Capitalism & Electrification

anonymous

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"In the current organization, as monopolists of science who remain such beyond social life, scientists certainly form a caste of its own which presents many similarities with the caste of priests. Scientific abstraction is their God, living and real individualities are the victims and scientists are their consecrated and licensed sacrificers"

– A. Bakunin *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg97**]*

They Say "Ideology" Too Soon

For at least thirty years the dominant narrative has fobbed us with "the end of ideologies". According to the "thinkers" of the palace, the collapse of countries under State Capitalism would have inaugurated a new era, the one that the philosopher Francis Fukuyama (1992) calls "the end of history". Therefore history would be to be intended as a linear development where the democratic and liberal State represents its *telos*, the ultimate Goal of evolution beyond which it is impossible to go. It is the principles of liberalism that dictate evolution, marked and pushed by the force of rationality.

As this state of "perfection" is attained, ideologies make no sense either. The clash between opposed and alternative visions of the world is irrational and counterproductive, technical reason decides what is right and what is wrong, the only thing we can do is to follow rationality. Therefore any deviation would be absurd.

In a contradictory way, Fukuyama thinks that this final stage of human evolution is the democratic State. What he couldn't foresee is that precisely by virtue of the rational domination of

technique,[1] the very democratic constitution would soon become obsolete.[2] If there is nothing to choose, if the best thing to do is the most rational one… Another world is impossible!

It is a strong idea of immobility. Not only has the thought of being able to overturn the State, of taking over political power (let alone destroying it!) become synonym of an imminent psychotic crisis, but even the direction has become untouchable, up to its smallest detail: not only did capitalism become the only possible world, but within it, the neo-liberal variable was the only economic form necessary in the years between the two millennia. Hence the excess of the democratic regime *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg61**]*. It increasingly demonstrated to be a theatre of the shadows, whose director, however, is a copy, a duplicate of the one and only ideology.

It is particularly necessary to distinguish between plural "ideologies" and singular "ideology". What has happened in recent years is not at all the end of *ideology* but the end of *ideologies*. Ideology is stronger than ever: it has become the one and only thought. After all the affirmation "ideologies are dead" is an *ideological* affirmation itself. The thesis of the end of ideologies is an eminently ideological thesis. It is a thesis which by closing the debate and declaring any possible confutation defeated, founds itself as necessary ideology: so much necessary that it doesn't even need to declare itself as such, doesn't need to boast the word either – it is intangible like the Holy Ghost. If you ask it "what are you?" it will reply like God with Moses: "*Ego sum qui sum*" [I am who I am].

Ideologies make sense only if they are thought to be resolutely opposing one another, the one armed against the other. From a certain point of view, in this sense it is correct to say that

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[1] ed. – "The European Union constitutes a hybrid between a technocratic and democratic model, though it cannot advocate such hybridization, because to acknowledge a gap between democracy and technocracy would contradict the EU's fundamental identity. A technocratic system leaves policy decisions to appointed experts who climb the ranks, ostensibly based on performance; appointments are carried out by the institution itself, as in a university, not by consultation with the public. Most leading members of the Chinese Communist Party, for example, are engineers and other scientists. However, it would be naïve to ignore that they are first and foremost politicians. They simply have to respond to internal power dynamics rather than focusing on performing for the general public. In the United States, the all-important Federal Reserve runs technocratically, although it is subordinated to democratic leadership. The technocratic elements of the European Union, such as the European Central Bank, enjoy far more policy-making power, and are often able to dictate terms to the democratic governments of member states. However, the EU has been careful to take advantage of the old liberal distinction between politics and economics: by relegating technocracy to a putatively economic sphere, the EU maintains its obligatory commitment to democracy" (Diagnostic of the Future).

[2] ed. – "Democracy as a governmental practice incapable of realizing its ideals is in crisis domestically in the US and many other countries, but democracy as a structure for interstate cooperation and capital accumulation is also facing a crisis at the global level. Due to its domestic crisis, democracy is failing to capture the aspirations of its subjects. The kinds of equality it guarantees are mostly either irrelevant or pernicious, and the benefits decrease the further down the social ladder you go. Democratic government has failed to deliver just societies and failed to cover up the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. It has ended up as another aristocratic system, no better than the ones it replaced. This means that democracy is losing its innovative ability to recuperate resistance. But until roughly 2008, neoliberal elites barely cared about resistance. They thought that they had so defeated and buried revolutionary potentials that they had no need to pretend, no need to toss the crowd any peanuts. As the 1990s and 2000s dragged on, they became increasingly blatant in their crusade to concentrate wealth in fewer and fewer hands while despoiling the environment and marginalizing ever larger portions of the population. Now that they have revealed their true face, it will take some time for people to forget before they can use their siren song again, and this lack of trust in public institutions comes at a bad time for the once hegemonic NATO countries and their allies. This underscores why it is so frustratingly myopic when radicals help to restore the seductive value of democracy by talking about what "real democracy" should look like: it's like the story of the engineer in the French Revolution whose life was spared at the last moment when the guillotine jammed – until he looked up and said, "I think I see your problem" " (Diagnostic of the Future).

ideologies are over. The dominant ideology is therefore a paradoxical, monstrous Super-Anti-Ideology. Today the most radical move, the one really revolutionary on a theoretical level, is the denunciation of the mystified ideological nature of technical thought.[3] But to affirm that what commands us is still an ideology, also the most radical one and for this reason mystified, is not yet enough. What we have to do regarding this new religion, rather, is: *not believe in it.*

