

The Rebellions of Misery

Gustavo Rodriguez

September 1, 2020

Contents

Of clowns and prophets	4
The Incubation Process	7
The misery to come	11

“All control systems are based on the punishment/award binomial. When punishments are disproportionate to rewards and when employers no longer have any rewards left, uprisings occur.”

Burroughs¹

In the second decade of this century, urban revolts are becoming more frequent throughout the global geography, with subtle variations in duration and intensity. Hong Kong, France, Algeria, Iraq, Haiti, Lebanon, Catalonia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Sudan, Chile, Belarus, and now the *United States of America*, have been the sites of massive protests widely reported in the *means of mass domestication*. As I have pointed out on other occasions, these demonstrations have very particular motivations that explain them; however, it is indisputable that they all possess an intangible link that serves as a common denominator of most of these mobilizations: the weariness and rage of despair.

Far from the leftist rhetoric that insists against all evidence that “as long as there is misery there will be rebellion,” what has really motivated the recent rebellions has not been “misery” but the conjunction of weariness and despair. These two factors – which drive the nostalgia for the “devil you know” and yearn for the return to the welfare state, to industrial capitalism and to the society of labour – are the causes of the widespread unrest that has led to the global revolt of our days.

It is increasingly axiomatic that “misery” only produces “misery.” That is to say, servitude, begging and even the loss of all dignity. As the proverb goes, “hunger is a bad counsellor.” She is the mother of all those specimens that hang a sign around their neck that says “I will do any work” (*even for the SS*, as George Steiner reminds us). Therefore, instead of creating rebels and refusers, misery breeds disease, malnutrition, mortality, fear, sexual exploitation, corruption, soldiers, police, informants and voters: *human misery*.

This is why misery is exalted by the left, knowing that the future is fattened in its jaws, as that is where future votes are counted. All we have to do is to consign some “prizes” and, to state abracadabra: the corpse-like clientele will remain guaranteed for a relatively long period of time, until “there are no more prizes” (**Burroughs dixit**) and the uprisings return.

This was already inferred by the famous author of *Les Misérables*, paving his brilliant political career with his successful literary career. In Book Seven of his well-known novel, entitled “The Slang,” the poet and novelist finishes off:

“Since 1789, the whole population is expanded in the sublimated individual; there is no poor person that, having his right, does not have his light ray; the most miserable and helpless feels in himself the honesty of France; the dignity of the citizen is an inner armour; he who is free is scrupulous; he who votes reigns. Hence incorruptibility; hence the abortion of disordered and unhealthy lusts; hence the heroic lowering of eyes in the face of temptation.”²

Victor Hugo, after throwing himself into the deep pool of misery, sees its wonderful potential. As Walter Benjamin rightly points out:

¹ Odier, Daniel, *The Job*. Interviews with William Burroughs, Enclave de Libros Ediciones, Madrid, 2014.

² Victor Hugo, *Les misérables*, Fourth Part, Book Seventh-El argot, Garnier Hermanos Libreros-Editores, Paris, 1901, p. 282.

*“He was the first great writer to use collective titles in his work: Les Misérables, Les travailleurs de la mer. The crowd meant to him, almost in an old sense, the crowd of customers — that is, his readers — and of his masses of voters.”*³

Certainly, misery has fuelled countless revolts in history but, unerringly, they have been “pacified” with proportional doses of garote (neutralization by fear), bread (neutralization by subsidisation⁴) and, circus (consolation prizes and political reforms). It is precisely in the proportional application of these rations that lies the culmination of the “proletarian” concept, in reference to the landless citizens lacking work who made up the most miserable class of the Roman cities (*proletarius*), whose only utility — for the State — was their capacity to generate *proles* (descendants/children).

These hordes of excluded people were pacified with cudgels, bread and circuses and, used as a “repressive hand” (legionaries), swelling the reserves of the armies of the Empire. Such reflection, motivated *Saint Charlie of Trier* — fourteen centuries later — to make use of the term “proletarian,” landing its only definition in a tight note as pagefooter among the copious folios of *Das Capital*, where he delimits a priori all the botched work of the contemporary Marxians who try, arbitrarily, to subsume within the “proletarian” concept the most unbelievable configurations of identity (indigenous peoples and people of African descent) in an attempt to correct the racist constraints and the economic narrow-mindedness of the Marxian vision.⁵

Of clowns and prophets

Regarding “pauperism” or the *general misery* of the working classes, already in 1844–46, Proudhon said quoting Antoine Eugène Buret⁶:

“The description of the misery of the working classes [...], has something fantastic that frightens and oppresses the heart. These are scenes that the imagination refuses to believe, despite the certificates and government records. Naked husbands, hiding at the bottom of an unfurnished room, with their children also naked; entire populations that do not go to church on Sunday because they do not have even rags to cover themselves with; unburied corpses that lay for eight days because the deceased did not even have a shroud to wrap them in, nor money with which to pay for the coffin and the undertaker,

³ Benjamin, Walter, *Baudelaire’s Paris*, 1st Edition, (Mariana Dimópulos, trad.), Eterna Cadencia Editora, Buenos Aires, 2012, p.136.

⁴ This neutralizing strategy is very common in Latin America, generally orchestrated by a clientelistic network, woven by political parties and a diverse set of social organizations that have established themselves as interlocutors with the State, either through mobilization and / or through negotiation and agreement with domination.

⁵ ‘By “proletarian” can only be understood, from the economic point of view, the wage earner who produces and valorizes “capital” and who is thrown into the streets as soon as he becomes superfluous for the valorization needs of “Monsieur Capital,” as Pecqueur calls this character. “The sickly proletarian of the virgin forest” is a gentle chimera of Mr. Roscher. The inhabitant of the virgin forest owns it and treats it as nonchalantly as the orangutan does, that is, as his own property. He is not, therefore, a proletarian. It would be if the virgin forest exploited him, and not he the virgin forest. As for his state of health, he would not only stand up to comparison with that of the modern proletarian, but also with that of syphilitic and scrofulous “respectable people.” It is likely, however, let Mr. Wilhelm Roscher understand by virgin forest his native moors of Lüneburg.’ Marx, K., *Das Capital*, Volume I, Vol. 3, chapter XXIII: The general law of capitalist accumulation, Siglo XXI editores, México, 2009, note number 71, p. 761.

⁶ Cf. vid. Buret, E: *De la misère des classes laborieuses en France et en Angleterre*, Paris, 1840.

*while the bishop enjoys four or five hundred thousand francs in rent; whole families crowded together in miserable pigsties, living together with the pigs, and already in a life earned by rotting, or living in holes like the albinos; octogenarians sleeping naked on naked boards; the virgin and the prostitute expiring in the midst of the same nakedness and destitution; everywhere despair, consumption, hunger, famine! ... And that people, who atone for the crimes of their masters, do not revolt!"*⁷ (my underlining).

And yes, of course, the “people” have rebelled countless times. The “bread riots,” caused by the deprivation of basic foodstuffs, have been the answer of the children of famines since the dawn of civilization, leaving a rich record of ephemeral uprisings from the 14th to the 20th century, with a marked frequency in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.⁸ As Bakunin well warns:

“Since the existence of political societies, the masses have always been dissatisfied and have always been miserable, because all political societies, all states, whether republican or monarchical, from the beginning of history to the present day, have been founded exclusively and always, with only the difference in degree of frankness, on the misery and forced labour of the proletariat. [...] Hence the eternal discontent. But this discontent rarely produced revolutions.”⁹

One of the most well-documented hunger riots, characteristic of the pre-industrial era, occurred in the spring of 1652 in the city of Córdoba, in the region of Andalusia.¹⁰ Near the end of the century, but on this side of the Atlantic, there was another riot caused by misery: the 1692 Mexico City Famine, also known as the “Motín del Pulque.”¹¹ In the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, there were also riots caused by misery. However, from the second half of the

⁷ Proudhon, PJ, *System of economic contradictions or Philosophy of misery*, (F. Pi and Magall, trans. And prologue), First Part, Ch. VI, The Monopoly, Alfonso Durán Library, Madrid, 1870, pp 312–313.

⁸ Until the second half of the 19th century, the causes of famine were poor harvests caused by constant frosts, floods and devastating droughts caused by the famous “Little Ice Age,” to which must be added –as an aggravating factor– habitual outrages against the dispossessed and the draconian measures imposed by the ruling classes.

⁹ Bakunin, Miguel, *Complete Works*, Vol.1, 3rd Ed., Las Ediciones de La Piqueta, Madrid, April 1986, p.159.

