

"The Economy Is the Homeland!" – Neoliberalism, Fascism and Bolsonarismo

by RODRIGO GUÉRON

Abstract

We decided to write the present essay as a way of opposing some current statements which affirm that bolsonarismo cannot be viewed as a form of fascism since it sponsors a neoliberal program and therefore does not have a "nationalist" program – a characteristic of fascism. We aim to demonstrate the articulation between the cult of a mystified State, a characteristic of fascism, and neoliberalism, something that was already present in the constitution of a liberal individual, as well as in the equally mystic relation with the market – with capital – and also with the State that this individual brought, or brings, within himself.

I – Liberalism, nationalism and fascism: a genealogy

The economic discourse of 1836 and 1850 was, among ourselves, a pragmatic variant of certain positions already adopted by the so-called 'patriots' or 'liberals' that inherited the fruits of September 7th. [...] Free commerce, the first and foremost banner of the patriot colonizers, did not necessarily mean, and in effect was not, synonymous with free labor. [...] From there results the conjunction that is peculiar to the Brazilian economic-political system, but not only Brazilian, during the first half of the 19th century: liberalism plus slavery.

Alfredo Bosi

Foucault points out, in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, that liberalism finds in the "market" a criterion of truth (Foucault 2004: 33) – a certain "regimen of truths", as he liked to call it. It was this "truth" that should rule the management of the State. We are talking about a kind of "rationality" pattern produced by the so-called market – in fact, the capital – which,

in the same gesture that claims for itself a functioning that is free of State interventions, presents itself as a force that determines the patterns of a kind of economic health of this same State. However, it is exactly in this context of "liberal rationalization", and as a decisive part of it, that a strong policy of State intervention arises, aiming at a kind of social control that was supposed to guarantee the highest possible productivity, directly implicating the positive results – preferably robust – of the State's finances, which, by their turn, would have implications for the proper functioning of the market and, consequently, in the efficiency and volume of social productivity.

We are referring to the appearance of something Foucault would call biopolitics or biopower, which roughly works as a kind of application of this "truth" of the market – which, in our view, we insist, is a "truth" of the capital – upon a management of life that occurs directly as a management of bodies. It is in this moment that individuals, now understood statistically from the concept of "population", divided in groups and submitted to hierarchies according to their physical characteristics, their genders, their origins and supposed "natural" aptitudes "(or lack thereof)", are crushed by the violence of the rationalization produced by the capital – the "truth of the market" – by means of the State. This rationalization would be, in this sense, the operation of pushing to its limits the capacity of production – production as conceived by capitalism – of individuals and, consequently, of the population, converting, separating or simply eliminating everything that could threaten the proper functioning of the market. In fact, in the lower decks, below those bodies divided and hierarchically disposed, there were those bodies deemed incapable, dangerous or monstrous, supposedly closer to savages than humans, therefore viewed as a threat to "rationality". We write "rationality" or "criterion of rationality" between quotation marks because we believe to be present here a strong mystical component where the old mystification of the State is coupled with a new form of mystification produced by capitalism – a conclusion we arrive at not exactly in a dialogue with Foucault. In any case, this violent social hierarchy expressed in biopolitics is a decisive part of this "rationalization": it is society itself that must be rationalized in this statistical and quantitative operation that separates and hierarchizes bodies, organizing them in population groups, in an operation for which the State is responsible and that implies, necessarily, a hyper-rationalization of this very State. At the limit – in the previous chapter, we saw how Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe demonstrates this – an "irrational" and "uncivilized" population is either naturalized as destined to brutal manual labor, thus separated and subjugated to serve "the reasons of the market", or is simply exterminated. In this sense, we feel we can consider that this new "reason", the "reason of the market" – "the reason of capital" – constitutes a new form of "reason of the State", different from that which the despotic State generated in its own core. Here we have the strong State of liberalism, born amidst the motto of "non-intervention" of the State. Here we have, therefore, the strong State of capitalism – that which, at the limits of its expansionist politics, where the expansion of the State occurs in ways almost

completely immanent to the expansion of capital, practices pillage and extermination in order to obtain surplus value and profit.

Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe shows us that biopolitics – the operations of biopower – was decisive to every colonial and neo-colonial operation, to every pillage, slavery and genocide, to all violence that befalls peoples crushed by the expansion of capital. Upon reading Mbembe, one may wonder why Foucault did not point out that biopolitics was already present in the horrors of slave trafficking across the Atlantic, or in the gigantic single-crop farms – the plantations – that depended on the slave labor of these Africans in the Americas and the Caribbean (Mbembe 2018: 21). In a similar and more effective way, Silvia Federici reprobates the French philosopher for having ignored how these politics affected in a direct and systematic way the bodies of women, extreme victims of the productive rationality of the capital, which reduced them to machines to reproduce – in fact, produce – labor work (Federici 2017: 35-36). Foucault has been recently criticized for supposedly not having made a connection between biopolitics and a strategy, by means of the State, of domination of the capital and, therefore, of class domination. According to these critics, the philosopher would have failed to see how biopolitics was a decisive part of "primitive accumulation" (Ibid.), that is, part of the process that would have created the conditions for the formation of capitalism, as described by Marx. This process was later readdressed and redefined by several authors (Guéron 2020: 184), among them the same Silvia Federici, who stated that there is not only a "primitive accumulation" in the historical origins of capitalism, but also that it frequently engenders new movements of "primitive accumulation" every time it wishes to intensify its expansionist process.

In general terms, we may agree with these criticisms towards Foucault, yet we maintain the concept of biopolitics, which seems to bring us an extraordinary inventory of power technology in the capitalist State. Understanding the origins of capitalism is, in fact, what Foucault is doing, given that the birth of biopolitics and biopower is found at the heart of the analysis he makes about the origins of economic politics and liberalism, which, in its turn, bring this technology of power in their core. In any case, although we recognize that going deep into the relation between biopolitics, State and capitalism proposed by Foucault – in the scope, limits and paradoxes of this analysis – is a very important debate, we shall not dwell into it here. Our interest lies, at the moment, in observing that, in capitalism, the State that should be non-interventionist, according to the motto of the liberal order, ends up being characterized by an astonishing intervention in the lives of individuals and the population. In this sense, we believe liberalism to be far more than an "ideology", since it is a way of organization of capitalist production, a way of organizing and managing the State that even brings about an intense process for producing enunciations, affects and subjectivities, which acquires a new configuration and strength in neoliberalism. Thus, even though there is an evident element of submission of the State to the capital, determining the appearance of biopolitics and

biopower practices – the "truth" of the market determining the actions of the State –, this should not be viewed as a weakening or debilitation of said State. On the contrary, liberalism, at the same time that subjects the State to the rules of the market, decidedly relies on the structure, strength and violence of the State in order to manage all living beings according to its rules. This is where the violence of biopower is produced, that is, a "statization of the biological", as Foucault would say, that allows the State to operate a direct management of bodies and a subjection of life to quantitative imperatives of rationality.

Nothing is more exemplary of the way in which the enunciations and slogans of liberalism produce a complete subjection of bodies than the minute description made by Alfredo Bosi in the text "Slavery between two liberalisms", a chapter in his renowned book *A Dialética da Colonização [Brazil and the Dialectics of Colonization]* (Bosi 2002: 194). Bosi demonstrates the way in which the enunciations of liberalism constituted the basis for defending slavery in Brazil, in the Americas as a whole and also in the Caribbean. Evidently, the concept of biopolitics does not appear in Bosi's texts, but bodies reduced to form-commodity surely do: in the "liberal" defense of slavery, quite recurrent in the discourse of slaveholders, resting on the enunciation of "private property" and "right to property". Yet, Bosi also shows us that the relation between "market" and State – the slave market and the market of goods produced with slave labor – are not found only in the legitimization of the right to property translated into the "right" to own slaves, to sell and buy human beings, in a complete ownership of their bodies and lives. They are also present in the noticeable "patriotism" of slaveholders, plantation owners and slave traffickers who would constantly speak of "national sovereignty" in the parliament, opposing the British pressure against African slavery (Ibid.: 197). Incidentally, in this context, historian Manolo Florentino, responsible for a turning point in researches about Brazilian slavery, shows us that slave traffickers were equally, or even more important, to the Brazilian economy of those days than the big landowners and their plantations (Florentino 1997: 184). Their political-economic power would be proof of an already important internal economy in Brazil, to the point that the Brazilian dominant class was able to resist for decades to the British pressure for the end of slaved Africans. Slave bodies are bodies reduced to commodities: bodies to produce surplus value and profit. So, they are also bodies reduced to statistics, like in the procedures of biopolitics that, for instance, evaluate mortality and disease rates, establishing a maximum limit of what is admissible and the "rationally" necessary moment for the introduction of health care policies, since excessive deaths, or deaths in an epidemic rate, hindered productivity, caused expenses and/or a drop in State revenues, thus threatening the proper functioning of the market. In this same logic, we can say that a kind of biopolitics was already in place in the assessment of the numbers of dead and diseased bodies in slave ships, playing a decisive part in the balance of costs of these horrid voyages (Ibid.: 171) that crossed the

Atlantic from Africa to Brazil, which were nothing more than economic-commercial enterprises¹.