Here the difficulties begin for the anarchist movement. Revolutionary anarchism of the new millennium has had the incalculable historical merit of placing itself as the only negation (at least in the West) of the new dominant ideology. Released from the scientific myth that permeated Marxism, besides not having been knocked out by the fall of the Berlin wall, anarchism could be, and in many aspects has been, the revolutionary force of the century. Let's just try to think: what would the anti-globalisation movement *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg80**]* have

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[3] ed. – "However, there is a great deal of myth around technocratic governance. You can't have a purely "scientific" government because "objective interests" is a contradiction in terms. Bare empiricism cannot recognize something as subjective as interests; this is why scientific bodies have to fabricate discreet ideologies masquerading as neutral presentations of fact, since there is no human activity, and certainly no coordinated research and development, without interests. Yet governments are nothing without interests. They are, at their most rudimentary, the concentration of a great deal of resources, power, and capacity for violence with the purpose of fulfilling the interests of a specific group of people. The relationship becomes more complex as governments become more complex, with different types of people developing different interests with regard to the government and with institutions producing subjectivities and therefore molding people's perceptions of their interests, but the centrality of interests remains, as does the fact that hierarchical power blinds people to everything outside of a very narrow reality, and such insensitivity combined with such great power is a sure recipe for unprecedented stupidity. One example of this is the Three Gorges Dam, perhaps the greatest construction feat of the 20th Century, and certainly a symbol of the Communist Party's ability to carry out strategic planning that sacrifices local interests for a perceived greater good. But the dam has caused so many demographic, environmental, and geological problems that they may outweigh the benefits in energy production. The major motivation for building the dam was probably hubris—the state basking in its technocratic power—more than a measured estimation that the dam would be worth it. [...] The European Union is also experiencing problems due to technocratic management. Aside from the temporary rebellions caused by the heavy-handedness of the Central Bank, the EU's number one existential threat right now can be traced to the Dublin Regulation, an early EU agreement, subject to little scrutiny at the time of its signing, that stipulates that migrants can be deported back to the first EU country they entered. The core EU states (Germany, UK, France, Benelux [ed. – Belgium, Nederlands, Luxembourg]) habitually bully the poorer states, protecting their key industries while dictating which industries poorer members have to expand or abandon. And while the Mediterranean countries were able to tolerate being turned into debt colonies and tourist hellholes, they have not been so tolerant of the immigration policy, which also gives leaders a scapegoat for the first two problems. The EU's immigration policy is an obvious dumping on Greece, Italy, and Spain, and to a lesser extent Poland and other border states. These are the countries that can least afford a greater burden to their social services, as Germany siphons off better educated immigrants and shunts the poorer ones back to the border states. This policy has been the major cause of all the right-wing threats to the EU's integrity. Though it is the product of technocratic planners, it reflects the same arrogance that accompanies all power politics. There is also the question of resistance. The Chinese government is making the bet that it has the technological and military power to quash all resistance movements, permanently. If it is wrong, it risks total political collapse and revolution. Democratic governments enjoy a greater flexibility, because they can deflect dissident movements towards seeking reform, which rejuvenates the system, rather than forcing them to shut up or blow up. European democratic institutions have proven that this pressure-valve mechanism still works, with progressive parties forestalling the growth of revolutionary movements in Greece, Spain, and France. [...] So the technocratic model is not clearly superior. Even if it were, Western powers would have a hard time accepting it in more than hybrid form. This comes down to white supremacy and its centrality to the Western paradigm. Democracy plays a fundamental role in white supremacist mythology and the implicit claims of white progressives to superiority. Basing the mythical roots of democracy in ancient Greece, whites can think of themselves as the founders of civilization and thus apt tutors to the rest of the world's societies. Orientalist paranoias are based on the association of Eastern civilizations with autocracy and despotism. The Western sense of self-worth collapses without that opposition" (Diagnostic of the Future).

been without anarchism, what would the Greek crisis *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg17**]* have been without anarchism, what would the struggle against eco-catastrophe have been without radical environmentalism *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg78**]* for the most part anarchist, what would our era have been without the endless string of attacks against politicians, economists, scientists, carried out by anarchists?

Therefore, if on the one hand anarchism hasn't naturally met with any difficulty in spontaneously setting itself as *negation* of the dominant ideology; on the other, as we will see further on, some components of the movement have expressed a substantial limit: *they believed in* some of the theses of the dominant ideology. Sometimes, even if we overturn its judgment of value, we excessively tend to believe all the lies that the ideologues of the State foist on us. The dominant ideology affirms it can submit and control all corners of the world with technique? Then we believe it and talk about resistance to a "mega-machine" with totalitarian characteristics, apparently almost invincible. The dominant ideology affirms that class struggle is over? Then we believe it and talk about new oppressions, about an indistinct multiplicity of privileges. Our action has certainly always been in good faith (obviously here we are interested in talking only about comrades in good faith), our acting has always aimed at attacking the mega-machine and privilege. But as we tend to believe in the theses of the dominant ideology, even if we overturn its values, our analysis remains nevertheless tainted with a hermeneutic horizon which is that chosen by the State.

The Afghan Variant

But are things really like this? Is history really over? Are ideologies really dead?

