

On the front cover:
'The last panting'
by Vladimiro Tomasi

1st Edition 1998

VLADIMIRO TOMASI

INTRODUCTION

Vladimiro Tomasi was born in Comacchio (Ferrara) on September 30th 1931.

1945 move to Turin, 2003 he lives and works in Sardinia, away Bressan,59.- 09010 Cortoghiana (Cagliari) Italy

He is an artist of recognized painting qualities, who has to his credit a conspicuous series of one-man shows, reviews and cultural demonstrations, both in Italy and abroad.

For his activity he has been decorated with prestigious recognitions.

Aca-demic Tibeerina [Region D'ORO](#) di Rome 1977, Oscar day Montecarlo 1978, Master d'work of art Contemporanea 1983.

Tomasi's personality and work were widely treated in a monograph, cared on his behalf by Pentarco Editions in 1988, with a significant and exhaustive panorama of his works, followed by some of the innumerable critical essays dedicated to his works.

With his publications Vladimiro Tomasi, who is known by practitioners of the art of painting as an emerging personality in the figurative-landscapist drawing up of facts, has wanted to dwell upon some peculiar moments of his creativity, by explicating and justifying the reasons which induced him to apply himself to subjects and themes which apparently are outside his usual artistic store.

As a proof of the fact that every artist is - and must be - always son of his time, Tomasi remarks and points out his presence today, by dwelling upon some events and constructing a kind of argument of moral, social and cultural

character about specific events which had a deep and even suffered effect on his sensitiveness of man who pays attention to the time he lives and works in.

It is a matter of events which have struck not only Tomasi's inner feelings, but a lot of people's minds and at times the whole mankind, if we take, for example, the dramatic event which he calls 'an American tragedy', that is the murder of the brothers John and Robert Kennedy and of the symbol of coloured men's emancipation, Martin Luther King.

Since he finds himself following again events which exceedingly marked Italian and world history, Tomasi lingers with pertinent recalls over the loss of some ideals and some presuppositions which brought about a decay of values and a degrading of the ethical component which troubled and alarmed not a little the consciences of them who looked at this case with watchful and sharing eye.

It is a matter of a reasoned analysis of a strip of present-day life which has permanently engraved the network of the community, by stimulating, at the same time, regrets and hopes, bitternesses and illusions, renunciations and projections towards a future where there is room for a less ferocious and less materialistic behaviour of humanity.

Giuseppe Nasillo

THE LAST PANTING

Those who had a chance to follow me over time and to accord their benevolent attention to my activity of painter are supposed to agree and remark that, from when I picked up the palette, I have always considered - but I would say raised - as object, protagonist and prevailing element of my visual conversation the voices and the features of nature, with all its sounds, in a context of prevailing harmony.

I expected to sing, celebrate, evoke and honour it with my brush, in its seasonal, climatic and cyclically renewable changeable presences, with all the suggestion of the unintelligible and charming secret which has followed it from time immemorial.

That is to say, I turned my convinced understanding to gaze - as it was sharply pointed out by the most shrewd and sensible critics - at what Blaise Pascal called the whole nature in its great majesty.

A snowfall, a shrill poppies field, a full of silences sea-scape, a sunset in the melancholic magic of autumn, a lush green spring in the morning light, an alpine mountain-chain which blends with flowing and dissolving clouds which overhang it, have always caught my soul in a sort of rapture in which I easily understand the reason of that delighted and satisfying syntony with the infinity of the universe and with the precision of the laws which are at the head of it.

Therefore have chosen nature as the favourite scenery for my chromatic allocutions, which are taken away from whatever participation of the human component which- except for some rare cases - I have always tried to keep away from the pages of peaceful symbiosis with a so different and heavenly world, which is in contrast with the one we are daily offered by the deafening metropolises life, as it was often pointed out. (*)

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It was (and it is still today) that world, which was so exuberantly and generously prodigal of unusual emotions and sensations, the interlocutor for antonomasia, since in it I saw - and I still see - the fusion of the contingent and the universal, the transcendent and the immanent fleeting pass of life itself, to reach an the universal, the transcendent and the immanent fleeting pass of life itself, to reach an immutable eternity dimension.

But in some particular, unforeseeable circumstances, something shining and unusually unpublished has struck my sensitiveness and I have been conscious of the need to direct, like an inexplicable force, the directive of my being towards situations which I would define as upsetting as far as I am concerned and which are destined to leave an unforgettable trace in my conscience of twentieth century man who is called to live - like millions of other men - in a state of anguishes, neurosis and mental wounds, nearly in deference to a condemnation, to an expiation that overhangs a wounded society, which has set off on the consumption way by work of violence, fear, cruelty which move its grounds and contaminate its roots in an irreversible way.

During these worried considerations, it was looming what Italo Svevo wrote in conclusion to "La coscienza di Zeno" where it is clearly drawn the hypothetical and apocalyptic dissolution of our Planet, with a cosmic "conflagration" which leaves room neither to hopes nor to illusions.

(*) See the monograph "Vladimiro Tomasi" published by Pentarco Editions in which at page 60 one can read : "It is not true that Tomasi hates the town, but like all us who are obliged to live in it hour after hour, day after day, in a waste and, at times, in an oblivion of the chances of an alive regeneration, he feels the need to have a rest in the atmospheres with open views, with articulate light softenings, with snowfalls in an echoing silence which scatters among valleys or trees that glance at the hesitant glare of lucan, noonday or evening tonalities which the artist's hand reproduces with expert ease and unbiased life like depiction, without difficult invention, without additions excepted those of him who poeticizes, which is to say, who makes universal his peculiar states of mind, his personal conversations with the world which reflects his joys and emotions".