¹⁰ After the terrible plague epidemic that devastated the region between 1649 and 1650, there was a substantial increase in wheat prices causing famine among the most deprived. The death by hunger of a child in the San Lorenzo neighbourhood would set off an angry riot at the beginning of May. A multitude of peasants would raid the house of the magistrate and prominent wealthy people in the city, massively expropriating the grain they had hoarded. The rebellion would be appeased with the mediation of Diego Fernández de Córdoba, who agreed to replace the magistrate (viscount of Peña Parda) and establish a fixed price for bread, demanding that the Cordovan peasants surrender their weapons and return to their homes. King Felipe IV ordered the delivery of resources to the city for the purchase of wheat and granted the pardon to the mutineers, ending the revolt with an abundance of grain and the cheapening of bread. Cf. vid, Díaz del Moral, Juan, *History of Andalusian peasant agitations*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1967.

¹¹ After a prolonged period of torrential downpours and floods in the Valley of Mexico, which severely affected agricultural areas, a chiahuixtle plague followed that accounted for the few crops that had survived the waters. The shortage of corn and wheat and, the speculation of the merchants, induced a rise in the price of grains, unleashing hunger in the midst of the measles epidemic in the excluded sectors – «Indians, blacks, Creoles and muzzles of different nationalities, Chinese, mulattoes, Moors, *zambaigos*, wolves and Spanish *zaramullos* (who were the rogues, pimps and snatchers) »-; Faced with the shortage of food, indigenous women threw themselves into the *alhóndiga* in search of sustenance. Immediately there was a revolt in squares, markets and pulquerías, emboldened and euphoric by the effects of the “nectar of the gods..” To the shout of ‘*Viva el pulque!*’ the anger of the mutineers was unleashed who headed for the Zócalo, ready to burn down the palace, kill the viceroy and the magistrate. At five in the afternoon on June 8, 1692, with stones and machetes in hand, the rebels burned the viceregal palace, the town hall houses, its courts and clerks’ offices, the door of the Royal Court Prison, the *alhóndiga* and the drawers and stalls of the main square.

eighteenth century, these revolts would be effectively exploited by the “putschiistas” devoted to the *coup d’État*. Misery would begin to give birth to revolutions.

The career of the “professional revolutionary” began to bear fruit in the 19th century, consolidating the *coup d’État* strategy towards the “seizure of power.” For this reason, for *St. Charlie*, Blanqui and his comrades were the living embodiment of “the real bosses of the proletarian party.”¹² In this way, the formation of ‘specialists’ in the needs of the Revolution was encouraged and politics was ‘sacralized’, transforming the Nation, the State, the People, the Race or, the Proletariat, into a sacred entity, that is, a supreme, intangible and transcendent entelechy, erected as the axis of a system of values, symbols, rites, myths and beliefs, that demands sacrifice, militancy, fidelity, worship and subordination of the individual and the collective. Thus political symbolism took shape in mass society¹³ and propagated ‘a way of conceiving politics that goes beyond the calculation of power and interest, and extends to the definition of the meaning and ultimate end of existence.’¹⁴ To this end, the masses were given hope in the future (another world is possible!), while they were trained as cannon fodder; that is, while they learned the art of the imbeciles and prepared themselves to kill and die in the name of the Truth that will make them happy, enunciated by some clown and/or prophet.

To say it with comrade Bonanno:

*“If there was a time when I thought it would be useful to be a clown for the revolution, and rallies are certainly a theatrical activity like any other, now I no longer believe in this need, not because of the specific uselessness of the clown, which will always have its role in all political movements, but for the possibility that the revolution can be achieved by playing the lyre to the people, with all the strings of established harmony [...] Bringing up the truth as a symbol of the sacrifice for which one is willing to die, and therefore to kill, suggests to others, if there is a shred of intelligence, the solution to the enigma, the place of the trick to be solved for the benefit of all. But who answers to the sphinx?”*¹⁵

The expropriations of goods and food were massive, with stores of merchandise, seeds, iron, pottery and other goods being looted. The next day the repression would not wait, many of the rioters would be hanged, others flogged and the indigenous population would be expelled from the city to the peripheral neighbourhoods. After the tumult, there was enough corn and wheat that they brought from the city of Celaya to appease the rebels. Cf. vid, Robles, Antonio de, *Diary of notable events (1665–1703)*, vol. III, Porrúa, México, 1945. And, Sigüenza y Góngora, Carlos, “Alboroto y Mutín de México del June 8, 1692,” in *Historical Relations*, UNAM, University Student Library, Mexico, 1954. Another version of the events, affirms that “the tumult had not been motivated by the lack of corn, but rather they had a lot hidden in their houses; that they had hidden it to have it stored for when they revolted, and that since the corn crop had been lost and there was little and expensive, they bought much more than necessary and buried it so that with it the poor people and these would lack. The food was worth so much they would be on the side of the rebels. Letter from a religious leader about the rebellion of the Mexican Indians of 1692, Editor Vargas Rea, Mexico, 1951, collected in Feijóo, Rosa, *El Tumulto de 1692*, Revista Historia Mexicana, El Colegio de México, Vol. XIV, N° 4, April-June 1965, p. 458.

