that might lead to danger? When an informer is closely watched it is difficult to find apparently legitimate opportunity for clandestine conversation. A barber could whisper in the ear of a client whom he was shaving; Frisella had whispered and he had died long ago.

“So Giuliano lost his life because he could not resist the call of woman, wishing at all costs to enjoy the thing he could never deny himself.”

You paid your money and you took your choice.

“Giuliano was killed on the eve of his escape to Tunis.”

This, assuming that Giuliano was dead at all, sounded more credible. He was to escape by air:

“Ten days ago Colonel Luca received confidential information which reported that Giuliano was preparing to leave the country by means of a special plane that was to land at the old war airport of Castelvetrano, now a cornfield, but with a small cement runway still remaining.”

Or by sea:

“He had made Castelvetrano his headquarters so as to be

near the coast, where not so long ago a fleet of motor boats was kept at his disposal. His idea was to get to America."

That first day the newspapers had to make do with what they could get, and it was not much. Some, who had run special editions, found that the space had to be filled not with the story of Giuliano's presumed death but with that of his life; the number of crimes with which he was charged, the exact length of penal servitude he had technically earned (one thousand three hundred and twenty-seven years), and the number of deaths for which he was held responsible. It did not seem very great, this figure, after seven long years of war, for the total was only a little over a hundred, and the vast majority had been *carabinieri*; only by representing Giuliano as a gangster and each *carabiniere* death as a murder could the number be made to sound sufficiently lurid.

Other journals sent reporters to interview the thirty-two of his men whose trial for participation in the massacre of Portella della Ginestra had opened a fortnight before at Viterbo; but it was thin gruel to set before a starving public.

It was not until the evening that Captain Perenze, Luca's second-in-command, gave a press conference. Before this, however, a number of *carabinieri* and others reputedly involved had held minor and entirely unofficial press conferences; many thousand-lire notes had changed hands, and editors all over the country were printing what they believed to be exclusive stories. The result was a little confusing. Hence on that morning of July 6 the *Manchester Guardian* described how Luca, Perenze, and a small patrol had taken up position after dark round a house in Castelvetro. At dawn the first shots were fired. Five bandits jumped from the windows at the back of the house; Giuliano, thinking that the

front door was uncovered, came out with a gun in each hand. Here he was met by fire from three sides, and fell dead.

The Times preferred a different version. "At 2:30 this morning Giuliano was seen to enter a house in the town, where he was faced in the courtyard by a group of police. He at once opened fire on them, and fell riddled by bullets from police tommy guns."

No wonder Perenze's press conference was eagerly awaited.

It came at last.

"For an hour the man who had killed Giuliano recounted to me the events of the tragic night at Castelvetro. . . ." —"exhausted as he was after five nights and five days' man-hunt" . . . "not slept for four days . . ."—"only able to speak with the aid of cigarettes which I gave him and which he chain-smoked all the time. . . ."

So it was Perenze himself who had killed Giuliano, and evidently the celebration luncheon had done little to restore him.

In answer to the first clamor of questions he admitted that he could not be quite sure whether it was sex or the cinema van, or the desire to escape by sea or air, or a combination of several of these factors, that had brought Giuliano to the town. The CFRB had learned, anyway, of his presence in the town and had laid their plans. Plain-clothes forces had closed in and spread themselves through the streets. "From 9 P.M. to 3:15 A.M. Captain Perenze and his men waited with bated breath. A little way off the carabinieri commanded by Colonel Luca crowded round a small receiving set. . . ."

Perenze talked on, smoking and sweating; the reporters scribbled. Perhaps his exhaustion had made his speech a little indistinct.

"At 3:15 A.M. two armed men were seen walking openly down the Via Gagini, their rifles clearly visible. Four carabinieri went to meet them and ordered them to stop."

Or did he say: *"At 2:30 A.M. two men advanced cautiously along Via Serafino Mannone. . . . Two dark shadows advanced to meet them—they were two carabinieri"*? Each of the journalists who wrote those two sentences was present.

"Captain Perenze was already patrolling Via Gagini when he was attracted by the sounds of shooting. One of the two carabinieri had fired at the two men; one escaped one way, the other by another. Which to follow? But Captain Perenze chose his prey; a man who in the act of fleeing threw away his coat that was hanging from his shoulders. The choice was a good one; the man followed was indeed Giuliano! The other, who escaped, was thought to be his cousin Gaspare Pisciotta. It was Captain Perenze who shot Giuliano fatally."

But the *Gazetta del Popolo* gave its readers a longer run for their money, over somewhat different country:

"The two men turned their backs and attempted to escape, but one soldier, Renzi, followed them closely while the other three went down a short lane to cut them off. Giuliano was recognized at once, he was bareheaded, and his features could not be mistaken in the well-lighted street. At one point the bandit who was accompanying him [variously suggested to be Badalamenti, Pisciotta, or Passatempo] escaped into a dark narrow passage, but the carabinieri let him go, as they were concerned only with Giuliano. . . . Then started violent shooting. The brigand defended himself well, making use of a special invention of his own that allowed him to keep a second magazine of forty rounds in the butt end of his sub-machine gun. His fight for life lasted till 3:50 [thirty-five minutes] zig-zagging from side to side, taking cover behind

this wall and that, moving continuously for quite a kilometer in distance, whilst the pincer movement of Perenze's men closed steadily in. . . . It happened as it does in so many realistic films; he found himself in the middle of a broad road, well-lighted and empty, faced by carabinieri and one at his back. Others had hidden themselves in two large courtyards on either side of the street; wherever he turned his escape was barred. He fired fifty-two shots from his tommy gun but he was losing blood from a wound in his back, and the net was being drawn tighter every minute; be it a small net round the heart of a girl, be it the large net thrown round him by 530 men silently converging on him from all sides. He threw himself into the courtyard on the right; twisting and turning like a madman, perhaps he never noticed the large machine gun [sic] operated by Captain Perenze, and he fell riddled with bullets before he could use the Browning automatic that he had drawn from his belt with the strength of desperation.

"Giuliano did not die at once; for about ten minutes he continued to groan, but without articulating a single word, nor uttering a single curse or invocation.

"The city was deserted; in the dark courtyard windows and doors were tightly closed. The terrified citizens of Castelvetro awaited anxiously the conclusion of the violent shooting that had been going on for half an hour. Captain Perenze knocked at one or two doors but no one answered; then he forced in the first door to find some water, for even to a dying bandit one must offer the only thing possible to assuage his thirst. But Giuliano's mouth was closed forever."

To the correspondent of Il Tempo Captain Perenze said: "Giuliano died at exactly ten minutes to four, after a ten-minute agony; a silent tranquil death as if he was already suffocated by the weight of the imminent hereafter. Not only

twenty shots were fired, as the local inhabitants report, but many more. The bandit alone fired fifty rounds; then he took cover in this courtyard, but was brought down by a fusillade of seven shots which hit him in the vital parts."

Great stuff. . . .

So Perenze gave his statement to the press, and the newspapers should have been satisfied. But somewhere a confusion still existed, a confusion that caused two reputable newspapers to print these two sentences on the same day:

"The street over which Giuliano had fought so desperately for three quarters of an hour was no more than a hundred meters long."

And: *"The battle was rapid; it was almost an execution. The population of Castelvetro heard only a very few shots."*

The press was not satisfied; it wanted more, and unquestionable detail.

By July 7 it was an open complaint:

"To all my questions the officials met me with a wall of silence most unlike their usual procedure. They told me to read the official communiqués, and gave the impression of obeying strict orders. The official communiqués, so laconic and devoid of detail, cannot dissipate the heavy mysteries surrounding this affair which has aroused the feelings of all Italy."

Heavy mysteries. It was the first acknowledgment by the press that the truth was being concealed from them; the first little whispering wind of suspicion that dislodged at first no more than a leaf or two from a tree still in full foliage; then stilled itself before a second and a third gust, until at last the limbs were creaking under the force of a full gale, and the rotten leaves streamed from them, piling down the wind onto

the tidily-swept pavements and courts of officialdom, mingling with the crumpled and rustling newspapers that had told of Giuliano's death in battle with the force for his suppression.

All that first morning of July 5 the body lay as it had reputedly fallen, in the courtyard of No. 54 Via Serafino Mannone. The archway entrance was closed by a Fiat car, round which a body of *carabinieri* stood guard, blocking entrance and view from the crowds who now filled the street. A table and chairs were carried out from the houses abutting on the courtyard, and in the decreasing shade round its walls officialdom went through the routine that was necessary before the body could be moved. Measurements as apparently aimless as those taken by any English policeman were recorded, the attitude of the body and the position of the weapons described, and an inventory made of the dead man's clothing and effects. The expressions of those grouped in the courtyard did not reflect unmixed triumph; some looked worried or puzzled, others sad, all mentally uncomfortable.

As in the case of much other significant detail, the dead man's clothing was described very variously by the newspapers; he was suitably dressed for whichever role they had cast him for on what, curiously, they nearly all described as "the tragic night." The minute details of a beautifully-cut jacket, the number and quality of its buttons and the texture of the cloth, were initiated by one journal who favored the "gallant encounter" version, and were widely copied. A bag or rucksack, alleged to have fallen from his shoulders, lay near his back, containing a full magazine for a submachine gun, forty extra cartridges, a flashlight, a camera containing a film—apparently taken recently of Giuliano and some of

his followers—and a packet of mentholated cigarettes. (One newspaper listed all these items as having been found in his trousers pockets.)

The brown sandals were very highly polished—so clean, in fact, that one official in the courtyard remarked that he appeared to have come straight from a shoeshine boy—he wore, it seemed, the famous belt with the gold buckle of the lion and the eagle, and on the third finger of his right hand was a great diamond ring like that taken from the Duke of Pratemeno a year before; but a gold wrist watch, believed to have held for Giuliano the same fetish value as the ring and the belt, was missing.

Over the right ribs the back of his singlet was soaked with blood from waist to shoulder, and this huge stain was joined by a narrow red line to a smaller one under the left shoulder blade, right over the heart.

By noon the work of the Procurator General and his colleagues was finished, and he gave orders for the body to be removed to the mortuary of Castelvetro cemetery. Those who lifted him did so gently as if he were a wounded comrade, and one brushed a little dust from the forehead where it had lain pressed into the pale powdery earth of the courtyard. A hearse of strange design nudged and jostled its way through the multitude in the street outside, an ancient chassis whose front cab, like that of a truck, was unmodified and equivocal; behind this had been built an elaborate openwork neopalladian construction of black fluted pillar and arch, inspired perhaps by the vicinity of Selinunte, and seeming tacitly to imply in its archaic pretension that the future can lead only back to the past. The hearse began its journey to the cemetery and the crowds closed in behind it.

In the mortuary the body was laid upon an immense oval

slab. The official doctor, Professor Gabbio, prepared for a superficial post-mortem, and a mask maker was sent for to take a death mask for the Criminal Museum at Palermo. Not until after the mask was completed were certain of the press photographers admitted.

In the meantime the singlet had been removed, and a fact became obvious that must at least have been guessed during those scorching hours that the body had lain in the courtyard. Beneath that huge stain upon the right side of the back there was no wound. Only on the left side, where there was little blood, were two wounds under the left shoulder blade; the remainder were concentrated on and near the right hand and arm, and on the body near the right armpit. Yet this position in which the body had lain in the courtyard made it impossible for the blood that had soaked the singlet to have flowed from any of these wounds.

It was some days, however, before the public learned of this anomaly.

It was a different face that the newspapermen, who were by now pouring into Castelvetro, had expected to see. Over the years they had themselves painted of Giuliano a portrait, to which now, illogically, they required this corpse to conform; they looked in these dead features for the savagery, the ruthless hardness, the brutality, that they had required of Giuliano; but they did not find it. They looked for the mask of a Tamburlaine, a Genghis Khan, and found instead a Hamlet perhaps, or a Romeo, according to their mood. Most of all they were unprepared for his youth; like many figures of legend Giuliano had become to them ageless, an image of power and destruction, who had been a man before they were born. Here was none of the expression of frustration and aggression with which Giuliano had faced cameras

in the past, and the utter relaxation of the body on that marble table—death and marble always so intimately conjoined, bloodstains and gray veins on the white stone of the butcher's slab, marble sarcophagus and mausoleum—were at contrast with the familiar forward thrust of the chest and the assertive thumbs thrust under the belt with its gold buckle and symbols of Chieftainship. In all the story this was the one point on which there was no disagreement; this face had the look of "a handsome boy asleep," "the calm beauty of an exhausted adolescent."

Among the group in the mortuary, *carabinieri*, journalists, and minor officials, there was an atmosphere of strain, of hyper-reaction. Few of them were able to play competently the "routine completed" role that Scelba had implied to be requisite; their faces were for the most part shocked, in the most literal meaning of the word; some, including that of the mask maker, reflected tragedy and compassion, others were strained with the effort to hold in an emotion that they themselves perhaps could not have well defined. When the corpse was stripped of the last garments, and lay before them in a nakedness that seemed the final surrender, they crowded closer, some making lewd jokes and gestures, but these were a little feverish, brittle, and somehow beyond their convention. It was of no importance now what Giuliano had been, whether he had been great or small, the Savior or the robber; it was as though they were not sure nor caring what had been killed, only that it had been something larger than themselves, the symbol he had become, secretly admired, feared, hated, or loved with an incomplete but almost universal identification.

Their behavior was little different from that of all Sicily, or, for that matter of much of Italy, but because they were here in the mortuary, crowded round that naked body that

had paradoxically become so much more vulnerable to them in death than ever in life, their reactions became magnified and brought immediate physical response.

One *carabiniere* said to the journalists: "You will have nothing to write about after this." It was in all their minds in one way or another; nothing to write about, nothing to think about, no scapegoat, no idol. If this were Giuliano he had let everyone down, by showing himself to lack the one quality demanded alike of all gods and devils—immortality.

The more curious examined every detail of the body, commenting on the perfection of manicure and pedicure. The hands were capable but sensitive, and they looked unused to manual work; the little-finger nails worn long, pointed and polished, a mark of dandyism throughout Sicily.

The scars of a wound showed on his right side a little above the hip, said to be the shot fired by the *carabiniere* at Quattro Molini seven years before. The bullet had passed right through the body just below the ribs, leaving two scars an inch or two apart. Perhaps with unconscious symbolism, perhaps with conscious but abashed memory, it was of these things that the journalists wrote when they left, the hands, the feet, the wound in the side. One of them even remarked how the plaster that the mask maker had left in his hair gave him the appearance of wearing a crown.

Early in the afternoon great blocks of ice were sent for and placed against the body, for even by the official story it had been dead for twelve hours of a Sicilian summer.

Colonel Luca said that there was a 99 per cent chance that this was indeed Giuliano, but that no official claim could be made until the body had been identified. Instructions had been issued that the mother should be brought from Montelepre

for this purpose, and at ten o'clock the police had gone to her house and told her that to the best of their knowledge her son had been killed in Castelvetro. A car was waiting to take her there.

How much she believed then it is impossible to say; perhaps she thought that this was one more paragraph in the book of lies, intrigue, and deception with which she had become so familiar. But it was the first time that this formula had been used, and she knew so much that the public did not. When the words came, formulated and unequivocal, "*il figlio Suo e morto*," she gasped and then stared in hard silence before she said: "I do not believe you. It is lies, a trap."

Her daughter Giuseppina and her son-in-law Francesco Gaglio, who had also been released from arrest, prepared to go with her; and because her grandson could not be left alone in the house, he too, a little boy of seven, awed and frightened by the way his family were behaving, was washed and scrubbed and dressed and hustled with them into the car.

Perhaps they had known everything before the police came, for in Sicily it is rare that authority is first with the news. They arrived in Castelvetro at two o'clock in the afternoon.

At the cemetery they sat together on a bench in the scorching sun, the women in hooded black, the man in the suffocatingly thick dark suit that is one of the traditional penances of Sicilian mourning, awaiting admittance to the mortuary. Among the tall black cypresses loud with the chirping of cicadas, with the African sea a narrow hard blue strip on the horizon, the photographers fussing round them and the crowds dense outside the gate, Maria broke down at last and began to sob, articulating the slow dirge of a defeat that she now accepted. She knew now, perhaps she had known from

the beginning, that Turridu was dead. There was some formula, some ritual, to be completed, and he would be hers again; they must not take his body away from her.

