



Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
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The private, the Virus and the Leviathan: The Sars-Cov-2 Crisis and the Metamorphosis of the State

Along the last decades, especially after the Regan-Thatcher de-regulation period, we have assisted to the dismantling of the State, from its conceptualization as a manager of the Common-Good and the embodied of the Common-interest (Rousseau), to its transformation into a formula of indirect private government produced by the constant privatization of basic services such as security, healthcare or education, and the transfer of wealth from the middle and low class to the upper elite. A pattern that represents the destruction of the fundamental pillars that have gestated the very first formula of the liberal state. A transformation, that has been practical, as well as psychological, deeply affecting the behavior we develop as member of a society where values such as solidarity has been completely overcome by a social Darwinism. Having as main consequences the constant degradation of the democratic process and the erosion of the system of check and balances. Through this article, we aim to analyze how the response to the Sars-CoV-2 represents the dissolution of the State, showing the configuration of a system, that tends to “privatize” the government interest. While affirming a very complex phenomenon that we could describe as the “return to authoritarian formulas”.

Key words: Sars-Cov-2 Crisis, Metamorphosis of the State.

1. Introduction

(...)I like to think
(it has to be!)
of a cybernetic ecology
where we are free of our labors
and joined back to nature,
returned to our mammal
brothers and sisters,
and all watched over
by machines of loving grace.

(Richard Brautigan)

“All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace” is the title of poem written by Richard Brautigan and first published in 1967 in a collection of the same name. A depiction of a utopian future where our species is finally able to find equilibrium with the rest of life forms of our planet thanks to the role of modern computation. A poem, related with an ideological and philosophical school,

* Doctor of Law, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Autonomous University of Barcelona.

objectivism, that blossom in the 90's under Clinton administration (in the economical field) thanks to the role of Alan Greenspan, objectivist himself (President of the Federal Reserve from 1987 to 2006), and whose impact in the configuration of the current Global Economy is key to understand the metamorphosis of the State and its legal frameworks. Because it's precisely the trend of de-regulation (standard bearer by the Regan-Thatcher administration and their followers) inflamed by the believe that techno-scientific progress the one that identifies the technological progress as the philosopher stone of a new global order based on "Machines of loving grace". Ultimate responsible of the degradation of the idea of democracy and the ultimate responsible of the metamorphosis of the state in a form of private governance.

Objectivism, as a philosophical school of thought can be understand as anti-communist approach to the organization of society and individual behavior. It was gestated by Ayn Rand, born in Russia in 1905, fled to the United States after the Russian revolution. She considered communism to be deeply immoral, proposing an approach based on radical egoism, a reinvention the "Invisible Hand" of Adam Smith, that in her case not only will be key for the development of the economy, but all aspects of human life, evolving to a radical form of social Darwinism. A philosophy that has its major spread thanks to her novels, first "The Mountain head" and then "Atlas Shrugged" which fully defined the four tenets of objectivism: reality, reason, self-interest and capitalism ¹.

Four tenants that reflect the pillars over Global Economy has been built over the last decades, and whose results are well known to everybody, materialized in the constant erosion of the middle class, and the constant enrichment of those who are already rich. Where the economic boom of the 90's was just a mirage that hide the degradation of the middle-class, camouflaged by data reflecting a constant growth without taking into account the nature of this growth and its distributions among all layers of society, just such happened with the boom and fall of some Asian Economies; South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia also in the 90's. A growth structure that laid the foundations of future global economic crisis, where austerity policies where put in place degrading the quality of life of everyone, except the upper class.

All this process can be explained through the evolution of the Gini Coefficient. Where we observe a constant trend from the 90's in which the capital is concentrating in fewer hands, as it can be clearly observed in the cases of Italy, Spain and the United States of America, three of the countries most affected by the current Pandemic. Italy moved from a 32.5 in 1986 to a 35.9 in 2017 based on estimations of the World Bank ², Spain from 31.8 in 2003 to a 34.7 in 2017, and the US from 35.3 in 1974 to a 41.4 in 2016. A trend that can actually can be easily transfer to our global society, where according to the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report, the world's richest 1 percent, those with more than \$1 million, own 44 percent of the world's wealth ³ Their data also shows that adults with less than \$10,000 in wealth make up 56.6 percent of the world's population but hold less than 2 percent of

¹ Rand A., 2020, <<https://aynrand.org/ideas/philosophy/>> [12.04.2020].

