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Toward the Creative Nothing

Renzo Novatore

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Toward the Creative Nothing
1924

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1924

Already the foreboding sky grows dark and silent!

Iconoclasts, Forward

History, materialism, monism, positivism and all the isms of this world are old and rusty tools which I don't need or mind anymore. My principle is life and my end is death. I wish to live my life intensely and embrace my death tragically.

You are waiting for the revolution? Let it be! My own began a long time ago! When you are ready (god, what an endless wait!) I won't mind going with you for a while. But when you stop, I shall continue on my way toward the great and sublime conquest of the nothing!

Any society that you build will have its limits. And outside the limits of any society, unruly and heroic tramps will wander with their wild and virgin thought — those who cannot live without planning ever new and dreadful outbursts of rebellion! I shall be among them!

And after me, as before me, there will be those saying to their fellows: "So turn to yourselves rather than to your gods and idols. Find what hides within you and bring it to the light; show yourselves!"

Because every person who, searching his own inwardness, extracts what was mysteriously hidden therein is a shadow eclipsing any form of society which can exist under the sun!

All societies tremble when the scornful aristocracy of tramps, inaccessible, unique ones, rulers over the ideal and conquerors of the nothing resolutely advances. So, come on, iconoclasts, forward!

Contents

Translator's Note	5
Translator's Introduction	5
Biographical Note	7
Introduction from the 1993 Edition Published by Centrolibri-Edizioni Anarchiche e Libertarie	8
Renzo Novatore	11
Toward the Creative Nothing	16
I	16
II	17
III	19
IV	20
V	22
VI	26
VII	27
VIII	29
IX	30
X	30
XI	35
XII	37
XIII	38
XIV	40
XV	40
XVI	41
XVII	45
Cry of Rebellion	48

My Opinions	49
Excerpt from <i>Vertices</i>	52
<i>Iconoclasts, Forward</i>	54

peaks, crouched together between the symbolic shrubs of a truly free art form. We will cultivate poisonous flowers of pure beauty in spite of the impish apes who live in the lowest marshlands of society and who will hurl their impotent curses toward our nest of violent hermits.

I've concluded my statement, but I haven't yet defined myself. I know that anyone, even the most humble of mortals, has the right to make a statement of this kind. But I also believe that aside from having the right, the true genius should regard it as an absolute duty.

Excerpt from *Vertices*

“We absolutely feel we are beyond all isms and theories. We will suppress the works of all nitwits and all scribblers who, by affiliating with the schools of the avant-garde, try to impose themselves on more original minds. We will absolutely refuse all works of purely technical virtuosity unless they serve to express an aesthetic rebellion. Dark, virgin. forces, laughing ravagers of the impossible, audacious explorers of the highest peaks and of the abyss, let’s thunder our howl of beauty to squash the verminous swarms of the stinking feeble-minded.”

I don’t announce or promise anything. There are too many lying prophets who make pronouncements on the possibility of a new life; and there are even more vulgarians who promise the world new christs with their unredeemed blood... Who are they? I don’t know! I can’t explain!... I know I am a mixture of modesty, pride, wisdom and ignorance, of virtue, cowardice and heroism, light and gloom, logic and absurdity. I am suspended above an abyss of unexplored depth with my eye fixed on a distant peak that may be nothing more than an illusion. I know that within me are sunlit and blossoming summits like fantastic summer gardens. I also know that there are dark hidden caverns that will never see the light of day.

I have found some friends who resemble me to some extent insofar as I resemble them to some extent and we have come together to build a crystalline house on the rocks of a vertex. But this is not why we consider ourselves gods. And there are eagles and there are snakes who, like the gods, love the virgin heights... and we are among them as well. We are all creatures, but creatures of the

Translator’s Note

In order to preserve the poetic integrity of this text, I did not conform it to contemporary standards of “political correctness”. I have also translated the introduction to the 1993 Italian edition of *Verso il Nulla Creatore*, which was the basis of my translation. A brief biographical note and a reminiscence from Novatore’s comrade, Enzo Martucci are included to give a feel for the man and his life.

Translator’s Introduction

It is difficult to find anarchist works in English that are at the same time “individualist” and explicitly revolutionary, that emphasize the centrality of the aim of individual self-determination to a revolution that will “communalize material wealth” as it will “individualize spiritual wealth”. For this and other reasons I chose to translate *Toward the Creative Nothing* by Renzo Novatore and publish several of his shorter pieces. Written shortly after World War I, as a revolution was occurring in Russia and uprisings were happening in Germany and Italy, this poetic text responds to the upheaval of its time with a call for a revolution that could truly move the human race beyond the spiritual impoverishment, the equality in baseness that democracy and socialism offered. Bourgeois society seemed to have reached its dusk, and Novatore saw the hope for a new dawn only in such a revolution — one that went beyond the mere economic demands of the socialists and communists — a revolution moved by great ideas and great passions that would break with the low values of bourgeois democratic civilization.

Novatore recognized that the war had simply reinforced the lowest and most cowardly of bourgeois values. The “proletarian frogs” just let themselves be led to the slaughter — killing each other for the cause of those who exploited them — because, in

spite of their exploitation, they continued to share the values of their masters, the “bourgeois toads” — the values of the belly, the democratic values of equality in baseness, the rule of survival over life.

In our time when the “great dusk” of bourgeois democratic society that is heralded in this text seems to have become an eternal dusk making the entire world a dull grey nightmare of survival, Novatore’s call to a destructive revolution based on great passions and ideas, on the dreams and desires of a mighty and strong-willed “I” seems more necessary than ever if we are to move beyond this pathetic swamp of mediocrity. Of course, no revolution can go very far without the insurrection of the exploited against their condition. But this is precisely the point: when the proletarians rise *up against their proletarianization*, this means taking their revolt beyond the demand for full bellies to the active appropriation of *full lives*.

Novatore recognized that one could not struggle against this order alone — that revolution was necessary, not just individual revolt. If he mocked the proletarians of his time, it is because they did not lift themselves above the bourgeois hordes with great dreams and great will. So, as Novatore could have predicted, the “great proletarian revolution” in Russia came to embrace the worst of bourgeois values and created a monstrous machine of exploitation. Starting from the bourgeois values of the belly that place productivity above all else, that anti-individual egalitarianism of survival above all, how could it do otherwise?

Now more than ever we need an anti-democratic, anti-capitalist, anti-state revolutionary movement which aims at the total liberation of every individual from all that prevents her from living his life in terms of her most beautiful dreams — dreams freed from the limits of the market. Such a movement must, of course, find ways to intervene in the real struggles of all the exploited, to move class conflict toward a real rupture with the social order and its survivalist values. These are matters we must wrestle now analyzing our

Man

A filthy paste of servitude, tyranny, fetishism, fear, vanity — and ignorance. The greatest offence one can commit against an ass is to call it a man.

Woman

The most brutal of enslaved beasts. The greatest victim shuffling on earth. And, after man, the most responsible for her problems. I’d be curious to know what goes through her mind when I kiss her.

tened by a vulgar christian creature. A medley of fetishism, sectarianism and cowardice.

Organizations, Legislative Bodies and Unions

Churches for the powerless. Pawnshops for the stingy and weak. Many join to live parasitically off the backs of their card-carrying simpleton colleagues. Some join to become spies. Others, the most sincere, join to end up in jail from where they can observe the mean-spiritedness of all the rest.

Solidarity

The macabre altar used by capable comedians of all sort to display their priestly talent for reciting masses. The beneficiaries pay nothing less than 100% humiliation.

Friendship

Fortunate are those who have drunk from its chalice without having their souls offended or poisoned. If one such person exists, I urge them to send me their photograph. I'm sure to look upon the face of an idiot.

