

GAETANO MOSCA

WHAT IS THE MAFIA



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BOOKS



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I. About the recent and now famous trial, which took place in Milan, ^{6a} lot has been done talked about and written about the mafia, an old topic that from time to time buys in Italy a new interest and new topicality. It is strange, meanwhile, that it should be noted as those who they talk and write about the mafia, all over Italy, but especially in the north, even today they rarely have a precise and exact concept of the thing, or things, which they glue word mafia want to indicate. Really it would have been for the Sicilians themselves to remove the misunderstandings and to establish the true value of the new word they introduce in the dictionary national. But for Sicilians that complex of social phenomena, of anomalies of their own region, which they express synthetically when they say *the mafia*, is so familiar, that they almost do not imagine that others may feel the need for a detailed explanation, for a comment that fixes and clarifies the various meanings of the expression that the natives of the island, mercè long custom, easily distinguish.

Now, therefore, having to first eliminate this little precision of our language spoken, it should be noted that Sicilians with the word mafia mean and want to mean two facts, two social phenomena which, although they have close relationships with each other, still are likely to be analyzed separately. The mafia, or rather the spirit of the mafia, is one way of feeling that, like pride, like pride, like arrogance, makes a certain course of action is necessary in a given order of social relations; and with the same word not a special partnership is indicated in Sicily, but the complex of many small ones associations that propose various purposes, which however are almost always such as to border on to the members of the association itself the penal code and sometimes they are truly criminal.

II. The feeling of mafia, or rather the spirit of mafia can be described in a few words: it consists in considering the use of justice as a sign of weakness or cowardice officer, to the police and the judiciary, for the reparation of wrongs or rather of certain wrongs received. So while it is generally admitted, even by those who act according to rules of the spirit of mafia, which simple theft, scam, latch and in general all crimes

5. From the *Journal of Economists* of July 1901, p. 236-62, transcription of a conference. For a bibliography on the mafia: GR Lanfranchini & B. Marin, *To know the mafia: A reasoned bibliography*, Turin Book Fair, Rizzoli, 1993.

6. See in G. Speroni, *The crime Notarbartolo*, Milan, Rusconi, 1993, and also the novel by S. Vassalli, *Il Cigno*, Turin, Einaudi, 1993.

in which the author helps himself only with cunning and deception and does not presume to exercise violence and to have greater strength and courage than the victim can be reported to the justice, this instead would be forbidden by a false feeling of honor, or personal dignity, when the crime has the character of an open and brazen imposition, of a wrong, which the offender intends to do specifically to a given individual, to whom he wants to make his own felt superiority and with which he does not care to be on good terms because he does not fear his enmity and resentment.

Offenses against family honor, beatings, personal violence, murder in brawl or lurking are all crimes for which the denunciation of justice is considered by the Mafia thing inconvenient and cowardly, which brings with it a kind of disqualification of chivalry. But they are not alone: also the cutting of the vines, the killing of the cattle, the *abigeato* 7 and even the grassing and the blackmail with kidnapping when they take on, and this happens very often, the character of personal revenge, of *scarring* done to a given individual, would not be strictly denounceable; and if they denounce it is *pro forma* , to put themselves in order, as they say in Sicily, with justice, but without in any way facilitating it in the discovery of the offender, who instead often knows each other very well and to whom you want to make the weight of your personal revenge felt.

And it is here to note that the character of revenge and offense towards a particular person is a true specialty of Sicilian delinquency. Offenses that elsewhere would have no motive staff, who are routinely perpetrated by professional offenders who choose indifferently for victims all the individuals who are within their reach, in Sicily they assume the semblance of a revenge for a real wrong or supposed wrong that the offender, or some of his relative or friend, would have suffered from the victim; well understood that often wrong mentioned is not the real cause but rather the pretext of the crime.

It is for this reason that the Italians of the continent and in general all foreigners who travel or even live in Sicily are almost always respected by evildoers, because, not having the stranger in general relations with the delinquent class, it is difficult than against him the pretext of a personal revenge may arise. It is for the same reason that the same Sicilians who live in the big cities of the island are rarely victims of premeditated crimes; since in the big cities everyone can freely choose the people with whom he wants to establish any kind of relationship and personal grudges are more difficult to ignite and they do not find food in daily contacts and frictions as happens in small towns.

Established the principle that for the prevention and repair of a large category of offenses personal a man who wants and knows how to *be respected* , is the technical phrase, he must not resort to

7. Cattle theft.

legal justice, the consequence is that it is lawful, indeed rightful, to deceive the authorities, or at least do not give them any light, when they want to meddle in private disputes disturbing its natural development with the application of the canons of the penal code. Then direct filiation of the spirit of the mafia is *silence*, that rule according to which it is an act dishonorable to give information to justice in those crimes that the mafia opinion believes it is they have to liquidate between the offending and offending party. And this rule, which applies even in disputes between third parties, it is the main cause that leads witnesses to criminal proceedings so often become liars or rather reticent. Because in Sicilian, even if it belongs to the most miserable and rough classes, the true lie is rare and he will hardly tell the false, but very frequently it will show that it does not know or does not remember the truth, which instead it knows and remember very well.

I have known people who are also educated from northern Italy who found something proud and sympathetic, or at least not completely ignoble, in this feeling or spirit of the Mafia for which each individual believes honorable to trust in his strength and courage for reject and prevent offenses. But sometimes it also happens that a way of thinking and to feel, whose motives are not all ignoble, produces harmful results on the whole, and in this case you must have the courage to condemn it vigorously and without extenuating circumstances. Or the Mafia spirit is an essentially *antisocial* feeling, which prevents it from being true order, a true justice can be established and effective among the populations that do they are widely and deeply affected. As we will see later, it also has last consequently the oppression of the weak by the strong and the tyranny that small minorities organized exercise to the detriment of individuals of the disorganized majority.

