

Insurrection in times of the #Coronavirus

Antikalypse

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Now, finally, that destabilizing event that could block the capitalist system has arrived. And unlike what we imagined, the cause is not the action of a group of revolutionaries or a social group of a territory or even a population in revolt. The event originates in the capitalist body itself and spreads within it at the same speed as a virus spreads in an organic body, blocking various functions of the system.

For this reason, in one of the many parts of this body, more precisely in Italy, from Tuesday March 10th, a new proof of obedience is required. New travel bans, new regulations for already previously restricted individual freedoms will be introduced without mentioning the causes of this pandemic. Leaving home is now only allowed to buy food, as the possibility of producing it oneself has long been taken away from most people. To barricade oneself inside the four walls by retweeting #iorestoacasa (#Living at home) is the sad proposal that good Italian citizens are forced to make.

And just as the ecological drama is to be avoided by differentiating and buying electric cars, the spread of the virus is to be blocked by forcing people not to leave their homes. The capitalist system spreads the burden on the backs of its subjects and, like modern medicine, intervenes in the symptom rather than the cause.

A human event, caused by humans

All or almost all of them forget to remember that the virus was originally transmitted to humans by a bat (apart from the conspiracy theories, which may seem obvious but do not change the substance of things) and that this was made possible by the fact that man-made climate change is making previously hostile environments more attractive to certain microorganisms.

They forget to remember that it is the enormous concentration of labour in one place, millions of people, although alienated from each other, squeezed into cities, that has caused the virus to spread. It has spread because of the madness that brings people and goods (including billions of living beings destined for human consumption) from one part of the world to another. Until a few weeks ago, an average of more than 12 million people a day flew, 4.5 billion a year, all potential carriers of a virus. Workers, goods, tourists – now it is the corona virus that is in the (goods) flow.

And so both the rhetoric of the fascists and that of the present and worldwide ruling class is deconstructed: The borders, which are closed for those who have no money and no documents and open for those who have both, are the same ones that made the spread of the virus in the whole world possible. Fast and comfortable in the business class. Welcome drink? Corona or sars?

How the state reacts

The entire peninsula – and soon Europe – will be militarized, new borders will be created, checkpoints will be guarded with armed uniforms. The movement of goods has collapsed dramatically, and the ever-decreasing free movement of persons has almost come to a standstill. Everyone at home is abiding the bans for fear of infection or of spreading the virus. Or simply being punished.

Those who do not have a home, those who do not have the documents required by sovereignty, their sole existence is prohibited, they are outlaws. They can no longer be in the deserted cities unnoticed and are at the mercy of the police and state control, which can only see with the blind eyes that have control in these blind cases.

The state of emergency allows exceptional measures, emergency measures for more social control. These measures, such as those taken throughout the West to “combat terrorism”, will be permanent.

Some suggest adopting the model used in South Korea and managing the epidemic by tracking people’s movements using large amounts of data. (Editor’s note: In Austria, it has been reported that a major telephone provider is already transmitting the mobile phone data of its users to the police in order to create movement profiles – all under the primacy of fighting the pandemic).

As more and more people are becoming insecure, why shouldn’t the persecution – not only by the technology giants, but also by the state – of all citizens be carried out under the pretext of public health or public security? Or rather, both? The audience of the public debate applauds.

Likewise, a ban on assemblies for a supposedly higher purpose, that of public health, could put an end to the mass movements that have challenged the current social order around the world in recent months.

o if the revolts in Hong Kong are exhausted by the virus and the Chilean revolt returns to a constituent and reformist horizon, what could be better for the state on the other side of the Alps (France) than extraordinary measures to “contain the epidemic” and thus to strike a final blow against the uncontrollable – though tendentially reformist – movement of the yellow west?

How capitalism might be reinvented

The capitalist world, if it survives this period, could take advantage of the state of emergency to push everyone into the fourth industrial revolution. The attempt to discourage the activities outside home, the socialities and groupings of its opponents – and thus the possibility of encounter, confrontation, organization, revolt ... we still refer to the revolts that have shaken the rulers of the world only last year.

