

Elephant Archives

Neither racism nor anti-racism

Neither racism nor anti-racism

www.elephanteditions.net

Original titles:

Verso il nulla creatore. Toward the creative nothing — Renzo Novatore.
A VENOMOUS BUTTERFLY PUBLICATION. Republished by Elephant
Editions.

Ne razzismo ne antirazzismo, Pierleone Porcu, Anarchismo, 1991, No.
67, pp 37–40.

Inattualità sul razzismo, Alfredo M. Bonanno, ProvocAzione 24, June
1990;

Le lunghe ombre oltre il muro, AMB, March 2017, Negazine 1.2017, p.41

Le radici del razzismo; Siamo tutti razzisti, Angelo Gaccione
Provocazione No 22, November 1989 , p. 18

Italy — Rosarno: the revolt of the slaves. Spartacus is back! *Angry news
from around the world*, Translated from *cette semaine*, 16 January 2010

Who are the Nazis? ; Pest Control — *Deranged no. 0*, 2007

alongside the other variants such as social democracy, state communism, etc. We are talking about a kind of natural hazard that is produced by the conditions of life under capitalism and States. Something that is small and insignificant, but is capable of killing you if it gets close to you. Let's say, something like an infested mosquito or a poisonous snake. If you want to kill a mosquito, you use a folded newspaper, or an insecticide spray. If you want to defend yourself from a snake you use a stick or a stone... the logic being that the thing represents a real danger at that moment, and wouldn't be deterred by a noble discourse on human rights or freedom of expression.

Yes, there are certain pests around that need to be dealt with unequivocally with adequate means. There is no other solution and waiting is a losing game.

Deranged 0

Contents

Neither racism nor anti-racism	8
Destructuring a commonplace	8
An irreversible indictment	10
The totalitarian-democratic mentality	10
Role of the mainstream media	13
Non-news about racism	15
The long shadows over the wall	24
The roots of racism	31
We are all racists	34
Rosarno: the revolt of the slaves. Spartacus is back!	38
Larnaca, Cyprus – Wild clashes when nationalists attack anti-racism festival	41
Lyon, France – Dangerous face-to-face, fascists against anarchists and ‘scarlas’	43
Who are the Nazis?	46
Warm welcome for Le Pen and co. in Sicily	48

Pest Control

They surface from time to time like patches of scum on a slow-moving, polluted river. The last occasion of note was July 21, when about 15 of them attacked a nuclear protest camp in Angarsk, Siberia, resulting in the death 21 year old anarchist Ilya Borodaenko with a fractured skull and the injury of many other comrades, 9 of whom were hospitalised, one with two broken legs.

They tend to be ugly bastards, embodying a repulsive exterior that comes from a core of hatred, ignorance, idolatry, fetichism and, above all, fear, +the greatest fear of all, the arse-tightening ‘fear of the different’ that engenders monsters. Small, insignificant monsters, to be honest, not worthy of elevation to the level of an actual ‘enemy’. In fact, they can’t keep up a sustained attack, they just come out at night to prowl around and look for some unsuspecting prey: an immigrant or two, perhaps a gay or, why not, simply someone who doesn’t have the right haircut or wear the right clothes, doesn’t conform or worship the god Authority.

At times they might be ‘used’ by power to do certain things that can’t be done within legality—such as attacking comrades who have exposed themselves in a specific area of struggle—and thereby foster the interests of capital, as in the case above, where the G8-approved plan to build the International Uranium Enrichment Centre (IUEC) about to go ahead was meeting opposition from protestors and some of the local community. But we are not talking about the organised levels of neo-nazis that exist and work at quite a different level, integral to the workings of power itself

Warm welcome for Le Pen and co. in Sicily

On Tuesday July 3, about 20 demonstrators threw molotovs and fireworks at the hotel in Palermo, Sicily, where the French leader of the fascist Front National, Jean-Marie Le Pen was staying to participate in a seminary dedicated to immigration. Significant security was set up around the hotel and the bus that transported the participants after a press conference during which Le Pen vociferated: "Immigration causes poverty in all countries. Many measures could be taken to safeguard our cultural identity and our European traditions". The seminary, organised by the extreme right group of the European parliament, Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS) lasted four days. The Italian neo-fascist site Fiamma Tricolore had informed that a visit was foreseen in Palermo and the island of Lampedusa where many clandestine migrants disembark. The aim of the seminary was 'to look for solutions to the serious problem of clandestine immigration in Italy, entrance to Europe for uncontrollable migratory fluxes'. Eurodeputies of the Italian, French, Belgian, Bulgarian and Rumanian extreme right were all part of the delegation.

Deranged 0

A selection of words from some Elephant meanderings throughout the years to provoke thought and action on a subject often seen merely in its grotesque manifestations leading to muscular confrontations that numb the brain in the brash logic of extreme opposites, momentary victories that leave the megamachine to carry on only to be duly recharged by the input of the zealous citizen anti-racist racists. To conclude, a few small dives into viscid waters, the amniotic fluid, of our world, a world of prohibitions, self-censuring and inhibition, all under the banner of 'respect' and 'safety'.

Fascism is an obstacle much too ephemeral and impotent to hinder the course of human thought that bursts beyond every dam and overflows beyond every boundary, stirring action on its way.

Fascism is impotent because it is brute force.

It is matter without spirit; it is night without dawn.

Fascism is the other face of socialism.

Both of them are bodies without minds.

Socialism is the material force that, acting as the shadow of a dogma, resolves and dissolves in a spiritual "no".

Fascism is a consumptive of the spiritual "no" that aims—wretch—at a material yes.

Both lack willful quality.

They are the bores of time; the temporizers of the deed!

They are reactionary and conservative.

They are crystallized fossils that the strong-willed dynamism of history that passes will sweep away together.

Because, in the willful field of moral and spiritual values, the two enemies are equal.

And it is well known that when fascism is born, socialism alone is its direct accomplice and responsible father.

what they wanted in Romania and paid the passage of men who could not make a living in their own country. Deals were also made with the Chinese government and tens of thousands of Chinese slaves imported. Other immigrant workers in Israel are from the Philippines, Thailand, other east European countries as well as some African and Latin American countries. On arrival, their passports are confiscated. They live in conditions unfit for human habitation, have meagre quantities of disgusting food pushed under their doors or through bars, for which large deductions from their pay are made. Babies born to immigrants must leave the country within months of birth, they have no rights at all in Israel. Since the crash in the construction industry many of the imported work large deductions from their pay are made. Babies born to immigrants must leave the country within months of birth, they have no rights at all in Israel. Since the crash in the construction industry many of the imported workers are living as illegal immigrants and it was reported already years ago that the flora and fauna of Israel is disappearing as starving people are eating whatever they can find.