It was three quarters of an hour before the Procurator General and the Doctor had finished with Colonel Luca's celebration luncheon. The *carabinieri* standing guard outside the mortuary watched the mother of Giuliano; one of them, a young man, looked at her scornfully. "I imagine we are supposed to find this moving," he said, and spat. "Personally, I'd clap her in jail for life, the old bitch." The time went slowly; the photographers had a sitting target. Giuseppina, who had been trying to comfort her mother, lost control; tormented by those cyclops lenses and clicking shutters, she began screaming imprecations at them; then she tore off one of her shoes and hurled it at the nearest camera. The *carabinieri* laughed, and the crowd jostled each other to get a better view. Only the little boy sat still, as if he were quite alone, beyond the power to give or to receive comfort; because his disequilibrium, however great, was so utterly different from theirs. His misery was simpler, he no longer had any recognizable status; the landmarks of his existence had been swept away in this adult storm. He looked like a waif in the appeal advertisement of a charitable institution.

The photographers saw all this, and they were not to be deterred; it was their big moment, their last moment, with Giuliano. They moved nearer again until Maria, whose emotion could not be contained in lamentation, rose screaming and tried to throw a chair at them; and they scattered as though she had been Giuliano himself.

"Clap the old bitch in jail, I would."

When at last the celebration luncheon in Hotel Selinus was finished, the last cognac savored, the cigars decorously

stubbed out between the town and the cemetery, the Procurator General and the Doctor arrived. Maria should have been no longer human; that she was, that she behaved as any mother before the dead body of her best-loved son, was evidence, surely, of her strength rather than her weakness. As she was led into the mortuary and saw all that she had foreseen and kept place for, the physical fact was too great for the space she had kept for it, and she fainted. She was given an injection by her family doctor, who had traveled with her from Montelepre, and at her own request she was taken back to the body. The official questions were asked in an undertone that distressed the reporters, but her answers at that moment were strong and firm. "Yes, that is my son, Salvatore, born to me twenty-seven years ago. . . . Yes, I identify him. . . ." It was a necessary step in the reclamation of her son's body.

When the formalities were over she kissed the body passionately; the forehead, where the fragments of white plaster denied her, the unresponsive blueing lips, and the mutilated right hand; she wept tempestuously, and invoked him: "Oh my blood, my blood—my beloved son, what a death you have died." After her, each of the family kissed his head.

At length, drooping and supported by both arms, she turned to leave the mortuary, and screaming to the people outside: "*They betrayed him! They betrayed him!*" she fainted again.

The words were out at last; the words that had been unspoken, swelling silently like a great blister since the first light that morning. They ran in a spreading murmur among the crowds outside the cemetery gate and through the streets of Castelvetro; they reached the sightseers in the courtyard where Giuliano had lain. "Betrayed . . . Betrayed . . ."; men began to look at their neighbors with surmise and

distrust. There had been a companion who escaped; they began to run through the names of those of his inner circle who were still at large. There were seven altogether: Gaspare Pisciotta, Giuliano's Co-Chief; Frank Mannino; Nunzio Badalamenti; Salvatore Passatempo; Castrenze Madonia, who had carved upon his gun-butt "God protect me from my friends"; a certain Giuseppe Zito; and Vittorio Vitale, the band's armorer.

Suspicion fell chiefly upon Mannino, though Passatempo and Badalamenti were also cited. The following morning some newspapers told the public that the figure who had been with Giuliano had been definitely identified as Frank Mannino, and that because of his apparently easy escape it was clearly he who was the betrayer. Gaspare Pisciotta was rumored to be hunting him to the death in vengeance for his dead blood-brother.

Through the whispering crowd in the courtyard came Maria Lombardo, wild-eyed and now distraught beyond control. Crying out again: "My blood, my blood, they betrayed you, they assassinated you," she threw herself at full length upon the ground and licked the drying bloodstains in the dust.

Professor Gabbio carried out his autopsy as soon as Maria had left the cemetery, but the full results were never published. The wound that had caused death was a perforation of the heart from behind; two submachine gun bullets had struck below the right armpit, and some half-dozen more had mangled the right arm and hand. Two had grazed, but had not entered, the forehead. The bleeding from the submachine gun wounds had been comparatively slight; further-

more, the blood from all the wounds had flowed against the laws both of gravity and medical science.

There was only one undisputable fact: Giuliano was dead. Perhaps Professor Gabbio was as mystified as anyone else who considered the problem; perhaps he had only Perenze's official story to go upon and was dismayed into silence by its obvious discrepancies; perhaps, but less probably, he had the new story, that a year later was known as "*la verità*," the truth, and had failed, as we must now, to make it fit the visual facts.

The mystery, anyway, created the one attitude that everyone, from Scelba downward, must have been anxious to avoid: "Giuliano is dead, long live Giuliano."

In the evening of the same day his mother went to beg from the Mayor of Palermo the body of her son. "He belongs only to me now," she said, "you have finished with him." Officials argued, responsibility was shifted between those of the provinces of Trapani and of Palermo, and at length it was announced that the official time limit had expired and that the body must be buried in Castelvetro. But Maria prevailed in the end, and after four days Giuliano was brought to Montelepre, and not in a pauper's coffin, but in an elaborate affair of ebony and brass which Giuseppina had ordered from Gerace, the undertaker in Castelvetro.

In Montelepre there was much rumor, strain, and excitement. Frisella the barber, son of the couple whom Giuliano had executed as spies, had never been a bright boy, and his mental condition had not improved since his parents' death; now he had a *crise*, and begged to be allowed to go to heaven to shave Giuliano. Most of the adults maintained a dignity, an apparent impartiality, that was at least in part the outcome of an attitude as yet undetermined; some, an *avant*

garde, followed the *carabinieri* at Castelvetro cemetery, and made a scapegoat of Maria, the mother of Giuliano, for they were not yet ready to refute their past loyalties. The children, that fierce, swarming, vociferous blend of beauty and ugliness, piety and obscenity, were as uninhibited as usual; for them it was a stimulating occasion. In the little *piazza* of Montelepre they waited for the coffin, crowded around the church steps and the iron railing that leads from them, pressed against the walls of the neighboring houses and climbed on the war memorial that faces the church, scuffling and pinching each other, joking, giggling, exchanging rebukes, and momentarily forcing a solemnity that some felt to be requisite. Not a few were related to Giuliano, very many had seen father, mother, aunts, or uncles taken away to prison for a real or alleged complicity in his affairs. Many northern Europeans thought that these children should have shown grief, anger, or perhaps exultation, according to whether their families had admired or hated Giuliano, forgetting how often childhood emotion is undifferentiated, just emotion, that the adult sees as excitement. It was their intimate connection with, rather than their detachment from, the situation, that produced these quick childish reactions.

Later, they ran, as only Sicilian children run, behind the hearse; the whole mile from the town to the cemetery.

At the cemetery the custodian, Franco Russi, was watching for the coffin. He stood framed at the entrance, facing a little crowd of journalists and photographers at the other side of the road; above his head, on a strip separating the gates from the wrought iron of the arch above them, the dead of Montelepre spoke with the flat fatality to be read on every Italian necropolis: "*Fummo come voi sarete come noi*"—"we have been like you and you shall be like us." There is no sug-

gestion of hope, nothing beyond, only the simple call to resignation. Neighboring village cemeteries speak with the same hollow tongue: "*Lasciate tutto qui*"—"leave everything here"; "*Tutto finisce*"—"everything finishes."

A Sicilian cemetery conforms to a pattern unlike an English one. Here is no forest of marble headstones; the coffins that are buried are comparatively few and are marked by tiny crosses of iron or wood. The majority, however, are in mausoleums, sometimes communal, which are called *congregazioni*, sometimes in smaller buildings of varying ornateness and pretension which are devoted to one family only. At the extreme edge of Montelepre cemetery, where the wall separating it from the vineyard beyond is cracked and broken, there are several of these *congregazioni*, pitilessly practical and unornamented edifices whose doors are straight iron grilles, without one flourish or curve to mar the resemblance to prison bars. On each side of the short central gangway are two tiers of pigeon holes, as it were, into which the coffins are pushed and cemented over. It is a far cry to Whispering Glades; only the names of the *congregazioni* have a spuriously comforting ring: "*Congregazione di Sette Dolori*," "*Congregazione della Madonna di Carmeni*." It was in this last that the ornate coffin of Giuliano was placed, the entrance to the pigeon hole was sealed, and the words *Salvatore Giuliano* scrawled in a childish cursive handwriting on the wet cement. His was the top coffin; on the ledge above, the candles lit for his soul stood among those for an old lady below him, and the wax from them mingled and ran down the cement onto a curling unframed photograph of her that hung from a nail on the cement.

The lampoonist "Errant Cavalier" emerged from behind his *nom de plume* to write a last poem to Giuliano. It ended:

You were born to pitchfork and to plow;
It was a delusion that you could write in verse,
But now, after all, I think you were a boy
Of good and simple heart
Into whose hands the horrors of your time
Put weapons and the will to fight.

Now that for you this after-war is over
And your heart no longer feels the summer heat
I feel pity, although you were a brigand—
Sympathy, though I cannot excuse—
For you too were betrayed.

I, Gaspare

WHILE Giuliano was being buried some curious things were going on in Castelvetro. A second wave of newspapermen had entered the town, those who had been dilatory, those whose papers had been unable to afford to send them by air, and those who believed that Giuliano was to be buried in Castelvetro cemetery. Among them, too, were a few who had scented the discrepancies of the official story and were preparing to do a little amateur detective work.

The late arrivals, particularly the cameramen, found themselves in a difficult position. Certainly Castelvetro was not in a normal or tranquil state, for it was rustling with rumor, suspicion, and plain gossip, but there was nothing to photograph. True, some enterprising person had kept the bloodstains fresh in the courtyard, and had even approximated to the original shapes they had formed, but Giuliano's body had gone, and Maria and her family had gone too. The courtyard and the bloodstains were not enough. Elderly women, especially those who had a superficial resemblance to Maria Lombardo, were suddenly in great demand in Castelvetro. In various attitudes of grief, despair, and hysteria, the face always decorously hidden by the black hood, they

posed—usually in some place of comparative seclusion where they would not incur the odium of their neighbors—as the stricken Maria. It was not their first experience of acting, for most Sicilians act from the moment that they are conscious of other human beings as such. For a few unique hours all the women over a certain age had something for sale, and they solicited with all the vigorous coquetry of their juniors selling less esoteric wares. Their fee was anything from one thousand to three thousand lire, and for that sum they would assume any fantastic posture—assuming, of course, that the place and time were discreet. It was a roaring trade, but it was strictly seasonal. Many of these photographs found their way to the public, but their falsehood was concealed among the multiple strata of untruth at every level.

Whether anyone actually posed as the corpse of Giuliano is difficult to say. Probably some did, because as the rumor of Maria's accusation spread, the youth of Castelvetro felt the town to be branded with infamy—the “Judas town,” as it was soon called in the northern villages—and through detailed charades of the official story they tried to prove that the betrayal must have taken place elsewhere. The scene was re-enacted hour by hour.

The reporters were more fortunate than the cameramen, for they stumbled upon a piece of news that the first on the scene had missed. Originally, the bigger the gun battle, the longer the fight, the greater the amount of ammunition fired, the better the public would have been pleased. Now, with the rumor of betrayal and assassination heavy as thunder in the atmosphere, a few reporters began to scratch such words as “desperate battle . . . 300 rounds” from their notepads, and to interview the more serious-minded and responsible people who had heard the shooting. As a result, it was found

that the most reliable witnesses were adamant in their assertion that they had heard very few shots, and that had there been more they would have heard them. There had been, they said, five or six revolver shots that came, apparently, from just inside the courtyard, and these were followed not quite immediately by two short bursts of submachine gun fire. Then, with scarcely a pause, they had heard the voice of Captain Perenze shouting for water, and some heavy object hammered against a door. Why water? they asked, reasonably enough. Thirst came to a wounded man after some long time, after a fever had set in, or in the heat of noon; one did not become thirsty within a few seconds of being hit by a bullet in the night. Just after the shooting, too, a woman had peered through the shutters of her window overlooking the courtyard, and had seen Perenze and someone else standing looking down at the body with an expression of infinite sadness.

It may be doubted whether Perenze was capable of an expression of infinite sadness, but it made good copy, and it stiffened the breeze that had now steadied from a stormy quarter.

Perenze may have been a very stupid man or a remarkably clever one. The obvious discrepancies in his story may have been due to carelessness, lack of preparation and imagination; but they may, on the other hand, have been deliberate, designed to hint that he was an impostor with official sanction, enabling him to claim the rewards of an executioner while avoiding the unpleasant consequences of Sicilian vengeance and vendetta.

At this moment Luca produced another bombshell. He announced the arrest of Mannino, Badalamenti, Castrenze Madonia, Zito, and Vitale. At first only the bare fact of their

arrest was announced; then, a little later, it was stated that all five had been prisoners since before the death of Giuliano. Some said that they had been arrested for their own protection; that the betrayer was amongst them; and more and more it seemed that it must have been Mannino, for the story of his arrest, as it was reported, was highly improbable.

It seemed that at midday on June 27 a *mafia* member had been driving his horse and a cartload of tomatoes from Partinico in the direction of Alcamo. He had seen a roadside bamboo-clump moving on a windless day, and had stopped his horse to await developments. A hand had signaled to him from the bamboos, and when he came closer Mannino and Badalamenti had emerged. The three were well-known to each other, and had collaborated against the *carabinieri* many times in the past. Mannino and Badalamenti had asked the carter whether he was going to Castelvetro, and, when he had replied that he was, requested to be hidden in the big tomato baskets on the cart. The carter had consented, had covered them over with tomatoes, and had driven them straight to the *carabinieri* headquarters at Alcamo. They had become uneasy when the horse stopped, but they were unable to see anything without showing themselves, and believed the carter's reassuring explanations. A minute later the tomatoes were swept from them onto the road, and they were looking straight into the muzzles of four *carabinieri* pistols.

Now this tale was frankly impossible to believe. Its impossibility did not lie in the nature of the trap into which they had fallen, nor in their betrayal by the carter, for one by one all five had been sold out by the *mafia*, and the traps that Mannino and Badalamenti had really entered were just as simple as this. The transparency of the lie lay in a geo-

graphical impossibility; no cart from Partinico would have been carrying tomatoes to Castelvetro, a town some forty miles away on the south coast. Yet much emphasis was placed upon this destination, almost as though it was in some way part of a plan to show that it was indeed Giuliano's headquarters at the time, and that the members of his inner circle had known this.

"They betrayed him, they assassinated him."

If the date of their arrests were taken at its face value it had a further significance; it exonerated all those five from the possibility of having assassinated Giuliano, they had what is known as a cast-iron alibi. Yet it was whispered that the arrests had been antedated for just this purpose, or that it would have been easy to liberate for a few hours someone who would be only too anxious to return to police protection afterwards. In the guessing game that was now in full swing it was still Mannino who was most favored for assassin.

Mannino had, in fact, been trapped much as the story said, but he had not been going to Castelvetro, nor was the vehicle a donkey cart. He had but recently returned from a spell of service in the French Foreign Legion, and was possibly unaware of the extent to which the *mafia's* attitude had changed. Now the Micelis renewed their promise of protection to him, told him that he was unsafe where he was, in Monreale, and that they would send transport to take him to safer quarters. In due course this transport arrived, a big truck filled with tomato baskets and driven by one of Luca's men disguised as a *mafioso*. Mannino, apparently, had no suspicions, and the story had the same ignominious ending as the garbled version.

Another of the free members of the band had fallen, it is said, for a trick that was an example of the virtuosity of

Luca's tactics and psychological insight, a trick dazzling in its pure simplicity. Luca sent him call-up papers for national service, complete with the date and the military station at which he was to report. No one of Giuliano's men could have been ignorant of the almost incredibly departmental nature of Italian administration, and he would assume a complete absence of contact between the army and any of the forces which were now threatening him. As a private soldier with a name that was not rare, an initial and a number, he might disappear effectively; further, the army would seem the last place in which the CFRB would think of looking for him. He is said to have reported at the stated time and place.

Castrenze Madonia and Vito Vitale had been arrested, it appeared, a surprisingly long time before; turned in, like the rest, by the *mafiosi* whom Giuliano trusted most, the Micelis of Monreale; but it was upon their arrest that all subsequent events turned.

The roundup was almost complete; one by one they had been killed or imprisoned, the good and the bad, the idealists and the plain killers, the gold-greedy and the boy gangsters. Now there were only two left: Passatempo and Gaspare Pisciotta, who had been second only to Giuliano himself, who wore the silver star of co-chieftainship, and who was said now to have made a vow of vengeance to the death against the killer of Giuliano.