The September 11th anniversary occurs right as we are meeting up. Not even ten years after Fukuyama made his appearance, history overwhelmingly came back. What followed is well known. The Bush administration declared war on the Taliban and invaded Afghanistan. Two years later it was Iraq's turn. Twenty years after we can see how it all ended. For a long time now Iraq is actually a State controlled by pro-Iran governments, Americans' worst enemies. As for Afghanistan, after twenty years of economic and literal bleeding, the USA were compelled to withdraw and the Taliban conquered the country again. A defeat which reminds the West of Vietnam, with the Americans and their allies (including the Italians) forced to flee from embassies by helicopters!

The most powerful and armed army in the world was defeated by a guerrilla of shepherds armed only with *a myth*. The same shepherds who destroyed the Red Army *[ed. – of Soviet Russia]* forty years ago. The clumsiest army in the planet defeated two world superpowers in the space of half a century. Certainly the most irreducible economists will find a multiplicity of supporters who backed the Taliban in recent years in the name of the most ignoble economic interests. Surely these are not forces that can compete with the USA, Russia and China together, all of them terrorized for different reasons at the Islamic expansion in central Asia.

The truth is that the Taliban defeated NATO and before that the Red Army because they were not afraid to die. They have a God and a pre-modern religious practice in the name of which they absurdly believe heaven will be there for them the more enemies they manage to kill. The myth, martyrs and heroes versus placid super-paid westerners who want to kill some savages and go back home with their bank accounts full of mercenaries' lavish wages. The myth of Allah versus

the myth of Messi and Michael Jordan. Who else could have won? A revival of the *myth* that defeated the two most important ideologies of modernity in the space of four decades.

What does this have to do with our discourse? Quite a lot.

The dominant ideology (which claims it is not) thinks it is invincible. It preaches technical rationality as an unbeaten and unbeatable form of historical evolution. As we mentioned, the opposition to this Moloch has sometimes accepted its contents, even if it has also overthrown its values. But not only do we anarchists need to oppose the dominant ideology we also need not to *believe in it.*

The dominant ideology affirms the overcoming of the human being and their limitations in favour of machines. It occurs that its opponents firmly believe in it, even if they declare they are disgusted. Faith in this fate is so strong that it ends up cheating the swindlers themselves. Not having opposition, the ideology ends up cheating itself. Doesn't the Afghan variant also talk to us about the failure of this dystopia? You can bomb villages with drones for twenty years, but then you need humans to control the territory. Forget about advanced technologies, forget about cyborgs to be used in wars! Without boots worn by human feet, when drones go back to the base after their death flights, humans retake control.[4]

Think how many say that a sort of "health dictatorship" was established by Big Pharma because of the pandemic. Perhaps they should reckon with the "Afghan variant" more than they do with the English or Indian variant. Don't you think it was a hard blow for Big Pharma to have lost the biggest supplier of opium on the planet? Obviously the point is not to stop fighting Big Pharma, put oneself at the service of the pro-vaccine leftists and of general Figliuolo *[an Italian army corps general appointed by Prime Minister Mario Draghi as Extraordinary Commissioner for the Implementation of Health Measures to Contain the COVID-19 pandemic, to lead the vaccination campaign].* The point is always that of *not believing* their ideological theses, not believing that theirs is the only possible fate. Their science is not the only possible science *[ed. – see* **Return**

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[4] ed. – "Fourth generation war, or the revolution in military affairs, also sometimes includes reference to new types of warfare enabled by new generations of weapons, particularly those using computers, robotics or electronics. This is an emerging field, and hard to discuss as a result, but it appears that the main dynamic behind such moves is the search for a technological fix to the vulnerabilities faced by military forces: firstly that they rely on the loyalty and at least reluctant willingness of large numbers of soldiers to fight, and secondly that they are vulnerable to tactics depending on the density of local social and geographical spaces. Armies seek to get around these limits by developing technologies which reduce the reliance on large numbers of soldiers, which render local sites vulnerable to surveillance, and which render popular support irrelevant to the outcome of local conflicts (note that they seek to do so – they have not yet done so). One of the difficulties with this discourse on technology is the nexus of interests involved: arms companies have an interest in making new products seem more transformative than they are, military leaders have an interest in playing up threats and increasing military budgets, and between them, they create a situation where political leaders are constantly urged that they are about to fall behind without some vital new killing machine. Supposed new breakthroughs, such as unmanned drones, heat-ray weapons and anti-missile interception, have proved to be less effective or less widely usable than originally intended. This qualification aside, the state is constantly increasing its autonomy from factors of public support and morale by relying on high-tech weaponry and surveillance. The effect is dangerous: if the state can do what it likes without the need to obtain popular support on the ground, it can increasingly resort to unconstrained warfare while making fewer and fewer concessions to local proxies or domestic populations. They also contribute to atrocities which would not otherwise have occurred. The US drone strikes on Pakistan, for instance, would have been technically possible without drone technology, but probably too diplomatically risky without Pakistani government support. The risk of an American pilot being put on trial in the glare of the global media for violating Pakistani airspace is the kind of demoralising image problem America increasingly seeks to avoid. Dead villagers in isolated locales which can be kept off CNN or passed off as dead 'terrorists', on the other hand, are deemed a price worth paying." (Behind Enemy (Thought) Lines).

Fire vol.5 pg33], the domination of technical rationality at the service of capitalism is not a technologically necessary fate.

After all, wasn't precisely general Figliuolo the leader of the war mission in Afghanistan on behalf of the Italian troops of occupation? There, the so-called "military-vaccination campaign" is in the hands of the general who along with others lost Afghanistan. Generals in power? Yes but which generals?