A handful of brainless idiots are stealing the show. But in the shadows there exists a great choreography of suffering and despair of those who do not belong to the 'chosen race', and whose only public face is the 'made in Israel' that enhances the shelves of so many supermarkets and lies behind beautiful bouquets for light-hearted sweethearts.

Deranged 0

Who are the Nazis?

Eight youths suspected of being members of a local neo-Nazi cell that assaulted gays, foreign workers, homeless people and men wearing ‘kippot’ were arrested in Israel at the beginning of September. All but one are non-Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union who arrived in Israel by the law of return—a grandparent, for example, who was Jewish. Swastika posters, neo-Nazi movies and explosives were apparently found in their homes and they circulated pictures of themselves on their mobile phones doing nazi salutes.

For a State that bases its reason for being upon the Holocaust and the persecution of Jews throughout time, the news obtained a shock effect. In fact, already in 2006 graffiti had appeared in the town of Petach Tikva, home of the arrested, bearing the words ‘death to Jews’ and swastikas in red paint, and signed WP (white power).

A closer look at some of the other things that go on in the land of Zion puts things in quite a different perspective. Far from being a ‘special’ State with particularly high moral values (apart from that annoying question of having had to throw out the Palestinians, then imprison, kill them or wall them up), Israel is like all other modern democracies, i.e. thrives on the labour of slaves. When the intifada ruined the slave markets of Arabs from the occupied territories—who used to queue up daily for work inside Israel, and were often locked up inside their sleeping quarters by fearful Israeli bosses—contracters looked elsewhere. They found

Because, if when the nation, if when the state, if when democratic Italy, if when bourgeois society trembled in pain and agony in the knotty and powerful hands of the “proletariat” in revolt, socialism had not basely hindered the tragic deadly hold—losing the lamps of reason in front of its wide-opened eyes—certainly fascism would never even have been born, let alone lived.

Renzo Novatore

occur. Police and gendarmes, exhausted by a week of tensions, played peacekeepers.

cette semaine

Neither racism nor anti-racism

What does it mean to question the phenomenon of rampant racism in the opulent and democratic post-industrial societies of the West and the motivations behind the measures taken as an antidote by the respective governments? I think it means asking the question of the real causes that motivate it and of what revolves around it, having given as insufficient, if not misleading all the theses put forward on the subject so far.

The first problem in tackling this issue is therefore that of pulling oneself out of the usual mental habits, in short, escaping from the mirrors that deliberately distort reality such as ideologies and sociological analyses filled with psychological idiocy, all of which lead to the production and reproduction of empty discourses. In doing so, I will start from the following assumption: “Right and interesting is not to say: this came from that, but: this might have come about this way”. (Wittgenstein).

Destructuring a commonplace

Let us begin by saying that there is no historical continuity, nor any ideological connection, between the current forms of racism that are being manifested and those that preceded them

Bellecour. There, another camp, about two hundred people, have filled the square. It mixes the youth of the estates, children of immigrants and anarchist activists. For the police, the strategy is to contain these groups, isolate, separate them, to avoid potentially worrisome clashes.

This ceaseless game of cat and mouse causes a striking scene, around 17 hours. This is not place Bellecour, nor Guillotière Bridge. This time, instead in place Ampere in the Ainay district, which is completely cut off from the world, surrounded by tight police cordon. In the middle, about 150 young people waving a tricolor [French] flag, chanting slogans of a somewhat equivocal tendency. Style: "Scum, you're fucked, the people of Lyon are in the street". Or again, in an allusion diverted from the founder of SOS Racism slogan: "Don't touch my city". Some songs are accompanied by gestures similar to those of football fans. In Rue Victor-Hugo a window opens curtains drawn, a man brandishing a Lyonnais flag shouts: "Go home". All around the square, small groups rotate, appear to be seeking trouble, reply: "This is our home". The two sides shout at each other, provoke each other.

Fascists against anarchists: this is not the traditional folklore of the campus. Groups are giving a new dimension to the social crisis, seeking a fight, against a backdrop of conflicting ideologies that are not really declared. And with new guests, young people from the banlieux without political affiliation. A worrying cocktail. Four brass knuckles, a knife, a screwdriver, were discovered in a sewer near the site Ampere.

In the afternoon, eight youths armed with iron bars, considered as "anarcho-libertarian" by the police, were arrested around Perrache. By early evening, suspected young rightist extremists leave Square Ampere, in buses. Direction, Central Police station. Reason: unlawful assembly. Bloc against bloc, the war did not

in the past. This is not only because they arose in two different socio-economic and political-cultural contexts. The current forms of racism are fuelled by a process of technological development of capital and the most advanced States, which are destructuring all forms of traditional social life and thus also breaking all the communicative infrastructures of vast exploited social strata within post-industrial societies, while with regard to Third World countries they are destroying by globalising all the cultural forms, customs and traditional usages of these peoples, deconstructing their identity in the realisation of a project of domination on a planetary scale.

The old forms of racism were born in the opposite direction, from a crisis of capital and the imperialist States of the time, which found its outlet in mass extermination through the Second World War. All those who refer to this type of racism to explain the current one, are deliberately distorting the reality of things, continually concealing the real causes.

Another element that is eminently visible is that it reveals an obvious numerical disproportion between the dimensions of the phenomenon involving broad strata of the population and the consensus base enjoyed by the right-wing neo-fascist or neo-Nazi, as the latter, counting the nostalgic carrions of the past regime and the young shaven-headed bulldogs, turns out to be very small. Added to this is another element: a precise discrepancy between the forms of racism expressed in a crude and declared way, forms despised by all, and the new forms, subtly insidious, slithering, anonymous, psychologically non-ideological forms of racism, even though they are all based on precise discriminants of a socio-economic kind.

An irreversible indictment

One of the points on which current forms of racism hinge is formed by the cleverly discriminating action carried out at the institutional level by those democrats who emphasise the nobility of their conduct towards workers of colour, resorting to forms of social welfarism, that go well with the voluntary work of religious organisations and youth aggregations of the various parties and trade unions. In another respect, these same democrats discriminate against the proletarianised social strata of the local population, who are thus aroused to turn against these workers of colour almost as favourites given the lack of interest shown by the rulers in their basic needs (work, housing, social assistance, etc.), needs that remain unanswered.

This situation creates an induced war between the proletarianised masses, favouring a development free of social conflicts directed against the structures of domination in all fields, which is why the conflict is transferred within the ragged masses themselves, who thus turn against one another.

Therefore, paradoxical as it may seem, the material, socio-economic and political-cultural, but also psycho-ideological, conditions of this new racism have been created precisely by the democratic forces, the same ones that in the streets channel and manage the popular anti-racist protest and indicate at the same time the measures to be taken at an institutional level to curb this wave.

