

ON COMMON GOOD, VIRTUE AND THE MARXIST UTOPIA: FROM POLITICAL MIMESIS TO THE SACRIFICIAL CRISIS

*SOBRE O BEM COMUM, A VIRTUDE E A UTOPIA
MARXISTA: DA MÍMESIS POLÍTICA À CRISE SACRIFICIAL*

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Abstract

This paper proposes a philosophical-theological reflection on the concepts of virtue and the common good in contrast with the disintegrating effects of the Marxist utopia in modern society. It observes that the twentieth century was marked by a crisis of political and civil structures, caused by ideological adherence to forms of political messianism that fragmented the social fabric and obscured the understanding of the ethical and metaphysical foundations of human coexistence. Longo argues that, in order to avoid a merely ideological or moralistic reading of

Received: 04 Jul 2025

Accepted: 25 Sept 2025

Published: 01 Nov 2025

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these concepts, it is necessary to return to a gnoseological perspective that recovers their original and transcendent meaning. The analysis thus proposes a path that unites the philosophical and theological dimensions, guided by two central questions: how is it possible to love ones enemies and do good to those who hate us, and what is truth? These questions function as hermeneutical keys for understanding the collapse of political mimesis in which collective desire turns into rivalry and the ensuing sacrificial crisis that characterizes modernity. The study therefore seeks to reconstruct a vision of the common good grounded in virtue and the recognition of otherness, overcoming both moral reductionism and the utopian ilusions that replace the ethical and spiritual dimension of political life with ideological simulacra.

Keywords: Common good. Virtue. Marxist utopia. Political mimesis. Sacrificial crisis.

Resumo

Propõe-se uma reflexão filosófico-teológica sobre os conceitos de virtude e bem comum em confronto com os efeitos desagregadores da utopia marxista na sociedade

moderna. Constata-se que o século XX foi marcado pela crise das estruturas políticas e civis, provocada pela adesão ideológica a formas de messianismo político que fragmentaram o tecido social e obscureceram a compreensão dos fundamentos éticos e metafísicos da convivência humana. Longo argumenta-se que, para evitar uma leitura meramente ideológica ou moralista desses conceitos, é necessário um retorno gnoseológico que recupere seu sentido originário e transcendente. A análise propõe, assim, um percurso que une a dimensão filosófica à teológica, orientado por duas perguntas centrais: como é possível amar os inimigos e fazer o bem a quem nos odeia, e o que é a verdade? Tais questões funcionam como chaves hermenêuticas para compreender o colapso da mimese política em que o desejo coletivo se desvia para a rivalidade e a consequente crise sacrificial que caracteriza a modernidade. O estudo busca, portanto, reconstruir uma visão do bem comum fundada na virtude e no reconhecimento da alteridade, superando tanto o reducionismo moral quanto as ilusões utópicas que substituem a dimensão ética e espiritual da vida política por simulacros ideológicos.

Palavras-chave: Bem comum. Virtude. Utopia marxista. Mimesis política. Crise sacrificial.

1. PREMISE

To contribute to a reflection on a topic as vast and complex as proposing an evaluation and a semantic-historical reading of the concept of virtue and the common good, on the historical-social disintegration and legal-political divisions caused by the Marxist utopia and beyond, conditions that mark the return of a renewed cyclical decay of civil society due to the pursuit by politicians of infatuations deriving from the variegation of an ideological messianism, especially in the 20th century, risks leaving a series of circumstances disconnected from a philosophical point of view, as well as from a metaphysical and theological point of view, which are decisive for understanding what at first glance might appear to be strongly interconnected and correlated concepts, either solely with ethics or also with moral philosophy and in any case with a very general semantics of the communitarianism of roles. To overcome this hermeneutical difficulty, which would result in a true error of evaluation and consideration of the very concepts of virtue, common good, and utopia, I wish to contribute to a reconstructive analysis from a gnoseological point of view, beginning my reflection with two pivotal questions, indispensable for a correct approach to the topic without it being just a polarized problematization of concepts in constant dialectical and political conflict. The first question is as follows: how is it possible to love ones enemies, pray for those who mistreat us, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us?¹ The second question, which intertwines with the first, asks instead: what is truth?²

2. THE REVOLUTIONARY PREMISES AND THE IDEOLOGIZATION OF THE COMMON GOOD

If we were to abandon ourselves to merely deductive and teleologically pertinent considerations, carrying out a reflection on virtue and the common good that also manages to bring them closer together, to the point of showing how the virtues reveal a common good as the supreme aspiration of the politician in order to make the claim of collective well-being a communal and syn-odal catechetical synthesis, not only of a legal guarantee of individual rights and political protection of fundamental freedoms, but also of their effective practice constitutionally ensured and affirmed, we would risk remaining far from grasping a common epicenter and mee-

¹Lc, 6, 27-38.

²Gv, 18, 37-38.

ting point between virtue and the common good. This is because, from the French Revolution of 1789 and then the Russian Revolution of 1917, they were destined to be utopically pursued until the entire humanity as recent events in Ukraine amply demonstrate escaped the collective space of inclusion and the place of community adhesion. Virtues degenerated into a symptomatic and obsessive exercise of the revolution and its persecutory and re-educational precepts, leading to the political normalization of civil society with its known mechanisms of exclusion on an ideological basis and repulsion due to the profession of one's faith. Meanwhile, the common good, as a hypostatized concept temporally dislocated in a future every time shown to be within reach by skillful propaganda, only to be fragmented again into increasingly complex and vague, as well as temporally distant, expectations, ultimately becoming completely unattainable, would be solely a safeguard of the same materialistic revolution in fieri because it is a consistent and analogous expression of utopia, that is, the achievement of a collective well-being that forcibly collectivizes. On this it is appropriate to dwell on what happened horrifyingly, after the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Already around 1924—when Stalin, after Lenin's death, supported Bukharin and his theses—the so-called kulaks and their lands were forced to communalize their properties with the result that about two and a half million peasants who “owned” a small plot of land of thirty square meters, a cart, two chickens, a dog, and two cows (this or part of this was enough!) ended up in the gulags to be re-educated, one could say, to the values of the “common good” and the virtues induced by the revolution, brought back into the revolutionary and ideological, i.e., communist, fold. The common good was emphatically erected as ideological nourishment for all, consolidating itself as a forcibly induced aspiration for an indistinct, illusory good, progressively reaffirmed and held as a constant point of reference, although confused and not determined in its consolidation. This was done through a perpetual rally sponsored by the communist party and entrusted to different executors, but identical in repeating the same verbal mechanisms of hypnotic suggestion of the masses³. The common good was finally offered on the communist revolutionary altar, which was thus able to communalize the concept of good by integrating it into the survival of the party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The latter objective was not reached and, in reality, the preparation phase was never even started, as power itself had become a tight hierarchical and gerontocratic oligarchy held together by a hypothetical and very dubious “virtue,” that of safeguarding the State and the single party, from which only coercive anti-democratic decisions and directives could

³Iosif Stalin, *Questioni di leninismo*, Società Editrice l'Unità, Roma, 1945, p. 187.

descend, of some over all to be pursued.