Love

Deception of the flesh and damage to the spirit. Disease of the soul, atrophy of the brain, weakening of the heart, corruption of the senses, poetic lies from which one gets ferociously inebriated two or three times a day in order to consume this precious but stupid life more quickly. And yet I would prefer to die of love. It's the only swindler, after Judas, that can kill with a kiss.

present situation to find the openings for our insurrectional project. Novatore's text is a light of poetry and passion — one light among many — which may help us to pierce through the gloom of the capitalist technological dusk that surrounds us — a ray of singularity breaking through the dinginess of the present mediocrity with its call for the revolution of the mightiest dreams.

Biographical Note

Renzo Novatore is the pen-name of Abele Rizieri Ferrari who was born in Arcola, Italy (a village of La Spezia) on May 12, 1890 to a poor peasant family. Unwilling to adapt to scholastic discipline, he only attended a few months of the first grade of grammar school and then left school forever. Though his father forced him to work on the farm, his strong will and thirst for knowledge led him to become a self-taught poet and philosopher. Exploring these matters outside the limits imposed by the educational system, as a youth he read Stirner, Nietzsche, Wilde, Ibsen, Baudelaire, Schopenhauer and many others with a critical mind.

From 1908 on, he considered himself an anarchist. In 1910, he was charged with the burning of a local church and spent three months in prison. A year later, he went on the lam for several months because the police wanted him for theft and robbery. On September 30, 1911, the police arrested him for vandalism. In 1914, he began to write for anarchist papers. He was drafted during the first World War. He deserted his regiment on April 26, 1918 and was sentenced to death by a military tribunal for desertion and high treason on October 31. He left his village and went on the lam, propagating the armed uprising against the state.

On June 30, 1919, a farmer sold him to the police after an uprising in La Spezia. He was sentenced to ten years in prison, but was released in a general amnesty a few months later. He rejoined the anarchist movement and took part in various insurrectionary

endeavors. In 1920, the police arrested him again for an armed assault on an arms depository at the naval barracks in Val di Fornola. Several months later, he was free, and participated in another insurrectionary endeavor that failed because of a snitch.

In the summer of 1922, three trucks full of fascists stopped in front of his home, where he lived with his wife and two sons. The fascists surrounded the house, but Novatore used grenades against them and was able to escape. He went underground one more time.

On November 29, 1922, Novatore and his comrade, Sante Pollastro, went into a tavern in Teglia. Three *carabinieri* (Italian military police) followed them inside. When the two anarchists tried to leave, the *carabinieri* began shooting. The warrant officer killed Novatore, but was then killed by Pollastro. One *carabiniere* ran away, and the last begged Pollastro for mercy. The anarchist escaped without shooting him.

Renzo Novatore wrote for many anarchist papers (*Cronaca Libertaria*, *Il Libertario*, *Iconoclasta!*, *Gli Scamiciati*, *Nichilismo*, *Pagine Libere*) where he debated with other anarchists (among them Camillo Berneri). He published a magazine, *Vertice*, that has unfortunately been lost. In 1924, an individualist anarchist group published two pamphlets of his writings: *Al Disopra dell'Arco* and *Verso il Nulla Creatore*.

Introduction from the 1993 Edition Published by Centrolibri-Edizioni Anarchiche e Libertarie

About 70 years since its first publication, *Toward the Creative Nothing* seems to really maintain its destructive force intact. This characteristic of unchanging timeliness, in spite of every upsetting social occurrence and beyond the literary form, is common to a great many of the writings of individualist anarchists, that is to say, of those who did not base their lives on a social and economic

My Opinions

God

The creation of a sick fantasy. Inhabitant of senile and impotent brains. Companion and comforter of rancid spirits born to slavery. A pill for constipated minds. Marxism for the faint of heart.

Humanity

An abstract word with a negative connotation, long on power, short on truth. An obscene mask painted on the mean face of a shrewd vulgarian for the purpose of dominating the multitude of sentimentalist idiots and imbeciles.

Country

Penal servitude for the semi-intelligent, a cowshed of imbecility. A Circe who transforms her adoring fans into dogs and pigs. A prostitute for the master, a pimp of the foreigner. Child-eater, parent-slanderer and scoffer at heroes.

Family

The denial of love, life and liberty.

Socialism

Discipline, discipline; obedience, obedience; slavery and ignorance, pregnant with authority. A bourgeois body grotesquely fat-

Cry of Rebellion

But if Socrates and Christ by their senseless deaths had to undergo horrendous bloody suffering, then wouldn't all revolutions fought in their names be equally bloody and senseless? The victory of Christianity over the enviable paganism, the establishment of republics, the conquests of empires, the liberal, constitutional or absolute monarchies and democracies — were they not all consequences of the bloody torrents of war and revolution? The violent pulse of all revolutions fought in the name of ancient phantoms in order to erect new phantoms...

What possible value could these phantoms have for me, the iconoclast, the killer of phantoms, the shatterer of idols old and new? And what possible benefit could the triumph of Christianity have for me since I am the anti-christian *par excellence*? And what about the republics, monarchies and all forms of society that can only accept me as a “Christian”, a “subject”, a “citizen”, a “member”, etc., etc.? All forms of society have systems to do one thing: Equalize! And all forms of society consider themselves the perfect one. And it is this dogma of perfection that obstructs the restless rebel who refuses to bow to its new god... And I'm so revolutionary that I barely recognize myself. And do you know why I am a barely recognizably revolutionary? Because I am guided only by the tremendous and unstoppable impulse of MY desire to expand the force of my own will. I am not guided by phantoms, I do my own walking; it is not the illusion of a perfect society or the universal redemption of humanity, but the absolute need to affirm my potential in spite of all other forces.

program that was to be realized — the validity of which could only be determined by History — but on the individual, on being a real human being in flesh and bone. (This very probably explains the recent revival of enthusiasm for the work of Stirner.)

But the enhanced value of the individual cannot and must not decay into the constitution of a new school, a new ideology which in a time of uncertainty like the one that we are going through could attract all those — and they are many — who go in search of a point of unshakeable support. One cannot substitute the Individual for the Party merely because it is considered exempt from every critique in relation to social reality. In conclusion the greatest risk is that of enclosing oneself in the classic ivory tower, as many individualist anarchists in the past had, in fact, done.

Many, but not all. Here then is the reprint of the work by Renzo Novatore that allows us to rediscover his figure under several aspects that are exceptional in the individualist anarchist, since it not only gets rid of possible speculations about individualism, but is, at the same time, a call to struggle with a timeliness that is at times amazing.

Among those who declare themselves to be individualist anarchists, Renzo Novatore undoubtedly occupies a place of remark, being one of the greatest examples of that which in past epochs was called “heroic and iconoclastic anarchism”. Man of thought and action, in the course of his life, Novatore had a way most of the time of showing his own uniqueness.

During the First World War, when interventionism picked up not a few followers among the anarchists, particularly within the ranks of the individualists, Novatore lined himself up resolutely against the war, deserting with arms in hand and being condemned to death for it by the tribunal in La Spezia. Unlike the great portion of other individualists who amused themselves with academic meditations on the “I”. Novatore live as an outlaw committing *attempts* and expropriations and actively participating in numerous

insurrectional endeavors until he was killed in a gun battle with *carabinieri* in 1922.

Anti-dogmatic, he entered into polemics with both the muscle-bound anarchist organizers of the UAI (Union of Italian Anarchists) – he had a most violent argument with Camillo Berneri – and with the spokespeople of a certain type of anarchist individualism (like Carlo Molaschi) often and willingly. For Novatore – a reader of Stirner, but not for that a disciple of stirnerism – the affirmation of the individual, the continuous tension toward freedom, led inevitably to the struggle against the existent, to the violent battle against authority and against every type of “wait – and see” attitude.

