

Questioni



Questionnements Frågor. Ερωτήματα Cuestiones Questões

Fragen Mistoqsijet Questions Kysymykset Въпроси. Vragen Zagadnienia

**AGAINST THE WAR.
THE OTHER AGENDA**

LEONE
Graphic design: Davide Leone

Magazine of the European Left

N°4

 **European LEFT**

Quistioni

Magazine of the European Left

Director

Paolo Ferrero

Editorial board

Walter Baier

Luis Fazenda

Pierre Laurent

Jean-Pierre Michiels

Anna Mikkola

Margarita Mileva

Natasa Theodorakopoulou

Editor-in-chief

Giorgio Riolo

Editorial office

Daniele Brunetto

Responsible Director

Romina Velchi Pellecchia

Cover design

Davide Leoni

Design and layout

Elena Coperchini

Dario Marini Ricci

Dear reader,

What you are reading is the fourth issue of *Quistioni*, the quarterly magazine in three languages of the European Left. Our purpose is to create a public space for discussion and debate between those who want to build the alternative to this neo-liberal world. For this reason, it will include contributions from the member parties of the European Left, from intellectuals and movements.

The magazine is titled *Quistioni* (referring to the way in which Antonio Gramsci indicated the matters, the problems), because in each monographic issue of the magazine we want to tackle a problem and contribute, in this way, to the building of a common alternative project at European level.

We are very interested in your opinion, feedbacks and suggestions: you can write us at magazinepge@libero.it

Paolo Ferrero

Contacts

✉ magazinepge@libero.it

🌐 www.europeanleftmagazine.eu

Index

Editorials

- Heinz Bierbaum - *The War and the Other Agenda* 4
- Paolo Ferrero - *The crisis of globalization: Putin's regional war and Biden's world war* 6

Interventions

- Riccardo Petrella and the Other Agenda Promotion Group - *The Other Agenda. Knowledge. At the heart of power, inequality and injustice* 16
- Leonardo Boff - *Another (world) agenda: free life or another civilizational paradigm?* 31
- João Caraça - *Five steps of the metamorphosis of the modern world-system* 34
- Marga Ferré - *Another agenda for hope in a dystopian world* 37
- Cornelia Hildebrandt - *Four central tasks of European political foundations in times of war and crises* 39
- Luis Infanti de la Mora - *Even from the black clouds, clean and abundant rain falls* 42
- Roberto Mancini - *The ethics of the Other Agenda: for a conversion of civilization* 45

Materials

- Leïla Chaïbi - *Platform work and the struggles of bicycle couriers. Possible solutions on a European scale* 49
- Attila Antal interviews Tamás Krausz - *Barbarism is not the worst case. When there is no left alternative, social resistance rallies behind the far right* 53

The War and the Other Agenda

Heinz Bierbaum

The war in the Ukraine created a new and very dangerous situation, which has a profound impact on our societies. The entire Left in Europe condemns the Russian invasion which cannot be justified by any means, not even by NATO's eastward expansion. It clearly violates international law and causes immense human suffering. The left demands an immediate ceasefire and to stop the war. We are in solidarity with all those demonstrating against war and for peace, especially in the Ukraine and in Russia. We call on the political institutions to use all the available resources to promote negotiations and to achieve a peaceful solution.

The European Left is committed to peace. We say no to war. War is not a means to make politics. The disaster of Afghanistan clearly demonstrates that war is not a solution, and that democracy can't be introduced by military interventions. Concerning the war in the Ukraine and the question, how the Left should react, there are also disagreements on certain issues between the different parties of the European Left. This primarily concerns the delivery of arms, for which some parties are in favor and others strictly against. Another issue are the sanctions. The majority are in favor of targeted sanctions which do not affect the population but affect those who are responsible and the oligarchs. But there are also voices calling for more severe sanctions such as stopping energy imports. And also about NATO there are some differences.

The majority judges NATO's policy as aggressive and dangerous, not being the solution but a part of the problems we are facing. Others now have a less rigid position on NATO and are disoriented. But there is one thing very clear. The

Left is the political force which is committed to peace and in favor of a political solution through negotiation.

We need to work on establishing in Europe a system of collective security free from old and new divisions, where the sovereign equality and independence of all states are fully respected, as envisioned by the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and all other OSCE documents. Stability and peace in Europe can only be achieved through peaceful conflict resolution, arms control and disarmament measures. We are against rearmament and a new arms race. Serious political and diplomatic efforts are needed.

The European Left highly appreciates the invitation of Arnaldo Otegi from the Basque Left to a peace conference in Guernica. Guernica is a symbol for peace and for antifascism as well. Especially in the current situation an appeal for peace from Guernica would be extremely helpful.

The war in Ukraine is not limited to this region but has a geopolitical dimension. This war is also part of the struggle for hegemony in the world. The strengthening of NATO as a certainly unwanted consequence of Putin's aggression is in the interests of the United States and serves their efforts to assert their hegemony, which they see threatened by China. It's worth to remember that NATO at its summit last year in Brussels identified China as the main enemy. Not least because of the geopolitical importance of the current military conflict the risks are extremely high. There is a risk that the war in the Ukraine will be transformed into a greater war, using also nuclear weapons. That would be a deadly catastrophe.

Instead of assuming a mediating role, the European Union (EU) is becoming more and more a war party with the delivery of arms and massive military support. This is a wrong policy. The EU should make every effort for a negotiated solution to end this war. The EU should play an independent role and not be the loyal ally of the United States. In my opinion, it is very worrying that now states like Finland or Sweden are considering to abandon neutrality and to join Nato.

The war in the Ukraine should be taken as an opportunity to promote another policy, breaking with the logic of power which dominates international policy. This links the considerations about the war to the “Other Agenda” to which this edition of *Questioni* is dedicated. The “Other Agenda” aims to break with the predominant logic of power. War is certainly the most extreme expression of the logic of power. In its document it’s outlined that there are two principles creating the logic of power: “the private ownership by ‘natural’ right of everything and the artificialization of life”.

Instead of the logic of power the “Other Agenda for Another World” is inspired by the logic of the conservation and regeneration of life. To break with the dominant logic and to promote another logic there are three key objectives: another use of financial resources for the preservation, care and regeneration of life, to use the knowledge for developing societies and not to be limited to private purposes, to abolish private patents not being only the source for benefit of the holders of capital like it is the case

with pharmaceutical companies.

This initiative for another agenda is an initiative to use the knowledge and the technical progress for improving the working and living conditions and not to limit it to increasing private benefits. And indeed, we are facing major challenges that threaten the survival of humanity, such as climate change. Every effort must be made to combat these ecological challenges. This is not possible in the dominant capitalistic logic which the “Other Agenda” denounces.

The commitment to peace and disarmament and the fight against climate change and for a better world are linked. Every cent spent for military is a cent lost for combating the climate crisis. Instead of spending billions for arms we need public investments for the necessary social-ecological transformation of the industry. We know that a production based on fossil energies has no future. We need a green industrial revolution.

For the Left it’s clear that we have to protect the workers affected by these transformation processes and that the workers should be involved themselves. This will be a big challenge and cannot be achieved by leaving it to the market. As it is outlined in the “Other Agenda” the public use of knowledge is crucial.

Heinz Bierbaum is President of the Party of the European Left. He is a sociologist and economist.

The crisis of globalization: Putin's regional war and Biden's world war

Paolo Ferrero

War is an inhuman abhorrence and can never be justified. As our Italian Constitution fathers and mothers had wisely understood, war cannot be considered a solution to resolve international disputes. Problems must be solved differently and we are committed to that. Firstly, because the level of suffering produced by the war is inhuman and is paid above all by the weakest people, from the elderly to children and women, to whom gender-based violence is added to that of armed conflict. Secondly, because in addition to suffering and terror, war generates hatred, it tends to reproduce itself, destroying politics, democracy and freedom. War generates war, and it is the greatest aberration produced to humans, a kind of cannibalism on an industrial scale. War is the negation of humanity. That's why we are against war, always. War must be fought at its root, but it must be analysed in its causes - causes, not reasons - and in its multiple effects. Understanding war to build peace, a lasting, perpetual peace, is our goal. With this look we look at the ongoing wars.

Putin's war and his accomplices

On 24 February 2022, the Russian army invaded Ukraine militarily. As we have repeated a thousand times, this is a wrong and criminal choice that has dramatically aggravated the problems of the area and that opens the risk of the Third World War.

This war, guilty of Putin's Russia, is unjusti-

fiable. This crime turns other subjects into saints, as the Western propaganda would like: Putin has many accomplices because the problems in the area have worsened and have been deliberately rotted by the West: firstly, the President of the United States, in the company of the leading group of Nato, the European Union and the governments of the western nations.

In 1989 the United States won the Cold War and in 1991 - against the explicit guarantee by the US government not to extend Nato to the East - the Warsaw Pact was dissolved. In violation of the agreements, in 1997 Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic joined Nato and in March 1999, with a new qualitative leap, the first military operation carried out by Nato, with the bombing of Serbia, was carried out. An action carried out in total violation of international legality, without authorization of the UN Security Council and on the basis of the international legal concept of "humanitarian interference".

From that turning point, the United States, after the Vietnam war, once again attacked sovereign countries militarily outside any international legality, building its own consensus on the manipulation of reality. Just think of the aggression against Iraq based on the lie of the possession of weapons of mass destruction by Tony Blair and Colin Powell. Similarly, Nato continued to absorb the countries of the Old Warsaw Pact and Ukraine's entry into Nato (included in the Constitution after the 2014 coup) would be the last piece of a real military encirclement of Russia. That this situation undermines the security of the area, even a child understands it. That is, the United States and Nato won the cold war but

did not seek peace, did not want to build a new world balance, but used the collapse of the Ussr only to dominate the whole world. It is clear that this situation is a source of conflict.

Putin's second group of accomplices are successive Ukrainian governments and presidents after 2014. The Minsk Agreements, which were supposed to guarantee a precarious coexistence between the separatist republics of Donbas and the Ukrainian State, have been constantly violated by the military aggression of the Ukrainian army and, in particular, of the Nazi militias. The different presidents who have succeeded in these years have never had the will to stop the military actions against the Donbas and even the Azov Battalion has been incorporated within the Ukrainian Republican Guard. This military aggression - it cost more than 14,000 dead - added to the outlawing of several opposition parties - from the Ukrainian Communist Party that had more than 15% of the consensus - to violent action by Nazi squads across the country and the abolition of Russian as the country's official language. The Ukrainian governments, after the coup of 2014, have fueled a civil war that is dragging against the inhabitants of the eastern part of the country and penalizing the populations of native Russian speakers.

The reaction of Western countries

Let us now look at the characteristics and objectives of the war unleashed by the United States and the West in reaction to Putin's. Indeed, it is clear at this time that there are two wars. The war initiated by Putin challenged the power of the United States, but it could be addressed and managed as a regional conflict. The knots relating to the security of Russia, Ukraine and the solution of the civil war that has been going on for years in Ukraine could and can be composed through mediation, as we and the Pope have maintained throughout these months. On the other hand, Germany tried to reach a com-

promise in December, which proposed a negotiated solution, rejected by the United States and Ukraine. A compromise can and must be sought today to end the war.

On the contrary, the United States, followed by the Western ruling classes, did not seek an agreement that would put an end to the conflict, but unleashed a world war - economic, media, military - which risks leading every day to a direct - and therefore nuclear - confrontation between Nato and Russia. This war moves mainly on three levels:

- Trade sanctions. They are very broad and aim to bankrupt Russia, reducing the standard of living of the population in order to provoke a massive uprising against the government or even its dissolution. Famine is to stir. These measures are based mainly on the indefinite interruption of economic relations between Europe and Russia. Europe is thus the spearhead of this economic offensive and is destined to pay the highest prices, with strong recessive effects on its economy.

- The information war. The major Western media were recruited just like the Russians. The abandonment of all professional ethics is the rule of shameful regime information. On the one hand, any statement by the Ukrainian government and Nazi militias is repeated by the Western press without any verification. On the other hand, Russia's request to form an independent UN commission of inquiry into the Bucha massacre was blocked by Britain without any problem in the militarized press. The information became a fairly centralized propaganda system based in the United States. Anyone who thinks differently is criminalized in the name of democracy.

- The armed war. To date it is carried out by proxy, with the Ukrainian government employing adult men as soldiers under martial law, often under the supervision of Nato instructors. The supply of arms is on the rise and has already crossed the border of Nato's direct engagement - and incidentally, of Italy - in the conflict. The US strategy, announced by Clinton since early March, is to turn Ukraine into a new Af-

ghanistan, bogging Putin in a very costly war of attrition. It is a criminal choice, first of all, against the Ukrainian people, which are used as slaughter meat in a proxy war.

It seems clear to me that while the war unleashed by Putin could be averted with compromise and can be stopped with a negotiation, the war unleashed by Biden is made to last, as demonstrated by America's huge arms allocations. America's goal is not peace, but the continuation of a non-nuclear war that uses the willingness of the Ukrainian government to use its people and its country to bleed Russia into blood.

Biden's war to maintain American rule

It is a question of understanding why the United States and its allies have adopted this position. It is clear to me that the United States has wanted this escalation because it does not accept that its sovereign power be questioned. We have seen how, after having achieved the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the United States has conquered military leadership at the global level. They obviously do not tolerate Russia calling this situation into question. But it is not just about that. The point is that in these 30 years that separate us from the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world has become much more multipolar: in economic, technological, financial and military terms. The United States remains the greatest power, but in no way can they be considered the hegemonic power or endowed with a position of effective domination over others. Thus, the decision of the United States is, for all intents and purposes, the aggressive decision of a superpower that sees its global leadership decline. If the world after World War II was bipolar and after the fall of the Berlin Wall was unipolar, it is evident that today it is multipolar. Biden's war represents the attempt of the United States to restore a role of absolute sovereignty on a global scale in a new objectively polycentric context. It is therefore a deliberate

act of force that Biden summed up on March 21: "There will be a new world order and we must guide it".

Biden's tactical objectives

Biden's war has Putin's Russia as its immediate competitor, but its *strategic objective is the confirmation and restoration of America's unipolar command over the entire world*. This restoration of unipolar domination is articulated in the attempt to destabilize Russia, to turn Europe against Russia, to contain and threaten China. All this by making Europeans pay for human sacrifices, destruction and the economy. As for Russia, there is no doubt that Biden's line is that of its far-reaching destabilization, which can range from the removal of Putin to the disintegration of Russia itself. This objective is not the only one. We see the other objectives better.

- Threaten China and put pressure on it. After the phase of economic confrontation opened by Trump, the new US administration accentuated the elements of military confrontation. Let's look briefly.

The Heads of State and Government forming the Nato Council, at the request of the United States, on 14 June 2021 in Brussels, for the first time in history have decided to include China "among the great systemic challenges for global security".

As if that were not enough, at the meeting of Nato Foreign Ministers from 6 to 7 April last, the ministers of the United States' main allies in the Pacific were also invited - Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea - and in the statement of the Secretary General at the end of the meeting, the Chinese danger was given a space of little less than that of the war with Russia...

Also on that occasion, President Stoltenberg affirmed that Nato would consider China for the first time in its new defense strategy to be made public at the end of June 2022 in Madrid. The Nato summit extended to the countries of the

Pacific that are not part of it, was repeated on April 26, 2022 while we closed this editorial, always with the aim of putting pressure on China. It is clear that China is today considered the main enemy by the United States, which is working to deploy the entire Nato in this position.

- Relaunching Nato by changing its objectives and forcing European countries to pay for arms... After years of discussions between Trump and European leaders, in which even the utility of Nato was questioned, Biden used Putin's war to practice a decisive turn in order to revitalize Nato as a global gendarme - also against China - forcing Europeans to finance the whole operation. The Nato created as a defensive alliance in opposition to the Warsaw Pact does not exist for a long time and today it is relaunched as an instrument of global domination over the planet and is characterized by being the main instrument of integration and "discipline" of European countries to the hegemonic will of the United States.

- Weakening Europe economically and politically. It is not today that the United States considers Europe a competitor, just think of Trump's polemics with the European Union and in particular with Germany because of its persistent trade imbalance with the United States.

Similarly, only a few months ago the United States piloted a "theft of orders" of 3 nuclear submarines that France was to build for Australia and that were "passed" to the most faithful Britain. The good Macron has nothing left to complain but without raising his voice too much because this dragged conflict is covered by rivers of rhetoric. For the United States, Europe must take its place, without any desire to act autonomously in the world, even if only to protect its interests.

- To point out to all the countries of the world that there is only one superpower and that it is capable, today as yesterday, of intervening, economically, financially and if it serves militarily, to discipline the riotous.

The first effects: Europe's suicide

Biden's most notable success was in Europe, which readily enlisted in the war against itself. The first symbolic act was the definitive installation in the attic of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, followed by a policy of economic boycott that essentially deprives Europe of the background of hydrocarbons and raw materials hitherto represented by Russia. Thirty-three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the European Union has agreed to build a wall along the entire eastern border, which represents a considerable economic and political weakening.

This choice of European ruling classes, in a few days has seriously compromised - if not cancelled - the objectives of political, economic and financial autonomy that, after the Covid pandemic, Merkel and Macron had indicated as necessary.

If Trump was sometimes arguing with Merkel, Biden has so far found only obedient executors, particularly in the Italian government which has a position of shameful submission to the United States. The European Union has committed suicide because instead of trying to stop Putin's war it has accepted to be part of the Biden war in which it has everything to lose.

The President of the United States has achieved a double success, on the one hand by subjecting the European Union to his will to restore world domination and - at the same time - by structurally weakening it both economically and politically. It is no coincidence that Boris Johnson, at the beginning of April, was praised for "this European Union", with which "now you can talk" because it has nothing to do with the previous one, from which the United Kingdom came out.

