



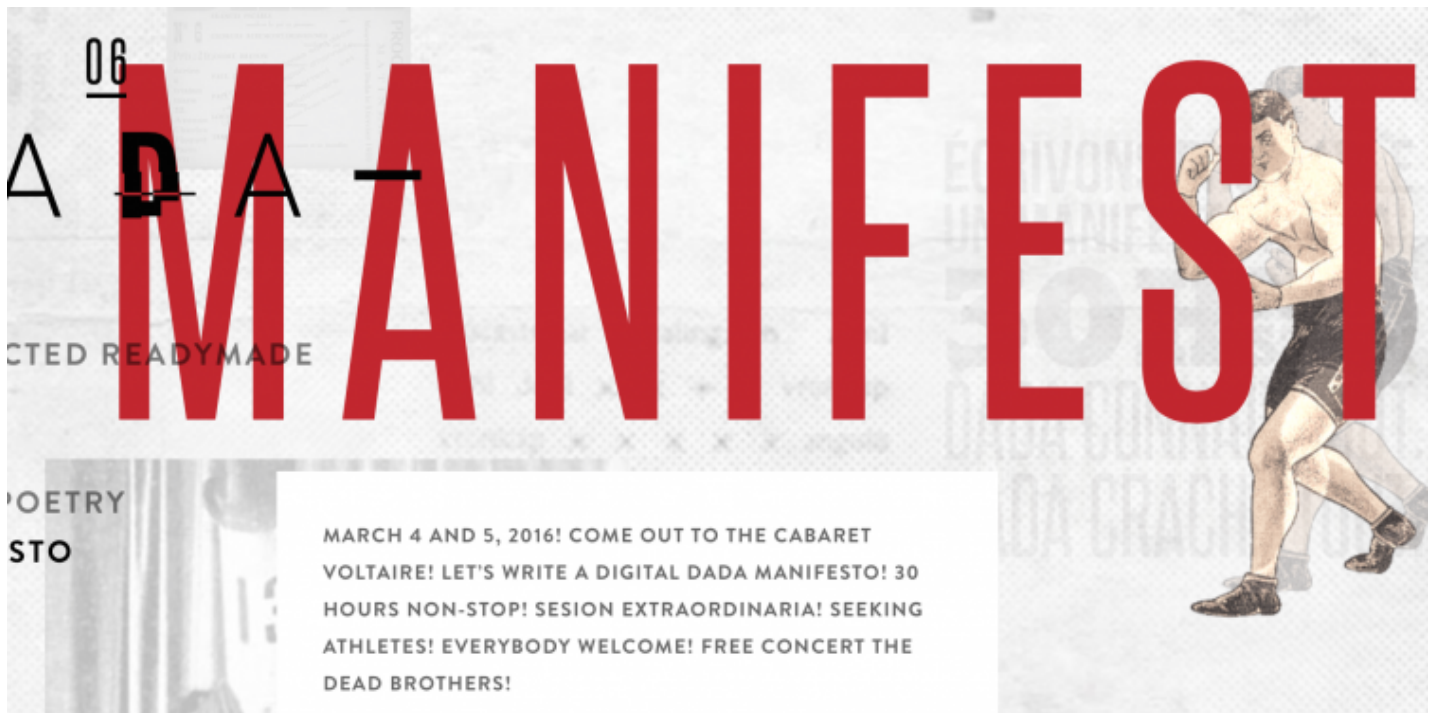
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# RetroDada Manifesto

McKenzie Wark — February 8, 2016



The **RetroDada Manifesto** was written at the invitation of **Anita Hugli** and **David Dufresne** for an event at **Cabaret Voltaire** in Zürich, 4 & 5 March 2016, to celebrate the Dada centenary, in there place where it all began. For more information on that event,

and related projects see <http://dada-data.net/en/> Below is the text in English, followed by French, German and Italian. Feel free to share, remix, etc.

## RETRODADA MANIFESTO

RetroDada begins with disgust. Once again the world gets its war on. While some cities are attacked by bombers, others are strafed by art fairs. This time there's no Switzerland of neutrality where refugees might cool their heels, as now the whole globe itself overheats. The insomnia of reason breeds monsters.

But before we can take two steps forward, let's take one leap back. Back a whole century. Back to the first of the world wars to be numbered; back to the birth of Dada disgust. Back to that great refusal of what the century was to become. Why shouldn't a .gif run backwards as well as forwards? Its RetroDada time! In principle RetroDada is against manifestoes, but it is also also against principles. So here goes nothing.