Figliuolo is a loser!

The "Afghan variant" brings us to another thought, a much more disturbing one: *modernity as a parenthesis*. What if the occupation armies of the capitalist States of the planet "withdrew their troops" one fine day? And what if the Sun of the Future didn't rise that fine day but medieval reaction, religious obscurantism, human barbarity, oppression of women? It must have been this thought, so disturbing that it was pushed into the deepest subconscious, that pushed so many ex-comrades towards a now exquisitely reformist terrain. In the face of the collapse, many could show they are not all that revolutionary. Fear of death or of something much worse could drive many to say that yes, after all our government is not that bad. After all, don't a certain opposition to fascism, a certain social-democratic rhetoric of defence of the vulnerable, a certain neo-liberal vision on the role of minorities also talk of this to us *[ed. – see **'Something Different Than the Reflection of This World'**]*?

What do we need to do? Espouse obscurantism? Shout "Allah is great" or to take to the streets along with conspiracy theorists? No, we need to oppose our myth to their war gods. We need to oppose what Alfredo Cospito *[ed. – see **'Our Anarchy Lives'**]* calls "the myth of avenging anarchy" against the divinities of technique and reaction. The Idea that the rich who have reduced us to these conditions will pay one fine day. And it won't be due to some miraculous divine assistance, the chance to do justice is in our hands alone!

From "Technological Totalitarianism" to the Chip Crisis

Another way with which some are opposing the dominant ideology of our age is that of denouncing the danger of an imminent technological totalitarianism. **Again, while rightly opposing the ongoing trends, these comrades end up nevertheless with accepting their beliefs.** The idea that technological progress won't know limits and will conquer the entire planet is only the umpteenth ideological delusion. Not only are we against the projects of reorganization of capitalism, we are also sceptical about the lies being told to us by its mouthpieces.

On 17th July economy newspapers spread a disconcerting piece of news, well concealed by the mainstream media. This is an item from the agency *LaPresse*:

> Audi and Volvo will stop their plants in Brussel and Gent, Belgium, this week due to shortage of microchips. It is what is being reported by several local media including *The Brussels Times*. Shortage of microchips has slowed down production of about half a million vehicles all over the world, according to the European Association of Car Suppliers (Clepa), and it is believed that its effects will be felt until 2022. It is not the first time that both plants have had to stop production due to shortage of microchips, which can be present in their dozens in the newest car models. 'The second trimester of 2021 was very difficult and we are still witnessing delays in production', Clepa president Thorsten Muschal affirmed. Audi explained that the supply of chips will

remain limited in the coming months – and therefore it is not possible to exclude further adjustments to production – even if the situation is expected to improve. 'It seems that the lowest point of the crisis has been reached', Peter D'Hoore, the plant spokesperson, said. 'We expect an improvement in the second half of the year', he continued.

But what, you want to make the digital revolution and you don't have chips for cars?!

The effects of the chip crisis will be felt until 2022, they say. At the time of the press release (June 2021), they mentioned half a million vehicles not being produced due to shortage of raw material. But they were confident that "the lowest point of the crisis" had been reached. On the contrary, the chip crisis keeps on expanding, affecting all technological sectors and not only these. We publish extended passages of an article of *Il Sole 24 Ore* which you can read entirely at this link: ilsole24ore.com

After Audi and Volvo, it was the turn of Tesla, Elon Musk's electric car *[ed. – see **'Let's Destroy Everything That Is Called Tesla!'**]*, which had to stop due to shortages of lithium and cobalt:

> Problems are also there for Tesla, Elon Musk's electric car titan. Costs are increasing due to shortage of raw materials. The CEO himself explained the situation in a tweet: 'Prices are increasing due to the pressure of costs, especially those of raw materials, in the supply chain all over the industry'. In this case prices of raw materials such as lithium and cobalt are at stake, both increasing (according to the International Energy Agency), demand for minerals for electric vehicles and batteries will grow at least 30 times by 2040).

Inevitably these problems also concern electrical appliances:

> Things are no better in the sector of electrical appliances. According to the president of Whirlpool in China, the same global shortage of raw materials (in particular chips) which has shaken production lines in car companies, is now striking producers of electrical appliances, unable to meet demands. Whirlpool itself, one of the biggest companies of electrical appliances in the world, has seen its deliveries of chips reduced by 10% in proportion to its orders in the month of March. Hangzhou Robam Appliances Co Ltd, a Chinese producer of electrical appliances with over 26 thousand employees, had a four-month delay in the production of a new fan for high range heaters because they couldn't procure a sufficient number of chips.

And videogames: "Unfortunately we are coming up against a great shortage of semiconductors and other components". These are the words of the Chief Financial Officer at Sony, Hiroki Totoki, talking about Play Station 5. What was not expected, however, is that the chip crisis could cause serious troubles also to other sectors such as construction, coffee and even toilet paper!

> It seems absolutely absurd, but one of the sectors put in crisis by the chaos of raw materials is that of toilet paper. Suzano SA, the biggest producer of wood paste – the raw material for products including toilet paper – has made it known that logistics problems triggered by the raw material crisis (containers requested by other sectors, transport in an uncertain state, etc.) could create supply problems.