This ruthless revolutionary emphasis, in reality revenge and retaliation against populations that were difficult to bend to political utopias by abjuring faith and life resources, led to the death of over half of the kulaks deported to the gulag prison camps, where it was also common to support oneself with acts of cannibalism. But above all, it caused a serious agricultural crisis that imposed a further act of violence on the Soviet regime: confiscating large cereal supplies in a situation of paradoxical exaltation of the so-called war economy, even though there was not yet a European war as actually happened fifteen years later. Stalin himself, in his notorious, extravagant, and inconclusive synopses of Marxism, precisely in defining the kulaks as a class, ideologically encircled them, exalting the common good of Soviet society and the indispensable revolutionary ascent and its virtue, against whose defense nothing could resist and against which nothing should oppose. He even explicitly resorted to the extreme measure: that of eliminating the kulaks themselves. For the common good, the Ukrainian peasants—the parallel with the current situation is evident, as Ukraine has always been an ancient thorn in the side of the Soviet empire and currently of the Russian one—i.e., men, women, and children, were de-personalized by sacrificing them and their properties were de-territorialized in a nauseating and incomprehensible “collectivization of the common good” which history then showed very clearly had tragic repercussions, without producing anything good or anything common, if not imprisonment in the gulags, the disappearance of the very concept of good, and the defeat of the protection of the promises of guarantee of individual rights reduced to a pure propaganda slogan, an exercise of worship and ritual indispensable to make the revolution itself in turn an ideological and political myth, in no way different from what was announced in the 1930s by Joseph Goebbels⁴ to the ignorant German people. This distinguished a suggestive and grotesque exaltation of human existence, divided between German citizens and Jews (who were for the most part German citizens); or, in the case of the Soviet Union, divided between revolutionaries and obedient servants of the revolutionary virtues and then “all the others” who for this reason had to be subjected to the will of the State and the intransigent destinies of Marxist political-revolutionary history. Moreover, precisely against an idea of legal and political transformation, seen and finalized to refund the constitutional structure of the State, Karl Marx believed, in his scathing criticism of Hegel, that precisely the legislative power, that is the Hegelian *gesetzge-*

⁴“Wir sollen die Einheit eines neuen politischen Zeitereignisses leisten, um das Ergebnis von der Judenentsorgung und von der allen möglichen Staatsbürger unter Verdacht zu erreichen”, so wrote Joseph Goebbels, in J. Goebbels, *Tegebücher* 1924-1945, Fünf Bände, hrsg. Von Ralph G. Reuth, Piper, München-Zürich, 1992-1999, pp. 984 e ss.; pp. 1242-1249; pp. 1342 e 1626.

bende Gewalt, had completed the order of the French revolutionary process, because in fact that power had been the representative of the people, or rather it had been the general will. Conversely, however, the governmental power, the Hegelian Regierungsgewalt, would have operated according to Marx only small revolutions, for the exact reason of not having wanted to make the revolution “for a new constitution against an old one, but against the constitution as such”⁵.

3. THE DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMON GOOD IN REVOLUTIONARY VIRTUE: FROM 1789 TO 1917

Wanting to dwell on a paradoxification of the common good and revolutionary virtue, we could consider a historical and philosophical semantic axis represented by authors who link and refer to each other for a shared matrix of custody and guarantee of the common good within civil society, but in a suspension of its political effectiveness and civil and social validity: from Hobbes/Rousseau/Hegel/Marx/Gehlen/Schmitt, deciding as a sovereign meant performing an action for which the choice also decreed the fate of the politician. The decision necessarily implies, according to these authors, a preceding disorder, a moment in which the decision becomes a sovereign political choice capable of reorganizing the very fate, not of the State, but of the nation. The sovereign thus makes the decision that is equivalent to the common good in which everyone can recognize the momentary end of a conflict. On this path, however, it is no longer possible to understand the same effectiveness and importance of fundamental freedoms, as they are not guaranteed by law, but are apparently protected by a “political” decision of the sovereign, aimed at exiting from a state of nature. Such a decision “scoffs at every act and every reaction on our part,” with the immediate effect of an involvement of the governed who do not see their constitutionally protected rights and freedoms guarded and ensured, but such rights and freedoms are, in reality, subject to the “fundamental political decision,” in which everyone had to recognize themselves. In fact, the very French revolutionary program of 1789 had appeared to Marx as an event that had in itself celebrated the maximum illusion of politics. In this context, the difference described by Lenin in instead founding a political-revolutionary program as an “active organization” that

⁵Karl Marx (1843), *Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts*, in *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, I, 1, Marx-Engels-Archiv Verlagsgesellschaft, Berlin 1927 (in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Opere complete*, vol. III, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1976, pp. 64-65).

should have revealed, in Lenin's intentions, its most significant contents precisely in redefining the legal-constitutional structure, should not be underestimated.

The major problem that arises with the rise of Marxism is its influential disintegration of the civil and social apparatus, since the common good is a stake to be reached through an ethics of work subservient to a State personalized in revolutionaries, who considered work a way of employment and collectivized verification of salary, without commitment and without a service of usefulness and solicitude towards one's neighbor, understood in a Christian sense. The diabolical Marxist wound in the history of the 20th century is therefore revealed in the reunion of the state apparatuses entrusted to ever superior, and finally invisible, even surreal if not outright dreamlike instances, leaving almost in the unaware citizen an aura of charm and mystery. This wound and this laceration produced by the Marxist ideology to the detriment of numerous civil societies and state communities emerge clearly in the dissipation of the individual consciousness of work as a creative and personal act, heir to the Old Testament *ut operaretur* (Gn 2, 15), capable of making man free because precisely by carrying out his work man finds his divine filiation, his path of being and not of having-to-be, his ontologically operating in a salvific perspective for the other, thus restoring to work itself a redemptive itinerary for those who perform it and for those who receive it within the civil and social context to which they belong. This continues to the point of giving back and finally paying tribute to work itself as the constitution of a communal experience of collective palingenesis and an indispensable human quality in bringing peoples together among themselves and outside the individual national contexts, so that work itself is characterized as the becoming of the common good, an expression, that is, of a syn-odal and catechetical social pact, of existential virtue and of the aggregation of communities.