French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, on the other hand, find in Christianity a determining factor for the relations between State and capitalist production. These French authors transform the genealogy of Christian guilt made by Nietzsche – a genealogy of the "Judeo-Christian west" – into a genealogy of capitalism. Guilt would be expressed in the internalization of a debt in every individual and also in every social body, determining a force of subjection, thus constituting a decisive power relation not only for the stability but above all for the functioning of the productive intensity that characterizes the social capitalist machine². By living the existential experience of a debt inscribed in their bodies and minds, even if they do not in fact owe anything to a capitalist entity (in spite of the fact that billions of people actually do), individuals feel the need to constantly produce. In this sense, the singularity of the experience of debt in capitalism lies in the fact that it becomes an instrument of power and social coercion that, besides producing a repression and a limitation in production, also produces the opposite movement: an intense production. This production is not related to life itself, but is a reproduction of the capital's imperative of always producing more money: more value.

This unique view of Christianity as a decisive factor in the formation of capitalism, with the inscription of guilt into the bodies of individuals, introduced by the two French thinkers, was resumed and systematized by Maurizio Lazzarato in a small and important book entitled *The making of the indebted man* (Lazzarato 2011: 140). In it, the Italian author goes deep into the analysis of debt as a power instrument of the capitalist machine, observing the power of financial capital not only in macro-political terms but also in micro-political ones, that is, in the way neoliberalism uses, as a crucial element of power, the construction of an "indebted subjectivity". The "indebted man", whom we would rather call "indebted individual", is constituted and inscribed in that which neoliberalism created as its greatest cliché and its biggest catchword: the "entrepreneur". That is, people who must be their own managers, managing their life and the lives of their families as if running a company, becoming in fact the "indebted individual", an expression that may be a little redundant.

In fact, for Deleuze and Guattari, the constitution of some kind of debt is a decisive element for the appearance of any form of what they would rather call "social machines": social relations, societies themselves, not only capitalist ones. For them, the experience of constitution of a *socius* among human beings did not arise from the need of exchanging and circulating goods and individuals, by then a predominant hypothesis in Anthropology,

¹ Florentino presents us a table with an estimation of investments and profits (and occasional deficits) of several vessels in their trips to bring over enslaved Africans.

² "The infinite creditor and infinite credit have replaced the blocks of mobile and finite debts. There is always monotheism on the horizon of despotism: the debt becomes a *debt of existence*, a debt of existence of the subjects themselves. A time will come when the creditor has not yet lent while the debtor never quits repaying, for repaying is a duty but lending is an option." (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 197)

but rather from a debt relation that would have been synthetically described by Nietzsche in *On the genealogy of morality* as a "creditor-debtor relation" (Nietzsche 2004: 53). The very circulation and distribution of goods and individuals could only exist, or not exist, from conditions determined by this debt. In the same movement, the process of socialization and the determination of the social functions of these individuals would be characterized by the inscription of this debt in their bodies. Thus, the French authors identify three kinds of debts that would determine the functioning of three distinct kinds of social machines, the third of them being the capitalist one:

1) A "finite immanent debt" that characterizes societies without a State, marked by compromises between social groups, such as lineages or clans, which would determine a permanent flow of lateral exchanges in such a way that a debt settled by one of the parts – one of the lineages, for example – would mark the emergence of a new debt going the other way. For example, a lineage could supply some kind of food or utensils to another lineage that, now indebted, would "repay" by offering an offspring to the first lineage for marriage, tossing the debt back and forth in succession. 2) The appearance of the State, which would mark the appearance of a "transcendent infinite debt" that would upstage all others: a debt towards a superior and precedent instance that should even manage, judge and decide all lateral debts, which do not disappear altogether. Thus, a mystified instance – the Despot-State-God – would become the lineage of all lineages, referred to a mystical time identified with creation and origin. This mystification legitimates the fact that the State claims the monopoly of judgment and, consequently, the monopoly of violence: it has given us life, therefore it owns life. Thus, the State is born like a paranoid machine that creates, at the same time, its own interior space and also a menacing exteriority: an exteriority that can even be found within of its own territory. Since it has given us life, the State would own life, and everything that threatened it would also threaten its "subjects", including these very subjects whenever they rebelled against the sovereign: domestic enemies turned into "external evil", enemies that the State would be legitimately entitled to eliminate. Deleuze and Guattari even claim that money would have been created due to the State – by the debt towards the State expressed by collecting taxes –, and not as a means to facilitate the exchange and circulation of goods. 3) Finally, in capitalism, without the entire elimination of the transcendent debt towards the State, what appears is, according to these authors, an "infinite immanent debt". It would result from a minute process of interiorization in human beings of a moral Judaic God, a judge and savior. For this process, the figure of the crucified Jesus would have been decisive, that is, the figure of a deity – the "son of God" – that would have become a victim due to his condition, since he then becomes a God that, aside from being a judge and a savior, is also a victim. The issue here would be the interiorization of this God-law, of this judging God, which means, in a certain way, the interiorization of the State. In fact, the French philosophers wrote that this Judaic God-law functioned like a "portable State", in reference to Moses and its tablets, leading the Hebrew across the desert. This God, this

transcendent instance to whom we are indebted, is interiorized in Christianity, helping to create individuals that are judges of themselves, even though this deity had, for a long time, kept his transcendent function also as a Christian God, like in the absolutist States founded upon a so-called "divine right".

As an expression of this operation, there would be a genealogical lineage that originated from the fear of the single Judaic God – the people that must fear the God-law as a condition to achieve their freedom – and reached the categorical Kantian imperative, the fundament of the "rational" individual of the Enlightenment. According to this moral imperative, Reason, taken as a universal presupposition of human beings, should be obeyed precisely due to its universality, in an obeisance that would be a precondition for the freedom of human beings. That is, the obeisance to Reason, just like the obeisance to a monotheist God, would be a condition for freedom, with the difference that, this time around, this obeisance would work as a process of interiorization: the creation of a (bad) conscience, a guilt. In this sense, Nietzsche says that Christianity was an interiorized religion, forming individuals that did not even need to declare themselves Christians anymore. This interiorization was already, in a certain way, perceived by Marx himself, when he identified, more specifically in Lutheranism, a process of interiorization of faith, turning religion into "that which is innermost to man"³. However, it is Nietzsche who realizes how decisive this is to a certain concept of the "rational" individual created in the Enlightenment.

In this context, therefore, we see the rise of an individual that should obey himself, manage himself, according to an imperative of rationality that was also a moral imperative, in an operation that Deleuze and Guattari consider decisive for the constitution of the indebtedness that marks the relations of capitalist production: the "infinite immanent debt". Here is the mechanism of Christian guilt, decisive for the constitution and functioning of the social capitalist machine.