This choice - if confirmed in the coming months - would constitute Biden's main geopolitical success. For the moment, the minuscule signs of European rethinking are clearly flooded by military supply options at risk of World War III. The European subordination, in addition to the

strategic repercussions, is destined to produce a strong recession in Europe, with risks of reducing the size of the productive apparatus. If there is no change in this direction, the breakdown of economic relations with Russia and the strong risk of a reduction in relations with China, it would also roll back the role of the euro as a reserve currency. The European regression and the social crisis that will arise from it is, therefore, until today, the main objective realized by the open war by the United States.

The boomerang effect of Biden's war on the rest of the world

If Europe put its helmet on itself, much of the rest of the world was frightened by the American choice. This situation has given rise to a gigantic boomerang effect and the main players worldwide are making decisions very different from those expected by Uncle Sam.

First, the US action has led to a clear rapprochement between Russia and China. Although China condemned the Russian invasion, it strongly underlined the role of the United States and Nato in destabilizing the area and did not join in any way the Biden war in economic, financial, informative or military terms. It is clear that the Chinese Government thinks that the United States, having settled its accounts with Russia, intends to regulate them. The common interest in self-defense against US aggression is therefore the basis of an unprecedented convergence between China and Russia. This rapprochement is unprecedented in history and finds its basis precisely in the global threat posed by the U.S. with its determination to maintain by authoritarian and military means an income position that no longer has any basis in world economic and geopolitical reality.

This mutual defensive interest is destined to expand because the complementarity of China and Russia is very strong: Russia has intercontinental atomic missiles and raw materials while

China has factories and technologies. Looking up you can glimpse the relation between geopolitical data and a decisive phenomenon for humanity: climate change.

First, Russia is by far the largest country in the world in the northern hemisphere and is already the world's largest wheat producer. Under climate change, Siberia is becoming progressively cultivable, giving Russia the chance to conquer absolute leadership in food production worldwide. Since Russia has arable land and China population and capital, it is easy to imagine what can happen in a context of positive relations between these two giants.

Second, global warming is making navigable the sea routes that pass through northern Russia. For China, this is a fact of enormous interest. This is not just a drastic reduction in transit times from South-East Asia to Europe - of the order of 40% - but the acquisition of a route removed from US military control that completely ignores the Indonesian funnel, true bottleneck of Chinese shipping traffic.

Therefore, Biden and the US administration have provided a symbolically decisive reason - the Russian and Chinese interest in the mutual defense against American aggression - to build a never-realized cooperation between the two giants. The United States in a single blow has convinced the ruling classes and the public opinion of China and Russia about the opportunity of a cooperation that is probably destined - in case humanity does not commit suicide with the third world war - to radically change the balance of the world and its own centre of gravity.

Not only has China distanced itself from the United States. It is emblematic that the vote on the resolution adopted at the UN General Assembly on 2 March saw the abstention of India and South Africa with half of the African countries. From the point of view of the world's population, the governments that have aligned themselves with the United States represent only 41% of the world's population. This is an alarm signal that received an even more striking response at the UN General Assembly on 25 March. In that case, on a motion put forward by

South Africa - and which Ukraine asked not to vote - Saudi Arabia with all the Gulf countries and Brazil also spoke out against the Ukrainian indication supported by the United States and the EU. Most Latin American countries abstained. On 3 April, on the exclusion of Russia from the Human Rights Council - presided over by Saudi Arabia, a country notoriously disrespectful of human rights, as well as being a protagonist for years of a war against Yemen -, disagreement with the US position has been further expanded.

These are new cuts and not small ones, which have greatly worried the United States that - for now - have responded with the usual carrot-and-stick system and a whirlwind round of "Anglo-American" visits to various recalcitrant countries, starting with India. In any case, India will not have been pleased to be cited by the United States as a country that does not respect human rights and be threatened by the fact that greater alignment with Russian positions would bring "significant and long-term consequences". In this context, however, India has speculated on an increase in Russian oil imports that would be paid in rupees instead of dollars. I do not go any further in the analysis of geopolitical changes in order not to overload this already large editorial. In short, the American action not only scared China, but also other nations, which resulted in a significant narrowing of its sphere of consensus.

I may be wrong, but I believe that this fact is not a contingent and is not linked solely to the fate of the war in Ukraine. If the Atlantic Ocean was the world's centre of gravity in the XIX century and since the end of the same century it has become the Pacific Ocean, it is not said that in the next phase, in a polycentric world, a significant role cannot be played by the continent and in particular that Asia, which has strong connections with Africa and - potentially - with Europe and gives life to that gigantic set of emerging lands that geographers call the "Ancient Continent".

He who of coin wounds...

A further boomerang effect that the US war has had on the very important field of monetary relations.

As is well known, the US dollar acts as the world's reference currency in terms of trade and - to a lesser extent - in terms of foreign exchange reserves. This function is carried out by the dollar since 1944 when the United States imposed it in the Bretton Woods agreements after defeating the position of Keynes who wanted to introduce an international "autonomous" currency, called Bancor. Over the decades, the ways of exercising this function have been different (in 1971 Nixon abolished the fixed conversion rate between the dollar and gold), but the central role of the fiduciary currency has remained indisputable.

In a world in which the US economy is weighing less and less, the pressures to overcome this situation have increased. Biden's war struck a decisive blow to destabilize this system. In fact, if the blockade with which the United States has strangled Cuba for more than 60 years or the theft of gold from the Venezuelan Central Bank by the Bank of England have been criminal acts that, however, have not questioned the system, the magnitude of the actions carried out in recent months have a much more important systemic effect.

On the one hand, the embargo of more than 600 billion dollars that the Central Bank of Russia has in its bank accounts abroad greatly mortgages the credibility of the use of the dollar as a reserve currency. Similarly, the set of embargoes and sanctions determines the practical impossibility of Russia using the dollar as an international currency. For example, Russia is obliged to sell its gas in rubles simply because, otherwise, any payments made in dollars or euros at Western banks would be immediately seized. This would be tantamount to Russia giving away its own gas.

In other words - in a situation where economic and financial power relations were already

crunching the monopolistic role of the dollar in international trade - the measures taken by the United States in the war produced a real crisis of the previous situation.

The United States thought it could “bend” the Russian government by this decision. The effect is that Russians are forced to look for alternatives to the use of the dollar and those who did not support the dollar’s income position have shown interest in reaching agreements with Russia. In other words, in my opinion, the United States have overestimated its economic - financial strength (which for years is based on the monopoly of military force worldwide) and risk losing the enormous advantage of having the official currency of international exchanges. To be clear about what the United States runs, just keep in mind that by issuing a currency that is assumed by all as stable, they can print as much as they want and - ultimately - they do not have to pay their debts. If the people of the United States can live far beyond their real possibilities, if the United States can have had a deficit trade balance for decades, it is because the rest of the world finances them. In the new millennium, China financed them by selling goods to the United States and buying - with the dollars received in exchange for the goods - US state bonds. The war has introduced a radical crisis factor of this mechanism. The tendency to reduce the monopoly of the green note in the management of international trade - a role that will not end overnight - has been accelerated by sanctions against Russia, and this trend will negatively affect the standard of living of the people of the United States.

This is not a phenomenon destined to take place in a few months, but the dynamics of the Biden war has produced the rupture of an unstable balance and the new point of equilibrium will not be in continuity with the old but qualitatively different. From this point of view, the sale of Russian oil and gas in rubles or the fact that Saudi Arabia is speculating to sell oil to China in yuan (25% of Arab production is bought from China) may be the snowball that determines the avalanche. The Bretton Woods era is

coming to an end and with it questions the privileged position that the American people have had by appropriating the fruits of the work of others. A situation is opening up which destabilises that country and increases its danger on a global scale. Let us not forget the convulsions experienced by the United States in the Trump case, but I cannot here open this other chapter.

In short

I finish this long editorial summarizing the basic thesis. To the criminal regional war launched by Putin, the United States has responded with a global criminal war. This situation threatens every day to lead to the Third World War.

The context in which this happens is the attempt of the United States to maintain the unipolar domination of the world in a situation in which this domination no longer has military, economic, financial or technological justification. The Biden war has achieved the desired objectives on the European side, both as regards the breakdown of relations between the European Union and Russia and as regards the radical questioning of European autonomy.

In the rest of the world, on the contrary, the action of the United States has generated a significant boomerang effect, determining a major strategic convergence between Russia and China and a strong distancing from the United States by countries we had once called “non-aligned”. Biden’s strategy has so far failed to pull the United States out of its declining global power. The risk of the Third World War is implicit in the protection with which the United States does not want to renounce its position of domination.

Indeed, it is clear that the foreseeable failure of Biden’s attempt to maintain a situation of domination and of imperial-type standard of living - in a context in which it no longer has the structural elements on which to rely - greatly increases the risks of world war and highlights that today the United States is by far the greatest danger to world peace.

In conclusion

Four pillars seem to me to be the basis for our political and cultural action.

1. First, for us, the world must be governed by multipolar cooperation. We do not want American unipolar domination, nor do we consider a world divided into two opposing economic-imperial blocs positive. In this context, it is necessary to clarify the disengagement of Europe from the subordination to the United States, aware that a balanced world must see a balance between macro global areas.

Our goal is a multipolar world based on cooperation. Only a new humanism, founded on the equal development of humanity in its relationship with nature, can enable the human species to civilly overcome the goal of the twenty-first century. On the basis of this new humanism, we must redefine adversaries and allies. I hope not to scandalize anyone by highlighting how militarism, in its nationalist or “humanitarian” versions - constitutes the greatest adversary and that the humanist zeal of Pope Francis I consider it part of this great prospect of transformation.

The struggle for equal economic cooperation, peace and the protection of nature are three aspects of a single objective. They cannot be solved separately. That’s why we think that capitalism has exhausted its driving force and that socialism today is a necessity. That’s why we think that overcoming capitalism is a necessity to guarantee a future for humanity.

2. Secondly, we must be carriers of a pacifism founded both in the ethical-moral instances and in the material and social instances. We must build an anti-war movement based both on the humanist zeal of moral ethics and on the intransigent defense of the material interests of the popular strata. War kills and war impoverishes, war is death, war is hunger and poverty.

The contrast - propagated by the universe of the main media - between the head and the belly, according to which the confrontation of ideas would be guided by noble ideals but then the

harsh material reality forces us to inhumane choices to meet our needs. It is baseless nonsense. Today humanity is capable of producing much more than what is needed to live and of doing so in ways compatible with the protection of the environment. It is capitalist relations that artificially provoke a polarization between scarcity for billions of people and mad waste for millions of rich people in a context of environmental destruction. Lawrence’s textile workers asked for bread and roses in the demonstrations in which they opposed the bosses’ power in the early 20th century. The bread and roses we want today because the nutrition of the body and the spirit as well as the positive relationship with our natural habitat are not a luxury for the few but the necessary possibility for all.

In the struggle to avoid World War III it is necessary to return to the foundations, to the simple but understandable slogans at the mass level as with which Lenin made the revolution in Russia: peace and land to the peasants.

In this perspective, it is therefore necessary to open a mass struggle against war, pollution, the increase of military expenditures, that is, the famine against capitalism. The effects of war are not only the deaths in Ukraine, but also the hardship, poverty, social suffering of other peoples. Against the war and its consequences, it is necessary to build a mass movement, starting from Italy that will pay hard for the unfortunate elections of the ruling class itself. Against the banker with the helmet and his acolytes we must build a popular social alignment against war, inequalities and the destruction of the environment. Ethical pacifism and environmentalism must merge in the fight against war based on social justice.

3. Thirdly, it must be stressed that the interests of the Italian people and the peoples of Europe do not coincide with those of the American leaders and Nato, from which we must emerge. In this context, it is necessary to open a frontal confrontation in Europe in order to build an economic, political and geostrategic autonomy. Europe’s destiny does not end in the Atlantic dimension, but must look to the Urals, to the

Middle East, to Africa. In this context, the proposal for a neutral Europe, capable of developing international dialogue, is the fundamental point on which our political proposal. It is not an easy process and it is not conceivable that it should be a linear process: today it is necessary to counter and boycott the process of militarisation of Europe under the aegis of Nato and, to that end, every unilateral act by each country is welcome. The priority today is to prevent the closing of the circle of an enlisted West behind the imperialist command of the United States. It would be the worst reactionary, barbaric, dangerous and destructive aggregate that humanity's history has ever seen.

4. Fourthly, we must make a thorough fight against the manichaeism of the dominant ideology which reduces everything to a football match: by which of the two supporters? So, the war is presented as the need to choose between Putin and Biden as if those two criminals were not simply two sides of the same coin. They want to enlist all of us in the war, convincing us that it is necessary to take sides when, instead, the only real option is to defect and build the alternative, peace, negotiation, dialogue. This typecasting of reality and alternatives within the options that their lords like is one of the fundamental problems of the political imaginary of our time. For years politics has been kidnapped and reduced to a pure simulation of itself in the construction of a bipolarism of convenien-

ce that always expels the issue of the alternative. They want you to believe that you have to choose between right and left center when they share almost all of the background options. The Covid case has also been used to produce a manichean division in the country, which goes far beyond the contingent situation, identifying a part of the population as "internal enemies", all while multinationals have been disproportionately enriched, public health is destroyed and vaccines remain a mirage in poor countries. Between killing and dying there is a third way, living. And this approach is a decisive point on which to sustain the possibility of change. The dichotomous alternatives that power gives us are always false alternatives. They are always the choice between frying pan and ember. Our cultural autonomy is based on the ability to ask the right questions, the right alternatives, without accepting the organization of the imaginary made by our adversaries in order to perpetuate their power.

Paolo Ferrero, director of Quistioni, is vice-president of the European Left Party. He has been national secretary of the Party of Communist Refoundation, Italy, and minister of Welfare in the second government Prodi.

Interventions

The Other Agenda. Knowledge. At the heart of power, inequality and injustice

Riccardo Petrella and the Other Agenda Promotion Group

The goal

Building a global community of life by moving from the “I” that encloses to the “we” that liberates

Synthesis and proposals

Document based on a text submitted by Riccardo Petrella. At Fontaine de Vaucluse (F), 25 November 2021, modified and updated on 10 January 2022, following comments and proposals from other members of the Other Agenda Promotion Group.

Contents

Introduction

Part A. Analysis of the Dominants’ Agenda

The Dominants

Founding principles. Beliefs

Priority objectives, mechanisms of domination

The (main) instruments of power

Narratives on knowledge of the dominants

The S&T world according to the forecasts and expectations of the dominant

Part B. The Other Agenda, the Agenda of the People of the Earth

The Inhabitants of the Earth

The basic ethics of the Other Agenda

Founding principles. Beliefs

Priority objectives, cooperation and sharing mechanisms

Proposals. Main actions for transformation

Appendix. A graphic comparison between the Dominant Agenda and the Other Agenda

Introduction
The Other Agenda project

It all started with the aim of mobilising international support for a global public health policy at the G20 2021 in Italy.

The aim was not to ask the G20 for something. There is no need for that. But to show our great indignation, to denounce the criminality of the dominant policies and to spread our proposals centred on the abolition of patents on life (and artificial intelligence) and for another policy of knowledge, a public common good of the inhabitants of the earth. A global common good that has become private property and a powerful instrument for the predation of life in the interests of dominant social groups.

At the origin of this mobilisation were the associations Transform!Europe and Agora des habitants de la Terre. From their alliance and the participation of other groups such as the Venice group (Paolo Cacciari) and the feminist movement (Nicoletta Pirotta), the drafting of the Citizens’ Memorandum was born, an attempt at a basic human-political positioning for the citizens themselves (see www.agora-humanité.org).

On the basis of the Memorandum, the Other

Agenda project took off: street demonstrations took place in Liege, Brussels, Rome, Venice, Matera... on 18 May on the eve of the G20 World Health Summit in Rome. Then, thanks to the support of the parliamentary group The Left in the European Parliament and the European Left Party, a series of international seminars and an international distance conference took place at the end of September and end of October 2021. We also released a 34-minute video featuring interventions by some 30 artists from around the world, entitled “The Other Agenda” (see www.agora-humanité.org).

On 27 November, we were able to submit a version of the document “The Other Agenda. Synthesis and proposals” to the European Forum of Alternative and Progressive Forces. This document is the final version of the project The Other Agenda.

With this document, the social-political work enters its true phase of transformative mobilisation. The course has been set: to denounce the criminal irresponsibility of the Agenda of the Dominants and to begin a long-term journey in which citizens who adhere to the aims of the Other Agenda, the Agenda of the Inhabitants of the Earth, will fight to open new horizons for the construction of a global community of life on Earth that is just, supportive, and peaceful – three feasible adjectives.

Acknowledgements

The document was the result of a collective work carried out during two international online seminars and an international conference, also at a distance.

Several people took part. We would like to thank in particular Roberto Musacchio (I), Roberto Morea (I), Paolo Ferrero (I), Paolo Cacciari (I), Cornelia Hildebrand (D), Marga Ferré (E), Roberto Mancini (I), Heinz Bierbaum (D), Joao Caraça (PT), Nicoletta Pirota (I), Mary Theu Niane (Senegal), Manon Aubry (F), Marc Botenga (B), Paola De Meo (I), Alassane Ba (F), Marcos P Arruda (BR), Armando De Negri (BR), Luis Infanti de la Mora (CL),

Hélène Tremblay (CND-Québec), Oumu Kane (Ruanda), Maria Palatine (D), Pietro Pizzuti (B), Bernard Tirtiaux (B), Pierre Galand (B), Moema Viezzer (BR), Anibal Faccendini (ARG), Lucie Sauvé (CND-Québec).

Part A. Critical analysis of the Dominants' Agenda

1. The Dominants

By “dominants” we mean those social groups which have the political power (ideological, economic, military, social, cultural) to define and impose common values and the founding principles of living together, by dictating the rules; to set the objectives and priorities to be pursued; to control and judge compliance with priorities and rules; to resolve conflicts and sanction transgressions; to direct the lifestyles of populations on a global scale.