According to the writer from Trieste who died in 1928 because of a car accident, a rationally ravaged man with a wrong and distorted idea of science is about to "gamble away" the future of the Earth and to bring it into chaos and destruction.

I was reflecting about this, when on the morning of March 16th 1978 I was struck by the news of the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, whose capture happened in Rome in Via Mario Fani at the cost of death of them who had the duty to defend him. It deeply wounded my inner feelings, being I, since then, a free and - probably wrongly convinced man who thought to belong to a society of men, in which it was inconceivable that such deeds of unspeakable cruelty could take place, so that the authors of this crime were unanimously defined as "beasts".

Moro's long detention, his painful and unjustified martyrdom, his natural person who was reduced to a vegetating existence without any autonomy or any elementary self-respect appearance, which is not even refused to a slave, had perturbed my balance, had struck my conscience which is bound to a civil idea of existence and which is unconditionally unwilling to accept the principle according to which a man cannot have the right to be always and however respected.

It did not happen so for the parliamentary from Apulia who was raised to symbol of an evidently consumed power and whom his jailors and inquisitors looked upon as a man who was far from those same people's interests.

Independently from political ideology, I tried to identify myself with that man who was deprived of any least decisional capacity, who was obliged to waste away in the narrow space of improvised, restricted and plain walls.

I projected myself into the painful smallness of that cell and I repeatedly wondered how I would feel if I were barred of whatever chance to have a relationship with the outer world.

Long developed affective links were drastically and roughly severed, contacts with family and friends were cynically broken : I saw in that human being, who suddenly fell headlong into mental destruction abyss, the very end of our time man, for whom it was getting more and more difficult to hope and believe his fellow creatures, who were so ostentatiously proud to be implacable jailors, tormentors, torturers and executioners.

Those were days of untellable pain and, as rational entity, I could not find a trustworthy justification to that event which was so contrasting with the respect and tolerance presuppositions which we seemed to have learnt.

The annihilation of that mind and of that body made me plunge into a terrible heart-ache, which became even more unbearable because of the powerlessness sensation which gripped me and all them who suffered for that ignoble deed which earns no justification to its wicked cause.

In such a lacerating moral abyss, visited by continual torments, I heard the news that Aldo Moro was physically dispatched with merciless determination. His corpse, brought in as a mass of flesh without any vital beat, was exposed as a blood and cruelty show to the unbelieving crowd who, in the very heart of the astonished capital, was going to and fro, both amazed and distressed, in the proximity of the back boot of the sadly known red Renault which was parked in the very central Via Caetani, as a sign of ostentatious defiance to Institutions.

It was a manifest and declared affront, an arrogant reply to them who fallaciously believed in a possible repentance or reflection during the long - but frantic - passing of those fifty-five days' imprisonment, on part of them who considered and defined the trap to the President of the old Christian Democracy as a "proof of geometrical power".

It was an nth challenge, directed to them who undeservedly held the most representative offices of a state, whose structure and trend was beginning to crumble exactly that day which was fatal for the Republic, on which the left opposition would guarantee its support to the government, and which was bitterly destined to be perpetuated with endless torment in the innermost feelings of the family which uselessly uttered a prayer and charity cry - as the Pope Paul VI himself did - to spare what to me - and not only to me - seemed to be a real sacrifice.

In the clutches of that patrol of inquisitors, the hostage Moro put aside all the quibbles and the excessive pedantry to which he usually resorted in his political career, and he understandably lavished his still left energies, to save his life

with instinctive obstinacy to come out of that hell of the soul, where he very well and consciously knew to have been dramatically catapulted by his destiny.

It was the hopeless man, the shipwrecked person at the mercy of terrible waves who was trying to find any old landing-place, who was uttering his sorrowful request for help, by urging them who had to show sympathy, forbearance, compromise and complicity with what was an evident illegality : to deal with criminals who are disguised as raving ideologists. (*)

I wonder whether I could amend that guilt which so strongly oppressed me, pricked me and made me feel participating in that affliction which once again was looming up the path of humanity and was adding an excellent sacrificial victim.

It was a question of asking the conscience about the consistency of that traumatic event which, in its cruel realization, had surely aroused a

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(*) *"Moro did not only care of his public image, he was not fascinated by patriots' "fair death", but with his still left strenght, with all the resources of his tortuous cleverness, he was weaving his last cloth to entrap the notables of his party and the Pope, the very same Paul VI who trained him into the association of Catholic students to pessimism and ambiguity with the State. He did not care to appear on text-books like a Muzio Scevola or a Belfiore martyr, he wanted to come out of this unexpected political incident any way. And I learnt from Moretti and from others that the revelation of such a personage was somewhat paralyzing for the Red Brigades, since he was disclosing a game of wiles and perfidies, of manoeuvres and closures in comparison with which they felt powerless, unprepared. It was a point that neither Aldo Moro nor the Red Brigades considered : that, as their power had beenbrought into play, the bigot, the devout, the quiet Demo-Christians would have become as hard as steel and as cold as ice. Yes, I do believe that Moretti and the others understood how feeble and anachronistic they were with their deeds, their symbols, their anxieties, their utopias, their strategic resolutions and their hand bills in comparison with those who knew the power in all its points, its subterfuges and its links".*

(Giorgio Bocca, *Il provinciale*, Mondadori, 1991, pp.287-288) .

considerable wound in men and had invalidated the theory of those who believed that the threshold of an undiscussable civilization had been definitively reached.