We shall remember that Foucault spoke of a truth of the market that is imposed upon the State as a criterion of "rationality" born at the core of capitalist production, which, for us, indicates a kind of submission of the State to capital. But let us also remember that this was not synonymous with a feeble State. This State, which would have to operate within a regime of truths of the market, operates a violent policy of social rationalization to guarantee, at once, its own financial health – "rational" – and the proper functioning of the market, supposedly thanks to this "health". These politics are what we call biopolitics. Through biopolitics – through practices of biopower – the lives of individuals are submitted to this rational criterion of the capital, which quantifies them in statistical groups, reduces them to numerical units within a group denominated "population",

³ "Luther, to be sure, overcame servitude based on devotion, but by replacing it with servitude based on conviction. He shattered faith in authority by restoring the authority of faith. He transformed the priests into laymen by changing the laymen into priests. He liberated man from external religiosity by making religiosity that which is innermost to man. He freed the body of chains by putting the heart in chains." (Marx 1970: 138)

classifying them hierarchically according to their supposed physical aptitudes – thus, productive – or lack thereof.

Yet, this self-managing of the State according to this assumed criterion of rationality created by the market – by capital – is also that which, in a certain way, introjects itself into the individual as self-"management": the interiorization of the State is also the interiorization of the "truth" of capitalism. It is up to individuals to manage themselves according to this supposed rationality, and their ability to do so will guarantee their supposed freedom, that is, their prosperity in a "market economy". As Lazzarato has shown, this operation, in neoliberalism, characterizes the constitution of a capitalist subjectivity completely disseminated across the social body, aiming to turn every individual into a so-called "entrepreneur" while actually creating an indebted individual, therefore subdued, as a kind of existential condition disseminated throughout the entire social capitalist machine.

Financial capital, in this sense, is more than an operating element that allows for the functioning of capitalism; it is rather the great instrument of capital power that is radically interiorized in the figure of the "duty" of the liberal individual. The entrepreneurial man is in constant debt with himself, but this debt with himself is what determines all his life in function of the capitalist production, that is, all his life in the incessant process of "making" money that feeds the core process of capital, that is, an infinite and endless production that is also, and always, money producing money. That is one reason that makes Deleuze and Guattari consider "immanent" this debt that marks the functioning of capitalist production. It is immanent to the very capitalist production, that is, it is precisely the reason why the entrepreneurial individual is, in fact, existentially indebted, unable to remove himself from the incessant and increasingly intense process of capitalist production: he produces because he is indebted and he becomes indebted since he needs to produce. Debt and capitalist production operate in immanent fashion, which is different from the old transcendent debt towards a Despotic State. This State, in general, threw itself upon the productive process from outside, as in, for example, in operations of tax collecting often carried out as police operations.

The individual's debt, immanent to his very existence and to the actual way he is constituted as an individual, is a debt towards his economic health and his prosperity. By properly managing himself, according to the neoliberal logic, he will contribute to the prosperity of the economy – of the "market" – and, consequently, of the State, since those who properly manage themselves become, as much as possible, one less burden to the State. In this sense, his debt is also towards the State: it is the duty of the individual to look after the economic health, the integrity and the prosperity of the State. Which means to say that, in a certain way, the debt of the State is also his debt. The State is present both as an interiorized element in this individual, who judges himself according to a criterion of rationality – responsible and indebted to himself –, and also in the way that this criterion of rationality determines his duty towards the State. There is a kind of "patriotic"

duty that is already insinuated in the constitution of liberalism and that, in neoliberalism, gets introjected more effectively as a subjectivity, namely the rational duty of the individual to look after the rationality of the State: the criterion of a "truth" of the market that would guarantee at once the economic health of the State and the proper functioning of the economy. Duty towards the State gets confused with duty towards the "economy": in fact, the "market", the "capital" – "The economy is the country!"

Even though the "immanent" character of this debt seems evident, as described by Deleuze and Guattari, we believe it still keeps an important element of "transcendent debt", even if it is an interiorized transcendence. This is what we observe in the very "rationality" taken as the truth of the market – of capital –, which is written here between quotation marks precisely because it occurs as a mystification, thus producing, as we shall see further ahead, a demonization of everything that may threaten it. Foucault, when speaking of this "truth of the market" that came to determine the government of the State, helped us perceive – even if not putting it in these terms – that the immanence, so well observed by Deleuze and Guattari, is articulated as a kind of indiscernibility between State and "market", where both share the same mystified "truth". We dare say that, in neoliberalism, it is exactly this "truth" of the capital, now also the "truth" of the State, that gets interiorized in the form of a guilty subjectivity: indebtedness. We are not referring just to indebtedness in the more mundane economic sense, which in fact affects large part of the population, but also to the constitution of an indebted subjectivity as an existential experience. This existential experience of indebtedness will be decisive in keeping every individual fully immersed in productive activity, in the way it is conceived by capitalism: intense labor, interminable duty, a life lived towards the incessant flow of money making; the production of capital itself.

At this point, one of the most important and invaluable contributions of Marx to the criticism of capitalism, namely the creation of a counter-theology of capital, seems to acquire a newfound relevance. In fact, Marx points out several times that the capital is mystified as the origin of all production and that this is a key operation of political economy: of liberalism. This would be, in fact, the fetish of all fetishes in capitalism, that is, making every production go from labor to capital, transforming the latter in a kind of "mythical entity" (Marx 2017: 890), thus deflating the protagonist aspect of labor. However, in order to demystify capital, Marx also needed to demystify the capitalist concept of State. Every incisive criticism he makes of the way Hegel conceived the State and described its fundamentals in mystical terms (Marx 2005: 29-36) is, in fact, a denunciation of the way the bourgeoisie conceived the State in a mystified form. Hegel's mystification appears when he claims the precedence of the State in relation to civil society, while Marx proposes an inversion of this equation, showing how such thinking is typically bourgeois and how capitalism needs such mystification to legitimize all its juridical and repressive apparatus.

So, what we suggest here, working towards the conclusion of the first part, is that the relation between State and capital occurs, in contemporary capitalism, through an "indiscernibility" that contains an element of immanence but also an element of transcendence, that is, of mystification, despite being an interiorized mystification. What is indiscernible are exactly these two mystifications blended into one: the mystification of the State and the mystification of capital. A mystification that is interiorized in the individual, that is, inscribed within him as debt and guilt in a more effective way than any ideological convincing or any alienation that obscured his conscience. It is an inscription that brings impotence and, from there, potentializes capitalist production. The State gets inscribed in the bodies of individuals and also in the entire social body, inscribing there its "truth". But its truth is, as we have seen, the criterion of "rationality" of the market and, therefore, of the capital. Once again, it is the indiscernibility between capital and State interiorized as a mystification that expresses itself in an enunciation that is disseminated as a motto, inscribed in bodies and minds: "The economy is the homeland!"

II – The war for the economy.

"The economy is the homeland!" Was that not the main motto of Bolsonaro and his *bolsonaristas*, especially during the pandemic?

Bolsonarismo created a false dilemma between sanitary measures and the economy, pointing to sanitary measures, mainly social distancing and quarantine, as a threat to the economy. In this context, it is interesting to observe the dislocation, and eventually an alternation, between two constructions that even contradict themselves. First we have one that tried, and still tries, to deny the threat of the virus and the pandemic, or at least minimize it considerably. In this logic, all kinds of rumors were fabricated – the so-called "fake news" – to discredit the numbers that notified of the infected and the death tolls. In general, state governments, city governments and the media were accused of falsifying and inflating numbers, of creating an ambience of fear around a pandemic that would have far less scope and danger than was it was attributed to it. There were quite a few statements made by Bolsonaro himself in this sense. We should point out that, in this case, it is *bolsonarismo* that accused its adversaries of producing fake news and information, in an alleged case of "psychological terrorism", that is, blaming adversaries for something that is one of its own most striking characteristics. This first construction, while never completely abandoned, ceased to be the only one, or even the most predominant.

Soon we saw the emergence of another, which admitted the existence of the virus, of the pandemic and its dangers, substituting the argument that a great lie, part of a great conspiracy, was threatening us, to deem the existence of the virus and the pandemic the creation of this menacing conspiracy. In this case, those who were accused of being responsible for the fabrication of fake news about the severity of the pandemic,

supposedly inflating the numbers of dead and infected, were now blamed for creating and disseminating the virus – the "Chinese virus" – and the pandemic itself. However, we shall notice that, in both cases, the great threat, the great conspiracy, the one that involves an alleged lie about the pandemic and the one claiming there was an alleged creation and dissemination of the virus and the pandemic, was always aimed towards the Brazilian economy, even if it was part of a purported Chinese conspiracy against the entire planetary economy. Thus, Brazil was being threatened – the "homeland" was being threatened – and there was in course, supposedly, a sordid plot to paralyze its economic and productive activities. It is also interesting to observe that, although the two arguments are contradictory – since one can either say the virus is a hoax or else admit its existence as a key element in a big sordid plot –, this fact has no importance whatsoever to the *bolsonarista* strategy, which jumps unabashedly from one argument to the other. In fact, being coherent in the construction of its arguments was never a characteristic of fascism and we might find here an important similarity between *bolsonarismo* and the European fascist movements, given that the latter articulated demonizing and denial campaigns that, in present times, are intimately related to the concept of fake news.