² WorldBank, GINI Index World Bank Estimate, 2020, <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>> [12.04.2020].

³ Credit-Suisse, The Global Wealth Report 2019, <<https://www.credit-suisse.com/about-us/en/reports-research/global-wealth-report.html>> [12.04.1 2020].

global wealth. Individuals owning over \$100,000 in assets make up less than 11 percent of the global population but own 82.8 percent of global wealth.⁴ A process that also has been accompanied by a set of austerity policies (fundamentally in Europe), applied since the break-out of the economic crisis of 2008 that have had as main consequence and erosion of the public services, with an especial impact on the Health Care system. If we attend to the Current health expenditure per capita (in US\$) Spain moved from 2.967.68 in 2008 to 2.389.89 in 2016 and Italy, from 3.489.99 in 2008 to 2.738.71 in 2016⁵

This massive concentration of wealth only can be explained through the existence of a legal framework, that not only has allowed this trend to happen, but facilitate the whole process posing into question the very nature as the state not as the holder of the common interests (as we have been told) but the materialization of the willing of the wealthy/oppressors. A process that nowadays is being accelerated by the massive use of algorithms and AI by the financial institutions which is having a very perverse effect as pointed out by Cathy O'Neil⁶ not just is the dehumanization of the system but in the crystallization of the inequality with special impact over already marginalized communities⁷. As also has been pointed by several scholars^{8 9 10}.

But the very beginning of this system should be found in the post-WWII agreement for the reconstruction of the International society, where the Bretton Woods Conference officially known as the United Nations Monetary Financial Conference (July 1 to 22, 1944) in New Hampshire, when 730 delegates from all 44 Allied nations agreed upon a series of new rules for the international monetary system. And established a system based on free trade relied on the free convertibility of currencies. Giving also birth to the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank (from now on Breton Woods Institutions). A conference that result in the victory of the American model that at the time represented the 50% of the world GDP with just a 7% of the population¹¹.

The new economic system required an accepted vehicle for investment, trade, and payments. Unlike national economies, however, the international economy lacks a central government that can

⁴ FACTS - Global Inequality, <<https://inequality.org/facts/global-inequality/>> [12.04.2020].

⁵ WorldBank, Current Health Expenditure per Capita (Current US\$), Google Public Data Explorer, 2020, <https://www.google.com/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9_&ctype=l&met_y=sh_xpd_pcap&hl=en_US&dl=en_US#!ctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselm=h&met_y=sh_xpd_chex_pc_cd&scale_y=lin&ind_y=false&rdim=world&idim=world:Earth&idim=country:ESP:ITA&ifdim=world&hl=en_US&dl=en_US&ind=false>[15.04.2020].

⁶ O'Neil C., *Weapons of Math Destruction : How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy*, Broadway Books, 2017.

⁷ Martínez-Quirante R., Rodríguez-Alvarez J., *Inteligencia Artificial y Armas Letales Autónomas: Un Nuevo Reto Para Naciones Unidas*, Oviedo: Trea, 2018.

⁸ Boyd D., Levy K., Marwick A., *The Networked Nature of Algorithmic Discrimination*, 2014, <<http://www.danah.org/papers/2014/DataDiscrimination.pdf>> [15.04.2020].

⁹ McQuillan D., Algorithmic States of Exception, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18.4–5 2015, 564–76, <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549415577389>>.

¹⁰ Umoja S., *Algorithms of Oppression : How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, 2016.

¹¹ Bordo M., *The Bretton Woods International Monetary System: A Historical Overview in A Retrospective on the Bretton Woods System: Lessons for International Monetary Reform*, Chicago University Press, 1993, 3–108.

issue currency and manage its use. In the past, this problem had been solved through the gold standard, but the architects of Bretton Woods did not consider this option feasible for the postwar political economy¹². Instead, they set up a system of fixed exchange rates managed by a series of newly created international institutions using the U.S. dollar (which was a gold standard currency for central banks) as a reserve currency. Until in 1971, Richard Nixon end international convertibility of the U.S. dollar to gold¹³ on August 15, exhausted due to the economic landscape generated by the Vietnam War.