So I took refuge in my studio, full of brushes, colours and paintings which were evoking mantles of snow, outbursts of green, gratifying silent excursions towards a world without boundaries, that is to say so little fitting to my state of mind in that moment of dizzy dejection. So on my easel I began to give some character outlines to that human being, deprived of any material definition. For me, he became a pattern, a symbol of sacrifice in the name of the collectivity, of that opulent and perfect society which had not been able to save an authoritative member of its, which had not proved itself to be able to rescue that captured man from the suffering of a renewed Golgotha, which is so disgraceful and anachronistical at the end of the twentieth century, defined as the age of the triumph of science and technics.

After days of untamable anxiety, as I was so busy purifying that well-known figure from any specific reference. I was trying not to make him a martyr of his time and not to fall into the oleographic assertion of a man who - following the example of Christ - had decidedly devoted himself to the greatest and conscious sacrifice, because it was not so.

In a flashing scene-painting, battered by clouds crossed by sinister glares in the distance, I placed a cross made of trunks of trees mutilated of their own branches, and I reproduced the anonymous body of a man with nailed limbs, who shouted in the empty space his uncontainable pang, his lonely cry of him who does not want to meet the merciless grips of death *ante tempus*.

Each of us could have found himself in those features of a man who was curved in a wriggling tension, with his back-turned head to more strongly utter in the cloudy and dull sky his distressing invocation not to be left to the whirlpool of the darkness.

But in the meantime, as if I were exhumed from a far-off dimension, I saw Moro's recomposed face gradually emerge and advance, with a heavenly serenity which was decidedly in contrast with the figuratively upset and

upsetting image of the human entity which was hung on that rudimental wooden cross.

The look of the man Moro (who was brought back as a scorned wreck to his wife and to his sons, who unconditionally declared not to appreciate representatives of the State at the grievous funerals which precluded the burying of the dead body in Turruta Tiberina Chapel) seemed to be relieved of any sorrowful sign and was perpendicularly projecting himself towards the observer, as if he intended to search some higher verities in a no more earthly dimension, but in the infinite sphere. It seemed to me he wanted to direct his *ubi sunt* ? to those who declared themselves friends of his. I had the sensation that he was directing his indictments to all them who chose the way of treachery and cowardice.

In spite of my intention of objectifying and universalizing the image, it was appearing more and more incontrovertibly in the features of that man who had - even though it was unusual for a politician - stirred up and polarized the solid, moved participation of the whole nation, not so much in virtue of his special merits or qualities which were exceptionally different from those of his colleagues, as because he was down-graded as a defenceless and wild prey of a pack of ravenous hounds, unworthy of any belonging to those people in whose name and for delegation of whom, they autonomously and unilaterally arrogated the right to speak, to act, to judge, to condemn and to kill.

Therefore, the same title of the pictorial work which was outlining - The last panting - assumed a manifold meaning, with reference to the physical and cruel end of a fellow creature of mine (who was made powerless and was uprooted from his usual world) and to the execution of the utmost deed of a band of fanatics who for years had been unpunishedly terrorizing Italy and who from that moment inexorably saw their defeat and their fall in the justice hands.

And contemporaneously, I foresaw the march towards the disintegration of a political class, which did not find it difficult to recognize itself in that forecasted agony, imbued with scandals, with moral shames, with no more hideable offences, with no more inexplicable crimes, with the beginning of trials which were held not in improvised, soundless cells, paranoiacly defined as "nation's prisons", but in real courtrooms, in the presence of a responsible

audience and in the name of laws which that class had promulgated and which some members of it had criminally, repeatedly transgressed and violated.

It was the last panting of an abnormal way of conceiving the right, the justice, the militancy at the service of electors, the delegation given in full reliance to people who would reveal themselves egregious cornerers, treacherous corrupt meddlers, nourished on arrogance, haughtiness and declared contempt towards them who dared to remember that beyond and over their basenesses there is, of course, men's judgement, but also and especially the watchful eye of God, under whose wings many of that rapacious horde used to go and invoke protection for better, shiftily and selfishly sacking votes and agreements for filthy and illicit deeds.

Among bitter and taunting remarks, echoing over all the organs of world information, it was extinguishing a dominant race, accustomed to consider illecitly as its pattern of life, by enacting thus the crumbling of all the structures of which it macroscopically has made use during long ten-year periods of connivence with criminality and evil life. While talking about that virus which has affected the political class for many, too many five-year periods, Giorgio Bocca quoted, among the others, the case of Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, the man who defeated the Red Brigades, that is to say another piece of humanity sacrificed to the greed of a sub-power (or a counter-power), hiddenly legitimated by those in Rome who did not agree with the way of weeding him out of the national scene, while they were more and more putting their moral and spiritual miseries under everybody's eyes. Also the Piedmontese general, slain in Palermo with his young wife would belong to that noble, lean, firm minority of men "whose main enemy, deaf enemy was exactly the State, exactly the bureaucratic machine". ()*

(*) Giorgio Bocca, see quoted work, p.293.

EXHIBITION IN BRUXELLES

The painting on canvas was coming to an end, not without a stormy mood sinusoid, in two months'time and I soon - surprisingly - realized that, like for an inexplicable coincidence, in the cloudy mass overhanging the white hair which crowns Moro's face, some vanishing outlines had been loomed up and they roused in my mind now Albert Einstein's ethereal somatic iconography, now Arturo Toscanini's indefinite but really well recognizable features, while forms of remarkable aspect were standing out in other grouped clouds in the picture, which were shaken by a furious wind and crossed by sinister "chiaroscuro" glares.

