

# **Black Flags**

Renzo Novatore

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## I

*Black flags in the wind  
stained with blood and sun  
Black flags in the sun  
howling of glory in the wind*

We need to return to the origins. To drink at the ancient fountains.

We need to return to heroic anarchism, to individual, violent, reckless, poetic, decentering audacity...

And we need to return with every bit of our modern instinct, every bit of our new conception of life and beauty, every bit of our healthy and lucid pessimism, which is not renunciation or powerlessness, but a thriving flower of exuberant life. We are the true nihilists of reality and the spiritual builders of ideal worlds

We are destructive philosophers and creative poets.

*We walk in the night  
with a sun in our mind  
and with two huge golden stars  
in our blazing eyes*

We walk...

## II

Several years ago, all the earth's kings, all the world's tyrants crossed the threshold of time, and — turning their backs on the dawn — called in a great voice — the ghosts of the past, of the gloomiest past!

The voices of the tyrants and kings were joined by the raucous voices of all the great misers of the spirit, of art, of thought and of the idea! — And in the voices of the tyrants, kings and misers, ghosts and phantoms were raised from their tombs and came to dance among us...

The "state," the "race," the "fatherland" were macabre storm clouds assailing the heavens, ghastly phantoms darkening the sun; they threw us back into the dark night of distant medieval times.

## III

Death!

Who still recalls the macabre dance of the baleful and monstrous god of war?

Who still recalls the war?

Much time has passed between then and now, but upon this wretched yet noble earth, fertilized with sterile corpses and bloated with infertile blood, not a single ideal, virgin flower, made of spirituality and purity, still sprouts today.

No, the flowers that are born now on the dry clods of this earth, so vainly bathed in blood, are not flowers of flourishing life, capable of great hope, virile struggle, vigorous thought; they are

rather flowers of death, born in the shadow, growing in the anguish of the unconscious, swept away in the hurricane, borne along in the drift of the river of oblivion...

...

I am not a sentimentalist... but I have a horrible memory of the war.

It is the reason that I ended up hating and then despising men. Before despising and hating them though, I collected all the tears of humanity in my heart and locked all the sorrows of the world in my vast mind-synthesis...

...

Even the spirit of the great Zarathustra — who is war's truest lover and the warrior's most sincere friend — must have been horribly nauseated by this war...

He must have been horribly nauseated, because I heard him cry out: "You must seek your own enemy, fight your own war, and for your own ideas!"

And if your idea succumbs, may your rectitude cry out in triumph.

But, alas! the heroic preaching of the great liberator came to nothing!

The human herd didn't know how to distinguish its own enemy or to fight its own war for its own ideas. (The herd has no ideas of its own!)

And not knowing his own ideas that he might make triumph, Abel died at Cain's hands once again.

He was called to die, and he went, like always. So!

Without knowing how to say either Yes or No! He goes as a coward, as a robot, like always.

If he had at least had the capacity to say the Yes of enthusiastic obedience — if he didn't have the heroic power to pronounce the titanic No of tragic negation — he would at last have shown that he believed in the "cause" for which he died, fighting...

but he didn't know how to say yes or no!

He went!

As a coward, like always!

So...

And when he left, he went toward death.

He went toward death without knowing why.

Like always!

And death did not wait...

It came!...

It came and danced.

It danced and laughed!

For five long years...

It laughed and danced over the muddy trenches of the entire world's fatherlands.

A macabre dance!

Oh, how idiotic and vulgar — how savage and brutal — is this death that dances without the wings of an idea on its back.

Without a violent idea that smashes and destroys.

Without a fruitful idea that generates and creates.

What a stupid and horrendous thing, dying as cowards, without knowing why.

We saw it — as it danced — Death.

It was a black Death, opaque, without any of the transparency of light.

It was a Death without wings!...

How ugly and vulgar it was.  
How clumsy its dance was!  
And how it mowed them down — dancing — all the superfluous, those of whom there were more!  
Those for whom — the great liberator says — the state was invented.  
But, alas, it didn't only mow these down...  
Yes! Death — to avenge the state mowed down those who were not useless, those who were necessary...  
It also mowed down those for whom life was a profound poem where sublimated sorrow sang a playful refrain...  
But those of whom there were not more, those who were not superfluous, those who fell crying out the rebellious and forceful titanic No!: they will be avenged.  
We will avenge them!  
We will avenge them because they were our brothers; because they died with stars in their eyes; because as they died, they drank the sun.  
The sun of the Dream.  
The sun of Battle.  
The sun of Life.  
The sun of the Idea!

