

The Bayfront Restaurant, Toronto

June 27th, 1978

with Amerigo Marras, Director, CEAC, 15 Duncan St.

A No anyway, in Milan we went to this place that was really incredible, it was self-operated, like the kids um supported the place themselves. It was apparently closing down because of drugs. You know the police were shutting them down. It was amazing, it was so big, cafes, restaurants and all that, exhibition space, performance space, huge place. Like for the closing night, you know, that's where we went. A lot of people were speaking, Umberto Ecco and people like that; and then there was this guy, Bifo he is called, he was some sort of radical, very well known figure in Italy. He wrote a book called, "Who Killed Mayakovsky", in a new style of narrative, you know. You should look at it actually stylistically very interesting. But anyway, on the same night there were lots of things happening and thousands of people, literally thousands of young people were there. I just couldn't believe how they dragged so many people in. You know, in Toronto that would never happen, by the thousands. We found the music a little bit corny, but the whole atmosphere, the whole idea of having so much infrastructure for taking care of themselves, I mean that was amazing. And then, yeah, this guy Bifo wassaying, the narrative in the book "Who Killed Mayakovsky" is something between narrative and historical novel, like amid page he stops and he fills the rest of the page with dots, dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, so narrative. Have you ordered? No it was sort of funny though, the kind of structure that he used in the book, like amid page he stops and fills the rest of the page with dots. And then, um, well he sort of writes like you were in the past and the present, like he talks about Mayakovsky being himself, or being alive and all these fictitious people. It's sort of interesting, the kind of structure that he uses. But what is interesting about him though, is that apparently he is very outspoken about the present situation in Italy, the younger generations the outre left. He disagrees strongly with the New Philosophers, because he feels that they are just muddling the whole argument of Soviet Camps and they are actually making a favour to capitalism and liberalism.

D Can you go over who the New Philosophers are again?

A Oh there are lots of them. The most known ones are, the most respected one is Glucksmann. The guy who came over, Bernard-Henri Levy who is actually the founder, the guy who gave the name to the whole movement and there are other people who are sort of marginally attached to it, like Benoit, Dolle. However the main people are Levy and Glucksmann in

Amerigo Marras, Director

particular. It takes the whole point of criticism of dissidence in the East. Well, my whole criticism to that is that it does exist also such a thing as dissidence in the West, probably is even more dramatic than has ever been reported. I mean it goes from the aboriginal Americans namely the North American Indians to people like us.

D Right, that's a good point, I think they are very valuable people.

A Oh yeah, there is a magazine actually called Dissenso; which is the only one that talks about the East and the West.

D These groups that you were saying were so strong, say in Italy, for example, that are dealing with radical ideas and publishing newspapers, how do you think that they survive.

A Well you have to figure out that first of all they have a bigger group behind, that supports say a centre, or a publishing activity and also you see there are a lot of people that are interested in that, so somehow there is money going back, but in particular perhaps, is the whole milieu seems to be much more active in coming out, in speaking out, through books, radio broadcasting, television broadcasting. It's a tradition.

D They are not stopped or anything, they are allowed to survive.

A Well right now actually, I think that there is a lot of paranoia, a lot of problems going on, but in comparison to what we have been saying for instance, I mean, there is much more of that, in many different forms and people are saying a lot that disturbs the system. There is a magazine called Male, meaning evil and it is a very sarcastic magazine, a nasty little magazine, you know, then there is a magazine called Dissenso, there is another one called Rosso.

D This is from Milan?

A Oh they are all over. Some magazines have different kinds of, well a single magazine might have, yeah, I was looking at it today, it might even have four or five different headquarters.

D That's a good idea.

A Yeah there are magazines about practically everything. You name it, there is a magazine.

D Yeah I noticed that when we were in Milan last year.

A Well now even more.

D Than last year?

A Yes, much more.

Amerigo Marras, Director

D A definite kind of..

A Oh yeah, an explosion. More magazines than you could ever buy.

D Well is that because of the terrorist activities.

A Oh no, I wouldn't call it, you see there is a difference between terrorism and guerilla, ok you call it terrorism probably, ok the terrorism is an effect on something that is happening but is also part of the same movement of dissent. That is the whole generation of young Europeans actually rebelling ok, rebelling against the people who have been in power for thirty years.

D And that's not necessarily terrorism, that's more like..

A No I would call that Guerilla, because guerilla gives the better idea of what is happening, in other words the act of rebellion.

D And a lot of young people and students are following this.

A Oh thousands, millions, with different directions... Oh I met by chance, actually they met me by chance this group from Bologna, you remember, the students, they recognized me somewhere, they said, 'Oh come here', I said oh me, 'Yeah you', hah, and then they said, 'Don't you remember', then I remembered.

D So do you think that the conditions that are happening, that are being protested against, exist here as well? Like the kind of bourgeois situations and corporate governments.

A Well there are reasons here to actually rebel, but the problem is that people, first of all haven't thought about it well enough, and there isn't any organization to pull it together, or there isn't any tradition to do so. So probably it will take a little bit more time before something like that would actually happen. Like to me, what ever is happening now or until now in the last couple of years in Italy can only be compared to another single situation in Europe, which is the Constructivist period which was an overflow of publications of events of an organization. It is happening now again in Italy and France. I couldn't think of anything else, like even in 1968 in Berkeley or in France was not the same thing because it was not an out-pouring of so much stuff, you know.

D Do you think that situations here will just keep on being the same until there is a kind of radical wave opposing them. Kind of a system devised.

A Well things are never really the same, I mean because we always have more or less information or different information so..

Amerigo Marras, Director

D I was just wondering if you were saying that there has to be a certain system.

A Oh probably, probably it will take a little while, I mean things do not really happen over-night. I think a situation that...