At present, the dominants are primarily to be found in the so-called “Western” countries of the “North”, mainly because of their economic, military and ideological power, i.e. the system of so-called “market capitalism, the most widespread form of “dominant system” in the world.

The main dominant subjects are States such as the USA, Germany, France, Japan, the UK, Switzerland, Italy, Canada and, by other modalities, Russia, China, India, Brazil, and organizations such as the Glocos (global companies) such as Gafam, Big Pharma, oil and mining companies, large commercial distribution groups,; and Big Finance (a few dozen global banks, three main global investment funds, the stock exchanges...). Of course, religious organisations such as Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians, Muslims, Christians, Catholics, etc. are also part of the dominant groups, but on other levels than the political one.

The double novelty compared to sixty years ago is that, on the one hand, the “political” power is no longer the main prerogative of the States, of the public authorities. This power is more in the

Interventions

hands of private “non-state” subjects, such as multinational, multi-territorial, multi-sectoral, global companies, new planetary oligarchies in permanent war for power and survival, On the other hand, the power of domination is no longer based mainly on the sovereignty (ownership and control) of natural resources and the population, but on the appropriation and control of knowledge, especially scientific and technological knowledge, leading to the “creation” of a new universe of goods, products and services that were practically unknown 60 years ago.

Thus, domination is exercised through different factors, mechanisms and modalities, but also through the reinforcement of “old” forms, mechanisms and modalities. One thinks of patriarchy, racism, the principle of inequality, autocracies, the erasure of freedoms, the surge of the primacy of the “I” and of identities centred on totalitarian, warlike, conquering “I”s. This, to the detriment and annihilation of the “we”, the collective, common, open, plural, cooperative “we”... See the first part of the Citizens’ Memorandum.

The Agora of the Earth’s inhabitants, for instance is an “association” of people who formed in 2018 in opposition to the society and history of “I”. Agora’s basic principle is that we, human beings, are all - beyond certain group specificities (gender, age, skin colour, language, beliefs...) – an integral part of a “we”, humanity, which in turn is an essential part of a broader “we”, of which humanity is becoming aware. We refer to the “global community of living beings on Earth” (including all living species).

2. Founding principles. Beliefs

According to the dominant view, the purpose of human creativity, both individual and collective, is to pursue economic growth, from which – they claim – all development derives its strength and sustainability.

Scientific and technological knowledge is the source of economic growth and the material and immaterial well-being of societies. It has become the key factor underpinning the

economic power, strength and security of populations. Its ownership and control, they say, guarantee the sovereignty of peoples. In reality, they are thinking mainly of their sovereignty.

Freedom and private ownership of goods essential for economic growth and personal and collective prosperity are, they say, fundamental rights that take priority over others. They are the two central pillars of any society that wants to govern its future.

The exploitation of labour and the allegedly “natural” class division of society are structuring phenomena of the organisation of societies. The absolutization of the hierarchy based on the diversity of social roles of the different labour functions is the constitutive basis of economic and power hierarchies.

Economic governance, especially on a global scale, is the keystone of the system of global political governance, based on the priority role of “stakeholders”. Global governance of stakeholders is the negation of democracy.

Poverty has always existed. So has inequality. So has war. They consider that they are phenomena linked to human nature, to egoism, to the tendency of some to dominate, of others to enrich themselves, to racism, to xenophobia. The realistic, pragmatic objective is to reduce the extent of these phenomena and mitigate their effects.

3. Priority objectives, mechanisms of domination

Technological innovation, the technologisation of life, of all forms of life, through the intensification and application of scientific advances in all fields (life, energy, materials, intelligence) is the main watchword. The focus on digitalisation sums up the dominant trend towards unrestricted technologisation.

Economic competitiveness in increasingly globalised markets is “natural” and inevitable in the context of a “permanent economic war” of all against all. It depends on the capacity for technological innovation and the financial power of the stakeholders. Only the strongest will survive.

Optimising financial profitability. Finance

is the mother of the value of things (goods and services). Everything that is financially profitable has value, and for this, money will be available. Anything that is not profitable is of no importance.

4. The (main) instruments of power

The so-called “competitive” market, de facto oligopolistic or even monopolistic, is considered the optimal “natural” regulator of the exchange of goods and services and, therefore, of the economy and social relations. All exchange must be “market”.

Competition between workers at local and global level, desired and organised by the competition between companies and territories by the large multinational groups...

Financial engineering is increasingly concentrated at the global level, with high technological intensity, and dissociated from the real economy. It is independent of state political power... Freed from public political and economic regulations, it has broken down the functional differences between financial subjects (banks, savings banks, insurance companies, investment funds...) and territorial borders.

Patents, private intellectual property rights. This is currently the most powerful instrument that allows private companies, especially multinationals, to become the owners for 17 to 20 years of the knowledge at the basis of the design and production of goods and services in the field of living organisms (seeds, plants, animals, microbes, human beings, etc.) and artificial intelligence. One only has to think of the debates on patents on vaccines and on intelligent systems, robot soldiers and drones to realise the power based on patents.

The monetisation of nature (giving a price to any element of the natural world), which was forcefully relaunched at the end of October 2021 by the New York Stock Exchange, is necessary and irreversible in order to ensure that companies have the resources they need for economic growth in a situation of quantitative and qualitative scarcity of natural resources.

Education is above all a system for training

human resources in the knowledge and skills that private companies need to maintain and strengthen their international competitiveness.

5. Narratives on knowledge of the dominants

The concept of “knowledge” is reduced to that of “science and technology” (S&T). “Science” is understood primarily as “exact science”. Thus technology has replaced the term “technique” to indicate the increasing dependence of technique on science.

Any other form/expression of knowledge, for example that of the so-called “indigenous” populations, is considered either “local” or of no value to the global system.

A techno-scientific deterministic view of “progress” and life has been imposed. All change begins with scientific “progress” which leads to technological progress which leads to economic progress. From these follow social progress and, ultimately, human progress. In other words, for the dominant social groups, there is no human progress without scientific progress!

The innovation that “changes the world” is technological and economic innovation. Social, cultural, political and human innovation must be closely linked to the former and in any case cannot be in conflict with or even an alternative to the latter, on pain of being unrealistic and impractical.

Everything, every form of life, is a resource to be “valued” in terms of its contribution to “economic progress” (i.e. Gdp growth and capital profitability).

Everything, including human beings, is treated as a resource for the economy. The commodification and monetisation of nature is a principle adopted in 2012 at the Third UN World Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The commodification of life and the imperative of competitiveness between companies on the increasingly global scale of profitable world markets have given a powerful boost to the privatisation of all economic activities, with global private capital finding enormous new opportunities for profit in such a context.

The scientification and technologisation of the

Interventions

economy has led to an increased interest by dominant economic groups in the control of scientific and technological production and use, and hence in their ownership.

The privatisation of science, R&D, and technological innovation through patents, with the support and financial assistance of states, has been the key instrument by which private subjects have seized the power of real regulation and control of life.

The private intellectual property rights over knowledge is likely to remain the most powerful and paradigmatic form of the current conquest of political power by private subjects. Legalised by a US Supreme Court decision in 1990 and by the European Union in 1998, patents on life have unleashed an enormous wave of private appropriation of life by private subjects: first at the level of seeds and GMOs, in particular medicines and annexes, then at the level of the immense open world of artificial intelligence.

The university, the main field of creativity in research and education, has ceased to be a free field. Its research activities have been colonised by the world of business and finance, with the agreement of the public authorities, in the name of the “first patent, then publish” principle. Academic knowledge is no longer a common public good but a tool of war for the global competitiveness of companies.

The same has happened to education, which has been reduced to a human resource training system for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that the country’s companies need to maintain and improve their competitiveness in global markets.

All of the above has transformed the nature and concrete modalities of the notions of “national” security, energy security, food security, water security, military security.

All scientific and technological activity is seen as a strategically important instrument in the service of the interests of the strong.

Behind the word “national security” lies in reality the security of the economic and power interests of the globalized private “local” oligarchies, and not the general interest, the common good of all members of the global community of life on Earth.

The militarisation of the economy, especially through the “strategic” militarisation of knowledge, is an indicator of a great change in our societies.

The algorithm wars, the seed wars, the vaccine wars... are collective social practices imposed by the dominant. They have reduced life, once again, to multiple spaces of rivalry for survival. The other is the enemy.

In this “knowledge based society” and “knowledge driven economy” there is no room for universal human rights or for the rights of “nature”.

Nor is there any co-responsibility for certain goods and services that are essential for life and living together, such as water, air, seeds, solar energy, health, knowledge.

The “naturalisation” of the social hierarchy, given as the best and most efficient form of social organisation, is the key expression of an inegalitarian anthropology and serves as an ideology legitimising all inequalities (economic, social, democratic, cultural, political...).

6. The S&T world according to the forecasts and expectations of the dominant

The following table is taken from a study carried out by Nato on the emergence of significant disruptive technologies in the years 2020-2040. It illustrates concretely the conceptions of the most important changes that will alter the S&T system and, consequently, the current global economic and political system, according to the “expectations” of the dominant technological world.

As can be seen, “Data” (Big Data) is strongly in the forefront. It is through it, it is argued, that money/wealth was created. It is also on them that power is built. It is surprising that the starting point of the anthropology of our civilisation, according to the dominant ones, is “data”. It is no longer “In principio erat verbum”. “The word” (what says, what expresses...) is not the primary act of creation, of knowledge.

Thus, logically, Artificial Intelligence comes immediately after “data”. The mastery, control and use of data have become strategically important for the construction, appropriation

and exclusionary use of this immense and expanding world of so-called “intelligent” machines and operational systems.

Table 1. Emerging Disruptive Technologies (Edt) 2020-2040. Technology areas of major interest

Edt	Technology Areas
A.	Data Advanced Analytics Communications Advanced Decision Making
B.	Artificial Intelligence Advanced Algorithms Human Machines Symbiosis Applied Artificial Intelligence
C.	Autonomy Autonomous Systems Countermeasures Human Machines Training Autonomous Behaviour
D.	Quantum Communication Information Systems Precision Navigation Sensors
E.	Space Operations Platforms Sensors
F.	Hypersonics Countermeasures Platforms and Propulsion
G.	Biotechnologies Bioinformatics Synthetic Biology Human Augmentation Medical Countermeasures
H.	Materials Additive Manufacturing Energy Novel Materials

Source: Nato, Science & Technology Trends 2020-2040 Exploring the S&T Edge Nato Science & Technology Organization, 2020

This world is increasingly set up in a free, unregulated, “self-certified” way. There are modest attempts to introduce public regulations, without much success. For those in power, Artificial Intelligence is like Finance. It must be free, must grow and assert itself freely. Think, in this respect, of the crucial role played by the right to private intellectual property, notably through patents on algorithms. Not only in the military field, but especially, scandalously, in the field of health.

Significant, but not surprising, is the attribution of the third rank to autonomy. In a context of artificialisation of life, self-nomination (the power to decide for oneself) of humans, but also of machines, is becoming the critical “problem” in all respects.

Hence the challenges raised by the “capacity” of humans (individuals, human groups, human communities, companies, local authorities, states, etc.) to make autonomous decisions, by their relations with intelligent machines, and by the relations between the machines themselves and between systems of autonomous machines. High-tech finance (e.g. financial advisors and very high speed transactions, at a millionth of a second) is proving to be useless! In turn, universal digitalisation is not the solution, but becomes the problem.

If one wanted to synthesise as much as possible, one could say that the importance taken by the principle/objective of autonomy for the dominant S&T system represents the major breaking point of the ongoing mutations introduced and sought by the agenda of the dominants: the artificialisation of life by autonomous machines in relation to humans indicates that the dominants think that the greatest value for the life of the Earth is to be attributed to the life produced by machines and no longer by human beings. To underestimate this trend is to miss the dystopias that could emerge.

Then come, in fourth, fifth and sixth place, three areas of powerful strategic valence in a long-term perspective, but which already have a considerable influence on the moving configurations of the major existing techno-scientific and industrial-commercial systems.

Interventions

These are quantum, space, and hypersonic.

The field of the quantum is still unfamiliar to the general public. It is no less decisive for the dominant players because the generation of quantum computers, operating on the scale of atomic and sub-atomic physics, will replace current computers in the next 5-10 years. The question is to know who, and how, will lead such an “industrial reconversion”, when it is clear that the current leaders are incapable of carrying out an energy “reconversion” in the interest of the world’s population and the life of the Planet?

There is a lot of talk about space, especially as the “place” of new great human adventures. These “biblical” narratives are a poorly concealed attempt to sweeten the pill, namely the headlong rush into the unknown by the dominant powers, by announcing the inevitability of “space wars” and therefore the priority of investing in the conquest of space in the same spirit as that of the conquest of the American Far West. The Walt Disney-like triumphalism with which the private tourist trips into space of American billionaires were presented reveals the cultural, social and human misery of a society that projects itself into the future as a highly technological society that values appearances more than being!

Our future is further entrenched in the cult of having, the cult of the power of having.

The field of hypersonics is the only one of the highlighted fields that is clearly of major importance for military applications at this stage. The dominant view of knowledge in this area is how to prevent the enemy from gaining advantageous positions, and everything else is focused on the issues of platforms and propulsion.

Last but not least, we find biotechnology in seventh place and new materials in last place. These are two fields which, along with data and artificial intelligence, have been, and remain, the main generators of the “scientific and technological revolutions” of the last 40 years. It is no coincidence that they close the universe of S&T knowledge on which the dominants derive their power and, above all, their claim to legitimacy to be in power.

All the major political, social and ethical

debates have revolved around three areas mentioned, centred on life (biotech, GMOs, the predation of life by synthetic chemistry, patents on vaccines, etc.), human work (robotisation, patents on artificial intelligence, virtual reality, etc.) and the health of life on Earth (pesticides, plastics, pfas, large dams, giant container ships and huge cruise ships).

This configuration of the knowledge system into eight spaces clearly shows the deterministic and oligarchic techno-scientific view of life and the world. According to the dominants, life is not for everyone on Earth because, they believe, capacities for self-reliance (and resilience) are necessarily unequal. Nor do decisions about the future of the world belong to the creative and cooperative space of all the Earth’s inhabitants, because access to knowledge and appropriation of the goods essential to life are, they believe, inevitably unequal, unbalanced, elitist.

The dominants could not offer a more compelling reason for the need for upheaval. What is needed is an Other Agenda, a radically alternative agenda capable, through its construction processes, of bringing down the current immense edifice of violence, injustice and predation/spoliation of life.

The Other Agenda is indispensable.

B. The Other Agenda, the Agenda of the People of the Earth

1. The Inhabitants of the Earth

We human beings are not the only inhabitants of the Earth.

We are even among the last to inhabit it. Millions of living species have inhabited it long before us. We are part of the life of the Earth, part of the nature of its creation, part of its evolution. We belong to nature.

We are not outside nature. We are a living species that has managed to improve its capacity for existence, resistance, adaptation and autonomy over the millennia. So much so that today we are the only species capable not only of modifying

but also of destroying the totality of the Earth's life forms...

From this observation, it follows, among other things, that we are also the only species capable of being responsible for the life of the Earth to which we belong. Our "survival" and "health" depend on the whole of the life of the Earth. The artificialization of life is not a solution but part of the problem. We have an obligation to safeguard, conserve and care for life.

Since the very nature of life is its natural regeneration our first vital imperative is to ensure the regeneration of life. To do otherwise is a crime against life.

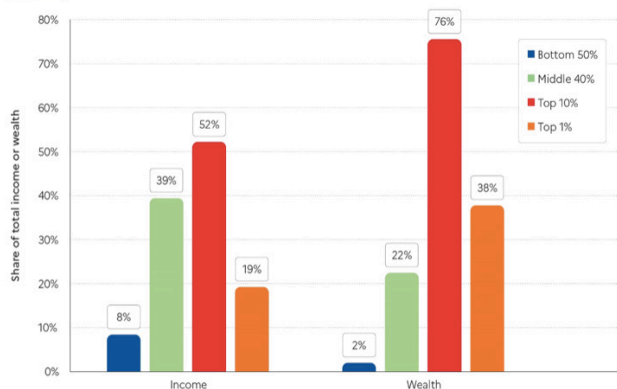
Thus knowledge, including S&T, cannot be thought, and applied as an instrument for humans to do violence to or destroy nature. In this sense, the 'polluter pays' principle is an aberration. "No polluting" is fair and reasonable. The human inhabitants of the Earth have become aware of this over the past fifty years and have begun to develop the foundations and legal principles of the rights of nature. Human rights to life cannot be a factor in denying the rights of nature.

At the same time, we must reaffirm that as human beings we are all part of the same global life community, humanity. This is beyond the differences in skin colour and worldviews specific to this or that local group or community. Today, the white American lives with the fear and horror of losing the supremacy of world power that his elders acquired through force, slavery, military power and the colonisation of the world. But the white American is not a "superior human being" to the Afro-Brazilian dishwasher at a Chicago Pizza Hut who earns a pittance, nor to the yellow Chinese worker at Huawei who is threatening Apple's global power. At present, there are too many WAEs ("white American equivalents") among the populations of Western countries, but also, mutatis mutandis, among Russia, India, China, the Middle East and, less significantly, Africa. The duty to change lies primarily with the WAEs of the Western world. A numerical minority on a global scale, they still have enormous, destabilising, devastating power to disrupt humanity. The example of the inequalities

desired and maintained in the field of vaccines against Covid-19 and the "universal" right to health, shows in a strong way from what and from whom we must start again the fight for the right to life on our Earth. Let us remember that within a quarter of a century more than 9 billion human beings will have to live together in dignity and equal rights.

We need to start again from inequality in the world in its many dramatic dimensions. Wealth inequality is the most significant indicator in concrete terms and in human and social terms. The World Inequality Report 2021 leaves no doubt about the need to start again from eradicating inequality.

