

Freda, Heretical Interpreter of Evola –

Franco Ferraresi

The gridlock of the system, that seemed happen in Italy in the second half of the 1970s (the government called “national solidarity”), unleashed the protests of those who felt excluded and marginalized. “New needs” appeared with the “new revolutionary subjects” impossible to reduce to the worker’s struggle alone. The struggle against repression and marginalization transformed into a drastic confrontation that henceforth also welcomed the forces of the left against a “palace” (Palazzo). The expulsion of the secretary of the CGIL, Luciano Lama, from the University of Rome is the episode that traces new lines of deployment of forces and of conflict. In this phase, the radical right furnishes an interpretation of many analogous aspects of the radical left, even recovering, at least in part, instruments of analysis and keys to interpretation from the latter, to the point of arriving at the hypothesis of a strategic common line: the immediate common line is the same for both, the destruction of the bourgeois system.

The principal metapolitical point of reference of this analysis is the second of the Evolian political “grand texts,” *Ride the Tiger*, in the most radical of possible readings, that proposed at the end of the 1960s by Franco Freda. The principal concept of *Ride the Tiger*, that of *apoliteia* (1) [ch. VI], is susceptible to least two readings: the first, exclusively concentrated on the internal dimension, leads to a total abstention from all forms of political action; the second interprets *apoliteia* as a refusal to insert oneself into the political system of today, and thus to adhere to the components that create it (Anti-Tradition), and indicates an exasperated political engagement under form of a militia, “the heroic way,” “holy war” as the most valuable and most authentic instrument of spiritual realization.

That is thus the line suggested by Freda in the “manifesto” that was the most authoritative in the radical right (2). His point of departure is a virulent attack on the concept of Europe, that overthrows the entire political spiritual heritage of the modern West:

“Europe is an old hussy who has whored in all the brothels and has contracted all the ideological infections – since those of revolts of medieval communes to those of anti-imperial national monarchies; from Illuminism to Jacobinism, to Masonry, to Judaism, to Zionism, to liberalism, to Marxism. A whore, whose womb has conceived and engendered the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolt: whose soul was possessed by the violence of merchants and the rebellion of slaves. And us, right now, we would like to redeem it?” (*The Disintegration of the System*)

The result of this Europe is a world totally “other” regarding that of Tradition: it’s the bourgeois, capitalist world, dominated by economic authority and by the exploitation of man by man. The state

itself is the political place reserved only to the bourgeoisie, whose unique function is the defense of the bourgeois economy (the debt towards the instruments of Marxist analysis is explicit and declared). To that he opposed the idea of the "true state" (vero Stato), as an absolute reality, values that transcend contingent historical realizations (the Evolian inspiration is evident here). This conception is the source of inspiration for the "popular state" proposed by Freda in an articulated and analytic project, whose only relative indications of external politics can be reprised here, by reasons of the consequences that they have on the general strategic choices ("the field of battle") of the extreme right:

"The denunciation of the Atlantic Pact and its military organization, as the rupture of relations that link Italy today the neocapitalist structures (European Economic Community, etc...) must provoke the active insertion of the Popular State into the sphere of states that refuse to be snagged by the politics of imperialist blocs of power. The Popular State will establish alliances with all the authentically anti-capitalist states and favor on the international level, movements of struggle against capitalism and the revisionist accomplices."

This type of affirmation, as the repeated declarations of sympathy for Chinese communism because of the sober, Spartan, warrior style that characterizes it (beside the anti-imperialist struggle) is at the base of the "Nazi-Maoist" formula by which they often characterize the theories of Freda. This constitutes the basis of one of the most important passages of the itinerary of Freda, the hypothesis of a solidarity with the left. It is not solely a theoretical hypothesis, but a veritable strategic proposition of "common struggle," that Freda addresses "to those who radically refuse the system, lying beyond the traditional left, in the certainty that even with them we could realize a loyal unity of action against bourgeois society." Well understood, they are foreign to metaphysical premises, they do not pursue the myth of the "true state," the super-human, metapolitical, metahistorical directions of a superior "reality": but in the temporal historical order, their objective is the same, the destruction of the bourgeois system. That's why a coherent unity of action is to be inaugurated with all the forces engaged in the struggle for the elimination of the system, by repudiating legalist and reformist tactics, and "all guilty hesitation before the use of all the means, drastic and decisive, that only violence possesses." (3)

Franco Ferraresi, extract from : « Les références théorico-doctrinales de la droite radicale en Italie », Mots n°12, 1986.

Evola. Philosophy and Direct Action –

Dominique Venner

Considered by certain people as “the greatest traditionalist thinker of the Occident,” Julius Evola (1898-1974) always had difficult relations with the MSI while exercising a certain influence on the most radical circles, the FAR in their time then Ordine Nuovo or Avanguardia Nazionale. Evola was held on the margins of Fascism during the Ventennio (1922-1943). Despite his criticisms, however, he still wanted solidarity with the Italian Social Republic after 1943. Influenced by both Nietzsche and Guénon, he cultivated in fashion of the first the contempt of the plebeian and the praise of the self-made superman. But he joined Guénon in his interpretation of history as a process of decadence and involution leading, according to the Hindu tradition, to the Kali Yuga, the demonic age preceding the return to primordial chaos (1). However, he was ready to recognize that certain political forms, more or less in accord with his hierarchical idea of Tradition, could slacken the decline. Such was his interpretation of fascism, in the measure where it, by its attempt to rehabilitate heroic values, constituted a challenge to modern societies and to the faceless mass man.

