

**N°070**

Nanni

Balestrini

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*Carbonia*  
*(We Were All*  
*Communists) /*  
*Carbonia*  
*(Eravamo tutti*  
*comunisti)*

**100 Notes - 100 Thoughts / 100 Notizen - 100 Gedanken**

**Nº070: Nanni Balestrini**

***Carbonia (We Were All Communists) /***

***Carbonia (Eravamo tutti comunisti)***

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*Carbonia (We Were All Communists) /*  
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DOCUMENTA (13)

HATJE  
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Nanni Balestrini

*Ultimi*, 2012

Collage and acrylic on canvas / Collage e acrilico su tela  
40 × 40 cm

Nanni Balestrini  
*Carbonia (We Were All  
Communists) / Carbonia  
(Eravamo tutti comunisti)*



# Nanni Balestrini

## *Carbonia (We Were All Communists)*

Translated by Mike Harakis

### 1

I actually went to work in the mines in Carbonia to run away from a girl I had got back from prison camp on August 29 I had got back home from Germany I had a bit of a holiday at home I was really emaciated I was really down I stayed at home all the time I didn't do anything I read some newspapers some books some stuff I found lying around I passed the time like that but then I needed money and I couldn't find any work and so I went to sea I traveled around just about everywhere the first steamer I took was called the Gennargentu it did La Maddalena-Cagliari Cagliari-Palermo Palermo-Trapani it transported wine and passengers and that was the first steamer I went on

it was a ship that used to go up and down the coast but now the war had destroyed almost all the ships and the crossings they made us do out there were real adventures once we went 36 hours without contact we ended up who knows where we were off Sicily and then a storm a terrible storm that lasted for days pushed us back toward Cagliari she was a really old ship the Gennargentu initially only

used on the Palau-La Maddalena service a short trip but we had to do some real voyages with an old ship like the Gennargentu

I went on other steamers after that I was stopping off in La Spezia on July 14 and I was walking with some soldiers whose ship was in dry dock when a ship is in dry dock if they lower the flag at the stern the ship is out of commission and when it's out of commission the crew goes to the barracks on land and they take everything down but when it's fit to sail even if it's in dry dock then there's still the radio and so at midday the captain receives the order to let the water back into the basin and set sail immediately and so the ship departed leaving nearly all the sailors on land apparently because the navy back in Rome had heard that something was happening apparently

shortly afterward the workers also received the news that there had been the assassination attempt on Togliatti and 13,000 workers walked out of the shipyards and the factories they all walked out and they crowded along the waterfront after a while a column of police arrived and was immediately attacked at three different points there was an enormous throng of people workers and sailors all together and all were in a fury the first five vans were rolled over and burned the police used their machine guns and two workers fell wounded but the police officers were immediately swept away and had one casualty and five wounded they ran away and barricaded themselves in the station they all ran away

the police force no longer existed the crowd assailed the offices of the DC and the Front of the Ordinary Man the doors and windows were smashed in people rammed them with tractors and then went in and destroyed everything red flags flew everywhere and all the roads were full of

enraged people there were groups of workers and armed sailors wearing red neckerchiefs everywhere there was this great anger this desire to put an end to it once and for all and you could tell that the moment had come after all these years of defeats of disappointment of humiliation the moment had come to assert our will and we knew that this was what was trying to be done all over Italy assert our will

it was not because of Togliatti because Togliatti was only an opportunity because there'll be other leaders but everyone had started on their own accord to put an end to it once and for all and the partisan brigades had quickly reorganized weapons were seen everywhere even machine guns anti-tank guns everything was being pulled out but then the next day the PCI MPs arrived bringing orders to stop everything and that's how without an organization everything ended the weapons were laid down and everything ended all over Italy it ended with a lot of dead and wounded and a lot of people in prison that was my last crossing then I went to work in the mines my last crossing at sea

when this period here was over I went back to my hometown I didn't have a job for a while then a friend found me a job in Carbonia so I went there but before going to work in the mines I worked for a while in the woods planting trees for the Forestry Department it would take too long to say all that happened in that period anyway I went to Carbonia mainly because I had to get out of marrying this girl that's the truth in short this girl was expecting and I didn't have any money I didn't have a job I didn't have any prospects I was also really tense very touchy I had been like that since I had got back from prison I was like that

I wasn't very well I felt strange I was also drinking a lot if I didn't drink I couldn't have a good time I was always sad and it took years before I was really able to get over prison but the thing that really made me angry was the fact that when I got back to my hometown I found that there were still all these Fascists for example there were these people who used to play these Fascist records Faccetta Nera and songs like that there was a place where you could dance and all sorts of people used to dance there rich and poor there was a big hall and everyone used to go there then once there were some Fascists who played these records and I didn't want them to play those records

I told them not to play those records anymore but they played them again and so I went round there and I smashed all the records and the gramophone too I smashed all the equipment all of it into pieces out of anger I made a real mess that time my blood boiled when I heard something that had anything to do with fascism with Mussolini with all those things because I'd just got back from the prison camp in Germany there were three of us in my town who had been in the camps two had been with the Wehrmacht but me I had been with the SS and the SS was something totally different

and there I still found all those people who were in charge before half Fascist and half Christian Democrat as they are called now after the end of the war they had filled my head with all that stuff that everything had changed that there were no more bourgeois masters and that they shouldn't be in charge anymore and instead they were still there they had only changed from black to white but they were still in charge for Christ's sake and they were the ones who told me you are a Communist and so because I