The world is full of mistakes, but the worst is the art that got made. Art gives us Dante's Inferno as styled by interior decorators. RetroDada aims to please neither at art nor anti-art, as nobody should serve masters. We will put an end to spectacle and replace it with convulsive laughter from continent to continent. It's shit after all, but from now on we mean to shit in different colors.

Psychoanalysis is itself the disease. It makes the bourgeois self seem interesting. Ethics produces atrophy like every plague produced by intelligence. Theory merely guides us in a round-about way to the prejudice we had in the first place. What we need are works that are tender and precise and forever beyond understanding. There is a lot of negative work to be done.

RetroDada is our intensity. RetroDada is for and against unity. RetroDada is the abolition of their reasons. RetroDada is the refusal of an inheritance. RetroDada is a convulsive effusion, like a cellphone cooked in a microwave. RetroDada is a divinity of the lowest order. RetroDada has no theory. There is enough of that in art school. We love the old things for their freshness.

How to make a RetroDada manifesto: Take a Dada manifesto or two. Copy the good bits. Toss them in a file. Move the bits around. Improve on them. The manifesto will be like you. As for intelligence, it will be found in the streets.

RetroDada is working with all its might to introduce the idiot everywhere. RetroDada is a venture capital form for the exploitation of other people's ideas. God can afford to be unsuccessful. So can RetroDada. It is luxury without value or price. RetroDada gives itself to nothing, neither to work nor play. RetroDada seduces you with your own idea.

RetroDada is at once stand-up comedy and a requiem mass. RetroDada trusts only in the sincerity of situations. RetroDada fights against the thanaticism of the times. RetroDada develops the plasticity of the digital. We should make all art and literature and cinema free. The medium is as unimportant as we are. Essential only is the forming. Take any material at all.

RetroDada is a theoretical virus. RetroDada means letting oneself be thrown by events. Say yes to a life that strives downward toward negation. RetroDada refuses to be contemporary to any of this shit. RetroDada reintroduces art and everyday life so they can have queer sex in back alleys. RetroDada is the statelessness of the mind. RetroDada rejects both the stylish order and the stylized disorder of contemporary aesthetics. We are convinced of the arbitrariness and falsity of our poor creation, the world. We look unencumbered into the heights and depths.

Let's only steal from the best, and from their actions, not their styles. The resonant **Sophie Taeuber**, the drum-banger **Richard Huelsenbeck**, the tubular **Hugo Ball**, the mystic **Emmy Hennings**, the hypeman **Tristan Tzara**, the ironic **Jean Arp**, the dadasoph **Raoul Hausmann**, the runfast **Hannah Höch**, the aviarist **Baroness Elsa**. Let's take their leavings not their droppings. Music, dances, theories, manifestos, poems, paintings, costumes, masks. To be begun again, from the beginning.

So many fates of the west befell Dada. It tried everything already, so we don't have to. **Arthur Cravan** became a legend. **Mina Loy** became a poet. **Marcel Duchamp** became the enabler of contemporary art. Hugo Ball became a devout Catholic. Emmy Hennings became a Protestant mystic. Hannah Höch wrote a trans-species children's book. Richard Huelsenbeck became a therapist. Tristan Tzara became a communist. Marcel

Janco returned to the Orient. Baroness Elsa died in poverty and obscurity. Jacques Vaché killed himself before it even all began.

To be for this manifesto is to be RetroDada! To be against this manifesto is to be RetroDada! To be for and against this manifesto is to be RetroDada! To be neither for nor against this manifesto is to be RetroDada! There is no escape from the history yet to be unmade!

## MANIFESTE RÉTRODADA

Au commencement de RétroDada était le dégoût. Une fois de plus, le monde s'est déclaré sa petite guerre. Tandis que certaines villes sont sous le feu des bombardiers, d'autres sont dévastées par les foires d'art contemporain. Et cette fois, il n'y a plus de Suisse, havre de neutralité où les réfugiés pourraient prendre leur mal en patience, car la planète entière est en surchauffe. L'insomnie de la raison engendre des monstres.

Mais avant de faire deux pas en avant, commençons par un grand bond en arrière. Un bond d'un siècle. Il nous ramène à la première des guerres mondiales à avoir été affublée d'un numéro. À la genèse du dégoût Dada. À ce rejet sans appel de ce que ce siècle-là était appelé à être. Pourquoi un .gif ne pourrait-il pas se lire vers l'arrière autant que vers l'avant ? L'heure de RétroDada a sonné ! En principe, RétroDada est contre les manifestes, mais il est également contre les principes. Donc voilà, quoique.

