

# Innocents Abroad

(with apologies to Mark Twain)

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# 1 Trieste

The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) had set up a system of inviting eminent mathematicians to give courses on emerging areas of research and assigning at least one student the task of writing the notes for the lectures, which would be developed into a little book to be published under the TIFR Lecture Notes series, which was very popular with the global mathematical community.

Thus it came to pass that my colleague Vanninathan (hereafter referred to as Vanni, and he will feature in many of the episodes) and myself got to write the lecture notes for Prof. Ciarlet who, pleased with our efforts, recommended to Prof. Lions, the father of the modern approach to Applied Mathematics in France, to invite us as PhD students to that country.

It took a while before this could be realised. To save time, Lions invited us to attend a school in our area of research that he was organizing during the entire autumn of 1976 at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) at Trieste in Italy and promised to find a means to get us to Paris from there. TIFR agreed, gave us a round trip ticket and packed us off.

Every mathematician and theoretical physicist in the third world knows about ICTP. Set up under the aegis of the UNESCO by Prof. Abdus Salam, a physicist of Pakistani origin and a Nobel laureate, ICTP has a charming location on the outskirts of Trieste, in front of the famous Miramare castle and park on the *strada costiera* (coastal highway). On one side are sheer hills and in front is the shimmering Adriatic sea. The institute hosts numerous short training schools in mathematics and physics by experts for the benefit of scientists from the third world.

At that time the institute had only one building and no housing facilities. As soon as you got there, several helpful and cheerful secretaries took over. You were given a generous advance on your stipend and the housing officer helped with the accommodation. She had a list of numerous old ladies in town who were willing to rent out a room to the ICTP guests.

Usually scientists from India who attended such programmes were in their thirties and early forties or older, generally faculty from Indian universities with some experience. She took one look at Vanni and myself and said ‘You are far too young. I think you will be happier without a landlady’ and assigned us a room in an apartment used by some Italian students which had spare rooms. On my very first morning there, I blew the electricity out when the hand shower I held in the bath went out of control and the shower spray hit a bulb above the wash basin!

In the evenings we had to fend for ourselves for food and we invariably ate in a pizzeria called Galleria Fabris. One could sit at the counter surrounding the pizza chef’s oven and watch him make pizzas as well as the other cooks preparing dishes for the clients. Tonino, the *pizzaiolo*, was from Naples (the home of the Pizza Margherita) and with our near nil Italian and his near nil English, we got on famously.

We were vegetarian and landing first in Italy was a great help. We could manage with the pizza Margherita, spaghetti *al pomodoro*, minestrone soup,

vegetable soup and the occasional *gnocchi* with spinach. On the soup days, I would indulge in desserts like *zuppa inglese*, a kind of trifle pudding or cream filled chocolate profiteroles.

One day, waiting for my pizza at the chef's counter, I noticed a cook put some cooked spaghetti on a pan, add a generous dollop of butter and then some fresh cream. He broke a couple of eggs, separated the whites and added the yolks to the mixture and started to stir fry. I started to drool seeing a new preparation with my favourite ingredients (at twenty-four, I had not heard of cholesterol) when he seemed to ruin it all by showering on it a fistful of shredded ham. I asked Tonino what that dish was and was told that it was spaghetti *alla carbonara*, a dish favoured by *i carbonari* or coal miners. (Italian cuisine seems to be largely based on tastes of common folk, while the much touted French cuisine with its subtle flavours and heavy sauces was designed for the royalty.)

The next evening, I timidly asked him if I could have it *senza carne* (without the meat). He agreed good naturedly and soon it was added to my list of dishes. Since, according to them, it lacked the vital ingredient, they called it *senza*, 'without'. Every time I ordered it, a shout would go towards the kitchen '*una senza, prego!*'

## 2 The French visa

Most of the lecturers in our school were from France and they knew that we were scheduled to reach Paris and most of the participants got to know of the two Indian *protégés* of Lions, but no letter of invitation was forthcoming even as the school was drawing to a close. Unfortunately, Lions' mother, who was ailing all the while, died and so he never made it to Trieste and we lost the chance of talking to him. Finally, in mid-November, an aerogramme came from Ciarlet with just two lines saying that we could now proceed to Paris and asking us to keep him informed of our travel plans.