On the other hand, it could be more reasonably observed that the spirit of the Mafia is not special to the Sicily, which it has found and is found in many other parts of the world, everywhere justice social has shown or is unable to eradicate and completely replace the system of private revenge. The spirit of mafia in fact, very attenuated, still exists in central Italy and very attenuated in the northern one. If the word that expresses it was born in Sicily this it happened because there, thanks to circumstances that must perhaps be sought in the history of the century just dead or dying, the mafia is more rooted, more general and profound and has become more disciplined and organized. Thus it came about that the Jesuits gave their name to Jesuitism, which they neither invented nor are they alone to practice, but which they practiced and practiced assiduously and with diligent practice they perfected and coordinated the system. In many parts of central Italy the populace always believes that the policeman, the cop is a to be abject, and does not approve that one, who is wounded in a fight by a knife, reveals to the

justice of the name of the wounder. 8 So also there we have not only the mafia but his indivisible companion, silence. And if the workers of Turin are generally immune from this lue, in the very low funds of this city, between the barabbas and the gargagnans, 9 is still in force and in honor a perfectly analogous way of doing.

But even in the upper classes of most of Europe and all of Italy a very light spirit Mafia still exists. Among them it is admitted that for certain personal offenses the reparation should not be sought in legal justice but in a duel. Which is not the last analysis that a form, attenuated, regularized, surrounded by garenzies, of that tenzone bloody between two individuals often used by the people of Sicily and all of Italy southern and central to settle their lawsuits.

III. It is difficult to determine precisely how widespread the Mafia spirit is in Sicily. We should first fix the point where the Mafia truth begins and where it ends. Sure, examining one by one the Sicilians with very rigorous criteria, baptizing all mafia members those who in some special cases believe it preferable to put their hands on duty a arrogant or an offender instead of resorting to justice, one could assert that the mafia includes the majority of the inhabitants of the island. But if instead we resort to more criteria broader and more just, if we consider for mafia only he who for mafia spirit has committed a crime, or is at least capable of committing it, then the Sicilians who, as they say Northern Italians are *affiliated with the Mafia* , they become a scarce minority.

Wanting to make distinctions, according to the various social classes and the various regions of the island, I will say that the mafia spirit, in general, is stronger and more widespread in small towns and less so in the big cities. Although then the poorest farmers of the interior of the island are less affected than the more affluent and intelligent ones of the municipalities near Palermo and the rural villages annexed to this city. It is also natural that the Mafia spirit is more in general strong, whatever you say and write to the contrary, in the poor and rough classes rather than in those rich especially and in educated ones. However, it must be recognized that there is some large fraction of the poorest classes, made up of those who exercise certain certain professions, which it is almost completely immune; this occurs in particular in sailors and fishermen many on the island. And it is also true that some fractions of the ruling classes, certain rich and even noble families are heavily dipped in mafia; it is often a question of families of gabelotti, or large tenants of rustic funds, recently enriched, in which education and culture have lagged behind the wealth of one or two generations; or, if they are ancient and noble families, they are the ones that match the coat of arms with a good dose

8. See the chapters on central Italy in M. d'Azeglio, *My memories* .

9. Ruffiani.

of ignorance and rusticity, badly larvae by a kind of gentileria *sui generis* , and that, living mostly in secluded villages, where modern ideas and feelings have had so far little grip, they have assumed, let me pass on the metaphor, the moral color of the environment that is surrounds.

In the same family then, or rather in the same individual, the spirit of the mafia increases or it decreases and disappears depending on whether he is transported from one place to another where the environment is different. The Sicilian who goes to the continent in countries where mafia is considered as a low and vulgar thing, with admirable intuition and extraordinary ease of adapting to a new environment that sets it apart, it immediately divests itself of every spirit of the Mafia. The same does, in minor degree, the Sicilian who from a small mafia center settles in Palermo, a Messina, in Catania. Vice versa in certain small rural centers, where resorting to certain occurrences regular justice is not very effective, perhaps also because it is little used, and not it helps to *respect* the individual who uses it, even the Sicilian of the big cities, who there must dwell for a long time, acquire a strong mafia tint and even the can take it natives of upper Italy who set their domicile in these countries.

However, I could see that the natives of rural municipalities and villages more deeply and traditionally rich in Mafia spirit, if for a long time they live in large cities of the island or on the Italian continent and if they acquire a solid and broad intellectual culture, they undergo a real psychological transformation, by virtue of which they feel an invincible one repugnance to return permanently to the paternal place. Following the psychological transformation that I mentioned, they have such respect for legality and they feel such disgust for them private violence not to be inferior in this regard to the most perfect gentlemen of the high Italy; what, if other arguments were missing, would suffice to prove that the mafia is not an effect inheritance or race, but the environment in which we live.

It often happens that an Italian from northern Italy asks confidentially to a friend of his Sicilian if his or her fellow countryman is a mobster and hears yes. There The answer is very often given in good faith, but we must always welcome it with benefit inventory, and you need at least other more precise questions if you want information really conclusive. *For a Sicilian, any of his fellow countrymen who is one is a mafia a little more than he:* who therefore admits, *even theoretically* , a somewhat wider use action and private force in the event that it is necessary to prevent or reject possible offenses. Therefore the crime of mafia can easily be applied also to a person who it is not affiliated with any criminal association, which it has never committed and which it would be perhaps unable to commit, a real crime.

The immortal Manzoni, the greatest sociologist of modern Italy, and great sociologist because deep psychologist, describing Renzo says that he had "a certain air of *braveria then common to even the quietest men*". Now, it would be a real exaggeration compare today's Sicily to Lombardy at the time of the *Promessi Sposi*, but certainly the traces from that era, they can be found more lively and lasting on the island than in upper Italy. A certain air of *braveria*, or, if we so wish, a certain perfume of the Mafia, is therefore still very much today more widespread in Sicily, even in honest men, rather than in Piedmont, in Veneto, in Lombardy.

Especially then, and this is the real specialty of the region, while the said perfume in the high Italy must be sought only in the lowest social strata, on the island it can still be done sporadically found, and very intense, even in high-class individuals; which some once they occupy high positions, which confer a lot of authority and which suggest that, who invested in it, enjoy the esteem of your fellow citizens.

IV. Perhaps the greatest damage of the spread of the mafia spirit, in all social classes but especially in the high ones, it is in the fact that it is very difficult to be affected by it regulate according to its precepts without entering, more or less, in relationships and relationships with those very low levels of society in which professional offenders are recruited. Where indeed the Custom requires in some way not to resort to public force but to private force the prevention and repression of wrongs, offenses and crimes is easily understood by many woe must suffer the isolated man, who does not know or cannot rebel against this custom, and who is not healed by friendships and numerous adhesions among the people most capable of wrongs, offenses and offenses.