In fact, we do not believe the term or concept of "fake news" best refers to the phenomenon it describes, although it is very important to investigate the phenomenon itself. We believe these so-called "fake news" are not characterized mainly as something that opposes lies, illusions or falsehoods to the truth, that is, they appear to be only secondarily a phenomenon that should be analyzed from an opposition of "truth vs. lies". These millions of messages, many of them little audiovisual productions, that get spread across social media – namely WhatsApp and the such – are rather characterized by mobilizing a certain regime of affects. Which means they are a decisive factor in what we call "the economic-politics of violence and death", triggering, mobilizing and intensifying a certain state of affects. In this sense, the existing contradiction between the two main forms through which *bolsonaristas* referred to the pandemic matters less than the mobilization of fear, a terror and hatred against an alleged foreign threat articulated with a domestic enemy, that is, a threat that would also be found in the heart of Brazilian society.

Thus, in the list of demonized "foreign enemies", China often plays the main role, the leading force of an alleged international communist alliance disseminated throughout the world in several forms and different movements – LGBTQIA+, feminists, ecologists, globalists –, controlling other governments but especially international organizations, among which the WHO (World Health Organization) is usually accused of being the main conspirator. To this curious alliance of foreign demons, listed by *bolsonarismo* and Bolsonaro himself, would be added, as political allies, a list of "domestic enemies" formed by the same LGBTQIA+, feminists, ecologists, globalists – in the forms by which they get organized in Brazil –, in short, a list often encompassed by the greatest demonizing denomination: again, "the communists". These were already demonized before the

pandemic, in a mobilization that targeted, for example, professors and artists, and that attacked universities and scientists. This strategy, however, acquired new characteristics and strength at the onset of the pandemic, also because these categories would be, among us, representative of organizations like the WHO.

Yet, there is no doubt that the second construction, the one that admits the existence of the virus and blames its creation on the Chinese, was favored because it proved especially adequate to the logic of "economic warfare". The construction is quite clear and easily verifiable, both in statements by Bolsonaro and also in *bolsonarista* discourses that circulate in social media. It means, basically, declaring war on the pandemic not by a social mobilization around sanitary measures but by a social mobilization to save the economy, ignoring the pandemic as a threat to human lives. In this logic, there is exaltation, even glorification, of the citizens that leave their homes to keep the economy spinning: workers that risk their lives in public transportation, micro and small businessmen that keep their shops open, delivery workers and ride-share drivers, and every other example we can think of. These would be the true "patriots", risking their lives, exposing themselves to the virus, facing disease and death to save the economy. At the other end, we found those who supported and practiced social distancing, quarantines and, in extreme measures, lockdowns. Accused of conspiring against the economy, therefore "unpatriotic", they were also deemed coward, feeble, deserters of a war that needed to be fought: the war for the economy.

It is precisely the admission of the existence of the virus and the dangers of the pandemic that brings forth this element of war and death, in the way both have been long related, especially when war is immediately understood as a State business – a war of the State: the glorification of death. Bolsonaro and *bolsonarismo* found in the pandemic an amazing opportunity to intensify this economy-politics of affects that operates by constructing the paranoid idea of the great enemy – which is, by the way, a characteristic of the cult of the State as a mystical instance. An economy-politics of fear, but also a positive intensity that offers a glorifying fruition, a heroic excitement to those who were supposed to be the soldiers of the country, risking their lives in a war to save the economy.

When we define fascism as an economic-politics of death and violence (Guéron 2020: 354), we are referring to the way in which death and violence circulate in a dynamic of intensification of flows that is typical of capitalism. This dynamic of flows detaches death and violence from the institutions of the force of the State and makes them circulate as commodities, constituting an entire sector of economic activity, an entire "market" with their own ways of life and, therefore, a whole dynamic for producing subjectivity. But the first part of the present text allows us to claim that there is, in this movement, a strong element of a State at once mystified and interiorized. Why? Because every mystical component that attributes a transcendent power to the State – for instance, the monopoly of judgment, the monopoly of violence, the right to kill or spare lives –, usually revered and intensified in repressive institutions of the State (for example, in the processes that

form and manage police and military forces), also begin to circulate socially, creating an economy, even a sector of economic activity, where it becomes evident that the economic-politics in the "conventional" sense and the libidinal economic-politics constitute the same flow and are, in fact, the same thing. In fact, violence and death are often put in circulation as the key element of a mystified State. Perhaps it is precisely in this mystical component of the State that we can spot a decisive factor that allows this force to get detached from it, just like a State that gets detached from a State and, paradoxically as it may sound, begin to socially circulate as a nomadic flow. In this sense, also, a fascist flow tends to acquire characteristics of a messianic movement.

We can even claim that there is always, in a certain measure, a tendency towards a fascist flow, even the existence of a fascist flow in capitalist society, which does not exclude the countries once called "socialist", maybe because these never actually overcame the organizational ways of capitalist production. Yet, this flow is quite capable of remaining in relative control, without great economic-political expression, or with an expression restricted to certain areas of activity, being even occasionally utilized by the State and/or by sectors of the capital. It even seems that the stability of the capitalist social machine always depended on some kind of management of these fascist flows. Phenomena like *bolsonarismo*, however, have to do with a rupture of this stability.

One could argue that this political economy of violence and death often detaches itself from structures of repression that, while being a strong social presence, do not necessarily belong to the State. Let us take as an example what is generally called in Brazil *capatazes* – roughly, a private assembly of thugs, musclemen hired by large monoculture landowners and grain exporters to carry tasks related to security and repression since the time of plantations and slavery. There is, however, a State present in these private power formations, even if only as an evoked mystical element; just like there is, frequently, an actual statization of these armed "private" structures, with grey areas established from the beginning: it should be enough to point out that the military police of Rio de Janeiro displays, on its blazon, a branch of coffee and a branch of sugar cane, the two main produce of old slave plantations. It is no wonder that powerful landowners in Brazil were called "colonels" and received from the State, in 1831, the denomination of commanders of a military institution, created upon their demand: the "National Guard". In this operation, those *capatazes*, or any other denomination given to them – *jagunços*, *capitães do mato* – officially became the State police force of these large farmland properties, under the orders of their oligarchs, who kept being called "colonels" way into the 20th century, even after the official dissolution of the National Guard.

In any case, what interests us at the moment is less the permanence of a structure of *capatazes* similar to that of the 19th century, with their respective productive organizations, but rather how this structure is reconfigured as a contemporary force, thanks to an economic-political process. In order for this to happen, it is necessary an element we recently identified as being paradoxical, that is, the fact that the mystification

of the State – a State that, at first, defined itself as a sedentary force – begins to circulate socially in a clearly nomadic dynamic, yet in the same way as it occurs in capitalism. The cult of the State gets detached from the actual institutions of the State, and its mystification becomes a phenomenon of messianism. This should be a good moment to ask to what point one can speak of messianism, referring to the way it occurred before capitalism, since we are describing a phenomenon that gets detached from the State exactly due to the characteristics of a capitalist economy and its intense dynamic of flows. We raise here the hypothesis that there is, in Brazil, an economy-politics of *capatazes* as a kind of economy-politics of violence and death and that, with its strong component of messianic mystification of the State, it circulates as commodities, produces subjectivities – "an object for the subject, but also a subject for an object" (Marx 2013: 47) – as a way of maintaining and expanding its businesses, that is, its market. Here, however, we must observe that the typically nomadic characteristic of messianism often turns it into a force of rupture that can be extremely threatening to the established powers and can eventually produce important social transformations. Which means that if, according to our theme, we articulate messianism with fascism and the economy-politics of death, there is also a possible messianic vitality, as seen in some heretic movements of Christianity, among them, for example, the experience of Canudos, in Brazil. If fascism has a messianic element, it has to do with the way in which a line of rupture can end up being an economy-politics of death, a point we shall soon return to, when we enumerate the several flows that converge to constitute fascism as an organicity.

