

OFF THE LEASH

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 their lives for themselves.



iconoclastic words from Zo d'Axa, Albert Libertad, Emile Armand, Renzo Novatore, Enzo Martucci and Erinne Vivani

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INTRODUCTION

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 potentise 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

FURTHER READING

The Ego and Its Own by Max Stirner (available in various English-language editions)

Enemies of Society: An Anthology of Individualist and Egoist Thought, (2011) Ardent Press

Toward the Creative Nothing and other writings by Renzo Novatore, Venomous Butterfly Publications

The Rebel's Dark Laughter: the writings of Bruno Filippi, Venomous Butterfly Publications

theanarchistlibrary.org/topics/egoist

theanarchistlibrary.org/topics/individualist

individualistanarchism.blogspot.com

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

other; at those who, not able to live freely, pose as world redeemers, speaking of the rosy future while forgetting the black, cruel reality of the present. Finally, we laugh at all the poor in spirit who believe and hope in a radiant tomorrow, and faithfully and patiently await the reign of Saint Humanity.

Beyond the organizationalist, prophetic, christianizing, monomaniacal anarchism of those who, like the young monk of Assisi, preach the theory of love and meekness, according to which our I "must gain by losing and rise by submitting," there is the Anarchism of the free, virgin and rebellious instinct of refusers, nihilists, innovators, iconoclasts, amoralists, aristocrats, individualist, to whose proud, invincible and immortal breed I belong.

All symbols and all rites still provoke laughter in us. The religious procession is replaced with the march, the sermon with the rally in the same tone, the canopy with the banner. Portraits of rulers take the place of portraits of saints and madonnas, and the new christians, instead of singing sacred hymns, sing patriotic or subversive hymns. Nothing has changed, either in its form or its substance from twenty centuries ago to today.

But we aren't tired of our laughing.

Our satanic laughter starts to boom like thunder and sends out flashes of lightning when we find ourselves before the worshipers of monstrous divine and human phantoms, which they call God, Religion, State, Fatherland, Humanity, Morality, Right, Duty, Custom, Altruism, Socialism, Communism, etc.

These baleful phantoms, created from the ignorance, fear and cruelty of human beings, still today make the stupid demand that the free and strong individual sacrifice himself to them, but he, who loves boundless liberty and the noonday sun, shoots his scorching and poisonous arrows against all the cursed and infamous idols and, striking them, laughs and is happy.

We laugh at all those who transform themselves into apostles of humanity and practice the craft of the preacher, promising earthly paradise and universal abundance; at those who want to give a single form to human society that numbers around two billion individuals each and every one different from the

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. 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*.

notice that their method has inexorably, irremediably swept them away and thrown them into the abyss.

Individualists have laughed at all the compromises, all the renunciations, all the foul marketing, and still they laugh their irreverent, sacrilegious, cursed laughter.

We always laugh at each and all, at those who manufacture revolvers, rifles, bayonets, machine guns, cannons, ammunition, chains, shackles, various instruments of torture for the workers, at those who build prisons and raise gallows for "their" brothers, at those who organize themselves, or rather link themselves, into leagues and unions, paying membership fees and fattening the swine, as they give up their human dignity by electing masters and shepherds.

We laugh at those who shouts, "long live this and long live that," at those who go to demonstrations ready to pay up and leave their bellies empty, at those who wait for the orders from the central committee of their party before they'll rise up, at those who listen to leaders who exhort them to cowardice when they rise up, at those who wait for the sun of the future with arms crossed and stomachs empty, as if it could rise by itself from one minute to the next.

And those subversives who, in the name of liberty, want to overthrow the current government so that they can replace it with a new tyranny, how they make us laugh!

discipline, etc, with the sole aim of forming a herd that was willing to let them milk and shear it.

With a system of social political education of this sort, everyone knows what happened. The majority of proletarians who joined subversive parties and organizations willy-nilly, have gone over — bit by bit — to the enemy. What, pray tell, was the value of all the effusive praise that sages lavished on the proletariat — that poor wind-filled puppet — that some believed to be called by history to become the dictators of the world?

Now the proletariat has gone over to fascism, because fascists command, if tomorrow the black priest were to command, it would be willing to worship them, as it worshiped the red priests yesterday.

