

## Red Army Faction. Red Brigades, Angry Brigade. The Spectacle of Terror in Post War Europe

Gianfranco Sanguinetti, John Barker, Charity Scribner, Tom Wise



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This collection brings together a spread of writers, revolutionaries and reprobates to offer up a variety of critical perspectives on key European armed struggle groups from the 1970's.

Gianfranco Sanguinetti, founding member of the Italian Section of the Situationist International, writes in 'On Terrorism and the State', 1978: "Italian terrorism is the last enigma of the society of the spectacle and only those who reason dialectically can solve it.... Today, all those who speak of social revolution without denouncing and combating the terrorist counter-revolution have a corpse in their mouths."

Dave and Stuart Wise, (King Mob) look into the relationship between the Italian Communist Party, workers struggles post 68' and the roots of the Red Brigades, concluding of the latter: "they added to the substitutionism of Lenin, who replaced the proletariat by the Party, by replacing the Party with the armed struggle."

Prof. Charity Scribner (MIT), contributes "Buildings on Fire: The Situationist International and the Red Army Faction", exploring how and why the SI and the RAF's differing definitions of autonomy produced divergent modes of resistance: "Both the RAF and the Situationists drew from the arsenals of anarchism and Marxism. But whereas Debord critiqued the society of the spectacle...the leaders of the RAF became fodder for the media machine, leaving a legacy heavy on style, but light on political analysis."

Tom Vague contributes fast paced, potted histories of the RAF and Angry Brigade, both strong on time line energy, both useful entry level introductions to the respective narratives.

John Barker was sentenced to ten years at the Old Bailey in 1972 for his Angry Brigade activities ("they framed a guilty man"), and here he laments Tom Vague's "fetishisation of the Angry Brigade" and "how comfortable he is with 'the situationist angle' while saying nothing about the analysis and theory that came out of the Italian movement from Potere Operaio onwards, which was more important to us." Barker's piece, dated from the late 1990's, goes on to give a brief, but uniquely frank first person perspective on the AB's activities, viewed through the prism of realism, maturity, and continued belief in the revolutionary potential of mass working class action over the clandestine, substitutionist activities of the few - a fitting end to this book.



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