Written around 1921, *Toward the Creative Nothing*, which visibly feels the effects of Nietzsche’s influence on the author, attacks christianity, socialism, democracy, fascism one after the other, showing the material and spiritual destitution in them. All that which has led to the decadence of the individual, that which subjected it under various pretexts to “social phantoms” is assailed with iconoclastic fury. With this critique of that which belittles the uniqueness of the individual – which is still valid now – Novatore demolishes all the widespread commonplaces on the worth of individuals. At times with a smile on his lips and at other times with rage, Novatore refutes anyone who imagines him closed in the cloister of philosophical speculation; he drives back the accusations of those who believe him to be a blind negator, one deprived of projectuality; he shows the absurdity of those who believe him to be opposed to the revolution and favorable only to individual revolt. All of this without ever missing an opportunity to affirm the uniqueness of the individual, the greatness of the dream. The force of desire, the beauty of anarchy. In other words, here is what today has come to be considered out-of-date, but which perhaps is more simply out of fashion.

Certainly, a lot of time has passed since the writing of this text. But the triumph of democracy, the survival of stalinism, the rebirth

As the poet transforms his lyre into a dagger!
As the philosopher transforms his probe into a bomb!
As the fisherman transforms his oar into a formidable ax.
As the miner comes up from the unbearable caves of the dark
mines armed with his shining iron.
As the farmer transforms his fruitful spade into a war lance.
As the laborer transforms his hammer into a scythe and cleaver.
And forward, forward, forward.
It is time, it is time – it is time!
And society will fall.
The fatherland will fall.
The family will fall.
All will fall after the Free Man is born.
Forward, forward, forward, oh joyful destroyers.
Beneath the black edge of death we will conquer Life!
Laughing!
And we will make it our slave!
Laughing!
And we will love it laughing!
Since the only serious people are those who know how to be
actively engaged laughing.
And our hatred laughs...
Red laughter. Forward!
Forward, for the destruction of the lie and of the phantoms!
Forward, for the complete conquest of individuality and of Life!

Of our dead!
 The voice of the blood that cries from underground!
 Of the blood that wants to free itself from its prison to hurl itself
 toward the sky and conquer the stars!
 Those stars that — blessing them — sparkled in their pupils at
 in the final moment of death, transforming their dreamy eyes into
 vast discs of gold.
 Because the eyes of the dead — of our dead — are discs of gold.
 They are luminous meteors that wander the infinite to point out
 the way to us.
 The way without end that is the pathway to eternity.
 The eyes of our dead tell us the “why” of life, showing us the
 secret fire that burns in our mystery. In that our secret mystery
 that nobody has sung up to now...
 But today the twilight is red...
 The sunset is covered with blood...
 We are close to the tragic celebration of the great social dusk.
 Already, on the bells of history, time has struck the first predawn
 strokes of a new day.
 Enough, enough, enough!
 It is the hour of the social tragedy!
 We will destroy laughing.
 We will set fires laughing.
 We will kill laughing.
 We will expropriate laughing.
 And society will fall.
 The fatherland will fall.
 The family will fall.
 All will fall after the free man is born.
 The one is born who has learned the Dionysian art of joy and
 laughter through tears and sorrow.
 The hour has come to drown the enemy in blood...
 The hour has come to wash our minds in blood.
 Enough, enough, enough!

of fascism, the deluge of technology, the universalization of com-
 modities, the validation carried out by the mass media, the reduc-
 tion of language, the contempt for utopia; this is what conspires to
 drown the individual in a sea of mediocrity, to tame its uniqueness,
 to placate every instinct of revolt within it, to render it incapable of
 love as well as hatred, impotent in its quiet life — all this is frighten-
 ingly current. Here this is because it renders that which can serve
 to desecrate and combat this situation equally current.

One thing is certain, only one who prefers the stormy sea to
 stagnant water will surely know how to appreciate the iconoclastic
 work of Renzo Novatore.

M.S.

Renzo Novatore

*By Enzo Martucci (revised from a translation by Stephen Mari-
 etta)*

My soul is a sacrilegious temple
 in which the bells of sin and crime,
 voluptuous and perverse,
 loudly ring out revolt and despair.

These words written in 1920, give us a glimpse of the
 promethean being of Renzo Novatore.

Novatore was a poet of the free life. Intolerant of every chain
 and limitation, he wanted to follow every impulse that rose within
 him. He wanted to understand everything and experience all sen-
 sations — those which lead to the abyss and those which lead to
 the stars. And then at death to melt into nothingness, having lived
 intensely and heroically so as to reach his full power as a complete
 man.

The son of a poor farmer from Arcola, Italy, Abile Riziero Ferrari (Renzo Novatore) soon showed his great sensibility and rebelliousness. When his father wanted him to plow the fields he would flee, stealing fruit and chickens to sell so that he could buy books to read under a tree in the forest. In this way he educated himself and quickly developed a taste for non-conformist writers. In these he found reasons for his instinctive aversion to oppression and restriction, to the principles and institutions that reduce men to obedience and renunciation.

As a young man he joined the Arcola group of anarcho-communists, but he was not satisfied with the harmony and limited freedom of the new society they awaited so eagerly. "I am with you in destroying the tyranny of existing society," he said, "but when you have done this and begun to build anew, then I will oppose and go beyond you."

Until he was fifteen years old, Renzo included the church in his poetry. After that, freed and unprejudiced, he never planted any roots in the gregarious existence of his village, but often found himself in conflict with both men and the law. He scandalized his respectable family, who wondered what they had done to deserve such a devil...

... Novatore, who was influenced by Baudelaire and Nietzsche, asserted that we had needs and aspirations that could not be satisfied without injury to the needs and aspirations of others. Therefore we must either renounce them and become slaves, or satisfy them and come into conflict with Society, whatever kind it may be, even if it calls itself anarchist. Novatore:

Anarchy is not a social form, but a method of individuation. No society will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants to each of its members. But I am not content with this and want more. I want all that I have the power to conquer. Every society seeks to confine me to the august limits

Because — with us — everything must be pushed to its maximum consequences.

Even Hatred.

Even violence.

Even crime!

Because Hatred gives strength.

Violence unhinges.

Crime renews.

Cruelty creates.

And we want to un hinge, to renew, to create!

Because everything that is dwarfed vulgarity must be overcome.

Because all that lives must be great.

Because all that is great belongs to beauty!

And life must be beautiful!

XVII

We have killed "duty" so that our ardent desire for free brotherhood acquires heroic valor in life.

We have killed "pity" because we are barbarians capable of great love.

We have killed "altruism" because we are generous egoists.

We have killed "philanthropic solidarity" so that the social man unearths his most secret "I" and finds the strength of the "Unique".

Because we know it. Life is tired of having stunted lovers.

Because the earth is tired of feeling itself trampled by long phalanxes of dwarfs chanting christian prayers.

And finally, because we are tired of our brothers, carcasses incapable of peace and of war. Inferior to hatred and to love.

We are tired and disgusted.

Yes, quite tired: quite disgusted!

And then that voice of the dead...

We are the predawn ones who drink the dew from the chalice of flowers.

But the flowers have glowing roots attached in the darkness of the earth.

In that earth which has drunk your blood.

Oh dead! Oh our dead!

This, your blood that cries, that roars, that wants to be freed from its prison to hurl itself toward the sky and conquer the stars!

Those, your remote and luminous sisters who have seen you die. And we — the vagabonds of the spirit, the solitaries of the idea — want our mind, free and great, to open its wings wide in the sun.

We want to celebrate the social dusk in this twilight of bourgeois society so that the final black night is made vermilion with blood.

Because the children of the dawn must be born of blood... Because the monsters of the darkness must be killed by dawn...

Because the new individual ideas must be born through social tragedies...

Because the new people must be forged in the fire!

And only from tragedy, from fire and from blood will the true, profound Antichrist of humanity and of thought be born.

The true child of the earth and the sun.

The Antichrist must be born of the smoking ruins of revolution to enliven the children of the new dawn.

Because the Antichrist is the one who comes from the abyss to rise beyond every boundary.

He is the strong-willed enemy of crystallization, of pre-establishment, of conservation!...

He is the one who will drive the human race through the mysterious cavern of the unknown to the perennial unveiling of new sources of life and of thought.