All the members of congregations have come out of the terrible storm badly, or rather extremely badly. Once again — and it won't be the last time — the fraudulent bankruptcy of working class organizations has been declared. They have solemnly shown that they were not at all revolutionary or subversive, but reformist, state, church and shopkeeper organizations.

The failure of the organizational method, in the struggles for the conquest of well-being and freedom, is precisely and absolutely evident. Despite this, revolutionaries — many libertarian communists included — still insist — bellowing like cows about the necessity and importance of organization, don't

WITHOUT A GOAL

Zo d'Axa

"WAIT A MINUTE THEN," PEOPLE SAY, "WHAT IS THEIR goal?"

And the benevolent questioner suppresses a shrug upon noting that there are young men who refuse the usages, laws and demands of current society, and who nevertheless don't affirm a program.

"What do they hope for?"

If at least these nay-sayers without a credo had the excuse of being fanatics. And no, faith no longer wants to be blind. They discuss, they stumble, they search. Pitiful tactic! These skirmishers of the social battle, these flagless ones are so aberrant as to not proclaim that they have the formula for the universal panacea, the only one! Mangin had more wit...

"And I ask you: what they seeking for themselves?"

Let's not even talk about it. They don't seek mandates, positions or delegations of any kind. They aren't candidates. Then what? Don't make me laugh. They are held in the appropriate disdain, a disdain mixed with commiseration.

I too suffer from that underestimation.

There are a few of us who feel that we can barely glimpse the future truths.

Nothing attaches us to the past, but the future hasn't yet become clear.

And so we carry on, as misunderstood as foreigners, and it's both here and there, it's everywhere that we are foreigners.

Why?

Because we don't want to recite new catechisms, and we especially don't want to pretend to believe in the infallibility of doctrines.

We would need to possess a vile form of complacency to admit a group of theories without reserve. And we are not that complacent. There has been no Revelation. We are keeping our enthusiasm virgin for a fervour. Will it come?

And even if the final term escapes us, we won't skimp on our work. Our era is a transitional one, and the free man has his role to play.

Authoritarian society is odious to us, and we are preparing the experiment of a libertarian society.

Uncertain of its results, we nevertheless long for the attempt, the change.

SACRILEGEOUS LAUGHTER

Erinne Vivani

IN THE PALE, SAD TWILIGHT HOUR, PREGNANT WITH COMIC and tragic events, while all ridiculous pettiness achieves manifestation and crime is erected as a life system, as an athletic gymnastic drill, while the blood of revolutionary and non-revolutionary citizens bathes the beautiful lands of Italy, anarchist individualism — unique and radiant living and historical reality — blazes majestically and gloriously beyond so much civil and social putridity toward joy, toward liberty, toward the sun.

The latest squall that raged suddenly in the cities and villages, has swept away people and things.

It was predictable and fatal.

The theory of love and meekness, propagated by all the Parties and all the proletarian organizations, absolutely could not resist the overwhelming flood.

The party chiefs, instead of educating the working class in rebellion and freedom, kept it always prone and enslaved. They only had their sights on the number of followers, membership cards, votes,

"You must, in every instance, practice love, forgiveness, renunciation of worldly goods and humility. Otherwise you will be damned", say the Gospels.

"You must, in each moment, defeat egoism and be unselfish. Otherwise you will remain in absurdity and sorrow," Kant points out.

"You must always resist instinct and appetite, showing yourself to be balanced, thoughtful and wise on every occasion. If you don't, we will brand you with the mark of archist infamy and treat you as a tyrant," Armand passes judgment.

In short, they all want to impose the rule that mutilates life and turns human beings into equal puppets that perpetually think and act in the same way. And this occurs because we are surrounded by priests: priests of the church and priests who oppose it, believing and atheistic Tartuffes. And all claim to catechize us, to lead us, to control us, to bridle us, offering us a prospect of earthly or supernatural punishments and rewards. But it is time for the free human being to rise up: the one who knows how to go against all priests and priestliness, beyond laws and religions, rules and morality. And who knows how to go further beyond. Still further beyond.

Instead of stagnating in this aging world where the air is heavy, where the ruins crumble as if to bury us, we hasten to the final demolition.

To do so is to hasten a Renaissance.

TO THE RESIGNED

Albert Libertad

I HATE THE RESIGNED!

I hate the resigned, like I hate the filthy, like I hate layabouts!

I hate resignation! I hate filthiness, I hate inaction.

