

A SOCIETY WHERE THERE IS ROOM FOR ALL: THE IMPOTENCE OF OMNIPOTENCE

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In the 50's and 60's, the conviction that the First World showed the Third World its way to the future was dominant. Nevertheless, today we can see the opposite: the Third World shows the First World what its future will be. What the western world had imposed onto the Third World in the 70's and 80's, by means of its support to the National Security dictatorships and the structural adjustment imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is revealed today as the future of the First World itself:

- the destruction of the social State (of "Welfare") and the increasing impoverishment, exclusion and precariousness of the population
- unemployment and flexibilization of work contracts

"The police State liberates, the social State enslaves" seemed to be the motto openly unexpressed by the National Security dictatorships in Latin America during the 70's and 80's, but it was something present, in fact, everywhere.

When in March of 1995 a law by which a substantial amount for social aid were to be eliminated was approved in the United States of America (USA), the President of the Congress, Newt Gringich, asked the following question:

Why those who pay their taxes should help unwedded mothers under 18 years old [mostly black women]?

Gringich celebrated the results of the voting which implied the abolition of a great part for social aid, as the end of a system which had "enslaved" the recipients of this aid¹.

In Germany today this motto may also be preferred: "The police State liberates, the social State enslaves". The

¹ Reproduced by the German newspaper *Schleswiger Nachrichten*, 27. III. 1995.

expelling of foreigners and their preventive imprisonment (*Abschiebehaft*), euphemisms for deportations and internment camps, are already part of their daily-life. Germany appears in the *Amnesty International* lists due to such a high number of prisoners abuses—especially foreigners—, making hard to believe that they are isolated cases. The verbal formulations by which the government and political parties react to the Amnesty International accusations, suspiciously seem like the ones used by the National Security dictatorships, from Chile to Guatemala, in rejecting similar accusations from the Human Rights organizations.

The resulting mottoes are known to us: we cannot afford the luxury of maintaining previous wages. We cannot afford the luxury of full employment. We cannot afford the luxury of an adequate professional formation for our young people. We cannot afford the luxury to keep paying a social aid which protects the poorest people from misery. We cannot afford either the luxury of a policy of social housing construction, limiting rentals.

Facing similar mottoes before the consequences of the North American free trading zone, some churches in Canada started a campaign: *We can't afford the rich*.

Can we really afford the luxury of maintaining so many concentrated riches if we want to assure human dignity in these present times?

Max Weber talks about "that 'slavery without a master', in which capitalism involves workers or debtors (burdened with mortgages)"².

What can we do before that "slavery without a master?". And, what does it mean?

In the following pages, I will present some theses.

² Weber, Max: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* [Economy and Society]. Tübingen, 1972, pp. 708s.

1. First Thesis: a liberation project today has to be a project for a society where there is room for all and no one is excluded

In Latin America today a concept of a new society and of justice is arising, clearly distinguished from previous concepts. By the same token, it is also linked with new forms of social praxis.

When reporters asked the Zapatistas rebels from the Mexican province of Chiapas what was the project they imagined for Mexico, they answered: "a society in which there is room for all". A project of this nature implies a universal ethics. But it does not dictate universally valid ethical principles. It does not prescribe nor general universalistic norms nor universally valid, determined production relations.

The fact that a liberation movement defines itself in this manner, it means something new. Previous movements were defined more by universalistic principles or new production relations, although determined beforehand and universally valid. The socialist movements, especially, defined their project by means of the so-called "socialist production relations". These were understood in the formal sense as a fixedly defined shape of society, based especially on public property and central planning. In this sense they were very similar to the bourgeois movements, which determine their project of a bourgeois society by means of the universalistic principle of private property and market. In both cases, the social project is marked by universally valid ordaining principles. In their corresponding social theories, these principles derive or are deducted from in a principled manner; for example, of the individual's autonomy postulated *a priori* or about his or her sociability, also given in *an a priori* manner. In consequence, these universalistic principles are considered as "eternal" principles. In their name the "end of history" is declared, and laws of history determining with necessity this end of history. The last case of historical laws of this kind, with its final point in the end of history, we are living it today with the celebration of world globalization by means of the market and its eternal principles.

