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# To Unknown Waters

Madrid Cuarentena City

March 2020

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Translated from Spanish by *Enough 14.*

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We've been in a state of emergency for over a week now. The destructive capacity of the virus is no longer in question. But we would like to make some notes on its non-clinical consequences and on its origins.

Whether the COVID-19 virus came about because of a bat or an American attempt that has gotten out of hand, to disable the Chinese economy, we think is irrelevant now. This virus, like others before in history that massacred entire populations in the Amazon, Mesoamerica, Africa and Oceania, is a biological phenomenon. But the context in which it was born, how it spreads and how it is managed are social issues. This virus is the result of a system that commodifies every process, object, relationship or living being on earth. Spread rapidly across the macro-concentration of labour and the consumer corpus of cities, which feeds itself from agro-industry and intensive livestock farming. A flow of human assets (5 billion people fly around the planet each year) at frenetic speeds, reflected in 200 characters and 5000 likes.

It is precisely this effort to artificialize everything, even our emotions, everything being driven by profit, seeing the world through a screen, allowing our mind to be colonized by "efficiency", which

has led to a gradual loss of the “human”, of the “living”. Facilitating such extreme measures, in which there are only two reasons to get out of the house (work and consume) have entered in a way that is not exaggeratedly traumatic. At the same time, it is proposed to us as a way to escape the same technophile dynamics that have led us to disaster. If we add fear to it, the rule of fear, we end up losing our way and reinterpret concepts like responsibility or solidarity.

You’ll be labeled irresponsible, for example, if you don’t submit to voluntary house arrest. What a perversion of meaning, in reality it is nothing else, than embracing between the heart and the head, between analysis, decision and action. With that cry of “unconscious,” which you will receive from the window if you go, for example, hand in hand with your partner on the street, actually people are shouting to you, “obey the norm!” The same is true of calls for solidarity that are translated by collective voluntary servitude when make an acritic #yomequedoencasa<sup>1</sup>.

What about the hundreds of people who pile up in Atocha and Chamartin between 6.30 and 8.30 a.m.? Why hasn’t construction work on buildings stopped in a city that has an exorbitant surplus of houses? Are the people crowded into IFEMA<sup>2</sup> no human beings? Is it shocking to be locked up for a week and five, 10, 15, 30 years pass by and now you can’t even see them? Is it crazy to be locked up for a week and spend five, 10, 15, 30 years and you can’t get even receive a guest, not even a short visit and in many cases calls and mail are absolutely restricted? To refer just a few painful examples.

For those who are homeless it is no longer possible to survive anonymously. Survival, can no longer be unnoticed when the jungle of glass has become a concrete desert. They are, even more than they used to be, forbidden people<sup>3</sup>. Which at best will be herded

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<sup>1</sup> #yomequedoencasa the spanish version of #StayAtHome

<sup>2</sup> IFEMA **Ifema** (short for *Institución Ferial de Madrid*; “Fair Institution of Madrid”) is an entity charged with the organisation of fairs, halls and congresses in their facilities in Madrid. en.wikipedia.org

<sup>3</sup> Forbidden people, people without documents, like for example migrants.

into plots like IFEMA. It has also unleashed the, already exacerbated, police impunity against other forbidden people, who cannot prove by means of bureaucratic papers that they are people with “full rights”, or because the color of their skin induce torturers in uniform not to think. (Mainstream media reported numerous cases of police brutality in Lavapiés<sup>4</sup>, the city centre and other cities). Because a pandemic is still a matter of class, of privilege, of not-so-random deaths.

We do not have the power of augury like Cassandra had, but we do, in exchange, have the oath of Apollo. I mean, we don't know for sure if these forecasts are coming true (although there is unequivocal evidence where he points out the power and shows, this kind of measure are already in effect), however, we fear that we will hardly be heard. We think that all these control measures will become permanent, or recurrent like it already happened with the anti-terrorist laws after 9/11; No wonder that we will be called in confinement again in the future

in circumstances such as storms, hurricanes and all kinds of climate crises, which are sure to come, or new and old epidemics that will come knocking at our door again. Tracking movement by phone, biometric and temperature controls, limitations of movement according are a reality already and have come to stay. In addition to this, the widespread precariousness of the life that will come in the medium term, the socialization of poverty...

At this point we would like to share the idea that the present, or rather the past, world as we know it: based on domination, with its structures perpetuating misery, its orthodoxy, its desire for freedom... is not good enough for us. And in no way we want to go back to it.

Let's start trying. Considering that there are people who don't would like to get infected, let's break the isolation. Let's act, if necessary, on an individual level. In this reality even with a blind strike

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<sup>4</sup> Lavapiés is a city district in Madrid.

it is very easy to hit the right target. Let's communicate, talk, share information and be critical, force curfews, map control (where and when it is patrolled, what spaces have been banned, where having supply...). Let's encourage strikes and company closures. We don't want crisis management. We want to experiment, crash, fight, conflict...

Let us strive to influence the present even when when we do not see the horizon when we look up. Perhaps it is precisely here that we will find the key, let's leave behind truths, convictions and securities, we will sail with passion for adventure towards unknown waters, towards dawns of freedom and revolt.