Then, in December, 1950, Gaspare Pisciotta himself was taken. That in itself would have made headlines, but close upon the proclamation of his arrest came the news that he had been apprehended not by the CFRB but by the *polizia*, as personified by Inspector Marzano, who, in December, 1949, had succeeded Verdiani. Since Luca had taken control the *polizia* had hitherto played no public part beyond that of

assumed co-operation with the CFRB; their intervention at this moment and in this quarter stirred a mistrustful public to still more fevered speculations.

Pisciotta, chained and guarded like a man-eating tiger, was sent to Italy to join the thirty-two at Viterbo whose trial for the massacre at Portella della Ginestra had been interrupted and postponed by the staggering announcement of Giuliano's death. Until almost the very day that he had died he had sent letters to the court, claiming full responsibility for all that had occurred and exonerating all who were accused; now that he could speak no more it must be Pisciotta to whom they would turn as the only living man who had held equal status with Giuliano.

They did not have to wait long for his first pronouncement, for it was published by his defending counsel before ever he spoke in court. It read: "I, Gaspare Pisciotta, assassinated Giuliano in his sleep. This was done by personal arrangement with Signor Scelba, Minister of the Interior."

The Trial of Gaspare Pisciotta

"I HAVE not sold my soul, though I have been offered millions for it! I have come here to testify of my own free wish, and no one captured me; I came to see justice done!"

From the first moment of his testimony Pisciotta was in fear of his life, but there were very few in a position to know the secret that made his fears so well grounded. During the first few days the Genovese brothers tried to kill him as they traveled between the court and the prison, but he rightly dismissed these overt attacks of his companions as the least that he had to fear. It was poisoning that he was afraid of, and no doubt he knew that it would not come from Luca or Perenze, whom he had discredited and made to look ridiculous by his "confession." His mother brought him food in prison; he would eat nothing that she had not cooked nor drink anything that did not come from her hands. When after some weeks she was refused permission to bring him food any longer, he said: "Now I am certain that they want me to die in prison"; and he began to test everything that he ate or drank upon a tame sparrow. Everything, that is, except the medicine that he took for his tuberculosis.

He entered the witness-box pale and defiant, as perfectly

dressed as ever. His evidence, though he showed gusts of bitter rage at strange moments, was firm and coherent. Out of court he was arrogant and assured, and gave the impression of containing some great secret closed forever inside him.

He spoke first of the massacre at Portella della Ginestra, for that was the nominal subject of the trial. "I reject with scorn," he cried, "the accusation of having taken part in that butchery. I am not a bandit who kills or robs. I was part of the band because of EVIS, and I served under Giuliano as a political general. We fought under the orders of Finnochario-Aprile, the Duke of Carcaci, Baron Stefano La Motta, and Gallo. Gallo killed eight *carabinieri*, and now he is styled 'Honorable'!"

Then, he went on, Giuliano had been approached after the amnesty by other political parties, the Monarchists and Christian Democrats, who made promises of freedom and power if he would fight Communism on their behalf. "I warned him to have nothing to do with this scum, some of whom had betrayed him already, and were certain to do so again, but he would pay me no heed."

The Christian Democrats, he testified, had promised pardon if they succeeded in forming a government, or expatriation to Brazil if they did not—but they never kept one promise that they had made. "Again and again Scelba has gone back on his word; Matarella and Cusumano went to Rome to beg total amnesty for us, but Scelba denied all his promises." He added that Scelba was known to be the son of a *mafia* chief of Caltagirone, in Sicily.

He, Pisciotta, had been present at all the meetings with the politicians except the last before Portella della Ginestra; Cusumano had come to fetch Giuliano, and Giuliano had returned saying that Communism must be destroyed at all

costs. Pisciotta had, however, seen the letter that Sciortino had brought to Giuliano on the eve of Portella. It had read, to the best of his recollection: "Dear Giuliano, we are on the eve of the downfall of the Communists. With our help and yours combined we can destroy it utterly; then the victory will be ours and you will have complete immunity." It was signed, he said, with the name of the Minister for the Interior for Italy, Mario Scelba. The actual instigators of the incident, with whom Giuliano had held meetings to discuss details, had been Prince Alliata, Matarella, Marchesano and Cusumano. "Pisciotta goes mad," flared the headlines, "and accuses heaven and earth."

Alliata, he claimed, was the power behind Giuliano's throne, without whom Giuliano never moved, and in whom he had absolute trust. "I was present at their meetings but I was not at the massacre. If I had been, I would have killed whoever it was that fired on the crowd."

But he was up in arms when a witness suggested that he had Communist leanings. "How could that be possible?" he cried in a passion. "For me there are only three things—*la mamma*, Sicily, and Jesus Christ!"

Many times since Pisciotta had begun speaking there had been uproars in the court, for this was the first that many in the packed galleries had known of the venality and corruption surrounding the supposedly anti-Giuliano forces. Pisciotta's statement that Giuliano's war against the *carabinieri* had enjoyed complete connivance from the *polizia* was headline news. "The public remembers Scelba's recent statement," wrote a middle-of-the-road daily, "when he said: 'We cannot help thinking of the rivalry between *carabinieri* and *polizia* which has so often given rise to good-natured competition.'"

Only when Pisciotta was asked for the names of those who

had taken part in the incident of Portella did certain reasoning members of the public begin to realize that even if he were telling the truth about many things he was not telling the whole truth; for his first list contained only those who were now dead or were presumed to have emigrated. On the subject of where the machine guns had come from, however, he was adamant; they had been given to himself and Fra Diavolo by Inspector Verdiani, to use against Giuliano if he should turn Communist.

Many of his statements were confirmed, or at all events were uncontradicted; a few were denied outright. He had always had a false pass, under the name of Giuseppe Faraci, allowing him to circulate freely; first from Messina, then from the other police inspectors, and finally from Luca's Force for Suppression of Banditry. But, asked the public, how many others of the band, from Giuliano downward, might have enjoyed the same privileges?

But not all of Giuliano's men, it seemed, had understood the extent of the *entente* between himself and his so-called suppressors, for Terranova claimed that he had known nothing of it until the unseemly death of Fra Diavolo. Giuliano was *molto riservato*.

Under the false name and documents of Faraci, supplied to him by the *polizia*, Pisciotta had recuperated from the crises of his illness in Castellammare del Golfo; for months he had worked there under that name as an electrical engineer. Both the *polizia* and *carabinieri* had come to look for him and had conducted house-to-house searches, but not until some time after he had left.

Newsprint is only so big; a moment comes when headlines can be no larger, and then they tend to shrink abruptly. In the trial of Gaspare Pisciotta this point was reached when he

related how he had offered his services to Verdiani against Giuliano, and how Verdiani had not only refused but threatened his life if he should harm Giuliano. Then he went on to tell how he had learned of Verdiani's intention to kill Colonel Luca, and had warned the colonel in time. He claimed, too, that his defending counsel had been forced upon him by Colonel Luca, and that this same counsel had offered him fifty million lire from Signor Scelba to keep his mouth shut at the trial. When this defending counsel asked for a postponement of the trial (obviously, said Pisciotta, so that even further lies could be concocted) Pisciotta refused point-blank to be defended by him.

"I killed Giuliano because you made me kill him, because you did not dare to have him alive. If you will allow me to speak a little more, Mr. President, here in front of everybody . . ."

"Silence in the court! You may not speak."

Pisciotta's willingness to talk disappeared very suddenly, quite early in the trial. A thousand hours of cross-questioning of many witnesses dragged out a story of Giuliano's betrayal and death; some of the public believed all that Pisciotta said, some had reservations, but at least no one any longer believed the gallant Perenze.

At first the President of the Court refused Pisciotta's request that Luca and Perenze should be called as witnesses, but later he acceded in the face of public opinion.

Pisciotta said scornfully that he was not going to concern himself with the greater lies that had been told, but that Luca should be called to answer three questions: whether he was in contact with Pisciotta; whether he had asked Pisciotta to procure for him Giuliano's memoranda concerning Portella della Ginestra for a reward of two million lire; and whether

Pisciotta had warned him of Giuliano's *entente* with Verdiani.

Luca told his story. He was in as difficult a situation as a man can be, for the official version of Giuliano's death had by now been so far discredited that no one would have believed a flat denial of all that Pisciotta had said. Somehow he had to make the two stories appear compatible, and he was walking the edge of a precipice.

It had all begun, according to him, with the arrests of Mannino and Madonia. They had been betrayed into his hands by the *mafioso*, Ignazio Miceli of Monreale; when Giuliano learned of this he kidnaped Miceli and held him as counter-hostage. To him, we learn from another source, Giuliano said: "As you have had my comrades taken prisoner so you must arrange for their release. I give you ten days—after that there will be nothing left for you to do but to make the sign of the cross." The ten days expired, and his messages to Luca were ignored. Giuliano handed over Miceli to Pisciotta for execution.

Pisciotta, however, had not carried out his orders. Instead, he had secretly released Miceli on condition that he would send Luca unarmed to a midnight rendezvous in Monreale (presumably the house of Miceli or one of his *mafiosi* relations). This rendezvous Luca kept, and found Gaspare Pisciotta, feverish and coughing. There Pisciotta made his offer of collaboration, but it was not unconditional; he required a letter signed by none other than Signor Scelba himself, promising indemnity from all charges, and Luca's personal promise of intervention in his favor if he were caught. There was no question of claiming the reward that was on Giuliano's head.

Luca had acceded to both Pisciotta's requests. At their

next meeting he had supplied the requisite documents, the most important of which was the letter of assurance bearing the signature of Mario Scelba. Pisciotta was satisfied. But Colonel Luca now said the signature was not that of Scelba, for he himself had forged it.

After that Pisciotta had held a number of meetings with Captain Perenze.

Giuliano was in hiding in Castelvetro. There were several "safe" houses in the town, belonging to members of the "young *mafia*," and in one of these Giuliano awaited the expatriation that he had agreed with Inspector Verdiani.

The story, from this point onward, was built up on the testimony of many witnesses who, beginning with alibis and denials, proceeded at last to apparent "confessions." In many cases, however, these "confessions" appeared to have been imperfectly learned by heart at the last moment.

From the beginning there was never any question as to who had been sheltering Giuliano in Castelvetro. It was the owner of the principal house abutting on the courtyard where, according to the original story, Giuliano had been shot down by Captain Perenze. This was a young *mafia* lawyer, by name de Maria. He had a degree in law, but did not practice; instead, he gave lessons in Latin and gymnastics. Giuliano had stayed in his house for much of the winter of 1949-50, had returned for the month of April, and finally had begun his last stay ten days before his death. All this de Maria testified, adding only that he had not wanted to have Giuliano in his own house but in that of his maid's family outside the town. Under pressure he had yielded the point.

Later, as the long trial dragged on, his story began to lose coherence, like that of every other witness concerning Giuliano's death. Everything hinged on Giuliano's documents,

the manuscript for which Perenze had offered two million lire. Giuliano had entrusted all his papers to a man known by the nickname of "*Avvocatichio*"—"little lawyer"—and it was suggested that this must be none other than de Maria. For weeks he denied it strenuously—then he admitted that it was true, and that there had been a large packet of documents that had disappeared on the night of Giuliano's death. Pisciotta must have taken them, or Perenze; or the man, a friend of de Maria's, called Marotta, who had first brought Giuliano to the house, and had been one of the last to see him alive.

This man Marotta was called to testify, but he denied any knowledge of the documents. He had last seen Giuliano alive four days before his death, when he had taken to him a letter that he had recognized to be from Inspector Verdiani. When Giuliano had opened it he had cried out: "Everyone has turned traitor to me, but I will never believe it of Gaspare Pisciotta—never!"

Perenze was called and denied having received the documents from anyone. He had been sent to collect them from de Maria, he said, but de Maria had said: "Tell Gaspare Pisciotta I have burned the documents, and have no more." Perenze added: "I have worked only under Colonel Luca's orders; he may have received them, but I have no knowledge of it." Pisciotta was up in arms at that, claiming furiously that he had given all Giuliano's papers to Perenze, with the object of saving the innocent.

The documents, anyway, were effectively lost, and no one but the President of the Court, actuated no doubt by a temporary and very natural (though highly dangerous) curiosity, seemed at all anxious to trace them. It was for them, Pisciotta claimed, that he had assassinated his blood-brother

on the eve of his expatriation to America: "With great grief I was forced to kill him, both to put an end to the slaughter, and because he would have destroyed us all." He added that when Verdiani's successor, Inspector Marzano, had arrested him, he had offered the alternative of emigration, but had advised him to stay and testify.

But nothing put an end to the slaughter.

Pisciotta's reluctance to testify had become the most noticeable feature of the trial before he was called upon to describe the details of the assassination, so that it was left to Scelba, Luca, Perenze, and de Maria to produce utterly conflicting stories. All there was to go upon was that Pisciotta was now "known" to have given Giuliano a sleeping-draught, killed him in his sleep (they shared a bed), and then handed over his body to Perenze.

Scelba was handicapped because when he gave his interview to the press very few people had as yet testified, and there was no knowing what anyone was going to say. He said that there was no reason to doubt the official version of Giuliano's death at the hands of Captain Perenze. Pisciotta might well have betrayed Giuliano, he said, but it was Perenze who had killed him. Pisciotta had waked Giuliano and warned him that the *carabinieri* were at hand; then, when Giuliano had dressed in haste, Pisciotta gave a low whistle to the waiting Perenze, who opened fire as Giuliano left the door. "Pisciotta would not have had the courage; he would not have had a firm enough hand to shoot at the man who had been his best friend."

The left-wing press hooted. Why should Scelba speculate, they asked, when he knew everything, when he now had the documents in his own hands, the documents he had received from Pisciotta?

Luca came next. By his own statement he had not actually been on the scene of action, so his account must have been hearsay of some kind.

Pisciotta had gone into de Maria's house at midnight; for three long hours Perenze waited tensely in the courtyard. Then suddenly from inside the building came sounds of violent quarreling, and the voice of Giuliano shouting. (Some justifiably asked how it had been recognized as the voice of Giuliano, for, despite many rumors, both Luca and Perenze had denied ever meeting Giuliano personally. Now some said that, like Verdiani, the staff of the CFRB had had a closer *rapport* with Giuliano than would have borne inspection.) The door of the courtyard burst open and Pisciotta came flying out, with Giuliano, yelling hysterically, hard on his heels. Perenze let Pisciotta go by and fired at Giuliano, who fell face downward hit by many bullets. Luca was more generous than Scelba; he said that Pisciotta might have wounded Giuliano, but it was the bold captain who inflicted the *coup de grâce*. He added that he thought Pisciotta was absolutely sincere in wishing to exculpate the innocent who were charged with participation at Portella della Ginestra; he knew that there had been no more than a dozen or so at the massacre, whereas there were thirty-two now standing trial at Viterbo. He confirmed that he had himself issued Pisciotta with a further pass after Giuliano's death, and said that the police inspector, Marzano, had arrested Pisciotta only out of spite against the *carabinieri*.

Perenze himself said very little; he "acted only under Colonel Luca's orders." He tried to stick to his original story of having seen Giuliano and a companion emerging from a little dark alley; but there was an audible titter in the court.

De Maria was explicit, but his first story was a little dif-

ferent from his second. He said, to begin with, that on that night of July 4 Pisciotta had entered a room in company with Giuliano; then, a little later, he had heard Pisciotta's voice raised as if in anger (a thing that anyone present at the trial became well able to visualize), followed by a single shot. When he got up to investigate he saw Giuliano's dead body being carried from the house.

He made that statement on May 27, 1951. On October 6, when the trial had lasted for eight months, he amended the story. All the household, including Giuliano, had already gone to sleep when on that night of July 4 Pisciotta had come knocking on the door, elegantly dressed and apparently unarmed. De Maria had admitted him, had shown him Giuliano's room, and had gone to sleep again. He was awakened by the sound of shooting, and as he scrambled out of bed Pisciotta fled past his door. He heard no sound from Giuliano, so he entered the room to see what was amiss. Giuliano lay as though asleep, but de Maria saw that he was dead. In a panic he decided to escape from the house and inform his friend, Marotta; but he was in the act of climbing out of the window when he was arrested by Captain Perenze. The captain led him upstairs and told him to clear away all traces of blood from the bed. Together they dressed Giuliano and carried his body into the courtyard; then, when de Maria had re-entered the house and closed the door behind him, he heard a burst of submachine gun fire from the courtyard and the voice of Captain Perenze calling for water. The bloodstained sheet disappeared; possibly because it had never existed.