If in Latin America today—as shown regarding the Zapatistas—a society's project appears that does not want to base universalistic and eternal principles of society, it is, in general, something new in the context of the existing political movements and not only from the liberation movements. A society in which there is room for all implies an exigency in a rather negative form. It does not pretend to know which form of society is the only correct one. Neither it maintains to know how can we make human beings happy. While market or planning promise paradise, this project does not promise a paradise. Before society's universalistic principles, the exigency of a society where there is room for all is rather a universal validity criterion on the validity of such universalistic principles of society.

The universalistic principles of society—market and private property or planning and social property—are

subject to a validity criterion. This implies that their universalistic *a priori* validity is denied. But their validity is not denied in *a priori* terms either. Instead, a possible validity frame is circumscribed. They are, or can be valid, in that they are compatible with a society where there is room for all. They lose their validity if their imposition presupposes the exclusion of complete sections of society. Nevertheless, this kind of exclusion is in the essence of the universalistic principles of society, provided that they are totalized. Thus, they can only have relative validity.

This position implies, as well, a new relationship with political praxis. In not having the Zapatistas a definitive positive project which pretends to impose new society principles, in the name of its imposition they could demand power to the government, they are understood rather as resistance. Subcommander Marcos has declared that the Zapatistas do not seek the seizing of power, and until now, their behavior makes credible that affirmation. What they are indeed claiming is to be a resistant power to force the government to create such production relations allowing the arising of a society where there is room for all. This implies the need for relativizing any society's principle so that production relations are flexible enough for the achievement of this goal.

In this way, the society's principles of pretended universalistic value are substituted by a universal relativization criterion for society's principles that demand universalistic validity in the name of general principles. This universal criterion about the validity of universalistic principles is still the criterion of a universal humanism. But in no way they maintain to know what is the form in which human beings have to live and what is the "good life". Independently from the imaginations they have of what a good life is, these are subject to the universal criterion according to which the good life of some should not imply the impossibility for others to live. Thus, it is not a question of just a criterion about the validity of society's principles pretending to be universalistic, but also about a criterion on the imaginations of what everyone's good life is or of particular cultures.

In this sense, it is a question of a categorical imperative of practical reason, that is, a categorical imperative of concrete action. Nevertheless, it is different from the Kantian one, which precisely pretends to base universalistic norms and a society's principle—that is, of bourgeois society—by means of a purely principled derivation. Thus, inasmuch as the validity of these norms, Kant is rigorous in extreme. So, his categorical imperative is of abstract action.

Looking at the Zapatista project in Latin America, it is certain that is something new. Although, as it happens with every novelty of this kind, it is rooted in a long tradition of human thought about justice and the corresponding orientations for action.

Already in the old Jewish tradition it can be discovered a categorical imperative for concrete action of this kind. "You shall not kill" is understood in the prophetic tradition exactly in a way implying "you shall not seek the good life in such a way as taking from others their possibilities for living". Thus, that exclusion is to be considered as stealing.

A similar thought is present in the Aristotelian-Tomistic tradition of natural Law. It finds its orientation in the

maxim that the good life of someone should not make impossible the life of others.

But equally, there are important antecedents in the thought of modernity. Starting from his criticism to Soviet Socialism, Sartre goes as far as to describe a free society where "the only impossibility is the impossibility of living"³.

Nevertheless, in the writings of young Marx we also find this form of categorical imperative for concrete action. Marx talks about the "categorical imperative of overthrowing all relations in which human beings are humiliated, subjugated, abandoned and made despicable beings"⁴. Young Marx does not link yet this categorical imperative with any principled deduction of some so-called "socialist production relations" which again pretend to have eternal value, just as the capitalistic production relations do. In consequence, Marx defines Communism as the "production of the form of change itself" (*Produktion der Verkerformselbst*), using the denomination "form of change" to what he later will call social production relations. Thus, he sees the problem in the flexibilization and relativization of social production relations that are considered as eternal and universally valid society's principles.

Later on, Marx distances himself in a progressive way from this starting point, although he never abandons it completely. I think this has a reason in his idea of being able to renounce in a definite form to institutionalized production relations and to institutionally affirmed formal norms. This idea, precisely, by inversion, leads to the attempt of creating socialist social production relations of eternal validity and deducted from some society's principles. The reason can be found in the anarchist root of Marx's vision. The Stalinist reaction to this anarchism leads to the reversal of Marx's position by means of the constitution of "socialist production relations".