Figure 1.1 Global income and wealth inequality, 2021



Interpretation: The global 50% captures 8% of total income measured at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). The global bottom 50% owns 2% of wealth (at Purchasing Power Parity). The global top 10% owns 76% of total Household wealth and captures 52% of total income in 2021. Note that top wealth holders are not necessarily top income holders. Income is measured after the operation of pension and unemployment systems and before taxes and transfers. **Sources and series:** wir2022.wid.world/methodology

Figure 1. Global income and wealth inequality, 2021

Figure 1 shows that the poorest 50% of the world's population accounted in 2021 for 8% of the world's income and much less for 2% of the world's wealth. In contrast, the richest 10% took the 52% and 76% respectively and the richest 1% of the population "captured" the 19% and 36%.

These are incredible figures for billions of people. Behind these figures is the infinite brutality of the dominant and the cynical indecency of human societies.

A second phenomenon, of fundamental importance from the perspective of the Other Agenda, emerges from the World Inequality Report. The last 50 years have seen a dramatic

Interventions

increase in the share of private wealth in global wealth, while the share of public wealth has fallen sharply. In other words, private subjects have taken over the world's wealth. The world's wealth has ceased to be a common heritage, a common good.

As demonstrated in the first part, the states, the public authorities, have lost a large part of their political power, which they have themselves transferred to the hands and control of private subjects. This explains why it is increasingly difficult to change the policies of the world's wealth.

However, the future is not blocked. Among other evidences, one is found in the fundamental work published in 2020 by David Graeber & David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* (ISBN: 9780374157357). Its authors have demonstrated that the theses on the naturalness and inevitability of inequality between human beings and peoples have no scientific validity. It is possible to eradicate the cultural, human, social and religious root causes of inequality.

The regeneration of the life of humanity and the global life community of the Earth on other bases is possible.

2. The Basic Ethics of the Other Agenda

We are an integral part of the life of the Earth. We belong to "global" life. We are not on Earth to conquer and subjugate other living species to our needs and desires.

We believe that the organisation of life together between all the inhabitants of the Earth (all living species) cannot, must not, be inspired and guided by the logic of power, domination, and violence.

We do not believe that "only the strong will survive".

It is inadmissible, from all points of view, that the right to life in dignity and equality for all human beings is not a concrete reality 73 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We believe that at the root of this unacceptable situation lies the responsibility of a social system that is structurally predatory on life and that in recent decades has imposed

itself throughout the world, mystified and then trampled underfoot most of the human and social advances made in the 19th and 20th centuries.

We believe that the predation of nature and the exploitation of labour are two violent sides of the same coin. Therefore, the eradication of this violence requires the liberation of labour and the construction of a harmonious relationship between human beings and the whole of nature. There is no reason whatsoever to accept the current inequalities and injustices. The right to life for all is here and now. Pragmatism is the mother of dystopias.

As the Covid-19 pandemic has shown, billions of people are excluded from access to vaccines and other means of fighting the pandemic because of the injustice of the world's strongest and richest societies.

The same is true of the lack access to clean water for billions of people. This is not because of the increasing scarcity of water for human use, but because of the choices and policies pursued by the dominant social groups.

If Syrians, Kurds, Iraqis, Lebanese and Palestinians are dying or living in intolerable conditions, it is because of the wars waged by the world's powerful, led by the United States, in order to safeguard their power, their interests, their ability to dominate and to monopolise the wealth of others.

Finally, there is no inevitability in the destruction of the life of the Earth. The Earth's ecological disaster continues because the dominant social groups in the strongest countries are unable to solve the problems they have created. This inability derives from their belief that the right to life does not belong to all the inhabitants of the Earth and that the only objective worth pursuing is one's own survival (under the alibi of "national security").

We believe that humanity exists as the consciousness of the community of human beings as an integral part of the global community of life on Earth, including all living species.

This recent awareness of the global community of life on Earth leads us to believe that one of the first tasks facing humanity today is to

work towards seeing struggles against life exploitation and for social justice as a necessary condition for building humanity as part of the global community.

To this end, world common public goods and services are a unavoidable prerequisite. Over time, human beings have endowed themselves, especially at the level of the organisations of the so-called “national” states, with many common goods (natural and artificial, material and immaterial...) that are essential and irreplaceable for life. In the cultural imagination, these common goods were part of the life of the Earth, of the world. Air, water, solar energy, seeds, knowledge, health, peace... Even today they belong, in principle, to life, to all... in solidarity.

But the private ownership culture of the dominant economy, market capitalism, has radically changed conceptions and visions of life and the world. Therefore, the Other Agenda is by nature “heretical”, it belongs to the world of resistance to the system of domination and the culture of inequality.

It is ethical, just, and indisputable to affirm that neither the right to private property, nor submission to the logics of the market and speculative finance, and even less to the logics of labour exploitation, can become inspiring principles for the organization and government of the essential and irreplaceable common goods of life.

3. Founding principles. Beliefs

The safeguarding of the life of all the inhabitants of the Earth, its conservation, regeneration and promotion constitutes the principal ethical, political, economic and social imperative of humanity, in the interest of all living species.

There is no such thing as human beings on the one hand and nature serving humans on the other. Humans are an integral part of nature and its evolution. Through their specificities, humans are responsible for their own living conditions but also for those of other species. For this reason, it is essential to eliminate the factors that generate class divisions and to recognise that we are all inhabitants of the Earth

and are part of the same global Earth community without discrimination of gender, skin colour, class. The Earth is our common home.

Human rights and the rights of other living organisms (such as forests, rivers, lakes, ecosystems...), are “constitutional” rights. The health of all the inhabitants of the Earth is an indicator of the good state of life of the global community.

Life, the essential and irreplaceable elements for life, cannot be the object of private property. We humans belong to life. It does not belong to us. We are responsible for it for the sake of all the inhabitants of the Earth, for “we are what we have made together” (according to the *Ubuntu* principle of Central African societies).

The primacy of human rights and nature must prevail over the power of the autocratic and global techno-financial structure that has imposed market-driven access to essential goods and services in recent decades.

Impoverishment, inequality of rights and war are the result of unjust social systems based on privileges, exclusions, racist, classist and xenophobic conceptions.

4. Priority objectives, cooperation and sharing mechanisms

The essential non-replaceable goods (and services) for life (such as water, solar energy, air, seeds, health, urban soil, knowledge...) are WPCG (World Public Common Goods), under the direct responsibility of human communities and public institutions governed by elected representatives of citizens.

The government of life, from the local to the global scale, must be public, out of the market, out of private finance, under the control and with the direct participation of citizens.

Decentralised, diversified, shared self-management is possible.

The application of the principle of equitable and affordable access to essential goods and services must be stopped. Systematically applied to the UN Agendas – Agenda 2015 (“The Millennium Development Goals”) and Agenda 2030 (“The Sustainable Development Goals”) – this principle has been a key factor of

Interventions

the failure to realise universal rights. Let alone the Sustainable Development Goals in the strict sense. This principle has been a resounding failure, particularly in Africa, where the indicators for the continent's population remain, alas, well below the stated objectives. While aware of the situation in Africa, the dominant powers are unable to provide solutions other than to subject Africa even more to the rules of the market and the imperatives of global finance. Freeing Africa from this subjugation is urgent and inevitable.

It is also urgent and indispensable to demonetise nature, to free the World Common Public Goods from the stock market, to stop all obvious or hidden forms of privatisation (such as the delegation to the private sector of the management of public services, or the PPP – Public Private Partnership).

The exploitation of labour and its reduction to a commodity must be stopped. Work must serve to guarantee the right to life of those who carry it out in harmonious relationship with other natural species.

Politics and the State – *res publica* – must be regenerated a) by revalorising parliaments and direct democracy, which have been emptied of all substance by a system that has privatised political power, b) by giving substance to new forms of representative democracy on an international and planetary scale and c) by promoting global political institutions with a high degree of autonomy with the aim of generating a multiform public institutional political power, the Community of Humanity.

This can be achieved by, among other things, rethinking and redefining the principle of security. In the name of a mystified “national security”, meaning only the security of the interests of dominant social groups within states, science and technology have been expropriated from their contribution to the security of the global community of life on Earth and subjected to economic militarisation in the service of the world's colonial powers, old and new. In this context, a dramatic example is what the dominant powers have made of Africa: a continent without security in any sense of the word.

5. Proposals. Re-definition of the priority fields of human action in the field of knowledge and, more generally, configuration of the main actions necessary to achieve the Other Agenda, the Agenda of the Inhabitants of the Earth

1. Redefining the priority fields of knowledge

The agenda of the dominant parties is inspired by a reductive, deterministic and utilitarian vision of knowledge, summarised in the acronym STS (Science-Technology-Society):

- *Reductive*, because knowledge is restricted to science and technology.

- *Deterministic*, because the evolution of modern-day societies is made dependent on the “progress” of science and technological innovation. The acronym STS establishes that at the origin there is Science, which generates and feeds Technology, which in turn shapes and structures the evolution, the change of Society.

- *Utilitarian*, because the purpose of S&T is to increase the capacity of human beings to act in terms of the value of the goods and services they use, and any scientific knowledge and new technological capacity must be “profitable” in relation to such a goal.

Thus, the US world has introduced the category of STS Studies into the university curriculum of higher education worldwide since the 1970s. The Other Agenda, the Earth Inhabitants Agenda, reverses the order of relationships and speaks of SST (Society-Science-Technology). This is not a play on words but a different vision, namely:

- *Holistic*, everything is in everything, everything is connected, the whole is life, is “society”. Let's think about water, health. The essence of society is to know and to be known. Health is not only “medicine” and its value is not the price either.

- *Integral*. Knowledge goes beyond the linear. Very often, the main changes in a scientific and/or technological field come from unforeseen and/or intervening breaks in other fields. Moreover, changes come in clusters, through multiple times and in variable forms.

- *Responsible*. Knowledge and self-knowledge

increase the sense of life and the role of each living being and species. Awareness of responsibility grows, expands and intensifies through knowledge. The consciousness of the global eco-citizen is not born in the halls of the computer platforms of high-speed speculative finance. Nor did it germinate in the minds of the shareholders of glyphosate-producing companies or of white American ultra-racists like Trump.

This vision of knowledge is not new. Already in the 1960s and 1980s, it manifested itself in multiple movements of opposition, resistance and proposals even within the institutions of the “system”. Reference is made here to the European Inter-University Education on Society-Science and Technology project (Esst). The author of the present document, at that time director of the Fast Programme (Forecasting and Assessment in Science and Technology) was the co-initiator of the project together with Jacques Berleur, Rector of the Namur University (B) at that time. The Esst initiative was the result of a “pact” signed by 16 university rectors in the European Community. Its objective was, and still is, to promote a holistic view of the interactions and interdependencies between the multiple components and dynamics of societies through which the multiple facets of knowledge and the political power relations acquired through technological tools and systems are shaped and structured. The Esst programme is still at work in twelve EU countries. Unfortunately, it has not escaped the intoxicating effects of the culture and power of the dominants. See <http://esst.eu/programme>.

In the spirit of the above considerations and proposals the vision of knowledge in the Other Agenda perspective can be outlined as follows.

Table 2. Priority fields of human action in knowledge (Fhak) and desirable knowledge paths (Dkp)

Fhak	Dkp
A.	Life
	Philosophy, Memory
	The Arts

	History/Anthropology
	Sociology
	Economics
B.	Safety
	Life Sciences
	Hydrography, Nutrition
	Land Management
	Social relations
	Risk assessment, Resiliences
C.	Common goods and services
	belonging, community
	Collective responsibility
	Universal rights and sharing
D.	Living places (oikos) rules for living together
	Power structures, Democracy
	Violence, War, Xenophobia
	Empathy, Peace
	Decolonisation of the world
E.	Imaginations and becoming humanity
	Community of life on Earth
	The universe
	Value
	Utopias, Dystopias

Source: Petrella, 2022

2. Configuration of the main actions to be carried out

In the light of the above, the following actions should be prioritised here and now:

- *At the level of the narratives of life*, of ethics Multiply and intensify meetings, happenings, videos, films, shows, articles..., denouncing the ethical illegitimacy, the criminal character, of the current policies of the dominants, especially concerning health, water, dignity, fraternity, biodiversity. Let’s stop the petitions and replace them with denunciations, appeals to the courts, appeals in defence and for the strengthening of the institutions of democracy, especially direct democracy. It is time for a strong global “I accuse” campaign.

- *In the field of knowledge and education*:

1. abolition of patents on life and on artificial intelligence. The new “lords of life” own more than 120,000 patents! Without this abolition, the predation of life will only intensify and,

Interventions

consequently, the strategy of survival for the strongest will impose wars, exclusions, walls... No real “Other Agenda” could be put into practice

2. put the university back into public control both in teaching and in research and development (R&D). The University must be freed from submission to the interests of large private multinational companies

3. to encourage the education system, in all its forms and at all levels, to become a place of critical shared learning – (re)knowledge – of planetary eco-citizenship, in the wake of innovative experiences promoted, for example, in Quebec

- *In the economic-industrial field:*

Given the deterioration of living and working conditions, it is necessary to broaden the rights of the world of work and to fight for workers’ control of their work and the products of their work. The most effective way to do this is to regenerate a new role for public intervention, not only at the national level, but also at the continental and global levels. The world of health care comes to mind in particular. The republicanisation of the entire health industry, including the pharmaceutical industry, must be put back on the agenda.

Health must be reinvented as a global public good and service. Water, health and knowledge must become the first three pillars of the “global res publica”.

- *In the financial field:*

1. stop legalized criminal finance: i.e. outlawing tax havens; abandoning derivative products, which are real leeches on the real economy; managing tax evasion; financing illicit activities (drugs, arms trade...)

2. replacing the World Bank and the IMF by the creation of a People’s World Cooperative Mutual Fund aimed at reorienting finance towards the objective of life security for all members of the global community of the Earth. To this end, hundreds of civil society organisations should launch a citizens’ movement for alternative global finance, building on numerous ongoing initiatives, by convening in 2025 an Earth Inhabitants Convention for a new global financial system

- *In the political-institutional field:*

Creation of a World Citizens Assembly for the Security of Global Public Commons (starting with water, seeds, health and knowledge).

Appendix

Graphical illustration of the configuration of the gravitational space of structural tensions within current societies according to the agenda of the dominant

Many different criteria may be adopted to describe and compare the “model of society” of a group of societies.

We propose the method of configuring the gravitational space of tensions along four main axes of relations. Our axes are not the only possible ones. We believe, however, that they cover a significant range of relationship tensions) to allow for a meaningful typology.

As our object of analysis is the alternative to the agenda of the dominant, whose power system is based on the ownership and control of knowledge, we propose the following four main axes:

1. the axis of public/private tensions. Examples: the research system, the innovation system, the intellectual property regime, the role of the university...

2. the axis of tensions local/global. Examples: is the trend in favour of a vision and policy of insertion/conquest of the national/local knowledge system in the global knowledge market, or is the priority given to a policy of satisfying the needs of local societies/populations?

3. the axis of democracy/oligarchy tensions. Example: the dominant groups in the European Union have asserted and applied the principle that the major actors in R&D policy and in the policy for the management and preservation of European water resources must be the stakeholders, i.e. the “interest holders”: agricultural companies, landowners, the agri-food industry, the chemical industry, water-intensive sectors (such as the sweetened beverage industries...), the IT industry, the

construction sector... In short, the large, largely privatised, multi-territorial, multinational, multi-utility players, heavily immersed in market mechanisms and profitable finance.

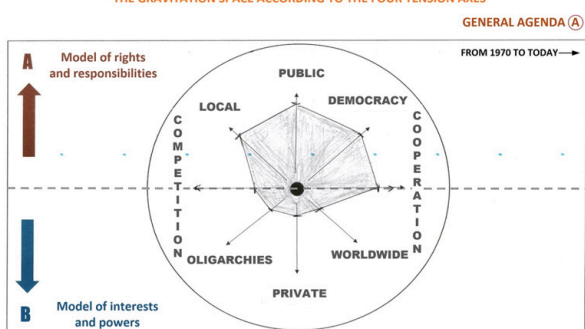
4. the axis of tensions between cooperation/competition. In the vast majority of cases, the gospel of competition and the imperative of competitiveness dominate almost absolutely in the scientific-technological field and the field of education/training...

It is reasonable to define as Model A, a system of rights and responsibilities, that of a society where:

- knowledge is considered a common, social, public good (and not a commodity)
- under the responsibility and ownership/control of public institutions (state and non-state)
- exercising their competences and powers, excluding patents, from the local to the global level, through advanced and effective forms of representative and direct democracy, and
- knowledge and technology policy is guided by the safeguarding of universal rights to life, global public goods, justice, fraternity, peace, etc. See graph

Model A.

THE AGENDA OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH VS THE AGENDA OF THE DOMINANTS
THE GRAVITATION SPACE ACCORDING TO THE FOUR TENSION AXES



Source: Petrella 2022

In contrast, it's possible to define as Model B, a system of interests and powers in a society where:

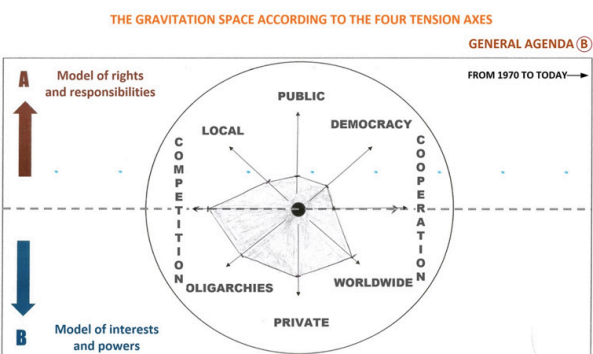
- knowledge is considered a commodity, an economic good strategically important for the growth of the country's GDP, a good that can be privately appropriated
- under the responsibility of market mechanisms and speculative finance, the property of large

private multinational groups (i.e; the private patent system on intellectual property)

- knowledge is seen as a powerful instrument for their competitiveness on world markets, for their profitability and
- for their growth as global enterprises, key players (stakeholders) of the global economic governance (with the support of "their" various national authorities in the strongest countries of the world).