Besides that, if messianism is characterized, on the one hand, by being a kind of force of flow, that is, a nomadic force that circulates socially in a typically anti-State action, on the other hand, it has always been decisive as a force of expansion of the States, even if it may cause them problems later. Colonial expansion itself, decisive for the formation of capitalism, had a noticeable characteristic: *bandeirantes*, pirates, cowboys and even Jesuit priests are, at certain moments, examples of the nomadic potency in the expansionist operation of the States. However, the State that gets detached from the State in a capitalist social machine is, rather, a State whose own mystification was subjected to the mystification of capital. It is that State which, based on Foucault, we described in the first lines of this text as one subjected to the "truth" – a criterion of "rationality" – of the capital. It is this "truth" of the capital that we identify, using a vocabulary that Foucault probably would not use, as a "mystification" that appears in the heart of the economy-politics. Before that, the great pioneer to denounce the mystifications of economy-politics and liberalism was, as we know, Marx himself. He viewed them as kinds of self-mystification of the capital itself, which magically conceived all production as if emanating from itself, in a series of enunciations or mottos that can still be easily perceived in capitalism nowadays, or perhaps more present than ever. So the discourse of the entrepreneurs – the "capitalists", as Marx liked to call them – are disseminated in the extreme neoliberal subjectivity of the "entrepreneurs". They never stop saying that production only exists

thanks to them, that employment only exists thanks to them, that scientific and economic development only exists thanks to them, even that prosperity only exists thanks to capitalism, to "investors" and "entrepreneurs". In fact, this was the "truth" of the capital and, hence, the State, which should interfere as little as possible in order not to disturb the proper functioning of the market, yet engenders a violent operation for managing lives and bodies – biopolitics, biopower – whose extreme manifestations are racism, slavery and the politics of extermination.

It is this State, subjected to the capitalist rationality, that ends up mystified and, as we pointed out, interiorized. A State that is also indebted to the capital itself at the same time that it creates and guarantees planetary patterns which determine both its indebtedness and the indebtedness of individuals: the global axioms of financial capitalism. But the indebtedness of individuals, in the sense of a disseminated social experience of debt, also occurs because the State that is interiorized is actually the indebted State which is typical of capitalism. The State itself is subjected to the infinite flows of the financial market, and this is a decisive way of keeping it subjected to the capital, but also a way of keeping individuals subjected to it. Meaning that it is not only the debt of individuals, guaranteed by the juridical and repressive system of the State, which works as a decisive operation of power in the capitalist social machine, but also – and perhaps above all – the debt of the State. This indebtedness is experienced by a gigantic mass of individuals as both a debt towards the State and towards the capital. It is an indebtedness that may not even exist in fact, that is, the bills of a certain individual may all be paid and yet he is constituted as an indebted subjectivity: he lives the experience of never being able to stop, and actually never stops. Evidently, we cannot say that "every individual" or "each individual" is constituted as an indebted being in the same way, since what we have here is an astonishing machine for extracting life through debt, feeding the machine for producing capital at the other end, since it is debts that throws individuals into an infinite and insane intensity of production – in fact, the reproductive intensity of capital, where lives are consumed in function of the incessant dynamics of money producing money: the (re)production of the capital itself. That is why, in capitalism, debt works in an immanent way with the productive machine: a mechanism of violence inscribed in bodies, working like a key element in social oppression, instead of just producing some kind of paralyzing and destructive effect – as happened in social machines before capitalism –, keeps individuals and the social machine intensely productive and, above all, circulates socially as an economic activity: it is constituted as commodity and market.

Here, perhaps, it is not correct to say that the State-capital is interiorized in individuals, but rather that its internalization is the very process of formation of the "liberal individual" – one that should be entirely responsible for himself, for his "success" or "failure", but also, of course, for his family, given that this logic is profoundly patriarchal. But this State that is interiorized, at once subjected and strong, inscribing and marking the bodies of individuals in a libidinal economy that makes it incessantly productive – in

the way the capital understands "production" –, also tears from it a political action forged at the heart of this libidinal economy-politics; and here is a point of particular interest to us.

This process is already inscribed, in a latent form, in this liberal man, described here as a man of the State – of the State-capital –, when he gets dislocated from debtors to creditors, transforming his political action in a kind of action for the defense of this austere State of capitalism. But what is he, in fact, collecting? He is collecting for all his sacrifices, for everything he went through – or imagines he went through – in order to be "self-made" without any "help from the State". In this logic, he goes against anyone who would be allegedly responsible for the indebtedness of the State, directing a special kind of resentment against those who are very near him, those who are socially similar to him, although he hates to admit so, those who would have refused to make the efforts that turned him into a "successful man": those who showed cowardice before the sacrifice of work and therefore, supposedly, are "dependent" of the State and, consequently, responsible for its indebtedness. Thus, resentment is a decisive force in the constitution of a neoliberal economic-politics which, much more than just an ideology, is a force that gets inscribed in bodies and therefore creates the preconditions for a series of micro-fascist actions that may get articulated in a fascist organicity of macro dimensions. A force that emerges from this individual who turned his debt-guilt experience into the action of a creditor, since he was able to construct, sometimes just barely, a life structure "in spite of everything": those who are disciplined amidst misery, those who suffered to 'serve good' amidst violence, those who feel threatened in the rigid structures they toiled to maintain.

This is the game of the libidinal economy-politics, immanent to every capitalist economy-politics, to which we frequently refer here, as if the relation creditors-debtors described by Nietzsche in the second essay of *The genealogy of morals* now worked inversely, that is, as a debtor-creditor relation that is inscribed and constitutes the affect economy of the liberal individual, who works micro-politically as a man-State. Still according to Nietzsche's terms, in his description of the two stages of what he called "European nihilism", this is a transition from the stage of guilt, of those who are self-judging, towards a stage of resentment: of those who judge others. We say here "neoliberal" instead of "liberal" because this is a striking difference between neoliberalism and classic liberalism: the constitution of an ingrained capitalist subjectivity that constitutes the "entrepreneurial man" as a paradigm in the hearts of the destitute and the working class.

There is, in the social capitalist machine, a series of violence and sufferings that do not derive exclusively from the repressive apparatus of the State, but also from the way in which the demand for incessant work, typical of capitalism, marks bodies. This is decisive to create a neoliberal subjectivity that combines the paranoid fear of anything that allegedly threatens a social condition that was "conquered" with resentment, expressed

in hatred and revenge, towards those who would have "failed" or refused to endure this affliction. Here we observe, once again, how the Christian operation that establishes a political-affect economy with sacrifices, guilt, punishment and compensation is so important for this immanent and infinite indebtedness of capitalism. We also see a noticeable intersection between that which threatens the individual and that which threatens the State, creating a kind of resentful and paranoid machine in liberal individuals that is like an anteroom of fascism, that is, something that turns a fascist flow – therefore, a fascist action – into something latent. But let us remember, once again, that this individual, historically constructed in a process of interiorization of the State, lives in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, he constructs an identity combining his defense as an individual – his "freedom" – against any form of intervention of the State while, on the other hand, defending the State against anything that supposedly threatens it, including the supposed threats to the economic health of this State. It is this defense of the State and its "market rationality" that becomes this individual's support of any kind of violent action of this State against a kind of territory of irrationality, where human beings that are "less human" would dwell: the spaces of the "lawless", of those "without Reason", as shown by Achille Mbembe (2018: 12). Defending the rationality of the State would be, therefore, defending the (supposed) rationality of the market, identified with the (supposed) rationality of the capital. In this logic, it is the financially austere and balanced State that would allegedly guarantee a "free" individual capable of managing himself – with an identity formed between personal freedom and the freedom of the market – and also this same State that should protect this individual against all "irrationality" that could, supposedly, threaten it at the same time that it would threaten the market – the "economy" – and the State. In this sense, the interiorization of the State in capitalism is a kind of interiorization of the biopolitics and, further down, of the very necropolitics, where every individual is pushed, in the violence of this economy-politics of affection that marks him, into being an agent of the capitalist "rationality" and, at the extreme, of the extermination machine. In fact, as Mbembe shows us in his genealogical analysis, death and extermination are forged at the heart of the western conception of Reason. This individual, a kind of agent for the capitalist "rationality", operates with bases on the defense of himself and his family – conceived, in a patriarchal micropolitics, as "the responsibility of the male" –, which is, at the same time, the defense of the State whose mystification is mingled with the mystification of the capital. We are faced with the neoliberal patriot, who finds in the description of the *bolsonarista* militant, or the Trumpist militant, a perfect image-cliché.