In the eyes of the militants or intellectual of the young post-fascist generation, Evola presented the advantage of proceeding from a vigorous internal critique of fascism without ceding to anti-fascism. He offered a coherent and sophisticated “vision of the world,” pitiless for modernity, to which he opposed a construction far more radical and absolute than that of fascism (2). Condemning for example nationalism for its “naturalist” inspiration, Evola opposed to it “the race of the spirit” and “the idea, our true fatherland.” What counted, he said, “it is not sharing the same earth or speaking the same language, it’s sharing the same idea (3).” What idea? That of a superior order, which ancient Rome, Medieval Chivalry, or Prussia had expressed. He proposed a style of life made with severity, discipline, durability, sacrifice, practiced as asceticism. Evola was not a pure spirit. He had served in the artillery in the course of the First World War, and had been, in his youth, a distinguished alpinist, author of the admirable Meditations on the Peaks. At his death, his ashes were deposited on the summit of Monte Rosa.

Towards 1950, then believing in the chances of the MSI, Evola wanted to give a warrior’s “bible” to the young militants of this movement: that was *Men Among the Ruins* (*), prefaced with an essay by Prince Borghese (4). His hopes were dashed, he withdrew from the MSI and all political action beginning in 1957. He would publish *Ride the Tiger* a bit later (1961), (***) a difficult work that contradicted the preceding one (5). He declared in substance that in a world going to its ruin, nothing was worth saving, the sole categorical imperative being to follow the interior way with a perfect detachment from all that surrounds us, but by assuming that what life offers is painful and tragic. This message raised lively controversies in the sect of those ironically called “the Witnesses of Evola.” Some understood it as an invitation to retire from the world, and others as a invitation to dynamite decadent society. It is this part

of the message which would be understood by the Italian adepts of brutal activism that would manifest in the course of the "years of lead."

What Ride the Tiger expressed reflected the disgust that swamp of petty parliamentary politics in which the MSI sank could inspire in even the most idealistic. But, beyond that, was the evolution of Western and Italian society submitting to the hold of consumerism and materialism.

In the course of the following decades, the generalization of violence and terrorism on the left had some important effects within the radical right that influenced the philosopher. The two principal extra-parliamentary organizations, Ordine Nuovo and Avanguardia Nazionale, having been dissolved in 1973, grew to illegality. But this strategy was broken by outright repression.

However, a new generation was at work who had made a superficial reading of Evola. Born after 1950, foreign to the historical memory of fascism, it willingly criticized the "old guard" of the MSI, and the equally sacred monsters of the activist right, of the Borghese type, and their obsolete strategy of the coup d'Etat. They proclaimed emphatically the end of ideology and the primacy of action. For this generation of very young militants, before the void of old dead values, combat remained as an existential value. "It is not to power that we aspire, nor to the creation of a new order," one read in 1980 in Qex, newsletter of political prisoners of the right. "It's the struggle that interests us, it's action itself, the affirmation of our own nature." The influence of Ride the Tiger was evident. But that, which according to Evola, should have resulted in an internal asceticism, was here reduced to its most brutal literal meaning, by identification with the simplistic myth of the "warrior." This derivation led to the summary theorization of "armed spontaneity," as much as retreat into an esoteric ivory tower.

The Doctrine of the Warrior –

Franco Ferraresi – 1986

The panorama of groups who, from 1976 to 1981-1982, originated in Italy, and especially Rome, of black repugnance, with innumerable episodes of violence – strikes, attacks, homicides, robberies, and even probably massacres – can not be traced here. It is only possible to attempt to indicate the impact of the doctrines of the intellectual mentors and the formulations of the militant groups. An extremely complex task, as these militant groups most often formed spontaneously, and they escape all exact ideological framing, from which it is difficult to mark their actions, the border between the political act and the purely criminal act (very often, for example, robberies, at the start organized to finance the movement and aid comrades in difficulty, then became an instrument of enrichment for the perpetrators). Not to mention the extreme fragmentation and dispersion of rare documentary material, still very far from being known in a systematic fashion.

For example, and without the pretension of being exhaustive, we can indicate here the positions of Quex, the news bulletin of right wing political detainees, published between 1978 and 1981. All its editors, from the moment where they wrote, were incarcerated, some with very grave penalties, as is the case of the leader of the group, Mr. Tuti, condemned to life imprisonment for the murder of two policemen in the course of a brawl triggered by his arrest. The publication expresses in a relatively systematic manner and continues the points of view of a current – that of “armed spontaneity” (spontaneismo armato) – refusing by nature (or incapable) of developing its own ideas with a fullness that surpasses that of an leaflet or an internal document.