I feel for the sick man bent under some malignant fever; I hate the imaginary sick man that a little bit of will would set on his feet.

I feel for the man in chains, surrounded by guardians crushed under the weight of irons on the many.

I hate soldiers who are bent by the weight of braids and three stars; the workers who are bent under the weight of capital.

I love the man who says what he feels wherever he is; I hate the voter seeking the perpetual conquest by the majority.

I love the savant crushed under the weight of scientific research; I hate the individual who bends his body under the weight of an unknown power, of some "X," of a God.

or an interest sensed by all that maintain the union. Not an ethical precept as Armand would like.

From christians to anarchists (?) all moralists insist that we distinguish between freedom, based on responsibility, and license, based on caprice and instinct. Now it is good to explain. A freedom that, in all of its manifestations, is always controlled, reined in, led by reason, is not freedom. Because it lacks spontaneity. Thence, it lacks life.

What is my aim? To destroy authority, to abolish the state, to establish freedom for everyone to live according to her nature as he sees and desires it. Does this aim frighten you, fine sirs? Well then, I have nothing to do. Like Renzo Novatore, I am beyond the arc.

When no one commands me, I do what I want. I abandon myself to spontaneity or I resist it. I follow instincts or I rein them in with reason, at various times, according to which is stronger within me.

In short, my life is varied and intense precisely because I don't depend upon any rule.

Moralists of all schools instead claim the opposite. They demand that life always be conformed to a single norm of conduct that makes it monotonous and colorless. They want human beings to always carry out certain actions and to always abstain from all the others.

Emile Armand frees the individual from the state but subordinates him more strictly to society. For him, in fact, I cannot revoke the social contract when I want, but must receive the consent of my co-associates in order to release myself from the links of the association. If others don't grant me such consent, I must remain with them even if this harms or offends me. Or yet, by unilaterally breaking the pact, I expose myself to the retaliation and vengeance of my former comrades. More societarian than this and one dies. But this is a societarianism of the Spartan barracks. What! Am I not my own master? Just because yesterday, under the influence of certain feelings and certain needs, I wanted to associate, today, when I have other feelings and needs and want to get out of the association, I can no longer do so. I must thus remain chained to my desire of yesterday. Because yesterday I desired one way, today I cannot desire another way. But then I am a slave, deprived of spontaneity, dependent on the consent of the associates.

According to Armand, I cannot break relationships because I should care about the sorrow and harm that I will cause the others if I deprive them of my person. But the others don't care about the sorrow and harm that they cause me by forcing me to remain in their company when I feel like going away. Thus, mutuality is lacking. And if I want to leave the association, I will go when I decide, so much the more if, in making the agreement to associate, I have communicated to the comrades that I will maintain my freedom to break with it at any time. In doing this, one does not deny that some societies might have long lives. But in this case, it is a feeling

I hate, I say, all those who, surrendering to others through fear or resignation a part of their power as men, not only keep their heads down, but make me, and those I love, keep our heads down, too through the weight of their frightful collaboration or their idiotic inertia.

I hate them; yes I hate them, because me, I feel it. I don't bow before the officer's braid, the mayor's sash, the gold of the capitalist; morality or religion. For a long time I have known that all of these things are just baubles that we can break like glass...I bend beneath the weight of the resignation of others. O how I hate resignation!

I love life.

I want to live, not in a petty way like those who only satisfy a part of their muscles, their nerves, but in a big way, satisfying facial muscles as well as calves, my back as well as my brain.

I don't want to trade a portion of now for a fictive portion of tomorrow. I don't want to surrender anything of the present for the wind of the future.

I don't want to bend anything of mine under the words fatherland, God, honor. I too well know the emptiness of these words, these religious and secular ghosts.

I laugh at retirement, at paradises the hope for which hope holds the resigned, religions, and capital.

I laugh at those who, saving for their old age, deprive themselves in their youth; those who, in order to eat at sixty, fast at twenty.

I want to eat while I have strong teeth to tear and crush healthy meats and succulent fruits. When my stomach juices digest without problem I want to drink my fill of refreshing and tonic drinks.

I want to love women, or a woman, depending on our common desire, and I don't want to resign myself to the family, law the Code; nothing has any rights over our bodies. You want, I want. Let us laugh at the family, the law, the ancient form of resignation.