Many lies were told; but, as in so much of Giuliano's history, the greatest significance lay in what remained unsaid rather than in the falsehoods that had been spoken. In particular, it was curious that neither of the two overt contest-

ants to the title of Giuliano's killer—Perenze and Pisciotta—had produced any detailed story of that night since they had first challenged each other's claims.

On October 27 the Socialist Party in Italy and the Communist Party in Sicily demanded an official inquiry into collusion between Giuliano and the State forces controlled by the Minister for the Interior, Signor Scelba. Three days later Scelba promised that the inquiry should be held as soon as the trial was ended. On November 6 the court was closed to further witnesses, and on the 16th the prosecution began a lengthy summing up. (The sentences were not pronounced until May of the following year.) A request that the history of EVIS should be reviewed in order to give the whole subject an intelligible background was refused.

The magistrate said that all honor should be given to Giuliano for his refusal to betray the names of those who had been present at the massacre of Portella della Ginestra. Pisciotta, on the other hand, he said, had been shown up in a very bad light indeed.

He sentenced Pisciotta to life imprisonment with hard labor, beginning on May 4, 1951.

Meanwhile Pisciotta had had never a dull moment, though the run was against him. In January he had received a check for thirty-five thousand dollars from America, allegedly signed by the name of the head of the New Jersey Federation of Bankers—James P. Morgan. The draft could be cashed as soon as it was countersigned by Gaspare Pisciotta, but he was understandably reluctant to sign until he could be assured that the money would go to himself or his family. In the interval, while the check itself was being held by the governor of the prison, the Rome police sent an urgent message.

They had discovered that the check was a forgery. There was no detail.

Then Pisciotta brought an action for criminal libel against some ballad-makers, who had now got their teeth well down into the Giuliano story; they had called him a traitor, a dastard, and a bloody assassin. The case was dismissed with costs against the plaintiff.

It seemed to be over. However it had all happened it was history now, even if it was obscure history. A few still remained alive and at liberty, but one by one they were crossed off. Passatempo, the last of the inner circle, was found dead on the road near to Montelepre, shot full of bullets; much later the last of the Pianelli brothers was discovered in the same way. Some seventy-odd remained in prison to be charged with further crimes.

Inspector Verdiani committed suicide.

His successor, Inspector Marzano, who had arrested Pisciotta, had been transferred to a post of lesser importance, in Livorno, soon after committing his *gaffe*.

With eleven others Gaspare Pisciotta began a life sentence of hard labor. His spare time he devoted to the writing of his autobiography, and to silk embroidery of great intricacy and often beauty. His swan song, a photograph frame woven in brilliant silks with the patience of a spider, stands before me as I write. I look at the thousand conjoined threads of harsh brilliant color and wonder what he thought about as he worked.

PART III

“So perish all”

Montelepre Diary 1953

Montelepre, August 23, 1953

It is desperately hot. The tent, pitched just outside the crumbling wall of the cemetery above the town, is like an oven. Inside, it is cramped, stifling, and dense with flies. The ants are everywhere; they find their way through the ground sheet, through the paper that wraps food, they crawl on the page as I write. During the heat of the day there is no shade anywhere, and the water we carry by pitcher from a roadside drinking place is hot after an hour.

The trouble is that to go inside that hellish tent and close the flaps is the only escape from visitors. The Englishman's tent is Exhibit A. People come in twos and threes, to look, talk, lounge, smoke English cigarettes; then, when conversation and cigarettes are exhausted, just to sit and stare. When one visitor goes, two more arrive. It is impossible to be alone in Sicily; from a bare landscape people appear as quickly and miraculously as gulls from an empty sky when fish are being caught.

I feel deeply for Giuliano's hostages, for I realize now that this is one of the things they suffered. When Gaspare Pisciotta was accused of having taken part in a particular kidnapping, he replied that it was impossible because at the time

he was suffering from a hemorrhage of the lungs; it was true, he added, that he had visited the hostage in the cave where he was held prisoner, but this had been merely out of curiosity, just to look. Many others, he pointed out, had gone for the same reason.

Even the escape into the tent does not always work. One day, after a three-hour session in the blazing heat, I asked to be excused as I had letters to write. I went inside the tent, closed the flaps, and collapsed among the flies. It was like the hot room of a Turkish bath. There was a low mutter of conversation outside, then a rap on the tent. "*Scusi*, Signor, but we have never seen a letter written in English. May we watch you writing it?" I began to write the first thing that came into my head; it happened for some reason to be Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality." I wrote it cunningly in prose form and signed it William Wordsworth, but as a letter it looked odd with no beginning, so I went back to the start and wrote: "Dear God."

Escape by car is even more impossible. Destination is unimportant; they would like a lift to where you're going, and back.

Still, one learns from visitors, even if it is only how to catch lizards—an esoteric accomplishment of which I am now a master. This afternoon I had long run out of conversation, and did not dare to produce my cigarette case because there were nine people present. A big green lizard flickered up the cracked wall of the cemetery and paused, brilliant and beady-eyed in the sun. The man nearest to me picked a long stem of grass and made a running noose at the end of it. "You know how to do this?" he asked. "You must move very slowly; the lizard watches you, not the grass noose. You bring it gently, very gently, over his head . . . like this . . . and he is still

watching you . . . and then you pull the noose tight, and *eccolo!*" The lizard fluttered at the end of the grass-blade like a stranded fish. "That is the *only* method of catching lizards," said my teacher very earnestly. "If they are dried and pounded up they make very good medicine."

The tent is where it is because the custodian of the graveyard, married to the daughter of Frisella the barber whom Giuliano executed, offered to guard it when I was away. I explained this to one of my visitors. "Him? Sapienza? A fat lot of guarding he'll do—yesterday all the flowers were stolen from the graves while he was sleeping in the shade."

Sapienza asked me how old I was. Thirty-nine, I told him. "I am thirty-nine, too," he said. He looked to me at least fifty, paunchy, gray-haired where there was any left, and white-stubbled on the chin and cheeks. My face must have given me away, for he produced his documents from an inner pocket. "Look, here it is; it says that I was born in 1914, doesn't it? You see, they guessed my age when registration cards became compulsory—they estimated that I was born in 1914, and so as far as I'm concerned I am thirty-nine now."

We were on the steps of the shrine opposite to Giuliano's, waiting for the sun to shine through the open door onto the altar and onto his marble sarcophagus. Sapienza had come to fetch me from the tent. "You want to photograph Giuliano's tomb? The sun will shine on it in a quarter of an hour." Now we had waited for an hour and a half; the shadow of the cypresses still fell black across the entrance. The cicadas screeched in steady unison from the branches. There was a scattered pile of cigarette stubs in the dust about our feet. I find Sapienza's speech very hard to understand; once or twice he has written down for me sentences of which I could make nothing when they were spoken, and I am not surprised,

for there is hardly a word whose spelling approximates to Italian. One reads: "My brother-in-law Angelo Vitale was first outlawed from the band and then executed because he did not respect the poor." The next I can still make nothing of; untranslated it seems to read: "*Mori arsino segretorio del comando di giuliano.*" It is written on a loose leaf of paper, and I think it will turn up again and again for many years, like the scraps one finds in one's wallet or writing-table drawer, bearing unrecognized but tantalizing names and telephone numbers.

The sun never did shine on Giuliano's sarcophagus. It was always going to in ten minutes time; it is like the truth that was always about to be spoken of his death but never came. After two hours we stopped talking and there were only the harsh insistent voices of the cicadas.

Tomorrow I am moving; I can stand the smell of putrefaction no longer. I asked Sapienza whom he had buried so recently and so near to me. "The last of the Pianelli brothers. He was acquitted by the court, but three weeks ago his body was found on the road near here. He had been shot many times." "Who shot him?" I asked. He shrugged: "I do not know. It is what happens to those who are acquitted."

Pianelli was "buried" in a *congregazione* next to that in which Giuliano's coffin had been placed when it was first brought from Castelvetro. But Giuliano is now entombed in a shrine of his own, the newest and most ornate of the family tombs in the line of tall black cypresses. It is elaborate and pretentious, the kind of thing a rich Palermo merchant might design to found a dynasty of the dead. Over the door are the words *Famiglia Giuliano* in gothic lettering, but for the present Giuliano lies alone, in a white marble sarcophagus beside the altar. The words of the epitaph that he chose are

incised upon the stone: "My poor cherished dreams of love, you have perished when my joy in you was greatest, proud inspiring phantoms doomed to die like outlaws."

His tomb is the only place where I have found shelter from the sun since I came to Montelepre.

It has been unexpectedly easy to meet those near to the heart of the story. When on the first day I went down to the town to buy food, I looked among the swarming curious faces that pressed round the car for any that might be familiar from photographs; almost immediately I recognized close to me a boy from Vespasiani's picture of the children waiting for Giuliano's coffin. I showed him the photograph—as well as I could with twenty or more heads closing over it—and asked his name. They all wanted to see the photograph: "This is me . . . this is me . . . that is my brother . . . *e ecco questo nero col torso nudo*. . . ." They called him a Negro, but he was a North African, perhaps only a hereditary throwback to the Moors who had once settled in the island. Even when I was no longer a novelty in Montelepre I remained to the children a subject for undefined excitement, representing departure from routine, holding nebulous possibilities beyond the cigarettes I could give them, the footballs and the stamps that they wanted sent from England. One or two became my friends and protectors, an intense predatory Sicilian protection, involving many gifts from them of fruit and eggs and such tokens as broken fountain pens, warnings against their friends, and much display of affection. I asked the most faithful of them, Eugenio, what he had thought about that day while they were waiting for the coffin; but he considered too long, and then replied with his usual monkey-like adjustment that it had been a tragic day. Candela had

been his uncle; factually he remembered chiefly how much his relations had been photographed by the reporters.

The photograph set everything in motion. When I emerged from the shop with my bread, cheese, and tomatoes, Eugenio was there at the front of the waiting crowd round the car, and with him was a hatchet-faced man in his early thirties, who said:

"You English?—I speak English. Come!"

"But the car—I can't leave the car here with all this stuff in it."

"Eh?"

I said it again, in Italian. He grabbed another boy and told him to guard the car.

It was a quarter of an hour before I realized that beyond what he had already said he spoke no English except the numerals (the time) and some dozen other words whose pronunciation was so entirely Italian as to be unrecognizable, or were so coarse as to be unprintable. The sentence with which he had greeted me had been prepared during my ten minutes in the shop; linguistically he had shot his bolt. But by the time I had understood this I was in his house, had met his wife and five children, and had made my first friends in Montelepre. Names are dangerous things in Sicily; I will call him Francesco.

The boy whom I had recognized in the crowd, Eugenio, was his nephew, and was with us as we sat down to a meal whose lavish hospitality staggered me, for I had learned that my host was out of work. He was a builder, but was temporarily unemployed because of a duodenal ulcer. As course succeeded course he apologized for providing no meat; it was too costly when one was not working, but wine and cognac were already in the house: "Drink, drink more, you are my guest."

When we had finished he showed me photographs of the family. Then, when his wife was momentarily out of the room, he furtively slipped a photograph onto my knee under the tablecloth. "This—brother for Madame." I looked; it was a photograph I knew well. It showed a young man armed to the teeth and very dead. I had reached the periphery of Giuliano's band very quickly.

"Madame"—his wife—a woman of charm and beauty, had been victim of the incident described on page 138–39 of this book; both she and Francesco had served a sentence for collaboration, and his brother was in prison for a term of nine years for participation in kidnaping. The friendliness and warm hospitality of that house have suborned me; from the day I met Francesco and his family I have found my emotional sympathies thrown irrevocably upon the side of Giuliano's "bandits."

Two days later I was introduced by Francesco to the Pisciotta family. We were walking down the crowded street when he took my arm and said: "That man standing there is Pietro Pisciotta, brother of Gaspare; you notice the resemblance. Would you like to meet him?"

As I shook hands with Pietro I was at once conscious of my dirty clothes and stubbled chin. His white shirt was of silk, his fawn drill trousers perfectly pressed, his shoes highly polished. His hands were manicured, the little fingernails long and tapered, and he wore a very large gold wrist watch. His face was unexpected, for despite an uneasy arrogance of bearing it was a sensitive, worrying face, which struck me as *sympathique* and essentially friendly.

We went to the *taverna*, cool and dark as a cave, and drank cloudy wine while a very drunk, fat man expatiated monotonously on the brotherhood of mankind. With an arm

round anyone who did not shake him off he chanted his litany: "*Tutte il mondo sono fratelli—la stessa terra, lo stesso sole, la stessa luna, lo stesso Signor!*"

Pietro did not talk much, but when I left he gave me his *porta fortuna*, a medallion of Santa Rosalia hanging from his belt, and invited me to visit his family before I left Montelepre. In return I gave him a Coronation medallion; when Eugenio saw it he wanted one, too. Later, in Eugenio's house, I saw the medal appended like a royal seal to a framed parchment scroll tracing his mother's ancestry to a noble family of Norman knights in 1096.

I have acquired a mass of valuable detail without which I could hardly have integrated the intentionally fractured story of Giuliano as it was presented to the world. Besides all this I have learned a curious thing; everyone with whom I have talked in Montelepre believes that Colonel Luca met Giuliano often. Going back over the trial; I can find only one reference to the possibility. Colonel Paolantonio said that he had "always advised Luca against meeting Giuliano personally." He did not say whether his advice had been accepted.

September 1

My face is still tender from the most painful shave I have ever had. I met a vacant-looking youth in the street who asked me with some urgency to "his house." Eugenio, who is never far away, tried to dissuade me, but I did not understand. "His house" was the barber's shop; he was Frisella, whose parents had been killed by Giuliano and who had wanted to go to heaven to shave their executioner. A score of children followed me into the saloon and watched with sadistic intensity while I was shaved with cold water and a blunt razor. They knew what was coming; I watched their faces in

the mirror. The nearest was a child in a yellow cowboy jersey, with the word "Trigger" in big letters across the chest; like many others he was the son of one of Giuliano's men.

When it was finished I asked Frisella what I owed him. He replied in English: "Two dollars, please." I looked blank. "One dollar then." I said: "I have no dollars; how many lire?" He shrugged; the large stupid face and narrow eyes looked cunning. "Half a dollar." The children were almost holding their breaths; they entirely filled the shop, and there were many looking in from outside, holding aside the bead curtain that separated the saloon from the street. The situation becoming intolerable, I gave Frisella two hundred lire, said "*Grazie signor*," and tried to go. I knew it was far too much, but the children thought I did not; the entertainment had exceeded their highest expectations, and they were wild with delight. "*Grazie signor, grazie signor*," they chanted between giggles, dancing round me like a bevy of Brueghel's more sympathetic imps. Eugenio was furious; he has cast me for a role of sophistication that it is very hard to live up to.

I have moved the tent to a terrace overlooking the town, below the Grotto Bianco. Visitors arrive just the same, but there is shade below the olive trees and prickly pears, and the smell of death has gone. Nearly everyone who comes brings presents, figs, grapes, or other fruit. They are an astoundingly open-hearted and generous people; but my supply of cigarettes is dwindling rapidly.

There is great variation in the times that people sleep. One group, who work with animals, go to bed soon after dark, about eight o'clock in the evening, and get up when it is light, about 3 A.M.; another section of the community keeps the hours of conventional townspeople. The result is that I have practically no sleep at all, while both groups believe me to be

a sort of dormouse in perpetual hibernation. Last night, after a long conversation, I went to bed at midnight and then spent an hour scribbling in a notebook; at four the cowherd banged on the tent and offered me milk. "Why aren't you up? You sleep too much!—the sun has been up for more than an hour." Tonight, when I try to leave my hosts at ten, I shall be told: "Stay longer, what's the hurry—you sleep too much!"

I have met many people, but I have not met Giuliano's mother. Nearly every day I see her, a bowed old peasant woman making tomato paste in her garden, but she says she will never "interview any more journalists." Her husband is still in prison, and Giuliano's brother, Giuseppe, works in Palermo; it is an entirely female household. Eugenio carried the messages; when he brought me back the final refusal he clearly considered it a challenge to his status as my sponsor. He worried for a time; then he said: "Look—you must have photographs of her for your book. Every morning she comes down into the town at seven o'clock. You and I will wait in the car round this corner, and you will have taken a photograph of her before she knows. I shall come to the tent for you at six-thirty." Why I allowed myself to be persuaded into this monkeyish prank I don't know. The resulting photograph is extraordinarily funny; it is mostly occupied by the bodywork of the Land Rover and in the blurred background are two utterly anonymous hooded black figures partially obscured by Eugenio's pointing finger.