Trieste boasted of several consulates which cheerfully welcomed ICTP visitors and gave them visas to visit their countries. But the French consulate for the region was in Venice, a two hour train ride away. So we went to Ms. Mosca, the secretary who dealt with visas, for directions and advice. She told us how to get to the consulate and also promised to call the consulate and prepare them for our arrival. She came to see us, about twenty minutes later, with a grim expression. It seems, on hearing of our plans to do a PhD in France, the consular officer nearly went off in an apoplexy and was furious that someone would apply for a visa in such a cavalier manner, on the basis of an aerogramme, without the permission of a couple of ministries.

When we got to the consulate the following morning we were sternly lectured to by her on appropriate procedure, which, it was clear, that we could never complete in the time that remained for us at Trieste. We humbly replied, in French, that we were merely following instructions and that we were not aware of the complications. That we spoke the language, and that too reasonably well, instantly softened her. She still repeated the same thing

but in a far less severe tone and then said ‘Unless,...’ with a pregnant pause. We eagerly pricked our ears. She said that if the Italians could extend our multiple entry visas for four more months, she could give us a three month tourist visa to France in which time we could settle our problems locally, if at all possible, which she doubted. She then blighted our hopes further by saying that anyway all that was wishful thinking for there was no way in which we could wheedle the Italian authorities to oblige us.

With a heavy heart we returned to Trieste. We went to the main post office to place trunk calls to Ciarlet in Paris and to Prof. K. G. Ramanathan (our boss at TIFR) to appraise them of the situation (there was no STD or ISD at that time) and returned to ICTP.

Ms. Mosca was eager to know the details. When we came to the ‘Unless’ part she asked us to hand over our passports to her. That afternoon, we were pleasantly surprised by a letter from the deputy director of ICTP extending our stay at Trieste by two weeks to enable us to try and settle our visa issues. Such was their commitment to try and train third world scientists at the best institutions.

The school ended, all our friends went back to their homes and Vanni and I spent a dejected week not knowing what the future held for us. On Friday, Ms. Mosca sought us out at the canteen, handed our passports with our visas extended for Italy and also informed us that a totally bewildered officer from the French consulate called her to request her to send the two Indians to Venice on Monday as she had received instructions from her ministry in Paris to give us short term visas for France.

So on Monday, off we went to Venice, where the consular officer was even more flabbergasted when she saw that we also had our extended Italian visas. Grinning from ear to ear, armed with our French visas, we triumphantly returned to Trieste to prepare for our journey to Paris, where we spent three glorious years of research and training.

### 3 Sans viande

It is said that my paternal grandfather, R. Narayana Aiyar, was the first from his community to pass the ICS examination, way back in 1897. He used his furlough privileges and made several trips to Europe with his family. Since sightseeing was the main goal, he preferred to stay in hotels and be on the move rather than set up house. Consequently, this being the early twentieth century, his family had to be trained to eat meat. This included my grandmother who, hailing from an orthodox Kumbakonam family, was married at the age of twelve and was transformed into a society lady who played bridge and who was awarded an MBE for work done during WWI.

However, the family was vegetarian in India and the kitchen was, for decades, ruled with an iron hand (or, I should say, ladle) by one Lakshmi Mami, who strictly observed all the rules of *madi*.

Since my mother grew up in northern India, my gastronomical upbringing was very cosmopolitan and, from childhood, I was as much at ease with pasta,

as with *phulka* and *sabzi* as with the Tanjavur combinations like *paruppusili* and *morkuzhambu* dished out by Lakshmi Mami.

Vanni was strictly vegetarian and so we travelled with the intention of sticking to such a diet but we went without stocking on *podis* nor pickles and sans the ubiquitous small pressure cooker.

In Paris, we stayed at the *Maison de l'Inde* (India House) in the Cité Universitaire de Paris. The *Cité U*, as it is commonly known, occupies a large wooded area in the southern fringe of Paris. Many countries have built hostels there for their students studying in Paris and it is a delightful melting pot of several cultures. India House is a relatively modern structure and each floor has a common kitchen.

I did not know how to cook nor was I equipped for it. So Vanni and I made a beeline to one of the main student restaurants on the campus.