The totalitarian-democratic mentality

Since entering this post-industrial era, everyone is talking about a society that is multiracial, multiform and diverse, as a

Lyon, France – Dangerous face-to-face, fascists against anarchists and ‘scarlas’

Progress, 23.10.2010 – Lyon still bathed in a surreal atmosphere throughout the day yesterday. To the sound of sirens, screams of the crowd. To the rhythm of police vans, the running of disparate groups dispersed across the centre, many around Place Bellecour. All under the hum of the helicopter installed in the Lyon sky like an ominous bird. Just follow its flight to understand where the problems are. Yesterday, concerns took a new turn. A bad turn, with a nauseating stench. Groups, crystallized into two blocs sought confrontation.

On the one hand, an assembly of young people who seem clearly anchored on the side of the far right. Without openly claiming it. “Our city is not there to be dismantled, we belong to the people of Lyon, we do not want thugs (casseurs),” said a young man, black scarf around his neck, equipped with padded gloves. Displayed no movement, but a dull will to fight. This block had a rendezvous mid-afternoon, at quai Rambaud, on the banks of the Saone. Approximately 140 young people, immediately surrounded for an identity check. Without prior notification, without authorization, they incur a “crime of unlawful assembly”. They have been warned. This does not deter them from moving towards Place

dents between the two sides. A woman police officer was injured. Three migrants were beaten and a young girl received a stone to her head.

According to eyewitnesses nationalists threw stones, chairs, bottles, sticks, flares and bullets against the anti-racism festival goers, and “did not hesitate to push even young children who were playing at the festival.” An eyewitness who participated in the festival states that “the police instead of protecting us, who were now being attacked in an institutionalized attack on the festival, backed the Nationalists”.

from the greek media

sign of progressive advance of social emancipation on a planetary scale, failing to grasp, on the contrary the frightening process of colonisation taking place in societies recycled into one single society on a planetary scale, capable of destroying any real difference between one population and another, between one culture and another, not to mention the individuals totally de-territorialised from their own identity. If the Nazis wanted to eliminate genetic differences between one people and another in their own way, the democrats are preparing to do the same job by emptying the heads of individuals.

If, at its core, this post-industrial society appears totally dominated by the technologised apparatuses of State and capital, which control and administer the movement of individuals down to the smallest detail, unknowingly now the terminal prostheses of this monstrous and despotic social machine, altered scientifically, we need to analyse the mentality that has produced such a situation.

In the words of Adorno, the democrat considers the actual or imaginary differences between one individual and another as ignominious stains, and if these exist, it is a sign that there is a failed or not yet completed process of ‘social homogenisation’, i.e. there is still something not yet fully integrated that escapes the capillary control put in place by the totalitarian system. “The technique in use in concentration camps tends to assimilate the prisoners to their guards” (Adorno). This concept, transferred within society means that those who are exploited tend to assimilate with those who control them, as the oppressive conditions become worse.

When the progressive and the democrat say that one individual is perfectly equal to another, whether white, black, yellow or whatever, in order to prevent discrimination, or differential treatment, without realising it, they are not only reducing this issue to the criterion in use in the dominant system, but concealing the fact that this is in fact not the case, because each man has his own

logic, his own cultural background, his own way of understanding the same concepts, so that he is humiliated and violated precisely on the basis of a claimed equalisation. This is the criterion on which the process of social homologation carried out by any totalitarianism, aimed at terrorising always and in any case those who behave differently, as well as naturally inhibiting those who would like to behave as their true and real inclinations are.

This is not strange in a society in which all members have been recycled in their own image and likeness. In this society, tolerance has become the compulsory verb on which all things are measured. Outside of it one is barbarian, animal or otherwise. Of course, in this way one is more and more inclined to crush, rape and annihilate everything that does not fit into the integration scheme, feeling authorised in the name of progress and the civilisation of customs to enact processes of social lobotomy against this or that group that does not fit in.

The repressive and terrifying horizon of the democratic ideal, based on a declaredly reactionary and authoritarian mentality, or a progressive and authoritative mentality, goes as far as to want to have all individuals alike for the sole purpose of being able to manage them scientifically. The democratic ideal thus becomes a police-like ideal, of which dictatorship is a crude variant, not yet rationalised and planified by reason that has become omniscient and all-encompassing, incorporating everything within a similar criterion to rationality.

This process of democratic-totalitarian colonisation has as a consequence the pushing of each individual to do the same things, or different things as long as they are within the same logic. Each individual becomes a compound synthesis of the system that has recycled him/her to the dominant norms. Being all in the same condition, coincides with the end of all opposition, which provides an indiscriminate consent to the system.

Larnaca, Cyprus – Wild clashes when nationalists attack anti-racism festival

5 Nov 2010 – Bloody episodes in Larnaca. Violent events unfolded this afternoon on the quay in Larnaca Palm Tree Promenade, between nationalist demonstrators and people attending the annual “Rainbow” anti-racism festival and “Cypriots and immigrants united against Crisis” organized by KISA.

First information says there are more than five wounded, one of which may be severe, as he received stab wounds. The nationalists’ front, which consisted of the organization “Greek Resistance Movement”, the PAK and the “Movement for the Salvation of Cyprus” marched shouting abusive slogans against immigrants and settlers, while calling “against illegal immigration, against the Islamization of the country,” and for the “immediate abolition of provocative allowances etc. for political refugees”. According to confirmed information a member of the Democratic Party, Zacharias Koula, was there on the side of the nationalists.

Around 19.30 the nationalists started a march at European Square and along the coastal road to the church of St. Lazarus, at a time when people were attending the anti-racism festival in the seaside boulevard and sidewalks and chanting slogans in support of diversity. A strong police intervention failed to prevent inci-

Because only one 'dead in spirit' can debate a lover's declaration of love in legal terms or inside the pages of a newspaper. Either you accept such a declaration, or you refuse it.

Those who accept the increasingly unbearable yoke of the State day after day, just like those who kiss the hands of the mafias when they strike, those who lick the ass of the boss — then grumble about the ones who are poorer or less fortunate — just like those who profit from other people's misery; all such people will certainly refuse the advances of the immigrants of Rosarno. But these people aren't worth talking to, they are not the ones that we want to talk to.

Those who will certainly know how to listen are the 'libertines', the spirits that still know how to desire, that still know the difference between surviving and living, between slavery and freedom. Who know that a thousand burnt cars are nothing compared to a man's freedom and dignity.

Slavery consists of people and goods, businesses and relationships. It is possible thanks to a politic that is increasingly xenophobic and classist, supported by uniformed armies and mafiosi in white shirts.

The love of freedom consists of complicity and fantasy. The revolt of the African immigrants of Rosarno is a gift to all of us, now it is up to us to give something back.

Because nobody will ever be free until the last chain is broken.

Anarchists and libertarians of Genoa

What is imagined as social equality, according to this criterion, is nothing other than the planning of a dominant society, with the relative flattening and reduction of everyone to an ideal 'figure' that symbolises annihilation and recycling. Social equality as something accomplished in the irreducible differences of each individual seems inconceivable to the democrat as that would be an unmanageable reality irreducible to one single criterion of system and logic. Its own and the rationalised fear of freedom.