Maria's status in the community seems to me difficult to establish. She is said to have few friends and to keep much to herself; she is at feud with her sister, Rosalia Pisciotta, yet many of Giuliano's staunchest supporters are openly friendly with the Pisciotta family. Even Francesco Giuliano

and his wife, Giuliano's paternal uncle and aunt, seem no longer to mix with Maria's household. They are an elderly couple, kind and dignified; it is impossible to associate violence and prison with their homely peasant faces. They showed me the laboriously repaired damage where the *carabinieri* had shelled their house with mortar fire. "They called us bandits," he said, "and they put me in jail." We were sitting by the door of his house on a terrace overlooking Montelepre; there was a flowering creeper overhead, and while we talked a white dove fluttered onto it and began to coo. "Anyway, it is all finished now."

They have two sons: one is married to a big blonde Berlin girl and lives in Germany, but is here on holiday with his wife; the other is remarkably like Giuliano in feature.

I have visited the Pisciotta household twice now. Gaspare and his stepfather are in prison, and Gaspare's brother-in-law, Spica; all that are left are Rosalia and Pietro and his sister. Rosalia spent two years on the prison island of Ustica, and Pietro sixteen months in Palermo jail, where Gaspare and his stepfather are now; the family drives there once a week to visit them. Pietro has a 1500 Fiat, one of the very few cars in Montelepre, and the house is clean and prosperous.

Rosalia is recognizably Maria's sister, but she is of finer feature; she must once have been a beauty. It is a peasant face, honest and friendly, but in her carriage there is a suggestion of something fiercer. I can imagine her eyes assuming the incandescent glow of a nocturnal creature of the rocks; they are light, whereas the children's are very dark. Her daughter is a Mona Lisa.

At the end of my second visit I screwed up my courage to ask questions. I was momentarily alone with Pietro. Why, I

asked, had Gaspare killed Giuliano? Pietro seemed always to have an irritating fragment of cigarette tobacco left on the tip of the tongue; he cleared it with small explosive noises of the tongue between the lips. He waved his cigarette vaguely. "It is not known. One day he will say . . . perhaps in a few months . . . perhaps next year." Gaspare was due for trial on several further charges; they might extend over many years of his lifetime penal servitude.

Pietro saw that I looked discontented. He rose and led me to a back room. On the wall was a magnificently theatrical framed photograph of Gaspare on horseback. "You like that? Look!" From a drawer he produced a carefully-wrapped bundle, photograph after photograph of Gaspare. "Choose what you like—I will give them to you and authorize publication." When I left he said: "You must come to see Gaspare in prison when I visit him."

But my meeting with Gaspare was like the sunshine that would presently fall upon Giuliano's coffin.

Skins from an Onion

AT THE very end of my first visit to Sicily I sat at a café table on a street of Castellammare del Golfo, some twenty miles across the plain from Montelepre. It was already dark but still very hot. The long homing procession of donkeys and mules and painted carts, many laden now with great vats of new pressed grape juice, for it was the season of the vine harvest, had finished. Below, in the harbor guarded by the ruined Saracen fort where I was living, the brightly painted fishing boats were being pushed down the sand beach into the water. No boats at anchor here; when the wind blows from the west the harbor is open to it, and the sea comes in big and green and angry with a white marbling on the slope of the rollers. Tonight the harbor was sheltered and the sea calm, for it was the sirocco that blew now, the hot south wind that blows up from Africa, raising eddies and columns of white Sicilian dust. Before I came to Sicily I had been told: "It gets you down, the sirocco in Sicily. It's bad enough further north, but in Sicily it does something to the nerves. If it blows for a week you get so strung up you don't know what you're doing any more."

That dust: there can be no other in the world like it. It is there all round you always, as white as flour and as fine as

smoke, and nothing that is not waterproof—waterproof on total immersion—is dustproof. When the sirocco blows it gathers up the dust and scatters it capriciously, sometimes gently and insidiously, sometimes in hot white moving clouds, sometimes like plumes of powdered snow blowing from a mountain-top. It becomes the smell and the taste of Western Sicily, and the sea is the only refuge from it.

The street where I sat was crowded, dense, packed as the street of every Sicilian village or town is, with people doing nothing in particular, strolling arm in arm, standing talking in pairs or arguing in groups; all male, all, except the adolescents, dressed with a near-uniformity of white short-sleeved shirts and well-pressed trousers. To be less conspicuous I tried to conform exactly; I wore, too, Pietro Pisciotta's *porta fortuna* medal of Santa Rosalia hanging from my belt, both because all men wore them and also to create the illusion that I was not a heretic. It was of no use; I remained as obviously a foreigner as a Negro in Scandinavia. Sometimes people would stop suddenly and stare, disconcertingly, at close quarters, or nearby the words *Tedesco* (German), or *Americano*, very rarely *Inglese*, would emerge sharply isolated and preternaturally important from the hubbub of noise.

The effect of this close throng is unequivocally menacing; it is the alien herd of which one can never become a part. Something in the brain waits cowering for the moment of hostility that, with atavistic certainty, it expects. Here among these people the knowledge of guilt added stature to the little paranoiac figure who begins to thread the labyrinth of my brain when I am enclosed by a crowd, hurrying down ill-lit passages and past doors ajar with sentient darkness, shouting out his terrors in a huge echoing empty whisper. I

was the rifler of the tomb; I felt the vengeance of its guardians about me.

On the first day that I had come to Castellammare I had stood in the harbor watching the fishing boats being manhandled into the sea. A customs policeman in a shabby white uniform had come up to me and begun to talk. He had a sad, frightened face with big eyes and mouth; he was a mainland Italian from the north. "There are many bad men here," he said, his eyes becoming round and disturbed, "*molto molto mafia qui. Tutto il monde sono mafiosi qui.*"

After that, when I sat at the café tables or walked in the packed streets, I wondered which among the swarming faces had even now decided that my trespass had gone too far. It was easier in the daytime, when one could study them from behind dark spectacles, safe in the realization that when one's stare was returned it was without certainty of the direction of one's own eyes. Now, after dark, I glanced unarmored and vulnerable from stare to stare; the curious, the hostile, and the blank. That man who stood alone at the opposite side of the street, as he had stood every evening since I came here—he could not be one of them; that would be bad melodrama. At this distance the effect was simply of menace, of general undifferentiated evil. A big, slouched, paunchy man in his middle forties, always motionless as a watchful lizard, yet always in full face. For me he had no profile, no third dimension from which he could be outflanked. Sometimes when I was walking I would pass him; he would be full face as I approached him and if I turned to look back he would be full face still; a black cap pulled low over black eyebrows as big as mustaches, a fleshy beaked nose, and between sagging jowls a mouth as thin and cruel as a reptile's.

I turned from him to the dense crowd in the center of the

street junction. A small car, hooting impotently, had come to a dead stop, unable to force a passage. The driver abandoned the horn and began to flick his headlights on and off. At the edge of the group a face, caught in the beam, turned to look. Through no camera angle nor makeup could any gangster of the cinema achieve that hungry ferocity, nor the *panache* of the movement with which his left hand took the cigarette from his lips and threw it away. He bent to speak to a fair-haired boy who stood with his arm through his, laughed, and looked back at the car. The crowd noise continued, no one made way. The car began to hoot again, and then to move; men shifted their feet to let it pass, but gauging its width to a millimeter and never appearing to step back or give way to a *force majeure*. This attitude of power and assurance—often mellowing to real dignity—is astonishing in a pawn island of poverty; until one remembers that every Sicilian is worshiped as a child.

From the street leading east came the double-noted trumpet of a bus, blown almost continuously with a second's interval here and there. Presently it crawled into view at the corner, people strolling in front and on either side of it, as though quite unaware of the sound. It, too, came to a dead halt before the crowd where the streets joined. It stood trumpeting without pause, the steady headlamps lighting the heads of the crowd. They all had something in common, these faces, the dark, the fair, the beautiful and the ugly, the young and the old; a sort of intense awareness, an opportunism—perhaps in the final analysis a rejection of inner discipline. Yet whatever the quality that is their common denominator it has a profound appeal. •

A hand fell on my shoulder. I looked up to see a face that had already become to me one of mystery. He was a French-

speaking Sicilian with connections in Tunisia, who had been outstandingly friendly and helpful, and had put himself utterly at my disposal. But I had been warned that I could not make a close friend of him and keep the good will of others, for he was a Communist, and the party was unpopular here. I had been surprised, after that, to hear him speak disparagingly of the Sicilian left wing. The peasant Communists, he had said—there are one thousand in Castellammare, out of a total population of eighteen thousand—were like the poor everywhere; what they wanted was not Communism but money, and those were two very different things. Perhaps, I thought, this was a tactful bluff, though no very obvious right-wing sympathies could have attached to my scarecrow Land Rover and travel-worn clothes. Puzzled, I had asked my informant if there could be a mistake in identity. The reply had been emphatic—Signor Tempio was an active *agent provocateur*, who was concerned in North African riots and smuggled arms into Tunis.

A little later I had been even more mystified. I had been walking down the street with Tempio when he had halted before a small dapper figure in khaki drill.

“Aha!” he said. “I have been most anxious for you to meet my good friend Colonel Zampino. He speaks English perfectly, and you will find him, I am sure, very pleasant indeed. Colonel, may I introduce the English writer, Signor Maxwell?”

We shook hands. The colonel was in early middle age, short and slight; his face was keen and intense, and his brown eyes, though they were friendly now, looked as though he had carried a chip on the shoulder for a long time. He reminded me of someone; my mind groped, then it came suddenly—he was like Goebbels.

With disconcerting suddenness Tempio had said: "You will forgive me if I leave you now, as I have much business to attend to. The colonel will be very pleased to give you a drink, and we shall all meet later." He flashed his charming smile and vanished into the crowd.

The colonel put his arm through mine and led me to the *gelateria* on the corner; he sat down, ordered coffee, and began at once to talk. Here for the first time was a Sicilian whose English was easier to understand than his native language. There were mispronunciations, but the form of the word was always clear. He talked politely and formally, asking me whether I liked Sicily, and Castellammare in particular, how long I was staying, and whether he could help me in any way. He looked shocked when I told him that I had been living in Montelepre. A silence fell, due to my recollection in the nick of time that it might be impolite to ask him what he did for a living. I remembered Pietro Pisciotta's reply to the same question—an arrogant and offended protestation that he did nothing but command other men to work. The colonel seemed clairvoyant. He rose to his feet, brushed away my attempts to pay for the coffee, and said:

"Now you will come with me to my house and meet my wife and see for yourself just how I live. It is a humble house; I am not rich any more—I shall tell you why—but I think you will find that I am a gentleman, and my wife would like to meet an English gentleman." He looked up at me searchingly as he walked beside me.

"You were in the army during the war?"

"Yes."

"I know some British regiments, perhaps I know yours? Which regiment?" For the first time in Sicily I had the sensation of being socially screened.

"Scots Guards."

"Ah," he exclaimed, his eyes sparkling with pleasure, "you were of the Guards? And your rank?"

"I was a major, Colonel."

"Ah, a major in the Guards! My wife will be pleased."

In his house I found an accentuation of the generous hospitality that I have found everywhere in Sicily; these were not peasant people, for they were widely read and traveled, but this Sicilian characteristic remained. Over the coffee the colonel said:

"Now you have told me so much of yourself you will think me rude if I do not tell you my story, and explain to you why it is that I am unable now to entertain you in a more beautiful house.

"I am not allowed to work any more because of my politics, so I must live on the little money that my *campagna* brings in."

This, I thought, was confirmation; both he and Tempio were ostracized in different ways for Communist activity.

"You see," he went on, straightening himself in his chair and placing both hands flat on the table, "I am a Fascist." He said it with so proud a ring that he seemed to gain inches in height; his eyes flashed, and his mouth took on the twist that had reminded me of Goebbels. "Yes, I am a Fascist; I have always been a Fascist, and I shall always be a Fascist. I am not like the rats who turned traitor and denied their party. When the English took me prisoner at Bologna I had already transferred from the Italian army and was in command of a German S.S. battalion. For a time I was in Germany. It is true that I could not approve of all that the Germans did, but they were our allies—and war is cruel, it cannot be made anything else. In Germany I washed with

soap made from human corpses—yes, I did that for I had no alternative; I had to keep myself clean.

“When I was taken prisoner I was brought before an English colonel—a gentleman, and of the aristocracy—and I took my pistol and held it out to him so, by the muzzle, so that he could take the butt. I said: ‘I surrender, I am your prisoner’; but he said: ‘You may keep your pistol, Colonel, and you are a brave man.’ Ah, he was a gentleman, your English colonel. And all standing behind him were Italian officers who made believe that they had never been Fascists and that they had been forced to fight. The English colonel, he said to me: ‘What are your politics?’ and I replied: ‘I am a Fascist.’ He smiled, and pointed to the other prisoners, who did not dare to look at me. He said: ‘You are sure that you are still a Fascist—you are not like these gentlemen, who realize that they made a mistake?’ I said: ‘They are not gentlemen, they are traitors and scum, and if I were not your prisoner I would shoot them now.’”

His voice was harsh with emotion. “The world is rotten—it is full of traitors who think only of prosperity and safety—never of the ideal, of the new world that the Duce promised.” Suddenly he relaxed and sat back in his chair. “So now you see why I am not allowed to work any more—it is because I am an honest man and no traitor.

“The English handed me over to the Americans, to an interrogator who spat in my face, and the Americans handed me over to the left-wing partisans, who condemned me to death. Then they commuted my sentence to life imprisonment. I was lucky; one Fascist officer they flayed alive and sent his skin to his mother. I had known an American general in peacetime; I managed to get an appeal to him and he got me out. Others were not so lucky. The feeling against the Fascists was hysterical—remember the way the ‘partisans’ dese-

crated the dead body of Mussolini, and the dead should always be respected—and the general considered it impossible for me to return to Palermo. I had a little property here, so I buried myself, with just enough money to live on. But I have never denied my political convictions, and I never shall, for I am an honest man and I value the truth.”

The anomaly of his friendship with Tempio struck me suddenly. I said: “I do not understand politics—they are not my *métier*. In any case, you have so many parties that it is too difficult for a foreigner to understand.” (I had studied past electioneering posters in Castellammare, and had seen twenty-five parties, each with an average of ten candidates.) “And all my friends here seem to have different views. What, for example, are Signor Tempio’s politics?”

A warm grin spread over the colonel’s face.

“We are the only two good *Fascisti* left in Sicily! Like me, he is Fascist to the center of the heart—there is no soft spot in the middle, no bargaining with our memories. We are like two good swords of honor left upon a battlefield, but as yet there is none to take them up from the ground and strike with them!”

What does it matter, I thought; I have been making language the scapegoat, I have been thinking that if I could speak more and understand more the truth would be easy enough to separate; now on a little subject like Tempio’s politics I have heard two incompatible stories in my own language. Yet I am utterly convinced that the colonel is as honest and direct as his speech. Perhaps truth, even fact, does not really exist here in Sicily or anywhere else. Each story is a soap bubble going up into the air; it bursts, and there is nothing to show that it was there.

So the second sword of honor, Signor Tempio, had become

a figure of mystery to me; just one more Sicilian puzzle that I should never solve.

Now he smiled down at me in the crowded street. "You will take some coffee with me?"

We settled ourselves at a table well out into the thoroughfare—far enough out, as most of them were, to make it virtually impossible for any wheeled traffic to pass.

"So you are leaving Sicily now? You are sorry to go?"

"Yes, very sorry. I would like to stay forever."

"But for your book—you have now all the information you want?"

"That would be very difficult, but I think I have enough material to write from."

"And the part about Giuliano. You know everything?—I mean you know enough?"

"I think so. I got a great deal of information in Montelepre, of course."

"Yes, of course. You know, for example, that Giuliano was not killed by the police, but by his cousin, Gaspare Pisciotta?"

"Yes, yes."

"And that he was killed in his sleep in Castelvetro?"

"Yes."

"And that afterward his body was dragged out of the house and Captain Perenze shot at the corpse?"

"Yes, I know all that."

The bus had still failed to force a passage through the crowd. For a moment the blare of its two-noted horn made talk impossible. I felt grateful; I was bored by this recapitulation. I watched the bus edge forward through the crowd, which closed behind it like a viscous fluid.

When the horn stopped I turned to Tempio again. He was sitting back in his chair with his fingertips together, looking

at me with an odd smile. He cocked his head a little on one side, and said suddenly:

"You know that none of that story is true?"