After the failure of this attempt of a socialism based on supposedly eternal and universally valid principles, that is, after the failure of historical socialism societies, it becomes understandable that ideas of a new society which conceive the mediation between the categorical imperative for concrete action with universal criteria and society's principles of a universalistic form appear today. This mediation conceives the flexibilization of social production relations as a condition for the possibility of a society where there is room for all.

³ Sartre, J. P.: *Crítica de la razón dialéctica* [Critique of Dialectic Reason]. Buenos Aires, Losada, 1963. "...the reality was not until now nothing more than the need of living the impossibility for life; it becomes the practical realization for trying of a world in which the impossibility of human life would be the only impossible thing". *Ibid.*, volume II, p. 512.

⁴ Marx, Karl: "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung" ["Introduction to Criticism of Hegel's philosophy of Law"]. *MEW*, Bd 1, p. 385.

2. Second Thesis: the logic of exclusion underlying modern society can be understood as a result of the totalization of universalistic social principles. In Capitalism it is a question of market laws and their totalization (globalization)

If I talk here about totalization, I do not do it for arbitrary reasons. In reality, the world capitalistic system today presents itself as total. Henri Lepage, a French reporter who had been for a long time the main propagandist of Neo-liberalism in France, already talked about a "total market". Milton Friedman, one of the creators of Neo-liberalism in the USA, talks in an interview with Guy Sorman about "total Capitalism"⁵. In Latin America and the USA, the word *total* has been transformed in a dominant word. Even Colgate toothpaste is sold as "total Colgate". In Germany, a total toothbrush is offered. The new production and selling strategies are called "total quality". Fujimori talks about "total pacification". Even the current Pope says that he wants priests with "total faith". And in San José, a shoe repair person had been very successful in calling his poor business a "total shoe repair shop".

This "total Capitalism" becomes present as world globalization and homogenization, thus as market totalization and privatization of public functions in the name of private property.

Some years ago, in a flight from Santiago, Chile, I had a Chilean businessman as a travel companion. In the course of our conversation, I talked about the consequences of structural adjustments in Latin America, about the increasing environmental destruction, and about the expelling and pauperization of an increasing sector of the population as its results. He answered: "Everything is true. But you cannot deny that efficiency and economical rationality have increased".

These words reveal the problem of economical rationality in our times, and not only in reference to Latin America. We are unleashing a process of destruction subverting the foundations of our life, nevertheless, we celebrate the efficiency and rationality with which this process is carried out. The result is that we do not even enter into a discussion about this efficiency basis. We are in a competition in which each of us is cutting the branch were another one is sitting. The most efficient one is the one left in the end, and he or she will be the last to fall into the abyss. Even when he or she are convinced of the opposite, he or she had cut precisely the branch were they were sitting.

⁵ Sorman, Guy: "Sauver le capitalisme-Le dernier combat de Milton Friedman" (To save Capitalism-Milton Friedman's last fight) in *Le Devoir* (Montreal, Canada), April 5 1994, p. B2.

Is this sort of efficiency efficient? Is this rationality rational?

The inside of our homes is cleaner every time, but the surroundings get dirtier. Businesses succeed in an even greater work productivity in relation to the number of workers effectively used. But, if we measure this product in relation to the number of available workers, including in this number the excluded population, and if we value, in addition, the external costs of business activities, it is possible to conclude that work productivity is decreasing, despite the positive measurement rates. It is a similar situation to that of a planet that gets dirtier every day, while the inside of our homes gets cleaner every day: dirtiness as a whole grows. What for a long time had been technical progress, and still seems to be so, seems to be transforming in a simple movement in vacuum. In the name of efficiency and competition, we buy cheaper every day and we do not realize that buying cheap can be the most expensive way of buying. To buy cheap, we are having a bargain sale of human beings and Nature. In this way, we incur in costs surpassing, by far, all the profits we get when buying cheap.

This is the problem of the mean-end calculation. Efficiency becomes exclusively a relation between particular means with particular ends. The question about whether is rational to cut a branch is answered now just in reference to the saw being well sharpened, if it is used in an adequate way, if it gets cut in the right place, etc. If one is sitting in the branch being cut, it does not seem to be a problem of efficiency nor economical rationality. This question is considered a value judgment about which science cannot judge. This attitude is transformed into an ethics, if this rationality calculation is carried out as a formal calculation in terms of money. Thus, a market functional ethics corresponds, reducing ethics to merely procedural exigencies, as for example the property warranty and the exigency of contract fulfillment. In relation to this market ethics, the rationality mean-end is transformed into nothing more than an ethical rigorousness. Here, the rationality of action has nothing to do with the consequences of the action. This is why Hayek, one of the most important ideologists of present-day Neo-liberalism, can conceive justice in the following terms: "Justice, of course, is not a matter of objectives of an action, but of its obedience to the rules to what it subjected"⁶.

