

WOMEN AND TERRORISM

Also by Luisella de Cataldo Neuburger

CRIMINALITA' OGGI

PSICOLOGIA DELLA TESTIMONIANZA E PROVA
TESTIMONIALE

SAPERSI ESPRIMERE

CHIAMATA IN CORREITA' E PSICOLOGIA DEL PENTITISMO

TRATTATO DELLA MENZOGNA E DELL'INGANNO

Women and Terrorism

LUISELLA DE CATALDO NEUBURGER

and

TIZIANA VALENTINI

Translated into English by Leo Michael Hughes

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Contents

Prologue: Myth and Femininity	vii
1 Data and Methods	1
1 Introduction	1
2 Compilation and Analysis of Case Material	4
3 Women's Participation in Armed Subversion	6
4 'Penitentism' and its Meaning	9
5 Survey Methods	11
6 Psychological Criteria of Interpretation	14
2 The Phenomenon, the Context and the People	22
1 The Meaning of Violence	22
2 Subversive Violence and its Sociodemographic Context	23
3 The Faces of Terrorism	28
4 Clichés and Stereotypes of Criminological Research on Female Deviance	32
5 Gender and the Criminal Justice System	38
6 The First United Nations Survey on the Situation of Women and the Administration of Criminal Justice Systems, 1970–83	43
7 The Chivalry Factor: Myth and Reality	50
8 Reported Causes of Female Crime	52
9 Female Political Deviance	54
10 The Psychology of 'Penitentism' and the Culture of Violence	58
3 Path and Interpretation	63
1 The Psychological Path of the Terrorist	63
2 Female Specificity	75
3 The Two Faces of Obduracy	78
4 Women Penitents and an Explanation of their Repentance	86
5 Political Criminality and Obduracy: a Prognosis	89
6 Conclusions	92

4 Meetings and Questionnaires	97
Appendix 1: Meeting with F, 4 March 1990	97
Appendix 2: Mara Aldrovandi, 7 March 1990 – Questionnaire	100
Appendix 3: Meeting with Mara Aldrovandi, 7 March 1990	106
Appendix 4: Joint meeting with Mara Aldrovandi and Mario Ferrandi, 2 April 1990	111
Appendix 5: Joint meeting with Mara Aldrovandi and Mario Ferrandi, 7 April 1990	113
Appendix 6: Silveria Russo, 16 March 1990 – Questionnaire	119
Appendix 7: Joint meeting with Silveria Russo and Bruno Laronga, Bergamo, 16 March 1990	127
Appendix 8: Joint meeting with Silveria Russo and Bruno Laronga, 9 April 1990	131
Appendix 9: Bruno Laronga – Questionnaire	134
Appendix 10: Mario Ferrandi – Questionnaire	140
Appendix 11: Vincenza Fioroni – Questionnaire	146
Appendix 12: Meeting with Vincenza Fioroni, 30 May 1990	152
Appendix 13: Joint meeting with Silveria Russo and Bruno Laronga, 3 August 1990	157
<i>References</i>	166
<i>Index</i>	170

Prologue: Myth and Femininity

I am Isis, mistress of every land. I laid down laws for all, and ordained things no one may change. I divided the earth from heaven, made manifest the paths of the stars, prescribed the course of the sun and the moon . . . What I have made law can be dissolved by no man.

John Langdon-Davies, *A Short History of Women*

Hecate, high priestess of the goddess of fight, stands guard at the entrance to the underworld and the realm of the dead in secret identity with Persephone.

Medea, fascinatingly evil, offers such sinister sacrifices that the poet does not dare describe them. Betrayed, she does not hesitate to sacrifice her children so that their father Jason may also be struck and annihilated by ill fortune, as he deserves.

The Parcaes, who sever the thread of life.

The Gorgons, on whom neither sun nor moon ever shine, whose glance turns the beholder to stone.

The Erinyes, personalised projections of maternal ire, implacable ministers of vengeance.

Pythia, *entheos, plena deo*, who prophesies in the first person in order to have the god within her.

The Sibyls, oracular voices who incarnate divine revelation.

Electra, inexorable in her dream of vengeance.

In sum, femininity as carrier of life and death, oracular voices, divine medium, ruthless instrument of vengeance, depository of 'strong' and immanent values, the point of intersection of pleasure and death, of sensuality and assassination.

Feminine figures have a dramatic voracity that saturates the imaginary and the real world. The very same voracity that still saturates the social world when women present themselves anew as bearers and interpreters of the ancient archetypal message. And inevitably they once again become Medea, Phaedra, Salome, Judith . . .

The woman who brandishes an automatic weapon incarnates the definitive and irrevocable power of her mysterious myth, of her life and death rites, just as the Gorgon turns men into stone when she shows her nocturnal face.