

KABUL AROUND THE CORNER

"I come as a thief in the night, my sword drawn in my hand, and as the thief that I am ... I say: Give me your purse, give it to me, rogue, or I'll cut your throat... I say give it to the beggars, to the thieves, to the whores, to the pickpockets that are flesh of your flesh and that are quite equal to you, those who are ready to die of hunger in pestilential prisons and filthy dungeons... Have everything in common, otherwise the scourge of God will cut down all that you have in order to putrefy it and consume it." – Abiezer Coppe

The fire of anti-aircraft guns illuminate the Kabul night, and yet war did not erupt either today or last September 11 [2001], the day of the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York and of a good part of the Pentagon. This war can't be erupting now in Afghanistan for the sole, valid reason that it had already erupted some time ago; for years, the entire world has lived in a state of permanent war.

We did not want to see how close Rwanda and Kosovo, Somalia and Bosnia, Algeria and Macedonia were to us. But the Boeings of September 11 have brought Jalalabad, Baghdad and Jericho into the hearts of our cities. Therefore, no one can any longer ignore the planetary gangrene that shows no signs of coming to an end, chosen heir of modernity, of the technological era.

The industrial system has poisoned the earth, rendering it sterile; the opening of global markets has sent the peasant world into ruin; industrial restructuring has dismantled the old productive apparatus; strategic and geopolitical necessities determined by the control of resources have unleashed unending conflicts – capital, heavy with the immense possibilities that technological are providing to it, has broken up every possibility for autonomy, every past form of community in a large portion of the globe. At our latitudes, this same process has brought forth the precariousness that we have been tasting for the past few years, the abandonment of the old certainties and guarantees to which we were accustomed. Distorting the conditions of life for the exploited, capital has removed practical knowledge, the autonomous capacity to create one's existence for oneself. Where it still survives, the means of subsistence are mere appendages of a technological system that none of the exploited can understand or dream of controlling: no one knows what to do any more; no one knows how to do anything. Goodbye, then, to every common feeling of the poor, to all collective identification, goodbye to the dream of appropriating this world and driving out its masters.

This is how, over the last twenty years, the planet has increasingly come to resemble a refugee camp. One runs from conflict or from a wasteland, from poverty or from dictatorship; one runs from a world one no longer recognizes. The old ways of life, of being together, have vanished irremediably, and nothing can be seen on the horizon. All that is left is hatred and fear, with more accumulating every day, and it is having difficulty finding an objective, an enemy to fight. This is why – whether hidden or declared – civil war has already broken out, everywhere.

To each his own then, in this macabre exhibition that celebrates the decomposition of an entire planet. Led by their masters, the Yugoslav exploited have slaughtered

each other for years, convinced that their next-door neighbors were their enemies. The poor of Somalia and Rwanda have not acted so very differently.

Now the huge powder keg of the Islamic world is exploding. The poor, over there, have every intention and utter determination to call in accounts for years of suffering. Deprived of every concrete social connection – apart from precariousness and fear – most of them superimpose the words of the only common feeling that is proposed to them onto their rage, that of religion. The identification of a collective enemy causes fraternization beyond every boundary and every division; the epic poetry of the struggle against Evil fills History with meaning – it speaks of a future promise and gives a meaning to past tribulations. This is why they wage war against the entire Western world and not, instead, against those specifically responsible for their oppression: the masters and governors of the east and the west.

When you read these lines, we don't know what will be happening in Afghanistan or Pakistan, we don't what will be happening in Palestine. The bombs over Kabul precipitate events, increasingly channeling revolt in the Islamic world into the narrow path of religious war. The bombs over Kabul don't just wreak havoc on Afghani civilians, nor do they only cause further surges of refugees, nor do they just set the east on fire: the bombs over Kabul also fall on our heads, finally giving meaning to our fear of the future, putting order into the social precariousness of these times. The hypocritical anti-terrorist rhetoric of the western rulers terrorizes us and, at the same time, gives a name to our terror; it bestows on us a new enemy against whom we can fight: the exploited of the Islamic world, who are in Afghanistan and in Italy [and America], instead of capitalist society, as was beginning to emerge in social conflicts. Therefore, it is not a collision between civilizations that is being fought. It is the realization of the civilization of capital, its ripest fruit – putrefaction, death, war between the poor.