Against expectations, I had to prepare a one-man show of my landscapist works, for January 5th 1979 in Bruxelles by invitation of the Italian Cultural Institute of our Embassy, remarkably headed by Professor Augusto Trasversa, a papyrologist of world-wide renown, in the Belgian capital. I had not a few solicitations so that that just finished work, definitely unusual in my long painting activity, was present, together with other forty-five canvases which were selected for the exposition.

I had not to wait long for some tangible replies, since a surprising crowd of visitors stopped for a while to observe the figure picture so different from the others, which for me meant a living and direct witnessing of bitter and burning news of a strip of fresh history of our Country. I realized that it had crossed the boundaries of our Peninsula and had arrived at the consciences of thousands of people who - like me - had followed with anxiety the tragedy of the man Aldo Moro.

Moreover, there were those who, on that occasion, found other references of profiles in the blend of colours of the top of the picture. Someone evoked Verdi's profile or the great Leonardo's forehead and did not exclude the perception of an android, as if it remarked the ineluctability of violence in this world, in which our first brothers were Cain and Abel.

Surely I can say that I have never felt guided by a force which surpassed my common rationality as in the realization of that painting, so that I myself was struck by that special and unrepeatable occasion.

Was it a vision ? an intuition ? a message *sui generis* ? Not even today, at the distance of many years I could give a sufficient and exhaustive reason.

If we do some fleeting considerations on that event, destined to show in the time a dark period of our History, we easily infer that those people, imbued with an ill sociology, who were deceived subverters of a weak and inefficient State, entrusted to a tribe of dull-brained wary people, with the deplorable deed perpetrated to Aldo Moro's prejudice, offered to that period governors and to their supporters an unforgivable alibi.

As a matter of fact, if before there was something which could separate and make them ideologically irreconcilable, after that crime, arranged with wickedness, they found elements of agreement and good-will, in virtue of which they could hide beyond prismatic forces like the paraded but never really achieved legality (while still remained an underworld made of judges, sold collaborators, administrators with disputable morality) and go on in their vile act of appropriation of the vital organs of the Republic, delaying of many years inquiries and investigations, in which the first right suspicions, the first clear skirmishes, the first showy cracks of a plot of evil and malefic aims were beginning to transpire.

In this evil-smelling ocean which day by day was infecting the air and making it less and less breathable, the figure of Aldo Moro was standing out like a ghost of nemesis and revenge. He was more and more identifying himself with the overhanging biblical presence of an executing angel. After he eliminated with his death his torturers, with their arrest together with the executioner, now he was about to triumph over all them who made use of them to administer to him the bitter cup of the Last dismissal and to start the Republic, by them improvidently, unfortunately devastated, towards that palingenetic catharsis, which finally swallowed them up, one after another, among the flames of the final political destruction. Historians, who will deal with these events will find it very difficult to place the names of the leaders, or better, of the thieves who have covered with mud the name of Italy, in the pages of those books which our sons will study and upon which they will dwell dismayed, thinking about how much influence had the money on such a mean generation and how it could destroy in its foundations values and virtues of that land which in the past was the forge of culture and master of civilization.

REALITY OF A DREAM

On August 14th 1988, Enzo Ferrari died. He was the founder of the well-known Maranello house and motor-racing world lost one of the most prestigious and representative figures.

He was a complete personage who, starting from the empiric unskilled labour of the pre-war shops, rose in every corner of the Earth as a symbol of an agonistic discipline in which he would become a peerless myth for millions people, united by the passion for the always charming and fascinating suggestion of four-wheeled vehicles.

The history itself of the competition cars cannot avoid to name as uncontested protagonist him who - for his exceptional endowments - although he did not attend any regular academic course, was decorated with the University degree 'honoris causa' in mechanical engineering.

In our effervescent dreams of the first teens and youth, he always peeped out and ideally led us towards joy and glory winning-posts, with that rampant colt of the house of Modena in the vicinity of Maranello, which Ferrari made famous everywhere in the world, in a long, spasmodic see-saw of glamorous and enthusiastic performances and smarting, loud failures.

All we suffered with him when the Ferrari, the last boasting of Italian motor-racing, after that the Lancia, the Maserati, the Alfa Romeo and other not less legendary home marks left 'Formula 1' competitions, was unfortunately forced to a sudden withdrawal, to a humiliating placing in positions of little importance, to a series of defeats which feeded variances, quarrels and misunderstandings.

Ferrari was, perhaps, the most eloquent and direct ambassador of Italy in the world and he held that praiseworthy, enviable position with sincere and unchanging devotion, in spite of misfortunes, sadnesses, mournings, affective losses and familiar sorrows which struck him during the years, starting from the untimely death of his beloved son Dino, to whose memory, the FIAT wanted to dedicate a famous car.

In the circular tracks of different countries in the world, his red racing-cars were driven by the best champions on the market, in a constant and surely rash challenge with death, in order to give a great importance to man's cleverness and skill which he firmly asserted, even when venturing impossible achievements could cost - as unluckily it happened many a time - terrible tragedies, with victims both among the pilots and the audience present at competitions and an onerous expenditure of money, as it is easily to suppose and calculate with regard to the realization of a 'Formula 1' racing-car.

Enzo Ferrari's death in that close summer six years ago brought me a sudden tension, a sort of creative excitement so that I was induced to pick up the brush and to describe on the canvas the features of that ever young at heart venerable old man, to whom I was connected by common origins from Emilia-Romagna and by the passion for his praiseworthy activity.