Finally, right in these first days of September the chips crisis is starting to pop up in national news bulletins, which are trying to limit it to the economic pages: Stellantis (the old FIAT) in now writing to workers to announce an extension of mid-August holidays to part of September in several sites where they produce Panda and Fiorino, due to chronic shortage of semiconductors.

In an electrified world, the electrification crisis is a general crisis. Not only because robotization affects all sectors but also because the chips crisis is a crisis of extraction, speaking in strictly material terms: materials for computers are lacking, but trees for paper production are also beginning to be scarce!

Naturally the chip crisis is not an impromptu one, but a deep sign of the times. From the one hand increasing demand of conductors, semi-conductors and superconductors, on the other the inability of African mines to keep up with this ever increasing demand of raw materials.

The result of the imbalance between demand of conductor metals and the weakness of the offer will very likely have important consequences not only on the volume of production but also on costs. **The great strength of digitalization has been the progressive deflation of its products. Computers, cell phones, devices of various kinds have been costing less and less for many years, making them goods affordable by everybody – even those who can't feed themselves or pay the rent.** An increase in the price of these devices will certainly reflect on the speed of the propagation of their global spread. But the finite nature of the planet also applies to the raw materials which smartphones and PCs are made of, it talks to us about objective limits of technological expansion.

By saying this we don't want to spread the easy illusion of a spontaneous depletion of resources useful to the technological authoritarian turn. In the past we used to deceive ourselves too easily on the end of oil production, except that they found new oilfields deep-down and the way to reach them precisely thanks to new extraction technologies. Capitalism won't switch itself off spontaneously for lack of fuel, it is us who must blow it up!

Capitalism always finds new areas to be exploited and new technologies to do it. The spreading of mines in search of metals such as coltan outside the Congo is part of these attempts. The point is not to believe the reputation of invincibility of the capitalist machine. These researches also produce struggles of resistance, and also workforce surely more costly than the slaves used in Africa. Again, therefore, price increases and a more and more excluding availability of technological applications.

What we are supposing, therefore, is not technological totalitarianism, but a condition of technological specificity in a context of general recession. There will be hyper-developed "citadels" (the word is not to be intended literally), outside which the big mass of humanity will abound, more and more excluded from the poles of wealth *[ed. – see 'Something Different Than the Reflection of This World']*. This picture is not to be represented "geographically", as the developing world was pictured once upon a time. **This excluding dynamic will cross vertically all societies.** In this context, the image of the worker with a chip in his overall which spies all his movements at work will go hand in hand with that of the said worker who, once he is back home, will increasingly experience a condition of cultural barbarism – with the addition of problems in the supply of coffee and toilet paper. Technological revolution will continue to be based on the exploitation of humans. This will be the case as long as capitalism exists *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg9**]*. Human flesh remains the real gold mine for exploiters. If anything, new technologies will serve to control it better.

They Write "Green Deal" & You Read "Sacking"

While in the IT market the prices of the chip crisis are not yet to be seen, this is not the case for so called electric cars. To purchase an electric car with "decent" performance – we are not talking about rust buckets running 50 km per hour – you need to pay at least 18 thousand euros and this only thanks to public contributions otherwise the bill would be another 3–4 thousands exorbitant. It is not by chance that Panda continues to be the most popular car in Italy, as it costs less than 10 thousands. In other words, the "green revolution" remains a class privilege.

It is not by chance that Greta *[ed. – Greta Thunberg, influential – and reformist – teen climate activist]* followers and environmentalists of the regime repeatedly say to us that along with electric cars, our habits in moving have to change. With electric cars, people will mainly move with car sharing *[ed. – see **'A New Relation with Social Conflicts'**]*. "The future? Electric, but connected and shared", Diego Colombo for example writes in *Eco di Bergamo*. The reason? Simple: not everybody will be able to afford it!

This is an example of what we call "citadels" of the technological civilization surrounded by misery. Even the car, distinctive sign of the consumeristic society of the Seventies, becomes a privilege for the few.

Naturally here the point is not the environment because everything depends on what you produce energy with. If electricity is produced with fuel, it is evident that electric cars will cause more CO_2 emissions on the planet than traditional cars running with petrol. Okay, but this will happen "outside" in the regions where there are coal-fired power plants. Once again we can suppose a dynamic which is not totalitarian but "citadel"-like of the next techno-capitalist regime: historical centres will have less smog, my lady!

And obviously all this frenzy for electrification will only nourish the nuclear power impulse of the scientists of death *[ed. – see **Indigenous Anarchist Covergence – Report Back**]*.

Therefore the point is not to save the environment, as the ideologists of the palace tell us. The point is a global restructuring of society, with a more restricted fortress of inclusion and a bigger human mass of marginalized. The impoverishment of the "middle class", as magnificent as it is metaphysical, tells us something about this overall process. This impoverishment can be linked to the "Afghan variant" in the broad sense, to the reactionary forces of many impoverished small bosses.

This impoverishment is a necessary consequence, demanded by the new course. Still on the question of electric cars, it is estimated that between 30% and 60% of jobs are at risk in the car sector because of the production change from combustion engines to the electric ones. The ecological transition rhymes with digital transition; not by chance the Draghi government *[of Italy]* – a regime of National Unity in the name of capitalist redevelopment – invented the Ministry of Ecological Transition and reinvented the Ministry of Technological Innovation and Digital Transition. As Roberto Cingolani, the Minister of Ecological Transition claims in Mephistophelian style *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg52**]*, the transition will have an enormous social cost. Cingolani's armoured vehicles are marching on, mimicking Stalin's: capitalism and electrification are fluttering on the banners of new purges.