It is in this logic that the democrat fuels and motivates the forms of racism today, as unconscious responses to a process of de-territorialising of identity between ethnic groups, social strata of the population, individuals, who all feel threatened in one way or another. In the economy of the project of domination racism and anti-racism come to constitute the functionalising poles of an emergency campaign that serves to make repression, control and consensus pass unhindered.

Role of the mainstream media

We have mentioned the breakdown of the communication infrastructure in the proletarianised social strata, but we must also extend this rupture to small communities, such as the rural ones, where the technological revolution brought about by capital and the most advanced states, has invested the entire social structure, radically changing its framework at all levels, swallowing up the entire cultural heritage, which has thus been destroyed.

It is clear that for the unstructured and dispersed social groups and strata in the periphery of metropolises, as well as small rural, mountain or fishing communities, the role of the new communicative structure, the coloniser is fundamental. Its multimedial function, implemented by the apparatuses of domination guarantees

the appropriation and regulation of all the ways of life and relations from the social to the interpersonal level.

This has increased the time slots for listening to radio, but especially of the media, which is now 'non-stop', with consequences of true veritable teledependence. Within each family, communication between the members of the household is increasingly rare, while its place is taken by the media, which thus isolates each member. These big media are playing a terrorist role aimed at making foreigners be considered people from another planet. People feel threatened in this way and are therefore pushed to unite in organisational forms that are often based on the division of territory, on hooliganism, on acts of dissatisfaction from which on the whole transpires the sense of an unconscious threat that seems to derive from the 'foreigner'.

Racism is a phenomenon that grows out of the loss of all the reflexive faculties of man, such as writing, discussing, reading, loss parallel to the acquisition of greater interest in superficial or symbolic aspects, such as skin colour, customs and other regressive communal forms. The big media excite large masses of uprooted people to feel that they are negative protagonists of events that can only provide stimuli for socialisation through an imitative and not consciousness-raising principle. This mobilisation thus becomes the basis of integration into the system without the latter being questioned.

Hence the development of a fictitious conflictual state within the exploited masses. The racism-anti-racism binomial constitutes the pattern of this conflict, a pattern with no way out. Taking part in either of these two poles means feeding the overall scheme without being able to resolve it by breaking the circle of a harmful relationality.

Pierleone Porcu

SPARTACUS IS BACK. LONG LIVE SPARTACUS!

The slave ceases to be such from the moment in which he tries to break his chains. At that moment, unconcerned about the consequences of his attempt dignity, desire, rage and a profound sentiment of injustice towards the the boss who forces him into slavery, comes forth once again in a liberatory manner.

The revolt of the slave is a supreme act, it is above everything an act of love of oneself and the whole of humanity. The revolt of the slave is hope and justice forged into weapons to become the concrete possibility of emancipation. It is quite simply the will for another life, possibly happy, that is affirming itself. The slaves of Rosarno have spoken. they have spoken through their acts and their rage. In the fires, the broken windows, in the uprooted road signs, in the beating of the police, hides the poetry of a lover.

Perhaps love without calculation, desperate love, love capable of being given, is something old. Just like slavery is an old thing. Perhaps that is precisely why today, those capable of understanding, of knowing how to read the poetry of the slaves of Rosarno, are few.

In this pathetic Italy, plunged into the fear of the 'different' and impregnated with hypocrisy, governed by vermin supported by even more imbecilic mobs corrupted by hatred and grown up in the mirage of accumulation and wealth, are today outraged. Outraged because of the violence, clandestine immigration, work conditions, insecurity and exasperation.

Well, shocked Sirs, honest Citizens, whether you are of the right or of the left, whether you are gooey with the treacle of Christianity or forged by the hammer blows of the Right, You are corpses.

Rosarno: the revolt of the slaves. Spartacus is back!

On January 9 and 10, hundreds of immigrants rose up in Rosarno, a little town in the south of Italy. After some were shot at with an air rifle, the insurgents, armed with sticks and stones, blocked the main roads by building barricades. From the centre of Rosarno, windows of shops and businesses were shattered, barricades were set alight and there were hard clashes with the police ...and some of the local population demanding that 'all blacks be expelled from Rosarno'. Some citizens used their cars to run down immigrants, others armed themselves with batons, axes and guns to quell the revolt. On the evening of January 10, police and citizens managed to chase the immigrants from the town. Over one thousand immigrants were transferred to detention centres to await expulsion, hundreds of others escaped from Rosarno on foot, by car or by train. All four thousand immigrants have been chased out of Rosarno.

In the south of Italy, especially in agriculture, tens of thousands of immigrants are exploited in conditions of slavery thanks to an alliance of mafias, local politicians, and businesses. Most of them sleep in abandoned factories, with no water, heating or electricity. Already there had been revolts, which were often repressed in blood by mafia mercenaries.

This leaflet was given out in Genoa:

Non-news about racism

Racism can be defined in many ways, most of which tend to justify an attitude of defence and attack against other persons who, it is thought, might damage our interests in the immediate or near future. At the root of racism, under its disguise of myths linked to various fantasies and irrationalities, there is always a precise economic cause, in defence of which the fears and fantasies we all have concerning the different are addressed or opportunely solicited.

Racism has existed throughout the history of mankind and has always been linked to a fear of the 'different' which has been depicted in the most incredible and fantastical ways. Without going back too far, we can see that for centuries the Catholic church was an instrument both of violent racism and destruction, well before the racist theories of the last two hundred years. It developed the racial theory of blood for the first time, applying it against the Spanish Jews and their desperate attempts to convert them to Catholicism in order to survive.

In the struggle against the Church and its doctrines last century, scientific theory incongruously introduced a theoretical stream from Chamberlain to Gobineau which took up the blood theory again and used it as a weapon against the Jews. It was placed within a kind of deterministic evolutionism which the modern orthodox racist theory founded by the Nazis based itself upon.

But, from the 'reconquest' of Spain to our time, these theories would have remained in the locker of the historical horrors of human thought, had they not occasionally found an economic base on which to exercise themselves, common interests to protect, and fears of possible expropriation to be exorcised. The Catholic crusade against the Jews was a consequence of the fear that it would not be possible to control the extremely wealthy Spanish provinces left by the Arabs unless they proceeded to their immediate persecution. Their ghettoisation and consequent control was due to the fact that, having been left almost completely free by the Arabs, they had the levers of the Spanish economy in hand.