So in those parts of Sicily where mafia is more popular, a rich man in sight, of high status, who wants to take an active part in the life of the country and become, as they say, a character easily induces to cultivate relationships of all kinds, which after all, they are nourished by a series of protections and favors with which the high-level residence in return he obtains the *respect* of the one who is below. Respect that practically unfolds not only with bows and scappellate but also, and mainly, with doing no harm e the slightest offense to the respected person, his family, his substance and even his own friends, by preventing others from making them, and by placing them unconditionally in yours aspirations for elected offices.

The spirit of the mafia also means that some high-places, mayors, aldermen, councilors provincials, sometimes deputies, do not hear, or feel very attenuated, that repulsion that the true gentleman feels towards the troublemaker or the individual capable of

commit crimes. So the high-ranking mobster easily induces to intercede near the authority on behalf of *his* low-standing *friend*, and he does not abandon her to her fate if not when the latter has made so many of them that it is impossible to avoid a trip in his homelands.

The friendship then between the rich man with a mafia spirit and the troublemaking poor man understands of course infinite varieties, which depend on the circumstances and also on the different character of the individuals among whom it unfolds. There are rich people who in their relationship with the low rogues they maintain a certain reserve, never admit to their service or intimacy in true criminals and their adherence to the low mafia only serve their purpose, I will say so, defensive; and there are also those who take a wretched taste to stay in touch with the people of bad business, they surround themselves with murderers and veterans of the galleys and arrive even to instigate them because they harm the substances and people of their enemies. And among the poor mafiosi, alongside those who have committed, or are always ready to commit, true crimes, there are those who only show themselves to be resolute men, people of the liver, who on occasion he would be able to react even with the blood, which in short explain that minimum of mafia which is indispensable for them to be taken into account and to maintain those relationships based on mutual respect with the gentlemen, who are so useful to the poor.

Justice wants it to be said how, even in the most morally ill parts of Sicily, there is a number of poor and rich who, without rebelling openly and systematically against the custom of the country, tolerate it and reluctantly suffer, never commit one arrogance and much less a crime, nor do they pose as men capable of committing them. These individuals, if poor, easily become victims of the harassment of comrades and gods the whims of the bosses, if wealthy, must renounce many legitimate ambitions and their substances are routinely targeted by evildoers.

However, he assures me that, however much this may damage their finances, the damage pecuniary they receive is almost always less than what they would get from the reports too intimate and friendly with the wrongdoers themselves.

This means that those wealthy high-ranking who these relationships preferably cultivate do not they do it out of indispensable necessity, as they do not fail to affirm at all times authorities and their friends and acquaintances of Palermo and the other less impregnated cities of the island of mafia, but rather out of ambition, out of vanity, out of desire to excel in that special environment of the mafia centers to which they have perfectly adapted.

V. But the ugliest consequence of the spirit of the Mafia lies in the fact that it is at the mercy of it a large number of small associations of criminals,

which together constitutes that other Sicilian specialty which I mentioned in the beginning of the conference and that the Sicilians collectively indicate also with the very wide and comprehensive name mafia.

But in the very rich dialect of the island there is no lack of a special expression to name these associations. In fact, each of them is called a *mafia gang*, or certainly a *gang*. And when it is said that a certain *is from the gang* it means that he belongs to one of them little honorable partnerships.

And here let me point out that a pale image of the Sicilian phenomenon also found in other regions of Italy. The same word *cosca*, to indicate an association of people devoted to bad life and ill-doing, with a very slight variant, is not unknown to upper Italy. In Turin, in fact, sometimes the barabbas organized themselves into groups or companies that did they are called *coche*, and there was the *coca* of Porta Palazzo, the *coca* of Vanchiglia,¹⁰ as unfortunately in Sicily there is still the *gang* of Altavilla and that of Villabate. But the mafia gang it has a firmness of structure, a force of action and above all an infinitely vitality higher than those of the *Coca Barabesca*.

This greater vitality, the same continuous birth and rebirth of the *gangs* is due first of all, as I have just mentioned, to the spirit of the mafia, a true culture soup in which all malevolent vibes, all delinquent partnerships can live and thrive. In fact, where there is a widespread opinion that denouncing the perpetrators of certain crimes to justice is a matter as a weak man, it is natural that professional offenders, the scum of social slums, do they associate to take advantage of the awe and terror that an organized minority knows to act with calculation and together, inspires the individuals of the disorganized majority, whom they dare not invoke the protection of the legal force.

And, to appreciate well the effectiveness of the mafia feeling, one must keep in mind that it is not only fear properly so called, the fear of material damage, what makes i reticent damaged and the texts and prevents them from openly accusing members of a *gang* when they commit some crime; but to fear is added *silence*, the repugnance to show oneself openly weaker than the offender by resorting to justice for satisfaction of the offense received. If nothing else this kind of moral fear serves very well to larva and to justify material fear in the eyes of the individual who is affected and his friends.

And it also happens sometimes that physical fear serves to excuse moral fear in front of her people of Upper Italy, for whom the spirit of the Mafia is incomprehensible and completely impossible unjustifiable.

10. Neighborhoods of Turin.

Nor is that all: there is another psychological element that contributes to the reticence of many witnesses, an element of lower origin but which is not the least effective. The Sicilian, whatever one can believe otherwise, it is largely equipped with a moral sense; except that it makes sense morality that differs somewhat from that of the northern Italians.

His morality, for example, is expressed preferably in relationships with private individuals rather than in scrupulously fulfilling the public duties of the citizen. Therefore on the island also a gentleman, regardless of any spirit of mafia, placed at the crossroads to deny the truth justice or embarrassing a friend or acquaintance, who has revealed a serious fact trusting in his discretion, and therefore to show himself towards them lightly and faithful, he will almost always solve the moral question to the detriment of justice.

Returning to the Mafia gang, it is a very simple but firm organism that it does not have nothing fixed and bureaucratic. There are no presidents or secretaries elected in one form any, nor membership roles. The partnership is directed and exploited almost always by three, four or five people most authoritative for age, intelligence, social position, tests done, convictions reported and above all for the experience and the greater expertise in the difficult art of commit crime with impunity. If one of these members excels over the others for all of them these qualities actually become the supreme leader.

The social status of the influential members of the gangs is somewhat higher than that of the poorer part of the Sicilian population, but it rarely happens that it reaches the level of middle class. They are almost always small owners, or small tenants of rustic land, *curatoli* or *castaldi*, matchmakers or small traders of citrus fruits, livestock and other products agricultural.