Never was the saying more real: you wanted a bicycle, now you pedal.

National Unity from Cremaschi to Bonomi

For this project to go on, for this huge redevelopment self-named Great Reset to be realized, mass impoverishment all over the West is therefore necessary. As we've seen, this goes through the loss of millions of jobs due to robotization and robotics. Electrification demands human flesh!

The Italian government took care of this by unblocking bans on dismissals, the actual measure for which the Renzi operation was kicked off to unseat the previous government and install Mario Draghi's government. Now that there are no more bans on dismissals, all pretexts are good to close down. And the global pandemic offers pretexts in abundance.

It was on 20th July when Giorgio Cremaschi, the historical leader of FIOM [the Italian Federation of Metalworkers], the former union of metalworkers within CGIL [the Italian General Confederation of Labour], and a member of the "centre-left" little party *Potere al Popolo!*, chirped in the grammatically wrong language of Twitter:

> "Those who oppose #green pass[5] should coherently oppose: driving licence health cards identity cards residence certificates any similar devilry of communist dictatorships. Crazed ones certainly, but also simply #undomesticated fascists".

In the same day Carlo Bonomi, the president of Confindustria [general confederation of Italian Industry], wrote a decisively less illiterate letter to Prime Minister Mario Draghi, unveiled by the daily *Il Tempo*:

> [The headline: You don't get vaccinated? No salary. Confindustria's threat to workers]. With the purpose of protecting all workers and the continuation of production processes in the full respect of individual freedoms, Confindustria has proposed the extension of green certificates – i.e. the green pass – to have access to work contexts.

You don't need to be a conspiracy theorist to observe that the coincidence of dates is disquieting at the very least. But even assuming that Cremaschi's was "only" an unforgivable mistake and the symptom of a geriatric left to be locked more in a care home than in a social centre, a coincidence of this kind, however "unfortunate", gave the sensation of a media encircling for the security turn which would intervene a few days later.

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[5] ed. – "The Green Pass, also known as the "European Green Passport", is a document gradually introduced from the summer of 2021 by the Italian government. It is obtained only when you have obtained the so-called "vaccination coverage", after having received two doses of the vaccine (or, in other and rarer cases, when you have recently recovered from Covid-19). The document initially regulated access to public spaces, such as bars, restaurants, cinemas or festivals, hospitals... but its scope has gradually been extended to other aspects of social life. In particular, starting from 15 October, the Green Pass has become mandatory for all workers, both in the public and private sectors: under penalty of suspension from their jobs. In his absence, workers can only, and at their own expense, certify their condition of "negativity" using swabs. [...] Furthermore, thanks to the Green Pass, the government masks – through an authoritarian and punitive mechanism for workers – the will to continue its policies as in the past: cuts to healthcare, absence of preventive and territorial medicine, absence of investments and stable hiring in the school, no enhancement of public transport[...] It is the very gentlemen of Confindustria who in February 2020 lobbied to keep the factories open, who diminished the severity of the virus, who along with the democratic mayors of Milan and Bergamo were saying that we couldn't stop [who] want to impose the green pass on us today" (Against the Green Pass, against the State). Of course in parts of the UK we already have the similar 'Covid Pass', but the Italian experiment could set the track for other countries in Europe and the world.

You need to be very careful at the substance that the word involves when you use the expression "government of National Unity". National Unity is not a simple technical government or a mere political government of "large understanding". National Unity is a government where the Nation is united and mobilized for a supreme emergency purpose. From a parliamentarian point of view, it is no different from so-called "large understanding": many parties that vote a political government together. But National Unity is something different. The alliance of government goes through the whole of society, social forces, intellectuals, common people: all are mobilized for the Homeland.

From this point of view Cremaschi's and Confindustria's concentric statements suggest us substantial unity, a real patriotic front to save the bourgeoisie from the crisis caused by Coronavirus. It is a proper mass bourgeois government which, unlike fascism, maintains plurality of parties and mobilizes them all in the patriotic war. With his declarations, Cremaschi, a fake opponent, is in fact included in the structure of National Unity, he declares himself mobilized for his choices of social butchery.

Covid-19 is a Symptom. Yes, But a Symptom of What?

We are not giving the pandemic a central role in our analysis. Not because what occurred wasn't eminently historic, from all points of view. But we think that Covid-19 wasn't an unexpected event, a meteor that struck the planet changing its course for ever. If anything, we think that Coronavirus is in some way a sort of expression of the spirit of the current times.

All right, but where are the current times heading to?

Sticking to a clinical metaphor, Covid-19 is only a symptom. Yes, but a symptom of what?

Unquestionably it is a symptom of the health condition of the planet. Moreover, it is a symptom of the way modern science functions: it creates a disease and then it sells the remedy. It is a symptom of what constant urbanization, intensive farm breeding and "natural" biological selection through vaccines and antibiotics can cause. But even assuming this was a plot, an obscure conspiratorial manoeuvre, it would all the same be a symptom: the symptom of the point that military apparatuses, big financiers, etc. have reached. And even if – an intermediate hypothesis – it was the result of an accidental leak from a research lab (with two variants: a) a military lab; b) a medical lab which studies viruses for the "good" of human-kind), again it would be only a symptom: a symptom of the social dangerousness of capitalist science, which is running autonomous and brake-free putting us all in danger.