¹² Marx, K., *The 18 Brumaire of Luis Bonaparte*, Federico Engels Foundation, 2003, p.21

¹³ Cf. vid. Mosse, George L., *The Nationalization of the Masses. Political symbolism and mass movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars to the Third Reich*, Ediciones de Historia Marcial Pons, Madrid, 2005.

¹⁴ Cf. E. Gentile, “The sacralisation of politics and fascism,” in J. Tussel, E. Gentile, G. Di Febo, (Eds.), *Fascism and Francoism face to face. A historical perspective*, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 2004, pp 57–59. See also, Gentile, Emilio (1973), *The Italian way to totalitarianism. Party and state in the fascist regime*, Siglo XXI, Madrid, 2005; and, *Gentile, Emilio, Fascism: history and interpretation*, Editorial Alliance, Madrid, 2004.

¹⁵ Bonanno, Alfredo, *Miseria della cultura. Cultura della miseria, Colla Pensiero e azione, Part Seconda, Cap. IV*, Edizioni Anarchismo, 2015, p.175.

The Incubation Process

At the end of the 19th century, misery incubated the snake's egg. The nineteenth century famines fertilized the land for the fascisms (red and brown). Since 1890, a succession of bad harvests in the Volga regions caused havoc for millions of peasants in Czarist Russia. Entire communities fled to the cities in search of food. More than half a million people literally died of hunger or as a result of typhus and cholera. Despite the famine, the authorities allowed the export of grain, which provoked countless peasant riots and rebellions that would be repressed by the imperial army by blood and fire. This situation led the populist leaders to promote their call "for the people," enrolling hundreds of students from the major cities who, from their romantic vision, conceived the village as a harmonious collective community that embodied the socialist aspirations of the "peasant soul." Thus would conclude the last decade of the 19th century, marked by the abysmal inequalities of the Russian empire, with a stream of privileged aristocrats and an enormous "mass" of miserable people beset by hunger and disease.

During the first years of the 20th century, misery in the rural areas continued to rise, while in the cities unemployment reached unusual levels, triggering a wave of demonstrations and strikes, mostly called by anarchists. In the summer of 1903, a gigantic general strike shook the south of Russia; meanwhile, the "revolutionary Marxists" tore off their leather during their Second Congress in the midst of a pitched battle for control of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party, which caused the irreconcilable division between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

The "revolutionary consciousness" had increased considerably with the progressive schooling of the countryside, which, together with the general discontent over the military defeat of Japanese imperialism, brought the mood to the brink of social revolution.

In the early days of 1905, strikes broke out in several cities across the country. On January 9, a massive demonstration took place in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), led by the priest Gueorgui Garpón. More than 140 thousand women, men and children, carrying religious images and portraits of the Tsar, marched towards the Winter Palace begging the "Little Father of the People" to alleviate the tremendous misery they were enduring. The Cossacks opened fire on the demonstrators, leaving thousands of dead and wounded. Gorki would baptize that massacre as "Red Sunday" and Lenin — the new clown/prophet, — interpreted it as "the agony of the traditional faith of the peasants" in the "Little Father Tsar," and the birth of the revolutionary people.¹⁶ However, by 1913 the wretches of all Russia — to the cry of "God save the Tsar" — were getting ready to celebrate the three hundred years of rule of the Romanov dynasty.¹⁷ By the middle of the next year, the patriotic drunkenness was leading the wretches to war again as cannon fodder.

By the end of the Great War, the scene was chaotic throughout Russia. The exiguous industry was devoted to satisfy the military needs ("the hunger of warfare") and, although agricultural production was not interrupted, the ample network of railroads of the Empire was put to the

¹⁶ Lenin, VI (1905), «*The "little father Tsar" and the barricades*», in Complete Works, Volume VIII, Akal Editor, Madrid, 1976, p.108.