At the restaurant, one picked up a tray, glass and cutlery, handed over the meal ticket to the lady in charge, and proceeded to select a *hors d'oeuvre*, a cheese and a dessert, before being served the soup and the main dish, which was meat and vegetables. The entire assembly line was policed by hawk-eyed ladies who ensured that the hungry students did not take more than what they were supposed to. When I reached the last point, I told the serving lady '*sans viande, s'il vous plaît*' (without meat, please). She looked at me uncomprehendingly and I explained that since I did not eat meat, I just wanted a helping of the veggies. She raised an eyebrow, gave a Gallic shrug and complied with my request. Vanni repeated this and we passed on to the tables, aware of the whisperings between the waitresses.

We were hardly seated, when one of them appeared on our side smiling sweetly and placed an apple each on our trays and explained that if we did not eat meat, then we should, in future, mention it to the ticket collector and select an extra side dish - starter, cheese or dessert.

So everytime we went in and announced our vegetarian intentions, the ticket collector would yell '*deux sans viande*' down the line over the din in a booming voice that would have given Bertie Wooster's Aunt Dahlia a run for her money. She would be acknowledged and we would be allowed to pass with our extra dish, and, needless to mention, a generous helping of the vegetables.

Once a sturdy African student was behind me in the line busy talking to his friend and he missed this exchange. However, he did notice that I had two cups of chocolate mousse and he proceeded to take a second. But 'hawk-eyes' pounced on him and asked sarcastically if he was vegetarian. He was scandalized by the suggestion. It was then explained why I had a second helping of the mousse and his extra helping was mercilessly confiscated!

Vanni and I were often invited over weekends to dine at our colleagues' homes and it never struck us that they were rather inconvenienced by our food habits. Once, a delightful meal was served by a colleague's mother who was not only very old, but was paralysed waist down and confined to a wheel chair. When I thanked her before leaving, she proudly said that she thought for two whole days before coming up with the menu. After that, Vanni and I decided that we should learn to eat meat and that while we would remain

vegetarian as far as possible, we would, as guests, not advertise that fact while travelling abroad. I felt that my grandfather would have approved.

## 4 Thirty francs

Anyone staying in France beyond three months needs a stay permit called a *carte de séjour*, which is provided by the police headquarters of the region, called de *préfecture*. The process is reasonably streamlined in Paris but can be quite long and arduous in the suburbs and the provinces.

Vanni and myself received our first permits quite painlessly since the organization that controlled our scholarship arranged to get it for us. The next year we had to go to the *préfecture* at Paris, near the Notre Dame cathedral, early morning in the freezing winter, so that we could get a token and get the job completed in a few hours' time.

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Later, in 1978, we decided (rather foolishly) to leave the *Maison de l'Inde* and move to another student residence in the suburb called Massy, which came under the jurisdiction of the *préfecture* at Evry.

Since the permit must carry the correct address of the holder, I went to the police bureau at Massy to get my new address recorded on my *carte de séjour*. The officer there was busy energetically stamping some documents and did not look up for some time and I was reminded of the opening scene of P. G. Wodehouse's *Frozen Assets*. When he finally did and asked what I wanted, I stated the purpose of my visit. He looked me over and finally asked to see my passport first. He turned over the leaves of my passport several times and finally said, 'Aie, aie, aie, this is going to be complicated' and my blood froze. When I asked him what the problem was, he said that I did not have a valid visa. Now I knew I was on firm ground and asked him why did I need a visa when I already had a stay permit and he exclaimed, 'Ah! you have a *carte de séjour*! Why did you not say so in the first place?'

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With our theses defended, it was time to leave for India to return to our jobs at the TIFR. Holders of the stay permit of certain nationalities need to get an exit permit (and one for re-entry, if they needed to return to France). This applied to Indians in 1979 but subsequently, they have been exempted. The process took at least three weeks and so, a month ahead of my departure, I went to the bureau to enquire about the formalities. The officer there politely gave me the forms to be filled, the checklist of documents, mentioned the number of photographs needed and finally asked me to get a revenue stamp for thirty francs. In Paris, this would have been supplied by the police themselves but elsewhere, one needed to get them from a tobacconist.