And we — the free spirits, the atheists of solitude, the demons of the desert without witness — have ourselves already pushed ourselves toward the most extreme peaks.

of the permitted and the prohibited . But I do not acknowledge these limits, for nothing is forbidden and all is permitted to those who have the force and the valor.

Consequently, anarchy, which is the natural liberty of the individual freed from the odious yoke of spiritual and material rulers, is not the construction of a new and suffocating society.' It is a decisive fight against all societies — christian, democratic, socialist, communist, etc., etc. Anarchism is the eternal struggle of a small minority of aristocratic outsiders against all societies which follow one another on the stage of history.

Those were the ideas expressed by Novatore in *Il Libertario* of La Spezia, *L'Iconoclasta* of Pistoia, and other anarchist journals. And these were the ideas that then influenced me as I was well prepared to receive them.

During World War I Novatore refused to fight for a cause that was not his own and took to the mountains. Astute, courageous, vigilant, his pistol at the ready the authorities failed at every attempt to capture him. At the end of the war the deserters were amnestied and he was able to return to his village where his wife and son were waiting for him.

I was sixteen years old and had run away from home and my studies, freeing myself from my bourgeois family, who had done everything they could to stop my anarchist activities. Passing through Saranza on my way to Milan, I stopped to get to know Novatore, having read his article "My Iconoclastic Individualism". Renzo came at once to meet me together with another anarchist called Lucherini.

We passed unforgettable hours together. Our discussions were long and he helped me fill gaps in my thinking, setting me on my way to the solution of many fundamental problems. I was struck by his enthusiasm.

His appearance was impressive. Of medium height he was athletic in build, and had a large forehead. His eyes were vivacious and expressed sensibility, intelligence and force. He had an ironic smile that revealed the contempt of a superior spirit for men and the world. He was thirty-one years old, but already had the aura of genius.

After two months wandering around Italy with the police at my heels, I returned to Arcola to see Renzo again. But Emma, his wife, told me that he was also hunted and that I could only meet him at night in the forest.

Once again we had long discussions and I was able to appreciate his exceptional qualities as a poet, philosopher and man of action even more. I valued the power of his intellect and his fine sensitivity which was like that of a Greek god or a divine beast. We parted for the last time at dawn.

Both of us were existing under terrible conditions. We were in open struggle against Society, which would have liked to throw us in jail. Renzo had been attacked in his house at Fresonaro by a band of armed fascists who intended to kill him, but he had driven them off with home-made grenades. After that he had to keep a safe distance from the village.

Despite being an outlaw, he continued to develop his individualist anarchist ideas in libertarian papers. I did the same and we aroused the anger of the theoreticians of anarcho-communism. One of them, Professor Camillo Berneri, described us in the October, 1920 issue of *L'Iconoclasta* as "Paranoid megalomaniacs, exalters of a mad philosophy and decadent literature, feeble imitators of the artists of opium and hashish, sirens at so much an hour."

I could not reply because in the meantime I had been arrested and shut up in a House of Correction. But Renzo replied for both of us and took "this bookworm in whom it is difficult to find the spirit and fire of a true anarchist" to task.

Oh dead, oh dead! Oh our dead! Oh torches! Oh beacons! Oh pyres!

We have heard you speak in the solemn silence of our deep nights.

You said:

"We wanted to ascend in the sky of the free sun...

We wanted to ascend in the sky of the free life...

We wanted to ascend up there where once the penetrating eyes of the pagan poet gazed:

Where the great thoughts arise and stand as inviolable oaks among the people; where beauty descends, invoked by the pure poets, and stands serene among the people; where love creates life and breathes joy!

Up above where life exults and expands in full harmony of splendor...

And for this, for this dream we struggled, for this great dream we died...

And our struggle was called crime.

But our 'crime' must only be considered as titanic valor, as promethean effort for liberation.

Because we are the enemies of all material domination and all spiritual leveling.

Because, beyond all slavery and every dogma, we saw life dance free and naked.

And our death must teach you the beauty of the heroic life!"

Oh dead, oh dead! Oh our dead...

We have heard your voice...

We have heard it speak this way in the solemn silence of our deep nights.

Deep, deep, deep!

Because we are sensitives.

Our heart is a torch, our mind is a beacon, our brain is a pyre!...

We are the soul of life!...

That is ancient history!
 It can turn back no more.
 To attempt to turn back — as socialism does — would be a use-
 less and vain crime.
 We must leap into the abyss.
 We must answer the voice of the dead.
 Of those dead who have fallen with immense stars of gold in
 their pupils.
 It is necessary to cultivate the soil.
 To free the blood from underground.
 Because it wants to rise to the stars.
 It wants to burn its good sisters, luminous and distant, who have
 seen them die.
 The dead, our dead, speak:
 “We have died with stars in our eyes.
 We have died with rays of the sun in our pupils.
 We have died with hearts swollen with dreams.
 We have died with the song of the most beautiful hope in our
 mind.
 We have died with the fire of an idea in our brain.
 We have died...”
 How sad death must be as the others died — not our dead —
 without all this in the brain, in the mind, in the heart, in the eyes,
 in the pupils!
 Oh dead, oh dead! Oh our dead! Oh luminous torches! Oh burn-
 ing beacons! Oh crackling pyres! Oh dead...
 Here it is, we are at twilight.
 The tragic celebration of the great social dusk draws near.
 Our great mind already opens toward the great subterranean
 light, oh dead!
 Because we too have the stars in our eyes, the sun in our pupils,
 the dream in our heart, the song of hope in our mind and, in our
 brain, an idea.
 Yes, we too, we too!

More than a year later I was provisionally released from prison,
 but I could find out nothing regarding the whereabouts of Renzo.
 Finally I received the terrible news that he had been killed.

He was at an inn in Bolzaneto, near Genova, along with the in-
 trepid illegalist S.P., when a group of *carabinieri* arrived disguised
 as hunters. Novatore and S. P. immediately opened fire and the po-
 lice responded. The tragic result was two dead, Renzo and Maras-
 ciallo Lempano of the *carabinieri*, and one policeman wounded.
 This was in 1922: a few months before the fascist march on Rome.

So a great and original poet, who, putting his thoughts and feel-
 ings into action, attacked the mangy herd of sheep and shepherds,
 died at the age of thirty three. He showed that life can be lived in
intensity, not in *duration* as the cowardly mass want and practice.

After his death it was discovered that, together with a few oth-
 ers, he was preparing to strike at society and tear from it that which
 it denies the individual. And in the Assizes Court where his accom-
 plices were tried, a prosecuting counsel acknowledged his bravery
 and called him “a strange blend of light and darkness, love and an-
 archy, the sublime and the criminal.”

A few friends collected some of his writings and posthumously
 published them in two volumes: *Above Authority (Al Disopra
 dell’Arco)* and *Toward the Creative Nothing (Verso il Nulla Creatore)*.
 Other writings remained with his family or were lost.

So an exceptional man lived and died — the man I felt was clos-
 est to me in his ideals and aspirations. He described himself as “an
 atheist of solitude.” He wanted to “ravish the impossible” and em-
 braced life like an ardent lover. He was a lofty conquistador of im-
 mortality and power, who wanted to bring all to the maximum
 splendor of beauty.

Toward the Creative Nothing

I

Our epoch is an epoch of decadence. Bourgeois-christian-plebeian civilization arrived at the dead end of its evolution a long time ago.

Democracy has arrived!

But under the false splendor of democratic civilization, higher spiritual values have fallen, shattered.

Willful strength, barbarous individuality, free art, heroism, genius, poetry have been scorned, mocked, slandered.

And not in the name of “I”, but of the “collective”. Not in the name of “the unique one”, but of society.

Thus christianity — condemning the primitive and wild force of the virgin instinct — killed the vigorously pagan “concept” of the joy of the earth. Democracy — its offspring — glorified itself making the justification for this crime and reveling in its grim and vulgar enormity.

Already we knew it!