See Model B.

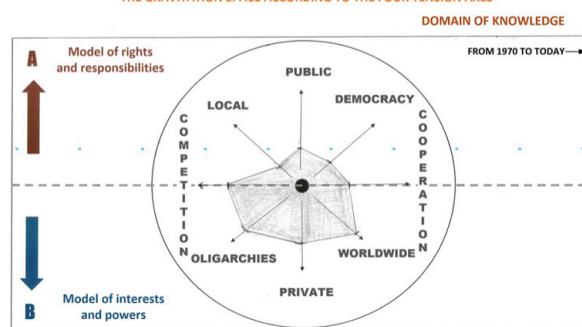
THE AGENDA OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH VS THE AGENDA OF THE DOMINANTS



Source: Petrella 2022

The third graph illustrates the configuration of the gravitational space regarding knowledge according to Model B in today's societies. In our mind, this is precisely the configuration that should be reversed.

THE AGENDA OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH VS THE AGENDA OF THE DOMINANTS
THE GRAVITATION SPACE ACCORDING TO THE FOUR TENSION AXES



Interventions

*The Other Agenda. The International Committee
(as 10th April 2022)*

1. *Alassane Ba (France/Senegal), Association of Pharmacists*
2. *Leonardo Boff (Brazil), Theologist*
3. *Valérie Cabanes (France), International law on nature*
4. *Joao Caraça (Portugal), Science, Gulbenkian Fondation*
5. *Armando De Negri (Brazil), Physician, Org. Latino-Amer. Santé*
6. *Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Portugal), Sociologist, Univ. Lisboa*
7. *Marga Ferrè (Spain), Co-chair Transform Europe*

8. *Paolo Ferrero (I) VP Party of the European Left, Former minister*
9. *Lilia Ghanem (Lebanon), Chief editor, the ecologist (in arab)*
10. *Serge Gutwirth (Belgium), Philosopher, Free University (Brussels)*
11. *Cornelia Hildebrand (Germany) co-chair Transform Europe*
12. *Roberto Mancini (Italy), Philosopher, Univ. Macerata*
13. *Roberto Morea (Italy), Transform Europe*
14. *Roberto Musacchio (Italy) Transform Italia*
15. *Riccardo Petrella (Belgium), Political Economist, Univ. Louvain*
16. *Roberto Savio (Italy), Journalist, IPS Founder, Other News*

Another (world) agenda: free life or another civilizational paradigm?

Leonardo Boff

Let me get straight to the point: within the current civilizing paradigm, of modernity, is another Agenda possible, or have we reached its insurmountable limits and must we seek another civilizing paradigm if we want to continue living on this planet?

Inspired by three statements of great authority

The first is from the Earth Charter, adopted by Unesco in 2003. Its opening sentence assumes apocalyptic overtones: “We stand before a critical moment in Earth’s history, at a time when humanity must choose its future...Our choice is: either to form a global alliance to care for the Earth and each other, or to risk our own destruction and the destruction of the diversity of life” (Preamble).

The second severe statement is from Pope Francis in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (2020): “we are in the same boat, no one is saved by himself, either we all save ourselves or no one is saved” (n. 32).

The third statement is from the great historian Eric Hobsbawm in his well-known work *The Age of Extremes* (1994), in his final sentence: “We do not know where we are going. However, one thing is certain. If humanity wants to have an acceptable future, it cannot be by prolonging the past or the present. If we try to build the third millennium on this basis, we will fail. And the price of failure, that is, the alternative to changing society, is darkness” (p. 562).

In other words: our way of inhabiting the Earth,

which has brought us undeniable advantages, has reached its exhaustion. All the traffic lights have turned red. We have built the principle of self-destruction, being able to exterminate all life with chemical, biological and nuclear weapons by multiple different ways. The technoscience that has brought us to the extreme limits of the planet Earth’s supportability (*The Earth Overshoot*) is not able, by itself, as Covid-19 has shown, to save us. We can file the wolf’s teeth down, thinking that we are taking away its voracity. But this does not reside in the teeth, but in its nature.

Therefore, we have to abandon our boat and go beyond a new world agenda. We have reached the end of the road. We have to open a different one. Otherwise, as Sigmund Bauman said in his last interview before his death, “we will join the procession of those who are heading for their own grave”. We are forced, if we want to live, to recreate ourselves and reinvent a new paradigm of civilization.

Two paradigms: that of *dominus* and that of *frater*

I see at this moment the confrontation between two paradigms, well exposed by the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*: the *dominus* paradigm and the *frater* paradigm. In other words: the paradigm of conquest, expression of the will to power as domination, formulated by the founding fathers of modernity with Descartes, Newton, Francis Bacon, domination of everything, of peoples, as in the Americas, Africa and Asia, domination

Interventions

of classes, of nature, of life, and domination of matter up to its last energetic expression by the Higgs Boson.

The human being (Descartes' *maître et possesseur*) does not feel part of nature, but its lord and master (*dominus*) who in the words of Francis Bacon "must torture nature as the torturer does his victim until she gives up all her secrets". He is the founder of the modern scientific method, prevalent until today.

This paradigm understands the Earth as a mere *res extensa* and purposeless, transformed into a chest of resources, considered as infinite that allow an infinite growth/development. However, today we know scientifically that a finite planet cannot support an infinite project, which is the great crisis of the capital system as a mode of production and of neoliberalism as its political expression.

The other paradigm is that of the *frater*: the brother and sister of all human beings among themselves and the brothers and sisters of all other beings of nature. All living beings have, as Dawson and Crick showed in the 1950s, the same 20 amino acids and the 4 nitrogenous bases, from the most original cell that appeared 3.8 billion years ago, passing through the dinosaurs and arriving to us humans. This is why the Earth Charter says, and Pope Francis strongly emphasises it in his two ecological encyclicals, *Laudato Si'* on the care of the common home (2015) and *Fratelli tutti* (2020): a bond of brotherhood unites us all, "to brother Sun, sister Moon, brother river and Mother Earth" (LS n.92; CT preamble). Human beings feel part of nature and have the same origin as all other beings, "humus" (the fertile earth) from which homo is derived, as male and female, man and woman.

If the first paradigm is one of conquest and domination (the Alexander the Great and Hernan Cortes paradigms), the second shows the care and co-responsibility of all for all (the Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa of Calcutta paradigms).

Figuratively speaking, we can say: the *dominus* paradigm is the clenched fist which subdues and dominates. The paradigm of the *frater* is

the outstretched hand that intertwines with other hands for the essential caress and care of all things.

The *dominus* paradigm is dominant and is at the origin of our many crises and in all areas. The paradigm of the *frater* is nascent and represents the greatest longing of humanity, especially of those great majorities mercilessly dominated, marginalised and condemned to die before their time.

But it has the strength of a seed. As in any seed, it contains the roots, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the flowers and the fruit. That is why hope passes through it, as a principle more than virtues, as that indomitable energy that always projects new dreams, new utopias and new worlds, that is to say, that makes us walk towards new ways of inhabiting the Earth, of producing, of distributing the fruits of nature and of work, of consuming and of organising fraternal and sororal relationships between humans and with the other beings of nature.

The passage from a *dominus* paradigm to a *frater* paradigm

I know that the thorny problem of the transition from one paradigm to the other arises here. It will be done processually, with one foot in the old paradigm of dominus/conquest because we must guarantee our subsistence and the other foot in the new paradigm of frater/care in order to inaugurate it from below. Here several assumptions should be discussed, but this is not the moment to do so. But we can advance in one thing: by working the territory, the bioregionalism, the new fraternal/care paradigm can be implemented regionally in a sustainable way, because it has the ability to include everyone and create more social equality and environmental balance.

Our great challenge is this: how to move from a capitalist society of overproduction of material goods to a society that sustains all life, with human-spiritual, intangible values such as love,

solidarity, compassion, fair measure, respect and care especially for the most vulnerable.

The advent of a bio-civilisation

This new civilisation has a name: it is a bio-civilisation, in which life in all its diversity, but especially personal and collective human life, takes centre stage. Economy, politics and culture are at the service of maintaining and expanding the virtualities present in all forms of life.

The future of life on Earth and the destiny of our civilisation is in our hands. We have little time to make the necessary transformations because we have already entered the new phase of the

Earth, its increasing warming. The heads of state are not sufficiently aware of the ecological emergencies and it is still very rare in the whole of humanity.

Leonardo Boff, among the founders of the Theology of Liberation, is a Brazilian philosopher and ecotheologist who wrote several books and essays. Among the latest books published we remember El doloroso parto de la Madre Tierra: una sociedad de fraternidad sin fronteras y de amistad social, Vozes 2020 (The painful birth of Mother Earth: a society of fraternity without borders and of social friendship, Vozes 2020); Abitare la Terra: quale via per la fraternità universale, Castelvechi, Roma 2021.

Five steps of the metamorphosis of the modern world-system

João Caraça

“The world in which we have been living, the modern world-system, had its origins in the sixteenth century. This world-system was then located in only a part of the globe, primarily in parts of Europe and the Americas. It expanded over time to cover the whole globe”. The modern states are sovereign states. Sovereignty is a concept that was invented in the modern world-system (Wallerstein, 2004).

This system is experiencing at present a deep cognitive, institutional, and structural crisis. Political hegemony is being challenged, social inequalities are deepening, growing ignorance and superstition usher perturbation and disbelief. The pillars of modernity are shaking. We seem to be undergoing a metamorphosis in five entangled dimensions. Just five steps into a bifurcation of this complex world-system which used to be modern.

The cognitive dimension of the crisis

A culture of critical tendency and experimental basis emerged progressively in Europe from the fifteenth century onwards, validated by a flood of new discoveries – of new seas, new territories, new peoples, new skies and new stars. The old order of the world was discredited as a new worldview took form. This worldview, of a “geometrical” character, consisted in looking for symmetries in nature which will lead to the formulation of laws for the natural world. These laws are permanent, eternal and absolute,

describing the motion of natural bodies in the universe since time immemorial extending to infinity. They are formulated in mathematical language. The cities were the beacon of this spirit of modernity (Caraça, 1999). New natural science transformed the domains and organization of knowledge. And knowledge became an instrument of emancipation, of human progress!

However, many changes occurred during modernity. The fields and disciplines of knowledge also evolved, some disappeared, many new ones surged. Change and adaptation are the two faces of the same coin. Today, the word “knowledge” has being redefined to signify a restricted set of fields that are instrumental to the success of the new services and products of the contemporary knowledge economy – i.e., technoscience (a natural science no longer led by curiosity but technology-driven), marketing, corporate law, design, software, artificial intelligence, training and development. “Knowledge” has displaced “science” in all policy-oriented documents written after 1990. But science was the main support of the worldview of modernity, of its immense pull forward, of the belief in a better future for humanity.

First. This new version of the word “knowledge” is an atrophy of the concept of knowledge, as it was understood since classical times; it is a consequence of the primacy of markets in our economies, a justification for short-term frenetic transactions, a vehicle for private ownership of data concerning all living beings, a basis for remunerating risk rather than labour. Even the future has been privatized! The light at the end

of the tunnel fades out.

The institutional dimension of the crisis

For the last two centuries we have enjoyed the rule of the universal. We had permanent, sacred and eternal rights, just because we had been born. These rights were introduced to protect the citizens from the power of the state, to allow the free exercise of citizenship. Of course, the process of exercising one's rights has not been easy, nor linear. Social progress and welfare were the culmination of a lengthy fight, a moment of rest in a never-ending strife. But nowadays there are no acquired rights, just disputed contracts where rights are negotiated and re-negotiated continuously. Citizens must conquer their place through competition. They become dispensable if no longer recyclable (through life-long learning).

Second. The erosion of the principle of sovereignty of human rights, achieved by a pervasive technology-based system of access to essential goods and services regulated by the markets, is the main mechanism for creating the inequality that presently hurts the globe, turning it into a computerized jungle.

Third. Democracy means the political expression of values concerning the will of the people. This implies the rule of law coupled with a verification process of compliance. All citizens are equal before the law, and they must enjoy liberty of speech, of thought and of assembly. Representative democracy, the political order of liberal republics, are founded on the principle of this paradigm of free expression of citizenship. However, our representative democracies have been invaded by a powerful system, based on global finance, which allows for the partial privatization of political power. The result is the weakening of state power through the impulse of private interests. How can our rights be guaranteed?

The structural dimension of the crisis

The deep roots of the crisis we are living through derive from the weakening of modernity. The successes of capitalism were accompanied by a process of progressive separation of the basic components of social life. The phenomenon of vision was separated from light due to the use of optical instruments. Machiavelli sanctioned the separation between politics and ethics. Culture was separated from the economy – it became an ornament embellishing society. The massive introduction of machines brought the exclusion of human beings from the resources that supported their survival and their autonomy. To consume immediately is the only certainty allowed. Marketing propaganda forces us to instant decisions. Fake news terrifies us about the future. The final achievement of modernity has been the separation of finance from the economy, in the vain attempt at being able to control fully wealth accumulation. This why we seem to be spiraling down together with our perceived aspirations.

Fourth. “Society is communication” (Castells, 2009). The recent introduction and expansion of powerful means of communication, supported by sophisticated hi-tech infrastructures and (intelligent) machines, mainly privately owned, has allowed the emergence, and an accelerated pace, of global platforms with immense extractive power.

Fifth. Only through education and culture would the transformation of human beings into responsible and autonomous citizens, fully aware of their rights and duties, be possible. This has been the intellectual foundation of modernity. The ongoing drift of education towards a mere system of training of human resources, aiming at strengthening the accumulation capacity of financial assets by global platforms, is like falling into the abyss with no available rescue. We are struggling in an evolutionary bifurcation. Like the medieval world, our society is refusing to scrutinize the future. But a new order will

Interventions

impose itself, no matter which is the path that will be taken.

So, let us wake up. Because, as always, “there will be time (...) before the taking of a toast and tea”.

References

Caraça, J., *Science et communication*, Puf, Paris 1999

Castells, M., *Communication power*, Oxford University Press 2009

Wallerstein, I., *World-systems analysis*, Duke University Press 2004

João Caraça took his D. Phil in Nuclear Physics in Oxford. Professor of Science and Innovation Policy at Lisbon School of Economics (ISEG/UL) he is Senior Adviser of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon.

Another agenda for hope in a dystopian world

Marga Ferré

Mark Fisher defined capitalist realism as “the widespread idea that capitalism is not just the only viable economic system, but that it is impossible even to imagine an alternative”. Before the pandemic, we heard this idea all too often, showing that Margaret Thatcher’s *Tina* (There Is No Alternative) or the end of history had a dark reverse side: the end, in turn, of utopia, of the ability to imagine better worlds. This is what the Italian historian Enzo Traverso calls “continuous presentism”, that is, that capitalism is incapable of proposing futures that are not dystopian or apocalyptic. For capitalist realism, the future is perpetual resignation for the majority because, according to the narrative of the ruling class, everything boils down to the fact that the world cannot be organised in any other way.

Faced with this immobilist offensive that justifies domination and the exploitation of humans and nature, there is an academic and political tendency in different fields that is challenging this order, this mandate, the tacit prohibition against imagining forms of human organisation other than capitalism, reviving and greening the rebellion that brought many of us to the World Social Forums under the defiant slogan “Another world is possible”.

This is the idea behind Another Agenda, which calls us to dialogue and think about better futures for the majority of humanity and the planet, and does so from the radical novelty of its proposal that aims to (and does) respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

Today, three human and planetary catastrophes demonstrate the need for this Other Agenda, to overflow the dikes of the single thought that essentially calls for resignation as a vital attitude against which we rebel: the pandemic,

climate change and war(s) or, in other words, and in the language so appropriately used in the call of the Other Agenda: to prioritise taking care of ourselves as a species, the urgency of caring for our planet and peaceful coexistence that define our future. And all three challenges are unavoidable.

Capitalist dystopia

Faced with the awakening of our conscience, which urges us as a species to act together, and the irrefutable data showing that climate change threatens life, the think tanks of contemporary capitalism have reacted with two proposals that summarise their catastrophic way of continuing to run the world: the thesis of green capitalism and digital capitalism, i.e. a saving technology that will ensure that the future will continue to be the eternal present (in which nothing essentially changes), except that technology will ensure that we do not modify the climate. This is their wish, which, because it is fallacious and unrealistic, inevitably leads us to a dystopia in which only the richest people on the planet will be able to live in dignified conditions or escape to another planet, in its most delirious version, because deep down, let’s not forget, the capitalist utopia is to flee. Capitalism is an “anti-anthropocentrist” movement, constantly fleeing from our human condition and our responsibility to ourselves and to the planet we live on.

Those of us who are not going to go to another planet, those of us who want to stay on this one, have to promote a different agenda, and that is the great contribution of the proposal of

Interventions

the Other Agenda, which I dare to summarise in the following points that define the forms of exploitation of contemporary capitalism and, at the same time, provide a response to it.

The struggle for shared knowledge and know-how

A concrete analysis of reality invariably leads us to face two substantial changes that define contemporary societies: the first is the realisation that power is no longer in political or public hands, but in non-state entities such as multinationals, global corporations, investment funds and planetary oligarchies. Real power is neither in states nor in the civilian sphere. The second novelty is that domination is not only exercised through the control and exploitation of resources and people, but also through the appropriation of knowledge, and this is where I find the great contribution of Another Agenda. Technology as an instrument of domination, the technologization of life, digitalisation in a market of permanent economic warfare in which only the strong will survive. It is the reduction of knowledge to technology applied to their interests that is defining the 21st century, concentrating real power in three large areas: the infotech sector, in data control; the biotech companies, Big Pharma and the fintech in the financial sector and investment funds. These three sectors, by reducing knowledge to technology, use human knowledge to their advantage through patents and the appropriation of data.