The vicissitudes of the repression and genocide of the Jews by the Nazis are well known, along with the economic justifications where concrete events were mixed with mythical elements. It is in fact true that with the inflation of the mark—decided mainly under the influence of Jewish managerial groups—the German government had damaged the small savers and salaried workers following their defeat in the first world war. But there was no justification in the subsequent deduction that this was because the Jews acted as a 'foreign nation' en bloc, which led to their being condemned to extermination. In this way a significant number of industrialists met their deaths, and along with them, millions of poor souls whose only fault was that they were Jewish.

In the same way the problem of the Jamaicans in Great Britain is based on the fact that they have now become a burden to the State. Brought over in tens of thousands immediately after the second world war to bear the brunt of rebuilding the country, the British State would now like them to go back from whence they came, without taking into account the fact that most of the youth, those who make up the most restless element, were born in Britain

taking advantage of our fanaticism, our ignorance, of the racism that we harbour within us and do not know how to get rid of.

Angelo Gaccione

The *other* who is different from me (because foreign culturally different, and so on...) becomes a threat to me and other than me, hostile, therefore represents a danger: economic, religious, etc. Projecting them as different from me, as an enemy of my security, I am legitimised to persecute them, therefore to suppress them. A perverse logic, if you like, but rigorous, immediate in its simplicity, linear, justifactory. And what is entering the minds of ever-widening layers of public opinion in the West, as in continents other than our own.

The same mechanism is being set in motion that has characterised the figure of the scapegoat in various eras in which at times a person, a people, an ethnic group, an ideology, a culture, etc., is set in motion.

I wrote something very short but emblematic about this, published in the book *A cigar in the mouth*. The mechanism is always the same, it follows a script long known. One projects all possible evil on to the scapegoat, it is invested with every responsibility, every potential threat.

It is made the focus of every difficulty of one's own or of one's group, the paranoid projection of one's own grief. A devaluation of the *different* to animal or thing is even operated, through the use of language. A reduction to something abject through language, to justify in full persecution, violence.

This is a trap that has been working for too long and acts as a detonator in particular contingencies. Especially in times such as these, of severe economic recession desired by capital and maintained by states. The fault of each of us lies in not wanting to understand, once and for all, the main responsible and supreme sponsor of society's unresolvable conflicts. Which uses them for its own dirty interests, which feeds them, determines them with its policy of robbery and misuse. Who pushes us to pit man against man,

and have no intention of going off to a place that is quite unknown to them, and from where they did not come.

Israeli racism against the Palestinians has the same economic basis. Zionist interests can no longer tolerate a reduction in territory, or even a cohabitation which might turn out to be destructive in the long run, possibly resulting in a Palestinian State capable of becoming the economic cutting edge of a potentially wealthy Arab world. We should not forget that the Arab intelligentsia is nearly all Palestinian and this scares the Israelis, providing them with a far more powerful motivation to fight than the mythical symbol of the great Israel that was to extend between the two historic rivers.

Arab racism, manifested in its continual declarations of 'holy war', although never all that solid, also has an economic foundation and is aimed at preventing political isolation and exploitation by other nations during the favourable and limited period of petroleum extraction.

Italian racism has also known significant periods which have not limited themselves to theory. Nothing compared to the 'Teutonic order' of course, but it reached a considerable level all the same. During its years of publication, the Italian review *Difesa della razza*, (Defence of Race) edited by Almirante, included many names from the official anti-fascist democratic culture at the time. But never mind. That is trivia compared to the massacres perpetrated by the Italian army in Libya, Ethiopia and Yugoslavia. Each according to their own capabilities.

Now the 'black man' is making his appearance in the sacred territory of our [Italian] homeland and is starting to become 'visible'. So long as it was a question of a few dozen 'blacks', things could be tolerated. In fact, it excited the superficial democratic sentiments of some, prompting heroic declarations of anti-racism. The same went for the occasional 'gypsy' camp and the communities of Chinese, Philippinos, Slavs, Poles, and so on. One con-

tinually hears, 'Very well, these people, even if their skin is a different colour, eat different food, move differently, speak another language, are just like us. But only as long as they stay in their place.' There, that sums up our anti-racism: the black man, who embodies the most extreme characteristics of racial difference, is just like us, a man, not a beast. But he must understand the 'good' we are doing him by giving him the chance to eat the crumbs that fall from our tables laden with every imaginable consumer product. He must learn to work long and unflaggingly and put up with the hardest of labour, be nice and polite, pretend not to understand, get accustomed to putting up with exploitation in the black economy (not because he himself is black), doing temporary work in very small enterprises, pay extortionate prices for a single bed in a rat-infested room, learn our language—given that we are all so ignorant that we do not know how to speak any language other than this useless, peripheral Italian one—and so on.

But the ten commandments of anti-racism were valid before the great, more or less rationally planned influx became as consistent as it is now, without any prospect of reduction or regulation. Now it is not just a question of economic damage, but of a real fear of the black man. Although it might sound strange, I have an idea that the real danger at the moment is not some group of Nazi-skins, but comes from a far more profound, deep-rooted feeling that is being experienced irrationally by vast social strata. It is not simply a question of shop-keepers seeing their trade damaged by illegal street sellers, but is also the middle-class white collar workers (among whom you find practically the whole police structure of every order and grade, including the professional military one) and even some salaried but insecure parts of the old factory proletariat who have been leading a trade union battle over the past few years to safeguard the few jobs that are left.

precedes the modern colonial deportations and racial segregations by several thousand years. Its ancient origins can be found in Asia, in Africa, in India, in the Middle East, in the same way as among the cultured civilisations of the Mediterranean. Racism and xenophobia have dotted our century with aberrant episodes investing those same groups or peoples who had previously been its victims. Racism is a patchwork of the most disparate elements and it is not just about skin colour or race, as is wrongly reductively and simplistically believed. It implies somatic differences; differences in language customs, habits, culture, thought; belonging to different social groups; to separate ethnic groups; to specific minorities. This is fuelled by cultural prejudices; of a lack of real knowledge of others; of ancestral fears with regard to what is foreign, unknown, different from oneself; of a lack of possible communication and therefore of tune, of listening; of pseudo-scientific theses, of simplifying and aberrant ideologies; of cynical power calculations by aspiring ruling classes and power groups that thereby attempt to legitimise their dominion.

More often than not, it stems from economic competition; from hatreds artfully fuelled by political opportunism in order to safeguard privileges; from artificial geographical visions; from forced and promiscuous relationships; from historical anachronisms such as borders, for example; from the ignorance of the masses; from mental and intellectual conformism; by the fanaticism of reactionary and antilibertarian ideologies.

The destruction of the Americas by the Yankees, of the Waldensians by the Jesuits, of the Armenians by the Turks, of the Jews by the Nazis, of anarchists and socialists by the constituted powers, of heretics by the Church, of the poor and working classes by the aristocracy first and the bourgeoisie afterwards, just to mention some historical data, are all racism in some way, with many of the facets which I have highlighted above.