Instead, preference should be given to meaningless conviviality and virtual gathering – there are already those who define live streaming as “concerts” -, online consumption, the construction of increasingly customized and less risky environments, with the result that people are gradually incapable of dealing with real conflict situations that cannot be solved by simply switching off.

Some more farsighted economists, moving from the local to the global, expect a possible restructuring of capitalism, a serious reduction of globalization and financial markets in the coming years. We may expect more local and less networked economies, shorter production chains, continents aiming at a kind of autarchy, borders that are even more closed.

Together with less interdependency, there is a higher probability of conflict, because if my economy no longer depends on yours and you no longer produce the components of my missiles, why should I avoid war when you touch my interests?

How long will it take to go from a “conventional war” to the mother of all wars, nuclear war? The one in which, like in a domino game, many millions of people would be killed in a few hours?

Now we see the planet being freed from the next human parasite...

What has to be done? Some hypotheses about the future

Although epidemics of this kind were generally to be expected, we are not prepared for the speed and rapid change in our daily lives.

So we need to understand what we need to do now, what opportunities the militarization of the country offers us and what we can expect from the future by trying to predict it.

At the moment, the first thing we have to do is communicate with each other, not isolate ourselves. Debate the state of emergency, confront each other, spreading texts and suggestions and critiques. And then we must try to share information about the situations in the different cities, in the different regions, where the checkpoints are, what forms of control are being used and whether the bans are actually being respected – or not. When we have a clearer idea of the overall context, it will be easier for us to move, to meet, to confront and to act – in the knowledge that our movements can cause new infections, even among people we do not want to infect. Each person decides whether to act for infection and perhaps for extinction – which will certainly not happen this year – or for something else.

What is certain is that the need to cover oneself opens up new possibilities of anonymity, which gives lovers of image and identification a good feeling of security. We will therefore be given masks, from the whole body down, so that we can act in public, covert and cheerful situations.

Everyone must decide whether the priority is to avoid contamination or to act differently. What is certain is that wearing masks opens up new possibilities for anonymity. That is why we will put on masks so that we can act in public situations in a masked and calm manner. We will certainly support those who resist the new restrictions. At the moment people are imprisoned in places where almost all individual freedoms are denied – in prisons. According to the information published by the media, in the space of a few days 6000 prisoners have rebelled from the north of Italy to the south, and someone managed to escape after the lynching of a prison director. Among the prisoners we count the first violent deaths of this extraordinary period, a period which will probably last several months and during which, as some of the rulers say, 60–70% of people could be infected with the virus. It could also last much longer: a long period of quarantine, limited mobility, controls, bans on meetings, etc.

Certain bans can be lifted with new relief: overalls, masks and the like. This will not be enough to return to normality, but rather to prove that we live in a time before the apocalypse.

The current economy, at least as we know it, will hardly be able to survive a long period of state of emergency and stagnation.

After only a few days we are already witnessing the negative balance of the Milan stock exchange, the spontaneous and unmediated strikes by union members, the blockades of the ports, the above-mentioned insurrections and the widespread violations of the bans.

In a few weeks' time, the basic commodities, namely food, could begin to run short. People who have time to engage in the unusual activity of thinking could therefore decide to direct their anger towards those who cause their hunger and imprisonment: this world and its most faithful servants.

And the uprisings of each historical period show us that the angry, the rebels, always know what to hit.

So let us wait for the situation to escalate and try to make our revolutionary contribution to the outbreaks of anger, resentment, protests, looting and unrest.

We are confident that it is enough to wait...

However, impatient people may feel a strong desire to make an immediate contribution to the upheaval – before the collapse of the current system? So perhaps someone wants to strike another blow to production cycles by disrupting their energy supply, the system that kills, chaining billions of people to production, and devastating the areas where it develops to produce goods, taking power. They need economics and control, we don't.

Someone else might decide to attack the infrastructure system, the same one that allowed the virus – and its certain successors – to move at such a speed. Of course, this could delay the supply to the various cities, but we have not chosen to completely decouple food production from the areas where it is consumed.