## IV

The war!...  
What has the war renewed?  
Where is the heroic transfiguration of the spirit?  
Where have the phosphorescent tablets of new human values been hung?  
In what sacred temple have the miraculous gold amphorae, containing the flaming hearts of creative geniuses and dominating heroes, that the frantic supporters of great war promised?  
Where does the majestic sun of the great new dawn shine?  
Frightful rivers of blood washed all the turf in the world and went howling through all the paths of the earth.  
Terrifying torrents of tears made their heartrending, anguished lament echo through the darkest, most remote eddies of all the world's continents.  
Mountains of human bones and flesh rotted everywhere in the mud, and cried everywhere in the sun.  
But nothing changed — it was useless!  
The worm-ridden bourgeois belly just belched with satiety! and that of the proletarian howled from too much hunger!  
And enough!  
If with Christ and christianity, the human spirit was suspended in the cold and empty void of the afterlife, with Karl Marx and socialism, it was made to descend into the intestines...  
The roar that sounded across the world after the war, shaking humanity, was nothing but a belly roar that socialism betrayed, stamped out, smothered, strangled, as soon as it noticed that this roar had begun to take on a bit of the color of an ideal content...

This supreme, nameless cowardice used up, the blackest, bleakest, most baleful reaction was born and grew tremendously.  
It was logical — natural — fatal!  
It was human...

## V

Our time — despite empty and contrary appearances — is already lying on all fours under the heavy wheels of a new History.

The bestial morality of our bastard christian-liberal-bourgeois-plebeian civilization turns toward the sunset...

Our false social organization is collapsing fatally — inexorably!

The fascist phenomenon is the surest, most indisputable proof of it.

In Italy as elsewhere...

To show it, one would only have to go back in time and question history. But even this isn't necessary! — The present speaks eloquently enough...

Fascism is nothing but a cruel, convulsive spasm of a decaying society that tragically drowns in the quagmire of its lies.

Because it — fascism — indeed celebrates its bacchanals with flaming pyres and malicious orgies of blood; but the dull crackling of its livid fires doesn't give off a single spark of vivid innovative spirituality; meanwhile, may the blood that pours out be transformed into wine, that we — the forerunners of the time — silently gather in red goblets of hatred setting it aside as the heroic beverage to pass on to the children of the night and of sorrow in the fatal communion of great revolt.

We will take these brothers of ours by the hand to march together and climb together toward new spiritual dawns, toward new auroras of life, toward new conquests of thought, toward new feasts of light; new solar noons.

Because we are lovers of liberating struggle.

We are the children of sorrow that rises and thought that creates.

We are restless vagabonds.

The boldest in every endeavor; the tempter of every ordeal.

And life is an "ordeal"! A torment! A tragic flight. — A fleeting moment!

## VI

Our will is heroic!

We'll stir everything up in a flurry of hatred at the heart of the world, and we'll transmute everything into a storm of the abyss.

Into a hurricane of the peaks.

Into cries of the mind.

Into howls of freedom!

By celebrating the social evensong, we will try to fully realize individual life, of the free and great I.

So that the night no longer triumphs.

So that the shadow no longer coils around us.  
So that the never-ending fire of the sun becomes eternal and perpetuates its feast of light over  
land and sea!  
Because we are fiery dreamers of the impossible, dangerous conquerors of the stars!

## VII

Fascism — despite empty and contrary appearances — is something far too ephemeral and impotent to prevent the free, unbridled course of rebel thought that overflows and expands, impetuously bursting beyond every barrier, and furiously spreads beyond every limit — as a powerful, animating, driving force — drawing behind its gigantic steps the vigorous and titanic action of hard human muscle.

Fascism is impotent, because it is brute force.  
It is matter without spirit.  
It is body without mind.  
It is night without dawn!  
It — fascism — is the other face of socialism...  
They are lightless mirrors. Two spent stars!

Socialism is the numerical — material — force that, by acting in the shadow of a dogma, resolves and dissolves itself in a miserable spiritual “no” that empties it of any unchained, willful, heroic, ideal resilience. Fascism is an epileptic child of the spiritual “no” that is brutalized by striving — vainly — toward a vulgar material “yes.”

In the field of moral values, they are equal. Fascism and socialism are two worthy brothers. Even if you call the latter Abel and you call the former Cain. A common Dream unites them. And that dream is called Power.

## VIII

*Black flags in the wind  
stained with blood and sun  
Black flags in the sun  
howling of glory in the wind*

What the war didn't and couldn't do, revolution can and must do!

*Oh, black flags carried  
in a man's rebellious fist  
as he focuses his gaze intensely  
beyond the ruling lie  
— fluttering in the sun and wind  
fluttering in the wind and sun  
Victory smiles in the distance!  
In the distance — in the distance — in the distance!  
In the glory of the sun and wind!*

## IX

Fascism and socialism are bandages of the time, delayers of the deed!