The tensions raised during the Cold War between Communism and Capitalism embodied by the USSR and the USA produce a set of anomalies that can be categorized as ideological fundamentalism in both sides having a clear translation through the Bretton Woods Institutions, in a moment in which liberal democracy, was irremediably linked with a capitalistic structure of production¹⁴, just a few countries where able to develop some alternate models based on wealth redistribution strategies, the so-called Social Democratic model (normally attached to the European Nordic countries) during a brief time-lapse (50's to 70's) which finally evolve to the current "laissez-fer" redefined by the Chicago School of Economics. And Economical model that evolve into an holistic interpretation of society were "*market decisions were always right and profit values the supreme ones*" as pointed out by Paul Douglas¹⁵.

2. The Private

The mix represented by the mainstream thought of the School of Chicago, Objectivism and the tool for praxis implementation offered by the Breton Woods Institutions, generated a new whole system by the end of the Cold War, due to the constant pressure exercise by the US administrations in order to export and consolidate their economic model, sometimes by diplomacy sometimes by force; Coup d'état in Venezuela 1948, Paraguay 1954, Guatemala 1954, República Dominicana 1963, Brasil 1964, Argentina 1966, Bolivia 1971, Uruguay 1973, Chile in 1973, Argentina 1976, El Salvador 1979, Panamá 1989, just to name the ones produced in Latin America with direct involvement of the USA during the Cold War period.

A process that collaborated in the generation of private indirect governments, where the private capital have not just a word in the state affairs, but a complete control, supported but the liaisons with the military elites where the Spanish economic miracle during the end of Franco's fascist dictatorship is just a paradigmatic example¹⁶ of this new World economic order. Where countries, divided

¹² Bordo M., *The Gold Standard, Bretton Woods and Other Monetary Regimes: An Historical Appraisal*, 1993.

¹³ Douglas I., *The Nixon Shock after Forty Years: The Import Surcharge Revisited*, *World Trade Review*, 12.1 2013, 29–56.

¹⁴ Leeson R., *Ideology and the International Economy: The Decline and Fall of Bretton Woods*, Springer, 2003.

¹⁵ Douglas P., *In the Fullnes of Time*, 1972, 127-128.

¹⁶ Lieberman S., *Growth and Crisis in the Spanish Economy: 1940-1993 (Vol. 1)* London/New York: Routledge, 2005.

following the same schemes of social classes, where the wealth concentrated in a few, and the rest act as providers of cheap labor, and natural resources under the fierce control of the new metropolitan order¹⁷; first by major uses of force, and secondly by a carefully manufactured consent¹⁸. And where the interest of the private not only influenced governance but determined it, a phenomenon that is not completely new, but expanded itself at exponential rate.

The materialization of this private indirect government, can be exemplified with the case of Chiquita Brands International, formerly known as United Fruit Company. An American corporation that traded tropical foods, (primarily bananas) that has had a deep and long-lasting impact on the economic and political development of several Latin American countries, representing an evolve form of neocolonialism, focus in the interest of the private, not the state, close to the case of the Congo Free State, established in 1885, at the Berlin Conference, as an African colonial domain privately owned by King Leopold II of Belgium, who from then on administered it privately until 1908, when the territory was ceded to Belgium, after a period of horror that Sir Marti Ewans qualified as an European atrocity¹⁹.

The case of Chiquita exemplified the behavior of the economic elite, a pattern that now a days goes beyond the interference with external countries interest, but also the one where the companies are from. This company became in 2007 *“the first U.S.-based corporation convicted of violating a U.S. law against funding an international terrorist group – the paramilitary United Self-defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). But punishment for the crime was reserved only for the corporate entity, while the names of the individual company officials who engineered the payments have since remained hidden behind a wall of impunity.”*²⁰ but their history of involvement in the region is much bigger, as portrayed in the work *The Octopus and the Generals: The United Fruit Company in Guatemala*²¹.

In 1901, the government of Guatemala hired the United Fruit Company to manage the country's postal service and in 1913 the United Fruit Company created the Tropical Radio and Telegraph Company. By the 1930s the company owned 3.5 million acres of land in Central America and the Caribbean and was the single largest land owner in Guatemala. Such holdings gave it great power over the governments of small countries. That was one of the factors that led to the coining of the phrase "banana republic"²², in a continent still determined by the Monroe Doctrine²³.

¹⁷ Balibar E., Wallerstein I., Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities, 1991.

¹⁸ Herman E., Chomsky N., Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media, 2nd Ed., London: Random House, 2010.

¹⁹ Ewans M., European Atrocity, African Catastrophe: Leopold II, the Congo Free State and Its Aftermath, Psychology Press, 2002.