Christianity had brutally planted the poisoned blade in the healthy, quivering flesh of all humanity; it had goaded a cold wave of darkness with mystically brutal fury to dim the serene and festive exultation of the dionysian spirit of our pagan ancestors.

In one cold evening, winter fatally fell upon a warm midday of summer. It was *christianity* that, substituting the phantasm of “god” for the vibrant reality of “I”, declared itself the fierce enemy of the joy of living and avenged itself knavishly on earthly life.

Because, if when the nation, if when the state, if when democratic Italy, if when bourgeois society trembled in pain and agony in the knotty and powerful hands of the “proletariat” in revolt, socialism had not basely hindered the tragic deadly hold — losing the lamps of reason in front of its wide-opened eyes — certainly fascism would never even have been born, let alone lived.

But the awkward colossus without mind is then allowed to take hold — for fear that the vagabonds of the idea would push the movement of revolt beyond the appointed mark — in a most vulgar game of sullen conservative pity and false human love.

Thus, bourgeois Italy, instead of dying, brought forth...

It brought forth fascism!

Because fascism is the stunted and deformed creature born of the impotent love of socialism for the bourgeoisie.

One of them is the father, and the other the mother. But neither wants the responsibility for it.

Perhaps they find it a child much too monstrous.

And this is the reason they call it a “bastard”!

And it gets revenge.

Already wretched enough for being born this way, it rebels against the father and insults the mother...

And perhaps it has reason...

But we, we bring all this out for history.

For history and for truth, not for ourselves.

For us fascism is a poisonous mushroom planted quite well in the rotten heart of society, that is enough for us.

XVI

Only the great vagabonds of the idea can — and must — be the luminous spiritual fulcrum of the tempestuous revolution, which advances in gloom upon the world.

Blood requires blood.

After the negating celebration of the social dusk, we will celebrate the rite of the “I”: the great noon of the complete and actual individual.

So that the night triumphs no more.

So that the darkness surrounds us no more.

So that the majestic fire of the sun perpetuates its feast of light in the sky and in the sea.

XIV

Fascism is an obstacle much too ephemeral and impotent to hinder the course of human thought that bursts beyond every dam and overflows beyond every boundary, stirring action on its way.

Fascism is impotent because it is brute force.

It is matter without spirit; it is night without dawn.

Fascism is the other face of socialism.

Both of them are bodies without minds.

XV

Socialism is the material force that, acting as the shadow of a dogma, resolves and dissolves in a spiritual “no”.

Fascism is a consumptive of the spiritual “no” that aims — wretch — at a material yes.

Both lack willful quality.

They are the bores of time; the temporizers of the deed!

They are reactionary and conservative.

They are crystallized fossils that the strong-willed dynamism of history that passes will sweep away together.

Because, in the willful field of moral and spiritual values, the two enemies are equal.

And it is well known that when fascism is born, socialism alone is its direct accomplice and responsible father.

With christianity Life was sent to mourn in the frightful abysses of the most bitter renunciations; she was pushed toward the glacier of disavowal and death. And from this glacier of disavowal and death, democracy was born.

Thus democracy — the mother of socialism — is the daughter of christianity.

II

With the triumph of democratic civilization the spiritual mob was glorified. With its fierce anti-individualism — democracy — being incapable of understanding such a thing — trampled all the heroic beauty of the anti-collectivist and creative “I”.

The bourgeois toads and the proletarian frogs clasped each other’s hands in a common spiritual baseness, piously receiving communion from the lead cup containing the slimy liquor of the very social lies that democracy handed to each of them.

And the songs that bourgeois and proletarian raised at their spiritual communion were a common and noisy “Hurrah!” to the victorious and triumphant Goose.

And while the “Hurrah!”’s burst forth high and frenzied, she — democracy — pressed the plebeian cap on her forehead, proclaiming — grim and savage irony — the equal rights... of Man!

It was then that the Eagle, in his prudent awareness, beat his titanic wings more swiftly, soaring — disgusted by the trivial performance — toward the peak of meditation.

Thus, the democratic Goose remained queen of the world and lady of all things, imperial mistress and sovereign.

But since something waiting above her laughed, she — by means of socialism, her only true son — moved to hurl a stone and a word, in the low swampy realm where the toads and frogs croaked, to raise a materialistic fistfight in order to make it pass through a titanic war to superb ideas and to spirituality. And in

the marshes, the fistfight happened. It happened in such a plebeian manner as to spray mud so high that it stained the stars.

Thus, everything was contaminated with democracy.

Everything!

Even that which was best here.

Even that which was worst here.

In the reign of democracy, the struggles that were opened between capital and labor were stunted struggles, impotent ghosts of war, deprived of all content of high spirituality and of brave revolutionary greatness, unable to create a different concept of life, stronger and more beautiful.

Bourgeois and proletarian, though clashing over questions of class, of power and of the belly, still always remained united in common hatred against the great vagabonds of the spirit, against the solitaries of the idea. Against all those stricken by thought, against all those transfigured by a superior beauty.

With democratic civilization, Christ has triumphed.

In addition to paradise in heaven, “the poor in spirit” had democracy on earth.

If the triumph has not yet been completed, socialism will complete it. In its theoretical conception, it has already announced itself for a long time. It aims to “level” all human worth.

Listen, oh youthful spirits!

The war against the human individual was begun by Christ in the name of god, was developed by democracy in the name of society and threatens to complete itself in socialism in the name of humanity.

If we do not know in time how to destroy these three absurd as well as dangerous phantoms, the individual will be inexorably lost.

It is necessary that the revolt of the “I” expands itself, broadens itself, generalizes itself!

We — the forerunners of the time — have already lit the beacons!

We have lit the torches of thought.

We have brandished the ax of action.

Bourgeois and plebeian society is shattered fatally, inexorably! The fascist phenomenon is the most certain and irrefutable proof of it.

To demonstrate it, we would only need to go back in time and question history.

But there is no need for this!

The present speaks with abundant eloquence!

Fascism is nothing but the convulsive and cruel pang of a plebeian society, emasculated and vulgar, that agonizes tragically drowned in the quagmire of its flaws and of its own lies.

It — fascism — celebrates these its bacchanals with pyres of flame and wicked orgies of blood.

But from the gloomy crackle of its livid fires, it does not sparkle with even a single spark of vigorous, innovative spirituality, whereas the blood that it sheds transforms itself into wine that the forerunners of the time silently gather in the red chalices of hatred, addressing it as the heroic beverage in order to commune with all the offspring of social sorrow called to the twilight celebration of the dusk.

Because the great forerunners of the time are the brothers and the friends of the offspring of sorrow.

Of sorrow that struggles.

Of sorrow that rises.

Of sorrow that creates.

We will take these unknown brothers by the hand to advance together against all the “no” of denial, and to climb together toward all the “yes” of affirmation; toward a new spiritual dawn; toward new noons of life.

Because we are lovers of danger; the reckless ones in all undertakings, the conquerors of the impossible, the promoters and precursors of all “endeavors”!

Because life is an endeavor!

Our brain is a sparkling pyre, where the crackling fire of thought burns in joyful torments.

Our mind is a solitary oasis, always flowering and cheerful, where a secret music sings the complicated melody of our winged mystery.

And in our brain all the winds of the mountains cry to us; in our flesh all the tempests of the sea shout to us; all the Nymphs of Evil; our dreams are actual heavens inhabited by thrilling virgin muses.

We are the true demons of Life.

The forerunner of the time.

The first announcements!

Our vital exuberance intoxicates us with strength and with scorn.

It teaches us to despise Death.

XIII

Today we have reached the tragic celebration of a great social dusk.

The twilight is red.

The sunset is bloody.

Anxiety flaps its throbbing wings in the wind.

Wings red with blood; wings black with death!

In the shadow Sorrow organized the army of her unknown children.

Beauty is in the garden of Life, and is weaving garlands of flowers to crown the brows of the heroes.

The free spirits have already hurled their thunderbolts across the twilight.

As first announcements of fire: first signals of war!