I had been raising my cup to my lips when he spoke; the coffee slopped onto my trousers. I put the cup down carefully and wiped my clothes. While I was doing so I began to feel a tremendous sense of resentment. Every stone in my laboriously constructed edifice had been quarried with pains and patience; now, when it was almost complete, someone was saying that the foundations were rotten.

"I don't quite understand," I said carefully. "What is not true?"

"Any of it. Giuliano was not killed in Castelvetrano, and he was not killed by Gaspare Pisciotta."

"But—you'll forgive my asking—how do you know that it's not true?"

He smiled with great good humor.

"Those who are at the heart of these matters know that it is not true. You must remember that in this *combine formidable* there are many people who have their own interests to guard. So there are many stories about everything—but only one truth."

Perhaps, I thought, perhaps. Another big colored bubble was about to float up into the air. I would know how to treat it.

"Will you tell me what really happened, then?" I asked.

"I do not know everything, of course, but I will tell you some things.

"*Ecoutez bien.* On the day Giuliano was dead in Castelvetrano I was in Palermo; I had some business there to attend to. The news reached the town in the early morning—all the day people talked of that and nothing else. I may say that even on that first morning no one believed that he had

been killed by the CFRB. Some said it had been the *mafia*, some that it had been a quarrel between him and one of his friends; Mannino or Passatempo—very few spoke of Pisciotta then. In the afternoon I came back to Castellammare. I sat down here—at this table, or perhaps it was that one—to drink some coffee. After a few minutes two *carabinieri* came by, a *maresciallo* and a private. We said good evening to one another, and I said: ‘So Giuliano has been killed at last, the immortal one. Perhaps the country here was his magic circle, and when he stepped outside it to Castelvetro the spell was broken.’ I mocked them a little, you understand, in a friendly way. And the *maresciallo* laughed and said to me: ‘An intelligent man like you should not believe all he hears, Signor Tempio; there are too many *blagueurs*, and for good reasons. There was no magic circle because he was not killed in Castelvetro but in his own territory, in Monreale. But anywhere like that too many people might become involved—people who wouldn’t want to be involved, so they put his body in a truck, and drove it to Castelvetro in the darkness.’”

He paused and blew out a huge cloud of smoke.

“Yes,” he went on, “that is how it happened. And they got to Castelvetro, just as you would expect, a little—a very little—before dawn. It is a valuable thing, darkness. They put the body in the courtyard, where Captain Perenze is waiting for them, and the captain fires half the magazine of his submachine gun in the air. Then he fires the other half into the body that had been dead for many hours. He knocks on a door, and calls for water, and—hey presto!—he has killed Giuliano. Then he stands like a hunter with his foot on the body of his kill.”

“But the blood,” I protested, “the blood that was all over the courtyard and his shirt?”

He made a contemptuous gesture. "The blood? It was the blood of a goat, or a chicken perhaps, or a cow. The truck driver stopped in Alcamo—you will have seen that the shops like that are open in the middle of the night here—and bought some blood which he said was for soup. Perhaps the blood cost more than it should"—he winked—"or perhaps the butcher was a *mafioso*. The old *mafiosi* hated Giuliano; he killed several of their chiefs. I have met those who have spoken with the truck driver."

Oh God, I thought, how can I write about Giuliano. There is no story to write. They are not soap bubbles, they are like peelings from an onion; layer after layer strips off but there is no hard core at the center; no kernel, only more layers, until they are spread in a litter all over the table. And they all stink, even if some of them make you cry.

Signor Tempio looked at me keenly. "All that is true," he said. "Is there anything else I can tell you? Remember that I do not know everything, only some things."

"Yes. Even if all that is true, how can you know that Pisciotta didn't kill him?"

He lit another cigarette and flipped the dead match across the street.

"I know from someone who would not be wrong."

No one could be wrong in Sicily.

I said with what I hoped was an ingratiating smile: "Would it be possible for me to know who that someone is?"

"That would not be discreet. But if you will give me your word not to put it in a book I will tell you, since you are now leaving Sicily."

He told me, *sotto voce*. Certainly, if it were true, it should be an unimpeachable source. I ordered some more coffee and chewed on the information, wondering at the same time how much I could find out.

At length he said: "You find that interesting?"

"Very interesting. Very interesting indeed. But then why was Pisciotta so anxious to claim that he had killed Giuliano?"

He spread his hands wide. "Undoubtedly he had helped those who wanted Giuliano dead. But had he helped them to kill Giuliano? Many people wanted him—Pisciotta—dead too. So perhaps he gave himself up, as a scapegoat, to be treated leniently and be safe in prison. And listen—how else could his confession have been published in the newspapers before his lawyer read it in court at Viterbo?"

I could think of many reasons; none of them seemed probable—or, by comparison with all the other *verità*, improbable.

I said: "Then who really killed Giuliano?"

He looked round him carefully. For a mad moment I thought he was going to give me a name, or point someone out. He looked at the gabbling throng at the crossroad twenty yards away, then at the strolling couples around us, then back at the tables between us and the *gelateria*. His eyes fastened on a short choleric-looking man standing in conversation with another a pace or two away. I knew him—he was a fish salesman. (He had spoken to me often of Giuliano—how he had come to buy fish for himself and his men, how he had always given a just price and been kind and polite to him and other poor people. He was a myth builder; he would not believe even that Giuliano had had anything to do with Portella della Ginestra—he had even claimed that all Giuliano's letters on the subject written to Viterbo had been fakes designed to inculcate him. "But," I had said, "all the accused at Viterbo gave evidence about Portella—no one denied it," and he had replied: "How do I know that? The newspapers said so; is that important? Even if I had been in court and

heard it, how should I know that those are the real men being tried? They might be a couple of dozen men hired by the Italian Government to impersonate the accused! You see, I believe nothing I am told." I saw the argument was not worth pursuit.)

Signor Tempio looked at him fixedly, then turned back to me.

"Perhaps him," he said. His eyes wandered again and came to rest on a swarthy good-humored-looking gorilla who was chewing the butt-end of a cigar at a table by himself. "Or perhaps him." "Or"—he pointed suddenly at a crafty beauty-conscious adolescent sipping *latte di mandorla* at the next table—"perhaps him." "Or perhaps"—he leaned forward and tapped himself on the chest—"perhaps me!" His face split in a huge grin.

I pocketed my pride to ask one more question.

"He is alive then?"

"Yes, yes, he is alive."

I ordered a bottle of anisette; I had not yet been drunk in Sicily. This seemed the moment.

I said good night and walked down the street and over the little narrow bridge to the Saracen castle, where behind the big iron gate my tent was pitched on a dusty terrace vertiginously overlooking the sea. There I could leave the tent unguarded, for though the gate was easy enough to scale no one would go near it after dark; the castle was haunted by the ghosts of hundreds whose heads had in the past decorated its walls on spikes. In the courtyard before the gate the lamp was lit; under its light two little girls were tormenting one of the monstrous black beetles which inhabited the ruins. Long afterward, when I had come back to England, I found four of them in my car, skewered through the back with long

slivers of bamboo, their legs contorted and stretched high in the air.

The little girls grinned, pulled a leg off the beetle, and asked for sweets. *Buona notte*, they chanted as I locked the iron gate behind me and began to fumble through the darkness of the ruins.

There were things to be negotiated in the dark. A flight of downward steps, the branch of an old vine at head level, the ambushing leaves of a prickly pear. One could time it; at the end of the terrace the little lighthouse winked, two seconds on in two flashes, ten seconds off. Two seconds for the steps—halt. Two seconds to get past the vine branch—halt. Then two seconds to the German gun emplacement, and from there one could see the silhouette of the tent.

I walked past it and sat down on the parapet. The stars were bright and glittering in a black sky; fifty feet below me the sea came surging in on a whispering lather of foam right to the red walls of the castle. All over the bay the scattered fishing boats with their probing acetylene searchlights made flare-patches of reflected light as green as a butterfly's wing, and the fishermen were calling to each other from boat to boat. They lay and leaned over the bows, peering down into the green and gold patches of lit sea through crude water-glasses.

If only something would happen, I thought—anything. If someone would come out from the shadowed ruins behind me, mounting through the dark and ruinous stairways to stand hunched in a broken archway, someone coming stealthily by night to tell me the truth about Giuliano. Why should anyone?

Nothing came from the ruins but a bat as big as a pigeon; he circled the terrace once or twice and disappeared. From

one of the boats a man hailed another: "*Turridu! Viene qui!*" No more interesting than an English fisherman calling "Joe." I finished the anisette. Far away across the plain I could see the lights of Montelepre on the breast of the mountains. It was as though someone apparently asleep watched me through half-closed eyes.

Suddenly it was all plain sailing; I would go to see Pisciotta in prison. Pietro had half-invited me to go—I would go, and of course Pisciotta would tell me what had really happened and why. *La verità*. Of course, the solution was as simple as that.

I went into the tent and lit a candle. There were ants all over the ground sheet, and when I lifted the sleeping bag an obscene-looking gecko scuttled from under it. I blew out the candle and slept; presently I dreamed that I was talking to Pisciotta through prison bars. He talked very earnestly, and I understood him perfectly because he spoke in English, but it worried me that I had no means of writing down what he was saying. However, I had already found out something new, for while his head was the same as all his photographs his body, though perfectly mobile, was a prickly pear bush. The hands rested between the iron bars of the grille like green ping-pong bats. He told me that Giuliano had committed suicide, and that he, Pisciotta, had handed the body to the police for the reward. "How could I shoot him with hands like this?" he asked, and a dun-colored rubber balloon inflated from his lips. They've gagged him, I thought, so that he can't tell me the truth; but he went on speaking just the same, the words hollow in the balloon. They wouldn't give him the reward, so he had to give himself up as the killer. "Then they gave me the reward and this balloon," he said, and suddenly became very small.

The Murder of Gaspare Pisciotta

I WENT back to Montelepre, and in forty-eight hours it was all arranged. Tomorrow was prison-visiting day; I would take my friend Francesco to Palermo in the Land Rover to see his brother, who was serving nine years for kidnaping. Outside the jail in Palermo I would meet Pietro Pisciotta, and he would take me in to see his brother. "It will be all right if you come with me," he said.

Early in the morning I set out with Francesco and two of his children; up out of Montelepre, past the Giuliano house where Maria was making tomato paste on a bamboo frame in her garden, past the cypresses of the cemetery, on through the dusty bare limestone mountains under the hot blue sky. I was in a mood of exaltation; at last I was going to see Gaspare Pisciotta in the flesh, and hear him speak.

We were stopped about a mile out of Montelepre. We swung round a right-hand turn, tires squealing, and there fifty yards off were three *carabinieri* barring the road. Francesco used two of his ten words of English: "F——g bastards!" He got more venom into them than any Englishman could do, though he did not know the meaning of either.

They came to my side of the car first. One of them unslung his submachine gun, the other two chattered over my pass-

port for a full five minutes. As they were unable to read the date of expiry, I had to tell them. What other personal papers did I have permitting me to be in Sicily? I said that a British citizen required nothing but his passport to be in Sicily. Then I thought we were wasting time; I produced an impressive-looking document in Italian from the consulate in Palermo, saying that I was a famous English author touring Sicily with a view to writing a book about the island. It had a big heraldic letterheading and a liberal tapestry of rubber stamps, but they were not visibly moved by it. The *maresciallo* handed it back to me.

"When does your authorization to tour in Sicily expire?"

I had never been able to cure myself of mentally translating "*girare*," to tour, as to gyrate; now I found myself doing so again. I replied that as far as I knew it never expired; I could gyrate in Sicily for the rest of my life. They kept my papers and moved to the other side of the car. Francesco gave them a wad of small documents held together by a rubber band; these took a further five minutes to examine. Then questions and answers began, too quickly for me to follow; it was as well that I was not called upon for confirmation. The story drawn out of Francesco by cross-questioning was that he had been a prisoner of war in England, and had worked upon land which I owned. Naturally, being in Sicily, I had come to visit my faithful farm-worker, and had now invited him to lunch in Palermo. Considering how much the *carabinieri* must have known about me already, it was a weak story, but it let us by for the moment.

That night the commander of *polizia* from Giardinello visited Francesco at his house and told him that if he were seen in my company again he and his family would be exiled to the Island of Ustica for subversive propaganda. "F——g bas-

tards!" spat Francesco. "If Giuliano were alive that man would die tomorrow!"

There are two jails in Palermo. Francesco's brother was in the older and smaller, approached by squalid alleyways barely wide enough for a car. From where I parked, in an irregular courtyard where a blacksmith was steel-shoeing wheels of carts, I could not see the entrance to the prison; only one ruinous wall of the same red stone as the Castellammare fort had painted on it in big letters: "*Il peccato chi lo fa paga prima qua e poi li.*" (The sinner pays first here and then hereafter.)

Francesco went into the prison and I waited. I waited a long time; I was impatient, because I was going to see Pisciotta. It was hot as an oven inside the car, and when I got out the metal parts were too hot to touch. An angel-faced child of about six climbed into the back and began to play with the tie-rope of the top. He was like a Nordic poster, pale bright hair and gray eyes and a shy smile that would have given him a Hollywood contract. "You're waiting for someone?" I asked. "Yes—my aunt." He pointed toward the prison. "What's your name?" "Mario." The angelic, timid smile. "Mario what?" "Mario Passatempo."

I remembered the photographs I had looked through in Rome, taken from a revolting angle, the body of Passatempo by the roadside—the naked bloated corpse of a big hairy man full of bullet wounds, his mouth hanging open, straw scattered on the macadam to clear up the blood. Perhaps this seraph was fruit of those obscene loins. I decided not to ask.

The jail where Gaspare Pisciotta was serving life sentence, the Ucciardone prison, is a very large building on the outskirts of the town. All that one can see of it is bleak and superficially hygienic. (There is a scale model in the Criminal

Museum at Rome.) Here, one feels, no one is concerned whether or not "*Il peccato paga poi li*"; it is here and now and matter-of-fact, its orderly spaciousness designed perhaps to reinforce a fictitious idea of incorruptible justice. Its walls flank a wide road, and at the gates there is a large car park, which on visiting days is usually empty, for it seems that for most of the prisoners' families crime has not paid. Pietro Pisciotta, I noticed, had parked his Fiat a couple of hundred yards up the street, so I drew the Land Rover up behind it. He got out of his own car and sat beside me. It was twenty past eleven, and he explained that we couldn't go into the prison until midday.

The next forty minutes were rough going. Pietro's chief interest was in taking me to see a French tart in the town the following evening, my chief interest was in blocking the invitation without losing his good will. Her charms were described graphically, his well-manicured hands moving in sweeping curves and lingering here and there. At last I was able to point to my watch (mine was of steel, his of gold) and show that it was twelve o'clock.

On his instructions I solemnly turned the car round and drove it back the two hundred yards to the prison car park outside the gates. Saying "*Aspett' momentino*," he climbed out and went into the big archway to the prison courtyard. Watching his uneasy swagger, I remembered suddenly that he, too, had served a long term behind those walls.

At the end of half an hour he had not reappeared. A trickle of visitors began to arrive, stopping to buy from an ice cream vendor and a boy who sold hot *pizzas* from a charcoal oven on a handcart. The visitors were mostly elderly people in dark clumsy clothes; their reassuring peasant faces might have come from any remote European village. Here and there

among them were more appropriate visitors to a Palermo prison, flashy clothes, loud voices, and young predatory faces; these walked in quickly and with talk and laughter, while their elders moved quiet and subdued as Englishmen enter a church. Little children with their parents clutched miniature earthenware pitchers from which they could drink at the prison taps. As time went by a few of the visitors began to come out, carrying objects made by the prisoners. Some were of brilliant and intricately-embroidered silk, some were painted models as delicate as carved ivory—shrines of the Saints, effigies of the Madonna, crucifixes, and bunches of flowers in little vases. All these were made from molded bread and saliva, and they owed their perfection to the absolute unimportance of time. A single flower petal, or the hand of a figure, may take weeks or months to satisfy its creator. This craft has been put to less innocent uses; a prisoner has effected a breakout armed only with a perfectly fashioned and painted bread model of a Colt .44 revolver.

