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[A new magazine has recently appeared in Italy called *Diavolo in Corpo* [December 1999]. It is a magazine of anarchist ideas that is intended to get beyond the anarchist ghetto. The following text is a translation of the introduction the publishers of this magazine wrote for it. It is printed here as an introduction to the ideas of certain of the insurrectional anarchists of Italy.]

To have the devil in the body. Here is an expression that has fortunately survived from its medieval origins. The last witch burned on the pyre of the inquisition, the devil has continued to creep into the body of human beings to shake them from the torpor of their existence. Indeed, something of the sulphurous remains in this idiom, an odor of heresy. To have the devil in the body means being in continual motion, not knowing a moment of reprieve, of quiet: refusing to lie down on custom. It has nothing to do with the frenzy to which modern life invites us. On the contrary, the fibrillation of the I — when it is not adherence to external speed, but a spark that exceeds every utilitarian expectation — is customarily looked at with suspicion, considered a pathology. Possession, obsession, fanaticism: many are the descriptions with which the defenders of *that which is* have liquidated the lovers of *that which is not*. But the recourse to diagnosis without appeal announces in the first place the embarrassment of anyone who finds herself facing a condition of perpetual motion that is not the fruit of logical choice, but of visceral action. Not that one would want to say that to have the devil in the body means not to possess one's own reasons; on the contrary. These reasons exist and even have solid bases. Provided that the foundation of the projection into the future of desires that would want to be carried out lets them through to the enchantment of their life, to their immediate substance. All knowledge and understanding do not put enough words together to ease the burning of that which we lack, a life to invent. Like many before us, we think that no possibility, even if it is the most unreal, will ever be able to be outlawed or rejected beforehand, no part of life will ever be able to be condemned to death. If that one expanse, ever more limited, of unknown places does not remain on the earth, it is within the individual himself that a world in motion and without limits opens, the exploration of which has barely begun. Rather it runs the risk of beginning again every day. This thought provokes the vertigo of the

absolute in anyone who has come across it. And it is to avoid falling and hurting herself that the human being clings daily to the external reality that he knows, transforming this existential vertigo into an aesthetic thrill. Through the centuries the passion for the unknown has seized the human being, and through the centuries she has sought relief in art or in science. In such a way he accepts the dream into her own little interior kitchen, utilizing it in doses and tensions that are not able to cause burns themselves. Safety above all. This is the creed of a world that prefers the pension to adventure. Now anyone who is not satisfied with comfort that only the domestic walls of habit are in a position to give him finds herself in the unpleasant situation of having to create the other: another way to think, another way to feel, another way to live. This other is vulnerable to criticism and to drolleries from anyone who brags about having his feet on the ground, because it ventures beyond the verifiable facts. And since the accountability of giving and of having that scans our days on earth demands that we all balance our accounts, it often happens that one willingly dedicates only the season of adolescence to the persistent search for freedom. The desire to rebel is an infantile disorder: how many times we have heard it repeated. Yet in every epoch, in every circle, the tyranny of objective reality has known its own ageless outlaws. Individuals and ideas that, referring to Utopia, or to the Impossible, or to the Unknown, or to the Marvelous — the name with which they have christened the thirst that devoured them matters little — have sought to escape the (un)quick sand¹ in which they were trapped by the means that they had at their disposal. Today, a fine example of the (un)quick sand is furnished to us by the dominant thinking. It's inactivity cannot amaze anyone: it is the necessary consequence of a perspective dictated by the indispensable need to preserve the foundations of the world in which we live, the world of authority and of the commodity. In order to mold the world to its own image and profit, power must make the existing order appear natural. It must present and impose today's social

¹ "(Un)quick sand" is the closest I could come to expressing the Italian word-play. The term in Italian was sabbie (im)mobili. Sabbie mobili is quick sand, but literally means moving sand — thus, here the speak of unmoving sand which nonetheless traps one.

relations as eternal, define them as proper to all societies, for the purpose of establishing Progress, Money, Work, Democracy, State, as if it were a question of absolute concepts. The purpose is to spread the inner persuasion everywhere and within everyone that the world has always been this way and always will be, and that it will never know a rupture, an upheaval, a revolution. The world in which we live is thus presented to us as the ripe fruit of a linear progress that has brought us from the hell of primitivity to the paradise of civilization, and no one has the right to bring this up for discussion. As for the alternatives to this one-way thought, they appear to us to portray the unfaithful shadow. They limit themselves to demanding a different outline of the form within the substantial identity of content: a left government as an alternative to a right government, thirty-five hours of work as an alternative to forty hours of work weekly, organic merchandise as an alternative to adulterated merchandise, and so forth. Realism is the tomb of Utopia, but the last hope of politics, of work, of the market. And to us — to us who, to stay with the example, wish the end of every, government, all work, every market — nothing is left but to build castles in the air. Or else to try to demolish those that are on earth. It has already been said many times that a theory critical of society possesses no concepts that can build a bridge between the present and the future, offers no promises, shows no outcomes, but remains destructive. Indeed if we could formulate a concrete idea of the alternative, it would not be that of an alternative: the possibilities of the *other* world are so remote and incongruous with respect to the universe of today as to defy every attempt to identify it within the boundaries of this universe. This is why, at the very moment that we take the floor to question everything, whoever listens to us is certain to hear nothing. But nothing else is possible. Any one who is deafened by the roar of identical days and signs that follow one after the other will never succeed in catching our murmur. If we trust our flow to superficially banal reflections, it is because we have not yet reached to all of the depths. If we recite apparently mysterious formulae it is to awaken the demons that reside in most of us. Here we will record the incarnations. Here we will retrace the appearances. We will try to evoke the strength from them as well as the reasons.