Le monde regorge d'erreurs dont la pire est l'art qui fut commis par les artistes. L'art nous a donné l'Enfer de Dante, réinterprété par des décorateurs d'intérieur. RétroDada n'aspire à complaire ni à l'art ni à l'anti-art, car nul ne doit servir de maître. Nous mettrons un terme au spectacle et lui substituerons un rire convulsif, secouant tous les continents. De toute façon, ce n'est jamais que de la merde, mais désormais nous chierons en couleur.

La psychanalyse elle-même est la maladie. Elle voudrait rendre intéressants les états d'âme de la bourgeoisie. Quant à l'éthique, comme les autres fléaux produits par l'intelligence, elle tend à nous atrophier. La théorie nous conduit par un vaste détour au point de départ de nos préjugés. Il nous faut des œuvres exquises, précises et à jamais incomprises. Un vaste travail en négatif reste à accomplir.

RétroDada est notre intensité. RétroDada promeut l'unité et s'y oppose. RétroDada est l'abolition de leurs raisons. RétroDada est le renoncement à un héritage. RétroDada est l'effusion convulsive, comme un téléphone portable cuit au four micro-onde. RétroDada est une divinité totalement mineure. RétroDada est dépourvu de bases théoriques. Il y en a suffisamment comme ça dans les écoles d'art. Nous aimons les vieilleries pour leur fraîcheur.

Pour composer un manifeste rétro-dadaïste : prenez un ou deux manifestes dadaïstes. Recopiez les bons morceaux. Jetez-les dans un fichier. Mélangez les morceaux. Améliorez-les. Le manifeste vous ressemblera. Quant à l'intelligence, elle court les rues.

RétroDada œuvre sans relâche, en tout lieu, à acclimater le crétin. RétroDada est une forme de capital-risque favorisant la spoliation des idées d'autrui. Dieu peut se permettre l'erreur. RétroDada aussi. Il n'est que luxe, sans valeur et sans prix. RétroDada ne s'adonne entièrement à rien, ni au travail ni à l'oisiveté. RétroDada prendra vos idées et vous séduira avec.

RétroDada c'est – simultanément – du stand-up et un requiem. RétroDada ne se fie qu'à la vérité des situations. RétroDada combat le fanatisme de notre époque. RétroDada développe la plasticité du numérique. Il faut que l'art, la littérature et le cinéma soient gratuits, sans exception. Le support importe aussi peu que nous. L'essentiel est la mise en forme. Utilisez n'importe quelle matière.

RétroDada est un virus théorique. RétroDada signifie l'abandon de soi aux événements. Dites oui à une vie tendant résolument à sa propre négation. RétroDada se refuse à être contemporain de toute cette merde. RétroDada réconcilie l'art et le quotidien afin qu'ils puissent avoir des rapports sexuels contre-nature dans des ruelles mal famées. RétroDada, c'est l'apatridie de l'esprit. RétroDada vomit autant l'ordre stylé que le désordre stylisé propres à l'esthétique contemporaine. Nous sommes convaincus de la fausseté et de l'arbitraire qui président à notre pauvre création, le monde. Sans gêne ni entrave, nous scrutons les sommets et les abîmes.

Ne plagions que les meilleurs – leurs actes et non leurs styles. La sonore Sophie Taeuber, le tambourineur Richard Huelsenbeck, le tubulaire Hugo Ball, la mystique Emmy Hennings, le lanceur de tendances Tristan Tzara, l'ironique Jean Arp, le dadasophe Raoul Hausmann, la véloce Hannah Höch, l'ornithologue baronne Elsa.

Régalons-nous de leurs restes, dédaignons leurs déjections. Musique, danses, théories, manifestes, poèmes, tableaux, costumes, masques. À recommencer, da capo.

Dada aura connu tous les destins du monde occidental. Il a tout expérimenté, ce qui nous fait gagner du temps. Arthur Cravan devint légende. Mina Loy devint poétesse. Marcel Duchamp devint pionnier de l'art contemporain. Hugo Ball devint un fervent catholique. Emmy Hennings, une mystique protestante. Hannah Höch écrivit un livre d'enfant abolissant les frontières entre espèces. Richard Huelsenbeck devint thérapeute. Tristan Tzara devint communiste. Marcel Janco fit son retour à l'Orient. La baronne Elsa mourut pauvre et oubliée. Jacques Vaché se suicida avant que l'aventure n'eût débuté.