We shall point out that what we described a few paragraphs before already took place, that is, the State got already detached from the State, it acquired a dynamic of flow, so what we are calling the political economy of violence and death can now be called – since it has always been so – a political economy of the mystified State: the mystified State-capital that begins to circulate as messianism. We are evidently speaking of the

dissemination of war, which constitutes the neoliberal subjectivity in the same movement in which the mystified and interiorized State, in capitalism, is an interiorization and mystification of the capital. The neoliberal patriot is born at the heart of this interiorized war that, paradoxically, identifies this "free individual" with a soldier, in a war fought by "good men" to defend the economy from anything that threatens it: a threat to the individual (which is also a threat to his family), a threat to the "economy" (in the sense of a threat to the "market") and a threat to the State; in short, a logic in which everything that supposedly goes against the "capitalist rationality" must be fought and eliminated. That is why we said that the patriot of neoliberalism – the *bolsonarista* – is a kind of activist of biopower or, furthermore, an activist of necropolitics, since it has been described by Mbembe as an unfolding and transformation of biopolitics. Biopower and necropolitics begin to express themselves, in the neoliberal way of life, also – and decisively – as a micropolitical phenomenon and force. The call to arms to save the economy, frequently made by Bolsonaro, is an extreme moment of this neoliberal fascism, particularly when glorified as the courage to face disease, of facing the possibility of contamination by virus and death: the mission of a patriot soldier that would risk life to ensure the functioning of the "economy".

III – The glorification of death.

By now, we believe to have dismantled the argument that claims that *bolsonarismo* cannot be considered fascist due to the fact that it is not "nationalist". It is true that we witnessed the application of a savage neoliberal program that advances with relatively little resistance amidst the cynicism of part of the dominant classes, which pretend not to know that it can only have the political conditions to advance thanks to the violence of *bolsonarismo*. Thus, we have a kind of liberal *anti-bolsonarismo* in Brazil, which appears to vehemently criticize Bolsonaro, yet does so while defending the extreme program of neoliberal government proposed by Bolsonaro's minister of the economy. In truth, there are also those who unabashedly celebrate, with strong doses of mockery and class perversity, both patriarchal and racist, this neoliberal advance that, in itself, is but a social massacre. In any case, going back to the undeniable nationalist component of fascism, this has always been a delirious and paranoid element that, on the one hand, intensified capitalist production, like in the gigantic productive mobilization of war in Germany, and, on the other hand, extremely intensified the horrors of biopower as the politics of extermination of a supposedly monstrous "less human" irrationality, expressed in the figure of "the Jew" and often articulated with "communism", both liable for a great international conspiracy that would have provoked the downfall of the German economy and the impoverishment of its population. So, if we consider possible to think of a State with bases on its civilian society and not only as a mystified entity – a theme that would

place some of the authors mentioned here in a heated divergence –, we do not believe we can affirm that Hitler or even Mussolini were defending the States, the "people" and the "civilian society" of their respective countries. It is not about measuring what happens in Brazil based on European phenomena, but rather understanding a country like Brazil at the heart of the capitalist economy-politics of violence, death and extermination. We affirm this as an answer to the argument, often heard lately, which considers that the identification of *bolsonarismo* as a kind of fascism is "Eurocentric". For us, on the contrary, it would be Eurocentric to consider fascism as a solely European phenomenon that would have reached its definitive form in countries like Germany and Italy. We believe, in fact, that from the characteristics of the Brazilian phenomenon we can view the European cases against the grain: that is, from the experience we are having today, with the intensification of the economy-politics of violence and death in Brazil, we can understand in a new perspective, with new aspects, what happened in those countries. Let us remember, once again, that Mbembe has shown us that biopower was already a colonial and slaveholder politics, just like some authors have been calling attention to the fact that European colonial politics of social control, repression and extermination, beginning in the mid-19th century, were brought back to repress the rebellion of working classes in the metropolises (Alliez; Lazzarato 2021: 140), as if colonialism – especially neocolonialism – was a laboratory for the technologies of capitalist power.

"Patriotic" subjectivity acquires a strong tendency of becoming an actual fascist subjectivity when, among other motives, it begins to circulate within the logic of capitalist commodities, attached to the circulation of violence and death as commodities, the theme of our first two texts. As part of the economy-politics of the State, it is now death glorified and, as a part of the economic politics of the capitalist State that now circulates socially as an intensification of the capitalist subjectivity, it is also a demarcation and an amplification of a certain "market". Yet, if it is true that we consider that every kind of social circulation is, in a certain way, the circulation of desire, including the circulation of the simplest and most prosaic merchandise, it is also true that we must consider that the economy of the *capatazes* puts in circulation something that is not an average commodity.

If capitalism cannot do without these intense flows to survive, it needs a mechanism to make sure this intense production of flows does not destroy it, since the aspect of desire in every production – their very intensity – greatly exceeds the form-commodity. We also know, however, that the decisive moment of capitalism is reducing great part of the productive intensity – the entire dynamic of flows – to abstract quantities in the form of currency. It is an operation in which the entire singularity of produced goods and the entire qualitative force of production is emptied in a quantitative measure, which is what characterizes the form-commodity. In this movement, and even more perceivable in contemporary capitalism, every vital and creative activity, and not only those which happened in the space classically reserved for work, is captured by a productive machine that exists "only" to produce money: the production of the capital itself. If Marx has shown

us that the main commodity of capitalism is the labor force, we can say that what is turned into a commodity is human activity in general: every act of creation and, in the end, every life reduced to an exchange value.

Yet, we must again insist, if everything in capitalism can be reduced to the form-commodity, the "products" of the economy-politics of *capatazes* are not an average commodity: violence glorified, the messianic cult of the State, a war interiorized and disseminated as a war for the economy – an immanent war – seem to have such an intensity that it greatly exceeds the quantitative reductions to the form-commodity. Again we are faced with a paradoxical element, that is, at the same time that a fascist flow is a typical phenomenon of capitalism and can be adopted or not, and in different intensities, by the main structures of capital, it strengthens itself as a last possible intensity in a social machine where every life seems to be emptied as form-commodity. It is as if, from the creative intensity of life, nothing had remained but the extreme experience of betting everything in a game against death, that is, betting everything in the destruction of the other that supposedly threatens us to the very limits of our lives: therefore, of our deaths.

It is difficult to make here an evaluation of the composition of forces that makes these flows converge and get intensified, the role of each one of them, the ways and conditions through which they associate. It is also difficult to know precisely which moment something that circulated in a dynamic of flows acquires a new organicity, acquires new – higher and more complex – dimensions in the occupation of, and in the relation with, the structures of the State, aspiring to it in a more totalizing way; as, for example, organizing a presidential candidacy with chances of success and in fact winning the elections, like happened in Brazil. We organize these flows in five different kinds, in a list that is perhaps too schematic, especially since they have many intersecting points:

1) The economic-politics of the *capatazes* itself, which we place first in the list since the fascist phenomenon is characterized exactly by a moment when this flow begins to attract and gather every other, acquiring a surprising force as a sector of the economy. This force both augments and is augmented as a political force, way beyond what would be a traditional economic mensuration of a certain sector of the economy, even though this should not be disregarded. That happens precisely due to the especially non-quantifiable characteristics that it puts in circulation, which are still reduced significantly to the abstract quantities of form-commodities. We are referring to violence, fear and hatred, the glorification of war and death, the cult of a mystified State and everything that gets organized around them: the grey zone between State and businesses, be these of formal or informal economy (formality and informality also having a grey zone between them). Again, we are talking about examples given here: security firms and militias in a direct relation with police forces, positions in the State ranks and so on. In any case, it is in the economy-politics of *capatazes* that an affect economy is mobilized, decisive to compose the libidinal intensity of fascism, and which also constitutes its political force.

