

Europe alone—only Europe
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I begin with the simple idea that climate change and its denial have been organizing all of contemporary politics at least for the last three decades. Climate change plays the same role that social questions and the class struggle played over the two preceding centuries.

We can understand nothing about the way inequalities have exploded for forty years, and the accompanying movement towards massive deregulation, if we don't admit that a good part of the globalized elite had perfectly understood what was going on with the bad news about the state of the planet, which, thanks to the work of scientists, began to crystallize at the beginning of the nineties.

Since the threat was real, the elites drew the conclusion that it would be necessary to adopt two opposing courses of action. First, *give up* the post-war liberal dream of a common world created by the modernization of the planet—so, let's cut ourselves off as quickly as possible, through deregulation at any price, from the rest of the inhabitants to whom we sold this dream of universality; secondly, systematically organize long-term *denial* of this ecological change, which nevertheless brings in not just the environment but what is called the Earth-system.

(One can see in the case of Exxon-Mobil, which, at the beginning of the nineties, moved quickly from cutting edge scientific research on climate and the Earth, to the organization of a denial of climatic change, a useful empirical benchmark to situate this transformation of liberal ideals).

Denial—designated euphemistically as climato-scepticism—is crucial to hide any scandalous public admission that one was giving up on the ideal of a universal modern world for all its inhabitants. In theory, nothing had changed: “Globalization, here we come!” In practice, everything had: “We will no longer share anything with the rest of you since the planet will not be big enough for everyone.”

What makes today's political situation so disconcerting is that this double movement, renunciation and denial, is an open secret.

A good number of people around the world seems to have understood fairly clearly that they have been *abandoned* by elites who no longer have any intention of sharing the state of the world with them. They are staging a hue and cry for a *return* to the traditional spaces that could be called premodern (or at least look a bit like that). Hence the stampede, astonishing in its simultaneity, from the Philippines to France, via England, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, towards the idea that safety can only be found by going back to national borders, traditional cultures, ancient soil.

Commentators think this running away is “populism”, but it is just the quite logical reaction of people who feel abandoned in the middle of nowhere, and who have been chillingly *betrayed* by those who, until now, were leading them towards the enchanting horizon of globalization.

As a result, we are all caught up in the midst of what is looking more and more like the beginning of the panic when a theater catches fire. There are those who continue to flee towards the protections afforded by an unprecedented explosion of inequality (conveniently summed up by the term 1% of 1%), and those who flee backwards towards the completely imaginary protection offered by national and ethnic borders. In the middle are all those who run the risk of getting trampled...

Now, this situation take a potentially tragic turn where a whole government, the United States, is lead by Donald Trump. Trumpism (if one can use the term) is one of those rare innovations in politics, and it would be wise to take it seriously. Just as fascism also knew how to combine extremes and take politicians and commentators of its era by surprise, Trumpism combines extremes and trumps its world, at least for the time being.

It brings two contradictory attitudes together in one same movement: first, the flight towards maximum profit while abandoning the rest of the world to its own devices (billionaires representing the “little guy”!); second, a whole people scrambling back to national and ethnic categories (“Make America Great Again”, behind a wall!); and, thirdly, the explicit denial of the geological and climatic situation.

Instead of opposing the two flights—towards globalization and the return to old national terrains—Trumpism proceeds on the assumption they can be fused. This fusion is obviously only possible if one denies the very existence of a conflict situation between modernization on the one hand and the material condition of the Earth on the other. Hence the constitutive role of climate scepticism; the fusion would otherwise make no sense. (Let’s remember that until Clinton, questions of the environment were bipartisan in the United States).

This is the first time that a political movement has been explicitly organized by and for climate deniers. And it is easy to understand why: the total lack of realism of the combination—billionaires dragging millions of so-called middle class people towards a “return to the past”!—would be starkly obvious. For the moment, the whole thing only hangs together on the condition of it being totally indifferent to the *geo-political* situation.