Under the guidance of these, a number of young men act, who almost never go beyond the dozen, of which some daring, quick, ambitious characters set out on the crime route with the hope of making a career, driven by an admiration, not without envy, towards the elders of delinquency, who see surrounded by prestige and come to a position social that would not have achieved honest ways. While others are instead of the poor in spirit, half-witted, who have no criminal future, and who need, mafia education and fear make blind tools in the hands of leaders.

And they are perhaps the most formidable instruments, because the suspicion of victims and authority; while, subjected to a kind of hypnotization fearful of experienced criminals, they become capable of very serious crimes. They are not uncommon in fact, the examples of microcephaluses, which everyone mocked, became terrible killers capable of killing after ambushing several people with a shot in the back and killing them without compensation, for the mere force of the threatening injunctions, corroborated by some solemn slap, which were made to them by men in fame of bloodthirsty. And fear is like that strong and rooted in hired killers of this kind which, even in prison, very rarely happens that

reveal the names of the moral perpetrators of the crimes they have committed. Only when, as happened in the case of poor Notarbartolo,¹¹ the crime to be committed has a very special importance and presents particular difficulties, which require for its performing exceptional abilities and cold-bloodedness, and you also want to cover it with a mystery absolute keeping silent even with the younger members of the gang, only then a mobster skilled allows you to be a material performer. But in this case he takes care to procure himself first *an alibi* and other means suitable for misleading justice or at least saving oneself, neither does one put oneself at stake if it has no complicity and therefore high-ranking protections.

The mafia gangs are scattered around the rural municipalities of the island and the villages around Palermo, and each municipality or hamlet contains one, at most two. In this case I am frequent professional rivalries, which give rise to a series of mutual assassins, mercé shot mostly pulled behind and treacherously. But ordinarily every gang has its own territory to be exploited and does not invade that of the nearby gangs, with which it lives in good condition terms based on mutual respect. On some rare occasions two or more neighboring gangs or distant come together to commit a crime; this two-cosche cooperation is for very frequent need when the crime committed is the abigeato or theft of cattle.

There are also very few examples of gangs spread to several municipalities on the island and which have reached the number of eighty or one hundred and more affiliates. Indeed, I believe that from the unification of Italy to today we can only mention four or five criminal partnerships that have had one in Sicily so extraordinary and monstrous development.

Finally, it should be noted that in many municipalities of the island, the mafia gangs have always been unknown, in many others they were short-lived and difficult and were easily eradicated. In eastern provinces, where these fortunate municipalities abound and are in fact a strong majority, delinquency in its violent forms is of course much rarer.

YOU. The aims of the mafia gangs are different, but in their immense varieties can be reduced to one: obtain the maximum prestige and the maximum gain illicit to pros of society or its most influential members, using minimal effort criminal and therefore facing as little as possible the investigations and the rigors of justice. They for this they invented a true crime technique, for which they no longer shy away from the crime atrocious, from assassination by ambush, when this is necessary to save the association, for

11. See note 6.

keep the patronage of some very influential and unprejudiced protector, or to perform a revenge which they consider indispensable. But in ordinary cases not only do they indulge in violating the penal code as little as possible, but they also try to keep those forms, those appearances that do not offend too much self-love and also the spirit of the Mafia victims of their cracklings. It therefore acts in a way that the victim herself, who actually pays a tribute to the gang, it may flatter itself that it is rather a graceful gift or the equivalent of a service rendered rather than an extortion taken by violence.

Here is for example one of the many typical plays that are recited by the gangs mafia.

In one of the rural municipalities that crown Palermo, or even in a rural township aggregated to the city, a gentleman buys or inherits a land cultivated with citrus fruits, vines, a orchard. Already, during the negotiations or in the first visits to the fund, he noticed two or three figures or the place which, with respect, does not deprive of a certain sustain, of a certain I don't know what, what it is clear to fly, they made him deep scappellate and sought the opportunity to exchange a few words with him.

A few days that he goes to visit his property and take care of his interests, one of those figures, generally the most advanced in age or the most authoritative, he goes to visit him, wishes you welcome and offers him for all kinds of services. Talking does not fail to do note the advantages and conveniences of the site: the air is good, the walks very pleasant, the inhabitants courteous and hospitable; it is true that someone says badly but they are slanders, there are some bad boy a little bizarre but he understands the reason and always listens to people's advice authoritatives who know how to make it right. A gentleman like the one you talk to, who he knows the way the world lives and he knows how to respect everyone, he is always respected in his turn, he can live very safe, coming and going day and night, his property will be guarded, his lady, your children will be able to turn freely everywhere, without fear that anyone will touch them hair or direct them a phrase, a gesture, that are not considerate.

If the gentleman visited is not too sustained and returns the courtesies and performances, he, who, moreover, is treated well by all, immediately notes a particular deference on the part of the seven ods eight who pass through the convicts of the country.

But the day comes when he has to sell his citrus fruit, or rent his fund, or he has need a guardian who will keep the products, and then the character presents himself usually to offer him the deal or the man that's right for him. Of course it is always a good thing business, or a very trustworthy and very attentive person in the place he should occupy. But, if the sale or rental of the land are closed by the channel of the insufficient intermediary, it is possible

be sure that the price of the goods sold or the amount of the established fee are always of four or five percent lower than they should be under real conditions of the market; and, if you conclude the lease contract instead, you can be equally sure that the new guardian will keep the bottom products from the children very well rural thieves, but will allow the comrade who got him the place and his friends of the thigh take a small tithe on the products themselves.

If the new owner has made the claim from the first moment or if, after the first honest and happy welcome, does not think it appropriate to act its business according to the suggestions of the unofficial man who came to offer him his services, then these and his associates did not they even take their leave, but their friendship grows cold.

Simultaneously with this cooling many small ones begin to occur drawbacks. One fine morning for example a few dozen trees or vines can be found cut yourself; at night the bottom is visited by small vandals, by thieves that damage them crops, spoil fruit, export whole bags of lemons. If friendship breaks out of everything and it changes to open enmity then serious cases can arrive: an entire vineyard can be cut, an insolent letter of latch, anonymous well understood, is delivered by post or made to find in front of the house door, a rifle ball can whistle a few meters from the head of the truly loyal guardian, who seriously wants to prevent theft and devastation night.