Quex explicitly places itself in the Evola-Freda current, from which it recognizes the fundamental merit of having determined a theoretical position capable of leading to militant action, the “objectives of the lesser holy war.” The point of departure of its theorization, henceforth acquired by the radical right, is the refusal of all structural bonds. For the differentiated man, for he who wants to be able to “ride the tiger,” the only possibility is that of “blending into society however reacting when his honor and dignity require it, thus ... always. Actions of this type are perfectly possible even if they are conducted by isolated militants or by ‘informal groupuscules’ (slegati) of 2 or 3 comrades; they can, by spontaneous phenomenon, continuously expand.” It is precisely the shortcomings in the material and organizational plans, that constitute the premises of spontaneous struggle: “Spontaneity! That is the watchword being thrown by the vanguard to their comrades.”

The exemplary action is the natural outcome of spontaneity; it distinguishes itself as much from terrorism (as it is open and concentrates the attention of all on the group that accomplished it) as from the beau geste of the anarchist or spectacular type (because “it is not done to satisfy libertine demands

on the part of the militant, which should not exist”): not to mention the Leninist and Gramscist strategy whose essence is “the work of the ant” (referencing the fable). The choice of exemplary action derives from the canons of existential nature before politics: “It’s not to power that we aspire, nor, necessarily, towards the creation of a new order ... It’s the struggle that interests us, it’s action itself, the daily combat for the affirmation of our own nature.”

Such is the decisive point: action deprived of precise references to a single goal correspond to a classic topos of warrior ethics that the revolutionary militants permanently claimed. Once more, the fundamental reference comes from the body of Evola’s work, whose teaching in the matter was distilled and condensed in a text in 1940 which, reprinted by Freda in 1970 and 1977, constitutes a sort of mystic-ascetic breviary of the political soldier. This writing begins with the remark that the contrast between action and contemplation, typical of Western civilization, was unknown by the ancient Aryans, for whom action could be the instrument of spiritual realization, that is to say capable of pushing man beyond his individual conditioning and involving him in supernatural reality. War, of course, in the category of action, corresponds to an eternal struggle of metaphysical forces: on one had, the Olympian principle of light, the solar and Uranian reality, on the other, violence in its crude state, the Titanic-Telluric element, barbarous in the classical sense, feminine, demonic. That is the thought of Evola. His disciples echo him: “For us, to be legionaries means to be soldiers of the luminous forces against all that is telluric and chaos. So the struggle for the legionary is not a uniquely material action, but essentially spiritual.” In ancient tradition, war and the way of the divine blended themselves into a single entity. This applies to the Nordic-Germanic world, where Valhalla is the seat of eminent immortality reserved to heroes fallen on the field of battle. “No sacrifices pleases Odin-Wotan, lord of Valhalla, as much as that offered by the man who dies in combat.” On this point, our subject: “The Legionary clearly realizes his own being in the Heroic Death ... He always had in his heart the thought of death, in order to be ready at any instant to serenely embark with it on the triumphal voyage to Valhalla ... the Kingdom of Heroes.” These concepts, according to Evola, also constitute the core of Islamic tradition in the theory of the double war: “the lesser” material one, made against the enemy or infidel (in this case called “lesser holy war”), and “the greater holy war,” of the internal or spiritual order, the struggle of the superhuman element of man against all that is instinctive, impassioned, subjected to the forces of nature. The essence of this conception, according to Evola, is in the vision of the “lesser” war as a way to realize, in perfect simultaneity, the greater: it’s why “holy war” and “the divine way” – jihad – are often used as synonyms. The echo of this idea on Quex is literal: “The essence of legionary action must refer to the lesser / greater holy war binary ... Thus it will establish what type of action suits in a functional and contemporaneous fashion the lesser and greater holy war.” Finally, the Indo-Aryan tradition of the Bhagavad-Gītā, where the god Krishna condemns as cowardly the humanitarian scruples that prevent the warrior Arjuna from descending to the field of battle: the duty to fight has its origins in divine judgment, that ignores all earthly necessity, in the same fashion, heroic action must be done for its own sake, beyond contingent motivation, all passion, all vulgar utility. “In the measure where the warrior is able to act in purity and absolutism ... he breaks the chains of humanity, he evokes the divine as a metaphysical force.” From the Bhagavad Gītā, passing through Evola, to Quex, “action is done for itself

and for the purity that he who accomplishes it possesses, ignoring its utility or non-utility to the ends of global strategy.”

Inoffensive exercises of the adepts of esotericism? We must doubt it if we consider the entirety of the convictions accumulated by the editorship of Quex. The problem seems like any other: verify that these myths and concepts, reproduced by a small number of individuals having a particular inclination to doctrinal reflection (being separated from the action by reason of force majeure...) constitute a real legacy for active militants on the base. Unfortunately, the still minimal degree of our knowledge on these latter figures does not permit us to give a satisfactory response to this question for the moment.