In other words, it is a symptom and it remains a symptom. **That's why we need to give up the temptation to follow Covid and its dances with the deforming lens of technical reason. As usual it would be like choosing the battlefield and weapons imposed by the enemy. We must look beyond, at the real evil: the real evil is a strongly unequal world social organization,** which is plundering all environments, which is protected by a military apparatus without precedents in the history of humanity.

As it represents the spirit of the times, Coronavirus didn't invert the fundamental tendencies of our epoch; it simply accelerated them. The crisis of globalization was already foreseeable before the health emergency. Some of us, even with very poor analytical instruments and empirical data, had foreseen it for some years. Likewise we had foreseen we were going towards an authoritarian turn. The pandemic was the vehicle where these phenomena finally expressed themselves. The

pandemic is the vehicle of the globalization crisis and of a new form of authoritarian turn, but both are not passengers, they are the drivers.

We judge authoritarian devices such as the recent health passport, so called green pass, from this point of view. We are not strictly interested in the question of vaccination, in the technical discussion, in scientific debate that replaces political debate. Among the authors of these notes some are vaccinated and some are not, indifferently. A division that plays the game of power, whereby the State has deliberately accelerated in this direction to create further fragmentation among the exploited and the isolation of the "hotheads" among them. The green pass strikes first and foremost the freedom and privacy of anyone who has it: controlled when they board a train, go to the cinema or to the university, it is those with the green pass who are especially spied on.

As pointed out at the beginning, the goal is an ideological goal: the creation of a society where the horizon of subversion becomes ontologically impossible. In this context, the ideology of technique, impersonal and impartial as they want to describe it, becomes the only tolerated ideology. If technique says that we all have to be spied on, that it is the only rational solution to health problems... then we all have to be spied on. The decision-maker is logic and impersonal: another world is impossible – and exactly twenty years after Genoa *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg68**]*, Cremaschi and Confindustria are marched together on 20th July.

An Authoritarian Turn, But of What Kind?

In the columns of *Vetriolo [ed. – Italian anarchist periodical]*, expressions such as "an authoritarian turn of a new kind" and "an authoritarian turn of a new form" were used to describe what would happen. It was basically a negative definition, without content. We limited ourselves to observe that the new authoritarian society wouldn't have the characteristics of historical twentieth century fascism. It was important to highlight this fact in order to avoid the danger of so called front-ism: antifascist unity in the name of democracy.

As we were beginning to debate these categories, here and in a good part of the world extreme right parties and so-called sovereignists were growing. We feared what in fact happened: that antifascist alarmism would contribute to contain this right-wing wave, yes, but with the goal of reinstating world neo-liberal order. This was the case in Italy with the Draghi government and in the USA with Trump's "defeat". Once they achieved the result to reinstate liberalism, these movements deflated until they almost disappeared. **It is the eternal return of the cycle fascism-antifascism-liberalism, where movements got bogged down for the umpteenth time.**

At the time, therefore, the only thing we could do was to give a warning of the use that power would make of antifascism, trying to explain that the upcoming authoritarian turn was not the simple return of a totalitarian regime, but something very different. We couldn't give more information about the contents because we are not prophets. Reality would show us the contents. Today we can say something more. We can give some substance to the authoritarian turn of a new form.

The first fact is that the authoritarian turn came about in a substantial conservation of the liberal constitutional order. Someone might object that not even fascism in Italy suspended the Statuto Albertino *[the constitution granted by King Carlo Alberto of Sardinia to the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1848, which later became the constitution of the unified Kingdom of Italy]*. This is true,

but we can't not observe that the old Italian monarchical constitution was very vague and, for example, it didn't include guarantees for parties and unions. Fascism suspended party plurality and union freedoms, carrying out a constitutional change in the substance of the political order. The current European constitutions are much more regulatory in respect to rights and duties. **The new authoritarian turn of a new form, this is extremely important, is not changing its features.** On the contrary, it is not obviously interested in this. Berlusconi's and Renzi's reformist attempts were more dangerous for reformists and leftists in effective permanent service in defence of the Constitution. In full state of emergency, nobody thought of changing western constitutions in an authoritarian way.

In short the ongoing authoritarian turn, while it locks individuals up in their homes, drives over workers on strike, demands health passports, sets up checkpoints at every corner of the streets and makes restrictive measures fall down like rain against anarchists and rebels; it is not at all intervening on the institutional core.

This seems surprising only from a superficial point of view. In fact it is strictly linked to the particular ideological, mystified nature of the one and only thought of technical reason. If there is one and only one compelling choice, if social, ethical, ecological questions have only one answer and if this answer is identified by the impersonal dynamic of problem solving, democracies don't represent any danger for new authoritarianism. Anyone who ascends to power will have to necessarily adopt the same policies because the solution is one and only and it is compelling.

Announcement of Blood

The authoritarian turn is reality. Therefore we are in a new historical epoch, which like any revelation worth the name, needs an Announcement, a radical symbolism, a passion of blood. In Italy this "announcement" took form in the massacres committed in jails in March 2020.[6] Sixteen dead over whom a veil of forgetfulness was laid too soon.

First of all a radical reaction. In the face of the unprecedented revolt in Italian jails, a State confused by the irruption of the pandemic reacted as it could, as it knew: with an iron fist. Certainly a message to the rebels, but also for the whole of society: this is what those who rebel have to expect. The State is there. These are the world of the then Minister of Human Flesh Administration *[ed. – aka, Minister of Justice, then Alfonso Bonafede]*:

> I'd like to point out that in all the most serious cases the institutions have proved to be compact: magistrates, prefects, police and all the other forces intervened without hesitation making the face of the State even more determined before the delinquent acts that were being carried out.