Être pour ce manifeste, c'est être RétroDada ! Être contre ce manifeste, c'est être RétroDada ! Être pour et contre ce manifeste, c'est être RétroDada ! N'être ni pour ni contre ce manifeste, c'est être RétroDada ! Impossible de se soustraire à une Histoire qui s'écrit à l'effaceur !

## RETRODADA-MANIFESTO

RetroDada beginnt mit Abscheu. Die Welt hat mal wieder ihren Krieg. Manche Städte werden von Kampfflugzeugen angegriffen, andere mit Kunstmessen bombardiert. Diesmal gibt es keine neutrale Schweiz mehr, in der sich die Flüchtlinge die Beine in den Bauch stehen. Jetzt läuft die ganze Erde heiß. Und der Schlaf der Vernunft gebiert Ungeheuer.

Doch bevor wir zwei Schritte nach vorn gehen, werfen wir einen Blick zurück. Einhundert Jahre zurück – in die Zeit des ersten Kriegs, der eine Nummer erhielt. Auf die Geburtsstunde der dadaistischen Abscheu und die tiefe Ablehnung dessen, was aus diesem Jahrhundert noch werden sollte. Warum sollte ein GIF nicht auch rückwärts laufen können? Es ist Zeit für RetroDada! Im Prinzip ist RetroDada gegen Manifeste, aber es ist auch gegen Prinzipien. Hier geht also nichts mehr.

Wie Welt steckt voller Irrungen, doch am schlimmsten ist die Kunst, die geschaffen wird. Die Kunst schenkt uns Dantes Inferno, als sei es das Werk eines Innenarchitekts. RetroDada will weder der Kunst noch der Anti-Kunst gefallen; es will niemandes Herren

dienen. Wir bereiten dem Schauspiel ein Ende und ersetzen es durch weltumspannendes Gelächter. Letztlich ist alles Scheiße – doch wir scheißen fortan in neuen Farben.

Die Psychoanalyse ist selbst eine Krankheit. Sie lässt den Kleinbürger interessant erscheinen. Ethik sorgt für Verkümmern; wie jede Seuche, die vom Verstand herrührt. Die Theorie führt uns im Kreis zu den Vorurteilen zurück, die am Anfang unserer Überlegungen standen. Was wir brauchen sind Werke, die gleichzeitig sanft und konkret und ewig unverstänglich sind. Es gibt viel Anti-Arbeit zu tun.

RetroDada ist unsere Stärke. RetroDada ist für und gegen Einigkeit. RetroDada schafft ihre eigenen Ursachen ab. RetroDada lehnt ihre eigene Nachfolgerschaft ab. RetroDada ist ein krampfhafter Erguss, als brate man ein Handy in der Mikrowelle. RetroDada ist eine Gottheit untersten Ranges. RetroDada hat keine Theorie. Davon gibt es an den Kunstschulen genug. Wir lieben die alten Dinge, weil sie so frisch sind.

So erstellt man ein RetroDada-Manifest: Ein oder zwei Dada Manifeste nehmen und die besten Passagen kopieren. Sie in eine Datei packen und ein bisschen umherschoben. Und an ihnen wachsen. Jedes Manifest ist so wie sein Verfasser. Und was die Intelligenz angeht – die liegt auf der Straße.

RetroDada arbeitet mit aller Kraft daran, überall den Idioten einzuschleusen. RetroDada ist Wagniskapital zur Ausbeutung fremder Ideen. Gott kann sich Misserfolge leisten. RetroDada auch. Das ist ein Luxus, den man mit Geld nicht bezahlen kann. RetroDada widmet sich nichts, weder der Arbeit noch dem Spiel. RetroDada verführt jeden mit seiner eigenen Idee.

RetroDada ist Stand-up Comedy und Totenmesse zugleich. RetroDada vertraut nur der situativen Aufrichtigkeit. RetroDada kämpft gegen den Thanatizismus der Gegenwart. RetroDada entwickelt die Plastizität des Digitalen. Kunst, Literatur und Kino sollten kostenlos sein. Das Medium ist so unwichtig wie wir. Nur die Form spielt eine Rolle. Das Material ist beliebig.