2) A flow that has to do with a way of life that we shall call here by an expression many precipitately deemed "over", that is, the bourgeois way of life: the evaluation and valuing of life reduced to the form of commodities. This is socially disseminated as subjectivity and way of life, intimately linked to the liberal subjectivity that we mentioned in the beginning of this text, and seems to express itself in a kind of micropolitical force in the figure – the image-cliché – of the petit-bourgeois. It is curious because, if the bourgeoisie is the dominant class of capitalism, capitalism is characterized by having a strange subjected dominant class, no less powerful and violent because of this; in fact, the opposite. Marx, by the way, had noticed this aspect: it is as if the bourgeoisie was always dependent, submitted and terrorized by the process, which needs to be incessant and intense, of producing money. Evidently, we know that those actually submitted to this process are those who need to work, day in, day out, to maintain it: we are not minimizing here the violence of the capital in subjecting work and life. We perceive, however, in the liberal-bourgeois way of managing their own lives, at least two aspects that make a fascist economy-politics become latent. First, the relation of the bourgeois with will, that is, the way in which he experiences life, evaluates himself, his family and all his vital activity in which almost everything is emptied in a merely quantitative evaluation. Bourgeois life, as plentiful as it may be, tends to reduce the experience of will to a minus: to the form-commodity, to abstract quantities in the form of currency. Secondly, and entirely linked to this first aspect, it is the fact that fear constitutes the bourgeois subjectivity, which makes the dominant class of capitalism especially violent but also disseminates this violence socially. In this case, it is perhaps the figure of the petit-bourgeois that better expresses a micropolitical aspect of this subjectivity that is experienced as indebted, which oscillates between an incessant production, albeit qualitatively empty, and the horror of losing everything. The dissemination of the image-cliché and the neoliberal enunciations of the "entrepreneur" is, without a doubt, an extreme unfolding of this aspect.

3) The flow of aid to the poor, to those exploited in capitalism. We have spoken of this flow in this text – it mobilizes, in a remarkable way, the economy-politics affections of suffering and deprivations that constitutes life in capitalism: as we mentioned, those who were able to remain "honest workers" "in spite of everything", those who endured by working much and sleeping little when everything around seemed to conspire against them, and so forth. It is a decisive flow in the constitution of a fascist economy-politics, turning every violence suffered into resentment among peers, be it class violence, racist, patriarchal and, especially in this case, the violence that is immanent to the routine of work and to the struggle for life in general in a capitalist society. This is a decisive political-affective operation for fascism. It is important to notice that this flow contains important zones of intersections with the two previous flows, whether because this small distinction among peers, imagined or not, results into an explicit support of the economy-politics of the *capatazes*: something like becoming an actual "*capataz*"; whether because social

ascension, small as it may be, produces a shift towards a liberal subjectivity: the value of the "self-made man", who despises those that were born in the same conditions and did not "arrive where he arrived" because, supposedly, they did not make an effort and did not "deserve it".

4) The anti-capitalist flow itself, converted into fascist flow. Here is another decisive element, this time with an important intersection zone with the flow mentioned above. It is the way in which fascism is also constructed from the mobilization of an entire economy-politics of affects, of an entire vital practice of resistance to capitalism, even though it is, in itself, a capitalist phenomenon, both in the origin of its violence and also because it only acquires force and expressive social organicity when it is taken on by big capital. This reversion takes place when the masses that somehow experience their lives under permanent expropriation, that realize and formulate that a great part of their vital force is being extracted, and that rebel against this in many ways – the experience of being constituted as a class that is exploited and robbed by another – get dislocated to the messianic cult of the State that brings with it the economy-politics of disseminated war and glorified death. It is difficult to know exactly the moment in which this reversion occurs and a mythical State is evoked, in all its paranoid dimension, against this force that actually steals from the masses, yet gets dislocated in a scapegoat logic to another place in which all its monstrosity is deposited – that of the actual suffering and horror of the classes oppressed by the capital. It is then, paradoxical as it may sound, that this mystical State receives the rescuing mission of relieving the victims of expropriation from their tormentors. This is a paradox of fascism that often confounds and paralyzes the left: the oppressed masses evoking and adoring those who have always been their greatest tormentors – the State and its institutions of force and repression – to save them from the misery they were actually thrown into. Here, the German example is classic, given that a strong sentiment of class revolt from millions of workers thrown by capital into the squalor caused by World War I, expressed in the revolution of 1918-1919⁴, gets dislocated, 15 years later, to a hatred towards the "Jew", the delirious and alleged expression of a conspiracy to expropriate the German people. Quite often, this deluded image of the Jew as monsters was linked in Nazi discourse to the "Bolsheviks" and

⁴ The revolution of 1918-1919 had antecedents in the middle of World War I, in Germany, deepening the opposition between the main leftist party in Germany, the SPD, and the dissidence led by Rosa Luxemburg, at first denominated "Spartacus League" and later Communist Party of Germany. Briefly, we could say that the SPD, pushed by the economic crisis and the widespread poverty caused by the war – Germany's engagement in the conflict was supported by the party –, settled in leading a process to overthrow the Kaiser and the monarchic parliament of Germany, introducing a republic alongside the liberal parties linked to the bourgeoisie, while the dissidents led by Rosa, in a position very similar to that of Lenin in Russia, tried to make this process evolve to socialism, even founding the People's State of Bavaria, at the end of 1918, and leading a general strike in Berlin, at the beginning of the following year, which resulted in the Spartacist uprising. The SPD, in alliance with extreme-right militias (*Freikorps*) crushed both revolts and was responsible for the execution of Rosa Luxemburg and other communist leaders. The revolution officially ended in August 1919, with the foundation of the Weimar Republic.

"communists", part of an international conspiracy that, at this point, is similar to the one that *bolsonaristas* claim to be threatening Brazil, with the difference that these do not mention the Jews and even tried to form an alliance with the Zionist right; which is not synonymous with an alliance with Judaism, let us be clear. There is here a dislocation of the risks taken in a rebellious revolution – the political-affect mobilization of those that, in revolt and suffering, decide to put their bodies in risk towards a future that means betting on life – towards a flow that bets everything on the death of the other, in a movement where the risk of the revolutionary becoming, which can also imply confrontation and combat, becomes an end in itself, that is, the war itself becomes something that mobilizes life: here, once again, we find the fascist "patriot". In Brazil, for sure, we cannot speak of revolutionary flow, but there was something like an economy-politics of hope, a disposition towards political struggles and social mobilization that began to be produced in the two decades that preceded the arrival of PT and Lula at the presidency, stemming from the last years of struggle against the military dictatorship and deepened in important ways with the experiences of social ascension in the first eight years of Lula's government. It is important to notice here that a political-economical shift takes place, making masses of people that stood behind PT move towards *bolsonarismo* somewhere in the second decade of this century, particularly in the metropolitan regions of the southern and southeastern regions of the country. Here, of course, the economic crisis itself is not a factor to be disregarded, since every kind of quantitatively measured deprivation immediately constitutes a movement of libidinal economy-politics that is captured and intensified by strategies of power and political action, more or less organized, that kept gaining momentum and organicity while converging towards *bolsonarismo*. Here, it is interesting to perceive that the paranoid construction of a monstrous force that would be responsible for the expropriation of the people, constitutive of the fascist economy-politics, has an important element of the capture of a sentiment of class revolt, which continues to circulate socially, but not in the formulation that some leftist organization would like it to have. Besides that, as we have already seen, this paranoid operation is constructed, in fascist *bolsonarismo*, by identifying and mixing the alleged communists of the alleged international conspiracy and every kind of alleged incapable person, the lazy and the virtueless, the criminals and monsters that, at the same time, would threaten the State and the economy: the enemies of the "market", the enemies of the nation.