Marxism, on the contrary, has disintegrated and persecuted the redemptive purpose of man, destroying in man, ontologically and existentially, his creative and salvific recomposition through work, his becoming an expression of the face of God the Creator precisely through daily work. This work characterizes in the person a historical and civil expiatory dimension as well as determining itself as a communal palingenesis in which men find themselves in a reciprocal condition of syn-odal rediscovery of the common good, understood in its reciprocal and mutual value of mutual protection of life and guarantee of fundamental freedoms which in man's work rediscover their very existence and their most significant expression. In these aspects, Marxism has instead revealed, and still reveals in those countries where it is the economic and political model of reference, an inescapable and incontrovertible heretical component, a factor capable of assailing the common good, disintegrating

it into an ideological utopia. It is ideological because it is strenuously diffused in obsessive ways by propaganda similar to that of the Nazis with respect to the racial cult. In the case of Marxism, the ideological utopia was characterized, and is characterized, as destructive of man and his purpose in the world as a collaborator in God's creative project, because this ideological utopia is equally unleashing, just like the Nazi or Fascist ideology in Italy, in uprooting man from his divine filiation and artificially rooting him in political rituals and anthropological mythologies typical of the heroic and epic deeds of the revolutionaries. This allows history to develop as legitimate and recognizes it as such, only and only if it is a revolution par excellence, decomposing in the friend/enemy dialectic, as well as in the continuous opposition of a reality governed by the resistance of the enemies of the revolution. The life of the person is also fragmented and split between a past from which to flee and a present still to be realized and fulfilled in historical and dialectical materialism: the "common good," in essence, is reduced by Marxism to a surrogate of good, that is, to revolution in-itself and for-itself, to revolutionary virtue precisely in the socialization of the means of production and exchange which no longer belong to those who produce them, but to an indistinct all, cutting off the very creative and divine fruition that man possesses in his work.

The Enlightenment, therefore, paved the way for and channeled Marxism, from which it takes its opportune moves, towards the inevitable authoritarian turning point in being a historical model and in conceptualizing its political-demagogic manifesto. The *Encyclopédie* was only a prototype, an archetypal point of reference, of what would have been the Communist Manifesto, written by Karl Marx in collaboration with Friedrich Engels and published in 1848. At that precise moment, the common good ceases to be a political goal of social and civil well-being to become a forced collectivization of an idea, which precisely transforms reality semantically from common to communist, that is, it ideologically categorizes reality itself, materializing it in an inveterate and exasperated sense of propaganda in considering good obtained only because it is ideologically mediated. On this side, the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat"—apart from the fact that in and of itself it cannot be fulfilled in objective and practical terms, which is why only a very few end up deciding on everyone, carrying out decisions as if they had been taken and had been requested by that indistinct everyone highlighted above—also de-individualizes the protection of rights and fundamental freedoms, moving them to be necessarily managed and "safeguarded" by those who made that dictatorship possible, but above all took political direction and its apparatuses into their hands, to administer social control by resisting any eventual civil, legal, and above all historical transformation.

History materializes because any possible external evolution is denied. The history of communist countries was and still is a history of control and order held by the exercise of military power and the consequent repression of any instance of social and civil novelty and modernization.

The virtue par excellence, then, the one that combines the collectivization of the common good with the revolutionary utopia, became the concept of tolerance. Tolerance is in general the virtue of all those weak beings destined to live with their fellow men, but why, one wonders, should tolerance be affiliated with weakness? And again: It is precisely by having proscribed the sweet and conciliatory virtues of tolerance and forbearance that so many centuries have been the opprobrium and misfortune of humanity⁶. Precisely from that time, the characteristic that reveals human action will move, within the limits of reason and the disorder of the needs of deraison, within the scope of what is fatal, yet necessary for good governance, for the common good, for life finally. Life, no social pact, only life constantly threatened: “the only passion of my life has been fear,” according to the well-known expression of Thomas Hobbes. This Hobbesian characteristic makes the order pervaded by a fundamental restlessness on which it is based and which embraces the development of legal reflection starting from the 17th century. In fact, it is realistically intuitive how the naturalistic method and the deductive observation of the event lead, however, to considering and assuming every margin of Hobbesian thought as characterized by a determining psychological condition: man behaves according to a stimulus/response scheme. The desire for power is in fact manifested as deeply rooted in the human soul, and Hobbes reveals it, naturalistically, but above all materialistically and mechanically, as an instinct of the human will itself. This is perhaps the reason why, alongside a rigid description of a political system that is mechanized and finally sclerotic in its self-referentiality, enriched by analyses that question the aspect of the security of human life, Hobbes must have felt and perceived the need to integrate it, in reality to explain it in its most obscure motivations, with extremely deep-rooted psychological elements, all this always supported by a rigorously geometric Cartesian reasoning.

Uncertainty, then, as a characteristic pervading the social and political order, passes through the present and evolves into a social model of reference that extends within the sense of community by breaking it up, and the sense of security pervades every single member of that indistinct concept of everyone which in reality is no longer a guarantee of the common good but of absolutization of decisions and

⁶Jean-Edme Romilly, *Tolleranza*, in Denis Diderot e Jean-Baptiste D’Alembert, *Encyclopédie*, I.G.D.A., Novara 1977, p. 485.

political-military power, i.e., Marxism, Leninism, Nazism, Italian Fascism, etc.. At that precise moment, virtue is dislocated from the common good and takes refuge in the indispensability of the sovereign, but not yet of the State. Legal sovereignty came from that time to acquire its specific dimension, recognized as legitimate within political tolerance: in this way, the common good moves into a space that is indefinite from an anthropological point of view, but peculiar from a political point of view, playing on the double semantics of being realizable utopically because in a non-place, therefore non-existent and only the result of imagination, or in a good-place which, equally to be such, could hardly be circumscribed and actualized. In this case, it is sovereignty itself that instead becomes a place, i.e., territory and territorialization, a sovereignty that is defined as an opportune space of royal legitimacy, a place within which the fate of the State and only subsequently of the civil community are outlined. Nonetheless, it is sovereignty that defines itself as a space of action for the politician and establishes the granted Constitution (*octroyée*) like the French one of 1814 granted by Louis XVIII, to regulate the destinies of the civil community in the place promised by the revolutionary utopia and against which the same utopia had ideologically moved its struggle and its conflict. The State, from revolutionary, regresses into the pre-revolutionary past (a fate analogous to that of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and its epigones) it is transformed alternatively, into a common good, i.e., *eu-topos*, good-place, or into an imaginary virtue that catalyzes past time and future time without ever intersecting the present, becoming *ou-topos*, that is, a non-place.

What will realistically reveal itself, from then on, as utopian, will be the characterization of the individual: through this name the most diverse and different concepts will filter, not in the name of tolerance, but in the name of the common good opportunistically exploited by the politician in a propagandistic management of power. This virtue of the politician is often used in the effective exercise of social control, holding back any social transformation and resisting any effective historical and legal, even before political, guarantee of the protection of individual rights and fundamental freedoms. Realistically, from then on, the characterization of the individual will be utopian: through this name the most diverse and different concepts will filter, but all this will be constituted as a form of materialistic propaganda and a sovereignly ideological phenomenon.