¹⁷ The main streets of Saint Petersburg were decked out in imperial colours and portraits of the Tsars, while long strings of coloured lights lit up at night with the legend 1613–1913 and the empire's double-headed eagle, dazzling outsiders, many of which had never seen electric light. "The city was abuzz with onlookers from the provinces, and the usually well-dressed passers-by who strolled around the Winter Palace were now outnumbered by the unwashed masses (peasants and workers in their blouses and caps, and women dressed in rags with headscarves) ». Cf. vid. Figes, Orlando, *The Russian Revolution: The Tragedy of a People (1891–1924)*, Edhasa, Barcelona, 2010.

service of the war, paralysing the flow of food to the cities. The resulting famine gave way to intense protests and riots.

On February 23, 1917, the workers of the Petrograd textile factories – under the orders of the Bolshevik party – took to the streets en masse with the slogan “No more hunger,” initiating the so-called “February Revolution” that led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II. On April 3, the clown/prophet of the new Revolution would arrive at the train station of the former imperial capital from Zurich, counting on the punctual financing of the Reich.¹⁸ Thirty-four weeks later, red fascism would be set in motion, prolonging itself until the end of 1991. Hunger did not disappear with its establishment, but all the hunger riots were drowned in blood.¹⁹ Neither did the ‘pacification’ with cudgels, bread and circuses end with Lenin’s death (21 January 1924), on the contrary, it intensified with his successor Joseph Stalin. The new clown/prophet would impose a gigantic network of concentration camps, sadly known as the Gulag.²⁰

With different protagonists, although with the same script – an experience from which we could and, we should, extract important clues to help us understand the present, – the incubation of fascism continued its course. From the end of the eighteenth century until 1913, during the so-called “Giolittian Era,” the Kingdom of Italy promoted the integration of its economy into the international capitalist context, fostering “economic and social modernization.” The great inflation resulting from the First World War, derived in the generalized misery from 1918, sowed discontent among the excluded. In the face of the “crisis,” the working class called for a strike, extending the conflicts throughout the Italian boot. The rapid decomposition of the post-unitary

¹⁸ The Germans provided financial aid to Lenin and the Bolsheviks, with the intention that the revolution in the rear would force the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the front, as it happened. In March 1918, Russia and Germany signed an armistice in the border city of Brest-Litovsk (Belarus), under which the Russians renounced large territories (Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine) and, half of their industry. At the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union recovered all that was lost in Brest-Litovsk and implanted Red Fascism throughout its sphere of influence.

¹⁹ The most suppressed hunger riot in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was the “butter mutiny” in the city of Novochoerkassk, during the first days of June 1962. In full splendour of the Red Empire, in the heat of the so-called “Cold war,” Nikita Khrushchev ordered the installation of nuclear missiles in Cuba with the intention of intimidating the United States and preventing another military escalation against his new satellite. Aware that the decision could unleash World War III, he demanded that the Soviet military-industrial complex increase the production of weapons, decreeing drastic budget cuts in any sector that was not related to the military sphere. On June 1, the Central Committee of the PCURSS announced an increase in the prices of the basic basket (the value of meat rose, butter and eggs). The hardest hit by the rise in prices was suffered by workers whose companies had just cut wages. Employees of the Novochoerkassk “Budyonny” Electric Locomotive Factory would be one of the most affected groups. Faced with the situation, the workers declared themselves in a permanent assembly, which led to a massive protest in which more than 5,000 protesters participated. The communist authorities sent the Red Army tanks with the aim of frightening them, but when they could not persuade them, they ordered to open fire on the workers, killing 26 demonstrators and wounding 87. Seven people were accused of illegal association and executed for the events; One hundred and five protesters would also be sentenced, accused of sedition and sentenced to 10 and 15 years in prison, who at the end of their sentence were forced to sign a document swearing that they would never divulge these facts. Cf. vid. Mandel, D., ed., *Novochoerkassk 1–3 yunya 1962, g. : zabastovka i rasstrel*, Moscow: Shkola trudovoi demokratii, 1998. Y, Siuda, Pyotr, *Novochoerkassk Tragedy*, Obschina, 1988.

<https://libcom.org/files/1962%20The%20Novochoerkassk%20Tragedy.pdf>

²⁰ During the great purge of 1937–38 alone, more than a million people were killed or perished in the frozen forced labour camps, most of them former members of the Bolshevik party, workers and peasants.

liberal state and the revolutionary turbulence,²¹ fertilized the ground for Benito Mussolini's rise to power.