We are all racists

A key to understanding the social, psychological and cultural motives that shape and nurture racism. No people, race or individual, can be immune from this seed that has its roots in all ages, in the search for a figure to act as the scapegoat of a given situation. This is generally identified in the foreigner.

There is no internationalism that is such and has come to terms with the ghost of peoples, even the most politically advanced ones. If it were the other way round, no war would have been possible, let alone any nationalistic, tribalistic or ethnic persecution.

Tolerance is too high a concept, a practice that finds very little resonance in history. It implies a culture not only refined and sensitive, but a way of thinking that has made anti-conformism and diversity a sharp knife against everything that exists. Moralities included.

All groups, races, peoples, are potentially racist. Even in those groups or communities that are not racist, ideological and cultural convictions can under particular conditions become racist. Racism is always latent and in times of serious internal difficulties it can manifest itself in the most violent and destructive ways. If one does not take this into account, one ends up mistaking desire for reality, and remains bewildered and unprepared before apparently inexplicable phenomena. The imperant nationalisms are there to testify to this racism as a historical and universal phenomenon and

The fact that fascist action squads have been recruited in Florence is just a sign, a dangerous one, certainly, but still a sign. More serious still is the consistently racist behaviour of those who possibly consider themselves to be anti-racist. It is this behaviour that is capable of transforming itself within seconds into real conscious racism at some time in the future, and precipitating a catastrophe. The danger comes from the millions of racists who believe themselves to be democratic and anti-racist. This is the 'non-news' that we are proposing to comrades to reflect upon. I am from the South, so I am different, and have felt, not only at skin level, how this 'diversity' of mine came to be noticed by, and almost disturbed, those used to living in 'northern' circles so feel superior and even upholders of a 'language' they consider superior.

I perceived this latent hostility at the end of the Fifties, in the mittel-European cultural circle in Turin, where my stubbornness in continuing to underline my Sicilian accent was considered inaptitude and provincialism. Knowledge is acquired by study, not from the natural gift of being born in a given place. This is a dangerous concept. Italian is an artificial language that is composed of many elements which, like all other languages, are still in the course of transformation. This goes for dialects too of course, but the lesser capacity of dialects and languages reduced to such a range, to 'build' their own literature and make it known, encloses them within a fairly circumscribed territorial space.

I have always refused to 'refine' my accent in a 'correct' way, precisely so as not to be colonised like most of those who breathe the so-called 'air of the continent'. After a period in Milan they sound like pure-blooded Milanese when they return to their native Canicatti. Defence of one's identity, along with an—intellectual and practical—consistency, always gives rise to a reaction of annoyance and fear.

This happens with the homosexual, whom our democratic antifascist culture considers 'different' and tolerates so long as he is recognisable, i.e. assumes the attitude of a 'would-be woman' that allows us to identify him and keep him at a distance, naturally with great tolerance. But the homosexual who to all appearances is 'a man like us' puts us in difficulty, scares us, is the one we fear most. Basically, we have all built a well-ordered world with our certainties and reassurances, and we cannot accept someone 'different' turning up and upsetting everything in just a few seconds. In the same way there is latent, therefore unconscious, racism in any attempt at defence that demonstrates the importance and validity of one ethnic reality without linking it to another and pointing out their intrinsic diversity as well as the profound community of interests that exists between them. When I took up the subject of the national liberation struggle many years ago, there were two reactions, both mistaken in my opinion. On the one hand, there were those who said right away that such a thematic was right-wing, with goodbye to all the work of Bakunin and comrades and almost the whole of the international anarchist movement. On the other, there were those who took it up, turning it into a local affair aimed at going into its social characteristics, ethical or otherwise, without linking it to the international context as a whole.

Another undercurrent of racism, which runs through the whole of present-day anti-racism, is that of the political verbalism in favour of this or that struggle for the liberation of the South African blacks, the Palestinians, the British blacks, the Kanaks and so on. International solidarity in words alone is a form of latent racism, in fact it is even subscribed to by illuminated governments and respectable groups who spread the good word throughout the world. But when it comes to examining what could be done to support that solidarity concretely, what could be done to damage the economic interests of those responsible

is advancing like a spectre to undermine an economic security that is rather precarious.

The mounting tension towards these people, who precisely because they are poor create rivalry with other poor, has already openly unfolded in the school sector, pitting the North and South in a chronically precarious sector such that teachers from the South are viewed with strong aversion by their colleagues from the North, precisely for the same reason that opposes the labour of immigration to local labour in European industrialised countries. The shrinking of the market and available places is moving an increasingly great number of southern unemployed to the north in the desperate search for space, supplence, jobs, creating strong competition with the unemployed and precarious workers in the North. This war between the poor, like all wars for economic survival, can only irreversibly feed the conflict that from strictly social and economic, ends up taking on characteristics that go beyond all rationality. From here it is a short step to open racism, and thus to veritable coalitions of violence.

Is there a remedy? If the current equilibriums and present systems of dominion continue, the situation will only get worse worldwide. Poverty and hunger will drive more and more people to pour into the capitals of affluence until they burst. Population growth is increasing at an unsustainable pace: there will be no way out. Stopping these human masses will be impossible. Conflicts, contradictions and racism will take hold more and more everywhere.

Unless the dispossessed make a united front against the blind arrogance of their rulers.

Angelo Gaccione

What are the Senegalese, Nigerians, Arabs, Filipinos, Eritreans, Chileans, Argentinians doing but imitating the odyssey of other desperate peoples who went before them in history?

We know all about the great immigration in Italy. We know how they arrive and who profits from these modern mass deportations. We know how and where they live, how they earn their living and where they sleep. We also know how convenient it has been in periods of expansion of the labour market to have recourse to non-EU immigrants for the most disgusting and exhausting jobs, refused by our compatriots. Why then all of a sudden this wild explosion of intolerance towards them, not only in Italy, but in every European metropolis? Why precisely among socially precarious people this sign of retaliation and aversion? Why is the hatred only turned towards these new disinherited and not against the rich foreigners who do business in the various capitals of the world, living in luxury, complicit in the enslavement of these people?

I clarify in my other article the many reasons that lead to racism; here one is enough, the most obvious and concrete: the struggle for life. For several years now, the capitalist West has been carrying out a continuous expulsion of labour from the production cycle. Industrial concentrations and technological restructuring, while increasing capital profits, are producing unemployment and growing pauperisation. An intolerable discrepancy which has created widespread insecurity in vast strata of the population, not only the young. The certainty of remaining unemployed for a long time is ever higher. The marginalisation of intellectual functions is already a given state of affairs; periodic surveys show this clearly and in this bleak picture foreign workers are seen as competitors and possible rivals. The continuous waves of labour in search of work arriving from the depressed areas of the world are sowing panic; a threatening reserve army

for the repression, then things change, and a respectable distance is taken from them immediately. It is another aspect of the anti-racism that tolerates the black man so long as he stays in his place, a different way of keeping a distance, of putting one's conscience at rest and have racism carry on at a safe distance from one's own doorstep.