Therefore, in a surrealist halo of steaming, feverish agonistic atmosphere, I reproduced his image, in the moved moment when his two red racing-cars were getting the first and the second place in Monza circular track, thanks to Gerhard Berger and Michele Alboreto at the 10^o th Grand Prize of Italy.

This remarkable, exalting win arrived after his death, but it seemed natural to me to make him stand out in the very moment in which his two roaring "creatures" were darting towards the ambitious finishing line, followed by a uncontainable, understandable cry of joy for the surprising, hoped and long waited achievement, crowned just there in Monza, the seat loved by Enzo Ferrari because it was in Monza that he reached his first win in 1949.

It was a dream pursued for some time which finally came true (from this, the title "Reality of a dream" which I wanted to give to my picture). It was raising even more highly the symbol and the prestige of that great old man (at

the end and as thanks for a life lived in the glorification of that sport), whose multi-decorated stable, flapped Italian tricolour flag over the pennons of the five continents among undescribable enthusiastic applauses of jubilant crowds and the exultation of them who were fond of those steel torpedoes, entrusted to the hands of a man who, during all the race's time, would be conscious, as in a nightmare, of the presence of death, always in ambush.

A moment of carelessness, a sudden mechanical breakdown, a badly accosted curve, an unexpected jerk, a treacherous gust of wind, an overheated or faulty wheel, the slippery road, a drop of oil, fallen on the track from another competitor's racing-car would be sufficient to cause the death of the apparently invulnerable "semi-God" of the wheel, as it happened to Ascari, Musso, Von Trips, Villeneuve, De Portago, Bandini, Castellotti, Scarfiotti, Marimon, Bonetto, De Angelis, Hill, Rindt, Hawthorn, Clark and other revered idols, destined to a tragic death.

I clearly remember the excitement of the motor-racing supporters when the rising horse (a present from Francesco Baracca's widow to Enzo Ferrari) was triumphant on that memorable occasion. It aroused an untellable emotion. It was that emotion and those tears which I tried to reproduce on Enzo Ferrari's wrinkled but radiant face. He was exulting behind his dark glasses, which are in contrast with his white hair, for that unexpected placing. It recalled the win got by Gilles Villeneuve and the Sudafrican Jody Scheckter on a 321 T 4.

While I remember those years when it was still the man to have the power and the physical dominion of the vehicle, we are struck and hurt by the news of the death in Imola of the Austrian Roland Ratzenberger and of the peerless Brazilian Ayrton Senna. Destiny was once again pitiless with them, since they died more or less on the same day. Few days later another Austrian, Karl Wendlinger died, after his racing-car crashed against a guardrail in Montecarlo, while he was going two hundred and seventy kilometres an hour.

The dynamics of the two accidents in Imola was the same of Rubens Barrichello's accident. Fortunately, the twenty-one-year-old pilot was miraculously saved.

On such occasion, the motor-racing world did not weep with joy, as it seemed to me it happened to Ferrari (in whose stable Senna would have liked to support), but for the infortune which marked the awful death of two unforgettable champions of the wheel.

We are persuaded that Enzo Ferrari's personality gave to Italy more than what he received from the public institution of his country. He did not even get a special stamp which could honour his figure of sincere and brave man. Many

a country dreamt to wrap such a titled ambassador with its flag. Probably nowadays he could seem an anachronistic and out of date knight belonging to far-off times, with all his ancient ideals.

The death of Enzo Ferrari, who has always seemed to me the last, lonely ensign of a sport in which boldness and prudence, loyalty and athletics, physical efficiency and consciousness of one's own quickness of movements have always to be linked together, appeared to me as the end of a way of competing in the name of honesty and admission of others' merits.

Just for this reason it seemed to me right to add Enzo Ferrari's face among my symbol-personages, since I consider him as an eternal myth whose patriotic love could conquer a right space, without falling into rhetoric or exasperated megalomania, which is something completely different from the authentic qualities of him who fight to enrich man's life and dignity.

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

I have again begun to dialogue silently with personages who came into history dramatically. I have thought about what was defined "the American tragedy", that is to say the murder of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, of his brother Robert and of Martin Luther King. President Kennedy's cruel and unexpected death happened in Dallas, Texas, on November 22th 1963. His brother was killed in 1968. The spokesman of the Movement for Black Liberation was murdered in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4th 1968.

During the passing of the years, their ideals, their endeavour and their engagement have been better defined and they excited hopes, dreams and goals of ransom for entire populations in the world.

On the 25th anniversary of the young American President's death, I watched a news-reel on television which made me think about the actions of those three great overocean Democrats. Therefore I chose them as protagonists of a picture of mine, in a triangular arrangement of their faces, silhouetted against the sky and New York skyscrapers.

John Kennedy, elected in 1960, led the democratic party to the head of United States, by beating Richard Nixon, whose conservative and antisovietic politics was related to general Dwight David Eisenhower.

He was the first catholic President who entered the White House, while in Rome two years before Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, with the name of John XXIII succeeded Pius XII, the Pope who was present at the disaster of the Second World War.

Those were times in which America was living a period of deep uncertainty. However, the U.S.A. held military, industrial, economic and scientific superiority.

West Europe and Japan were gradually raising again, after the war disaster, and were undermining American supremacy . Moreover, the industrial and financial strong presence of Germany represented another menace to the leadership in Europe.

The rivalry with the Soviet Union had become the main worry for the United States, which looked at the launching in the space of the Russian "Sputnik" in 1957 with great surprise and understandable annoyance.

A general crisis of ideals was going through the States, where expenses for school, health, justice and pensions were reduced to advantage of the sum of money which was appropriated for the potentation of military resources in expectation of an eventual war with Soviet-controlled countries, linked together by the Varsavia Treaty, which was presided by Moscow.