With the arrival of this clown/prophet, a new totalitarian regime was established with the same features of 'generic fascism.'²² It quickly incorporated its own elements, building an Italian-style 'paradigm' ('specific fascism'), founded on corporatism, the exaltation of the 'people', workers' redemption and, nationalism. The ideology of this other fascism was also presented as a revolutionary doctrine, anointed with socialist principles (anti-capitalist, anti-parliamentary, anti-liberal and, of course, anti-Marxist and ultra-nationalist), which advocated the intervention of the State by means of professional corporations which would bring together workers and businessmen attached to the single-party regime.²³ To guarantee the proper functioning of the system, it would be necessary to consolidate the terror against dissident intellectuals, ethnic minorities and, the opponents of the regime (traitors to the nation), through an extremely repressive police apparatus; to strengthen the armed forces at the service of the leader and his party organization – and willing to extend the fascist project abroad-; to undertake the permanent mobilization of society in order to strengthen the State.

An essential characteristic of fascism is its anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeoisie mood,²⁴ manifested in its criticism of the prevailing materialism of capitalism, for which it demands its transformation towards an "organized capitalism" (State Capitalism or, *Totalitarian Monopoly Capitalism*) strongly regulated, which permits the "redistribution of social, political and economic power."²⁵ To this end, it appeals to feelings strongly rooted in the "people," embodying those feelings and emotions in symbols and their representation in the State, through the establishment of direct links between the "masses," the leading party and the leader.²⁶ In this way, every sphere of human activity is subject to state intervention. As the *Duce* put it: "everything within the state, nothing against the state, nothing outside the state."²⁷

But despite this "forced nationalisation" (or thanks to it), the fascist regime is going to enjoy great popularity and total acceptance among the "masses." The encouragement of popular leisure activities; the policy of integration; the construction of the "new man" through the system of education and; the promotion of social security through the "Letter of Labour"²⁸ – promising

²¹ Cf. vid, Luebbert, Gregory M., *Liberalism, fascism or social democracy*. Social classes and political origins of the regimes of interwar Europe, Presses Universitaires de Zaragoza, Zaragoza, 1997.

²² Griffin, Roger, "Swastika crosses and forked roads: the fascist dynamics of the Third Reich," in Mellon, Joan Antón, *Orden, hierarchy and community. Fascisms, dictatorships and post-fascism in contemporary Europe*, Tecnos, Madrid, 2002, p.109; Payne, Stanley G., *History of fascism*, Editorial Planeta, Barcelona, 1995, p.12.

²³ Cf. vid, Preti, Domenico, *La modernizzazione corporata (1922-1940): economy, public health, istituzioni e professioni sanitarie*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 1987; *Economia e istituzioni nello Stato fascista*, Editori Reuniti, Rome, 1980. And; Pinto, António Costa (ed), *Corporatism and Fascism. The Corporatist Wave in Europe*, Routledge, London, 2017.

²⁴ Paxton, Robert O., *Anatomy of fascism*, Ediciones Peninsula, Barcelona, 2005, p.11.

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 18-19.

²⁶ Op.Cit, Mosse, George L., pp. 69 et seq.

²⁷ Mussolini, B., *Fascism*, Bau Ediciones, Barcelona, 1976.

²⁸ In the «Carta del Lavoro» (Labor Charter), «political document of the party» authorized by Benito Mussolini on April 21, 1927 – anniversary of the founding of Rome, – dictated by the Great Council of Fascism and published in *Il Lavoro d'Italia* two days later (23), "the social rights of Italian workers" would be proclaimed in a juridical-political-ideological plot that "represents the culminating point of the great work of renovation of the general legislation that has harmonically reconstructed the entire Italian legal system, basing it on the fundamental principles of the Fascist Revolution [...] This document of our Social Revolution as corporate [...] presents a happy synthesis between the two forces that have always accompanied the millenary history of Rome: tradition and revolution [...] the luminous ideality that the revolution of the black shirts, bathing the tormented fields of Europe with its blood, in sowing a

social rights and, an order of peace and harmony between workers and bosses, as productive forces are put at the service of the Nation, — will give popular approval to fascism, endowing this political phenomenon with specificity.