So, here in this country, we have reached the point of believing it possible for police and carabinieri to become the paladins and defenders of the blacks, in other words the supporters of the anti-racist politics of the Italian government. But is such a thing possible? Anyone who has seen these murderers in uniform at work even once can have no illusions on the subject. These armed corps, for the most part composed of people from southern Italy, once their 'bread and butter' is safe, become the most ferocious jailers of other people from the south, those who dream of the possible clash that could bring about changes capable of putting the old ideals of their fathers—a piece of bread—in question once again. And if that is what they thought and continue to think as far as the South is concerned, imagine what their attitude will be concerning black people, Philipinos, gypsies, Poles and so on. Anything but democratic tolerance. The other day, in their haste to beat up their victims (quickly and well do not go together), they did not realise that they were also beating up one of their (parliamentary) colleagues who unfortunately has a black face. Here the racism is anything but latent, but let us put it all in the same category of possible, not certain, danger.

But also workers can be convinced of a 'black' danger from the immigrants who have arrived to take what little work is left from them. Massive shifts in this direction find the trades unions and political representatives, who have always worked out their strategy on the element of economic and normative safeguard alone, disarmed. Any humanitarian discourse would rebound on them.

In a short time they would be obliged to become the defenders of an institutionally separate working strata, underpaid and guaranteed in a different way, with lower wages and fewer protective measures, in short a kind of apartheid. Such a logic is applied in the United States regularly without half terms, and differentiated conditions have only begun to be reduced in recent years parallel to an unprecedented growth in the rage, not only of the black population, but mainly of other immigrants such as Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans and so on.

At the root of this problem, which can supposedly be resolved by power, there is one great obstacle: real, concrete anti-racism should start from real equality between everyone, men and women, of any race whatsoever, wherever they come from, whatever their culture and religion. But no State could ever bring about, or even consider, concrete equality, so all States are destined to become hotbeds of racial conflicts that no verbal respectability will succeed in camouflaging very well. Explosions of violence, in the one and the other direction, will always be possible unless the social and economic conditions that produce class stratification and differences are eliminated. Racism is an economic problem, and like all economic problems it can only be resolved with a revolutionary rupture.

One concludes that it is indispensable for revolutionaries to differentiate themselves from all those—and they are numerous—who say they are anti-racist, starting from democratic governments of half the world to the so-called governments of the ex-real socialist States, where racism has also always existed, just as inequality has. It is necessary to differentiate oneself in practical terms from the scoundrels who say they are anti-racist, by attacking with precise actions all the symbols of racism and its supporters as they develop and emerge. At the same time it is necessary to work out a critique of the fears and irrational

The roots of racism

Sketching a picture of the existing disparity in development between North and South, the progressive accentuation of economic-social inequalities and new conditions of misery, source of a war between the poor for survival, this piece identifies some of the causes of the spread of the racist phenomenon.

It is well known that the labour force is a commodity and as such is regulated, or rather subordinated, to the needs of the market: it contracts and expands according to the principle of supply and demand. The damned of the depressed areas of the world, of the global South, the children of misery have always been forced to move because of hunger (sometimes because they were persecuted, others because their countries were at war) to the richest Norths of the planet. To beg for their survival and that of their families. We Italians know this well because our emigration is ancient: no pen could ever recount the tears and pain of the integration of the first “exiles”.

What blame do those people have? Their dreadful poverty is intertwined with the immoderate wealth of others: of usurers, thieves of collective goods, rulers, holders of force and therefore of law. The poorer they were, the richer the others. They went to put their labour power at the disposal of where it could be sold; it was the only way to survive, the only challenge to existence.

Europe currently affected by the pressure of the migrants, could not withstand the impact of the arrival of millions of people. A collapse doesn't require the arrival of tens of millions, four or five million would be sufficient. In that case it would no longer be a question of building walls or voting in more or less permissive or liberticidal laws. It would be the collapse of a social concept that cannot tolerate the eventuality of slaughtering two or three million people on our coasts in order to accept a couple of million of them. We are not prepared for such an eventuality.

No one can predict what will have to be done. What will the revolutionaries with their mouths full of words devoted to little pinpricks on the body of the governing whale do when these forebearers of humanity arrive at the gates, the gates of our so-called civilization, and set about destroying it? Will they contribute to the more than welcome destruction? Will they do everything possible to prevent the reconstitution of a new power with the sign changed and some strange coloured flag on the ruins of the magnificent temple of the now fallen Christianity?

Who can tell?

AMB
March 2017

impulses that lurk inside us all concerning everything that is different, in order to reduce the subsoil where the most stupid, visible, racism finds its inexhaustible fuel.

Alfredo M. Bonanno

The long shadows over the wall

The “different” has always put fear in the dreams of the self-righteous, colouring their innermost drama with the most excruciating nonsense. He prowls around at night, black of skin or amber-coloured, with almond eyes or flat nose, it doesn’t matter, it’s always him, bearer of contrast and unrest. Now he is about to strip us of our happiness, albeit modest and hard won. He doesn’t have it, and can’t understand it. At best, in his desperation he can content himself with a few crumbs from our dinner table and, all things considered, should be thankful for such magnanimity.

Although we are always complaining, we are actually proud of our state of affairs, rolling around in our troughs with the fervour of pigs, dreaming of how to get more of what we already have. We are so intent on defending our wretched lives that we don’t even see that we are getting paler and more scared. Not only those on the brink of poverty are afraid of plunging like stones into the abyss of total destitution, the so-called rich are also scared, but at a different level. The wealthy are asking themselves how they can defend their well-being, and in this warped thinking there is no room to really do anything for the “different”. When they feel indignant about so many deaths at sea in desperate attempts to land on the coasts marked by well-being (if you could call it that), they placate their souls disturbed by the deaths of so many children by funding in part—in small part, given that government spending

ers of the specific goods that they say they represent. If, out of fear, we close in on ourselves, inside our private world, taking it to be the only frontier to be defended at any cost, if we hoist the flag of ideological chatter—be it of right or left, revolutionary or reactionary—on top of this wall, we are precisely the ones who are becoming the real “politicians”. Actually, in this case we would be the worst and most ferocious on the market. From this list, ladies and gentlemen, anarchists are not at all excluded. On the contrary.

And so here we are in the stands, armed to the teeth, defending our blind stupidity. And this defence will have everyone, or nearly everyone, on our side, apart from some Florence Nightingales and a few pale veterans of radical battles, or perhaps some post-pacifist anarchist rereading Tolstoy, given that for the time being (so to speak) there is no talk of action. And we will be a good bet because facing us will be a few tens of thousands of old men, women, children and young men exhausted from fighting. We will have, that is, the remnants of a humanity in flight bled from wars, genocide, pursuit, bombings, fires, systematic house to house massacres and rape, everything obscene and horrific that man has invented since he climbed down from the tree. We will all be happy after having taken this suffering frightened humanity and pigeon-holed them into our patterns of judgment, captured and imprisoned them, distorted them and turned them into second-class Europeans.