By one o'clock Pietro had still not returned. I bought three *pizzas* for thirty lire each and then tried to assuage a raging thirst on ice creams. I was doing so when I looked up to meet a hard blue stare that had disquieted me once before, in Montelepre. Angelo Genovese, the youngest of the three brothers; the other two were still inside. It had a fantastic quality, that stare. An eye is a sphere; it cannot hold any expression by itself, only by how little or how much of it shows, or by the tensing or relaxing of the muscles around it can it change its significance. The pupil can contract or dilate, but the eye itself, the sphere, has no other way of altering expression to reflect mood. Yet Angelo Genovese, without moving a muscle of his face that I could see, said as much with his stare as you could get on to a ten-inch gramo-

phone record. In Montelepre it had come at me out of a crowd of faces like one car that has its headlights on in a car park. The eyes were pale in a dark-skinned face; perhaps that contributed. The stare was watchful and intensely curious, yet not inquisitive, for that has an implication too small and intimate. It was appraising, yet not speculative, for that would imply doubt, and doubt in its turn a weakness. Finally, it felt absolutely and entirely hostile, even when he spoke, as he did now, with a smile and an outstretched hand.

"Buon giorno, Signor. You remember me in Montelepre? Genovese, Angelo. I am here to visit my brothers. And you?"

I shook hands. *"I am waiting for Pietro Pisciotta."*

The eyes looked at me for a second or two longer.

"Capito. I shall go in now."

I was left, as before, feeling uneasy and uncomfortable. I began to armor myself against this by reducing Angelo to a world of fantasy and make-believe where he could do no harm. If some film company, I thought, had the wits to give him a contract—what a cinema camera could do with those eyes in close-up. I was still banishing Angelo to the world of the screen when Pietro came out.

"It is now impossible until two o'clock," he said, and showed me his watch. It was a quarter past one.

We sat in the car for a few minutes, making such desultory conversation as our language powers allowed. I had already learned that it was useless to ask questions about Gaspare; misunderstandings arose infallibly.

Finally, he asked if he could drive the car. We set off down the road with a certain amount of gear grinding but tremendous dash. There was a lot of arm work; what when I was a small child my grandfather's ex-coachman chauffeur used to describe as *"the Eyetalian style—very fast."* Half a mile

down the road we turned with a lot of tire noise and came scuttling back. "You see," he explained in a deprecatory way: "I don't know the car, but if I had half an hour's practice with her—" He flourished the mandarin nail of his right little finger.

I remembered that he said he had come from Montelepre to Palermo in twenty minutes, and asked him whether he had ever thought of taking up motor racing.

"I wanted to. In fact I entered a car for a race this year, but," he added moodily, "my mother wouldn't let me. She says it's too dangerous."

I nearly burst out laughing in his face. That superb Lady Macbeth and her fabulous brood from the mountains, the enigmatic self-styled assassin Gaspere, co-generalissimo of the strongest bandit army in the world, the Mona Lisa daughter—and Pietro, little Pietro who had been in prison, too, he wasn't allowed to drive in a motor race. I began to tell him about my Alfa Romeo in England; it was my first power move in Sicily.

Presently Francesco arrived from the other prison, and at two o'clock we all went in together. Inside the gates was a big paved quadrangle with a banana tree at the center, and in the nearest corner a hundred or more adults and a swarm of children were waiting. They lounged against the wall, stood chattering in little groups, smoked, and looked bored. The children ran about and played, scuffled, cried, filled their little ornamental pitchers from a wall tap and drank. When they felt like it they defecated on the ground. We joined the waiting group, and almost immediately Pietro melted away.

An enormous Negro shambled across the courtyard carrying a bucket of water. Francesco plucked my arm. "That," he said, "is a British Negro. He is in here for murder. He

was a seaman, and he knifed another one of the crew in the belly. Like this—" He illustrated. "And he only got three years for it; if he had been an Italian he would have got a life sentence. F——g bastards!"

It was a very Sicilian story; in fact, I discovered later, the Negro had been given ten years, of which he had served three. Where there is real injustice, further injustices are fancied.

I began to look round me and almost immediately met Angelo Genovese's stare. I nodded and was about to turn away when he came forward.

"These are my parents, Signor."

I shook hands with two elderly peasants; a shawled woman with a tired face and kind eyes, and a toothless, helpless-looking man of sixty-odd with a basket of fruit and pastries on his arm. Next to them stood Gaspare's mother; of all the parents only she and her sister Maria Lombardo seemed to fit dams for the fierce broods they had whelped. The others seemed like puzzled old spaniels nursing a litter of wolves.

It was incredibly hot; the time passed slowly. I shook hands with others and heard the familiar names; Gaglio, Russo, Cucinella, Terranova. Always close on hand was the malign blue stare. To rid myself of it I began to look at the details of the quadrangle.

A *cheval de frise* fringed all the walls, and the ventilation spaces above the doors, but odd spaces in the court and on the parapet were decorated with anomalous elegance; plants in big earthenware urns of classical design. The plants, however, were sisal cactus, whose deadly multiple spikes repeated exactly the pattern of the ironwork.

At various doors opening on the quadrangle stood shabby prison guards. They lounged and smoked, and every now and again came forward and shoved the waiting visitors further

into their corner. Through an open door in the distance I could see a row of small windows like ticket offices in a railway station; people would lean into these for long periods, as though arguing a destination or the price of a ticket. Only when the Genoveses were called and a few seconds later I saw Angelo's back view in the same position did I realize that behind the ticket windows were the prisoners and the buyers were their visiting relations.

Suddenly a guard from a far corner bawled out: "*Il Signor Inglese!*"

A buzz of conversation followed me as I pushed my way through the crowd. Up till now, perhaps, they had thought I was still waiting for Pietro and had chosen from curiosity to wait inside rather than in the car. It seemed a long way to the other side of the courtyard where the guard was waiting.

We went through a great wooden door and down miles of stone corridor. At each turning I expected to see a ticket window with Gaspare Pisciotta waiting behind it, but at last we finished up in front of another door, large, solid, and iron-studded. At this the guard knocked and immediately a voice from inside called: "*Entrate!*"

The door opened and I was confronted with the governor of the prison. He was sitting at a big flat writing table on a low dais at the far side of the room. He was a short alert-looking man in middle age, wavy gray hair as regular as a stage wig and sharp features that were not ill humored. He had evidently been holding some sort of consultation or routine orders, for a dozen or more other officials in uniform were standing round him or leaning against the walls. Near the door were several chairs. The governor indicated one of them and said: "Sit down, please!" I did so, feeling acutely uncom-

fortable. Then he looked up from his papers again and said politely:

"Well, sir, and in what way can I help you?"

I groped wildly. Either Pietro had said nothing, or he had asked and been refused. In either case the governor was evidently not going to let on that he knew the purpose of my visit. A lot of people looked at me very intently; there was a clammy silence. The governor came momentarily to my rescue. He came across the room and offered me a cigarette. I collected myself, and to gain time told him that I did not speak Italian well enough to do without an interpreter. Had he anyone who could speak English? I think I knew who would come.

There was a wait of perhaps three minutes; no one except the governor stopped looking at me.

Then the Negro came in. At close quarters he was superb. He stood not much less than six and a half feet, loose-limbed with a sort of animal majesty, and his head was faultless. He radiated the tolerance, the good will, of enormous natural power; his grin was the last word in the brotherhood of man. In a voice about half an octave deeper than Paul Robeson's he said:

"You English?"

I couldn't take my eyes off him; I just said yes.

"Ah'm English too. I come from Liverpool. Know Liverpool?"

"Not well."

He looked at me as if he were about to shake hands. I forgot that the prison officials didn't know that I knew that he was a murderer. A lot of muzzy ideas about British prestige swam over my mind, superimposed upon the dignified honey-for-tea image of the British Consul. I just bridged the gap

by pretending to relight my cigarette. When I looked up again I thought he looked as if something inside him had gone back into its kennel. I felt like dirt.

"Well, boy," he said, "what can I do for you? You in trouble?"

"I can't speak Italian well. Will you translate to the governor for me?"

"Sure. Go right ahead."

"Please say, to start with, that I apologize for causing him any trouble."

He translated. The reply came back quickly.

"Tell the English gentleman that as yet he has caused no trouble. I do not know what trouble he is going to cause."

He looked bright as a robin on a spade handle. I temporized.

"I am an English writer touring Sicily," I said, producing my well-worn credential from the consulate. He glanced at it and passed it back.

"He may tour" (gyrate, my mind said) "in any part of Sicily except the prisons. To gyrate here he requires a special permit from the Minister of Justice. What is the purpose of his visit to this prison?"

Here it was. I had nothing to lose. I couldn't make a bigger fool of myself than I had already. I said:

"I wished to see Gaspare Pisciotta." I was aware that I said it with a sort of schoolboy defiance.

The Negro's bass translation was scarcely noticed. My sentence had been too short; only the name stood out of it, and the enormity ripped through the air like someone noisily breaking wind in a drawing room. Everyone in the room said something at once; the sum total of the sound was response to outrage; laughter and quick angry speech.

"Tell *il Signor Inglese* that what he asks is absolutely impossible without a personal letter of permission from the Minister of Justice." Now the governor looked hostile and suspicious.

Like a child who with his first paintbox makes a mud-colored mess, I smudged in a few more colors at random, without any real hope of improving the picture.

"I came here with his brother Pietro—he said there might be a chance of arranging to see Gaspare with your permission."

"Tell *il Signor Inglese* that it does not matter to me if he came here with God and all His Saints and angels. He cannot see Gaspare Pisciotta without written permission from the Minister of Justice, and I should be surprised if that were granted. He should not even enter this prison without that permission."

I said my mistake was due to my ignorance; I apologized, shook hands, and went out. The Negro took my hand in both of his, and said: "So long, boy, better luck next time. See you in seven years."

Pietro was waiting by the Land Rover.

"Did you see Gaspare?" he asked.

"No. I saw the governor of the prison. It is impossible without written permission from the Minister of Justice."

He smacked his lips, got back into the car and lit a cigarette.

"Gaspare will be very disappointed. I gave him your cigarettes and he sent many thanks. He also sent you a message."

I steadied myself. Another bubble was going to go up into the air.

"It is about a book he has written." This was followed by

the characteristic gesture of spitting a tobacco fragment from the tip of the tongue. "While he has been in prison he has written his life story beginning at the age of seven. In it he tells everything—*la verità*."

La verità, the whole onion, all the skins and the hollow space in the middle. What is the literary symbol for nothing, I thought, is it just the word nothing, or a cipher; and if it was really nothing, would it still stink like an onion?

"Yes," he went on, "*la verità*. It is very long and very good. But for certain reasons it is difficult to find a publisher. He has been offered a million lire, but that is far too little. He would like to get three million lire."

Wouldn't we all, I thought. How could I explain to him the scrape and grind of authorship?

I said: "I think it is too late. If he had written this at the time when Giuliano died he might have been offered three million lire, or even more. But now it is all three years ago."

"But you will try? In England and America?"

I said I would. But what, I asked, balancing awkwardly on a tightrope, would Gaspare do with three million lire? He was serving a life sentence in prison.

Pietro looked at me pityingly—patronizingly. He hitched up the cloth of his trousers.

"That is what you are told—what you are meant to believe. Gaspare will be out in a few years—perhaps seven at the most, and perhaps much less. Then he will make a film of his life. A great film. But it is better that the book should be published first. You will help?"

"I will try." I liked Pietro:

He fingered his *porta fortuna* hanging from my belt.

"*Lei la porterà sempre?*"

"*Si, sempre, per ricordo.*"

We drove back to Montelepre. Before my book was completed, I thought, as I wound the car round the hairpin bends of the mountains, with Pietro's dun-colored Fiat a hundred yards ahead, I would come back prepared, and I would really see Gaspare; I would hear what he had to say, even if it were only more bubbles in the air.

Now no one will ever lean through one of those ticket windows and hear Gaspare speak in lies, truth, or prevarication. Murders are often undertaken for money, like marriages. "He married her for her money"; "he was murdered for his money." . . . Perhaps, like Giuliano, he was murdered for his manuscript. Perhaps he wasn't, perhaps there was no connection.

Rome, October, 1953

I have waited here only to see the death mask of Giuliano, which in Palermo I was told had been removed to the Criminal Museum at Rome. I arrived at Rome on Sunday evening, and went to the museum on Monday morning. It was closed; I learned that it is open only on Sunday mornings. If I were to describe the precise item I wished to see something could perhaps be arranged by personal application to the Minister of Justice.

I preferred to wait. I waited six days; I was outside the museum when it opened this morning. The attendant raised his eyebrows when I asked where the mask was. "The death-mask of Giuliano? It has just been sent back to police headquarters in Palermo. It was only temporarily for public exhibition. But if you were to travel to Palermo, with a letter from the Minister of Justice . . ."

I spent the morning walking through gallery after gallery of medieval instruments of torture, mainly taken from Castel-

angelo; small models of revolting verisimilitude demonstrate their correct function.

Toward the end of 1953 it became clear that not only had Pisciotta's story now been accepted, but also that some fresh and secret evidence had come to light, for the Procurator General of Palermo instituted fresh proceedings. Captain Perenze was to be accused formally of perjury and of fostering the interests of Giuliano against those of the law; three *carabinieri* under his command were to be tried for aiding and abetting him. Gaspare Pisciotta was to be charged with the murder of Giuliano.

In fact everything was back where it had been on that July morning of 1950, with a dead man, a lot of lies, and no established killer. If it had indeed been Perenze the killing would be ample justification for promotion and honor; if it had been Pisciotta they could do no more to him, for he had already received the maximum sentence of the law. Logically, the new trials could achieve only two objects: they could punish Captain Perenze and his subordinates, and they could give Pisciotta a chance to speak again.

It seems that when Pisciotta heard of all this he expressed to more than one person his intention of speaking the truth at last if he should again stand in court as witness or accused. The rumor went round that he was going to "come clean" regardless of whom he might damage, for on the face of it he now had nothing in the world to lose by doing so.

A couple of months passed, the tortoise-crawl paper chase of legal proceedings started in Palermo. Gaspare Pisciotta waited his time, no doubt rehearsing during the age-long prison days and nights the final denunciation he would make. The fact that he had something to say that he considered of

vital importance is unquestionable; the world may speculate on its probable veracity, for the revelation was never made.

Perenze's mind, too, must have been far from inactive during that Christmas and New Year of 1953-54, for there can have been no very obvious solutions to his problems. It remains to be seen how far the orders of a superior officer, which he stressed when a witness in the Viterbo trial, can mitigate a charge of perjury and complicity with the supposed quarry.*

On February 8, 1954, Signor Mario Scelba, the Minister for the Interior to whom Luca's Force for Suppression of Banditry in Sicily had alone been answerable, accepted the Premiership of Italy.

Gaspare Pisciotta shared a cell in the Palermo prison with his stepfather Salvatore, who had been given a sentence of thirty years. At about seven o'clock on the morning of the ninth the two got up, made their beds, and drank the coffee with which the prisoners are provided. For the past three days Gaspare had been taking a new medicine; and now, as was his custom, he put a small spoonful into his cup. Then he drank the coffee.

He gave one terrible cry as he fell: "They have poisoned me!—I am dying!" The quantity of strychnine that he had drunk left no time for anything else. It was an inhumane execution; he suffered far more than had the man he claimed to have killed.

He was already unconscious when he was rushed to the prison infirmary; by eight o'clock he was pronounced to be quite dead.

At first his mother Rosalia in Montelepre was told only that her son had been taken violently ill. She and Pietro drove

* Proceedings quashed 1954.

furiously to Palermo, but by the time they reached the prison Gaspare had died. When the news was broken to Rosalia she screamed out: "They have murdered him, my poor son!" (*Me lo hanno ammazzato, il povero figlio mio!*) though as yet there had been no hint that his death had not been from natural causes. Both son and mother had used the same word, "they," as though the enemy were known, the end feared and foreseen.

Three and a half years before, the monster headlines "Giuliano Has Paid at Last" had marched across the front-page newssheets; now, in death as in life, his lieutenant lay shadowed by the figure of the master, for his end was announced under the words, in towering type: "Giuliano Does Not Forgive."

Gaspare Pisciotta was interred in the little *congregazione* where Giuliano's body had lain for the first year after his death, before his white shrine had been built.

The autopsy showed death to have been due to 20 milligrams of strychnine, administered by means of the medicine. Following this discovery, the staff of the whole Ucciardone prison was changed, and on March 2 a prison official by the name of Ignazio Selvaggio was arrested on suspicion of complicity in the murder.

Despite these happenings, "they" were not deterred. On March 4 eight more of Giuliano's men in the Ucciardone prison were poisoned. This time, however, something seems to have gone wrong, for all but one made slow recoveries. Angelo Russo, serving thirty years, died as Pisciotta did. Some say that his death was an unregretted accident, that he got the poison intended for the Genovese brothers, others that he had

known as much as Pisciotta himself, who had meant to call him in evidence.