In extreme cases, such as the murder of the faithful guardian or the blackmail with kidnapping in person of the owner of the fund or of some member of his family, now you do not arrive that very rarely. Since these are noisy crimes, which make newspapers speak and attract the attention of justice, which then uses to arrest the most influential members of the local gang and, although he often has to end up putting them out due to insufficient evidence, he keeps them meanwhile long months in prison and also someone warns, some others send to forced domicile. Of course the elders of the gangs do not like such procedures much prefer to enjoy dear freedom and bread honestly in peace dishonestly earned.

And this love of quiet living is so strong in the heads of the mafia gangs that they they also willingly practice forgiveness of offenses, and are almost always ready to reapply with those who, after showing off contempt or carelessness for their intrusion officiosa, they seek their friendship.

So, for example, if the owner who has suffered some theft in the garden, who has had cut a few dozen screws, or received a latch letter, send for that

this comrade I spoke of, gives him cordial welcome, asks him why you are not left to see more, and then informs you confidentially of the damage or offense received and he asks for his authoritative opinion on how to regulate himself, then everything settles down immediately. Well understood that the *man* there and there knows nothing, the thing is new to him, indeed it brings him wonder, but will investigate, see and then report; in the country he is respected and has the necessary relationships for ascertain everything.

In fact, after a few days he comes back with hilarious wax saying he has known where he came from *hand* that offended the lord. They were bad boys, some urchins he has already put in place, i which are most repentant of the wrong done to the lord and humbly apologize to him; can he also guarantee in the most absolute way that the wrong done will not be repeated. If the lord then believes, if you want to show your generosity, sometimes, you know, it is necessity, hunger that drives you to fail, now that those boys are ready to throw themselves at his feet, can give them something, a few hundred lire as a tip to keep them a little cheerful; for youth he wants his outburst and they will thus bless his magnanimity.

The hundred lire is paid out, the gentleman thanks in addition the man of skill and of the friendship shown, he begs him not to make his visits rare and precious, and the man does he is happier, more obsequious than ever and protesting that his friendship with the lord is not it is at any time cool.

In the interior of the island the mafia gangs are a little rougher, but basically they proceed with similar ways. Given the nature of the places and crops there the cutting of the vines and trees is hardly used as a means of imposing on recalcitrants, but vice versa there are cases of fire in the crops, sometimes of woods and olive groves, and it often happens that some big head cattle, which, due to the prevalent system of wild pasture, spend the night in the countryside, are to be found the morning slaughtered. A more useful crime and also frequently perpetrated by the internal gangs it is the abigeato or theft of cattle; and in this case it happens, as I mentioned, that two so that distant countries, often from different provinces, enter into close relationships, because one o'clock must try to sell cattle to affiliated butchers, and sometimes to military suppliers stolen from the other.

Also in the interior of the island, one of the quickest and most used means of getting cattle back stolen is to address the chief of the gang of the place where the theft was consumed. These al usually pretends to be new to the thing, but promises to inquire, to talk about it to friends, and, after three or four days, if the animals have not already been slaughtered, they find themselves abandoned, wandering in the territory of some common neighbor and are traced back to the rightful owner, who naturally he does not fail to pour a gift into the hands of his companion, who has dealt with the deal

equivalent to the fourth or fifth of the value of the theft suffered. And the comrade pockets the gift protesting that it will serve to compensate for the lost time of the friends whom he has made, and also to tip, to offer a plate of macaroni and a glass of wine *picciotti* who had committed the lightness of taking possession of the oxen of such a gentleman respectable, but who later proved to be repentant and repaired the badly done.

In the few municipalities of the island where the *manutengoli* remains a brigandage surplus preferably they are recruited from the local gangs, and the brigands' enterprises are often from them directed against those who are reputed to be enemies. Kidnappings with release through ransom paid by the family, crimes difficult to organize because they require many accomplices and therefore relatively rare, they are almost always the result of the collaboration of one gang with several brigands, to whom of course the part of material executors of the offense.

VII. The police know one by one I will not say all the affiliates of the gangs, but certainly all characters who in these partnerships have some importance and pose as leaders. And there knows not already for the reports of the professional spies, who are almost always unreliable, but thanks to the confidences of honest people of various classes who are very easy to obtain. It is enough that a public security delegate, a marshal or a brigadier of the *carabinieri* know in a given location to obtain personal relationships, which they know attract public trust, showing reserved people who don't compromise friends, so that they can find immediately who gives them the truthful biography of the most prominent mobsters, minutely detailing what the real origin of their earnings is. In these investigations are very helped by criminal records, because the heads of the gangs, at the beginning of their career, they have always undergone some condemnations or several acquittals for insufficient clues. Of course, investigations are getting easier for Sicilian officials, who they recognize the various degree of mafia and the existence of a gang can be said by the sense of smell, rather than by those native to northern Italy, who sometimes choose their mentors from among the leaders of the *cosca* itself.

But I also met officials from upper Italy who, after a long stay in Sicily, they had purchased that special sense of smell that I mentioned.

The prefects and the sub-prefects then, if they are serious and discreet people, easily get from gentlemen all the information they want, provided that it is requested, as it is said, from gentleman to gentleman and not as public officials.

But in truth the individual knowledge of the people capable of committing a crime, or rather a usual one to command and direct the material tools of crime, is of little use in Sicily for

ascertaining the perpetrators of a single crime. If in fact a cattle theft occurs, a cutting vines, an assassination by ambush, the injured person and his family and also the police they can guess at once with precision, or little by little, what *the hand* was inspired and organized the crime; but more difficult is to find the material performers of it, i which are often novice criminals, who have not yet achieved any notoriety because i heads of the gangs always leave them in the shadows, and then it is very difficult to find the rings that bring together the material perpetrators with the inspirers of the crime itself.

In fact, in all crimes committed by mandate, the main foundation of legal proof against the principal lies in the agent's confession. Now this confession young people who they carry out the criminal decisions of the elders of the gangs they almost never do; and not there they do it for mafia education, for the material fear of revenge and because by confessing the their career in delinquency would be completely ruined without being able to hope in I exchange immediate impunity and not even a noticeable decrease in the sentence imposed on committed crime.

The spirit of the mafia then often leads the injured and witnesses to keep silent on all that they may have seen and heard, and even if they allow themselves to be induced to provide some light to the justice during the investigation period, when I am head to head with the investigating magistrate, yes they will retract when it is necessary to testify publicly and solemnly before the Assize Court.

