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# **Neither Oblivion Nor Ceremony : Against the Cult of the Carrion**

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*“It seems more satisfactory, for me, seeing that it is about men who have been distinguished for their actions, than to honor them only with actions.”*

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponesian War*, 411 BC

It is dangerous to declare war against the State and this world, because the State only knows how to do two things: progress, and combat everyone who would destroy it, weaken it, or impede its progress. As such, anarchists, by which we mean revolutionaries, are conscious of our decisions and of the responsibilities that derive from them. When we say revolutionaries, we are not speaking of any belief in a perfect and peaceful world, nor in the chimeric belief in the possibility of seeing the arrival of some total anti-authoritarian revolution which we can only dream of in our mental masturbation, in our lifetime or not. We are speaking of a permanent tension toward the deepening of a process of rupture with power and its institutions, through radical critique and destruction.

On May 22, 2009, Mauricio Morales, a respected comrade from Santiago, Chile, fell in combat in this social war that he tried, like so many other anarchists across the world try, to contribute to with our means and our ethics, our own intensity and desires. The explosion of the homemade bomb that he was carrying on his back caused his brutal death; it was intended for the Prison Guards School which he was not far from. As far away as we were at this moment, in the heart of this old Europe, the news of his death upset us for what it was: the death of a brother. We did not know Mauricio directly, but does that matter? We recognize ourselves in him, as we recognize ourselves each day in all the attacks against domination, and that was enough for us. Like many others, we lit up the night in his commemoration. Because it is the only form of commemoration that suits us to salute the memory of the comrade: continuing the fight in solidarity, yes, but *much more*: propagating the critique of this world in action, and fostering its spread.

Because our attacks against the existent do not have as their primary objective to honor the memory of the fallen comrades, to send a dedication to one imprisoned comrade or another, nor to dialogue with power body-to-body and head-on. The attack is for us a necessity so that our

words have meaning and our ideas are not just concepts. And we find totally secondary, we see as totally dispensable, this need to always send winks or be self-referential. The recipients of the winks do not need to be named if they recognize themselves in the act itself. And offering an attack to a comrade distances the others from the possibility of appropriating it for themselves, and cuts ourselves off from an infinity of possibilities for appropriation and reproducibility, and also the anonymity that characterizes our anarchist intervention in all its humility. To clarify what we call humility, we mean that our attacks are registered as modest contributions in the social war that has been fought forever, and not as heroic acts, but as we have always said, it is easy to attack and it doesn't matter which enraged person does it. This is why our comrades fallen in combat are not heroes.

Our attacks are daily, they do not wait and do not require any call to solidarity. This is our sole form of commemoration: in permanent conflictuality. Because the other forms of commemoration do not serve to remedy our insurgent hearts, because crying has never made a wall fall down. Whether they are of divine or earthly religion, the apostles of this world don't offer any solution to our problems. Vigils, ceremonies, elegies, marches, anniversaries, pretty speeches and cheap lyricism we willingly abandon and we continue on our chosen path. We are not interested in glory and honor, but in dignity, love and hate. It is with these three sisters that we walk every day. We would have preferred not to have felt the need to write these lines, but we are afraid of seeing values of a religious and military origin that are not our own mixing in with ours.

*“The cult of the dead is only an insult to true pain. The act of keeping a small garden, dressing in black, wearing a veil do not prove the sincerity of grief. Grief must also disappear, individuals must react to the finality and inevitability of death. We must fight against suffering instead of exhibiting it, instead of walking in grotesque processions and false congratulations (. . .) We must overthrow the pyramids, the burial mounds, the tombs; we must run the plow through the cemetery walls to rid humanity of what is called respect for the dead, but which is the cult of the carrion.”*

Albert Libertad, *L'anarchie*, October 31, 1907.

There is no glory in the act of dying in combat. Power will reserve morbid consequences for our decisions as combatants, whether prison, torture, or death. All this bad news forms part of the contract that we signed with ourselves, in the decision of the war on the existent. We know what we can expect, from the most beautiful to the most tragic, and we are ready, come what may. This time it was fatal, but this does not make Mauricio a more involved or more courageous comrade than any other combatant. That night, he assumed the risks like many others do every night, and chance stole him from us. It could have happened to you, to me, to him, to her, or to any other individual for whom anarchy is not merely a matter of words or postures.

Many of our comrades died in combat. The Ravachols, Filippis and Morales of our history are numerous, of more or less living memory, they continue existing in every blow we make, in every assault carried out against domination. And they are not martyrs, they did not die for a cause, they did not sacrifice themselves. They died trying to realize a dream, they didn't surrender themselves and they were killed. That is all. Nothing will bring them back, not a song, not a poem, not a speech, because there is no beyond, there are no heroes, there is no other world where to cure ourselves from this one.

Comrades, let us not give in to the siren song of admiration, charisma and social value. Anarchists should not be canonized. Leave that to the star-system and religious idolatry. May each individual be her or his own hero rather than seeking greatness in others. Mauricio is not a statue, a poster or an icon. He is a source of inspiration, a brother.

*Against the cult of the carrion.*

(June 2013)