After this incident it is perhaps hardly surprising that there were hunger strikes in the Ucciardone prison. Seventy-four persons were still in custody awaiting further trial as followers or protectors of Giuliano.

On March 18 Rosalia Pisciotta wrote to the press. The opening words of her letter held promise of the revelation that her son Gaspare had been murdered to prevent, but she seems to have thought better of it as she proceeded. She wrote:

The time has come to speak plainly. Today certain things must no longer be slurred over; one must no longer rely upon the good faith of this man or of that. The little games are over that aim at protecting the reputations of those who continue to soak their hands in blood, committing murders even in jail. Prisoners should be inviolable, subject only to the laws of justice, not to the threats and violence of whoever, in contempt of the law, does as he pleases, laying his own filthy plans for lining his pocket and appearing as a gentleman in the eyes of the public.

Yes, it is true that my son Gaspare will never open his mouth again, and already many people think they are safe; but who knows—perhaps other things may speak. At any rate it is certain that I have not said my last word, and that I have further cards to play.

And now I turn to you, poor Ignazio Selvaggio—I exhort you to speak before it is too late for you too. They promised you money? They told you that you would soon be free, didn't they? Fool that you are, don't you realize that you have fallen into the trap! This is the game they play—the now familiar game. Speak—and perhaps your life will be saved; otherwise a sad end awaits you. Waste no time—for you too they are even now preparing their usual strychnine-flavored breakfast.

There is a curious choice of words at one point in that letter; she did not write “perhaps others may speak,” but

"perhaps other things may speak." It puzzled me until I remembered the existence of Gaspare's autobiography. I still do not know how it was removed from the prison, but somehow it certainly was.

Up till the time of writing (September, 1954), there has been no announcement of the arrest of Captain Perenze. Nor has there been any mention of his murder, suicide, or further promotion; perhaps this is one of the occasions on which old soldiers find it more convenient simply to fade away.

Last spring Signor Scelba, battered by the two cudgels of Pisciotta's murder and of the widely-published Montesi scandal, secured a vote of confidence by a giddily precarious margin. He said that the matter of Giuliano's death could not then be discussed in the Chamber of Deputies, but promised a full inquiry into all forms of graft in Italian administration. The result, if it is ever made public, should make fascinating reading.

Montelepre Diary 1954

Montelepre, August, 1954

For the first fortnight I thought that I should find out nothing more this year. I wanted passionately to learn the background to the poisoning of Gaspare Pisciotta, but in the complete barrier of silence that I met everywhere it had come to seem a waste of time. Last year Giuliano and Pisciotta could be discussed a little; the whole Giuliano episode, the brief glory, the terror and the tragedy, were over, historical. This year everything has seemed changed; the episode, after all, was not closed, and to know and to speak were dangerous.

I have an alphabetical guide book to Sicily written at the turn of the century. Sandwiched between *Mules* and *Museums* is the word *Murders*. "Murders in Sicily," the author prattles happily, "are not rare. But foreigners are never murdered, murder being reserved for vendettas and quarrels." It is a short and simple entry, and I find it comforting.

I went first to see Pietro Pisciotta. Over the door was a mourning sign, and above it the words: "Mourning for my adored son Gaspare." Pietro opened the door, dressed, as though he had been sleeping, in a singlet and trousers; he kissed me on both cheeks, found a chair for me, and almost immediately excused himself. When he returned a few minutes

later he was almost unrecognizable, clothed in the deepest but most elegant mourning. He wore a superbly-cut black suit, black tie, shoes and socks, and a white silk shirt; even his handkerchief had a broad black border.

When his mother came in I was shocked. One year has done the work of many; she looks an old and broken woman now. It is as though Gaspare's death had happened six days ago rather than six months. Her eyes were red and swollen with crying, her cheeks sunk and her shoulders stooped, the black hood of mourning pulled close round her face. I was painfully conscious that my hesitant Italian must fall short of any condolence appropriate to this abyss. I said what I could. Ready tears came again; she dabbed at them with a black-edged handkerchief. Even her voice was pitched in a lamentation keening for the dead.

"My grief, my grief," she moaned, "it is with me always, night and day. I cannot sleep, I cannot eat, because of my grief; I feel it always, always, here at my heart, here in my head, I never sleep."

I said gently that she always had Pietro, but she paid no heed.

"Oh, what a terrible misfortune, what an affliction." She bowed herself on her chair and sobbed again.

I put my hand on hers in a clumsy gesture of sympathy. "Gaspare is at peace now," I said.

She looked up at that, as though I had failed utterly to understand. "But *I*"—she put her hand to her heart—"I am not at peace. This grief, it is with me always, for all my life, because my son is dead." She hid her face again.

Pietro asked me whether my book was finished.

"Perhaps," I said, "I shall not ever be able to finish it."

"Why?"

"Because I do not know the truth. To write a book about all this without knowing the truth would be *ridicolo*."

"*Pericoloso?* Perhaps."

"I said *ridicolo*. Perhaps it would be dangerous, too, but the truth would be even more so, I expect."

Pietro pondered a moment; then he said: "What truth do you want to know?"

I could not carry on this conversation before the weeping mother. "We will talk about it some other time, I hope," I said.

After a few moments he led me to a well-furnished sitting room upstairs. "Now I will tell you something," he said. "You remember that I spoke last year of a book that my adored brother had written in prison. I have it—what is it worth? In it is all the truth—all."

Worth another death at least, I thought, perhaps several. That little packet of paper could kill like strychnine. Little men, perhaps far away, perhaps near by, would pass the bottles of poison furtively from hand to hand.

I explained to him the system of advance and royalty, but it was only an outright sale that interested him, or a computation of possible total.

"Your last book," he asked, "how much *total* did it make?"

I told him; he spread his hands in disdain, though the sum seemed large enough to me. "It is nothing," he said, "it is ridiculous. This book is unique."

The word rang a bell. "How many copies have you?" I asked.

"One only, in my brother's handwriting."

"Then get it micro-photographed in Palermo—as soon as possible—and when it's done put the negatives in the Bank

of Sicily." Privately, I thought that not even "they" could poison the whole staff of a bank.

He agreed that it would be a sensible idea. "And your book," he said with a hint of malicious humor, "you will not be able to finish the story?"

"I don't know who killed Gaspare, who was behind it; I don't even know the real reasons why Gaspare killed Giuliano."

"Listen." He leaned forward. "I know these things. I know everything. But I do not tell you, because it is all in my brother's book and I am trying to find a publisher who will pay enough for it. So I tell you nothing; though I know everything. *Capito?*"

I understood. To Pietro, Gaspare's manuscript seemed a legacy of priceless value; to me it appeared a heritage of death. To my brother Pietro I bequeath what killed me—my knowledge. I put something of this point of view to him.

"When it is published," he replied, "it is published forever. What can they do then?" He rubbed his hands together in a gesture of finality.

"Yes, but now, before it is published—aren't you afraid?"

He shrugged: "There are also my mother and my sister and my brother-in-law. They can't kill everybody."

Still, I thought, there must be cheaper ways of committing suicide than buying Gaspare's manuscript for fifteen million lire. Instead, I begged from him the big framed photograph of Gaspare on horseback that I had seen in another room the year before. He gave it to me. "And you understand why I cannot tell you anything?"

"Yes."

In the pass of Portella della Ginestra I talked to a man

leading a heavily-laden mule. I asked him who had killed Pisciotta. "I work," he said, "that is enough. Those who live live and those who die die. *Capito?*"

I understood that too. It didn't seem as though I was going to learn much. And then quite suddenly, for no reason that I could understand, the whole situation changed during the third week of my stay. In one way or another I have found out so much I did not know before that my whole manuscript must now be rewritten before it goes to the publishers. Type-scripts of whole police documents have come into my hands; records of conversation between prisoners, cross-questionings and confessions; and, more valuable even than any of this, all my friends except Pietro have begun to talk freely to me about the deaths of Giuliano and of Pisciotta.

The most startling single discovery is that nobody in Montelepre now believes that Gaspare Pisciotta killed Giuliano. I am told, though I cannot check it for myself, that even Giuliano's mother no longer holds Gaspare to be guilty. They believe that he was about to denounce the real killer, who, hearing of this, immediately arranged with powerful political allies the assassination in prison. The story is substantially the same as that told to me by Tempio last year in Castellammare, but with much greater and more credible detail. Above all, it explains the point that for a year has puzzled me most—the strange character of Giuliano's wounds. There had seemed no possible solution to the problem of those that had bled and those that had not, and to the baffling direction in which the blood had flowed.

Giuliano was not in Castelvetro but in the mountains between Montelepre and Monreale. He was certainly aware of treachery close to him; for a short time before his death he wrote in a letter of warning to his father that "our betrayers

are those who are nearest to us"; and in the same letter alluded to "very horrible things" of which he had learned. It would seem, however, that those could not have been intended to refer to Pisciotta, for a letter written to his mother only ten days before his death protests the utter fidelity of his cousin.

Giuliano's mother Maria and Rosalia Pisciotta had quarreled—a quarrel into which Maria later read Rosalia's knowledge of the impending betrayal—and Maria had spoken hard words to her sister. A few days later Giuliano wrote to her:

"Dear Mother, I beg you to respect Gaspare's mother [he used the affectionate nickname Aspanu, not the formal Gaspare] because we respect each other as brothers; what he is I am, and what I am he is. We have made a blood-pact, and we have sworn fidelity."

Whomever he had suspected, it had not been Gaspare Pisciotta.

He was assassinated, the story goes on, at least twenty-four hours, and probably as much as forty-eight hours, before his body was displayed in the Castelvetro courtyard. At first the killer hid the dead Giuliano in a house in Monreale—one may conjecture in whose—while he bargained for the reward; his attitude is said to have been an uncompromising "no money, no body." He refused a check, saying that not only would it identify him but that it would clearly be valueless by the time he could present it. He would take cash only, and in this extra delay the purchasers were faced with the problem of a man already dead many hours during the height of a Sicilian summer. The body, too, could clearly only be moved at night, and in the negotiations the whole of July 4 was wasted. Giuliano dead looked like being as troublesome as

Giuliano alive; the necessarily hurried nature of all the proceedings is the most probable reason for the imperfect staging at Castelvetro.

The truck carrying his body finally left for Castelvetro after dark on the night of July 4. While the haggling had been going on at Monreale the setting for his "death" had been chosen, and the requisite staff and other ranks of the CFRB had been sent ahead to Castelvetro.

The selection of the lawyer de Maria's courtyard for the final battle with the corpse was an obvious step, for there is no reason to doubt the story of his earlier connection with Giuliano, and he could be threatened into silence. Very likely he was arrested while trying to escape from the window, much as he described in his testimony at the Viterbo trial.

There remained the final problem of making Giuliano respond to this much-delayed second death as he should; a body full of bullet wounds that refused to bleed would be a serious embarrassment. Blood could be poured over it, certainly, as Tempio told me a year ago that it had been, but the more I studied the photographs the more puzzled I became; for while it was clear that much of the blood could not be Giuliano's, it was equally certain that some of these post-mortem wounds had bled quite copiously. The big stain (almost the "lake of blood" into which Italian journalists are so fond of making their victims sink) that had formed two long rivulets on the courtyard floor could have had no connection with the body, for the surface of the courtyard is loose, powdery, and as absorbent as blotting paper. That blood must have been deliberately poured from a moving container. But, once granted that it was necessary to pour blood about the place in order to give the impression of recent death, I have not

until now understood how the wounds themselves could have been made to bleed also.

Now I am told that, immediately after Perenze's mock battle with the corpse, blood was injected with a hypodermic syringe at the site of the wounds. For good measure more blood was scattered from a bottle over and around the body.

Certain other more unpleasant anatomical details are intelligible only in the light of his death at least a day earlier than it was announced, and finally the reason for the enormous quantity of ice with which his body was surrounded in the mortuary becomes clear. Whoever the real killer of Giuliano had been, the weight of evidence that the murder was done long before its official timing is overwhelming.

Montelepre is convinced that it was not Pisciotta. He knew of all this, they say, but with all the band dead or imprisoned except himself and Passatempo, he could not risk a denunciation. Instead, he wrote to the press protesting only his own utter innocence of Giuliano's death. When he was arrested "after five months of assiduous search" (Inspector Marzano's words at the trial) it seemed to him that if he claimed to be Giuliano's murderer he might well earn honor and pardon instead of a life sentence. He could pull the official story to rags, even if he could not commit himself to a detailed description of the assassination; and with Perenze discredited he might well be believed.

This is the story I have been told. To make it credible one has only to account for the documents given by Colonel Luca to Pisciotta, the passes, the promises of intervention, and the letter carrying the signature of the Minister of the Interior, Signor Scelba. There is a ready answer here too. Luca stated at the trial that Inspector Marzano had arrested Pisciotta to spite the CFRB; Marzano arrested him, they say now, not

because he was thought to be the real killer but because he was known to possess papers compromising to Luca and Scelba. Those papers, I am told, might have been given him not for the killing of Giuliano, but for keeping his mouth shut about the true circumstances of Giuliano's death.

The meetings between Pisciotta and the staff of the CFRB, acknowledged by all parties, also become insignificant when one remembers the impending proceedings against Perenze for collusion with Giuliano.

"Everyone knows now that Pisciotta was *innocentissimo*." That is the summing up from my friends in Montelepre.

"Who was the real killer?"

"The same man as killed Pisciotta—but the orders in each case came from high up. The arm of the *mafia* is much longer than that of the law. Perhaps your study of the subject will by now suggest a name?"

There can be no tidy end to this book, for there is no tidy end to the story itself. It remains a tale of treachery and betrayal; the tale of a few young men who were pampered, deceived, and finally murdered, for political ends that their education had not fitted them to understand. It is ironic to think that this is the island in which Plato had hoped to see realized his Republic.

During the few weeks of this my second visit to the district there has been a fresh outbreak of violence—a bank holdup with murder in Palermo, and armed highway robbery of cars in the country surrounding Partinico. This morning in Castellammare I received a letter from Montelepre: "I have been so very worried about you because you left Montelepre much too late last night; but now I believe you must have reached Castellammare in safety after all. . . ."

Tomorrow I am leaving the Island. I do not feel that I am leaving a race of criminals, but that as a stranger I have understood a very little the reactions of a bitterly ill-used people who resort to violence in the face of age-old injustice; that as a stranger, too, I shall not quickly forget the surviving dignity and generosity of friends whom I am proud to have made.

I could hazard the name of Giuliano's murderer. I have been obsessed with the problem for a long time now; I have lived with it, dreamed of it, waked with it. To me it is no longer important. Giuliano is dead, Pisciotta is dead; the petty agent of death is in either case insignificant. What is important is that Giuliano lived the myth contained in his epitaph, that his "proud inspiring phantoms" were great enough to destroy him. To many in Sicily he will remain the King asleep in the mountains; like Barbarossa, and like Charlemagne, on whom in childhood he had wished to model himself, he will return when his country calls him.

He has not waited, as did Charlemagne, for two centuries before passing into legend; he is already the hero of the ballads, songs, and painted scenes that are the traditional media of Sicilian folklore. It would not, perhaps, have displeased him greatly that his ballads are illustrated by the crudest type of American strip cartoon, for the stamp of the New World seemed always to him the seal of salvation; in those shoddy scribbles he has become one of the company of knights, sharing his proud defeat with Roland and Oliver at Roncesvalles.

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with all its excitement, adventure, tragedy—and mystery. He has produced a flash-light portrait of an ancient and exotic civilization in a moment of crisis, so that we see the extraordinary figure of Giuliano as the personification, the literal embodiment, of a fantastic and fascinating country and a people whose violent temperament, depth of feeling, worship of courage and hatred of law we feel as a living force. The extravagance, the melodrama, the myth are all true—and natural. Giuliano's childhood; his relationships with his family, his followers and the Mafia; the events that made him, for a time, a political figure of importance; his battles, kidnappings and literary ventures; his gallantry and furious pride; his death and the suspense and bafflement that followed it—all spring from the rocky and blood-soaked soil of Sicily. And thanks to the grace, skill and warmth of Gavin Maxwell's writing they make a memorable book.

THE AUTHOR

Gavin Maxwell is a grandson of Sir Herbert Maxwell, famous in his day as a naturalist, politician and man of letters. He grew up in Scotland, studied at Oxford and in 1939 joined the Scots Guards. He was with the Special Forces during the war and a few years ago published his first book, *Harpoon Venture*, of which the *New York Herald Tribune* said, "An excellent book," and the *New York Times*, "Maxwell writes with a comprehending eye for the racy beauty of the Hebrides and their profuse sea and bird life."