But this isn't all. I want, since I have eyes, ears, and other senses, more than just to drink, to eat, to enjoy sexual love: I want to experience joy in other forms. I want to see beautiful sculptures and painting, admire Rodin or Manet. I want to hear the best opera companies play Beethoven or Wagner. I want to know the classics at the Comedie Française, page through the literary and artistic baggage left by men of the past to men of the present, or even better, page through the now and forever unfinished oeuvre of humanity.

I want joy for myself, for my chosen companion, for my friends. I want a home where my eyes can agreeably rest when my work is done.

the one who is stronger than me. If I can't do it by myself, I will seek the aid of my friends. If my might is lacking, I will replace it with cunning. And balance will arise spontaneously from the contrast.

In fact, the only cause of social imbalance is precisely the herd mentality that keeps slaves prone and resigned under the master's whip.

"Human life is sacred. I cannot suppress it either in the other or in myself. And so I must respect the life of the enemy who oppresses me and brings me an atrocious and continuous pain. I cannot take the life of my poor brother, who is afflicted with a terminal disease that causes him terrible suffering, in order to shorten his torment. I cannot even free myself, through suicide, from an existence that I feel as a burden."

Why?

"Because," the christians say, "Life is not our own. It is given to us by god and he alone can take it away from us."

Okay. But when god gives life to us, it becomes ours. As Thomas Aquinas points out, god's thought confers being in itself, objective reality, to the one who thinks. Thus, when god thinks of giving life to the human being, and by thinking of it, gives it to him, such life effectively becomes human, that is, an exclusive property of ours. Thus, we can take it away from each other, or anyone can destroy it in herself.

UNBRIDLED FREEDOM

Enzo Martucci

STIRNER AND NIETZSCHE WERE UNDOUBTEDLY RIGHT. IT IS not true that my freedom ends where that of others begins. By nature my freedom has its end where my strength stops. If it disgusts me to attack human beings or even if I consider it to be contrary to my interests to do so, I abstain from conflict. But if, pushed by an instinct, a feeling, or a need, I lash out against my likes and meet no resistance or a weak resistance, I naturally become the dominator, the superman. If instead the others resist vigorously and return blow for blow, then I am forced to stop and come to terms. Unless I judge it appropriate to pay for an immediate satisfaction with my life.

It is useless to speak to people of renunciation, of morality, of duty, of honesty. It is stupid to want to constrain them, in the name of Christ or of humanity, not to step on each other's toes. Instead one tells each of them: "You are strong. Harden your will. Compensate, by any means, for your deficiencies. Conserve your freedom. Defend it against anyone who wants to oppress you".

And if every human being would follow this advice, tyranny would become impossible. I will even resist

For I want the joy of labor, too; that healthy joy, that strong joy. I want my arms to handle the plane, the hammer, the spade and the scythe.

Let the muscles develop, the thoracic cage become larger with powerful, useful and reasoned movements.

I want to be useful, I want us to be useful. I want to be useful to my neighbor and for my neighbor to be useful to me. I desire that we labor much, for I am insatiable for joy. And it is because I want to enjoy myself that I am not resigned.

Yes, yes I want to produce, but I want to enjoy myself. I want to knead the dough, but eat better bread; to work at the grape harvest, but drink better wine; build a house, but live in better apartments; make furniture, but possess the useful, see the beautiful; I want to make theatres, but big enough to house their me and mine.

I want to cooperate in producing, but I also want to cooperate in consuming.

Some dream of producing for others to whom they will leave, oh the irony of it, the best of their efforts. As for me, I want, freely united with others, to produce but also to consume.

You resigned, look: I spit on your idols. I spit on God, the Fatherland, I spit on Christ, I spit on the flag, I spit on capital and the golden calf; I spit on laws and Codes, on the symbols of religion; they are

baubles, I could care less about them, I laugh at them...

Only through you do they mean anything to me; leave them behind and they'll break into pieces.

You are thus a force, you resigned, one of those forces that don't know they are one, but who are nevertheless a force, and I can't spit on you, I can only hate you...or love you.

Above all my desire is that of seeing you shaking off your resignation in a terrible awakening of life.

There is no future paradise, there is no future; there is only the present.

Let us live!

Live! Resignation is death.

Revolt is life.

world for the triumph of the reality of my inner world.

