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Off the Leash

Introduction

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Only in the ruins of the urban centres, of the global infrastructure networks, of all the cultural edifices of civilization, with weeds breaking the concrete can we re-wild to dance under bright stars. But we live for now – if it's the end of the world, let's dance and laugh right here and now!

“If history is not an infinite process, as I firmly believe,” wrote the individualist Enzo Martucci, “than when it exhausts its cycle it will disappear opening the way to anarchy. If, on the other hand, history endures, then anarchism will remain – that is, the eternal revolt of the individual against a stifling society.”

Here we publish these texts by a few enemies of society alive in Italy and France in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a celebration of the rebellious and individualistic zest for life. Rather than detached thinkers these were individuals of action, active perpetrators of the crime of freedom – the crime that contains all crimes –, ready and willing to rob the rich and attack the State, not for ‘some cause’ but *for themselves*.

The defeat and subjugation of the populations of the planet has been the victory of the socialised mentality over individualistic wildness. We are supposed to believe that this world's problems, such as poverty and oppression, are the fault of those old Christian bugbears Selfishness, Greed, Pride, Hate and Immorality more generally. Nothing could be further from the truth. This moralising narrative demands, like any morality, self-mutilation and increased repression.

The forced slave march down the road of ‘Human Progress’ has been led by various deified abstractions over mountains of corpses, bulldozing through the wild woods to plant monocultures drip-fed subservience. It has been the march of the phantoms. Never letting any being be sufficient in itself, these deities demand sacrifices and mete out justice, bestow rights and responsibilities, and are the cause which is to be followed, the beat to synchronise the rhythm of life to, the order into which one fits. These phantoms are potentiated by the loss, socially and self-inflicted, of individual power, vitality, bio-energy. Max Stirner talked of spooks, Karl Marx of fetishes, Friedrich Nietzsche of idols. (Marx and Nietzsche though were moralists in their own right, smashing old idols to replace with new ones.) These phantoms are sovereign concepts which stand above the individual, demanding obedience. Individual potency (including sexual) becomes alienated from us, invested in the phantoms that now dominate us. Whether we potentiate a God, a Great Leader, or Capital we are alienated from our own being, our own potentialities. Unless they remain *our* tool or plaything, concepts, groupings, systems, and so on turn *us* into tools and playthings.

As Sigmund Freud described, civilisation is based on permanent repression of individual instincts, on renunciation, causing a constant tension between individual desires and the instilled control patterns, which lead to suffering and neuroses. All the varied desires we have are repressed in favour of the morality system. Selfishness, greed, pride, hate – not to mention free expressions of caring, sharing, vulnerability and love – are subjugated by external control patterns of behaviour, creating individuals that are useful to Society and its rulers. Society, beginning mostly with the Family, enforces its domestication of the individual, sapping our vitality by repressing with fear and shame our instinctual

desires, our free-creating-playful-sexual-aggressive-selfish-joyful-inquisitiveness. Look around you – everywhere there are people who are *afraid* of living for themselves, afraid of self-ownership, unable to feel accomplishment or power except through being part of the Mass, a Useful Part of something or other: lifted up by their Leaders, victorious though their Sports Team, empowered by Group Pride (Nation, Religion, Ethnicity, Class, etc), made “complete” by their partner or parents or kids. These characteristics of suppression of self-centred desires in favour of reified phantoms, zombies animated by our alienated potency, may be obvious in the patriarchal, Christian honest worker and loyal citizen but are just as present in ‘radicals’ and ‘revolutionaries’ who, most of the time, simply have an alternative Faith.

The mass of the oppressed have so far not liberated themselves because, when they even rise up against the oppressors, they have generally followed ‘Revolutionary’ ideologies that call for renunciation of individual desires, have simply changed patterns of authoritarian behaviour rather than overcoming these patterns. The waves of self-defeating capitulation by the oppressed have allowed increasingly horrifying events to take place – wars, ecological devastation, genocide, social re-engineering – that have, at the very least, tarnished the optimistic viewpoint of socialistic revolutionaries. Three paths are presented – a deeper, perhaps more nihilistic and less optimistic, certainly less populist, examination of our situation that stops seeing society as the innocent victim; surrender, making peace with the existent in the name of ‘pragmatism’, ‘reform’ or ‘evolution’ to pursue reasonability; and, of course, shutting our eyes very tightly, covering our ears and repeating the mantra of our belief in ‘a better future’ very loudly. The working class war mobilisations of the two ‘World Wars’, and the ‘betrayals’ of the mass social democratic and communist movements, led some revolutionaries in the West to challenge themselves to understand the consequences of these phenomena.

Optimistic socialistic anarchists believed, and continue to believe, that Society and the State are in conflict, are separate, and have used populist rhetoric to try to raise the masses against what is depicted as external to them – greedy rich men and unscrupulous politicians –, rather than attacking the submissive attitudes of the people that allow the rich and powerful to ride on their shoulders. Responsibility is shifted

to the external enemy and the masses are depicted as victims, rather than as the main upholders of domination. The individualist current in the Western revolutionary tradition, on the other hand, have had no problem laying the blame for the masses subjugation directly at the feet of the submissive themselves, while still aiming their guns and bombs at the rulers and their most active agents, like the police, journalists, bureaucrats, priests and military. Feeling the *need* for revolt in their bodies, those of an individualist-nihilistic bent never needed to justify their insurrection in terms of ‘the Will of the People’, ‘History’ or ‘Justice’; and have always been quite prepared to forego optimism in favour of honesty and pragmatism in favour of dignity. Amid the catastrophe of history, these individuals were free in the only way anyone can be free, by seizing freedom for themselves.

All previous civilizations have crashed. This one – global, industrial, and cybernetic – will also crash. The consequences will simply be much greater than the collapse of previous civilisations that have left ruins covered by sand and over-run by jungles. As long as civilization – the techno-economic-statist concrete infrastructure as well as the social dynamics – functions, the individualistic human will remain an outcast and an enemy. Only the destruction of civilisation, by the systems own crises and limits, as well as ‘*the barbarians*’ attacks and increasing desertion, can spell an end to mass society and open the way for a multiplication of chaotic worlds of small group autonomy and the free play of egoistic individuals forming relations based on desire rather than duty. Of course there’s every possibility that we’ll all be wiped out by some combination of nuclear, biological, chemical and nanotech catastrophes, climate change and pandemics. But if there is any better future it will come from a refusal of all the submissive attitudes, all the bowing before domination, all the abdications of our individual self-responsibility, all the renunciations of our desires and the self-stunting by illusionary ‘realisms’ and ‘responsibilities’ and ‘weaknesses’. Anarchy never was the harmonious perfect society imagined by the socialistic, and we can only truly conceive of anarchy as re-wilding. Let us be clear – mass technological society is incompatible with freedom, as we experience bodily, grasp logically if we allow the heretical thoughts through, and can see in the world around us, and by looking at the past and imagining our futures.