RetroDada ist ein theoretisches Virus. RetroDada bedeutet, sich von den Ereignissen überrollen zu lassen. Ja zu sagen zu einem Leben, das zur Verneinung strebt. RetroDada will nicht zeitgenössisch sein mit all diesem Scheiß. RetroDada führt die Kunst und den Alltag wieder ein, damit sie in dunklen Nebenstraßen schwulen Sex haben. RetroDada

ist die Staatenlosigkeit des Verstandes. RetroDada ist gegen stilvolle Ordnung, aber auch gegen die stilisierte Unordnung der zeitgenössischen Ästhetik. Wir sind überzeugt von der Willkür und der Falschheit dieser armseligen Schöpfung, unserer Welt. Unbelastet blicken wir in ihre Höhen und Tiefen.

Lasst uns nur von den Besten stehlen, und zwar von ihren Handlungen, nicht von ihrem Stil. Die klangvolle Sophie Taeuber, der paukenschlagende Richard Huelsenbeck, der großartige Hugo Ball, die mystische Emmy Hennings, der heizerische Tristan Tzara, der ironische Hans Arp, der dadasophische Raoul Hausmann, die rasende Hannah Höch und Baroness Elsa mit ihrem Kanarienvogel. Lasst uns nehmen, was sie uns vermachten, und nicht das, was sie fallenließen. Musik, Tänze, Theorien, Manifeste, Gedichte, Gemälde, Kostüme, Masken. Um sie neu zu beginnen, ganz von vorn.

Dada hat viele westliche Schicksale ereilt. Ich habe schon alles ausprobiert, wir müssen es also nicht mehr tun. Arthur Cravan wurde zur Legende. Mina Loy wurde Dichterin. Marcel Duchamp wurde zum Wegbereiter der zeitgenössischen Kunst. Hugo Ball wurde strenggläubiger Katholik. Emmy Hennings wurde zur protestantischen Mystikerin. Hannah Höch schrieb ein Kinderbuch über Mischwesen aus Pflanze und Tier. Richard Huelsenbeck wurde Therapeut. Tristan Tzara wurde Kommunist. Marcel Janco kehrte in den Orient zurück. Baroness Elsa verstarb in Armut und geistiger Umnachtung. Jacques Vaché beging Selbstmord, bevor alles so richtig begann.

Wer dieses Manifest unterstützt, ist RetroDada! Wer dieses Manifest ablehnt, ist RetroDada! Wer dieses Manifest unterstützt und es gleichzeitig ablehnt, ist RetroDada! Wer dieses Manifest weder unterstützt noch ablehnt, ist RetroDada! Es gibt keinen Ausweg aus der Geschichte, die es ungeschehen zu machen gilt.

## MANIFESTO RETRODADA

RetroDada inizia con il disgusto. Una volta di più il mondo ottiene la sua guerra. Mentre alcune città sono colpite dai bombardieri, altre sono devastate dalle fiere dell'arte. Questa volta per i profughi non c'è più la Svizzera neutrale per rinfrescarsi le idee, perché ora l'intero pianeta si sta surriscaldando. L'insonnia della ragione genera mostri.



Ma prima di poter fare due passi avanti, facciamo un salto indietro. Indietro di un intero secolo. Indietro fino a raggiungere la prima delle guerre mondiali a cui sia stato assegnato un numero, indietro fino alla nascita del disgusto Dada. Indietro fino al grande rifiuto di ciò che il secolo sarebbe diventato. Perché un .gif non dovrebbe poter essere mandato indietro tanto quanto in avanti? È l'ora di RetroDada! Per principio RetroDada è contro i manifesti, ma è anche contro i principi. Punto a capo.

Il mondo è pieno di errori, ma il peggiore è l'arte creata da artisti. L'arte ci ha regalato l'Inferno di Dante reinterpretato da decoratori d'interni. RetroDada non intende piacere né all'arte né all'antiarte, poiché nessuno dovrebbe servire dei padroni. Metteremo fine allo spettacolo e lo sostituiremo con un riso convulso che scuota tutti i continenti. È pur sempre merda, ma d'ora in poi intendiamo cacare in colori diversi.

La psicanalisi è lei stessa malattia. Vorrebbe rendere interessanti gli stati d'animo del borghese. L'etica produce atrofia, come ogni piaga prodotta dall'intelligenza. La teoria, lungo tortuosi sentieri, ci conduce soltanto al pregiudizio che avevamo all'inizio. Abbiamo bisogno di opere dolci e precise e soprattutto mai incomprese. Resta molto lavoro in negativo da compiere.