Not a single word of peace makes sense any more; no mediation is possible when the desperation of the poor breaks through the doors of a world that is falling to pieces. All that we can oppose to the bombs over Kabul is class attack: freeing the hatred that smolders and hurling it against those responsible for our oppression and that of all of the poor of the world. Identifying the common enemy with precision – the masters, the rulers, the technological and productive network – is the first concrete form of solidarity toward the bombed, toward the refugees. Attacking this enemy is the only message of fraternity that we can send to the exploited of the world, the only tool that have for transforming the war between the poor that is about to set the world on fire into a war of liberation from exploitation and from authority.

Strangers everywhere, 10 October, 2001

**NO ONE IS INNOCENT
WITH REGARD TO FOUR BOEINGS**

“Anyone who does it should expect it,” one could say with regard to the airplanes that were turned aside against the twin towers of New York and the Pentagon.

America – so one hears on the streets – reaped what it sowed. Someone went to pay back a little of its terror, of its Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of its Chatila and Sabra, of its napalm and its depleted uranium. More than an “attack against the free world”. The Pentagon, general headquarters of the greatest military power, is responsible for unspeakable horrors and infamies. The World Trade Center, the greatest concentration of banks and financial agencies in the world, is the concrete symbol of an economy that crushes millions of human beings. Someone has brought the things America exports to its periphery every day into the center of America.

Indeed, but who is “America”? This is not a game of Risk, or a battle recounted in History books (Italy against France, England against Japan, the Arab against America). It was mainly civilians who died, not politicians and bureaucrats, generals and capitalists. The logic is that of war, that unifies order-givers and order-takers, exploiters and exploited, a government and its populace, the logic of the state itself.

Indeed, but in Kosovo the airplanes bombed civilians (hospitals, factories) in the name of the American people and the Italian people as well. That was not “terrorism”; that was a “humanitarian operation”. What occurs in the occupied territories in Israel, where Palestinian children don’t dream of becoming astronauts or firemen, but “martyrs”, in order to give a meaning and a future in this way to a life that has none. What occurs in Palestine, between the corpses and the wreckage, also and above all happens in the name of the American people. Isn’t hypocritical then to speak of fanaticism, thus silencing our conscience?

What has any one of us done, no one excluded, to prevent the massacres, the deportations, exploitation pushed to the threshold of survival? What did the employees at the twin towers do to; weren’t the horrors perpetrated through money carried out thanks to them as well? Can one demand that the violence of others be the violence of liberation (directed, that is to say, against the state and not against the people) when we ourselves have allowed three hundred thousand Iraqis to be exterminated in our name in order to “stop” Saddam Hussein?

Fear has entered into the heart of capitalism, which is not the unassailable Moloch that its techno-bureaucrats pretend. The technological instruments that it has produced are uncontrollable. If we consider it clearly, a handful of individuals capable of redirecting some airplanes could appear anywhere. What will happen next? A portable atomic bomb? The “security measures” – which will mean more social control and more repression against dissidents as the official declarations that call the contestation at the G8 summit an “inspiration for terrorism” show – are powerless, and the states know it. Up to now, we have seen this scene in science fiction films, with the American hero who arrives at the last moment. But this time the heroes are not there. Heroes never die. But we do.

What will be the consequences? Police everywhere? War?

Feeling that we are held hostage between the great carriers of death and the tiny ones that come from who knows where, what will we do? Draw close to the institu-

tions – and the command of fear? Or finally attack a system that makes human life a commodity subject to elimination at any moment ourselves?

The illusion about the best of possible worlds has four Boeings over it. In indifference, no one is innocent.

Rovereto, September 12, 2001

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