The new generation, both in campuses and in big towns, insistently asked to take part to the public life and to the most important choices of home and foreign politics.

The young President of Irish origins (on September 12th 1953 in Newport he married Jacqueline Bouvier, who died on May 19th 1994 after a painful agony) understood that cold war could not go on anymore and that espionage, tension and armaments would not lead to peace.

Looking at the increasing national (and international) impatience, John Kennedy embraced the cause of new ideals and everybody was won by his heroic project of the "new frontier", that is to say the return of the time of great hopes which belonged to those pioneers who made their country prosperous and rich.

Moreover, his firmer and firmer attention to Third World needs gave importance to the value of freedom and dignity of living.

Thus, democratic America was becoming the upholder and the pleader of social requests from poor and backward populations.

It was a brave politics, which was often in friction with the interests of abuse of power, exploitation and illicit enrichment of some castes. For these reasons, the forty-year-old President had to face the resistances of conservatives, of anti-soviets, of military castes and the machines which were refractory to any political change.

With his strength, firmness and opportuneness, he had solved Russian challenge from Nikita Krusciov, who entered American area, causing the breach of Monroe's doctrine and supporting Fidel Castro's rebellion which should put an end to Fulgencio Batista's government.

John Kennedy's resolute and unconditional taking up of a position, in those days in which the outbreak of war seemed very near, raised again the glamour of his own Country and obliged the Russians to retire their armaments. In this way, the entire world hoped again in a peaceful living together.

With regard to this it is worth to remember that event which could have led to ruinous and pernicious developments for the whole Planet: "On the morning of October 16th 1962, the American President Kennedy was informed that the reconnaissance aircrafts revealed that the Soviets were settling in Cuba at just ninety miles away from American coasts, a number of launching pads for missiles of medium range, which could be armed with nuclear war-heads and reach the whole American territory. This discovery brought attention on the Cuban question.

A year and a half before, in April 1961, Kennedy administration began an operation of landing on the island of about a thousand and a half Cuban political exiles, who should stir up the population in an anti-Castro revolt. Since it was based upon wrong political allowances, the expedition was a clamorous failure, because in a few days the Cuban armed forces could catch the rebels. Havana authorities were worried about the reconfirmed American hostility. Therefore, Fidel Castro asked Moscow to settle on the island missile implements which could hit the United States.

The Sovietic leader Krusciov had already offered Castro, in 1960, an official declaration with which he would consider as 'casus belli' any American aggression. But Castro kept on asking for missiles and Krusciov, who was bold for the Soviet Union success in the previous years, accepted the risk. The missiles settling in Cuba would have bettered the Soviet military position. This time, Kennedy wanted to check the information from the CIA. When it was realized that danger was real, that the launching pads were under construction and that twenty-five Soviet ships were sailing to Cuba with the necessary implements, the White House thought over three possibilities : a bombardment

of the launching pads, a landing on the island with the armed forces, an air-sea blockade around Cuba.

It was chosen the third one and, on Sunday 21st, the blockade began. In spite of the self-censure that the newspapers wanted to keep, the news on what was happening were filtrating. On Monday morning, Kennedy addressed a firm message to the nation. He gave news on the situation and the counter-offensive. Then he concluded : "Nobody can exactly foresee how things will go and how much it will cost. However it would be even more dangerous not to do anything". He invited Krusciov to forbear from his purpose and to join the effort to stop armaments race.

After Kennedy's message there were days of wait, during which the U.S.A. put into effect the blockade and carried on the preparations for an eventual attack, while in Cuba works were going on. The Soviets asked for a mediate intervention of the Union Nations. But this did not consider the urgency of the question for the United States.

It was only on Friday 26th that the Soviets established some informal contacts with the American government and said they were ready to retire the missiles, in exchange for the American promise not to invade Cuba. The U.S.A. let Moscow know that they would appreciate such an official proposal.

Few hours later, Krusciov made it official. But just while the White House was preparing its official reply, on 27th morning Moscow radio announced that the Soviets wanted the U.S.A. to dismantle their missile bases in Turkey, on the boundary with the Soviet Union.

The require was rather good, but Kennedy, once considered the situation, decided to keep an uncompromising position and thus refused the negotiation. On suggestion from Robert Kennedy, who was a member of the President's staff, the White House simply decided to ignore the notice from Moscow and to answer Krusciov without any hint to the base in Turkey. Kennedy not only promised not to invade Cuba, but he proposed the opening of large negotiations to reduce tensions and also reconfirmed American intention to reach a political relaxation.

But what would the Soviets do ? Projects for an attack in Cuba were ready and could suddenly spring.

Suspense ended on Sunday 28th : Moscow radio read a notice from the Kremlin. It announced that, to avoid any menace of peace, Khrushchev had ordered the removal of missiles from Cuba to the Soviet Union.

During those days, the United States informed only the English government, but they received a great solidarity from the allies, although with some reservations : European allies of the United States realized the real risk that Europe could be involved in a war, without carrying weight. It was an experience that induced European governments, in particular the French one of De Gaulle, to keep distances from Kennedy's projects of an alliance between Europe and the United States. However, the young American President's leadership came off very strong of the crisis. Popular reactions, outside the United States were more contrasting. The English philosopher Bertrand Russell, publicly thanked Khrushchev for his politics of moderation and accused Kennedy of having brought peace into danger.