All the possibilities for an ethics of responsibility are lost and an ethics of the purest irresponsibility, justified in the name of efficiency, is established.

In this way, the problem of the irrationality of what is rationalized becomes evident. This same rationalization is transformed into a source of irrationality. The business oriented by money and profit calculations rationalize its procedures, but this rationalization is the origin of an irrational process of destruction of human beings and Nature.

It is like in the following fairy tale: a witch poisoned de town's water fountain, in which all drank. Everybody became mad. Except for the king, who had not drunk. The

⁶ Hayek, Friedrich A.: "El ideal democrático y la contención del poder" [The Democratic Ideal and the Contention of Power], en *Estudios Públicos* [Public Studies] (Santiago, Chile) No. 1 (December, 1980), p. 56.

town suspected him and wanted to kill him. The king, in need, also drank the water and became mad. All celebrated because he had become reasonable.

Kindleberger, an American economist who had exhaustively researched the stock exchange panics and crashes, adequately sums up the result to which we are in: When all get mad, the rational thing is to get mad too⁷.

This apparent rationality of madness witnesses the irrationality of what is rationalized and lies on effects external to the business calculations. This calculation formal-rationale is blind to the irrationalities produced. Irrationalities are the unintentional effects of the intentions of the business rationality mean-end. But this does not count only for business actions. The same is true for the rational action theory still dominant, as it was formulated by Max Weber, especially. It becomes so blind before these irrationalities of what is rationalized, as business calculations are. If one is sitting on the branch being cut, it is not relevant for this theory either. The action is considered rational, independently from the fact if one is sitting on the branch or not. To distinguish both cases does not seem to be a possible object for the empirical sciences. It is supposed to be a judgment value or an ethics of conviction, irreconcilable with any ethics of responsibility. Although, in reality, a destruction process appears analyzable in an objective and scientific way, which happens to be the unintentional product of formal-rational action.

But this dominant theory of rational action is in reality the adequate manner of thinking about business calculations, provided that we want to think about it as the rational per se. In this case, a maxim like: "You should not cut the branch where you are sitting" cannot be rationally based. In reality, Max Weber cannot base it either. He necessarily has to deal with it as a judgment of taste, and indeed he does so. Nevertheless, in consequence he cannot resolve the following paradox either, one that can be called the "paradox of the sponger": "Life is so expensive, so I will kill myself in order to save the little I have". This sponger makes a perfect calculation mean-end. But, only in theory Weber's rational action becomes a paradox. Going further, this theory is not a paradox but an absurdity.

Totalization of the domination of the mean-end calculation and the corresponding efficiency and competitiveness, leads to world globalization in the shape of a formal circuit mean-end. What from one point of view is an end, from another one is a mean. Means rationalization leads to a formal-rational rationalization of ends. When this circuit is totalized and globalized, human beings and Nature are transformed in simple appendices of a movement without any finality. The irrationality of what is rationalized transforms them into objects of a process of destruction. This destruction process, is, nevertheless, transformed into a compulsive force of facts⁸. Precisely the blind persecution

⁷ Kindleberger quotes a stock exchange speculator who says: "When the rest of the world is mad, we must imitate them in some measure". Kindleberger, Charles P.: *Manias, Panics and Crashes: a History of Financial Crises*. New York, Basic Books, 1989, pp. 134 and 33, 38 and 45.

⁸ It seems that only the German language has a corresponding acute word: *Sachzwang*.

for efficiency by means of the competitiveness mechanism creates this compulsive force of facts, which makes the destruction process absolute.

3. Third Thesis: efficiency, underlying the competitiveness mechanism, creates compulsive forces making the mechanism of destruction absolute

The competitiveness mechanism becomes destroying, because it destroys the life foundations on Earth. But, transformed in omnipotence, it imposes itself everywhere. No one can live anymore without being integrated and, thus, without participating in the destruction itself of these life foundations. In Latin America there is a saying: "It is bad to be exploited by the multinational companies. But it is worse not to be exploited by them". The work force transformed into commodity had become a commodity harder and harder to be sold, since it cannot set any conditions.