Our epoch is under the wheels of history.

Democratic civilization turns toward the grave.

And we have smashed.

And we have unhinged.

But our individual "crimes" must be the fatal announcement of a great social storm.

The great and dreadful storm that will smash all the structures of the conventional lies, that will unhinge the walls of all hypocrisy, that will reduce the old world to a heap of ruins and smoking rubble!

Because it is from these ruins of god, of society, of family and of humanity that the new human mind could be born flourishing and festive, that new human mind which — on the rubble of all the past — will sing the birth of the liberated man: the free and great "I".

III

Christ was a paradoxical misunderstanding from the gospels. He was a sad and sorrowful phenomenon of decadence, born of pagan fatigue.

The Antichrist is the healthy son of all the bold hatred that Life has bred in the secrecy of its own fecund breast, during the twenty and more centuries of christian order.

Because history returns.

Because eternal return is the law that rules the universe.

It is the destiny of the world!

It is the axis around which life itself turns!

To perpetuate itself.

To run itself back.

To contradict itself.

To pursue itself.

To not die.

Because life is a movement, an action.

That pursues thought.

That yearns for thought.
 That loves thought.
 And this being walks, runs, bustles around.
 Life wants to stir in the kingdom of ideas.
 But when the way is impractical, then, thought weeps.
 It weeps and despairs...
 Then weariness makes it weak, renders it christian.
 Then it takes its sister life in hand and seeks to confine her in
 the realm of death.
 But the Antichrist — the spirit of the most mysterious and pro-
 found instinct — calls Life back to himself, shouting barbarically to
 her: Let's begin again!
 And Life begins again!
 Because it does not want to die.
 And if Christ symbolizes the weariness of life, the sunset of
 thought: the death of the idea!
 The Antichrist symbolizes the instinct of life.
 He symbolizes the resurrection of thought.
 The Antichrist is the symbol of a new dawn.

IV

If the dying democratic (bourgeois-christian-plebeian) civiliza-
 tion succeeded in leveling the human mind, denying every high
 spiritual value that stands out above it, it — fortunately — did not
 succeed in leveling the differences of class, of privilege, and of caste,
 which — as we have already said — remained divided only over a
 question of the belly.

Since — for the one class as for the other — the belly remained —
 it is necessary to confess it and not only to confess it as the supreme
 ideal. And socialism understood all this.

It understood it, and since it was a skillful — and at last, perhaps,
 practically useful — speculator, it cast the poison of its coarse doc-

Because we hear the voice of the blood that cries from under-
 ground.

We prepare the paravanes and the torches, oh young miners.
 The abyss awaits us. We leap into it in the end: Toward the creative
 nothing.

XII

Our nihilism is not christian nihilism.

We do not deny life.

No! We are the great iconoclasts of the lie.

And all that is declared “sacred” is a lie.

We are the enemies of the “sacred”.

And to you a law is “sacred”; a society “sacred”; a moral “sa-
 cred”; an idea “sacred”!

But we — the masters and lovers of pitiless strength and strong-
 willed beauty, of the ravishing idea — we, the iconoclasts of all
 that is consecrated — we laugh satanically, with a fine broad and
 mocking laughter.

We laugh!...

And laughing, we keep the bow of our pagan will to enjoy al-
 ways strained toward the full integrity of life.

And we write our truths with laughter.

And we write our passions with blood.

And we laugh! .. .

We laugh the fine healthy and red laughter of hatred.

We laugh the fine blue and fresh laughter of love.

We laugh!

But laughing, we remember, with supreme gravity, to be the le-
 gitimate offspring and the worthy heirs of a great libertarian aris-
 tocracy that transmitted to us satanic outbursts of mad heroism in
 the blood, and waves of poetry, of solos, of songs in the flesh!

We come from the heights: to laugh and to curse!

We have come to light a forest of pyres upon the earth to illuminate it during the night which precedes the great noon.

And our pyres will be extinguished when the fire of the sun bursts majestically over the sea. And if this day should not come, our pyres will continue to crackle tragically amidst the darkness of the eternal night.

Because we love all that is great.

We are the lovers of every miracle, the promoters of every prodigy, the creators of every wonder!

Yes: we know it!

For you, great things are in good as in evil.

But we live beyond good and evil, because all that is great belongs to beauty.

Even “crime”.

Even “perversity”.

Even “sorrow”.

And we want to be great like our crime!

In order not to slander it.

We want to be great like our perversity!

In order to render it conscious.

We want to be great like our sorrow.

In order to be worthy of it.

Because we come from the heights. From the home of Beauty. We have come to raise a forest of pyres upon the earth to illuminate it during the night which precedes the great noon.

Until the hour in which the fire of the sun bursts majestically over the sea.

Because we want to celebrate the feast of the great human prodigy.

We want our minds to vibrate in a new dream.

We want this tragic social dusk to give our “I” some calm and thrilling tinder of universal light.

Because we are the nihilists of social phantoms.

trine of equality (equality of lice before the sacred majesty of the sovereign state) into the wells of slavery where innocence blissfully quenched its thirst.

But the poison that socialism spread was not the powerful poison capable of giving heroic virtue to anyone who drank it. No: it was not the radical poison capable of performing the miracle that elevates the human mind — transfiguring it and freeing it. Rather it was a hybrid blend of “yes” and “no”. A livid mixture of “authority” and “faith”, of “state” and of “the future”.

So that, through socialism, the proletarian mob once again felt close to the bourgeois mob and together they turned toward the horizon, faithfully awaiting the Sun of the Future!

And this because, while socialism was not able to transform the shivering hands of the slaves into so many iconoclastic, pitiless and rapacious claws, it was also incapable of transforming the mean avarice of the tyrants into the high and superior virtue of generosity.

With socialism, the corrupt and viscous circle created by christianity and developed by democracy was not broken. Instead it consolidated itself better.

Socialism remained as a dangerous and impractical bridge between the tyrant and the slave; as a false link of conjunction; as the ambiguity of the “yes” and the “no” from which its absurd underlying principle is mixed.

And, once again, we saw the fatally obscene joke that disgusted us. We saw socialism, proletariat and bourgeoisie, together reenter the orbit of the lowest spiritual poverty to worship democracy. But democracy — being the people that governed the people by beatings with cudgels — for the love of the people as Oscar Wilde one day quipped — it was logical that true free spirits, great vagabonds of the idea, more strongly felt the need to push decisively toward the extreme boundary of their iconoclasm of the solitary in order to prepare the trained phalanxes of the human eagles in the silent desert, those who will furiously take part in the tragic celebration

of the social dusk in order to overturn democratic civilization between their steel claws, and plunge it into the void of an ancient time that was.

V

When the bourgeoisie had kneeled to the right of socialism in the sacred temple of democracy, they serenely stretched out in the bed of expectation to sleep their absurd sleep of peace. But the proletarians, who had lost their happy innocence by drinking the socialist poison, shouted from the left side, upsetting the tranquil sleep of the idiotic, criminal bourgeoisie.

In the meantime, on the higher mountains of thought, the vagabonds of the idea overcame nausea, announcing that something like the roaring laughter of Zarathustra had echoed sinisterly.

The wind of the spirit, similar to a hurricane, would have had to penetrate the human mind and raise it impetuously in the whirlwind of ideas in order to overwhelm all the old values from the darkness of time, raising the life of the sublimated instinct again in the sun with the new thought.

But, awakening, the bourgeois toads understood that some incomprehensible thing cried out in the heights, threatening their base existence. Yes: they understood that a thing arrive from the heights like a rock, a roar, a menace.

They understood that the satanic voices of frenzied forerunners of time announced a furious tempest that, arising from the renewed will of a few solitaires, exploded in the entrails of society to raze it to the ground.

But they have not understood (and will never understand this until they have been crushed) that what passed over the world was the powerful wing of a free life in the beating of which was the death of the “bourgeois man” and of the “proletarian man”, because

In order to live all the battles, all the defeats, all the victories, all the dreams, all the sorrows and all the hopes intensely and dangerously.