The authorities would certainly have more free hands in applying police measures, than they can be imposed *ex informata conscientia* . And certainly the refusal of arms permits, admonition and forced domicile, if properly and conscientiously applied, they would be very effective tools to fight the mafia gangs. Unfortunately theirs use in practice is often uncertain, partial, occasional and therefore ineffective for intrusions of some powerful who cover the partnerships of the evildoers with their protection, and also for the compromise and transactional relationships, which sometimes exist between the police and said partnerships.

VIII. And here it falls to talk about the so-called mafia in yellow gloves, the protection that individuals of the upper classes, sometimes invested with the political mandate, and that the same government authorities grant mafia gangs.

This protection above all has ancient traditions; in Sicily certain conditions of society, that had to be generals all over Italy and even outside Italy until two centuries ago, yes they prolonged, slightly diminishing, throughout the nineteenth and over half of the nineteenth. Until 1860 the Sicilian lords, the nobles, did not disdain to intercede with

the authorities to spare the police penalties from those troublemakers who lived at their rural properties. Of course, they guaranteed that the alleged offenders would no longer fail, and really these either were really quiet or used more caution in criminal conspiracy.

In exchange for this sort of moral guarantee that the lord lent to troublemakers he was always *respected*, and the local gang not only did not offend him, but prevented him others offended him and exercised to his pro a kind of preventive police perhaps more effective than the legal one. A little for convenience, a little for vanity, a little for a leftover mafia spirit, the Sicilian nobles were pleased to be so *respected*, indeed with their close friends they boasted of it. But this tradition would have disappeared in the forty years of Italian life that Sicily has lived, if the Italian authorities responsible for public security of the island had not, at least occasionally, another tradition is maintained which also goes back to the Bourbon era; ie the system of transactions and compromises that the authorities made directly with the troublemakers. In addition to the protection of the gentleman in favor of the plebeian of malfeasance has now been added and replaced the much more effective one of the deputy, the mayor, the commissioner for the great mafia voter or even influential member of a gang.

The Bourbon police used to maintain a lot of public security with little effort relative, promising the oblivion of the past to the associations of the convicted, also granting a certain tolerance for the present, provided that in the territory where their activity took place, not serious crimes occurred of those that affect public opinion. Sometimes yes he went so far as to grant a number of apparently converted evildoers a kind of legal authority, which they should have used to guard the lives and substances of the honest.

Now these and similar devices, with which order was maintained through disorder, they have been and are from time to time imitated by the Italian police and prefects; and it is not necessary to demonstrate that they are remedies, which provide the patient with some precarious moments and incomplete refreshment on the other hand indefinitely prolonging the disease. A few years after the representative regime of the mafia gangs was introduced in Sicily they immediately understood the great party they could draw from their participation in the elections political and administrative. This participation became more effective and active after the laws who enlarged the suffrage and who gave the right to vote to the members of the gangs and to the classes in which these can have more influence and enjoy greater prestige.

Already the representative system, praised for other reports, under color to implement a

majority government, everywhere gives a predominance to organized minorities. ¹² Now yes easily understands that in the countries where minorities composed of those who use to border on the crime, and sometimes even commit a crime, these have acquired an electoral importance far superior to their numerical strength. And, because the candidates are more concerned with electoral force rather than morality of the their adherents, the aspirants to local administrative offices and also to the deputation politics, and sometimes even those who come up with an opposition program to government, have often made themselves intermediaries between the police and the criminals. Soliciting prothese the concession of the firearm, the acquittal from the admonition, the return from the forced domicile, sometimes spending a good word with the magistrates during the period investigation of the criminal trials and even brigand with the jurors, ¹³ which, worth to their praise, yes they are shown quite reluctant to be corrupted.

Government authorities, seen playing the game by candidates who supported or fought, they did it on their own and dealt directly with the gangs and the troublemakers in generally because they gave the votes they had to the one rather than the other. And that's how it is created, continued, reinforced that system of compromises between bad people, people authoritative and government officials, which is now the main source of the moral malaise that actress and adapts Sicily.

IX. Some say that it is necessary to remove Parliamentarism, to remove all authority from representative elements, so that the mafia will be eradicated in Sicily; and write and say others that it is the government that cultivates and maintains the mafia in Sicily, because without it it could not have that majority of Praetorians recruited from among the deputies of the South with whom he crushes the representation of the most civilized and cultured regions of the north. ¹⁴ I think exaggeration one, exaggeration the other.

Sicily is not so corrupt that the mafia is the only living electoral force. Governments who they wanted to be able, as happened during the prefectures of Gerra and Malusardi, to fight without neighborhood the mafiosi; and very few votes of the Sicilian deputation therefore moved and from ministerials became opponents. And it seems to me no doubt that a government, which strenuously, systematically, shrewdly, opposed the gangs and troublemakers of all kinds would end with having in the deputation of the island the same majority that can be collected granting a semitolerance to all unclean elements.

12. Here begins the political analysis of the mafia phenomenon more properly linked to class theory policy.

13. Popular jury drawn.

14. It was the position of democratic radicalism. See in G. Salvemini, *The minister of bad life*, Florence, Editions of the Voice, 1910.

Sicilian public opinion has always followed the authorities they wanted to fulfill a serious work of social purging and has neutralized several times the misfortunes of the interested in obstructing the remedial action of government officials, as seen especially at the time of the Malusardi prefecture. The jury, which is the body that provides the best index of average feelings to say so of a population, in the last decades has worked in Sicily quite well. Perhaps among the Sicilian jurors there is a part slightly dipped in mafia, but the complex is such that their verdicts when it comes to serious crimes such as fraud, theft, murder are almost never influenced by silence or fear. Entire bands of famous brigands, such as the maurine brigands, mafia gangs extremely dangerous and bloody, like the one that took its name from the Amoroso brothers, were sentenced to the most serious penalties that they could inflict by the jurors of Palermo. But unfortunately for the evil to continue, just the torch, letting go, doing like everyone did; while to heal it requires energy, diligence, shrewdness and a cure long and persevering that takes a long time, that time that is so often missing from ours ministers and also officials sent to rule the island.