4. *WESEN IST, WAS GEWESEN IST*

The direct repercussion of such a political process—which on the one hand saw Nazism subsequently historicize itself, and on the other hand also the horror of Marxist totalitarianism in its various typologies—was that legitimacy was supplanted by the “surrogate of a formalistic legality,” in which the law appeared as a tool through which to prepare decisions, with a clear prevalence on the part of the politician over the constitutional guarantees themselves. We cannot neglect the fact that Hermann Heller, not only on this, was, in theory, divergent from Carl Schmitt. For the latter, in fact, the Constitution assumed the features and contours of a mere “sovereign political decision”; while, on the contrary, in Heller the Constitution started from the concrete element of connecting and strengthening the acquisition of normality, i.e., exiting the *Ausnahmezustand*, but not to end up in the hands of a normative surrogate of sovereignty, but rather to spread and admit the incontrovertible possibility that it was the constitutional legal foundation to define and institute the politician, having set limits and having allowed the balance and coordination between the constituted powers⁷. In fact, Hermann Heller, precisely on this problem, had already made it very clear how the relationship between *Herrschaft* and *Ordnung* would then end up in a removal of the conflict, which from internal became turned towards the outside, in a demonstration of force (*die tätige und politische Kraft*), not of the State, but of the nation. This element then produced that unleashing of conflict on other territories, proclaimed—as happened, for example, in the character of the so-called preventive action with which Iraq was attacked on March 20, 2003 by the international community under the American aegis, destroying that country—in the deception of wanting to defend the peaceful coexistence between States, re-establishing a sort of “obligation to democracy,” without the effective fundamental factor of growth of a historical tradition of the exercise of rights and freedoms. But it is not about States, but rather about nations, i.e., States that respond to the urgency of satisfying ethnic, religious, linguistic interests and, above all, utility and advantages attributable to economic powers and military hierarchies, which precisely in the era of globalization, dominate and prevail over the same apparent “independent” decisions of the politician. We therefore arrive at the consideration of evaluating it as possible that: the legitimacy of the juridical-constitutional system historically founds a common good that can be exten-

⁷Gilberto Bercovici, *Constituição e estado de exceção permanente. Atualidade de Weimar*, Azougue Editorial, Rio de Janeiro, 2004, pp. 128-138; see also Hermann Heller, *Freiheit und Form in der Reichsverfassung* (1930), now in Hermann Heller, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Mohr, Tübingen 1992, Bd. I, pp. 371-377.

ded to other civil communities capable of normatively protecting and guaranteeing the legitimation of the politician.

From this we can come to understand that there has never been a society against the State, but always a State-restorer of its model as soon as this same model passed from global to local. The model of the State to obtain legitimacy must instead necessarily remain global, and one would say “globalized” from an economic point of view. That is, it must be able to witness its own representation as definitive and absolute. And Schmitt, in reference to Hobbes, states that all law, ordinances, and laws are essentially for the English philosopher decisions of the sovereign, a sovereign who cannot be legitimate only because he is a legitimate monarch, but is legitimate for the simple fact of having decided as a sovereign, that is, of having recovered the rule from the exception, the order unleashed by disorder. Hobbes’s natural law, however, is innovative compared to that of Altusio, who had deeply derived from Aristotle rather than from the Aristotelian Scholastics the fact that the desire of men to unite in groups was a natural and not an artificial question, as Hobbes had instead intended due to those very deep psychological reasons that link his thought and his observation of reality. But, nevertheless, it is also appropriate to consider it innovative with respect to Grotius: before the contract there is no formed civil society. The Hobbesian contract is that common good stipulated singularly and civilly, but entrusted to a universal instance: the sovereign. For this reason it becomes even more indissoluble. Natural law thus allows Hobbes to get rid of natural law itself to move on to the law established by the sovereign. Only in the representation of the State as a device, the particular finds its legitimacy and its security, and consciously the different particularities will support the structure of the one and only universal, that universal against which Hobbes, from a logical-formal point of view, had moved his criticisms. But in Hobbes’s case it is the civil society formed after the state of nature that supports the State. From that moment on, the State will be an indivisible and perfect mechanism capable of repressing and controlling the entire structure of civil society and any eventual transformation, even rejecting instances of renewal and therefore of modernization of the common good, which acquires a quality, in the sense of a stigma, characterizing in a communal and syn-odal sense the decisions of the politician. The concept of tolerance has in essence only refined this model, placing it above utility as a value that legitimizes democracy, but to do this democracy has had to internalize the sovereign in a defined and written legal model, rigidly founded and commonly shared: the Constitution.

In Hobbes, precisely in contrast to Altusio, the inspiring motive for the union is not a natural instinct, but fear, therefore a passion that determines human conduct

in every dimension, but which also conditions the general action of the individual with respect to his fellow man. The law is valid if it is capable of hitting and punishing, precisely with the aim of re-establishing a security that is not-given, not-ensured and, probably, not even granted. Hobbes, therefore, from this moment on no longer trusts natural law: all this leads to the observation of recognizing the premise on which the advent of the totalitarian State was based: generalized fear in every single individual even before this individual is recognized as a citizen's rights. The word appears, in truth, increasingly distant from utopia and from the State of Utopia, it becomes part of the propagandistic and demagogic mechanism that will characterize 20th-century politics. The word is the heritage of the State. A name, a concept. In this way, the exit from the economic crisis is not in fact resolved in a rediscovered circuit of goods on the market, but rather the maintenance of sovereignty is revealed through the invention of mimesis within society. In this way, the sovereign can legitimately represent himself and his act of knowing is a consequence of tolerance, that is, a consequence of a political circumstance. One can deduce how precisely from a humanized tolerance, the sovereign's intolerance arises, the stiffening of knowledge. The imaginative dimension is reflected in an exasperated condemnation of diversity, mimesis is directed towards a tolerance that is the genesis and principle of intolerance. In this historical moment, between the 17th and 18th centuries, mimesis does not recognize the individual's face, it transforms it, assigning it a "grimace" that makes it monstrous. A universal stature is not affirmed of the silhouette, the very features of the mask are altered, and the mask is man himself: diversity is classified, segregated, or exposed to public ridicule, therefore used in any case.

Unlike the Middle Ages, the classical age abstractly represents evil, without symbolic faces, it is an evil devoid of gothic, pervaded by the classification of knowledge and disciplines. Evil no longer takes on its fantastic body there; in it only the extreme form is grasped, the truth without content of the beast. It is freed from everything that could enrich it with imaginary fauna, to preserve a general power of threat: the deaf danger of an animality that watches and which, all of a sudden, dissolves reason in violence and truth in the fury of the insane⁸. The tolerance of diversity translates directly into the search for knowledge, into the classification of models, into the theorization of perspectives, into social divisions. Tolerance is now a political concept, it no longer belongs to man, but to power. The sovereign makes the people laugh when he laughs, he makes his grimaces, his obtuseness, his signs repeated: honoring the monkey, and its inert laughter, the sovereign imitates

⁸Michel Foucault, *Storia della follia*, Rizzoli, Milano 1976, p. 211

his role and in this tragic and grotesque idiotic awareness, his word sounds like the deaf bray of the donkey. Therefore, diversity becomes a “practice of knowledge,” whereas politics already then rises to *ars dominandi*: thus founded on tolerance, sovereignty is intolerant. In this sense, the politics of tolerance already preludes to the political decentralization of society and its very secularization. The social pact is written and reciprocally shared only for the purpose of protecting a utopian legal model: *longa possessio parit ius*.