Today, this competitiveness mechanism had certainly acquired omnipotence in the name of efficiency. Class struggle has not disappeared but it has a winner. It was won from the top, as it had already happened in the historical socialism societies. A power with no relevant resistance has arisen.

But a power which succeeds in defeating any resistance, falls in the impotence of omnipotence. It cuts the branch where everyone is sitting, and it does not have the power of not doing so. This omnipotence is the capacity for placing the mean-end calculation above all rationality of human life reproduction. A system having this capacity has appeared. Although, it cannot renounce to it. It is inevitably handed over to its own omnipotence. It cannot give any directions to the process already in course. The dominant class does not dominate, but derives its submissive power to the compulsive forces of facts.

A German magazine adequately describes this impotence of omnipotence. Under the title: "The balloon has to wait", says:

When Klaus Töpfer, then Secretary of Environmental Affairs [from Germany], proposed in 1990 an energy tax in the form of a national payment on the production of carbon dioxide, he received the answer that a German action would only damage the national economy, since it would give competitive advantages to the competitors. That is why Töpfer tried to impose a general tax to the CO₂ production at the European Union level. There, the same argument was put forward: if the European Union enforced a tax on energy, then there would be competitive advantages for the USA and Japan. Thus, those countries would only want to participate if the Asiatic countries of intermediate development also accepted this measure. What happened was what always happens when everyone has to participate: nothing⁹.

⁹ *Wochenpost*, 5. I. 1995, p. 4.

In this way that Jurassic Park whose dinosaurs are called Mercedes, Shell, IBM and Toyota shows up. They have not remained in the park, but they are crushing under their enormous feet the whole world, human beings and all of Nature. These dinosaurs cannot be limited precisely because they have absolute power on Earth. They are imprisoned by the compulsive forces of facts they have created themselves. And there is no last helicopter where the good guys left could escape.

Omnipotence of power is condensed in a vacuous power race which destroys everything. Toyotism imposing today is just like that. It functions as a stationary bike, going at high speed without even moving. They are the perfect images for the learning of vacuous movement paranoia, just as all Fitness Centers are. One learns to enter in that rationality we have already quoted: "When all get mad, the rational thing is to get mad too".

Kindleberger sums up in a masterly manner the logic of suicide resulting from the compulsive forces of facts, in function of a totalized competitiveness. It is a resulting logic from the compulsive forces of facts of a totalized competitiveness, found in this vacuous movement: "Each participant in the market, in trying to save himself, helps ruin all"¹⁰.

Now then, if one helps ruin all, one also helps to ruin oneself. If one destroys all, one also destroys oneself. This is the logic of mass suicide implied in the competitiveness's totalization. Murder becomes suicide.

We are before a logic of mass suicide, resulting from the compulsive forces of facts. Nevertheless, as a logic of mass suicide is not exclusively the result of technical progress nor of Capitalistic modernity. It belongs rather to the imaginary of humanity. In the German culture, this imaginary is found to be developed in one of the first literary works. The song of the Nibelungs sings their trip to death, owing its impetus to heroism from mass suicide. We are all involved in a fatal trip of this kind. The new of modernity is that now there are compulsive forces of facts imposing on us this fatal trip. Walter Benjamin said about it:

Marx says that revolutions are the engines of world history. But, possibly, everything is different. Perhaps revolutions are the effort for activating the emergency brakes humanity traveling on this train does¹¹.

If we want to stop this fatal trip, we have to talk about the compulsive forces of facts. Thus, it is a question about how to liberate from these compulsive forces and to know up to what point this would be possible. Because the irrationality of what is rationalized comes from those com-

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 178ss. Nevertheless, he is afraid of the consequences and reduces them to single cases: "...I conclude that despite the general usefulness of the assumption of rationality, markets can on occasions... act in de-stabilizing ways that are irrational overall, even when each participant in the market is acting rationally". *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹¹ Benjamin, Walter: "Notizen und Vorarbeiten zu den Thesen Über den Begriff der Geschichte" (Notes and preparative work for the theses: About the concept of History), in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Collected Works) (Tiedeman, R.-Schweppenhäuser, H., eds.). Frankfurt, 1974, Bd 1, 3, p. 1232.

pulsive forces. Although, the question cannot be reduced to some problem of "theology", "philosophy" or "moral". We are before a question that has to be asked to the empirical sciences also, which today evade, almost without exception, this problem of relevance, decisive for these sciences.