I reject society for the triumph of the I. I reject the stability of every rule, every custom, every morality, for the affirmation of every willful instinct, all free emotionality, every passion and every fantasy. I mock at every duty and every right so I can sing free will.

I scorn the future to suffer and enjoy my good and my bad in the present. I despise humanity because it is not my humanity. I hate tyrants and I detest slaves. I don't want and I don't grant solidarity, because I am convinced that it is a new chain, and because I believe with Ibsen that the one who is most alone is the strongest one. This is my Nihilism. Life, for me, is nothing but a heroic poem of joy and perversity written with the bleeding hands of sorrow and pain or a tragic dream of art and beauty!

V. The revolt of the free one against sorrow is only the intimate, passionate desire for a more intense and greater joy. But the greatest joy can only show itself to him in the mirror of the deepest sorrow, merging with it later in a vast barbaric embrace. And from this vast and fruitful embrace the higher smile of the strong one springs, as, in the midst of conflict, he sing the most thundering hymn to life.

A hymn woven from contempt and scorn, from will and might. A hymn that vibrates and throbs in the light of the sun as it shines on tombs, a hymn that revives the nothing and fills it with sound.

VI. Over Socrates' slave spirit that stoically accepts death and Diogenes' free spirit that cynically accepts life, rises the triumphal rainbow on which the sacrilegious crusher of new phantoms, the radical destroyer of every moral world, dances. It is the free one who dances on high amidst the magnificent phosphorescence of the sun.

And when huge clouds of gloomy darkness rise from swampy chasms to hinder his view of the light and block his path, he opens the way with shots from his Browning pistol or stops their course with the flame of his domineering fantasy, forcing them to submit as humble slaves at his feet.

But only the one who knows and practices the iconoclastic fury of destruction can possess the joy born of freedom, of that unique freedom fertilized by sorrow. I rise up against the reality of the outer

TO FEEL ALIVE

Émile Armand

I. AS I WRITE THESE LINES, ELECTION SEASON IS IN FULL swing. The walls are plastered with posters of every color where people claim to be of every flag, every "color" of opinion. Who doesn't have his party, his program, his profession of faith? Who is not either a socialist, a radical, a progressive, a liberal, or a "proportionalist" — the newest fad? This abnegation of the self is the great malady of the century. One belongs to an association, a union, a party; one shares the opinions, the convictions, the rule of conduct of another. One is led, a follower, a disciple, a slave, never oneself.

It's true that this is less taxing. To belong to a party, adopting someone else's program, adjusting to a collective line of conduct, is to avoid thinking, reflecting, creating one's own ideas. It is to dispense with acting by oneself. It is the triumph of the famous theory of the "least effort," for the love of which so many stupid things have been said and done.

Some call this living. It's true: the mollusk lives, the invertebrate lives; the plagiarist, the copycat, the babbler all live; the lemming, the traitor, the slanderer and the gossip all live. Let us leave them

and dream not only of living, but something more: "to feel alive."

II. To feel alive is not only to be aware that we are regularly performing the functions that maintain the individual (and, if you like, the species). Nor is feeling alive to perform the acts of one's life within a narrow design, in line with some wise book written by some author who knows nothing of life but its hallucinations, crucibles, and equations. To feel alive is certainly not to keep to neatly graveled paths in a public garden when the capricious trails of wild undergrowth are calling out to you. To feel alive is to vibrate, thrill, shudder with the perfume of flowers, the songs of birds, the crashing of the waves, the howling of the wind, the silence of solitude, the feverish voice of crowds. To feel alive is to be as sensible to the plaintive chant of the shepherd as to the harmonies of great operas, to the radiant influence of a poem as to the pleasures of love.

To feel alive is to render exciting those details of one's life that are worth the trouble: to make of the latter a fleeting experiment, and of the first an experiment that succeeds. All of this with no constraints, with no program imposed in advance; according to one's temperament, then, to one's state of being in the moment, one's conception of life.

III. One can think oneself an anarchist and vegetate. One can mirror the anarchism of one's newspaper, one's favorite writer, one's group. One can call oneself original and deep down be nothing

capacity to life and to rejoice. My every defeat serves me only as symphonic prelude to a new victory.

IV. From the day that I came into the light — through a chance coincidence that I don't care to go into right now — I carried my own *Good* and my own *Bad* with me.