In Germany, the situation would not be much different. The German National Socialist Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) came to power in 1933 amidst great social upheaval and a deep economic depression. The 1929 Wall Street crash had severe repercussions as a result of the enormous dependence on short-term loans from abroad, paving the way for the National Socialist Revolution. The unemployment rate between 1929 and 1932 increased from 6 to 18%, industrial production registered a drop of 40% and per capita income contracted by 17%. This combination of factors stimulated “the rise of a new mass movement that, in a period of crisis, mobilized a great proportion of the population, seduced by the attractions of a charismatic leader like Hitler.”²⁹

Since the 1890s, the *Völkisch* movement had gained strength through its cohesive discourse, despite its multi-faceted organization and diverse, sometimes contradictory and competing ideological concerns, but unmistakably oriented towards anti-Semitism, pan-Germanism, eugenics, and the reformation of cultural and religious life. Within this movement, the presence of young people was gaining strength, “literally shaking off the repressions and coercion of a stale bourgeois existence.”³⁰ At the beginning of the twentieth century, the popular movement would reap support in the face of the economic difficulties brought about by the First War. The German economy was severely affected by the prolongation of the conflict. Misery caused hunger riots (1915) and important strikes (1917), undermining morale on the internal front.

In mid-1917 – under the military dictatorship of Ludendorff and Hindenburg – the German Patriotic Party (*Deutsche Vaterlandspartei/DVLP*) was founded, with the support of the *Alldeutscher Verband*. It has an ultra-right-wing, nationalist and militarist orientation. The new political formation welcomed the *Völkisch* movement into its midst, together with other anti-Semitic currents of radical German nationalism, reaching a membership of 1,250,000. After the revolution of November 1918, which put an end to the monarchy of William II and gave way to a parliamentary republic, the Patriotic Party was dissolved. Many of its members would join the ranks of the National Party of the German People (DNVP); the rest of its members, under the leadership of the railroad worker Anton Drexler and the journalist Karl Harrer, formed the Political Circle of Workers (*Politischer Arbeiterzirkel*). Radically opposed to capitalism and communism, the “Circle” dedicated itself body and soul to activism and political agitation among the workers.

On 5 January 1919, Drexler and Harrer founded the German Workers' Party (DAP) in Munich with only 40 members. One of its future members would be Adolf Hitler, who two years

higher social justice between individuals and between peoples, tends [...] to lead towards victory, with his strength and with his indomitable spirit, against the enemies of an enemy word of Faith and Civilization.” Vine. Mazzoni, Giuliano, The principles of the “Carta del Lavoro” in the new Italian codification, *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 6, pp. 227–249. Available at: [Dialnet-LosPrincipiosDeLaCartaDelLavoroEnLaNuevaCodificaci-2126260.pdf](#) (Consulted 8/30/2020). For additional information see also: Heller, Hermann, *Europa y Fascismo*, Condes, FJ (trad.), Preliminary Study «Fascism and the political crisis of Europe» by José Luis Monereo Pérez, Editorial Comares, Granada, 2007.

²⁹ Fulbrook, Mary, *History of Germany*, Beatriz García Ríos (trans.), Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.241.

³⁰ ‘Members of the Wandervögel (‘wandering birds’) dressed in loose and comfortable sports clothes and went hiking and camping in the countryside, singing and trying to adopt a lifestyle as natural as possible; These groups, while still critical of official policy (especially disregarding parliamentary party politics) and the established education system, tended to be not only highly nationalistic, but at the same time anti-materialist and anti-Semitic, given that modern society identified the Jews with the gross accumulation of money.’ *Ibid*, pp. 202–204.

later would become the undisputed leader of the party. After his active participation in the brutal crushing of the Spartacist insurrection, together with the volunteer militias (Freikorps), the political formation would change its name to the German National Socialist Workers' Party (NSDAP) and would make public its 25-point Program – authored by Drexler and Hitler – on February 24, 1920.

In the heat of the misery, the ultra-nationalist spirit and the racist culture grew, which facilitated the accelerated increase of the party's militancy. The demagogic discourse of the NSDAP, centered on the attack on the banks and big companies, together with the defense of State socialism as an economic proposal guaranteeing social security, exerted great influence among the workers and a great general acceptance, providing it with two victories with a simple majority in the democratic parliamentary elections of 1932 and, the subsequent appointment of Hitler as Chancellor (1933).