It was a defeat for the Soviet Union. As recently the philosopher Karl Popper remarked, it was a conclusive defeat, since it was the only occasion on which the Soviets could be as really menacing as the Americans were. Surely, the development of the crisis showed the disproportion of objects to means of Soviet foreign politics, which cracked Khrushchev's prestige and fostered his removal from the Soviet Union summits. (*)

During the short but significant period in which he was the President of the United States of America, John Fitzgerald Kennedy availed himself of the collaboration of world-wide renown professionals, who, like Kennedy himself, found inspiration in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's politics.

Among Kennedy's counsellors we remember the historian Arthur Schlesinger, the economist Kenneth Galbraith, Pierre Salinger (who was

(*) Perugi-Bellucci, La crisi dei missili a Cuba, Bologna, 1994.

assigned to the press), Angier Biddle Duke (head of the White House protocol),

Dean Rusk, to whom Kennedy gave the appointment of Home Secretary (whose vice was Chester Bowles), Robert Mac Namara, as Secretary of Defence, Kennedy's brother, Robert, with the appointment of Attorney General.

The first aims of Kennedy administration were : first, the Alliance for the Progress; secondly, the start of a stronger political and economic collaboration with South-American Countries and a clearer entent with West European allies; thirdly, the need to abolish customs tax through negotiations with other Countries (it would be defined as "Kennedy Round") and, finally, a sort of committee which studied the neediest populations' troubles to give them a help.

As regards home politics, Kennedy tried to reduce taxation pressure and to give again importance to enterprises, without weakening the organization and military structure of the Country, to mantain its role of super-power.

He undertook to consolidate the civil rights of coloured minorities, which advanced their claims just in the summer 1963, by entrusting their requests to Martin Luther King, a man who had embraced the cause of non violent fight.

Kennedy gave his solidarity to those exploited people who were calling for dignity and human respect in a famous demonstration in Washington, where the chorus "We shall overcome" was echoing Martin Luther King's words "I have a dream".

Perhaps it was just that declared, explicit opening towards coloured men which irritated the reactionaries and created grudges in the South Countries where apartheid still existed.

As a matter of fact, on occasion of a journey to those Countries, John Kennedy was killed in his car, where he was with his wife. This event put an end to the hopes of millions human beings who believed in Kennedy, and prevented the United States from effecting the process of civil and social emancipation.

Kennedy was succeeded by Lyndon B. Johnson, who was already Kennedy's vice-President. He continued in office till 1968 (since he was re-elected in 1964).

At 1968 elections, the most qualified person to the office of President, among the Democrats, was the forty-year-old Robert Kennedy, firmly determined to pursue and complete the work of progress and social conquests, started by his brother when he was President of the U.S.A..

But at 6.01 p.m., on April 4th 1968, on the terrace of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, the spokesman of the Black Movement of America was murdered. Since that day, Martin Luther King has entered the legend as a man who faced a world in which violence, hate and selfishness are difficult to defeat and eradicate, with words of love and brotherhood.

Kennedean dream was fated not to have realization in the U.S.A. and, as it happened to John, also Robert was murdered during the electoral campaign at 1.44 in the morning, on June 6th 1968, at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. With the victory of the republican Richard Nixon, the Americans returned to their traditional politics, which was away from those ideals that stirred up anxiety among conservatives and hopes among needy people.

This is why I wanted to entitle the picture which sprang from these thoughts over thirty-year-ago events and personages, "Sacrifice of the sixties". I recognized the actuality of a message which began its realization just after the death of its prophetic defenders, till the recent political success of Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Here the natives, always subjected to apartheid, have revenged themselves and got the same rights which white minority has got. (*)

(

() Nelson Mandela himself pronounced remarkable words when he got the office of President of the new South Africa, in front of a crowd of more than 150000 people in the amphitheatre of the Union Building in Pretoria : "We, South Africa population, are satisfied because now we are part of Humanity. We wish everybody may have justice, peace, work, bread, water and salt. We wish everybody knows his body, mind and soul has been set free. From the experience of a long human disaster a new society must born. We dedicate this day to all heroes and heroines who in this Country and all over the world have sacrificed their lives for our freedom. Their dreams have come true. Their reward is freedom."*

The after-Kennedy democratic America had to make way for Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford's restauration. It was only in 1976 that it gained height with Jimmy Carter's victory. His non-incisiveness politics smoothed the way for republicans who, in 1980, elected Ronald Reagan as President of the United States of America.

With Reagan, the Democratic Party seemed to be directed towards a long and pathetic season of decay. We remember that Reagan was an actor (among his fifty-three films we mention "Crime without punishment" in 1942 from Bellaman's bestseller, with Ann Sheridan, directed by Sam Wood and arranged by Casey Robinson). Reagan had also been Governor of California (like his successor George Bush elected in 1988). But finally, the figure of Bill Clinton came out.

Clinton came back to Kennedian ideology and raised again Democrats' fortunes, by winning elections in 1992.

As it happens to few human beings, Bill Clinton could realize his dream. About thirty years before, he shook hands with John Fitzgerald Kennedy during a meeting at the White House. That was the spring of his political engagement. But what forces helped to realize that dream?

The results after a long analysis were : first, the strenght of his firm belief; secondly, the strenght of his determination, and, thirdly, the strenght of

his faith. All these elements realized that dream and Clinton became the 42th President of the United States of America.

My analysis wanted to pay homage to a man and to put him into the right light. I am sure that Bill Clinton will be a great President if his Country puts its trusts in him. I would like to add that when I received President Bill Clinton's letter for the picture I had presented him I was surprised since I did not see any reference either to my person or to my work.

But when I read it again I realized the true meaning. I can assert that only a great President can put aside his duty to solve the problems of his Country.