In the same way, the semantic-historical destiny of tolerance, i.e., tolerance as a political, historical, and legal concept, which unfolds from the writings of Saint Thomas More in which the English humanist and philosopher describes the problem of religious tolerance, will subsequently be confronted with a decadent and illusory space within which nothing will have been understood of the surrounding reality, but the latter will have been “tolerated”. Thomas More’s Utopia actually represents a nostalgic look at the dying past, More himself makes Utopia a postulate of uniformity to which to adapt with the aim of not upsetting the very course of nature. David Hume subsequently misinterpreted this condition, and for him the habit of an imagined place, of the same history that becomes for the sovereign his own place of action, leads him to assume “the future in conformity with the past”. The attempt that is strongly established already from that time is in fact to besiege and conquer history in its objectivity and in its very event: the event will become that set by the sovereign and written for him. The future can only be in conformity with the past: therefore, a fixity of time for no continuity of time. In this way, legal sovereignty pronounces its destiny with tolerance and reduces memory itself to a vulgar oblivion. Tolerance thus already reveals the features of realized Utopia, of the dream of reason and of the dawn of democracy. In the end, through the demagogized word and through the representation of a democracy realized through a liberation from the sovereign, the Enlightenment actually transmits to us the restoration of the same absolutism in terms of positive law: the Constitution occupies the lost space of the sovereign, acquires his crown, and order is re-established. But what is the place reserved for society?

On this semantic-historical and hermeneutical development, we can understand how the French Revolution, in order to be realized, had to use hatreds to mask that identity that was taking possession of a new power apparatus, in which the Constitution itself acted as a mask through which to re-establish an order by forever concealing the real and true political and legal contradictoriness, a contradictoriness that emerged during the revolution itself, no longer that of liberating and ensuring the guarantee of rights, but of suspending them in their validity and

their effectiveness, postponing them to a sovereign. The revolutionary model thus completed its self-referential circle, replacing the sovereign it had guillotined, a sovereign who in turn oppressed the people towards whom the Revolution had lavished itself to “exorcise them from the sovereign” and against whom now, in this mechanism of substitution and Girardian sacrificial crisis, it had to act by sacrificing it, after having characterized it as a new victim, to save the revolution, i.e., the new sovereign, precisely by exorcising the danger that would have put the revolution in crisis, a danger which had re-become the people themselves. It is for this very reason that the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat became a constantly postponed and labile, finally illusory and confused acquisition in an indistinguishable time.

The Constitution seems to have the time to decide: however, we have only freed ourselves from an anthropological referent: the Constitution then for this very reason legitimized sovereignty. The Enlightenment showed how the intolerance of language gave rise and was the development of the disempowerment of society and the individual: the Enlightenment does not tolerate the word expressed by the sovereign, the word of a divinized body that has had a decisive influence on the semantics of the constituted order. The language is repressed and the word of the law is bathed in blood. The concept thus has the opportunity to be relativized through the radicalization of the struggle within society. More and more the rule loses its utopian radicalization and is transformed only into an opportune exception: on the one hand, we will come to observe the game of a distributed and organized fiction (the political tolerance of the sovereign and the nation-state), but on the other hand, the constant and refined artifice of a rule reticulated in its thousand exceptions will also be constituted (the juridical and democratic sovereignty of the nation-state). The very concept of utopia, according to Saint Thomas More, changed its meaning to become legitimacy. The idea of sovereignty was therefore moving more and more towards stable, recognized legal contents, towards that Constitution which had to affirm the very concept of sovereignty not only as legitimate from a political point of view, instituting the function of a stable dominion of the State, but also legal and legitimate from a legal point of view. At that exact moment, the concept of tolerance, in a certain way, took on legal connotations, until it was present in the Constitution as the essence of the guarantee of individual rights: in this we understand how the Enlightenment philosophy, of Kantian and certainly not Jacobin inspiration, therefore strongly radicalized the postulate and the claim of a power of the State for the pursuit of a common good. The latter became, in that particular historical passage, the main task to which the same nascent legal reason had to dedicate itself, with the aim of subsequently reconstructing, in the

fulfillment of this office, the legitimacy of the State. In truth, we cannot ignore the premise for which Diderot at that time described every legitimate authority as one that had been limited by the laws of nature and the State; whereas Jaucourt⁹ placed legitimate authority as the goal to which a society should aspire, a society in which the maximum prosperity would be guaranteed.

It is evident that that ancient idea of social well-being and prosperity never changed, but continued to be the culminating point of the Enlightenment utopia, precisely in that place which, seeing the disappearance of the king, placed society itself, and the individual in his singularity, to be subordinated to those laws of nature and of the State which ensured sovereignty as a legitimate function. Legitimacy became effectively sovereign when the State made its leap in quality, having acquired the legality of its functions and its authority in that model of legal-political construction that the Constitution guaranteed precisely from the 18th century onwards, but which inevitably found its premises in Hobbes's legal positivist philosophy. On the other hand, the term "legitimate" itself came to be definitively depersonalized: it was no longer a question of linking legitimacy to a physical person, but it returned directly to the concept of constitutional sovereignty to which the very body of the King had been subordinated. Legitimacy was definitively elevated to the category of legal sovereignty, whereas tolerance became the category of the political order of the State: the memory-lexicon therefore reveals its hidden words and we understand how princes and courtiers do not like the truth about the State to be told to them. In the Utopia described by Thomas More, the solitudes caused by repression emerge: justice punishes theft and vagrancy with death. One does not observe the natural laws of the sovereign who grants, establishes, decrees the law. And the law prescribes, precepts, interprets society. This single instrument will be the strength of a definitive constitution in which the political act will reflect the sovereignty of the command itself: the legal utopia is nothing other than a political tolerance pervaded by the word of the prince, by his history that spreads an order from which everything starts again. The legal utopia and political tolerance do not describe the daily life of the subject, but rather upset his memory, swallowing up everything that has been. In this the power of tradition is consumed as Hegel will affirm about the essence: *Wesen ist, was gewesen ist*.

Tolerance is now, in fact, that of the servant toward the master. From this analysis, however, a significant and effective semantic reversal also emerges: it is the tolerance of power that pursues a narrative in which knowledge becomes convention

⁹Louis De Jaucourt, *Société*, in *Encyclopédie des Sciences, des Arts et de Métiers*, S. Faulsche, Neuchatel 1751-1780, I, p. 898.

with the ultimate aim of describing a political power to formalize the exercise of a sovereign legal power and its intrinsic historical legitimacy. Imitation thus works as a mirror of a mimetic and symbolic recognition: to imitate the sovereign means to recognize not certainly his presence, but the general representation of power and an act of legitimacy that presents itself, by means of the force of its legality delivered by a right that is already the heritage of the sovereign, as the only and the only realistically possible one.