The prefects and the Quaestors are passing through Sicily and, in general, they aspire above all not have too many troubles in the period, possibly short, that they have to go through. They must e they want to please their direct superiors, that is, the Minister and the undersecretary of state for the interior. These certainly do not fail to give them orders, to give instructions, to do recommendations; according to which the local official should take care that the laws were observed, municipal administrations and pious purified works, troublemakers kept in place, the order and public safety protected, the deputies friends supported, the opponents of the Ministry thwarted in re-election.

Doing all these things at once, in a few months and without arousing clamor and friction is difficult. The official soon realizes that if he wants to break the compromises with the troublemakers as far as the maintenance of public order is concerned, the immediate result will be a momentary increase in common crimes; that if you want to fight the usual ladies use a trespass with the mafia gangs, bringing against them candidates who lean exclusively on honest elements, in the meantime he must be exposed to plots and slanders who will be ordained against him in Rome, and who, if he fails, will be placed against him responsibility for failure. In this condition of things, as long as it is of conscience elastic, it immediately takes its party: it performs only one part of the program assigned to it, that which he considers most indispensable from the point of view of his good being and his career, and puts moral sermons aside.

So, using the usual means, which are always the quickest and easiest, he regulates his activities so that the names of the usual ladies come out of the ballot box and that does not happen meanwhile, a series of those big crimes that alarm people and make newspapers talk. And for to achieve these goals, it maintains, when it does not create them, the usual relationships between authorities and troublemakers; knowing full well that for a momentary result the wound plagues ¹⁵ troubled the province, but also knowing that it will soon be up to his successor treat it.

What if then the official is a man of high consciousness, of those who believe that in addition to duties towards himself and towards the cabinet that is in power, there is also a duty towards him society, if he feels a little compassion for the region where he is called to hold his own office, then focuses its efforts on fighting only one of the protectors' deputies dishonest and troublemakers, in destroying a single gang of mobsters, whom he judges most dangerous than others. In a word, try to leave a beneficial trace of its passage snatching some of the thorns that afflict the province. So much he knows very well that, if yes tried to expel them all, another result would only result in blood hands needlessly, and, in the most difficult case he succeeds, there would be no other prize that of leaving the roses to be picked to the prefects, to the questors of the future.

X. I have come almost to the end of my saying without making any mention of one any organization that brings together in one bundle and disciplines all the forces of the mafia or better than the mafia gangs. I didn't mention it for the simple reason that one organization does not exist. Each gang acts on its own, nor does it ordinarily recognize the superiority of any chief who stands outside and above it. Among the gangs operating in nearby sites there may be, and there are, relationships of friendship or enmity, as I already have mentioned, they *respect* or fight each other and sometimes exterminate each other. But this freedom they have is precisely a consequence of the lack of a federal bond that ordinarily unite them and may impose a common norm on them.

¹⁶

The members of two cosche distant from each other, for example from two different provinces, very often they do not even know each other in name and in person and rarely have relationships between them their.

It is superfluous after this to say that in Sicily there is no general council, no leader supreme of the whole mafia. Hence the expression often used: "the man is a leader of the mafia", it only means that he is on good terms with several mafia gangs, which he protects

15. Irritates.

16. Even today there is a tendency to imagine the mafia as a centralized power, while it is a federation of cosche. That's why the dome is pure mythology.

assiduously to have their support in the elections or for other less confessable purposes.

And there are no passwords or mysterious signs of recognition among the mafia
I add that they do not feel the need for it. ¹⁷

People strongly imbued with the spirit of the Mafia, and much more those who belong to the various gangs, they easily recognize each other for that mold, that I don't know what of common, that the same of habits and moral and intellectual education they impress in the different classes and in the different professions. Like the officer traveling in bourgeois, the traveling salesman, the employee, the elegant *viveur*, in a railway wagon or in a steamboat, he immediately recognizes his congener, so does the mafia who goes out of his common native. Of course, in the case of mobsters, this recognition has for as a consequence that, if the opportunity occurs, they know perfectly well, without needing any special understanding, to speak and act in the same way.

XI. It remains now to elucidate a question, that is, the part that the mafia, understood in its double meaning of spirit of rebellion against the law and associations of evildoers, he could have in the consummation of a crime that rightly moved and moves Italy, in the assassination of Notarbartolo, and especially in the greater scandal than this crime connects: the long impunity of the murderers.

¹⁸
In other words, that series of very serious facts, which, highlighted by the advertising of Milan process, seriously worries all those who want Italy to be a country truly civil, it is due solely to local causes, to the special disease that troubles the alone Sicily, or it is also the result of general weaknesses in all of Italy, of a disease more widespread, if not more serious, which pollutes our whole country?

I believe the investigation is useful and opportune, because in the moral ailments of the nations, as in physical ones of individuals, an exact, clear and precise diagnosis is the necessary foundation of any rational cure.

Now there was an era in Italy, still not very remote, during which the ignorance of the public in banking, a concept then prevalent between rulers and governed, a concept that unfortunately is not yet entirely condemned, according to which the interest public would correspond to the sum of some private interests, ignorance and even one a certain elasticity in the moral sense of those who had the duty to prevent ours

17. The refusal to recognize a specific symbolic patrimony to the mafia is the only scientific error of the Moscow's study, to be attributed to the devaluation of the role and social value of the rite, which is a typical attitude of liberal culture and dates back to Voltaire, *English letters*, Turin, Boringhieri, 1958. On mafia rituals see J. Bonanno, *Man of honor*, Milan, Mondadori, 1958; and also P. Arlacchi, *The men of dishonor*, Mondadori, 1992.

18. The murderers of Notarbartolo, sentenced on appeal to Bologna, with a sentence of 30 July 1902, will be acquitted in cassation on 30 July 1904 at the end of tight political maneuvers.

Issuing banks violated the law and their statutes, ensured that in banking matters laws and statutes were semi-clandestinely and sometimes even publicly and almost systematically violated.

¹⁹

Thus, for example, a new issue of paper money was authorized discovered to subsidize unsafe businesses and private banks, that being a politician, or the a politician's recommendation, it was considered almost legitimate title to get one wider discount from the Issuing Banks, and that these even came tacitly authorized, even if they were not encouraged, to play on the stock exchange in order to increase our securities State and those of our subsidized companies, considering that with this they made a service to our national economy.

