



States, Markets and Wars in Global History

Economic and Political Developments
Between the Advent of Globalization
and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Giulio Sapelli

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Man has always lived in history but all human cultures, except for the Western one, have spent treasures of creative energy to mask the historicity of existence.

Ernesto De Martino, The end of the world.

Contribution to the analysis of cultural apocalypses

All things converge into each other: good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics, years into epochs, the world into the universe. To those who take this into account, the evolution of the species will appear as a tiny and banal process within that same movement.

Thomas Hardy

To Claudia, my love.

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This book is the fruit of a long brooding. A brooding of years. The traces are evident in every line.

A brooding that I shared not only with the beloved Claudia Sonino, who always corrects with her inflexible accuracy as a scholar my disordered rides, but also with a group of friends who have been putting up with my intemperance for some... decade: Lodovico Festa, Pasquale Alferj, Augusto Carena, Veronica Ronchi, Giuseppe De Lucia Lumeno and Antonio Pilati have always been and are for me an intellectual reference point without which I would lose the compass more often than it always happens to me in research and curiosity.

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Siniscalco, already unsurpassed Director and now President of the Scientific Committee of the Foundation, have accompanied me on this journey for many years and for this I am deeply grateful to them. As I am grateful to the younger managers and researchers of this institution, of this very special business foundation, perhaps unique in the world, for all that they have given me in these long years.

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In Mario Mancini, also an unmatched publisher not only digital, I have always found—starting from the antipodal common love for New Zealand and the Olivettian world that shaped us in a regretted youth - the thread of a political and civil passion that never leaves us.

The same love for the Olivettian world I have shared for a lifetime with Mario Citelli: a job that was more than a passion... it was a destiny.

Giulio Sapelli

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Introduction

The content of this book is a research *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*, to resume the inspiration of René Girard's masterpiece [1], that is a research on the deep origins of what happened to the world during the years of the so-called "globalization" up to the global pandemic crisis of 2020.

My research is based, like all my previous works, on the basis of the "sacred texts" of the theory common to the "global humanistic thought", a thought rejected with hysterical and ideological disdain by the "published imbeciles" globally: annoyance, disdain, and hysteria incomprehensible unless resorting to Jungian or Freudian psychoanalysis.

My deep conviction is that the prevailing cause, the independent variable, in short, of everything that has happened lies in culture and not only in the *landscapes* symbolic [2].

It is primarily about the hegemonic victory [3] of ordo-liberalism theorized in the Thirties in the USA and in the Forties of the twentieth century in Germany.

If we do not remember clearly, once again, those theories and those socio-economic conditions that they—in more than sixty years—have helped to create in the world, we cannot understand what will happen in the post-pandemic.

Indeed, if we do not pay attention to what were the conditions of the economy and world societies before the coronavirus, we understand

nothing of what awaits us in the future, if “the Resurrection” does not come.

The global “pre-pandemic” foundations of property systems and the deep roots of socio-economic formations have remained structurally the same until today.

Political transformations, on the other hand, have been profound and have effectively culminated worldwide in the weakening of Weberian state structures, gradually replaced by extended forms of patrimonialism ranging from African states, where it has post-colonial, territorial, and clan roots, to the South American model that has exacerbated the neo-caudillismo described by Joaquín Costa in his masterpiece on Spanish political life [4], published in 1901 but increasingly current. It goes from the fragmentation of political parties into clans dominated by political and economic entrepreneurs grouped in small groups, to the model of the States with *common law* where the plutocratic caucuses of business have mixed with the “quasi groups” [5]. Afro-American multiethnic places of interest, *wasp*, black and Latin in a formidable mosaic for variety and freedom of expression, up to the European polyarchy dominated by States weakened by the subtraction of sovereignty from above for the ordo-liberal technostructures of the treaties that have followed from Maastricht and beyond.

With all the “regulations” that bind us, it is well understood how parties have crumbled in Europe with the sole exception of Germany, along with a handful of Scandinavian states also with surviving parties “inside” and “around” strong Weberian ordo-liberal states by the book. The same phenomenon of crumbling of historical political parties occurred in South America, with the dissolution of Apra in Peru, with the literal political-institutional disappearance of *desarollismo* radical in Argentina, with the rapid decomposition of the historical “liberal” Colombian parties (while the civil war and the clandestine armed struggle—which enjoys immense support among the rural populations—continue instead).