It is from this denunciation that Another Agenda launches its proposal, which starts from the basic concept of not accepting inequality as a natural fact and therefore proposes to understand the struggles against exploitation and social justice as a necessary condition.

The foundations of Another Agenda

Life and the elements that make it possible cannot be private property. From this ethical principle arises the proposal to make common goods necessarily public (services, water, energy, seeds, health, soil, knowledge...) and therefore they must be under the direct responsibility of citizens through new democratic institutions. It is time, and this is the proposal, to revalue and rethink direct and real democracy from the local to the international level. Let us re-appropriate our knowledge through critical and public education and the elimination of patents that corset human knowledge and privatise it. The irrationality with which the debate on the universality of vaccines has been denied shows how harmful patents and the privatisation of knowledge are. I support and agree with the call for water, health and knowledge to be the three pillars on which to build the new public health system, in which the human being and the environment are at the centre of all policies. To this end, Another Agenda proposes to go to the centre of gravity of today's capitalism and to start by curbing the legality with which financial crimes are committed. I suggest that you pay attention to the proposal to convene a Mutual Cooperation Fund of the Peoples of the World to redirect the financial system in the opposite direction to the current one.

Another Agenda calls us, summons us and proposes a Convention of the Inhabitants of the Earth by 2025 to discuss the construction of a global system of common goods that, starting with water, seeds, health and knowledge, lays the foundations for a future full of hope.

The immensity of the task does not make it impossible, but epic, a historic task to help define our life and that of our planet in the 21st century. Essential debates and a necessary ambition.

Marga Ferré, Madrid, is the president of the Fundación Europa de los Ciudadanos (Fec, Spain) and co-chair of transform! europe.

Four central tasks of European political foundations in times of war and crises

Cornelia Hildebrandt

The war of the Putin regime is an invasion against international law. This war will cost many lives, bring much hardship, suffering and destruction, this war cannot be justified by anything. This war will change Europe permanently. It will have an impact on global political developments.

What should be done in view of this war from the perspective of political foundations?

First of all, it should be pointed out that European political foundations are political actors in a space between science, politics and civil society. They are networkers, actors of political education and think tanks. From this, the following duties of political foundations can be derived.

1. First duty of the European foundations of the progressive and left forces is to use all ways to stop this war. Especially in times of war, the political foundations in Europe must use their possibilities as dialogue partners in a variety of ways.

This includes intensified dialogue with partners in the Cee countries and even more with partners in the Eastern European countries where there is a broad, but above all fragmented left.

For the radical left, the challenge for such a dialogue is that not only is the radical left in Eastern Europe plural, diverse, divided, fragmented. It is decisively shaped by different views of its history in the past and present, by the situation in its countries, by the size and geographical location of the country, by the political landscape, culture and balance of power, by the social and economic constitution of the country. This results in a solid foundation of common ground for an alternative to

capitalism and, at the same time, different views on many issues.

Today, this concerns concretely on the one hand the common condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine, on the other hand different views on Nato. While for leftists, not only in the Baltic countries, Nato is currently the only existing protective power, for the majority of leftists it is - even now - a military instrument with which the Usa maintains its global dominance.

Nevertheless, it was possible to formulate a joint manifesto on the war in Ukraine on behalf of the board of Transform. Its central demands are shared by all members of the board. These demands include an immediate halt to the Russian military assault on Ukraine, a return to diplomacy, mediation by the Osce and the United Nations to stop any military action, and the drafting and implementation of a new peace agreement. The EU should take the initiative for a comprehensive pan-European conference on peace and collective security and resume negotiations on multilateral and comprehensive disarmament, including nuclear and intermediate-range weapons. These demands are also supported by the member organizations of Transform. Not supported by all member organizations was the position on Nato.

Expressing these differences as legitimate differences, discussing them and providing the space for this is the necessary basis for working together on an alternative European peace order from a left perspective.

For this very reason, an intensified dialogue with representatives of the left from the post-Soviet space is also important, especially from Ukraine and Russia. It is true that Transform has succeeded in the past in involving important

Interventions

intellectuals and left-wing organizations in joint discourses. However, we have not been sufficiently successful in developing common continuous spaces for dialogue on the most important issues of the present.

This is significant because European political foundations have special capacities for dialogue. Political foundations - unlike their parties - can work on long-term lines of development. They are institutions with access to science and education and develop their projects beyond the political day-to-day business of the parties. They are partisan, but not party. They are close to an entire party family and its European Party. So, they have the duty to balance their positions in the sense of a European party family.

A special feature of Transform! Europe compared to the other European political foundations is that its foundation as a European network of educational organizations took place in the context of the globalization-critical World Social Forum movement. Thus, Transform is not only close to the party of the European left, but also, from the beginning to the social movements, which cultivate their own approaches to experts from science and politics.

2. Political foundations, as intermediary institutions, have a greater capacity for interdisciplinary work.

Relative independence allows political foundations to be structurally close to academia, which in other ways is relatively independent of politics. The independence of science, research and teaching from the state and from the economy has to be secured by politics. Science needs this independence, demands it in order to advance even those researches in the interest of society that are demanded and needed by society and do not guarantee economic profit. Politics must therefore safeguard research that is relevant to society, that also takes into account the complexity of current developments and that addresses the acute problems of societies and ultimately enables a socio-ecological transformation. In this sense, the left must pursue science policy more strongly than before.

The Corona pandemic - the first global pandemic of the 21st century - did not become a challenge for the medical sciences in developing vaccines and medicines. Mathematical disciplines were also called upon to calculate the course of the pandemic and the resulting societal needs. Questions arose about the causes and possibilities for containment and future prevention of pandemics. In addition, with the duration of the pandemic came the question of physical and psychological stress, the further development of digital ways of working, and the development of emergency plans in the event of the failure of critical infrastructures. The short period of pandemic emergency brought about interdisciplinary approaches, new forms of cooperation, but also competition for the later battle for market share in the production of vaccines and their distribution.

Thus, the new role of science and the relationship between science and politics in the 21st century was discussed – decisively co-organized by Riccardo Petrella and with the support of Transform – also using the example of the development of vaccines, government funding of research, the question of patents, the question of access to vaccines and their global distribution, and likewise the responsibility of political actors and specifically their relationship between politics, science and business.

In view of the war in Ukraine, in view of the so much cited turn of the times, there is a need for equally European and international research on how peaceful relations between the countries of the EU and Russia can be shaped under today's conditions. And we have to ask: In which phase of world politics are we? Are we still in a phase of interregnum or has there long since been a solidifying tendency toward the increased development of authoritarian systems? How are a sustainable European security policy and neighborhood policy with Russia possible after this war? What does security mean in the 21st century? How can the danger of nuclear wars be reduced? What are the cornerstones of a socially supported peace strategy and how can it be implemented?

3. In view of the new global challenges,

including military conflicts, climate change and other destructive potentials, the European foundations must act across party lines.

The European political foundations have large networks of experts across Europe - and beyond - working on fundamental issues of societal developments. This expertise of the progressive foundations in Europe would not only have to be more interdisciplinary, it would have to bring together its experts and all its competencies beyond its own party family.

The complexity of the challenges virtually demands the consideration of different perspectives, which also result from different political views - precisely because populist simplifications do not offer sustainable solutions but promote bipolarities and thinking in enemy-friend categories.

The challenges are too big too complex. Thus, the radicalism of left-wing politics must translate into socially supported policy approaches. Green positions against climate change and for sustainability always need a social dimension. Social democratic approaches need to be questioned in terms of their effectiveness against fundamentally needed changes.

In this respect, European political foundations have the opportunity to work together in a complementary way, with the knowledge of existing political differences, and to develop a culture of cooperation in an exemplary manner.

4. European foundations must become European learning centers for the empowerment of political actors to a greater extent than in the past.

Political education is one of the tasks of all political foundations. Increasingly, it is a matter of imparting orientation knowledge, of training contextual knowledge. What needs to be classified politically and how? What is related to what and leads to what consequences? What scenarios can be derived from today's developments and how is a fundamental social turn towards peace, justice and sustainability possible?

Knowledge for political actors must be prepared in such a way that they can form their own opinions on the basis of verified facts and contexts, so that they are able to act independently and cooperate. This is a central task of political foundations in view of the increase in hostility toward science, fake news and the development of right-wing populist parties in Europe.

Giving sociopolitical actors the tools to act cooperatively means

1. equipping them with analyses to better understand the signs of the times. I.e., analyses of new global trends, e.g., digitalization, global conflicts, climate change, environmental degradation, societal polarization.
2. providing interdisciplinary and transnational practice spaces and internships for intercultural learning, as well as new ways of student exchange, also to link leftist scholars more closely.
3. At the same time, such a preparation of knowledge that not only academically educated or party-politically active people are reached.
4. Providing learning spaces also outside of one's own party family.

The European political foundations of progressive parties should develop formats of exchange that, on the one hand, make existing political differences visible and, on the other, stand for joint efforts in the face of new political escalations, new wars and crises, climate change, and the emerging digitalization of work and life.

Cornelia Hildebrandt, Berlin, is a philosopher and senior research fellow on Parties and social movements in the Institute for Critical Social Analysis of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and with Marga Ferré Co-President of transform! europe.

Even from the black clouds, clean and abundant rain falls

Luis Infanti de la Mora

Even from the blackest clouds, falls clean and abundant rain/water. We are living in extremely difficult times, of terror and horror for all Humanity: BLACK and DARK times.

But the hope is alive in all of us because from these dramatic times will fall abundant rains of times of clear life, of universal love, of peace.

After two horrendous world wars, no longer conducted with arrows, swords, bayonets, but with tanks, including atomic bombs, which have scattered destruction, wounded, dead, pain and despair, Humanity has felt the need to rethink its future, giving rise to international multilateral commitments, set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for seven decades now.

Times of hope have arisen, times of confidence in the responsibilities of building peace on the basis of rights and duties to which everyone should adhere.

But after so many years we must ask ourselves why hopes have fallen, peace commitments have been buried, the right to life has been tortured.

“We are experiencing a war in pieces,” Pope Francis said. War crime is present today in at least 20 countries of the world: Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Burkina Faso, but also in Central African Republic, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Myanmar, Afghanistan etc.

Wars with thousands and thousands of deaths, destruction, masses of human beings fleeing their countries, shattered families, children pierced by poverty, desperate orphans...

But in addition to the military wars with weapons, with scandalous billions of dollars, we must recognize that for years there has been an economic war, a digital war, a cultural war, a war for natural goods (water, land, seeds, food, minerals, oil, gas, etc.), a war against the poor (“we cannot eliminate poverty, we eliminate the poor”), a war of ideologies, a war with diseases, a technological war, a war against the indigenous, against the migrants, a fierce war against the “Common House” that is our Planet. And what about a devilishly studied and planned war of information and misinformation?

So, even if they silence the weapons in Ukraine (hopefully soon) and in the other countries, the war will not end, unfortunately, because there is a malignant and deadly virus in the hearts of many men: HATRED, contempt.

The centre of this hatred is in the hearts of MEN OF POWER. Economic, political, intellectual, cultural, racial, scientific, technological power, etc. And even religious, in some cases. We witness a drama in which humans are the most violent species of living beings, in which they seem obsessed with destroying rather than building. Even with the enormous advances in modern science, technology and communications, they are used more to impose the power of force, destruction and death than to build a civilization of peace, beauty, happiness, hope, dignity and universal brotherhood.

“We cannot live healthily on a sick, ailing planet”, Pope Francis warns us again. In fact we are seriously destroying the Common House that hosts us, but the most ferocious disease,

the pandemic with the most malignant virus is in our hearts, in our minds, in our decisions to believe ourselves superior to any other creature. We call this disease POWER. POWER OF SOME PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THEMSELVES TO BE THEIR OWNERS, not only of the goods of nature (land, water, food, minerals, etc.) and of territories, but also of people, cultures, history, buying consciences, with the power of communications and money. But we are immersed in a new era of Humanity, we are moving towards a greater consciousness that in this way we are moving towards destruction and death, and other powers are being forcibly born to build other roads of a new civilization.

It is the power of the people and peoples, of social movements, of young people, of women, of indigenous people, of those who do not bend to power, of the prophetic inhabitants of the Earth, of the artists of LIFE, who question the current powers, since they cannot solve the problems that they themselves have created.

A people who no longer believe in the “progress” and “development” carried out so far.

A people that opens horizons, perhaps limping in some places, but determined to build a different history for Humanity. A story that more than puts the individual (I) at the centre, opens to the WE-COMMUNITY (HUMANITY and COMMON HOME). Rather than focusing on private property, it opens up to the sharing of common goods. Rather than manifesting the weakness of the destructive power, which is forced to wage war, it seeks to build an education for peace, for universal brotherhood, without racial, religious, cultural or ideological frontiers.

So ANOTHER AGENDA is opening for the history of Humanity, in which the “AGORA OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH” will have to make its powerful voice heard to build the art of life, the beauty of ANOTHER POSSIBLE HISTORY, in which new forms of participatory democracy are given shape

on an international and planetary scale, taking responsibility for taking history and decisions into their own hands, without manipulation or new economic and military colonizations.

In this project of new Humanity it is essential:

1.- KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATION, so that it is not only “education” to build “robo-machines” for the dominant system, but to train people and societies reflective, critical, proactive, with deep ethical, moral, democratic, community training, favouring the most marginalized or “discarded” by the current classist society.

2.- WORK, as a means to achieve dignity, personal fulfilment and responsible solidarity, giving right to the life of those who realize it, and that is not exploitation and market commodity.

3.- HEALTH, as a global public good, in which there are no patents of private bodies that classify people in the first, second or third category, condemning the poorest to slavery, extermination and death.

4.- FINANCE, to outlaw the legalized criminal finance of tax havens, the billions in military death expenses, the huge illegal activities of drug trafficking, etc. And have the courage to create an effective and efficient World Peoples’ Cooperative Mutual Fund.

5.- give greater importance to ARTISTS, as agents of awareness, so that art may provoke and promote the beauty of justice, peace, equity, cooperation, solidarity and brotherhood among peoples.

6.- enhance and give voice to LEADERS, driving towards the realization of the utopia of the NEW HUMANITY.

If we have had the capacity to use intelligence to create a world as criminal and evil as the present one, we have above all a firm and confident assurance that in Humanity there are infinite capacities to build a NEW HUMANITY day by day, with boldness, with joy, with sacrifice, with love.

In this vital and humanitarian project, no one can be discarded.

Interventions

Monsignor Luigino (Luis) Infanti de la Mora, osm, was born in Campomolle di Teor (Udine, Italy). In 1973, at the age of 19, he moved to Chile as a seminarian of the Order of the Servants of Mary, living in Coyhaique. In 1999 he was ordained Vicar Apostolic Bishop of Aysén, carrying

out, in the years of his ministry, an action on behalf of young people, the family, the poor, education, the media, the environment and justice. In 2008 he published his first pastoral letter “Danos hoy el agua de cada día” (Give us today our daily water).

The ethics of the Other Agenda: for a conversion of civilization

Roberto Mancini

The sense of the Other Agenda

The meaning of the Other Agenda is ethical. Here the term “ethics” does not only indicate a framework of principles, but goes back to a way of being inspired by the responsibility for the common good. Ethics is the exercise of the capacity *to be with the world*, as Paulo Freire says, learning to inhabit the earth without destroying it and without destroying ourselves. The Agenda is “Other” not so much because it changes objectives as because it takes on an ethical inspiration and criterion. It outlines the shift from an agenda of “adjustment” to the current system to one of deep *transformation*. At stake is the radical alternative between necrophilic logic and biophilic wisdom.

But today another agenda may seem even more utopian. As we witness the invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing war, how can we hope for a biophilic ethical breakthrough? This crime adds to the ongoing wars in Yemen, Syria, Israel and Palestine, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and elsewhere. We have never emerged from war as a permanent logic and system. Today’s society is subject to the dominance of five global powers: the financially driven market, technocracy, mediocracy, bureaucracy, the militarised circuit of geopolitics. The widespread violence in such a structural chaos tends to manifest itself directly in war. Thus living beings - people, animals, plants, relationships - are reduced to resources to be exploited, waste, hostages, refugees, victims, corpses. This situation confirms the

urgency of a profound change, which can only be initiated by a new historical effectiveness of ethics. It is not utopian to commit oneself to the Other Agenda, it is foolish to continue executing the Agenda of the systems of power and war.

Inspired ethics, a conversion of civilization

Consciousness, action and ethically configured forms of relationships cannot be developed solely by reference to general principles. They must be inspired by the acceptance of a meaning that illuminates our way of existing. I am not thinking of a meaning *of life*, but of a meaning *in the life*. In fact, meaning is the life itself to the extent that it becomes a harmonious coexistence of the living. This requires responsible action, repairing tears, harmonising all relationships.

By distrusting life, western civilization has espoused power as a logic, a single efficacy, the father of all means and all ends. But it is never a neutral means, qualifying itself according to how it is used. It is a radically self-referential system that aims to expand, generating a circuit of dominated and dominators where everyone is subjugated and every vital relationship is broken down.

Thus an inspired ethic begins when power as a universal logic is repudiated and we are oriented towards a biophilic spirituality. We may recognise the Source of such inspiration in God, or in Nature, or in Life itself, or even simply in previous generations and in the loving relationships we cherish: but it is nonetheless

Interventions

thanks to this Source that we can experience the good, which is always the common good. Those who internalize this sense of the Source are inspired to act ethically just as an artist is inspired to create his work.