²⁰ National Security Archive, The New Chiquita Papers: Secret Testimony and Internal Records Identify Banana Executives Who Bankrolled Terror in Colombia, 2017 <<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/colombia-chiquita-papers/2017-04-24/new-chiquita-papers-secret-testimony-internal-records-identify-banana-executives-who-bankrolled>> [12.04.2020].

²¹ Jones G., Bucheli M., The Octopus and the Generals: The United Fruit Company in Guatemala, 2005, <<https://store.hbr.org/product/the-octopus-and-the-generals-the-united-fruit-company-in-guatemala/805146?sku=805146-PDF-ENG>> [12.04.2020].

²² Livingstone G., America's Backyard: The United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror, Zed Books, 2009.

This form of indirect government, lead not only to the manufacturing of governments through American Intervention (CIA, School of the Americas)²⁴ but also new forms of workers exploitation and new forms of practical slavery through the structuration of monocultures where United Fruit Company was the single employer, imposing it's rules and work conditions, showing the true nature of wage labor as a mechanism for reproducing traditional slavery as pointed out decades before by Kropotkin²⁵.

A situation that lead to episodes such as “The Banana a massacre” of United Fruit Company workers that took place between December 5 and 6, 1928 in the town of Ciénaga near Santa Marta, Colombia. The strike organized by the workers began on November 12, 1928, when work ceased until the company would reach an agreement with them to grant them dignified working conditions. After several weeks with no agreement and no work, costing the company severe financial losses, the conservative government of Miguel Abadía Méndez sent the Colombian army in against the strikers, resulting in the massacre. After U.S. officials in Colombia and United Fruit representatives portrayed the workers' strike as "communist" with a "subversive tendency" in telegrams to Frank B. Kellogg, the United States Secretary of State, the United States government threatened to invade with the U.S. Marine Corps if the Colombian government did not act to protect United Fruit's interests²⁶. Around 5000 workers were brutally murdered in that event²⁷. Which, in fact, directly link the history of exploitation with the recent activities of Chiquita funding paramilitary and terrorist groups. But are not the only atrocities perpetrated by this Company which in collaboration with the Bio-Chemical conglomerate have been poisoning Central America since the beginning of the Green Revolution²⁸. A revolution that was powered up due to the stock of bio-chemical weapons that the allies didn't use during the WWII²⁹.

The case of United Fruit Company/ Chiquita, is just an example of the marriage between economic and political elite, that ultimately has led to a complete erosion of the state, not just in third world countries, but also in the first world generating a new dynamic that has been described as Necropolitics³⁰. A system that represents a new phase of the Bio-politics as described by Foucault³¹ determined by the rule of profits over all spheres of life. Mbembe theorizes the genealogy of a contemporary world, plagued by ever-increasing inequality, militarization, enmity, and terror as well as by a resurgence of racist, fascist, and nationalist forces determined to exclude and kill. And he

²³ *Gilrhys M.*, The Monroe Doctrine: Meanings and Implications', Presidential Studies Quarterly, 36.1 2006, 5–16.

²⁴ *Gill L.*, The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas, Duke University Press, 2004.

²⁵ *Kropotkin P.*, The Conquest of the Bread and Other Writings, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

²⁶ *Wolf P.*, The Santa Marta Massacre , Internet Archive, 2012, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20120717004708/http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/santamarta.htm>> [12.04.2020].

²⁷ *Castrillón A.*, 120 Días Bajo El Terror Militar, Bogotá: Tupac Amaru, 1974.

²⁸ *Wheat A.*, Toxic Bananas, Multinational Monitor, 17.9 1996, 9.

²⁹ *Shiva V.*, The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology, and Politics, University Press of Kentucky,, 2016.

³⁰ *Mbembe A.*, Necropolitics, in Foucault in an Age of Terror London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 152–82.

³¹ *Foucault M.*, Microfísica Del Poder, 1st Ed., Madrid: Endymion Ediciones, 1978.

outlines how democracy has begun to embrace its dark side -what he calls its “nocturnal body”- which is based on the desires, fears, affects, relations, and violence that drove colonialism. Where human life is quantified and stocked as a mere mean of production, where its value is just related with its position in the social ladder³².

This shift has hollowed out democracy, thereby eroding the very values, rights, and freedoms liberal democracy routinely celebrates. As a result, war has become the sacrament of our times in a conception of sovereignty that operates by annihilating all those considered enemies of the state. And it’s precisely the concept of war and enemy of the state, which allow us to trace a relation with the current situation developed by the Sars-CoV-2 which has been currently presented by official speeches as an enemy, embedded in a renovate war dialectics, even with the constant apparition of soldiers at government press conferences accompanying civil decision-makers.