They are rabidly crystallized fossils that willful dynamism — with which we animate history as it passes — will sweep away into the common grave of the times. — Because in the field of spiritual and ethical values the two enemies are the same.

They are two sides of the same coin.

They both lack the light of eternity!

Only great intellectual vagabonds — carriers of the black flag — can be the luminous animating fulcrum of eternal revolution that pushes the world forward.

## X

Our willful soul is multiform...

The fiery throbbing of the sun and the tremulous shudders of the stars pass through it!

We are rebel poets and philosophers of destruction.

We are anarchists.

Iconoclasts!

Individualists,

atheists,

nihilists!

We are the carriers of black flags.

*We walk in the night  
with a sun in our mind,  
and with tow huge golden stars  
shining in our blazing eyes!*

We walk on!...

And in the theater of humanity, our place is at the most extreme of all extreme lefts.

## XI

Behind the gigantic, black thundercloud that still covers the sky, a red twilight flashes.

The tragic celebration of the red evensong is near.

The last black night will become red with blood.

With blood and fire.

Because blood demands blood.

It's an old story...

And then our children — the children of the Dawn — must be born from blood and forged by fire.

Because new individual ideas must be born, more virginal and beautiful, from the great social tragedies, from the turmoil of new hurricanes!



And it is only from the great, fiery, bloody catastrophe that the real, profound Antichrist of humanity and thought will be born. The real child of earth and sun able to climb over the peaks and probe the abysses.

Because the Antichrist is Eagle and Serpent.

He inhabits the peaks and the depths.

He — the spirit of the new man — will pass through the smoking ruins of the old, destroyed world to rise toward the magnificent mystery of the coming virgin dawn.

Beautiful and superb — he will stand upon the threshold of the new morning saturated with the wild, scintillating strength of superhuman beauty, saying to reluctant men: Onward, onward!

*We rush beyond every system  
We rush beyond every form  
We fly toward the highest freedom  
Toward extreme ANARCHY!*

## **XII**

We — free spirits — vagabonds of the idea — atheists of solitude — demons of the unseen desert.  
We — luminous monsters of the night — we have already gone to the peaks.

*We walk in the night  
with a sun in our mind,  
and with tow huge golden stars  
shining in our blazing eyes!*

And — with us — everything must be driven to its highest consequence.

Even hatred.

Even violence.

Even “crime”!

Because hatred gives strength that dares.

Violence and “crime” are the genius that destroys and the beauty that creates.

And we want to dare.

To destroy — to renew — to create!

Because all that is low and vulgar must be broken up and destroyed.

Only what is great shall remain.

Because what is great belongs to beauty.

And life should be beautiful.

Even in sorrow.

Even in the hurricane!...

## **XIII**

We have killed the “duty” of solidarity, so that our free lust for spontaneous love and voluntary parenthood acquires a heroic value in life.

We killed pity because it is a false christian emotion and because we want to create noble, unacknowledged generous egoism.

We strangled false social rights — creator of the humble, cowardly beggars — so that man will dig up his deepest, most secret “I” to find the power of the Unique.

Because we know it ourselves.

Life is tired of having stunted lovers.

Because the earth is tired of being uselessly trampled by huge hordes of stupid, chanting, praying, christian midgets.

And finally because we are also tired of these carrion “brothers” of ours who are incapable of peace or war. Inferior in hatred and in love.

Yes! We are sick and tired!

Humanity must be renewed.

We need a epic and barbaric song of new and virgin life sounds over the world.

*We're the carriers  
of blazing torches.  
We're the kindlers  
of crackling pyres.  
Our flag is black.  
Our road is the infinite.  
And our highest ideal  
is the peak and the abyss.*

We walk on!...

*We walk in the night  
with a sun in our mind,  
and with tow huge golden stars  
shining in our blazing eyes!*

We walk on...

And if our dream is an illusion?

And if our struggles are useless and vain? And if the renewal of humanity is impossible to accomplish?

Ah, no! We will walk on just the same.

For our own dignity.

For the love of our ideas.

For the freedom of our spirits.

For the passion of our mind.

For the necessity of our life.

Better to die as heroes in an effort of liberation and self-elevation than to vegetate as impotent cowards in this repugnant reality.

*Oh black flags,  
oh black trophies,  
emblems and symbols  
of eternal revolt.*

You who are the bloody evidence of all human audacity:  
You who are the destroyers of all prejudice:  
You who are the only real enemies of all human shame — of all sinister lies!  
You who sing eternal revolt, soaked in sorrow and blood!

*I grip it in my strong fist  
and in the midst of windy storms  
I raise it in the glory of the sun.  
In the glory of sun and the wind...  
Of wind and sun and light.*

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