Meaning: my joy and my sorrow, still in embryo. Both advanced with me along the road of time. The more intensely I felt joy, the more deeply I understood sorrow. You can't suppress the one without suppressing the other.

Now I have smashed down the door and revealed the Sphinx's riddle. Joy and sorrow are only two liquors with which life merrily gets drunk. Therefore, it is not true that life is a squalid and frightening desert where flowers no longer blossom nor vermilion fruits ripen.

And even the mightiest of all sorrows, the one that drives a strong man toward the conscious and tragic shattering of his own individuality, is only a vigorous manifestation of art and beauty.

And it returns again to the universal human current with the dazzling rays of *crime* that breaks up and sweeps away all the crystallized reality of the circumscribed world of the many in order to rise toward the ultimate ideal flame and disperse in the endless fire of the new.

shattering and breaking up in its turn. I do not renounce life. I exalt and sing it.

II. Anyone who renounces life because he feels that it is nothing but pain and sorrow and doesn't find in himself the heroic courage to kill himself is — in my opinion — a grotesque poser and a helpless person; just as one is a pitifully inferior being if he believes that the sacred tree of happiness is a twisted plant on which all apes will be able to scramble in the more or less near future, and that then the shadow of pain will be driven away by the phosphorescent fireworks of the true Good...

III. Life — for me — is neither good nor bad, neither a theory nor an idea. Life is a reality, and the reality of life is war. For one who is a born warrior, life is a fountain of joy, for others it is only a fountain of humiliation and sorrow. I no longer demand carefree joy from life. It couldn't give it to me, and I would no longer know what to do with it now that my adolescence is past...

Instead I demand that it give me the perverse joy of battle that gives me the sorrowful spasms of defeat and the voluptuous thrills of victory.

Defeated in the mud or victorious in the sun, I sing life and I love it!

There is no rest for my rebel spirit except in war, just as there is no greater happiness for my vagabond, negating mind than the uninhibited affirmation of my

more than a second- or third-degree add-on or outsider.

Being bound by the yoke of a so-called "anarchist" morality is to be always tied down. All a priori moralities are the same: theocratic, bourgeois, collectivist or anarchist. Doubled over under a rule of conduct contrary to your judgment, reason, and experience, to what you feel and desire, on the pretext that it is the rule chosen by all the members of your group, is the act of a monk, not of an anarchist. It is not the act of a negator of authority to fear a loss of esteem or incurring the disapproval of your circle. All that your comrade can ask of you is not to encroach on the practice of his life; he cannot go farther.

IV. An essential condition for "feeling alive" is to know how to appreciate one's life. Morals, sensations, rules of behavior, emotions, knowledges, faculties, opinions, passions, meaning, the brain, etc. — so many means that can allow us to approach our life. So many servants at the command of the "self" for it to develop and expand. Mastering them all, the conscious "negator of authority" does not allow himself to be mastered by any of them. When he succumbs, it is from lack of education of the will. This is not irreparable. The studied "one-beyond-domination" is not fearful; he enjoys everything, bites into everything, within the limits of individual appreciation. He tastes everything and nothing is repugnant to him, so long as he maintains his moral equilibrium.

Only the anarchist can feel himself living, for he is the unique one among men, the only one whose appreciation of life has its source in himself, without the impure inmixing of an authority imposed from without.

I AM ALSO A NIHILIST

Renzo Novatore

I. I AM AN INDIVIDUALIST BECAUSE I AM AN ANARCHIST; and I am an anarchist because I am a nihilist. But I also understand nihilism in my own way...

I don't care whether it is Nordic or Oriental, nor whether or not it has a historical, political, practical tradition, or a theoretical, philosophical, spiritual, intellectual one. I call myself a nihilist because I know that nihilism means *negation*.

Negation of every society, of every cult, of every rule and of every religion. But I don't yearn for Nirvana, any more than I long for Schopenhauer's desperate and powerless pessimism, which is a worse thing than the violent renunciation of life itself. Mine is an enthusiastic and dionysian pessimism, like a flame that sets my vital exuberance ablaze, that mocks at any theoretical, scientific or moral prison.

And if I call myself an individualist anarchist, an iconoclast and a nihilist, it is precisely because I believe that in these adjectives there is the highest and most complete expression of my willful and reckless individuality that, like an overflowing river, wants to expand, impetuously sweeping away dikes and hedges, until it crashes into a granite boulder,