5) Finally, something that we place last, something that can almost no longer be considered a "flow", since it is a decisive stage for the organicity that the fascist flow may or may not acquire – especially to the way this organicity will operate in order for this flow to seize the State in a more traditional way, not only in the mixed game of internal and external relations that is typical, say, of militias. We are referring to the form in which the economy-politics of *capatazes* is undertaken by capitalist micro-powers. To employ once again the image we have been using to illustrate the Brazilian case: the moment in

which the Casa Grande – the plantation farmhouse – (re)plays the game, inviting the *capatazes* to the dining table – since they had, perhaps without being invited, already entered the dining room – as if accepting a bastard son and/or surrendering to an economic-political force that they achieved in ways beyond what was expected. The dining table of the Casa Grande was already listed here: agribusinesses, large retail chains, industries, financial markets. This is curious, given that the economy-politics of death, as described in the second flow, can seep through the political evaluation of the high bourgeoisie, whose supposed rationality, aimed at the proper functioning of its accumulating machine, is still capable of being imbued with paranoid elements like that of "subversion" or "communist threat". In this experience of a situation-limit, albeit delusional and paranoid, the economy-politics of *capatazes* can offer to the capital the irresistible perspective of "finally" and completely subjecting the State to the "truth" of the market. Yet, without a doubt, a decisive role is played at this moment by the terror experienced by capitalist macro-structures when facing forces that, in one way or another, oppose them, as mentioned in the fourth item.

But, above all, the violence of the economy-politics of *capatazes* is undertaken by the big capital because it offers the irresistible chance of new movements of pillaging and expropriation of what still remains of public and common, like in a new movement of primitive accumulation. That is what we seem to be witnessing now, when *bolsonarismo* offers to the capital several privatizations under special rates and conditions, including the natural resources that come with them – from oil to water –, the same way it harasses and attacks forests and indigenous lands, good examples of what still preserves a kind of collective and common dimension and that have yet to be "privatized". We are not making a simplistic argument in defense of state-owned companies, as if we ignored that forms of capitalist accumulation and expropriation can occur in them and through them, even to benefit private groups. We are, rather, diagnosing the obvious: once again, the harrying of what is left of a life – life in general, not just "human" life – still not immediately subjected to the dynamics of capitalist production.

The economic-politics of the *capatazes* – a kind of Brazilian case of fascist economy-politics –, with its capacity of attracting the conversion of several flows, gives it a clear advantage over the flows of resistance and revolutionary flows of anti-capitalist tendencies, besides appearing to offer something far more exciting than the well-behaved, austere and moralist programs sometimes offered by the left, as was observed, in a certain way, by Felix Guattari⁵. This advantage lies mainly in the fact that this convergence offers

⁵ "What no one is prepared to recognize is that the fascist machine, in the form it took in Italy and Germany, was a threat both to capitalism and Stalinism, because the masses invested in it the most fantastic collective death instinct. By re-territorializing their desire upon a leader, a people, a race, they were destroying, in a fantasy of catastrophe, a reality they hated – a reality that the revolutionaries either couldn't or wouldn't grapple with. Virility, blood, *Lebensraum*, and death replaced for them a socialism too respectful of the prevailing values – and this despite the intrinsic dishonesty of fascism, it's fake challenges to the absurd, its whole theatrical display of collective hysteria and feeble-mindedness, which brought them back again to the same values." (Guattari 1984: 227)

a certain social "stability", a version of the "social peace" dreamed of by the bourgeoisie of the 19th century, which places the libidinal economic-politics as something very attractive to be brought by the *capatazes* to the dining room of the Casa Grande, besides the already mentioned new wave of intensified pillage of collective goods: a new movement of "primitive accumulation". These kinds of surplus-value commodity offered by the *capatazes* to the dominant classes, turn them more and more into a part of it, in a movement that lies at the heart of the immanence and indiscernibility between economics and politics that is typical of capitalism. That is why the economic-politics of the *capatazes* expresses, in a privileged way, how much the "economy-politics", understood in the more conventional meaning of the term, and the libidinal "economy-politics" are, in fact, one and the same.

Evidently, we cannot only write the expression "social peace" between quotation marks, not only because social peace in capitalism can frequently only be achieved thanks to subjection, violence and even extermination, but also because a so-called peace based on an economy-politics of violence and death is a paradox. Paradox is found in what makes possible the convergence of all the flows listed above, in a fascist economy-politics that reaches an intensity that works like a sort of last possible experience of life beyond the form-commodity – as we have seen, betting one's life on the death of the other, all the way: death as a limit. It is the dissemination and interiorization of a libidinal-economy of war – total war – that gives rise to a suicidal element: what prompted philosopher Paul Virilio to call the Nazi State a "suicidal State", in a description fully adopted by Deleuze and Guattari at the end of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2005: 169).

The problem with this intensification of the economy-politics of death may also be, in a certain degree, menacing to the capital. This happens not only due to total destruction – which was a fact in Germany – but also because, prior to that, it destroys a series of productive flows that are important for the intensity and multiplication of the very capitalist production, that is, an intensity necessary for the production of commodities. This is a threat that can be felt even within the structure of the State, whose destruction, in large part celebrated with the advancement of the neoliberal program, can nevertheless extend to old power structures that are imbricated in the functioning of Brazilian capitalism as we know it, and also to modern State structures that the capitalist economy-politics needs in order to survive. We seem to be living in this impasse nowadays in Brazil. That is why we witness some of the more traditional economic and political forces of power simply trying to "regulate" once more this violence, in an effort to keep *bolsonarismo* under relative control, in a kind of parlor liberal *anti-bolsonarismo* that cynically turns a blind eye to the fact that the conditions for the advance of an extreme neoliberal program can only happen thanks to the atmosphere of terror and violence brought about by *bolsonarismo*.

We believe the anti-fascist resistance needs to operate in a place-limit, trying to remain active in a game between the macro and the micro-political. As a matter of fact, this is a

game that the big power arrangements in capitalism can play very well, knowing how to combine their operations among the hierarchical structures of the State and the dynamics of the flow of capital, especially in the ways through which these are socially disseminated, mobilizing the bodies of individuals and social groups. In regard to ourselves, we may have to find another composition between organization and flow. It is necessary to be mobilized against the big power structures but, in this mobilization, we need to construct our own "immanence" in the ways we get organized, act and live, coming up with our own enunciations – our "mottos", which need to be rather like mobilizing speeches. The anti-fascist struggle, as my friend, the professor and philosopher Jorge Vasconcellos always says, is less about "raising consciousness" or "convincing" and more about an effort to create sensitivity. The very struggle needs to be constructed like another affective economy-politics, that is, a political strategy that is also an aesthetic strategy: aesthetic-political. It is not only about opposing "our" mottos to "theirs", even though screaming our wishes and our revolt in street marches is more than necessary: it is desirable. Yet, when we say that it is not only about a clash of mottos and that we must go beyond that, it is because we believe that the struggle against fascism is a struggle to overcome an impotence that was decisive in its formation as an economy-politics of violence and death. An impotence that lies, for example, in the way by which we describe here how millions of people that were expropriated and violated by the State-capital adhered to fascism, taking vengeance upon every form of life and resistance around them, as if collecting the debt of their pain: an active impotence.

It is difficult to know exactly how to accomplish all this, as it is difficult to keep the final part of this text from becoming an empty and academic intellectual-activist verbiage. Roughly, we would say that the struggle should come up with enunciates at the same time that it comes up with new ways of life; again, creating a new economic-politics. In opposition to the active impotence of the economy-politics of violence and death, it is necessary to construct an economic-politics of creation without any transcendence that may intimidate it. Some may read this affirmation as an invitation to atheism; it may well be, as long as it remains far from the Eurocentric rationalism of the Enlightenment, a twin brother of the mystification and violence of the State-capital. We can also consider a "sacred" aspect, if the reader so wishes, as far as it lies in something that brings us together as a common force, which in fact we have always shared, far beyond any Enlightenment opposition between nature and culture: life as a self-inventing force. It is true that every political struggle has its eyes on the future – a common and collective future –, but it cannot be shut and sealed like the impotence, power and even violence of a purified future paradise and a mystical time. It is true that we need plans and projects, as much as we need the stability in which to meet again our friends and loved ones, to relax and enjoy the abundance of what we have managed to create, while being kept in check by a future that may have a degree of indefiniteness but does not frighten us.

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