In this perspective we discover that the future, in order to be kept open, must be welcomed. For the future is not an extension of the present, not the result of “growth” or “sustainable development”, but is real life, liberation from oppression. This potential for harmony is latent in the heart of reality like a seed: it is up to us to cultivate it wisely.

It is also clear that in such a destructive period of history, active minorities and vanguards are no longer enough. What we need is a conversion of civilization: the majority of human subjectivities - individuals, communities, peoples, institutions - must now choose to exist otherwise, converging in the vision of the ethics of the common good. Traditional cultures, with their ethnic closures, cannot cope with the current situation. This does not mean that they must leave the field to a single “uni-versal” global culture, but rather that they must open up to nurture a choral consciousness. *Chorality* is the orientation that unites humanity and brings it closer to nature without suppressing the variety of differences. The ongoing war in Europe reminds us that there will be no ecological transition and no future without a transformation of society and a conversion of civilizations.

An ethic for the political birth of humanity

If, in the entire system of relationships (between genders, between generations, between social groups, between peoples, with nature), we learn the lesson, rejecting the logic of power, we will finally discover the freedom to practice all forms of biophilic efficacy, suitable for living beings and the common good. Unlike the efficacy of power, which is always deadly, there are forms of benign efficacy: that of human *capacities*, i.e. the best skills that mature through education; that

of the *responsibility* of those who take charge of situations; that of *caring* and *service*; that of *participatory deliberation*, whereby collective issues are decided democratically, through dialogue, informed by knowledge, shared. It is then that the authentic functions of government necessary for society are performed, which is a *government* not over people, who would then be reduced to subjects, but is the *government of problems*, providing effective responses and preventing catastrophes. Those who perform such a role will be able to have *authority*, which is the function of those who make the common good flourish, not those who command. If these forms of effectiveness prevail, even *conflict* can be freed from destructiveness, as the way of nonviolence has taught with Gandhi and many others.

The prevailing tendency in history has identified politics with the struggle for power. But this has left us in the sphere of imposition and disruption, reducing the care of the common good to an exception. On the contrary, politics begins where power ends. It is clear then that - after a long chain of empires, dominations, nationalisms, wars and systems of oppression - the direction in which the Other Agenda looks is that of the *political birth of humanity*.

An ethic for salvation

It must also be said that the ethical orientation of the Agenda leads us to look beyond the rhetoric of sustainability. We need to recognise that we need a *salvation ethic*. It is hypocritical to patch up an ill-conceived and frayed fabric. The call for “sustainable” remains within the logic of domination over nature and people. It is a compromise between reason and madness, between respect and arrogance. Meanwhile, global society, in the grip of a self-destructive impulse, is burning.

It is not a question of making this system “sustainable” by trying to prolong its agony a little longer, but of dismantling it from its cultural presuppositions in order to give life to

another form of society, based on justice and care, and striving for harmony in all kinds of relationships. What we need today is a new cultural birth, inspired by the collective ethic of salvation. A political, historical, ecological salvation for nature and for human beings. The term usually evokes a religious vision. Here, however, it indicates liberation from all destructive and self-destructive practices.

There is an urgent need to wake up and act. With respect to this task, one of the most insidious temptations is to give in to pessimism. In truth, the most lucid sentiment and one that can unleash the best cultural and political energies is *transformative trust*. It can see the potential for healing and liberation latent in the given situation. Only if we see it can we cultivate it in action.

The Other Agenda asks everyone to choose ethically inspired political participation. Hence the choice to *get involved* in order to activate behaviours conducive to the common good: in the family, at school, in the workplace, in politics, everywhere. Our everyday behaviour is never neutral: either it goes along with the virus of destruction, or it promotes a better life for all.

The emergence of historical biophilic subjects

The Other Agenda prefigures a political programme. The commitment to implement it does not emanate from within conventional political forces, but requires the emergence of specific forms of historical subjectivity, including

individuals, communities and institutions. I refer to choral people, transformative communities and popular democratic movements. The people I call “choral” are those who have a sense of open communion and who adhere to a transitive style of existence. For them, no one is a stranger and they consider a passion for the common good to be a factor in concrete happiness.

In turn, cities can be transformative communities. They arise around a project of integral ecological democracy. This happens when the subjects of that territory, from associations to local administrative institutions, commit themselves to realising the project through the method of a strong participation of advanced knowledge and ethical orientation. On the broader level of nations and the world community, popular democratic movements can perform a similar action as transformative communities on the level of regions, of a nation or even on the transnational level.

The ethical sense of the Other Agenda should be understood not as a wish, but as an indication of a precise direction for the effectiveness of responsibility. Although a conversion of civilization is a very difficult goal, no-one can claim to be incapable of working to anticipate it in the space of their own action and passion.

Roberto Mancini is full professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Macerata and regional coordinator (Marche) of the Dipende da Noi (It depends on Us) movement.

Materials

Platform work and the struggles of bicycle couriers.

Possible solutions on a European scale

Leïla Chaïbi

On 9 December 2021, the European Commission presented a series of measures to regulate platform work, including a proposal for a Directive on the improvement of working conditions for people working via digital work platforms. During a debate held in Rome on 18 February 2022 at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Rome 3, organised by Transform Italia and by “Europe à Gauche” - a committee of individual members of the European Left Party, the content of this EU initiative was discussed by Leïla Chaïbi, MEP of the Left Group. We publish here her intervention in the debate.

1. What is at stake in Uber work?

Drivers who work for Uber, bike couriers who work for Deliveroo or Wolt are considered as self-employed. Indeed, digital platforms say that they are only an intermediary between a worker and a client. The reality is different. On the one hand, *the platforms exercise a real subordination link over their workers*: they decide who will have to do that errand, how much the workers will be paid, they classify the workers, etc. On the other hand, the workers, who are not the only ones, are the ones who have to be paid. On the other hand, the workers, who are therefore false self-employed, have no access to social protection or collective bargaining.

Moreover, uber-work is part of a new desire to circumvent labour law. What the platforms want is to set up a third status: to introduce into the law a status specially created for platforms, where the worker is officially independent while being subject to a subordinate relationship. The worker would then legally benefit neither from the advantages of employee status nor from the advantages of self-employment, and the platform would only benefit from the advantages that employee status gives it over workers without providing any compensation. If the platforms win this battle, it is in fact *the whole world of work that will be affected*, since ubiquitous work via a digital platform is in fact a Trojan horse that aims to unravel, in the long term, all the protections of the Labour Code. Finally, the issue is global, since this question is being raised everywhere and the platform lobby is monitoring legislative initiatives on all continents. It is ready to inject millions - as the Uber offensive against the AB5 law in the United States has shown us - to protect this model, which works by destroying workers' rights.

As an elected member of the European Parliament, a member of France Insoumise and of the Left in the European Parliament, I became interested in these issues very early on. Since the beginning of my mandate, I have been working and committing myself to ambitious legislation to give these workers the same rights as all other workers, by obliging platforms to respect the law.

2. What did the work in the European Parliament and on the ground consist of?

First of all, it is important to remember that in December 2021, the European Commission proposed a Directive to give more rights to platform workers. For once, this proposed Directive sets an ambitious framework since it includes *a presumption of salaried status*, which means that platform workers will in principle be under salaried status and will therefore have access to labour laws, sick leave, minimum wage, etc. If they are truly self-employed, it will be up to the platform to prove it - this is the reversal of the burden of proof - and if this proof is satisfactory, only then will they be able to work under a self-employed commercial contract.

However, this victory does not fall from the sky, it is a long term work and an addition of different factors that I would like to explain below.

First, I would like to return to the work that took place in the European Parliament. In 2019, at the beginning of the mandate, the subject of platform work was not really on the political agenda. We had *to insist for months* that it was necessary to look into this subject and that a European response, encompassing both the question of the status and that of algorithmic management, had to be found. Then, with the health and social crisis that took place from 2020 onwards, the light was shed on the precariousness of these workers: when everyone was confined, protected at home, the deliverymen on bicycles and the Vtc drivers roamed the streets. The deliverymen, forcats of the asphalt, went from restaurants to customers to deliver sushis and pizzas without benefiting from the labour law and without social protection. So, although the European Parliament does not have the right of initiative, I wrote with a group of experts, *a proposal for a Directive*, to show that even within the framework of the current European treaties, it is possible to do something in favour of the workers of digital platforms. Already in

this proposal, presented to the Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Nicolas Schmit, we proposed to reclassify all platform workers as employees, unless the platform can provide evidence that it does not exercise a subordination relationship and plays a simple role of intermediary.

In September 2021, the European Parliament voted, by a large majority, *an own-initiative report* - allowing to give the position of the European Parliament - on the rights of platform workers (2019/2186(INI)), for which I was in charge of the negotiations for my political group. Despite the pressure sent by the Élysée and Emmanuel Macron, we managed to build a broad arc of force that allowed the adoption by the European Parliament last September of a very ambitious text. The text adopted in September 2021 is ambitious. It also asked the Commission to include a presumption of wage-earning and a reversal of the burden of proof in its directive.

Secondly, it should be noted that *a good number of Member States' courts* have been referred to by platform workers because they did not have the right status. The vast majority of courts have ruled in favour of reclassifying these workers as employees.

Finally, this good news is above all the result of *a strong mobilization of platform workers* on the ground and the irruption of their anger, their demands and their collective mobilizations on the European scene. Aware of the impact that a European Union Directive could have on legislations around the world, workers demonstrated all over Europe, and also in South America and the US, to say “no to an Uber law in Europe”, as early as February 2021.

Moreover, even though Uber and co. are doing everything to prevent them from organizing by segmenting the work, platform workers from all over the EU and the world were able to meet and organize twice in the framework of the *Transnational Forum of Alternatives to Uberization*. The second edition took place in October 2021, where more than 100 workers from 18 countries met in Brussels, with the support of our Left political group in the

European Parliament. The workers were able to meet with Commissioner Nicolas Schmit and tell him about their working conditions and their demands. This is *a real success of the popular lobby* that has reversed the balance of power against the lobby of platforms, which has allowed to put pressure on the European Commission and to achieve such an ambitious result, which the Commission has not really accustomed! This victory was achieved by the strength of this new type of lobby that forced the European Commission to comply with the interests of workers.

3. How will the work continue?

We are only at the beginning of the legislative work: the European Commission's proposal for a Directive has just arrived on the table of the European Parliament and I will again be in charge of the negotiations for my political group. Obviously, *the fight continues* because everything is not perfect and we still have many points to improve, especially on algorithmic management, but also so that the largest possible number of platforms are concerned, so that a non-regression clause is applied, to strengthen the role of unions, etc.

To come back to just one point, I would like to say two words about *the presumption of salaried status*. This presumption means that workers are presumed to be employees and must therefore have the status that follows from this, since platforms exercise a subordinate relationship against them. To do this, the European Commission has chosen to establish a list of criteria (such as fixing remuneration, the possibility of controlling the work or giving sanctions, the impossibility of building up a client portfolio, etc.) and considers that if a platform ticks two out of five criteria, the workers must be considered employees. However, this is problematic, as it would be very easy for platforms to escape these criteria by slightly adapting their operation and would allow them

to maintain one of the criteria while continuing to have bike couriers and drivers work as fake-independent. For me, the presumption of wage-earning should be broader, apply to platform workers unless the platform proves otherwise, and it should start from the first day. It is now up to the co-legislators, the Parliament and the Council, to strengthen the ambition of the new Directive.

I would like to add that the French Presidency of the EU, which runs from January 1 to June 30, is putting a lot of obstacles in the way of progress on this issue. Indeed, *the presumption of salaried status* is not at all the idea that Emmanuel Macron defends at the French level. Instead, he has consciously chosen not to touch the fraudulent use of the self-employed status, and to leave workers under this false self-employed status under the pretext of granting them crumbs of rights in terms of social dialogue. This choice amounts to setting up the third status I mentioned earlier. Thus, at the European level, Emmanuel Macron is delaying the discussions around the Directive, putting it on the agenda of only a few meetings of the Council of the Union, and only on the question of the transparency of algorithms, leaving aside the major and urgent question of employment status.

4. Next steps. To conclude

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that the work done, through strong cooperation between workers, unions and our political group, in favour of platform workers' rights, has borne fruit. We are only halfway there, although I think the hardest part has been done, and I remain optimistic because now *all eyes are on this issue*.

I see that there is a real interest from workers, journalists and citizens for this subject, which is good news, it will allow us to continue to put pressure. Lobby our colleagues in the European Parliament so that the resulting position is even more ambitious and stronger. Lobby the

Materials

Council and the Member States to ensure that the interests of workers take precedence over those of platforms and that a minority of states close to the lobbies, with Macron's France in the forefront, do not scupper these progresses. For once, the European Union has the opportunity to help advance the situation of millions of workers. For once, the EU can set an example at the global level by proposing

legislation that workers on all continents can learn from. Now more than ever, let's not let Uber use workers as pawns, let's checkmate it, the future of work in its entirety is at stake!

Leïla Chaïbi, French MEP since 2019, resides in Paris and is a member of France Insoumise and the EL Group in the European Parliament.

Barbarism is not the worst case. When there is no left alternative, social resistance rallies behind the far right

Attila Antal interviews Tamás Krausz

The following interview took place before the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. However, it retains its interest for the analysis contained therein and for the considerations made.

*Tamás Krausz, funding editor of the periodical *Eszmélet* (Consciousness), a Hungarian journal for social critique and culture, talks to Attila Antal, editor-in-chief of the same review.*

Barbarism is not the worst case. When there is no left alternative, social resistance rallies behind the far right

Attila Antal: As we speak, there is a prolonged tension in European geopolitics, with the United States and the European Union and Russia in a major stand-off over Ukraine. This situation is also creating various frustrations on the domestic left, and the policies of the Orbán regime are adding to this. How do you see the position the left should take in this situation, when uncritical, liberal positions towards the EU are significantly distorting the public opinion?

Tamás Krausz: I think that the anti-capitalist left, no matter in which country, must start from the interests of the people in geopolitical matters, from the need to put a stop to the economic and territorial re-division of the world, because that means war, and we want peace. So, the fundamental question is not which great power you are on the side of. But we have to see that here in our neighbourhood Ukraine is just a tool in the geostrategic clashes of the great powers. This is not just about Ukraine, but about

fundamental issues: what will be the fate of Russia? It makes a big difference, as we can see from the break-up of the Soviet Union, what chaos and war and conflict would ensue from the break-up of Russia. We are well aware of the regimes of clans and minorities backed by ethnic or religious manipulations. Whenever we are confronted with what is happening in Ukraine or Belarus, or even Kazakhstan, we are always confronted with Russia: already during the period of regime change, Brzezinski had concretely outlined that the way for Russia's "normal" development was to be divided up. So, for the big capitalist corporations, Russia has always been an attractive area for capital accumulation, a kind of paradise. If we look at the contradictions and conflicts of the whole new Cold War unfolding in the West and the response in the East, a more complex picture emerges.

There is an economic and territorial division of the world system on a global scale between the powers that are capable to do it. The current Nato-Russian conflict is part of a series of struggles to divide up the spheres of power in the Middle East and the Black Sea. The *ethno-nationalist era* brought to life by neoliberalism has also made Russia reflect on the fate of the 25 million Russians living outside its borders, above all the 17 million or so Russian minorities living in Ukraine, a tense factor in an era full of conflicts whose dominant ideological leitmotif is Russophobia, the demonisation of Russia in the name of these interests.

Another element where there is a direct fight is the reallocation of the energy market. We

Materials

need to see clearly here! So, if we say that the destruction of Russia, i.e., the extension of Nato to Russia's borders, could be acceptable, then the left has finally given up everything in its global values, it has joined the Nato logic. We really do know that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Nato is no longer needed, it has no *raison d'être*. It is essentially an American interest; it is the tool of a few great powers. Where are we now with the original North Atlantic Alliance: they want to bring Georgia into Nato, let alone Ukraine. The world of the Blinkens, the Johnsons and the Borells is a world of outright imperialism. So, anyone who supports this process is not, I think, a leftist. I would certainly not stretch the definition of left that far. Russophobia is a form of civilizational racism, and it links conservatives and liberals. It is something that left-wing people cannot accept.

This does not mean that every foreign policy moves or solutions of Putin, or of Russia, or the possible military occupation of Ukraine, should be supported or justified. Russia is a conservative, military world power, but it must be acknowledged that today Ukraine is a pro-Nazi regime from a leftist point of view. We should not be confused by the fact that it is supported by the "democratic Europe" and the "democratic" United States. Zelensky and his ruling apparatus are there in alliance with the far right. Zelensky is a geopolitical tool and puppet of the Anglo-Saxon-American-European, i.e., the "collective West". The joke of the world is that it matters speaking about Orbán that he is associated with far-right organisations, but it does not matter to Zelensky because he is the "geostrategic lobbyist" of the West, and would of course turn his country readily into a Nato base.

Even if the left can see through the geopolitical games you mention, it cannot avoid placing the EU in this formula. So how can the left relate to the EU?

According to the anti-capitalist left, the

European Union is a neoliberal and hierarchical integration, with many features of the state, and still with a fundamentally neoliberal economic policy, since even in Sweden we can only talk about the ruins of the welfare state.

Obviously, there are trends within the EU: an uncritical Atlanticism prevails, especially in the former allies of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, which is dominated by the far-right, and in the Baltic states which are tending towards it. For our liberals, the European Union cannot be investigated in a critical context, it is synonymous with the rule of "democracy and freedom".

Dissenters, for whom the crucial choice is not between a nation-state framework or global capital rule, put the focus on other issues: a new politics of peace, the creation of political alliances for social equality. For these fundamental aspirations can be taken up and can form the basis of serious socio-political coalitions. Yes, this is, in fact, class politics. In other words, the EU is not the "enemy", because it is only the form, but capitalism itself is the content. Its *national form*, with its ethno-nationalism, is nowadays also a direct door-opener to fascism, which is becoming a power. This is an inescapable problem not only for the anti-capitalist left.