And we want to sing in the sun; we want to howl in the winds!

Because our brain is a sparkling pyre where the great fire of thought crackles and burns in mad and joyful torments.

Because the purity of all dawns, the flame of all noons, the melancholy of all sunsets, the silence of all tombs, the hatred of all hearts, the murmur of all forests and the smile of all stars are the mysterious notes composing the secret music of our mind overflowing with vital exuberance.

Because in the depth of our heart we hear a voice speaking of human individuation, a voice so masterful and vigorous that, often times, while listening to it, we feel fear and terror.

Because the voice that speaks is His voice: the winged Demon from our depths.

XI

By now, it is proven...

Life is sorrow!

But we have learned to love sorrow in order to love life!

Because in loving sorrow we have learned to struggle.

And in struggle — in struggle alone — is our joy of living.

To remain suspended halfway is not our task.

The half circle symbolizes the ancient “yes and no”.

The impotence of life and death.

It is the circle of socialism, of pity and of faith.

But we are not socialists...

We are anarchists. And individualists, and nihilists, and aristocrats.

Because we come from the mountains.

From close to the stars.

Clearly and distinctly, we hear that cry. That cry which intoxicates us with anguish and with sorrow.

And we cannot be deaf to that voice, nor do we want to... We.

We do not want to be deaf to it, because life has told us:

“Whoever is deaf to the voice of blood is not worthy of me. Because blood is my wine; and the dead my secret.

Only to the one who will listen to the voice of the dead will I unveil the enigma of my great mystery!”

And we will respond to this voice:

Because only those who know how to respond to the voice from the abyss can conquer the stars.

I address myself to you, oh my brother!

I address myself to you and tell you:

If you are among those who are kneeling in the half circle, close your eyes in the darkness and leap into the abyss.

Only in this way will you be able to bounce back to the highest peaks and open your great pupils wide in the sun.”

Because one cannot be of the eagles if one is not of the divers.

One cannot soar to the peaks when one is incapable of the depths.

In the bottom, sorrow dwells, in the heights anguish.

Over the sunset of all the ages, a unique dawn rises between two different dusks.

In the midst of the virgin light of this unique dawn, the sorrow of the diver that is in us must be united to the anguish of the eagle that also lives in us, to celebrate the tragic and fruitful marriage of perpetual renewal.

The renewal of the personal “I” among the collective tempests and social hurricanes.

Because perennial solitude is only for saints who recognize in god their witness. But we are the atheist offspring of solitude.

We are the solitary demons without witness.

In the bottom, we want to live the reality of sorrow; in the heights, the sorrow of the dream...

all people could have been “unique” and “universal” at the same time.

And this was the reason why all the bourgeoisie of the world rang their bells, made from false idealistic metal, in mass, calling themselves to a great assembly.

The assembly was general...

All the bourgeoisie gathered.

They gathered among the slimy rushes growing from the quagmire of their common lies and there, in the silence of the mud, they decided the extermination of the proletarian frogs, their servants and their friends.

In the ferocious plot all sides were devotees of Christ and of democracy.

All the former apostles of the frogs attended as well. The war was decided and the prince of the black vipers blessed the fratricidal armies in the name of the god who said, “Do not kill”, while the symbolic vicar of death implored his goddess who came to dance on the earth.

Then socialism — as skillful acrobat and practical juggler — took a leap ahead. He jumped on the tight wire of sentimental political speculation, his brow encircled in black, and, aching and weeping more or less this way, said, “I am the true enemy of violence. I am the enemy of war, and also the enemy of revolution. I am the enemy of blood.”

And after having spoken again of “peace” and of “equality”, of “faith” and of “martyrdom”, of “humanity” and of “the future”, he intoned a song on the motifs of the “yes” and of the “no”, bowed his head and wept.

He wept the tears of Judas, which are not even the “I wash my hands of it” of Pilate.

And the frogs departed...

They departed toward the realm of supreme human baseness.

They departed toward the mud of all the trenches.

They departed... And death came! It came drunk on blood and danced horribly in the world. For five long years...

It was then that the great vagabonds of the spirit, taken with a new disgust, rode their free eagles once more to soar dizzily in the solitude of their distant glaciers to laugh and curse.

Even the spirit of Zarathustra — the truest lover of war and the most sincere friend of warriors — must have remained sufficiently disgusted and scornful since somebody heard him exclaim: “For me, you must be those who stretch your eyes in search of the enemy of your enemy. And in some of you hatred blazes at first glance. You must look for your enemy, fight your war. And this for your ideas!

And if your idea succumbs, your rectitude cries of triumph!”

But alas! The heroic sermon of the liberating barbarian availed nothing.

The human frogs knew neither how to distinguish their own enemy nor how to fight for their own ideas. (The frogs have no ideas!)

And neither recognizing their enemies nor having their own ideas, they fought for the bellies of their brothers in Christ, for their equals in democracy.

They fought against each other for their enemy.

Abel, revived, died for Cain a second time. But this time, at his own hand!

Voluntarily...

Voluntarily, because he could have rebelled, and he did not do so...

Because he could have said: no!

Or yes!

Because saying: “no” he could have been strong!

Because saying: “yes”, he could have shown that he “believed” in the “cause for which he fought.

But he said neither “yes” nor “no”.

He departed!

From cowardice!

It needs to be freed from its prison!

Oh, young miners, be ready!

We prepare the torches and paravanes.

It is necessary to till the earth.

It is time! It is time! It is time!

The blood of the dead must be freed from its prison.

It wants to rise from the shadowy depths to hurl itself toward the sky and conquer the stars.

Because the stars are the friends of the dead.

They are the good sisters who have seen them die.

They are the ones who go to their graves every night with feet of light and tell them:

Tomorrow!...

And we — the children of tomorrow — have come today to tell you:

It is time! It is time! It is time!

And we have come at the hour before dawn...

In the company of the dawn and of the last stars!

And to the dead we have added more dead...

But all those who fall have a star of gold that shines in their pupil!

A star of gold that says:

“The cowardice of the remaining brothers is transformed into a creative dream, into avenging heroism.

Because if it were not so, one would not deserve to die!”

How sad it must be to die.

Without a hope in one’s heart... without a pyre in one’s brain; without a dream in one’s mind; without a star of gold shining in our pupil!

* * *

The blood of the dead — our dead — cries from underground.

The human spirit is divided into three streams:
The stream of slavery, the stream of tyranny, the stream of freedom!
With revolution, the last of these streams needs to burst upon the other two and overwhelm them.
It needs to create spiritual beauty, teach the poor the shame of their poverty, and the rich the shame of their wealth.
All that is called “material property”, “private property”, “exterior property” needs to become what the sun, the light, the sky, the sea, the stars are for individuals.
And this will happen!
It will happen because we — the iconoclasts — will violate it!
Only ethical and spiritual wealth is invulnerable.
This is the true property of individuals. The rest no!
The rest is vulnerable! And all that is vulnerable will be violated!
It will be done by the unbiased might of the “I”.
By the heroic strength of the freed man.
And beyond every law, every tyrannical morality, every society, every conception of false humanity...
We must set our endeavor to transform the revolution that advances into “anarchist crime”, in order to push humanity beyond the state, beyond socialism.
Toward Anarchy!
If, with the war, people were not able to sublimate themselves in death, death has purified the blood of the fallen.
And the blood that death purified — and that the soil drank greedily — now cries from underground!
And we solitaries, we are not the singers of the belly, but the listeners to the dead; to the voice of the dead who cry from underground!
To the voice of the “impure” blood that is purified in death.
And the blood of the fallen cries!
Cries from under the ground!
And the cry of this blood calls us also toward the abyss...