Not to forget what happened in Mexico, where the fragmentation of institutionalism—which had guided the liberalization and destruction of welfare—has been affirmed without giving that historical nation a stability that allows to defeat drug trafficking and mass murders caused by *narcos* to govern such vast territories and threaten the State with terror [6].

The USA are naked in front of everyone’s eyes, with the profound transformation of their political classes: the party system, however, has

remained intact, but in recent years the military-industrial complex—which is the fundamental engine of North American power—has forced the arrogant destructive prevalence of unregulated finance, with the consequent dysfunctions in the circulation of Pareto elites.

In conclusion, the great transformation that has taken place in the world since Bretton Woods seemed similar to the one that occurred between the Congress of Vienna and the First World War; but in substance, it was exactly the opposite.

Then the modern world was founded and the market was generated not by the State, but by the *haute finance* and the *big corporations*, with the corrections to the same market constituted by political parties: they, while organizing democracy, as Ostrogorski first understood [7], which Gaetano Quagliariello made known in Italy many years ago [8], built a relationship between State and citizens based on welfare systems. A role always underestimated and not recognized by the same theory on the party machine. They did that miracle, the mass parties *rank and file*, giving life to the foundations of the “welfare society”, between the two wars and during the European civil war against the USSR, phase of world history that follows that well described by Karl Polanyi in his immense book that is *The Great Transformation* [9].

What happened after the Second World War was complex and in many ways unpredictable. For a brief span of years, it seemed to continue intact the world that I have evoked, while instead laying the foundations for its profound transformation.

From Bretton Woods to today, what has happened, as I have tried to describe in some of my works and as two French scholars [10] have meticulously and wonderfully reconstructed with the tools of intellectual historiography, is a transformation perhaps even deeper than that described by Polanyi. Unfortunately for humanity, this transformation is still ongoing. The years that have passed from the end of the Second World War to the eighties of the twentieth century, which seemed to be—for many—the foundation of a new social democratic order that elevated the European system of mixed economy and welfare as a model, were essentially, instead, only the decaying fruit of global economic growth in the post-Korean war conjuncture.

In the eighties of the twentieth century, in fact, everything would have changed.

I am referring to the “revelation”, which after the years of growth—from the fifties to the seventies of the twentieth century—occurred of

that new economic liberalism that had built, in the world's indifference, the European and global institutional construct based on a series of treaties and on the dominance, in Europe, of the ideas of Teutonic ordo-liberalism and the French school of regulation. It was the European response to North American neoliberalism, which was no longer based on the rejection of state action, to leave free rein to a phantasmagoric market inhabited by Robinsonian actors that was supposed to exist in nature, as it existed in the physiocratic imaginary and in that of the Austrian school in economics. Not existing in nature, the State had to make it real.

After the Second World War, thanks to the intellectual work of groups of scholars often not even linked to each other, both in the USA, and especially in Germany, the foundations of today's world were laid.

Cultural foundations, not economic ones, which today dramatically slow down and will slow down the global exit from the pandemic on the economic, social, and above all, cultural level: the most important of all the others.

That neoliberal world prevents the "Resurrection" after the pandemic tragedy, as the "letter" of Saint Paul to the Romans always urges us to do eschatologically. What we are prisoners of today is written in the works not of great thinkers, of immense intellectuals, but of severe academics of great honesty and sober lifestyle who do not reach the heights of science or philosophical glory: officials of "regulated capitalism", supported by the State and the law and by de facto orders when both laws and Constitutions are silent.

Illegitimate elites govern the world.

And here we understand the tragedy we have incurred, between Hollywood and the illiberal twist of democracy.

I am referring to the thinkers who founded the world that prepared societies for crumbling under the blows of the pandemic: Walter Lippmann (his *The New Imperatif* is fundamental) [11] and above all, equally and perhaps even more fundamental, Walter Eucken [12].

To be clear, these modest thinkers would never have been portrayed in a "School of Athens" by the divine Raphael. But their ideas, adopted by the situational powers of finance and even before the great *corporations*, have dominated and dominate the world between "TV series" and the illiberal regimes that we have been building for many years as humanity endowed with vital worlds devoid of humanistic culture.

Opposing this transformation, in the bourgeois world and not in the Marxist and Soviet one, was until the sixties of the twentieth century the

French critical thought that had in Charles de Gaulle and Jacques Léon Rueff [13] its illustrious champions, but which was defeated when it came to rebuilding the world economy starting from a Europe in danger due to Soviet pressure. It was then decided, after 1957, to give a new face to Europe: an ordo-liberal face.