It is clear to see that in the current situation of the EU, there is, as you already said, a nation-state-centred approach, interpreting EU values in a nationalist framework, at the nation-state level, and favoured by Orbán, and there is a Brussels waterhead, a liberal, neoliberal conglomerate. How would it be possible to develop a kind of critical position on the system between them?

If I start from our fundamental values, it is precisely because the European Union, especially in this Covid-19 period, wants to move the world from the position of big business to that of "humanist environmentalist" and "human rights activist" with immense unilateralism that we must criticise day and

night. It is always the same old tune: private appropriation of profits by the few, while the loss is borne by the majority of society. This falls within the human rights, but not housing the homeless.

Some people like it so, like our liberals. Is it possible to pursue a people-centred policy with the logic of big business, supporting big business and marginalising the vast majority of the population? We cannot imagine it. The whole environmental turnaround has not been properly thought through either, only the interests and considerations of big business are clear, that is to say, the profit motive. Nor has it even been clearly thought through what new environmental destruction the quasi-introduction of “green energy” will bring about, which is already clearly visible today, if we only look at the issues of the periodical *Eszmélet*.

For example, the myth that electric cars are non-polluting. But yes, in a different way. Wind energy is also not the answer. This does not mean, of course, that if you break the European Union into nation states again, the position of humanism will be stronger. Looking at the traditions of the Eastern European nation states, I do not see that the socialist-revolutionary, left-wing anti-capitalist movements would be in a better position there. On the contrary, we would be regressing towards the unrestrained reign of savage racism, as I have stressed before. These are very conservative nation states, terribly attached to the Nazi, far-right, anti-humanist aspirations of the past, heroizing Nazi collaborators, the real tradition of the power elites, not Attila József, Ady or even A. Wajda, or even Miklós Jancsó.

I just do not see the organisational background of this non-capitalist thinking – to be honest. The World Social Forum movement exists, but it is fragmented and weak. It is not clear what political forces are capable of supporting this line, which is neither neoliberal nor neoconservative, of strengthening a social self-defence-self-organising critique of the system that genuinely prefers solutions that focus on the crisis. It is in vain to write down what we

think about it and if we cannot turn this theory into an organisational force, we are in the same position as we have been for the last 30 years: we can say something only from the side-liners, but we cannot effectively get into the public mind. It is an indication of our position, by the way, that even the German Left Party, Die Linke managed to perform below 5% last time. The fundamental question remains what is the decisive reason why the left is where it is.

I am of the opinion that the demise of the anti-capitalist left in every sense, whether we like it or not, is inseparable from the dismantling of the Soviet Union. However, we interpret the history, values and historical achievements of the Soviet Union, its dissolution is the complete marginalisation of the anti-capitalist, political and cultural force born of the October Revolution. There is no substitute for it in the absence of other broad, organised mass movements.

This is one reason for its weakness, and another is that the new oligarchic capitalist regimes are authoritarian they are all strongly closed toward a left, and only open to the right. Moreover, already Lenin saw that socialism could not be simply introduced, not only because of widespread illiteracy, but simply because “the Russian peasant cannot live without buying and selling”. This is a global truth that is still shared by the broadest social masses today. This small little remark is so profound that it contains the whole legacy of today’s world civilization, the millennia-long process and experience of capitalist accumulation.

In other words, the vast majority of the world’s population cannot exist without this merchant civilization. These are the decisive reasons, but we could list many other reasons, which we only experience here in Eastern Europe. We have said many times that the left here is characterised by an emigrant syndrome. The anti-capitalist left, cannot escape from this situation by accumulating its sects on a global and national scale.

You mentioned that the anti-capitalist left is

Materials

multiplying by splitting, at least by creating factions, sects. In a way, this is also a historical specificity. Is this diversity – which can be understood as the left opening up to more ideologically, politically and culturally – an obstacle to the production of a political alternative, or are the parties of capitalism closing down and not allowing in the critics of the system? Or do those who take a critical position say themselves that they do not want to participate in this bourgeois politics?

If we look at the Hungarian public sphere, we can see how important this debate was until recently, what the anti-capitalist left – in this tense situation, when as a significant factor the Orbán regime is becoming fascist – should do: should it enter politics or should it build a social base in other ways? It seems that in many respects one-sided solutions have been found so far.

Of course, I repeat, I think we should participate, but it's always a question of in what framework, with what objectives and how. It is impossible for this left to be a sect, because we want to get out of the situation that greatly the system has imposed on us. This makes no sense to us at all. But we must start with our own programme, our own civil and political organisation, our own members and our own social background. So, the left must be able to organise itself, and this is not just a political task. Diversity, as you said, is an advantage for a while, but when diversity cannot bring about anything but disintegration and not integration, then there is a big problem. But the decisive reason for this is that many groups are moving along a purely political path and are immersed in it because they expect the bourgeois forces to pursue socialist policies. This kind of naivety is completely extreme, almost pathological. Why would civilians behave in a non-civil way in politics?

I remember that more than ten years ago, at the end of the Gyuresány era, the basic idea of the Hungarian Socialist Party intelligentsia was that there would be only one alternative, that is, one with two camps in the world: globalist

democracies and nationalist authoritarianisms. In other words, perhaps without realising it, they had adopted the basic thesis of liberalism, and in this they had fallen in. The way out of this, as I have indicated above, is to have, alongside the analysis, an independent socialist programme for the development of a multi-sectoral mixed economy in which the Constitution guarantees the population the possibility of free self-government and the free right of existence of communal property. As long as this is not demonstrated and recognised in the economic field by the Constitution, the political authority the anti-capitalist left will not be restored in society.

This is, of course, a combat issue. It is no coincidence that in 1989-1990, when the possibility of social self-administration and community ownership was introduced into the new Constitution under pressure from the Left Alternative, it was immediately thrown out by the first Parliament, to the shame of democracy. It is understandable that they threw it out, since the liberals stood and still stand with both feet on the ground of capitalism, whatever is the world order of capital.

In this respect, they are no better than the conservatives: they will not give in to the sanctity of capitalist private property, however much the world system may be fraught with fascism. An anti-capitalist left, if he wants to have an impact on society, whatever his organisation, must take a clear and unequivocal stand on the question of property, on the methods of management, on the fundamental questions of freedom. It is even possible to organise a party for this purpose. But dissolving oneself in flat bourgeois politics is not the task of the left critical of the system. Everybody who wants goes to the polls. The anti-capitalist left must not decide, must not focus its political image on the question of whether to choose one capitalist or another right-wing capitalist, because then we will discredit ourselves. We will not grow our social background, as the last 30 years have shown, but we will also lose those who have always recognised that a socialist alternative

to capitalism is worth maintaining. This is true even if today it is expressed in a conservative way, mostly on a nostalgic level.

The anti-capitalist left in Hungary, which also regularly criticises the opposition, is often accused of being the “linchpin of the coalition of the opposition”, and therefore actually supports the Orbán regime. In the Hungarian public, the “Orbánist” stigma is quickly passed on. What we saw in the primaries is that the forces that fragmented and destroyed the critical positions of the Hungarian left after the regime change are very much in place.

A pole has emerged that represents a neoliberal economic and social policy. And now a neo-conservative line has caught up with it. I believe that these two oppositional tendencies will be the dominant ones on the opposition side in the next few years. In this unfortunate situation, should we not be afraid that the anti-capitalist position will be torn between the two millstones: the neoliberal, neoconservative opposition and the fascistic Orbán regime?

This is exactly what it is. If we remain between the millstones, the conditions for an organizationally and culturally favourable anti-capitalist left never be created. If the fascistic, neo-conservative line does not prevail in the elections, then perhaps more favourable conditions will be created for us, provided that left-wing pathfinding is not persecuted to the extent that it is today, when the identity of Communism and Fascism is a sort of obligatory mantra. Its basic function is to suppress anti-fascist thought and action. The representation of this is left to the anti-capitalist left. Some of the liberals can also be relied on to address this issue. Incidentally, I don't really know any “Fidesz” leftists. It is just an accusation to denounce anti-capitalists.

On the social base of the left, you have repeatedly written that the sin of left-wing (or rather, as it is better called) politics after the regime change was to have starved and allowed to be starved

its own social base, part of which migrated to the radicalizing right. Can this be changed? After all, the success and development of a critical position on the system depends on it.

It's a Sisyphean task, I remember the experience of the Hungarian Socialist Party. Once you've been fooled, it's very difficult to convince you later that this is not the left... I'm reminded of a very interesting thing about this. I don't want to go into boring theoretical and social-historical discussions here, but I would like to recall a political episode.

I would like to point out that the expulsion of the masses of working people, of ordinary working people, in the name of “modernity”, from the circles of the Hungarian Socialist Party has a long history. Sometime around 2006, and not for the first time, I raised this problem with Gyula Horn. At the time, neither seriously nor jokingly I did not name him a traitor. Then Horn said, “You know, my Tom, it wasn't a problem before, it's a problem that's going to come up now. Look, Gyurcsány is going to give Fidesz a two-thirds majority. You can be defeated, but a two-thirds majority will completely destroy us.” He said that the decisive reason for this, which you asked the question about here, was the social mass that helped the Hungarian Socialist Party to power in 1994 and even in 2002. That is where the cat is buried.

Gyurcsány also called himself ‘the “Hungarian Tony Blair”’. He just forgot that Hungary is not Britain. In addition, because of Iraq, Tony Blair is still being treated as a war criminal in Britain, and not only on the anti-capitalist left. What do we want with Tony Blair in Hungary, who is still regarded in the Labour Party as some kind of right-wing liberal deviant? We do not have a bourgeoisie like in Britain. In fact, “civic power” is a meaningless term here. Can the gas fitter and Orbán's circle be called a citizen? There is a tradition of a mass, plebeian left in Eastern Europe, but today's pseudo-left parties do not embrace this tradition. That is why quite a few people are oriented towards populist, actually “middle class” parties, such as Fidesz,

Materials

which are open to Fascism. As long as truly democratic, i.e., social mass movements do not emerge, it is difficult to change this basic situation.

You have outlined excellently the two poles that are fighting for power under the banner of opposition, but in reality, within the Orbán regime. The well-known liberal crowd, many of whom were key neoliberal politicians and businessmen in the pre-2010 regime, has risen incredibly quickly around Péter Márki-Zay, the opposition candidate for prime minister.

As if history were repeating itself, austerity-based, one might say anti-social politics, which ignores the basic structures of society and puts everything on society, is trying to gain ground again. This is also evident from the discourse that has already been launched that austerity will certainly be necessary in the event of a possible change of government.

What I am trying to say is that if the civil opposition fails this time again to gain a deeper understanding of the social and political structures that have created Orbán's system and enters the same river as before 2010, Hungarian society will be in a very difficult situation in the event of a change of government. What do you think about all this?

What I'm saying in this regard is what you say that they will create an "Orbán regime without Orbán" here, if they go in that direction. There will be new elements, but not many. When you raise the point that a neoliberal circle has immediately sprung up around Márki-Zay, I see this as evident, because I, who am not involved in politics, was informed from the very first moment that Márki-Zay moves in a capitalist logic with an American background. It is not even a German background, which has more of a social element, but an American framework. Hence the conflict you speak of is inevitable. I fully agree with this.

Now, this is what makes or can make anti-capitalist left, because we recognise in time that "Folks, the king is naked". In the end, they will

be so "law-abiding" that they will "forget" to return to the legitimate old constitution, and all the crimes and illegalities committed will be incorporated as legitimate within the framework of civil democracy. If only I were not right! So, it is quite an incredible story: they pretend, they legislate, as if the Orbán regime were not an authoritarian system, but a system of error after error. No. It is a different type of political management from what the liberals talked about in 1989 in the traction of the imaginary Western model.

They refuse to admit this, because then they would have to judge themselves, since they prepared the whole horror. And now they will use this free-market ideological bullshit again to justify why serious socio-political and important cultural changes cannot be made; instead returning to the old neoliberal dogmas and free-market illusions. That is all the wisdom they have. Let us remember when Gyula Horn took the first Eastern European "economic miracle doctor", Lajos Bokros, who led Gyula Horn and the entire Hungarian Socialist Party into the maze of neoliberalism. And now they want to play the same again. What progressive effect does this neoliberal "counter-revolution" have today? Tell me one thing...

I don't want to be very, very malicious. It is obvious that some liberal intellectuals represent some segment of humanist politics. But it is also clear that the Orbán regime has had a very strong influence on the side that came into opposition after 2010 (and even brought many people into the national capitalist class unchained) and that more and more of them would maintain the mechanisms that favour capital and run the state capitalism of the semi-peripheries in an authoritarian way even after a change of government.

Does this not offer an opportunity for the left, critical of the system, to finally say: once and for all, the authoritarian form of semi-peripheral capitalism must be overcome, whether it is run by a neoliberal/neoconservative or a fascist regime?

This is the situation! It is both terribly difficult and a terrible risky that there is nothing but the transcendence of capitalism, because in the semi-periphery only authoritarian management works effectively: Poland, the Baltic States, etc. There is no other way of overcoming authoritarian regimes except by overcoming capitalism. But looking at the experience of state socialism, it is not certain, very much so. This must be said frankly. Either we are faced with a new type of socialist transformation, or there is no effective transformation position for us. Perhaps capital, the press, can also denounce this, “you came out of Stalin’s cloak, that’s why you want socialism, you are Stalin”. It’s no use saying that you were the first to “expose” Stalin in Hungary – it doesn’t matter.

Nothing counts, only the methods of discrediting you. And they will do so, as long as there is no social mass behind you. Always prepare for acute crisis, because it always happens, from America to Ukraine to Kazakhstan. The most savage forms of crisis will occur, and if there is no left alternative, resistance will be channelled behind the far right. This is obvious in politics. You must always be prepared for this, because if you are not, the crisis will be exploited by Fascism. The crisis is very interesting because it is two-faced.

Recall that Jenő Varga, who as an economist based at that time in the Soviet Union defined the global crisis of 1929 crisis in the to the day and argued that this was the time of the Communist revolution. Well, what the heck! As he was a brilliant analyst, he got it right, that a capitalist world crisis was indeed coming, but that Fascism, the most savage form of capitalism, was able to exploit it, because the political conditions were not right.

There is a great risk here, but there is no other way than to put the socialist alternative into the consciousness. This is true in Moscow, in Berlin and in Paris. Many of our friends in the West and in the East confirm this. You just asked how to unite? You can do it by focusing on this position, for example. Unification is not

a matter of decision; it is also a process... In this work we are part of both an international and a global movement. It is very important to see the main issues, at conferences, everywhere we go. We have to produce unity. For example, our *Conference on Non-Capitalist Mixed Economies*, 23-26 June 2021, demonstrated just that.

My final question is as follows: in this seemingly hopeless situation, what can the organic intellectual community, to which I hope many of us belong, do in practice?

There is no recipe; you have to approach things differently in almost every country. First of all, I have to go back to what I said earlier about the fact that we have three or four very important ideas on which we have a common view. Let’s say, the thousands of people who like the periodical *Eszmélet* all understand that these fundamental ideas need to be made the dominant ideas in society.

Of course, there are organisational conditions for us to do this. The first practical step, of which there are already many precedents and signs today, is to create social forums for workers, such as the Workers’ Academy, where volunteers explain and discuss with people what the modern world is all about. We should not burden people with expertise. It’s a form of social organisation. Anyone who wants a political party under the spell of power is completely naive. To create a party, you need a nationwide, well-developed infrastructure and billions of florins. Of course, a few would make a living out of it.

First of all, we need to put down roots in society, we need to put down roots in the culture: when people start demanding that you should run for the party, and then they themselves come and organise it, yes, but to create the 66th political grouping of this kind again, I personally don’t see much point. You say that I should list other forms of organisation in addition to the Workers’ Academy. Why not support trade unions, even the creation of new trade unions? You can join

Materials

these unions as a consultant or as a volunteer. I do not know how it works now, I have not been involved in politics for a long time, but it used to be that a left-wing intellectual would help trade unions out of sheer conviction.

There was a time when they said: “we don’t need you, old man, because we only want to negotiate with the capitalists, we don’t need communist agitators like you” – you don’t go there. You have to offer yourself in a place where they want you. The third form is among the students: they are the most open to all new things; there are thousands of possibilities in film clubs, in reading circles. It’s a place to find “cadres”, a place to find people. But I see these forms of organisation – I have obviously not listed them – as very rich internationally, from Latin America to Asia. But their viability depends on their ability to participate in solving production and management problems. They

must be filled with the political content we have been talking about.

This strategy can bring together these structures, in fact of course people, on a local and global scale. If I look only at the periodical *Eszmélet*, the anti-capitalist left authors, there is no part of the world where they are not moving in the same line of thought as us, so broad is this anti-capitalist milieu. I always say that I have remained a Marxist intellectual because no other alternative to capitalism has been developed in the history of mankind in the last 200 years. So, either there is a way out of the capitalist system, which Marx started out on and his followers are still following today, or there is no alternative, and then comes the Rosa Luxemburgian question: socialism or barbarism, which István Mészáros said shortly before his death that barbarism is not the worst case...

Capitalism's Deadly Threat

**Joanna Bourke
Luciana Castellina
Fabian Fajnwaks
John Bellamy Foster
Ursula Huws
Maria Karamessini
Kateřina Konečná
Birgit Mahnkopf
Sandro Mezzadra**

transform!

Capitalism's Deadly Threat



MERLIN

2021



2021
transform!
europe

Edited by
**Walter Baier, Eric Canepa
and Haris Golemis**

Heinz Bierbaum, Paolo Ferrero, Riccardo Petrella and the Other Agenda Promotion Group, Leonardo Boff, João Caraça, Marga Ferré, Cornelia Hildebrandt, Luis Infanti de la Mora, Roberto Mancini, Leïla Chaibi, Attila Antal, Tamás Krausz