Someone who is particularly imaginative could instead attack more original targets. Even if he hits blindly, he is almost never wrong in this world. And who knows if the attack on tobacco shops, for example, which prevents the satisfaction of certain addictions, might not finally cause the uprising of smokers and lottery players to finally explode?

A future of contagious rebellious fantasy awaits us.

From the chambers to the squares

What we should do, whether the state of emergency lasts only a few weeks or longer, is to break out of quarantine, to reclaim the air, the streets, the squares, the areas where we live. Beyond the slogan, it means going back to living outside closed places, a habit that may be difficult to regain for many people who are used to the security of the walls of their military hospital. It will be necessary to unhinge the justified fear and mistrust that arise these days at every meeting when people get too close, to reduce the fear so that they can get close again.

But we can imagine that opening – or previously forcing – the quarantine cages, especially if the duration is endless, will make people throw themselves out into the open again like a thunderstorm.

Not necessarily to return to their former lives, but with the will to return with a bang to the squares, to the streets, to the parks – the places where the Chilean revolt broke out, like every other insurgent moment in history.

Let us return and affirm in word and deed the total rejection of a world based on domination – be it over nature, animals or humans – and thus on extermination, environmental destruction, war, patriarchy, wage labor and many other abuses that we will destroy.

Let us refuse to live in a world which by its very nature favours the spread of such epidemics and which has infected all or almost all of our work, and let us refuse a compulsion which not only devotes a whole life to enriching and maintaining the power of those responsible, but systematically kills every day. This also means giving up work to spread spontaneous strikes.

The return to the squares and streets to overcome the moment of exceptionality that is often present in today's uprisings, which reach very pronounced phases of conflict, but without pursuing the goal of becoming permanent.

In our view, this is the main limit and one of the main causes of the long-term failure of the recent uprisings and revolts. Together with the dazzling effect of the constituent assemblies, this is the lowering of the horizon from that of a revolutionary to that of a reformist and a consolidation of the present system.

If we look back at history, we can see that the squares were repeatedly the places where another culture tried to be born, the daughter of the centuries that preceded it, but not just a dull alternative to the capitalist one.

Instead, it is the insipid alternative that we unfortunately often propose in the places where we live.

But we can do better...

In a constantly renewing discussion about ourselves and about us, about our relationships. An exploratory movement of imagination, curiosity, self-critique to deconstruct the culture of domination in favour of something new. So that, in the open spaces that by nature repel sectarianism and identity, every category, every identity between the rebels and their fires will finally dissolve. So that the unpredictable and extraordinary becomes our daily life.

An end that we are going to live

Whether this is the beginning of the end or just a further aggravation of the crisis, we cannot yet know. What is certain is that this pandemic will let behind an indelible scar on the lives and minds of all people. As in the system itself. What is certain is that the idea that this is “the best of all possible worlds” can only be abandoned by even the most stubborn defenders of capitalism. If only those in good faith. So when the ideological foundations are shaky, the economic system collapses and the devastation confronts capital with its responsibilities, then someone begins to guess the possible decline of the Anthropocene. Billions of living beings rise to this vision and take the possibility of a future in freedom..

In front of us lies the unexplored, the unknown. It is about giving up our own certainties in order to explore the infinite possibilities that await us. We will explore them with a thrill, with the excitement of discovery, with the vision of something completely new.

And we will do it with joy – from the edge of the abyss, towards an uprising and liberation.

Note: This text was created in Italy, was translated from an Italian website into Greek – and now by me from Greek into German. To the best of my knowledge and belief, I have tried to avoid distortions of meaning and have made some marked additions. Originally there were four footnotes attached, which I have removed. Among other things, they referred to air passenger data, a study according to which a nuclear war between the USA and Russia would produce up to 34 million deaths within 5 hours and the fact that the relatively slow spread of Ebola is partly due to the fact that the inhabitants of the countries affected by this epidemic are considerably poorer and therefore hardly able to travel to continents. I would like to thank Sebastian Lotzer for lecturing.

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