The trickster is like the devil, you can't give him a finger without catching your hand with your whole arm and drag you to hell. Once, with permission or by inspiration coming from above, they had gone out of law on banking matters, once they had allowed themselves things not publicly confessable, that the border between the licit and the illicit was no longer clearly marked, it became easy for a cohort of businessmen and bribes, which had his own representatives among businessmen, in the Banks themselves, in local administrations and in the Parliament, to plot for its own benefit and to the detriment of the issuing institutions, the State and the I publish a very intricate network of shady deals: in which simple indelicacy soon degenerate into fakes, scams, other crimes covered by the penal code.

Like almost all other issuers, the Banco di Sicilia also suffered its own assault; he suffered heavily around 1890 the year in which, for reasons still not well understood, Notarbartolo was removed from his direction. But this attack was later and more timid of the analogous ones that the National Bank and Banco di Napoli suffered, or met greater resistance. So much so that the Banco Siculo remained in relatively good condition and it is still the smallest but most solid of our issuing institutions.

When in the last days of 1892 the economic and moral ruins produced by errors and from the weakness of our rulers began to wake the public when men who for years and years preached unheeded against our banking policy, the professors Pantaleoni and De Viti de Marco, were able to provide the deputies Colaianni and Gavazzi with proof of abuses and banking illegalities committed with the acquiescence of some of our rulers, when it was understood that the carnival of the villains was about to end and there was talk of accounts to be made, of administrative and parliamentary inquiries to be made, then the concussionarios nested in the Banco di

19. On the banking scandals of Crispino-Giolittian Italy the only documented text is of a fascist part: N. Quilici, *Banca Romana*, Milan, Mondadori, 1935. See also in N. Quilici, *Origins, development and insufficiencies of the Italian bourgeoisie*, Ferrara, 1932.

Sicily saw the danger and ... thought of the appropriate ways to avert it.

At this point, but at this point only, the general crime phenomenon across the country assumed a strong regional character, the leprosy common to all Italy became complicated in Palermo with a local infection. Notarbartolo was the most competent, energetic man, relentless with the dishonest, who would have known and could illuminate public opinion, who he would have guided the arm of justice well against the real culprits, and they ... agreed to suppress it.

The atrocious project could be conceived and developed more easily in Sicily than in the other parts of Italy, because on the island, thanks to the spirit of the Mafia and the contacts between the wealthy classes and the mafia gangs, the idea of bloody violence more easily appears in the consciences cloudy about what would happen in Lombardy, Piedmont, Tuscany, and the murder does not arouse that absolute repugnance, which elsewhere would be felt even in the little class respectable of high-ranking bailiffs and cheaters.

I would add that in Palermo it was easy for any of the abusers of the Banco di Sicilia, mercé i intimate relationships he had with the mafia gangs, to find among them the skilled assassin, true doctor in the art of misfare, who with incredible boldness and cold blood, all calculating and all foreseeing, he was able to carry out the disastrous massacre. And you know that having ready and effective, to at hand, the instrument of evil is a great temptation to commit it. But as soon as the crime was committed and its material author disappeared, the crime phenomenon it lost its local character again and regained its national character.

No, it wasn't the mafia, as many still imagine, it wasn't a big and mysterious one association of evildoers, which has its affiliates in all social classes and encompasses the whole Sicily in its coils, what prevented the murderers of Notarbartolo from being discovered and punished; nor was, and could not be, the mafia as it really is, because a mafia gang does not manages to deflect the arm of justice when it really wants to hit and destroy a criminal partnership that perpetrated a serious crime, of those who leave in the public a strong and lasting impression. And not even that kind of paralysis mentioned in the case of Notarbartolo was hit the investigating judiciary can be explained by the fact that in the offense he could be implicated a member of Parliament, who had intimate relationships with some policeman of second-rate.

The good Milanese who now amazed look for the explanation of many weaknesses, of many acquiescences of the Palermo authorities, if they really want to understand the sad mystery, don't they need to look to distant Sicily, as long as they remember another process that took place there origins in the end very close to them, in which a long impotence of the

police and judiciary in targeting high-located people implicated in bank fraud; that's enough which bring to mind the long impunity enjoyed by Filippo Cavallini.

This arrest, or at least this problem, that the functions of our authorities have suffered police and judicial whenever it came to discovering and punishing a crime intimately connected to big banking abuses, it is explained in an identical way for all Italy, and the explanation is *serious* but simple. That same series of errors and faults that made it possible between we the spreading of banking crimes has produced their semi-impunity. It is due to the fact that there has been a lot of circles around the relatively scarce circle of true concussionaries larger, which has entered much of our political world, and whose components allowed to go out of the law, that irregularities were consummated, and, unwittingly, almost without knowing it, they were wrapped in a kind of complicity with the bailiffs, because they have common secrets with them, which constitute the terrible bond for which they are forced to help them.

And in Palermo around the small group of murders, which matured and prepared the assassination of Notarbartolo, there was a much larger group of simple scammers than of the murder were not even scienti at the time of its perpetration, but that related to the assassins of untrustworthy relationships, they had to help them in any way; and around the quite a large group of fraudsters there was a very large group of fraud tolerants acquiescent to scams, that group that throughout Italy has passively, and also actively, as reluctantly, it helped the bank thieves.

XII. There are sometimes critical moments in the life of a man where he arrived at the maturity of his criterion and his conscience, he remembers and examines lightness and folly of his early youth and sometimes he feels a thrill noting the violations of meaning moral to which the scapataggini of the first years have unconsciously dragged him. Italy is now in an analogous moment, and it notes with terror that the indulgence used towards men who thought themselves skilled but knew themselves not too honest, than his admiration for success in politics and business, even if obtained with blameworthy means, he has it unconsciously conducted to grant semi-impunity to scammers and even murderers.

As in honest background individuals the moments mentioned are usually the principle of a period of renewal in which the duties of life are more seriously understood and more scrupulously observed, so it is hoped that the Notarbartolo trial will mark Italy final closure of the fatal cycle of errors, weaknesses and transactions that we have went through; it is hoped that our ruling classes, learned from experience, will understand finally that, when a tear to justice and legality is allowed, it is not possible

predict where the tear will stop and that it may happen that it widens so much that the moral sense of a civilized people is torn to shreds. This will be the best tribute to pay to the memory of Notarbartolo, the prize major who could await his civil virtues. Honest in life, martyr of honesty for his death, even his death will become the origin of good if, occasioning the analysis of evils particular to Sicily, will hasten its healing, and causing a severe examination of conscience from all over Italy, will contribute to closing the sad era of moral cowardice for which the our country has passed.

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