Thus, armed with a complete dossier, I went to a tobacconist for the stamp and she stumped me by asking 'Green or blue?' I had no idea and

said that it was for visa purposes and so she decided that it was blue but cautioned me saying that I might soon be back. Prophetic words! The officer scanned my papers and said, 'Aie, Monsieur does not plan to return to France?' I reminded him that I had requested the details for an exit permit only. He apologized and said that he made a mistake and that I needed to pay only twelve francs. So I went back to the tobacconist who told me that twelve franc stamps were non-existent and that thirty francs was the correct fee. I relayed this information to the officer who reminded me that *he* knew what *he* was talking about and insisted that I get a twelve franc stamp. I suggested that he use the thirty franc stamp since it covered the fee and he was outraged by the suggestion and said that the bosses at Evry would blast him if he overcharged me.

So off I went to the tobacconist again, who, irritated by these exchanges, just refunded my money and brusquely asked me to try another shop. So I hunted for another tobacconist; I found one who explained that though twelve franc stamps were non-existent, she could supply me a ten franc stamp and one for two francs, which would make twelve. The logic was irrefutable to the mathematician in me and I hoped that the police too, especially the bosses at Evry, would accept that ten plus two was indeed twelve.

This time the officer finally accepted my papers with profuse apologies for making me go up and down and gave me a date for the return of the passport with the permit stamped on it.

Three weeks later, I retrieved my passport. The permit was stamped on it, the ten and two franc stamps were pasted and cancelled neatly on the page and the boss at Evry had signed the permit after filling in (in French) 'received the sum of thirty francs'!!

## 5 'Basel est Suisse!'

The International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM), 1978, was being held at Helsinki, Finland. Since Vanni and myself were students at Paris, TIFR asked us to attend this meeting and offered to fund our travel. The *Maison de l'Inde* closes down during July and August every year and its residents have to find alternative accommodation at that time. So we decided to take a long and leisurely holiday travelling through Switzerland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden *en route* Finland, travelling by train and staying in Youth Hostels all along the way. In those days, Germany and the Baltic countries did not require Indian passport holders to get visas and so, armed with a single entry Swiss visa, we were soon on our way.

We did not qualify, as residence permit holders in France, for the Eurail Pass. The French railways provided us with a ticket for the entire journey, which included a cruise on the Rhine from Mainz to Koblenz in Germany and the journey by ship from Stockhölme to Helsinki.

We visited Geneva and Berne in Switzerland and arrived at Basel, which is at the confluence of the boundaries of Germany, France and Switzerland and which is cut in two by the Rhine river.



Our railway ticket indicated that we needed to change railway stations at Basel, from the Swiss one to a German one across the Rhine. So we (rather naively) deduced that the part across the Rhine was Germany and so, having finished with our sightseeing at Basel by late afternoon, we decided to go over to the German station, have our first meal in Germany that evening and board the train for Mainz.

On reaching the German station at Basel, which, to our surprise, was practically deserted, we were welcomed by a German police officer who checked our passports, verified that we did not have contraband cigarettes, and waved us on. We wished to leave our bags in the automatic lockers but they needed Deutsche Marks to operate, which we did not have. So we decided to go out into town, change some money into DM, have dinner and get back in time for the train.

To our utter surprise, our egress was blocked by a Swiss police post and a Swiss officer asked to see our passports. Checking them, he informed us that we had exhausted the validity of our Swiss visas to which I airily replied that we were aware of that and that we were now proceeding to the German part of the town.

Hearing my answer, the officer pulled himself up to his full height and solemnly told me, 'Monsieur, Basel est Suisse!' (Basel belongs to Switzerland.) This stumped me and I asked him then what did it mean to have been checked by a German officer and the DMs needed at the station. He then explained patiently that while the town was Swiss, the station alone is considered sovereign German territory and that this was for the convenience of the Germans who lived nearby and worked in Basel and its Swiss neighbourhood.

I did not fully grasp the logic of this but there was nothing we could do and so Vanni and I conferred in Tamil and decided to stay put in the station and starve, since there was nothing to be had in there and our train was at close to midnight.

The officer asked what we were planning to do in town anyway and we told him our proposed plan to have dinner and that we would now have to sit in the station and await our train. He asked to see our train tickets and having satisfied himself on that score, he winked at me and said smilingly (in French, the language in which we were conversing all along), 'OK, I will turn my back and you just quietly proceed into town. Enjoy your dinner and come back soon. *Bon appetit, messieurs!*'

This we did with alacrity. On our return, the 'border post' at the station was shared by both the German and the Swiss officers and the former was completely surprised to see us emerge from the wrong direction. The Swiss officer told the story, everyone had a hearty laugh and we proceeded thence to the German leg of our tour.