3. The Virus

Richard Horton, the editor of “The Lancet” has qualified “*The global response to Sars-CoV-2 is the greatest failure of science policy of our generation. The signs were there. Hendra in 1994, Nipah in 1998, Sars in 2003, Mers in 2012 and Ebola in 2014; all those great epidemics that affected humans were caused by viruses that are born in animals and then jump to humans. Covid-19 is caused by a new variant of the virus that caused Sars.*”³³.

A situation, that only can be explained through the erosion of the state, and the indirect private governance path that identifies profit as good governance. Resulting in the configuration of States that has been organize as a productive system, where the balance between labor rights and capital gain turned to be determined again by the “Iron law of wages”, a proposed law of economics that asserts that real wages always tend, in the long run, toward the minimum wage necessary to sustain the life of the worker^{34 35}.

And where democracy falls again into the “Iron Law of oligarchy”, first developed by the German-Italian sociologist Robert Michaels in his 1911 book, *Political Parties*³⁶. A law that states that all forms of organization, regardless of how democratic they may be at the start, will eventually and inevitably develop oligarchic tendencies, thus making true democracy practically and theoretically impossible, especially in large groups and complex organizations. The relative structural fluidity in a small-scale democracy succumbs to "social viscosity" in a large-scale organization. According to the "iron law," democracy and large-scale organization are incompatible, as it seem to be clears in the

³² Rodríguez, J., *La Civilización Ausente: Tecnología y Sociedad En La Era de La Incertidumbre*, 1st Ed., Oviedo: Trea, 2016.

³³ Horton R., *La Gestión Del Coronavirus Es El Mayor Fracaso En Políticas Científicas de Nuestra Generación*, Eldiario.Es, 2020, <https://www.eldiario.es/theguardian/gestion-coronavirus-politicas-cientificas-generacion_0_1015248658.html> [17.04.2020].

³⁴ Wolf J., *Iron Law of Wages*, *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, Wiley, 2014.

³⁵ Marx K., *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Wildside Press, 2008.

³⁶ Michaels R., *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchial Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, Martino Fine Books, 2016.

management of the current pandemic, where the Chinese model has been repeatedly praised by International Organizations and western countries³⁷, leading to strategies based in the erosion of civil freedoms.

So, we found ourselves defenseless in front of a situation, that wasn't at all unexpected as pointed out by Horton: *"In 1994 Laurie Garrett published a clairvoyant book, a notice, The Coming Plague. Her conclusion was: "As mankind fights each other, the game falls on the side of the microbes, which are gaining ground. They are our predators and will win if we Homo sapiens do not learn to live in a global village that leaves few opportunities for microbes. (...) The risks of a pandemic can be measured and quantified. As Garrett and the Institute of Medicine have shown, the dangers of a new epidemic have been known and understood since the emergence of HIV in the 1980s. Since then, at least 75 million people have become infected with the virus and have died 32 million people. It may not have spread across the planet at the speed of Sars-CoV-2, but its long shadow should have put governments on alert to take the necessary measures in the face of the outbreak of a new virus."* (op.cit)

Oppressed by States whose interest are far away from the safety and security of its citizens, but guided by the greed of the economical elite and private sector, surrounded by legal framework that allow the state to risk the life of its citizens just to maintain economic productivity, making our life's, as pointed out by Mbembe just as objects of consumption. Where the situation of the nursing homes in the case for example of Spain is paradigmatic of the protection of the non-productive elements done by the State. Till 10th of April were accounted 8,500 seniors died in public and private nursing homes³⁸. A situation that also affected other non-productive groups, such as the people with disabilities (at least in Madrid), who are being discarded for Intensive Care Units, a question that is currently under the investigation of the Office of Attention for people with disabilities³⁹.

But the central point is not just the deaths (collateral damage) of non-productive citizens, but the political and "democratic" assumption of this deaths. Just is necessary to remember the declarations of the Lieutenant governor of Texas, Dan Patrick to Fox News *"Do we have to shut down the entire country for this? I think we can get back to work"* and *"My message: let's get back to work, let's get back to living, let's be smart about it, and those of us who are 70-plus, we'll take care of ourselves,"* Representing the complete moral decay of a system able to sacrifice the elder to maintain the capital gains of the big corporations. Examples of immoral greed that can be found all over, but especially in those countries most affected by the Sars-Cov-2. A behavior that has been even more radical in the case of the speakers of the private sector.