Like always!
He departed...
He went toward death!...
Without knowing why.
Like always.
And death came...
It came to dance in the world for five long years!
And it danced hideously in the muddy trenches of all parts of the world.
It danced with feet of lightning...
It danced and laughed...
It laughed and danced...
For five long years!
Ah! How vulgar is death that dances without having the wings of an idea on its back.
What an idiotic thing to die without knowing why...
We saw it when it danced — Death.
It was a black Death, without transparency of light.
It was a Death without wings!
How ugly and vulgar it was...
How clumsy was its dance.
But still it danced!
And how it mowed — dancing — all the superfluous and all of those of the majority. All those for whom — says the great liberator — the state was invented.
But alas! It did not mow these alone...
Death — in order to avenge the state — has even mowed down those who are not worthless, even those who are essential!...
But those who were not worthless, those who were not of the majority, those who have fallen saying “no!”
They will be avenged.
We will avenge them.
We will avenge them because they are our brothers!

We will avenge them because they have fallen with stars in their eyes.

Because dying, they have drunk the sun.

The sun of life, the sun of struggle, the sun of an Idea.

VI

What has the war renewed?

Where is the heroic transfiguration of the spirit?

Where have they hung the phosphorescent tables of the new values?

In which temple have the holy amphoras of gold enclosing the luminous and blazing hearts of the supreme and creative heroes been laid?

Where is the splendor of the great and new noon?

Frightful rivers of blood washed all the turf and covered all the pathways of the world.

Fearful torrents of tears made their heartbreaking lament echo across the eddies of all the earth: mountains of bone and human flesh everywhere blanched and everywhere rotted in the sun.

But nothing was transformed, nothing evolved.

The bourgeois belly merely belched from satiety and that of the proletariat cried out from too much hunger.

And enough!

With Karl Marx the human mind descended into the intestines.

The roar that passes through the world today is a belly roar.

Our will can transform it into a shout of the mind.

Into a spiritual storm.

Into a cry of free life.

Into a hurricane of lightning.

Our thunderbolt could unhinge the present reality, rip open the door to the unknown mystery of our longed-for dream and show the supreme beauty of the liberated man.

Now that the age of obligation and slavery is agonizing, we want to close the cycle of theoretical and contemplative thought in order to open the breach to violent action, which is still the will of life and the exultation of expansion.

On the ruins of piety and religion we want to erect the creative hardness of our proud hearts.

We are not the admirers of the “ideal man” of “social rights, but the proclaimers of the “actual individual”, enemy of social abstractions.

We fight for the liberation of the individual.

For the conquest of life.

For the triumph of our idea.

For the realization of our dreams.

And if our ideas are dangerous, it is because we are those who love to live dangerously.

And if our dreams are mad, it is because we are mad. But our madness is supreme wisdom.

But our ideas are the heart of life; but our thoughts are the beacons of humanity.

And what the war has not done, revolution must do.

Because revolution is the fire of our will and a need of our solitary minds; it is an obligation of the libertarian aristocracy.

To create new ethical values.

To create new aesthetic values.

To communalize material wealth.

To individualize spiritual wealth.

Because we — violent cerebralists and passionate sentimentalists at the same time — understand and know that revolution is a necessity of the silent sorrow that suffers at the bottom and a need of the free spirits who suffer in the heights.

Because if the sorrow that suffers at the bottom wants rise with the happy smile of the sun, the free spirits who suffer in the heights no longer want to feel the petty offenses of the shame of vulgar slavery that surrounds them.

But nothing!
The war has given us neither great singers nor great rulers.
Only lying ghosts and grim parodies.

IX

The war has passed washing history and humanity in tears and blood, but the epoch has remained unchanged.

An epoch of disintegration.

Collectivism is dying and individualism has not yet taken hold.

Nobody knows how to obey, nobody knows how to command.

But given all this, knowing how to live free, this is still at present an abyss.

An abyss that can only be filled up with the corpse of slavery and that of authority.

The war could not fill up this abyss. It could only dig it deeper. But what the war could not do, revolution must do.

The war has rendered humans more beastly and plebeian.

Coarser and uglier.

Revolution must render them better.

It must ennoble them.

X

Already — socially speaking — we have slipped down the fatal slope, and there is no more possibility of turning back.

To attempt it alone would be a crime.

Not a great and noble crime however.

But a vulgar crime. A crime more than useless and vain. A crime against the flesh of our ideas.

Because we are not the enemies of blood...

We are the enemies of vulgarity!

Because we are mad forerunners of the time.

The pyres.

The beacons.

The signals.

The first announcements.

VII

The war!

Do you remember it?

What has the war created?

Here it is:

The woman sold her body and called the prostitution “free love”.

The man, who “dodged” to manufacture bullets and to preach the sublime beauty of the war, called his cowardice: “delicate artfulness and heroic cunning”.

This one who always lived in unconscious infamy, in cowardice, in humility, in indifference and in weak renunciations, cursed against small audacities — which he had always detested — because by themselves they did not have the strength to prevent his belly from being torn apart by those weapons that he himself had constructed for a vile morsel of bread.

Because even the beggars of the spirit — those who always remain outside to warm up while the more noble part of humanity enters into the hell of life — these humble and devoted servants of their tyrant, these unconscious slanderers of superior minds, even these, we say, did not want to depart.

They did not want to die.

They writhed, they wept, they implored, they prayed!

But all this from a low instinct of impotent and bestial self-preservation, deprived of every heroic roar of revolt, and not instead from questions of a superior humanity, of refined depth of feeling, of spiritual beauty.

No, no, no!
 Nothing of all that!
 The belly!
 Only the bestial belly.
 Bourgeois ideal — proletarian ideal — the belly!
 But in the meantime death came...
 It came to dance in the world without having the wings of an
 idea on its back!
 And it danced...
 It danced and laughed.
 For five long years...
 And while on the borders wingless death danced drunk on
 blood, at home in the sacred apse of the internal front — in the
 vulgar “gazettes” of lies — the miraculous moral and material
 evolution of our women was recited and sung along with the
 spiritual peak that our heroic and glorious foot soldier ascended.
 The one who died weeping without knowing “why”.
 How many ferocious lies, how much vulgar cynicism the
 grim minds of democratic society and of the state vomited in the
 “gazettes”.
 Who remembers the war?
 How the crows croaked...
 The crows and the owls!
 And meanwhile death danced!
 It danced without having the wings of an idea on its back!
 Of a dangerous idea that bears fruit and that creates.
 It danced...
 It danced and laughed!
 And how it mowed — dancing — the superfluous. All those who
 were of the majority. Those for whom the state was invented.
 But alas! It did not only mow these.
 It also mowed those who had the rays of the sun in their eyes,
 those who had the stars in their pupils!

VIII

Where is the epic art, the heroic art, the supreme art that the
 war promised us?
 Where is the free life, the triumph of the new dawn, the splen-
 dor of noon, the festive glory of the sun?
 Where is the redemption from material slavery?
 Where is the one who has created the fine and profound poetry
 that had to germinate painfully in this tragic and fearful abyss of
 blood and death, in order to tell us the silent and cruel torture felt
 by the human mind?
 Who has said the sweet and good word to us that calls a clear
 morning after a terrible night of hurricane?
 Who has said the superior word that makes us great as our sor-
 row, pure in beauty and deep in humanity?
 Who is, who ever is the genius who has known how to bend
 himself with love and faithfulness over the open wounds in the liv-
 ing flesh of our life, to receive all the noble tears from them so that
 the supreme laughter of the redeemer spirit could rend the claws
 from the starving monsters of our past errors in order to make us
 ascend to the concept of a superior ethic, where, through the lumi-
 nous principle of human beauty purified in blood and sorrow, we
 could lift ourselves, strong and majestic — like an arrow taut on
 the bow of the will — to sing the deepest and gentlest melody of
 the highest of all our hopes to earthly life!
 Where? Where?
 I don't see it!
 I don't feel it!
 I look around me, but I see only vulgar pornography and false
 cynicism...
 At least we could have been given a Homer of art, and a
 Napoleon of the acts of war.
 A man who could have had the strength to destroy an epoch, to
 create a new history...