RetroDada è la nostra intensità. RetroDada è per e contro l'unità. RetroDada è l'abolizione delle loro ragioni. RetroDada è il rifiuto di un'eredità. RetroDada è un'effusione convulsiva, come un telefono cellulare cotto in un microonde. RetroDada è una divinità del livello più basso. Retro Dada non ha nessuna teoria. Ce ne sono a sufficienza nelle scuole d'arte. Amiamo le cose vecchie per la loro freschezza.

Come fare un manifesto RetroDada: prendete uno o due manifesti Dada. Copiate i passaggi buoni. Gettateli in un archivio dati. Agitate un po'. Perfezionateli. Il manifesto vi assomiglierà. Quanto all'intelligenza, la si troverà nelle strade.

RetroDada sta lavorando con tutte le sue forze per introdurre ovunque l'idiota. RetroDada è una forma di capitale di rischio per lo sfruttamento delle idee degli altri. Dio può permettersi di non riuscire. Così anche RetroDada. È lusso senza valore o prezzo. RetroDada non si concede completamente a niente, né al lavoro né al gioco. RetroDada vi seduce con le vostre stesse idee.

RetroDada è allo stesso tempo un cabaret e una Messa da requiem. RetroDada si fida solo della sincerità delle situazioni. RetroDada combatte contro la morte dei tempi.

RetroDada sviluppa la plasticità del digitale. L'arte, la letteratura e il cinema dovrebbero essere gratis. Il mezzo è così irrilevante tanto quanto lo siamo noi. Essenziale è solo la forma. Utilizzate materiale qualsiasi.

RetroDada è un virus teorico. RetroDada significa abbandonarsi agli eventi. Dite sì a una vita che tende con decisione alla propria negazione. RetroDada rifiuta di essere contemporaneo di tutte queste cagate. RetroDada riconcilia l'arte e la vita quotidiana così potranno fare sesso omosessuale nei vicoli malfamati. RetroDada è l'apolidia della mente. RetroDada rigetta sia l'ordine elegante sia il disordine stilizzato dell'estetica contemporanea. Siamo convinti dell'arbitrarietà e della falsità della nostra scadente creazione, il mondo. Guardiamo liberi dentro le alture e le profondità.

Rubiamo solo dai migliori, e solo dalle loro azioni, non dal loro stile. L'evocativa Sophie Taeuber, il percussore di tamburi Huelsenbeck, il tubolare Hugo Ball, la mistica Emmy Hennings, il creatore di tendenze Tristan Tzara, l'ironico Jean Arp, il dadasofo Raoul Hausmann, la velocissima Hanna Höch, l'aviaria Baronessa Elsa. Prendiamo i loro avanzi non i loro escrementi. Musica, danze, teorie, manifesti, poesie, dipinti, costumi, maschere. Per essere nuovamente iniziati, dall'inizio.

Dada conobbe così tanti destini del mondo occidentale. Aveva già provato tutto, cosa che ci fa risparmiare tempo. Arthur Cravan diventò una leggenda. Mina Loy diventò una poetessa. Marchel Duchamp diventò colui che permise l'arte contemporanea. Hugo Ball diventò un cattolico devoto. Emmy Hennings diventò una mistica protestante. Hanna Höch scrisse un libro per bambini che eliminava i confini fra le specie. Richard Huelsenbeck diventò un terapeuta. Tristan Tzara diventò un comunista. Marcel Janco ritornò in Oriente. La baronessa Elsa morì povera e dimenticata. Jacques Vaché si uccise prima ancora che tutto iniziasse.

Essere per questo manifesto è essere RetroDada! Essere contro questo manifesto, è essere RetroDada! Essere per e contro questo manifesto è essere RetroDada! Essere né per né contro questo manifesto è essere RetroDada! Non c'è via di scampo alla Storia quando si tratta di sopprimere l'effetto di una modifica!

Thanks to Anita Hugi and David Dufresne for arranging the translations.

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More details to follow.

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Sincerely yours, Professor Pan

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On the right, it is clear that Donald Trump and his Republican followers are intent on using Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as a symbol of all that is evil in the world, commencing a vicious campaign of red-baiting that is sure to intensify in the months leading up to November 2020.

On the left, smart writers are noting that many socialist ideas resonate with the traditions of Progressive liberalism, and that there is a productive if uneasy dialogue to be had between self-styled socialists and liberals.bout/

### American Socialism Is Nothing to Be Afraid About

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Note: A shorter version of this piece was published yesterday at The Daily Beast here. Thanks to Michael Tomasky for his help. Socialism has captured the attention of American elites in a big way. On the right, it is clear that Donald Trump and his Republican followers are intent on using Alex

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