The imagined place, perhaps dreamed of, thus materializes much more quickly than the expectations of St. Thomas More himself: the realized utopia is the kingdom in which political tolerance provides the backdrop for a legal sovereignty, which cannot be debated or split into roles. That utopia has materialized and “enunciated” the role of the State, laying the foundations for a nationalism that will assume more marked and defined characteristics during the 19th century, but it has also reduced and disciplined law to a legal order that expresses the sense of the nascent control of society. In this way, any possible social transformation will, from then on, increasingly pass through the meshes of legal sovereignty that will be able to propagate itself as “humanized” and “socialized,” as soon as it is comforted by the constant transformations of political tolerance.

Unfortunately, there is no shadow of a doubt or uncertainty in noting that these transformations are to be considered as always and only located within the tradition of Western politics itself. This tradition sees at the center of its discursive network the necessity of an emergency and the usefulness of the reason of State as the constitutive axes by means of which to design and frame the historical fact to recover the order of the lost social order and which, however, is precisely shattered by violent action every time. In this frighteningly self-referential paradoxification, one understands the mechanism of violence that sacralizes the body to move to redeem itself, which results in two paradoxes. One is political and the other is cultural: suspending individual rights and fundamental freedoms with the absurd and yet unequivocal necessity and emergency of having to defend them, therefore repressing civil society to defend it. The second paradox, on the other hand, dear to euthanasia culture, says: save life, risking and undermining its survival.

Even the political language itself and the paradox of the common good extended to all and at the same time immediately suspended to be safeguarded and protected, but ultimately removed from the present and deferred to a dark and invisible time of mythical-revolutionary and political becoming, in turn has its own mimetic and symbolic characteristic. Ernst Cassirer had already identified how the essence of the contrast is between imitation and symbol, since mimesis is a model,

a double of the observed object.

5. "NON-PLACE", "GOOD-PLACE": THE POLITICAL PACT AS A LEGAL UTOPIA

In this context, political discourse adopted a geometric method to prove a fact: sovereignty. In doing so, it already embodied a principle of imitation: the concept of mimesis that developed in the 17th century was, in essence, made a prisoner of the world. As a result, tolerance could not be established according to a legal order; instead, it was reclaimed by the sovereign order and its political command. In this world so constituted, civil war crept in with catastrophic violence, disrupting the rigor of the perfect courtier conceived by Baldassarre Castiglione in 1528. The word remains, no less than in utopia, struck by the characteristic features of the “perfect courtier”. The concept of tolerance within its tradition shows an interesting primary transformation: a no-longer religious tolerance denounces its own political implication. Sovereignty, on the other hand, belongs to an increasingly distinctly legal order.

Castiglione, in fact, recounts the devotion to the Urbino courts, evoking the art of the courtier with the affirmation of elegance and dexterity. Castiglione thus established a rule: the order around the rule gives rise to the principle of mimesis within discourse and the communication circuit. This type of pedagogical treatise would have a great influence during the Renaissance and afterward. John Locke, for example, would be influenced by it. The rule itself becomes the virtue of the political sense of the State. The form describes the discipline of the political discourse that emerges throughout the tradition. Tolerance, therefore, increasingly appears as a pedagogical discipline of which the sovereign must provide sure proof. This is a sort of renewed attitude toward nature, toward the world that things describe, which reveals the beginning of a cataloging of what is known and what will become knowable. This characteristic of Western thought would later emerge, during the 19th and 20th centuries, as one of the determining factors of the “just” imperialistic principle: the knowledge of the “other” with the ultimate aim of caging it in a deaf process of civilization.

It is not controversial that Locke was inspired by and praised the “court pedagogy,” as it could be defined. This was the attempt to classify a concept so that it would become a discipline to be exercised politically in the state and within society. This transformation within the tradition, expressed by Thomas More’s

religious tolerance, would acquire more and more political connotations after the Enlightenment precisely so that it could serve to support the concept of sovereignty in its nascent historical and legal affirmation. In reality, the sovereign's "saying" is only the canonical artifice of a "reaffirming," a proportion that establishes the absence of time and the mediocrity of history. The courtier, for his part, spreads this climate, this thought. Moreover, even the purity of customs in Utopia includes the aspect that perfectly depicts and frames the technique of legal sovereignty: the violation of the rule, in fact, leads to servitude. For this reason, the representation of the elsewhere becomes the imagination of a diffused yet unreachable otherness. Legal sovereignty, as a concept, establishes inertia and dynamism at the same time, reducing hope to a generalized control of social expectations. Furthermore, from the 17th century onward, the state itself would have to appear as an inaccessible topos by an instinct of whim. This instinct strengthens sovereignty, humanizing it through political tolerance, a true mirror image in which one can perceive the contours of a Jacobin constitutional order where the political rearranges the fate of the law.

It happens then that the radicalization of civil war entails different attitudes toward the political order. One should, in fact, keep in mind a conformist observation in which the trend of the era is seen "as a kind of historical accident, an ongoing accident in the maintenance of an old, or respectively, a new conformism"¹⁰. Or, on the contrary, one should consider a tendency opposed to conformism, chaos, defined by Schnur as "a reflection of the dark sides of man: civil war, fanaticism, lust for power, a tendency toward a struggle of all against all, become dominant characteristics". This is a kind of order followed by a counter-order, so that the civil, social, and legal orders themselves are constantly put at stake. But in the work of Hobbes, alongside this very strong tension, alongside this search for a cognitive datum that could found a materialistic-mechanistic conception of reality and of history as a succession of events, a sort of hypothetical knowledge stands out. It is almost as if he had wanted, and perhaps desired, from an epistemological point of view, the very recovery of the universal so opposed by Gassendi. On this hermeneutical path, it is evident how mannerism, from rebellion against what is conformist, in reality reestablishes a form. It deifies the subject and almost unconsciously deepens the idea of subjective right. However, it is precisely within this concept that the semantics of tolerance are embodied. Tolerance becomes a tool for the maintenance and consolidation of sovereignty, a sort of artificial intelligence in the hands of the state. It is a non-conflictual resolution of dispossession, a basic principle underlying public order, the Euclidean freedom of the subject, and finally, the geometry of the

¹⁰Roman Schnur, *Individualismo e assolutismo*, Giuffrè, Milano 1979 p. 35.

kingdom.

But what is the defense? The answer in the transition from a worldly to a sovereign order probably lies in the refuge in an imagined and absent place, pushed to the shadow of one's own thoughts. It is not even a place perceptible in a voluntarily defined form, but rather an attempt at a childish challenge of virtual closure in a world of one's own, singular but not unique, and assumed as a universal model whose social diffusion is arcane and inscrutable. In fact, the individual does not found the universal; one can rather argue that it is the particular that founds the universal.