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[6] ed. – "In response to the government taking away a variety of prisoners' rights (including visitation and recreation), prisoners rioted. As of March 9, more than 50 had escaped in the riots, though six more had been killed. Criminal trials were continuing even during the outbreak, though prisoners are prohibited from attending, supposedly out of fear they will contract the virus and spread it to those trapped in the prison system. Despite all the threats and risks, on the first day of the national lockdown, a few dozen protesters converged on the empty streets of central Rome outside the Ministry of Justice to elevate the demands of prisoners across the country in revolt" (Against the Coronavirus and the Opportunism of the State). In Modena and Ascoli Piceno prisons, the guards replied with blows and gunshots, leaving sixteen dead: hundreds of inmates from prisons all over Italy are on trial for having risen up in those days.

These words were pronounced by a minister of "justice" before a consenting Parliament. An unequivocal political and historical responsibility: we, colleagues in parliament, along with "magistrates, prefects, police and all the other forces of order", are responsible for the massacre. The 1920s of our century are being announced. A surreal feeling, when we are almost in the situation of having to thank hangman Bonafede for having finally shown us without veils, for what it is, "the face of the State".

This is the nature of the conflict we are going to face. We are all warned, anyone who doesn't feel up to it should perhaps take a step back now. Even the images of the tortures in Santa Maria Capua Vetere[7] take on an important communication value in the terrorist message of power. In this slice of the century we learned how power wisely creates scandals out of torture: Guantanamo, Abu Graib are places of torture isolated from the world, if we learned something of what happened it is because the ideology wanted to show it. A warning, a shiver of terror for those who decide to fight arms in hand against the occupying army: I could be there.

Therefore it can't be by chance that the images of torture, amidst the big indignation of fine democratic souls, came out of a jail where there was no dead. It can't be by chance that only in Santa Maria Capua Vetere the screws were so stupid as to leave the cameras on. The truth is that sometimes certain information has to come out. So that you all are warned: the next ones could be you!

But the massacres in Italian jails were and still are a deeper test. They are a social thermometer on our inurement. Power wanted to test the level of reaction, of dignity left in the human flesh it wanted to administer. It wanted to see if we were really ready for electrification. Judging from the fact that the great majority of the population don't even remember the dead, and if you ask them to think of what March 2020 was like, their memories are well different (mass house arrest, terror of the virus), we can say that the experiment has been successful: the patient is dead.

The Autumn We Expect

With these premises the autumn we expect will be an autumn of fear, from anxiety over flu symptoms to anxiety over losing one's job. It will be an autumn of restrictions and witch hunts. Nothing makes us believe that it will be somehow a "hot" autumn. Better to throw an unpleasant truth in the face than continue to pretend nothing is the matter, than follow after the umpteenth social intervention and then get frustrated at its failure.

In spite of this sad starting set, uprisings won't be missing. The authoritarian turn, digital restructuration and social electrification are already generating resistance and desperation *[ed. – see **How the Left is Handing Over Protest to Fascism**]*. Resistance together with desperation, the feelings of those who have their backs to the wall, can be the next social detonator. Radical refusal of this imposed future will be the rebels' next move.

In this context, the most authentic expression of the class war will be precisely nihilism, which seems a paradox. If another world is impossible, then the only alternative you left us is precisely

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[7] ed. – This prison, near Naples, saw systematic torture of hundreds of inmates by guards (such as being made to strip, kneel and be beaten by screws wearing helmets to conceal their identity) the day after a riot in April 2020 as prisoners demanded face masks and COVID-19 tests. Responsibility has been traced from the director, to the regional director of prisons, to then Minister of Justice Bonafede. Fifty-two prison guards have since been arrested (CCTV footage having circulated); Matteo Salvini, the leader of the far-right League and part of the ruling coalition, visited the prison this June "to bring some solidarity from the League to all prison officers".

the lack of alternatives, in the fury of the hunted beast. An absolute counter-blow from this world in which we'll be more and more crammed, poorer and poorer, more and more ill.

However, if this reaction limits itself to this, it also risks becoming the last backlash of humanity by now submitted to the impersonal dynamics of electrification. In order to take this second step what is needed is faith, a myth, an horizon of (non)sense, an horizon which is not there, which perhaps will never be there, but only if we move marching towards it can we overturn an already written history. A mass, a surreal energy which can bend the linear time of capitalistic technique. All this is profoundly human.

All this can be also done by example: by demonstrating that power is fragile, has many weak points, can be cracked. By demonstrating through deeds that history won't go as they want, that there are those who are ready to make them pay dearly.

The area of the world we are in, that governed by the Italian State, is among other things particularly strategist in this context of restructuration. It is not by chance that Italy is the country that received more money in so called NextGenerationEU, not less than 210 billions over 807.

It is not a good gesture from European domination, but the conviction that Italy is the big patient in the continent and the first country which risks breaking the dream of a European Super State. This pile of money is not only a help but also a chain. Europe wants to ensure that the Italian State doesn't collapse and at the same time to block it firmly under its command. Today Italy's instability is a possible, important thorn in the side of western capitalism. Perhaps it is from this last consideration that we should begin to act.

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