This rejection precisely leads to the utopization of empirical sciences in the name of the total market. In the name of rationalization, the realization of all the utopic contents is promised. As a warranty for this realization, the renounce to any criticism about the irrationality of what is rationalized is demanded. In this way, rationalization promises heavens hiding hells produced by the irrationality of what is rationalized. As it is said today: *All West is Wild West*.

This is, in its present form, the "slavery without a master" about Max Weber talks.

4. Fourth Thesis: it is not possible to overcome the irrationality of what is rationalized, unless it is done through a solidary action dissolving the compulsive forces of facts dominating us

It is a question of finding a rational answer to the irrationality of what is rationalized. Nevertheless, the arguments of the mean-end rationality cannot transmit the needed rationality for that answer. It is precisely a matter of intervening in the Jurassic Park arising from that rationality, in order for the branch we are all sitting on not to be cut. But this answer cannot be only theoretical. It has to be, at the same time, an answer for solidary action in order to be able to dissolve these compulsive forces of facts. It is just that the root of solidary action is the resistance to those destructive effects that those forces unleash.

For this reason, the adversary against this rational argumentation cannot be the skeptic one, but only the suicidal one. Although, with the successful suicide one cannot argue. He or she are dead. The suicidal person that has not committed suicide yet, instead, can argue as a cynic of the mean-end circuit and of the compulsive forces produced by him or her. As a cynic, he or she denies the irrationality of what is rationalized. This denial is the condition in order for being able to continue with the process of destruction. He or she affirms humanity's mass suicide, but he or she believes that as an individual can escape to the consequences, at least for the time that he or she keeps on living. This calculation may even possibly be correct, at least in the degree the cynic conceives him or herself as an isolated individual. This cynic is a narcissistic individual. The problem is to argue with him or her ¹².

¹² Japanese comics reflect in an extreme way this kind of narcissism. See Otomo, Katsuhiro: *Akira. Comic Art. Mash-Room and Kodansha*. Tokyo,

The argument could be that murder is suicide. Nevertheless, this is no argument against those ready or decided to commit suicide. Thus, in the last instance, it is a question of not committing suicide.

But it is not an ethical option. The option of not committing suicide is rather the base of all possible ethics ¹³. Thus, this option does not follow either from a judgment value. This option is the possibility condition of all value judgments. The option of not committing suicide circumscribes the variation frame of all ethics and of all possible value judgments, and this is why it is not an ethical option nor a value judgment ¹⁴.

Then, for those who affirm suicide as a possibility, everything is licit. If Dostoyevsky says that for those who do not believe in God everything is licit, he affirms something untrue in this way. Christian fundamentalism, for example, as it has arisen in the USA and as is announced in the world today, contains an image of God that precisely promotes and propagates our present Nibelungs fatal trip, which is presented as apocalypses. It is an idol-god in whose name everything is licit, even humanity's mass suicide ¹⁵.

We believe in God but in name of this faith everything is licit. But a God of life which is not an idol, can be thought and believed in only as overcoming of that mass suicide mystic, which also comes from the name of God.

1984. It is a world dominated by the paranoia of the omnipotence of a total narcissism. The whole story presents kids with old peoples' faces. Akira is the omnipotent, whose power is shown by the fact that in a pure act of will succeeds in destroying Tokyo as a whole. He becomes a Messiah, the "enlightened one", which does not promise any messianic kingdom. He is the "enlightened one" because no one has a power like his. Others seek to defeat him, but they wish his defeat in order to take his place. They are no solidarity. Thus, all disappear in mutual destruction.

¹³ Albert Camus considered this question as the first one of all philosophies: "Do I commit suicide in front of the world or I let myself live, and if answering yes, why?". Camus, Albert: *The Myth of Sisyphus*.

¹⁴ That is why for those who maintain suicide as a possibility, everything is possible. Wittgenstein himself in his *Diary*, gives an similar answer: "If suicide is allowed, then everything is allowed. If something is not allowed, then suicide is not allowed. This sheds a light on the essence of ethics. Because suicide, so to speak, is the elemental sin. And when research is done about it, is like when mercury vapor is investigated to capture the essence of vapors. Even though, suicide in itself perhaps is not either good or bad!". *Diary*, 10. I.1917.