## 6 French leave

The cross channel rivalry between England and France manifests itself in the languages also. The adjective ‘French’ often has a negative connotation to it. A ‘French kiss’ has a suggestion of salaciousness. A condom in English slang is a French leather and, curiously, in French slang is *une capôte anglaise* - an English bonnet! ‘French leave’ usually means that one is playing truant at work and has taken an unauthorized leave of absence.

The French take their vacations and weekends very seriously. So, a long weekend is something they all look forward to. They have a charming invention (at least in academia) called *faire le pont* - bridging the gap. Whenever a public holiday falls on a Tuesday (respectively, a Thursday), the Monday preceding it (respectively, the Friday following it) is observed as an informal holiday, thus giving them a nice four day weekend. The first time I got to know of this was in my student days, when the lady collecting the meal coupons in the university cafeteria at lunch time wished everyone a *bon weekend* on a Wednesday afternoon!

However this can lead to some ridiculously funny situations, especially in the month of May, as it happened to me in 2001. In fact, academic visitors to France during May 2012 would also have experienced it since the calendars coincide.

I was scheduled to spend a month in France for research collaboration and so I arrived on Saturday, April 28, hoping to report for work the following Monday (April 30) after a spot of rest on Sunday. But May 1, Labour Day, fell on a Tuesday and so Monday was also closed by the bridging principle and the earliest I got to the university was on May 2, after cooling my heels for three whole days after arrival.

Since May 1 was Tuesday, it follows that so will be May 8, another very important public holiday, commemorating the end of WWII. So the next weekend was also a long one.

In the month of May, a long weekend is always guaranteed because of the *jeudi d’ascension*. Jesus Christ was crucified on a Friday (Good Friday) and was resurrected on the third day (Easter Sunday). He was on earth for forty days and on the fortieth day, he ascended to heaven. Simple arithmetic shows that this always falls on a Thursday and is a public holiday, which ensures a long weekend by applying the same principle of bridging the gap. Thus, the third weekend that year in May was also a prolonged one.

As a *coup de grâce*, that year the catholic feast of the pentecost - *pentecôte* - fell on a Thursday and so the fourth weekend also happened to be a long one! President Sarkozy, in an austerity move, tried to suppress the *pentecôte* holiday but he had to beat a retreat following stiff opposition from the (largely non-practicing catholic) public.

Add to all this the fact that the month of May is when the recruitment process for faculty positions in French universities is on and all professors are very busy scrutinizing the applications from aspiring candidates and conducting *auditions* - interviews.

Thus, that month I was literally on French leave from my parent institute

in India and I was more or less left to my own devices and pursued my research with minimal contact with my host. But I did escape the *agni nakshatram* at Chennai!

## 7 The magic flute

Paris has two opera houses. The old one, known as the Palais Garnier, is a classical gilded building at the head of the *Avenue de l'Opéra*. I have attended several performances there enjoying ballets like the Sleeping Beauty of Tchaikovsky and classical operas like Verdi's *La Traviata*. However, I never had an opportunity to attend a performance of an opera by Mozart, while I was a student.

Later, in the late eighties, a modern opera house was built at the *Place de la Bastille* (where once the dreaded prison which was stormed at the beginning of the French revolution was located). When I visited Paris as a visiting professor in 1995, the *Opéra Bastille* was scheduling a series of performances of Mozart's 'The Magic Flute' in the month of May. At that time when I did not possess a credit card or any kind of bank card, the only way to get a ticket was to present myself at the ticket sales counter exactly a fortnight before a particular performance and take my chance. Unfortunately, I was travelling during the easter break and so the only possibility available to me was to get a ticket by the above method for the very last show on a Sunday in the third week of May.

I made my way to the Bastille early on a Sunday morning two weeks prior to this and was surprised to see that there were already about a hundred and fifty people before me. When the sales counter opened, it was announced over the public address system that each person would be sold a maximum of two tickets only.

A few minutes after the sales started, it was announced that the cheapest tickets at fifty francs were all sold out and several people left the queue, disappointed. The sales proceeded briskly in this vein with the price of the remaining tickets steadily mounting and people deserting the queue disheartened. I stood my ground. When I was about four people away from the window, it was announced that the only seats remaining were for four hundred and ninety-five francs, the highest possible.