And so we witness the aspiration, not at all utopian, for virtue and the supreme good, which in St. Thomas More becomes a problem connected and structurally linked to religious tolerance. Unfortunately, the memory of the past is of no use even in this case, since the utopias spread by the Enlightenment generally possess the extraordinary destructive force that must annihilate everything that precedes what then becomes a foundation, a utopically political one, already considered the beginning of a new era. Ultimately, from this point of view, the Enlightenment itself would follow its wicked and grand-guignolesque utopian path of horrors. The same would be done by "democratic" nations, that is, the state that has become a nation. Nations that would be democratic exclusively within their territorial borders, but imperialistic toward what was considered *terrae nullius*. Tolerance spreads, becoming information for political power. It will be, from time to time, a utopian proclamation, an Enlightenment slogan, a instrumental propaganda. The concept takes on different levels of significance and value that make us understand how the very fate of society revolves around the multiplicity of meanings that the concept of tolerance reveals as we examine its aspects.

The excellent organization of the capital of Utopia, Amaurot, the splendid layout of every possible observation of it, the fact that each of the fifty-four cities present in Utopia is in itself absolutely similar, large and magnificent—all of this responds to the almost anachronistic and all-pervasive desire to realize what is not even remotely considered to be truly accessible, but rather takes on a perfect structure precisely because it is absent, inaccessible. Realized utopia is the dazzling of man; it is a relational and lexical set of a language that contains the magma of power. Utopia, the place, is nothing but the matter for the state to become the form of political power and tolerance its *ars dominandi*, the essence and phenomenon in which that political power is observed and described. The transformation thus describes the concept in its tradition, but this tradition becomes in this case the one marked by the fate of a political regime and a sovereign legal order, where

the citizen occupies less and less of his own space that does not necessarily have to be defined. The citizen is almost a kind of Pareto bureaucratic residue, but rather this legal-constitutional order is boasted as a point of reference in which to achieve the unity and totality of security. This is an aspiration that in reality betrays the desire for an ever-wider consensus, and which, therefore, is increasingly generalized. It is a sense of the concept of legal sovereignty that will be transferred to current democracies, taking on decisive and fundamental characteristics.

6.THE TRANSITION FROM OLD TESTAMENT LAW TO CHRISTIAN GRACE AND THE CONCEPT OF THE COMMON GOOD CONNECTED TO REVOLUTIONARY UTOPIA AND MARXIST SEMANTICS

Therefore, this contribution also wants to highlight how those two questions we immediately asked ourselves in this reflection intersect because they respond to each other alternately and disturb us in their naked revelation. Existence emerges in its quality only as the forgiveness of the enemy, the persecutor, the revolutionary in turn offended by the betrayal of a utopian project. In this case, the person, intersecting on the one hand with forgiveness and on the other hand coming across the truth, can understand what virtue and the common good are, passing through the narrow gate of their existence erected as a cross, the Cross of Christ from which Jesus himself answers Pilate's question about what truth is. It is a renunciation of the power of the world, the forgiveness of every single persecutor in an epicenter of love, love that has passed from law to grace, from human justice to Christian grace. Here one understands a further and seemingly inexplicable reality: Why did God not save the innocents? The innocents were all welcomed. From a redemptive point of view, they were included in the Word of sorrow and in the Word of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, which mark the personal revelation of the Gospel. Crucifixion and death are followed by the revelation of love, that is, the Resurrection of Jesus.

Therefore, understanding certain realities in the world, which are conflicting, absolutely unacceptable, and from a human point of view inconceivable and incomprehensible for the suffering they produce and for the long historical consequences of wars and evils for the world and for communities, which make us question the

effective presence of God, cannot be accepted from a properly ontological point of view with a simple ethical effort, with an act of iron will and a normative-coercive “revolutionary” psychological commitment, or even by resorting to the Kantian categorical imperative. It is not by predisposing for humanity a dimension of absolute ethics that would produce further types of political absolutisms. This would be the reiteration of messianic-historical demagogies like Marxism, all conditions that would mean and indicate revealing that characteristic hypocrisy of the politician in instrumentalizing the common good for internal propaganda purposes. This would exalt the virtue of a social pact that is actually only ignored and postponed to a utopian becoming of society in which justice for everyone would triumph in the dictatorship of the proletariat over everyone. Or it would even elevate the persecution of millions of Jews, as during the Holocaust, to a virtue, which then in time also happened to Christians and Muslims.

Christianity is not an ethical coercion, which would ultimately be difficult to explain and difficult to justify. Forgiveness, if it does not pass through the narrow gate of the killing, death, and resurrection of Christ—and thus of each of us spiritually—if it does not submit the law to grace, if it does not reveal a gratuitous mercy, is worth nothing. Truth remains suspended in an ever more hungry and refined, ever more obsessive search for power and powers, precisely because it will never find a limit. The thirst for love can only be quenched by forgiveness that has gone beyond the law, becoming a humble heart (that is, mercy). In this perspective, virtue and virtues coincide in the common good, and truth is the faith that lives because it is combined with love in the suffering produced by injustice, intolerance, wars, and abominations, or by those phenomenological manifestations of evil outlined by St. Paul in the Second Letter to the Corinthians (2Cor 6, 1-10) when he says: “in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, with great endurance, in tribulations, in necessities, in distresses, in beatings, in prisons, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fasting; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love; by the word of truth, by the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness on the right and on the left; through glory and dishonor, through bad report and good report. We are regarded as impostors, yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not put to death; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything!”.

These are the conditions that, lived within a reciprocity between the common good—that is, the salvation of the other—and virtue, are ontologically revealed in fulfilling the existence of Christ in our lives and loving his Cross in the present,

without descending from it. These conditions obtain for us the redemption of hope in a synodal and communal palingenesis, that is, a catechetical path toward mutual and unilateral forgiveness with the consequent tearing up of the contract between the self and the world. This is the contract of the individualistic good of the Hobbesian or Schmittian social pact, a pact sovereignly established by a decision on a state of exception erected as a legal-constitutional model, with the revolutionary virtue that remains paid by sin, that is, by death (*Rm* 6, 23). The revolution of Christianity is not a messianic mandate of a political common good linked to virtues of providence and to the virtue of tolerance as understood by the *Encyclopédie*, a revolutionary semantic temple and political primer for the normalization of civil society. Nor is it a myth, and it is not so precisely because the victim, that is, Jesus, is not archetypically immortal. He is born from the womb of a mother, although he incarnated himself at a precise historical moment as the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, lives and suffers as a normal creature, is struck and condemned, and finally killed. But he resurrects in an epicenter of love that is the forgiveness of those who kill him because they have condemned him. Subsequently, he becomes transcendence and a supernatural condition within us, dimensions that are always chosen freely by the person, thus escaping every myth that instead imposes itself on anthropological and political reality. This myth is explained only through certain esoteric cults, useful for fabricating a present that is not present, that is, the revolutionary, Marxist utopia. But from a historical past it is transmitted to an uncertain future, reassured by the revolutionary cult maintained through a regime of perpetual terror and ritual sacrifices of people.