¹⁵ One of the most well-known American fundamentalists, Hal Lindsey, affirms before the possibility of atomic war: "When the battle of Armageddon comes to its terrible culmination and it would seem that all earthly existence is going to be destroyed [Lindsey understands it as atomic war], in that same moment our Lord Jesus Christ will appear and will prevent total annihilation.

As history hurries to that moment, let me ask the reader some questions. Do you feel fear, or hope of liberation? The answer you give to this question will determine your spiritual condition". *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Grand Rapids (Michigan), Zondervan Publishing House, 1970, p. 222. For Lindsey there is nothing disturbing, because now the "restoration of Paradise" will come, *ibid.*, p. 233.

Novak, an American theologian, chair of the Theology Department at the American Enterprise Institute, the *Thing Tank* of multinational companies in that country, affirms: "Nature is not regarded as achieved, complete, finished. Creation is unfinished. There are things human beings have to do. Surprises lie in store. If there are horrors yet to face (there always have been), God is with us. The future may not have an upward slant, except as Golgotha had: So be it". *The spirit of democratic capitalism*. New York, An American Enterprise Institute-Simon & Schuster Publication, 1982, p. 73.

With this we go back to what we said at the beginning. The problem only has a solution in a society where there is room for all. This includes Nature, because there is only a place for this society if there is a Nature to give place to it. Nevertheless, the rationality of the mean-end calculation cannot create the corresponding conditions. A solution can be barely given as a response to the irrationality of what is rationalized, which is the result of the mean-end calculation and of its totalization. Thus, the rationality responding to the irrationality of what is rationalized can only be the rationality of everybody's life, which can only be based on the solidarity of all human beings.

In this sense, solidarity is the mean to dissolve the compulsive forces of facts. Those forces, which impose on us today a process of destruction of human beings and Nature, are not invariable natural laws. They arise from human action as its unintentional effects, thus out of the reach and discerning of the actors, inasmuch as they subject their actions exclusively to a mean-end calculation. They act treacherously. When the action is more and more subjected to a totalization of the mean-end action, in orienting more and more exclusively to competitiveness, the more we are dominated by these compulsive forces of facts, which have hopelessly as a result the process of destruction of human beings and Nature.

These compulsive forces of facts are an indicator of the absence of solidarity. When a solidary action becomes more impossible, the more they impose. Thus, the omnipotence of those who have the power to disable any solidary action is transformed into the impotence of omnipotence. They have to be subjected unconditionally to the compulsive forces of facts.

But these forces are not needs to which there is nothing more than to subject. Where these compulsive forces—apparent or real—appear, the question has to be asked as to the conditions for their dissolution and as to their satisfaction. If this question is asked it can normally be verified that the conditions for their dissolution are connected with the promotion of solidary structures of action.

Solidarity is the condition for the dissolution of these compulsive forces, although their arising presupposes the resistance against legitimized measures in the name of

these compulsive forces. But resistance against these compulsive forces is not the result of a lack of realism, but the only expression possible to face the irrationality of what is rationalized. The unconditional submission to these compulsive forces, and thus to the irrationality of what is rationalized, is not a realism, but the renounce to it; this demonstrates its intimate connection with the acceptance of humanity's mass suicide. The pretended absence of utopias in our world is nothing but the celebration of this submission to the compulsive forces of facts. Instead, the sense of resistance resides in its capacity for constituting solidary structures of action that can intervene in the process of totalization of the mean-end calculation, in order to submit it to the needs of human life reproduction, which always include as its possibility condition Nature's life.

Thus, to create a society where there is room for all presupposes the dissolution of those compulsive forces of facts which end up imposing a society where there is room for no one. As the society of totalization of compulsive forces of facts rests on the market ethics—a warranty for property and contract fulfillment—the dissolution of these forces rests on an ethics of solidarity. A society where there is room for all can only appear if in between these poles a mediation such that the ethics of the market be subordinated to the ethics of solidarity. Solidarity has been transformed into a possibility condition for human survival, and, thus, also in a possibility condition for rational action.

The history of Chiapas Zapatist rebellion in Mexico, also shows this problem. The entering of Mexico to NAFTA was justified in the name of the compulsive forces of facts. From here the market totalization within Mexico follows. The Zapatist rebellion seeks the dissolution of those compulsive forces.

Even in the extreme case in which no alternative still viable appears, it is not a reason for singing the hymn of humanity's mass suicide. We have to resist likewise, even when there is no visible solution on the horizon. To do something is never impossible. And it is better to do something than to do nothing. ■