The misery to come

The most notorious subsistence revolts at the end of the last century were those in Argentina in 1989, during the hyperinflation of the last days of Raúl Alfonsín's government, highlighting the proliferation of "popular pots" and the collective expropriation of the Cruce Castelar shopping center in the municipality of Moreno in Buenos Aires.³¹ That experience would soon be neutralized with official measures of containment through the provision of food to popular areas, consolidating as clientelist practices that favoured the empowerment of leaders and social leaders as mediators to the system of domination, guaranteeing social control and systemic recovery. The subsistence riots would be repeated in the southern country at the beginning of this century, originating with the uprising of December 2001 that produced the fall of Fernando De la Rúa's government. Once again they would be pacified with clubs, bread and circuses, while the future of the Kirchners (2003 to date) was being paved with the assured vote for the Left.

In the course of the 21st century, there has been a long string of protests and rebellions over hunger. In January 2007, under the slogan "without corn there is no country" and against the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Mexico City to protest the rise in the price of corn. In September of that same year, in Myanmar (formerly Burma), the increase in the prices of food and gasoline provoked the insurrection of the Buddhist nuns and monks known as the "saffron revolution." During the spring of 2008, riots broke out in different cities in Egypt, Morocco, Haiti, the Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Burkina Faso.

The rebellions of misery intensified with the so-called "international financial crisis" that aggravated hunger around the world with the growing volatility of agricultural products being included in the "commodity" exchanges, as a result of the incursion of speculative funds in these areas. Since then, prices have continued to rise, throwing more than 100 million people into misery. The paradox is that with the industrialization of agriculture – hand in hand with pesticides and biotechnological manipulation – current agricultural overproduction is exuberant. Today, famines are not due to hardship or misfortune, but to other factors.

³¹ From May 24 to 31, 1989, 282 mass expropriation actions were registered in Rosario, Córdoba, Mendoza, Tucumán and the Federal Capital.

Financial speculation in food products has forced 820 million people around the world to live in extreme poverty, of which 265 million could die of hunger, according to the most conservative projections of the UN World Food Program. An estimated 12,000 people will die of hunger every day as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic, far more than those who will die from the after-effects of the Covid-19 virus. Meanwhile, eight of the largest food and beverage corporations have distributed more than \$18 billion to their shareholders since the health crisis began. Economists expect that the contraction of global production will generate around 450 million unemployed people in the world but, from January to date, the 12 wealthiest billionaires on the planet have increased their fortunes by more than 40%.

Very probably, this announced misery will give rise to countless rebellions that will facilitate the rise of new clowns/prophets and the establishment of new populist governments. But none will lead to the decline of capitalism or the end of domination. With the “new-normality” imposed on us, capital is reinvented and domination is renewed, returning to strong states and nationalist rhetoric, in a framework of reorganization that once again leaves individual and collective freedom outside the text in search of “urgent solutions,” strengthening the authoritarian temptations.

Once again, misery incubates fascism (red and/or brown) disguised as a revolutionary solution and radical transformation and, it is instituted as the reason for struggle that attempts to replace the old reality. The contemporary rise of fascism and its rampant institutionalization reveals its evident acceptance through the repeated narrative of “the recovery of lost values” that capitalizes on the past – which is supposedly “heroic” and always better than the present – and moulds it as a product available for a better future.

We cannot fall into the trap of “urgency” and lower our guard against the authoritarian replacement of reality. Power keeps reality captive from the first day of its existence on the face of the Earth. Hence the impossibility of transforming it – as cynically proposed by the left in all corners-; the cantaleta of “Another world is possible” is the contemporary trap to prolong the homonymy “Power=Reality.” Hence the appetite to put into practice a thought-action capable of demolishing reality. Not to transform it. Only in this way is the trap of totality disarmed. Therein lies the need to think about anarchic praxis in its excessive dimension, the need to move from prepositional syntagmas to the paradigm. However, in order to create a new anarchic paradigm it is essential to burn all the road maps.

Let us imagine for a moment that the “normal” is not capitalism or the continuity *ad infinitum* of domination but that world in ruins which we have never feared. Let us think of the definitive destruction of labour, the demolition of everything that exists, the complete collapse of civilization. Let us walk, without deviation, toward that goal. The skill of fire is a tempting gamble that encourages our yearning for total liberation and drives the fight. Today, the only thing we have to save is fire. The rest: let it burn to ashes!

Gustavo Rodriguez,
Planet Earth, September 1, 2020

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Gustavo Rodriguez
The Rebellions of Misery
September 1, 2020

Retrieved on 2021-03-22 from
<https://325.nostate.net/2020/09/24/the-rebellions-of-misery-by-gustavo-rodriguez/>
Excerpted from the brochure "*The Aroma of Fire: The Rage of Despair in a Tri-Polar World*",
September, 2020.

theanarchistlibrary.org