René Girard writes: “The causality of the scapegoat imposes itself with such force that not even death is able to stop it. In order not to give up the victim as a cause, it resurrects her if necessary, makes her immortal, at least for a certain period, invents everything that we call transcendent and supernatural”¹¹. The revolutionary utopia, in essence, “invents,” and must do so, the revolution as the presence of a paradoxical messianic materialism capable of surrogating the supernatural character of the human experience in mere political tout-court. This materialism acts by preferring only the widespread use of capillary control of the population through the exercise of physical force or with the instruments of the exclusion of believers in God. The supernatural presence that every believer ascertains, without inventing it, in every revolution—especially the French one of 1789 and the Russian one of 1917, or the Chinese “cultural” one of 1949—is literally supplanted by revolutionary virtues and the pursuit of the common good. This is a common good that is sweetened into

¹¹René Girard, *Il capro espiatorio*, Adelphi, Milano 1987 p. 77

an invisible social pact that translates solely into historically materialistic ideologies and into re-education in the Soviet gulags of the past, or currently in the so-called Chinese laogai.

The victims sacrificed on the Marxist revolutionary altars were numerous because the very destiny of the revolution had been identified with immortality. And those who did not fall within the normalization of society into a common good that was nonetheless inviolable and at the same time untraceable and esoteric, reserved, caused an identity crisis, as described by René Girard. This was a crisis, on the one hand, in the relationship between revolutionary cult and myth and the common good, and, on the other hand, in the relationship between the social pact and the virtues of the revolution itself. This gave rise to a sclerotic set of factors aimed only at justifying political messianism, on the one hand, as a marginal utility capable of holding the masses in a perpetual spell. It was also aimed, on the other hand, at deterring any sense of rebellion in civil society by the constant threat of the use of physical force or re-education in internment camps or through forced labor.

Therefore, what should have become an epos and advent of a new world and a new-place—promised but ultimately granted to very few, and to the masses constantly re-proposed only as future hypotheses that history, a further symbolic mechanism, could only realize if they were inscribed in a dialectical destiny of opposition and therefore harbinger of successive revolutionary conflicts—irredeemably came to be illusory and indistinct in their contours. The violent and in this case mimetic mechanism of superimposing abnormality on the norm, of identifying the foreigner with the stateless person, or of reducing the citizen to a counter-revolutionary, and the difference as a common evil and danger for revolutionary ideals to a surrogate of values, and the virtue of the political system put into crisis by the virtue of Christian tolerance, in reality compromise the symbolic relationship. This allows every group threatened by the identity crisis of its system—which is then a crisis of the revolutionary utopia and of historical materialism as a dialectic that lives only if it feels constantly threatened and surrounded by enemies—to persecute other imaginary or concrete groups in turn. This continues until it becomes an unavoidable necessity capable of allowing the revolutionary utopia to continue to be a myth studded with the eschatological rite of historical materialism and with the cult of being able to be a victim, thus having to create a circle of enemies to be sacrificed, who are then the citizens themselves defined as “counter-revolutionaries”.

In this regard, René Girard also writes: “The persecutors always believe in the excellence of their cause, but in reality they hate without a cause. And this absence of cause in the accusation (*ad causam*) the persecutors never see. We must

therefore take it out on this illusion, if we want to free all these poor people from their prison of the invisible, from the darkness of the dungeons where they rot, and which seems to them the most splendid of palaces”¹². The hating without a cause of which Girard speaks is typical of revolutionaries. It belongs to those who have founded a system of thought in which utopia is immortal, but which does not adhere to the place, it is a non-place, scattered with symbolic and allegorical meanings, with metaphors and riddles, with cults and rites, which never reaches man because it does not express a truth. Rather, in an identity and symbiotic mechanism it seizes the truth, but distorts the truth into a lie and makes the historical lie an unassailable political truth. But for this mythical and cultic system, one cannot disregard the need for that constant ritual of enemies to be sacrificed. The link that allows one to diverge from the Christian truth lies precisely in this: escaping an epicenter of love, that love in which Christ gives himself as a victim for the redemptive salvation of the human race, does not create and does not invent the immortality of an ideology, of a utopia, that is, of a system of common good absolutely linked to the cultic virtues of the revolution. It is a materialistic artifice that, in an identity system that has gone into crisis, in a lost identity, can only transform itself into a persecutor. It denies precisely that common good and that social pact even exhibited by the revolution as a guarantee and protection of individual rights and as a custody of fundamental freedoms.

In this lost identity, however, the revolutionary system, self-referential in managing the common good and the social pact, constantly risks disintegrating. To avert this inevitable self-referentiality, it must enduringly feel hated, that is, justify its repressive action against the “enemies of the people,” transferring in a mimetic and symbolic process the threat of the unraveling of revolutionary ideals onto invisible enemies of the one whom the system protects, that is, the people, but who is in reality the power hidden by the people’s identity. The revolutionary power feels regularly surrounded and attacked by the people: it is in the people that the revolutionary system finds its downfall, and in order not to self-destruct it oppresses the very people who again become victims, after having been the cause and purpose of revolutionary salvation.

So, the progressive surrounding of enemies to be sacrificed renews the assault on the human race in the revolutionary system. We see what happened in the Ukrainian/Russian crisis, a crisis of lost political identities and their restoration through the use of violence, making the common good sacred, which risks being lost unless the enemy is sacrificed, that is, the people themselves in whom a mimetic

¹²Ibidem, p. 168.

ambivalence lives. On the one hand, it is the purpose of salvation, and the revolution is born to save the people who are victims of injustice, a people elevated to a common good. But immediately afterward, on the other hand, it becomes the origin of every possible danger, a threat to another salvation, that of the revolution, which is transformed not into a common good, but into a virvict

It is precisely in this ambivalently mimetic system that the revolution allows action through the use of violence, if its apparatus is not to be sacrificed. But to do so, it is necessary to find another victim, that is, the people, who will suffer the violence inflicted by the revolution as an expiatory and purifying virtue, a redemptive time in which violence, elevated to a virtue of the state, is the only one capable of flushing out the enemy and saving the possession of the common good. This common good has passed from being the people to being an ethereal but also esoteric expression of the custody of the principles of the revolution and therefore of the revolution itself, until it constitutes itself as the supreme and inviolable common good: the very power of the revolutionary apparatus, the new oligarchy.

Power, reciprocally protested as unique and legitimately guarded by only one side—never by the people as it would be in a democratic regime, but only by certain revolutionary elites who alternate in command—reveals as a whole a clear example of a Girardian sacrificial crisis: “The fact that, in the sacrificial crisis, desire no longer has any object other than violence, and that, in one way or another, violence is always mixed with desire—this enigmatic and oppressive fact receives no additional light if we state that man is a prey to an ‘instinct of violence’ ”.

The sacral extension of violence, its sacrificial function that restores a status quo ante, that politically resolves the state of exception or that historically gives the revolutionary reason to defend the people against whom the revolutionary himself will finally lash out to destroy his people, a loved and unconfessedly hated object, leads us to consider the common good as that virtue that passes through the narrow gate of natural law. This virtue, to be a transition from law to grace, transforms life into forgiveness, that is, into communal mercy and into the search for a synodal sense of the archetypal recognition of love. At the epicenter of every man, that truth sought anxiously by Pilate himself flows, and which Pilate instead had before him: Jesus.

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