³⁷ AP, 'WHO Chief Praises China's Virus Fight, Urges More from World', AP, 2020, <<https://apnews.com/d305b8c6fcc5ac1f1a6e24382e6769fb>> [17.04.2020].

³⁸ EuropaPress, Más de 8.000 Mayores Han Fallecido En Residencias En España En El Marco de La Pandemia', *Europa Press*, 2020, <<https://www.europapress.es/sociedad/noticia-mas-8000-mayores-fallecido-residencias-espana-marco-pandemia-20200409194727.html>> [17.04.2020].

³⁹ Pérez-Mendoza S., Rosa, Una Mujer Contagiada Con Discapacidad Intelectual: En El Hospital Nos Dijeron Que No Entraría En La UCI, *Eldiario.Es*, 2020, <https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/denuncia-UCI-discapacidad-intelectual-Madrid_0_1015598504.html> [15.04.2020].

For example, in Italy, epicenter of the European crisis, on February 28, in full emergency for Coronavirus the Italian industrial employers, Confindustria, started a campaign in networks with the hashtag #YesWeWork. "We have to tone down, make public opinion understand that the situation is normalizing, that people can return to live as before," said the president of Confindustria Lombardy, Marco Bonometti, in the media. While the same day, Confindustria Bergamo, epicenter of the Italian crisis, launched its own campaign aimed at foreign investors to convince them that nothing was happening there and that they were not going to quit. The slogan was unequivocal: "Bergamo non si ferma / Bergamo is running" (Bergamo does not stop) ⁴⁰.

The message of the promotional video for international partners was: "*Coronavirus cases have been diagnosed in Italy, but like in many other countries,*" and "*The risk of infection is low.*" While blaming the media for unwarranted fear-mongering, and while showing workers working in their factories. They affirmed that all factories would continue "*open and at full capacity, as always.*" And exercise of immorality and a show of force over the working classes, something very similar to the strategies developed by United Fruit Company a century ago.

Just five days later, the huge outbreak of infections and deaths broke out, which ended up being the most important in Italy and Europe (till the moment). But neither did they withdraw the campaign, much less did they consider closing the factories. Confindustria Bergamo that groups 1,200 companies that employ more than 80,000 workers. All were exposed to the virus, forced to go to work, largely without adequate measures - overcrowded, without a safety distance or protective material - putting themselves and their entire environment at risk. With complete complicity of the Italian government that chose the interest of the economy over the health of its citizens. ⁴¹

But their praxis didn't end in the moment they realized the magnitude of the catastrophe. On Saturday, March 21, when Italy achieved the record of almost 800 daily deaths. Moment, when the governors of Lombardy and Piedmont - another great industrial pole of northern Italy - declared that the situation was unsustainable and that it was necessary to stop productive activity ⁴². Conte, Italian primer minister, who until then had been contrary to the measure, appeared overwhelmed at night to say yes, that now, "*all non-essential productive economic activities*" would be closed ⁴³. Confindustria was immediately activated and launched a pressure offensive against the Government. "*Not all non-*

⁴⁰ Bergamonews, Coronavirus, "Bergamo Non Si Ferma": Sui Social Il Video d'incoraggiamento', <<https://www.bergamonews.it/2020/02/28/coronavirus-bergamo-non-si-ferma-sui-social-il-video-dincoraggiamento/356658/>> [16.04.2020].

⁴¹ Sidera A., Bergamo, La Masacre Que La Patronal No Quiso Evitar, *Ctxt*, 2020 <<https://ctxt.es/es/20200401/Politica/31884/Alba-Sidera-Italia-coronavirus-lombardia-patronal-economia-muertes.htm>> [17.04.2020].

⁴² ANSA, Coronavirus: "Close Piedmont", Governor Cirio Calls for More Stringent Measures, *ANSA*, 2020, <https://www.ansa.it/english/news/politics/2020/03/11/coronavirus-close-piedmont-governor_4937c432-a7c6-4afe-adcd-7801b259defd.html> [14.04.2020].

