

Alfredo M. Bonanno

Excluded and Included

The end of ideology has almost arrived, but not quite.

No political apparatus will ever be able to do without it completely. The substantial transformation in the productive structure of capital that has come about all over the world over the past ten years, has emptied nearly all the existing ideological coverings of their meaning. Having said that, one cannot maintain that politics, intended as the managerial and repressive action of the State, has suddenly got closer to people's needs. New ghosts have turned up on the heels of the old, with characteristics that are not always easy to distinguish, it being a question of ideological coverings that are still in formation. We can only say that their objective is still that of exerting pressure on irrational feelings and instincts so as to solicit behaviour favorable to maintaining the order imposed by the class in power.

Among the most immediate movements that jump to our attention is the old mirage of freedom, embalmed in all the logical trappings of the old liberalism and hastily dusted to justify the sinister operations of managing the new markets of the East. All liberalism bases itself on a precise discrimination between two categories of person: one who can enjoy human and political rights and also more concrete one of life itself, and those who have a reduced form of such rights, which are always susceptible to possible suspension or suppression.

It is not necessary to remember here that that paladin of political freedom, Locke, owed his private fortune to investment in English companies that worked in the slave trade for almost a century. The English revolution itself, which the idea of political liberalism came from, had considered the victory over Spain to be a great conquest, in that with the peace treaty of Utrecht it had obtained the destruction of the Spanish monopoly of the slave trade, so began this activity itself on a vast scale.

In reality, if we look closely we see that the new ideological mantle that is about to be thrown over hastily, by the academic organisations that occupy themselves with such things, consists of grafting the old liberal hypocrisy on to the social body that seems more disintegrated today than ever before. Only one thing remains beyond all doubt from this old chatter: men are only equal in principle, whereas in practice they are divided into two categories, those who have rights and those who do not. By right one means the possibility access to sources of wealth, to determining change aimed at reducing the difference in the distribution of revenue, in other words, everything that allows one to put one's hope in a better future, or at least one that is less difficult than the present.

Whether we will be able to see a reduction in the power of States or not, in reality these new political movements are moving at world level towards a phase of managerial opening that might be defined as the possible participation of the inferior strata in the living conditions of the superior, remains to be seen. On the

other hand the ideological effect of this perspective is underway, contributing to creating the better conditions for the structuring of the world in an industrial perspective.

The essential point of this process is that only some, and quite a restricted part, of the producers will be able to reach human conditions of life, meaning by human conditions a greater correspondence between occasions offered by the State and capitalism as a whole, and the possibility to exploit them. The rest, the great majority, will have to find room in separation, in that “dirty” work that the old liberals such as Mandeville compared to that of the slaves. Not “dirty” in the sense of the old physical brutalization, but “dirty” in the true sense of the word, in that it dirties intelligence, defiling it, lowering it, reducing it to the level of machines, alienating the most characteristic quality of man, unpredictability.

In this context, where ideological modernisation is walking hand in hand with profound transformations in the structures of production, a coordinated system of real and imaginary processes all based synchronically on flexibility, adaptability based on democratic assembly discussion, and the critical refusal of an authority that is no longer concerned with efficiency, the old function of the State as centralising element of management and repression, is destined to weaken.

And this weakening is in the order of things, in the spirit of the times, if you like.

But here we need to ask ourselves, is this weakening a positive thing? The reply, at least for anarchists, should be yes. And so it would have been had it not run into, in very recent times, problems that it seems useful to us to point out here.

Let us start with the positive aspects. Any reduction in the power of States is something positive that allows greater spaces of freedom, more consistent defence movements, an expectation of better times, survival if you like, but also organisational forms of struggle that the great repressive colossi destroy with ease. To participate in struggles that break up States is therefore a positive move, and in this sphere national liberation struggles have, unfortunately not always been occasions for breaking into the monolithicity of power and proposing possible lines of social divergence, alternatives capable of demonstrating practically different roads to take. That has often all been swept away by the sudden arrival of more consistent movements, capitalist restructuring in the first place, imperialist upsetting in the repartition of power at the world level, mechanisms in unequal development, etc.

In the present state of affairs, other considerations add themselves to the preceding ones. Not that this be such as to make us consider the struggles negatively.

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