It is useless complaining that the Trump electors “don’t believe in the facts”. They are not morons. It is, on the contrary, because the geopolitical situation must be denied in its entirety that an indifference to facts becomes so essential. If one had to take into account the massive contradiction between fleeing forwards or backwards, then one would have to start coming down to earth! In this sense, Trumpism is the first entirely ecologically-motivated government (but, alas, in the negative)!

If 2017 is the year that will be full of dangers, it is because Trump is looking like propelling the U.S. into a geopolitical dream that even the mavericks in the administration of Bush Jnr were not able to imagine. How can you be realistic in geopolitics if you deny the very contradiction between the material conditions of the “geo” situation and the political aims for which you are striving?

Bush Jnr still had the idea of constructing a world order—completely unrealistic, it goes without saying, but nevertheless still vaguely linked with powerful interests and relations. What is so terrifying about Trump’s rise to power is that it indicates the US’s abandonment of the vocation to organize a world order. What can we expect of a president who tweets that the “United Nations...is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time”? This very same United Nations that was constructed on the death of so many of his compatriots during the war? One would have to conclude that there is no longer any interest attached to the building of a *common* world order.

In 2017, just when France and Germany will have to vote in national elections, Europe has lost, because of Trump, the protection of what could be called the “moral umbrella” under which it has lived since the war, an umbrella which is at least as important as the nuclear arms one—and certainly easier to open.

A united Europe was the greatest institutional invention for exceeding the limits of State sovereignty. What allowed it not to collapse was the fact that together with the U.S. it participated in the construction of a world order that was bigger than itself. With America, the European States were something more than States. Without it, they are just States, arguing about everything.

What will Europe do if Trump speaks about the U.S. not as a head of state but as a head of a gang? What can Europe do *alone*, that is, left to herself? Knowing what happened after August 1914, we can only quake in our boots.

After Brexit, after Trump, the tendency, or the temptation, is obviously to continue to dismantle the whole idea of a world order. This is what is most likely going to happen. But it is also what it is still possible to fight against. After all, the abandonment of the idea of a world order under the hegemony of the U.S. is perhaps an opportunity for

Europe. But it is an opportunity only if one begins to make changes to the notions of "order" and of "world". So, Trumpism, because it is so extreme, because it is so contradictory, offers just the right path—as long as one takes it in the opposite direction...

First, the contradiction between the ideal of modernization and the state of the planet cannot be denied, it is organizing all the politics; highlighting this contradiction instead of denying it, reorients all the positions. And this has nothing to do with having a concern for "ecology" or a desire to "protect nature". It is about the concrete and material conditions of existence of one and all.

Secondly: the rush forwards managed for thirty years by the deregulators is no longer compatible with the ideals of development and the calls for globalization. That kind of globalization is finished; there is not enough globe left, to put it in plain language. The modern world is just not possible. Either you have a world—and it will not be modern. Or you are modern, but without a real world.

Thirdly: This is the most delicate point, and also the crucial one for the coming elections. The movement to turn back towards the protection of national or ethnic borders is *legitimate* if we consider that there was never any alternative to modernization, and that it had been betrayed from the inside by those who profited the most from it.

It is legitimate as a reaction, but it is a *mad* political project since this national ground, this ethnic soil, simply does not exist. If globalization were a utopia—it was one reserved for those who had abandoned the idea of making a common world with the masses—then the dear old country of yore is another one. And, in the end, everyone knows this. Hence the question: can we *recognize* the legitimacy of this reaction and *channel* it in the now perfectly realist direction of a return to the ground, the territory, the Earth, that is, an Earth that is no longer national or global? If it is an alliance that is needed, then it is with the "reactionaries", but in order to go somewhere else.

So the question has become: Can Europe once again become the *common homeland* for those who refuse these two utopias? It would be a new ground, as concrete as the one people are looking for with the country of old, and infinitely less limited than the space of national frontiers. After all, since it was Europe that foisted on the rest of the world this strange contradiction between global space and ancient *terroir*, is it not up to Europe to resolve this contradiction? Can Europeans, tempted by the return to nationalism, reoccupy their own territory and call Europe their true "mother land"?

If we have been abandoned by the US, we, Europeans should not dream: we will have to do it alone.