⁴³ Leali G., 'Italy Closes All Nonessential Factories to Halt Spread of Coronavirus', *Politico.Eu*, 22 March 2020, <<https://www.politico.eu/article/italy-closes-all-nonessential-factories-to-halt-spread-of-coronavirus-giuseppe-conte/>> [14.04.2020].

essential activities can be closed," they said in a letter to the premier detailing their demands. The industrialists managed to take the decree 24 hours to be approved and Conte to accept its conditions.⁴⁴

Confindustria, managed to add many that were not essential to the list of activities that could continue to operate, such as those of the arms and ammunition industry (maybe to fight against the virus). In addition, they included a kind of clause that allowed, in practice, any company that declared that it was "functional" for an essential economic activity could remain open. This caused that in just one day, in Brescia, the other Lombard province hit by the coronavirus, more than 600 companies that were not on the essential list began the procedures to continue operating. (Íbidem)

Showing not just the control that the private exercises over the state, but also, the immorality of State, the government, and the capitalistic system, nothing new, but this time it's not experienced by a country in Latin America or Africa, silenced by the mass media. This time the massacre is happening in Europe and the USA, lead by those who find themselves extremely comfortable in the balance between profit and litigation cost.

The attacks from the economic elit didn't cease once the magnitude of the tragedy was perfectly visible, and they move on with the old alliances, where the military appear into the scene. Maybe the most paradigmatic case is Spain, embodied now a day in a belligerent and pseudo militaristic dialectics, where speakers of the army appear daily, with members of the government, to explain us that we are in war against a virus in order to generate a smoke curtain of diversion in order to make people forget, that the enemy it's not the virus, but the system. Even, Pedro Sanchez, prime-minister of Spain, ruling thanks to a "theoretically" leftist coalition, use more and more in his speeches words like "war", "postwar" or "mortal enemy"⁴⁵ curiously referring to a virus, and not to those that are forcing the workers to expose themselves and die. A Prime minister to order to reopen factories the 13th April, following the dictates of the private sector⁴⁶.

4. The Leviathan

"For it must be cried out, at a time when some have the audacity to neo-evangelize in the name of the ideal of a liberal democracy that has finally realized itself as the ideal of human history: never have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of the earth and of humanity. Instead of singing the advent of the ideal of liberal democracy and of the capitalist market in the euphoria of the end of history, instead of celebrating the 'end of ideologies' and the end of the great emancipatory discourses, let us never neglect this obvious, macroscopic fact, made up of innumerable, singular sites of suffering: no degree of progress allows

⁴⁴ Sidera A., Bérghamo, La Masacre Que La Patronal No Quiso Evitar, *Ctxt*, 2020, <<https://ctxt.es/es/20200401/Politica/31884/Alba-Sidera-Italia-coronavirus-lombardia-patronal-economia-muertes.htm>> [17.04.2020].

⁴⁵ CadenaSer, El Lenguaje Bélico de Sánchez Que No Pasa Desapercibido En Redes Sociales, CadenaSer, 2020, <https://cadenaser.com/ser/2020/04/12/politica/1586703945_346985.html>.

⁴⁶ Aljazeera, Spain Loosens Coronavirus Lockdown, Aljazeera, 2020, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/spain-loosens-coronavirus-lockdown-200413104227651.html>>.

one to ignore that never before, in absolute figures, have so many men, women and children been subjugated, starved or exterminated on the earth”⁴⁷

Technological progress and egoism didn't fulfill the promises of utopian scenarios as imagined by Rand or Greenspan, neither history have achieved no end as predicted by Fukuyama⁴⁸, nor we find ourselves in a clash of civilizations⁴⁹. We are in a recurrent cycle determined by the clash between the owners of the means of production and “the others” as identifies by historical materialism⁵⁰, with the difference that in the current system nothing produces more than capital.

It doesn't matter how many times liberal intellectuals and scholars try to confront us by nationality, race or religion as shown by Balibar and Wallerstein⁵¹; material reality, in this case embodied by the Sars-CoV-2 always find its ways. The social crisis, the crisis of the state and the chaotic management of the pandemic, only can be explain through the materialization of the power of the state over its citizens, and the power of the private sector over the state. Which translate itself in the degradation of the working conditions and the constant devaluation of human life, as highly replaceable when non-productive.

Never through history we have been able to achieve so much techno-scientific progress in less time. Never we have been able to construct models to predict future development with such accuracy as today, and never we have been able to develop a bigger corpus of International regulations for our Global society, but all these efforts are useless if greed it's at the center of our cosmovision. Because technology it's just an amplifier of the human will as affirmed by Kentaro Toyama⁵². And the State and it's legal frameworks, it's nothing else than the materialization of the willing of the powerful. Allowing us to discover, that under one of the major crisis of the century, the system is able to sacrifice people before nationalizing companies, because the private sector and its interest is who really is controlling the state and its interest.