What I have asserted can be read in the letter which I reported in this book together with the others.

His programme of opening towards social, moral and cultural backwardness was an aim which was already fixed by the three "Prophets" of the sixties.

I imagined him as connected to that symbolic thread and I wanted to portray the actual President with the background of his official residence (which represents the starting and arrival points of his dream) with the stars and stripes flag in a scene-painting where there are trees which characterize my landscaping painting that is the *signum individuationis* of my style.

The features of Bill Clinton, who is wearing a tuxedo, symbolize a new world, a new era of serenity, peace and harmony among Countries. It is an era which carries us away from anxieties and worries of the post-war period.

[If it were possible I would like to unite a bridge, the greatness, the liking, the popular consent during their orders. Two Democratic Presidents, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, William Jefferson Clinton, says Bill.](#)

AN ANNOUNCED END

Now that also in Italy the ruins of politics have been removed (I mean those politicians who already held the power at the time of Eisenhower, Churchill, Stalin, De Gaulle, Mao Tse Tung and others), a new wave of hopes seems to imbue Italy, which was sadly accustomed to scandals, robberies and moral degradation.

The vigorous turn of the past elections and the lashing of optimism of the Country make us believe in social attainments which were long invoked.

There was a great need, both in Italy and in Kennedy's America, to turn to a "new frontier" of honesty, clear morality, solidarity, love, sympathy for one's fellow creatures.

During a cultural meeting, held in Turin at Teatro Carignano on the initiative of "Centro Culturale Socialita' e Sviluppo", some authoritative reporters remarked that "men live to be helpful to their fellow creatures, otherwise they have no justification to live in this world." Those who do not agree with these assumptions confirm Thomas Bernhard's statement, according to which men inevitably reduce themselves to a monstrous society of doomed to death. (*)

Italy came out of the war, thanks to those who fought to save it from barbarity. It was also possible thanks to men, like Alcide De Gasperi who, with their moral limpidness, rescued Italy from its tragedy. But later our Country was catapulted in a different reality.

(*) Giuseppe Nasillo, *Un lungo cammino*, Torino, 1994.

Local caliphs had transformed our Boot in a kind of feud for themselves and for their families, in contempt of legality and justice.

Italy had the strenght to get free of these awfully bad representatives of the State, although we are convinced that bad people will always exist.

The multi-parties government was responsible for economic, financial,moral and cultural disaster of our Country. We are witnesses at the end of the state of things of our State which got the terminus. We wish a change of route towards a moral and social recovery.

Hitherto this first Republic, after a start of betrayed hopes, has shipwrecked, with great shames for the presuppositions of justice , solidarity and civilization which have always been the fundamental pillars of a respectful connivence.

Surely, many old ideals fell very low because of people who held the power as if they were hegemonic autocrats. They did not think they should work to Country service.

We are astounded when we think about the case of men who, few months before, were holding very important offices and now, in prison, appear from time to time in Italian court's.

It is difficult to think that there is another Country like Italy, where there has been a kind of Wagner's Gotterdammerung, such a fall of idols which seems to us so amazing.

Now we are looking at trusted busybodies,dealers without a shade of suspicion, drudges untiringly faithful to their orders, who unmask their own "masters", without reserve and with evident proofs.

Who might have foreseen that the most obstinate supporter of the new social course, the man whom the U.N.O. chose as absolutely honest collaborator, would have fallen so low in the dust and in general contempt?

Who might think that after the dismissal from the political scene of this collaborator, also the other deputy-consul from Naples would start the long list of political dignitaries who were imprisoned?

Nobody might have thought that the Secretary of the Health, with his sixty-seven charges (conspiracy, corruption, breach of the law on the public financing of the parties, issue of forged invoices and so on) would have been confined in Poggioreale prison in Naples.

The man who has represented Italian politics for fifty years has been accused of being involved in criminal organizations and of being the instigator of first-rate crimes.

Suddenly our mind recalls the sad verses of the song "To Italy" which the twenty-year-old Leopardi wrote for his unlucky Country (*come cadesti o quando / da tanta altezza in cosi' basso loco?*).

Everyday we hear news of convocations and arrests from all over Italy, where the infringement of the laws and the plunger of the common weal have become ordinary standards.

For years we have heard about "golden ferries", "golden prisons", "golden poor-houses". In this way this kind of multi-parties association has robbed the State's goods and has been well-defended from suspicions and gossips.

Now, nobody hears, nobody sees and nobody knows, as if Italians were a set to persuade. The only exception is represented by the opinion's leaders who have always been considered as the critical conscience of Italy.

Some years ago, Ennio Flaiano located them who were always running towards the winner to guarantee their presence into high society. They have always been available to carry on a liberal-progressive way in order to reach a remarkable social position.

"Man cannot reach the good if he does not go through the evil", Fedor Michajlovic Dostoevskij wrote. It seems that Italy has to go through this passage, which is imposed by our time's events.

A dark and ambiguous period of our history has ended and a body, which suffers from political power, has breathed its last panting, like Aldo Moro did sixteen years ago.

In our Italy without authentic "knights", we hope that the word "honourable" gets its suitable meaning and the word "Senator" means wise and right man.

We need honour, honesty, wisdom and justice from those who have not understood that the service for society is the highest mission for the world.

We cannot accept anymore the maxim of several *patres conscripti* of our Republic. They made Italy believe to serve it, while they were ignominiously using it.

The proofs of agreement, esteem and sympathy that I received from many people have induced me to pick up my pen to explain all the sensations which originated my pictures.

After this reading, I would like to get Your agreement.

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