I felt a pang of my conscience pricking me as it was a stiff sum and at the prevailing exchange rate, almost a month's basic salary back in India. However, I had stood so long and it did not seem right to give up then. I told myself that it was a chance of a lifetime, that I needed to visit the new opera house, that Mozart was my favourite composer and especially that the 'Magic Flute' was my favourite opera and so on and went on to get my ticket and returned to the *Maison de l'Inde* in triumph.

The next two weeks went in a blur of excitement and anticipation and the day of the performance finally dawned bright and clear. Since I was supposed to be seated in the best part of the hall, I dressed carefully in a full suit and tie and reached the *Opéra Bastille* well in time.

There, at the entrance, I was greeted by an usher who told me, ‘Monsieur, we are on strike today; please go to the counter on the right and collect your refund...’

## 8 The laughing policeman

*Constabulary duties to be done, to be done,  
A policeman’s lot is not a happy one, happy one!*

(from *The Pirates of Penzance*, Act II, a Savoy Opera by W. S. Gilbert and A. Sullivan).

True, but often the members of the police force do exhibit a good sense of humour. When I was a pupil in the primary section of Bain’s School, Chennai, my English text ‘Reading and Thinking’ was a beautiful book with lovely illustrations. One that I do remember is that of a smiling London bobby holding up the traffic so that a mother duck could cross the road followed by her brood of ducklings. In fact, my sister alluded to this in her essay on an ideal policeman which she submitted to an eponymous competition organized by the Madras Police on the occasion of their centenary celebrations in the late 1950s and her entry won the gold medal. I have listed below some humourous situations that I was part of, involving the police.

- Our colleague and friend Prof. H el ene Lanchon once was offered a chalet in the ski resort of La Toussuire in the *Haute Savoie* region of the French Alps by one of her friends. She assembled a small party of colleagues for a week of skiing during the winter semester break and included Vanni and myself in it. We set off in her powder blue Citro en 2CV, a very robust, though ugly looking, car in which we had many an adventure. The *autoroutes* were choked by the the cars exiting Paris for the holidays and soon it started snowing which slowed us down further. By the time we reached the beginning of the ‘ghat section’ past the town of Chamb ery, it was past ten p.m. and steadily snowing all the time. There, blocking our way stood, a solitary *gendarme* who informed us that it was better not to attempt to go up, though the road was not yet closed. But H el ene was determined to reach the chalet that night. The officer then said that he could not permit us without the snow chains on our tyres. H el ene parked the car under a streetlight, opened the boot and took out an unopened box containing the chains. She ordered us to read out the instructions from the manual to fix the chains and laid them out in the snow beside the car. We two Indians, our teeth chattering in the midst of our first snowfall, attempted to do so. Watching all this with amusement and unable to hold back any longer, the policeman offered to help and deftly fitted the chains for us. While doing so he chatted us up and asked what we did for a living. Hearing that we were mathematicians from the university at Paris, he said, ‘Ah! Now I understand why you could not fix the chains. You only know how to do it in theory!’ and waved us through.

- I have already mentioned the police bureau at Massy. When I was there to retrieve my passport containing my exit permit, the officers were beleaguered by immigrant workers, mostly Portugese, Maroccans and Algerians, who were anxious to get their work and stay permits renewed before the holidays so that they could go home and then return to their jobs safely. One man was just given the necessary forms and detailed instructions as to how to fill them and assemble the supporting documents. The officer added that he needed six photographs of the man and four photographs of his wife. The man then enquired as to why there was this gender inequality in the photograph requirements and pat came the reply, 'Because, Monsieur, you are the better looking of the two!'
- I was once visiting the university of Rome and my host Filomena requested me to take a train from the Fumicino airport to the Roma Tiburtina station where she promised to pick me up. When we met, she suggested that we first go to the department, then to lunch and finally to take possession of my lodging. I accepted and we were on our way. The university is not far from the Colosseum and when we got there, there was a massive traffic jam. The road to the university was blocked and a single policeman was gesticulating wildly and directing the traffic. Filomena was determined to take the direct road to the university and so she edged her way near that exit and was firmly directed away from it by the policeman. She then lowered the window and told him that she wished to go to the university. Without missing a beat, he retorted, 'Then study well, Madam, that is the only way' and turned his back to us and continued his task.