We are ruled not by Machines of Loving Grace, but by an elite that loves greed, and use all the means necessary to reproduce the context of privileges they are embed on. An elite, that as always, is able to appropriate of all means of production, also the digital ones in order to reproduce and maintain the system of privileges they profit from. Whose materialization could be find in the regulations and measures put in place in the current health crisis, where a citizen isn't able to say goodbye to his mother dying in a hospital, or even organize a funeral due to the policies of social distancing, but is called to go to work using public transportation. A set of contradiction that as so visible that results into a tremendous obscenity, but accepted through heavily develop mechanisms of social control that allows it to manufacture consent⁵³.

⁴⁷ *Derrida J.*, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, The Work of Mourning and the New International*, Routledge, 2012, chpt. 3,87.

⁴⁸ *Fukuyama F.*, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Simon and Schuster, 2006.

⁴⁹ *Huntington S. P.*, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, *Foreign Affairs*, 72.3 1993, 22–49.

⁵⁰ *Marx K.*, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Arkose Press, 2015.

⁵¹ *Balibar E., Wallerstein I.*, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London, New York, 1991.

⁵² ITU and XPRIZE, *AI for Good Global Summit Geneva, 2017*, <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/AI/Documents/Report/AI_for_Good_Global_Summit_Report_2017.pdf> [27.03.2017].

⁵³ *Herman E., Chomsky N.*, *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*, 2nd ed., London: Random House, 2010.

The Leviathan is dead if ever existed, been just the suit wear by the corporate interest, the banking and financial companies, the tech giants that announce agreement to fight Sars-Cov-2 using our data in ways that can compromise future notions of privacy⁵⁴. The State is today declaring states of alarm, restricting rights and civil freedoms, applying censorship through internet and other forms of social control in a new love-affair with authoritarian expressions of power. States of alarm that prohibit you to go out to the street, except it is for work and serve the interest of the capital.

5. Conclusion

The domestication of the Leviathan by the private interest, represent just the confirmation of an historical trend where the owners of the means of production in their constant look for profit, have exposed their population, workers, to innumerable risk all along history, degrading their living conditions while preventing all kind of freedom or self-organization through the means provided by the state of law. Something that has happened in all previous systems, with big difference that represents globalization and modern technology, allowing new forms of social control, and alienation of the population. A new phase of the shock doctrine⁵⁵ that probably could be avoided if the policies of Austerity dictate by the Bretton Woods Institutions in collaboration with other Administrations such as the EU but always under scrutiny of the private, haven't be put in place degrading the welfare state, and specially the healthcare system in such dramatic way.

The current crisis, is just an expression of the contradictions of late-capitalism⁵⁶, in a moment when globalization has made especially easy a domino effect with affectations over all layers of the system. The attempts to save the elite from the disastrous effect of this crisis, through the continuation of the economic activity instead of being looking for alternatives for the reconstruction is just a proof of the submission of the state to the corporate.

Every democratic state exists “theoretically” to protect its citizenship, if it is to be regarded as a true democratic state and of law as portrait by the defenders of the liberal democracy. Citizens cede their rights to the state to regulate them so they can exercise rights and freedoms, without fear that could be loose, even in cases of confrontation or a collision of interests. Because - even if it happens - there will always be “theoretically” a law and courts that will determine the just reason for one or the other in the conflict.

When the state does not regulate the rights that have assigned to it, when it loses its obligations, when it does not protect or respect the citizens or when it tramples on rights and freedoms, then it loses its legitimacy, it denies itself, it ceases to have *auctoritas* and it is no longer the rule of law and

⁵⁴ *Brandom R.*, Answering the 12 Biggest Questions about Apple and Google's New Coronavirus Tracking Project, The Verge, 2020, <<https://www.theverge.com/2020/4/11/21216803/apple-google-coronavirus-tracking-app-covid-bluetooth-secure>> [27.03.2017].

⁵⁵ *Klein N., Peet R.*, The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism., Human Geography, 1.2 2008, 130–33.

⁵⁶ *Jameson F.*, Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, Postmodernism: A Reader, 1st Ed., London, Verso Books, 1992.

democracy to which its citizens had freely ceded their rights for a specific purpose. It becomes --with the idea of the Italian philosopher and scholar Donatella Di Cesare - an incontestable 'non-state'⁵⁷.

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