But we cannot seriously think we will sleep in peace thanks to such a quick fix. What we have before us now, which alarmists are calling “invasion”, is no more than a tiny part of what could show up at the gates of our ultrafortified castles. Let’s reflect for a moment on the not at all unlikely eventuality of the approach of an army, not of tens of thousands, but of millions. Unfortunately, the addition of one or two zeros to the figures that we continually read in the newspapers does not leave things as they are. Our social structure, meaning with this rough formula the whole of

from his ancestors with a thousand brutal military or commercially sophisticated expedients, the uneasiness becomes astonishment. How dare he expect anything, this man? How dare he ask, he should just be holding out a hand trembling in shame waiting to get what we are generously prepared to give him. So, astonishment gives way to indignation and we seek every possible defence. We entrench ourselves behind our walls, the battlements of our ruined castles, the thresholds of our hovels, with the full force of the law. We erect the armour of property, which their insistence cannot seriously threaten, but over which a long shadow is cast, harbinger of more pressing demands in the future.

And behind the defences that we all know, which we put up a long time ago and opportunely fed, these defences in uniform or the shirtless ones visibly flexing their disgusting abject muscles, behind these obscenities that would offend the sensitivity of a tree trunk, we start to tremble. Indignation gives way to naked fear.

As a rule, when left to itself this feeling magnifies shadows, feeds the imagination, turns gusts into storms. With critical thinking and reasoning, documentation and the right disposition, fear can be traced back to its source. To do this, however, you must have a stout heart and hands ready to strike. We must fight. That's the point. You can overcome fear through the struggle against those who feed it, against all the ideological chatter and mystification put into effect by the political vision of things. What does "political vision" mean? We are not referring to the interpretation of reality charmingly supplied by right, left and centre according to taste, they are all the same anyway. We are referring to any interpretation of reality that claims to give priority to our own personal interests. If you think for a moment you will find that it is not only politicians that "do politics". We all do when we dully turn inwards like all those who cultivate so-called common interests, which turn out to be those of the small group or clan or own-

usually benefits most those who pay least tax proportionately—the opening of concentration camps, free clinics run by the army, dormitories no one wants to go to because you need papers, refectories that serve meals to poor unfortunates, run by pale ghosts full of hopes and shattered dreams.

These contradictions are rampant in Europe and survive through recourse to a thousand legal expedients: expulsions, real and open-air prisons, State and religious handouts, underpaid odd jobs, mafia regimentation, ferocious gang-masters and everything else. Everything necessary to keep the fear of the "different" at arm's length.

For the moment we are referring to self-righteous compassionate people who believe in the basic humanity of those before them, staring at them eyes wide with fear and uncertainty. And being good people they set to work (in good faith for the time being), because those eyes are still watching the world from above and not from below, i.e. from the roots of the grass that often serves them as a bed. And the others? The so-called realists who see things through their reactionary dogmas, fanatics of aberrant idiotic theories dating back to the old-style positivism where everything was measured, from the tip of the nose to the shape of the feet, telling us how to educate our feelings and keep at a distance those who stank so differently to the way we stink? This lot don't just put up fences or more or less coloured signs, they don't just try to keep the different at a safe distance, they want to keep them out altogether by building walls.

Yet the poor wretches who are currently arriving on our shores in numerous groups, but not all that many really, or at our borders in dozens, hundreds, sometimes thousands, fleeing from war, famine, an invasion of their country or the horrendous repression of unimaginable dictatorships, should move one to compassion. They should melt hearts of stone, even, I am daring

to say but am not convinced, those hardened by the perverse ideologies of the racists and company roaming all over the world today in disguise, but it's not like that. Fear dominates all these feelings, turning them into a perverse need to hold on to what one has got.

Behind the mean hypocritical charity that we see today, and behind the obscene cursing and rhetorical abuse of those who want to throw them all into the sea, there is fear, simply fear.

Let's take a look at this widespread much-reviled feeling.

Feeling afraid is a human sentiment that is common to all of us. It is impossible to draw a sharp distinction between being brave and being scared. We all know fear and we can all call on a vestige of courage to face dangerous situations at any given moment. There is no shame in that. Admitting that we are afraid and recognizing that this prevents us from acting on what we consider to be morally right according to our status as human beings, is the first step towards finding the courage for action. Personally I do not trust swaggerers, braggarts, because all too often I have seen some of the noisiest of them back away at the first signs of danger.

We feel frightened in dangerous situations because they harm us and those we love, damage our belongings, and, in extreme cases can lead to our death. That is the root of fear. And, in fact, it is sometimes right to feel afraid. But who can tell us when we should feel so? How do we know when we are in danger? How can we assess particular situations? How can we discover the perverse ideological source of our fear in situations that are not in the least bit dangerous? And, likewise, how do we identify the source of the deception that disarms us when we really should be confronting a frightening situation?

Now, one thing sure is that anything that looks different to us at first sight makes us feel uncomfortable. We are used to seeing people and things, relationships and languages, symbols and

colours, contrasts of light and dark, according to a code that we carry inside us from birth to death. The itch that pushes so many idiots to go around the world as tourists in the belief they are seeing something exciting—whereas what they actually see is filtered through the protective screen raised by the trip organizers as well as the baggage that each of these explorers of the inexistent takes along with them, the same shirts, underpants and everything else so as not to sever all ties with their own world—is almost certainly also based on fear. But that is not what we are talking about here.

However, we can start off at this basic level, just a tickle or a pleasantly appetizing itch, to see how the sensation of fear is extremely modulated and rich in variation. Suddenly, the very exoticism that gives us a pleasant thrill elsewhere appears right outside our home, peers through the window, and turns into something else. We see a face contracted with pain and hunger, gasping for a sip of water or even something more than the crumbs that we might be prepared to give him, making a mental effort and remembering the Gospel if we are a believer. But what he is asking for, no. How dare he? How dare he assert his values, his dignity, his incomprehensible language, his faith (why not!)? How can he turn up and say that he, with features so different from our own, which for us, in our brutish stupidity, represent the most advanced, only acceptable, model of civilization? What does it matter if the face that we see (or imagine we see) peering on the other side of our re-enforced window has Chinese or Indian features, so is bearer of a far more ancient civilisation than our own, a far more articulate and philosophically grounded culture? Our appalling ignorance protects us, and, knowing nothing of these cultures and civilizations, we feel a pathetic sense of uneasiness.

Uneasiness, just to start with. Because if that barely glimpsed face materializes into a human being asking for something, careful, something that was once taken away, if not from him personally,