Those who advocated and advocate, yesterday as today, the role of the State not only to impose the market economy, but also to impose a detailed regulation of it, through the creation of international institutions all inspired, even in their technocratic dress, by the utopia of universal peace characteristic of the UN and even earlier to the Briand-Kellogg Pact, of 1928 [14]. Only that IMF, OECD, World Bank, World Health Organization, and, finally, the European Treaties, successively followed, are not the advocates of universal peace. What happened in Paris, in 1928, in the Salon de l'Horloge of the Quai d'Orsay, where the Briand-Kellogg Pact was signed, and where the first meeting of the League of Nations had already been held in 1920, was nothing more than the anticipation of the increasingly compulsive transformation of world governance that occurred with increasing intensity from the end of the seventies of the twentieth century, with the advent of deregulated finance and the North American families nourished and brought to power by it. A power that will no longer be based on the principle of realism dictated by Vegetius: "Igitur qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum", but, as I will discuss in this book, on the contrary, on the principles of neocon humanitarianism, following the ideological footsteps of Leo Strauss [15]. The unipolarist war, as defined in his fundamental works by David Calleo [16], veiled by an increasingly oppressive ideology and based on the falsehood of the *landscapes of political correctness*, will become the new universal creed of the "Internationalists" [17]. They are, moreover and consequently, the perennially active proponents of unelected technocratic government, delegated [18].

Europe, a tragic and clear example of the fulfillment of this adventure of the spirit, Europe subjected to the control of the Treaties does not have a Constitution [19], but only national power relations shielded by regulations, unknown to most and primarily to those who should make them act through national democracies. They, the national democracies, still stand, but without any vital force.

The conflict of power is, in fact, at the base of a set of States not united by a constitutional or federal or confederal design, with a jurisprudential

profile of the order sought from time to time with increasing difficulty through the dominance of the market paradigm.

Paradigm continuously imposed by a host of unelected in the guise of ideologically shielded technocracy, thus creating a veil that obscures the truth and scenographically feeds an illusory stage.

On the world political stage, a handful of mercenary companies perform. The issue has worsened when the other great transformation appeared on the scene: the transformation of neoliberal capitalism into capitalism with deployed finance.

The exogenous crisis of simultaneous demand and supply blockage caused in 2020 by the pandemic did not stop finance and its technological virulence. On the contrary, thanks to the same innovation that allowed us to rebuild relationships among the living in virtual conditions of interactive communication through magnetic waves (it is always Marconi who has given us everything that concerns the technohuman domain of the ether) the world has moved forward between *webinars* and constructs of artificial intelligence [20]. The latter has left the field of military research to flow into the creation of “Kondratiev waves” that spread in the regulated civil economy.

The global economy arrived at the appointment with COVID-19 in the worst possible situation, with high debt vulnerability and high speculative financial leverage: the pandemic had a catalytic effect amplifying a whole series of social dramas that had been evident for some time and that had to be brought, by the pandemic crisis, to an unprecedented explosion.

The speculative bubbles on credit and *equity* that circulated before the coronavirus were waiting for the fuse of the exogenous crisis to explode: the financial crisis, after all, would have come anyway, even just for a simple recession. And this is because the global model of capitalism with deployed finance is based on excess leverage, on lowering incomes, on huge speculative debt and weak investments in the real economy for the secular deflation in which we are immersed, central banks and non-central banks.

Here is a socio-economic system, not only European but global, that depends on how much debt one is able to make without taking into account the quality of the debt and its use. Quality of debt that is instead essential to avoid or not avoid cyclical crises: they are avoided, albeit for a short time, if the rate of debt growth is lower than the rate of economic growth, thanks to investments in capital stock, in organic capital [21].

All this in a constant decay of the real incomes of 99% of the world's living humans. Public and private debt, on the other hand, has been growing for thirty years more than income and attempts are made to support it with financial leverage causing continuous systemic crises. They started with the Asian crises at the end of the second millennium (Thailand) and continue cyclically until today.

Debt becomes, together, on the one hand, a theoretical European and global prohibition and, on the other, the condition of the artificial life of the same European and global capitalism.

It is a new version of the capitalist contradictions understood in a Marxian sense between social relations of production and development of productive forces: it is undeniable, even if today's bourgeois economy does everything not to see and to hide [22].

It is because of this contradiction, for example, that Europe is dividing: between states that slowly fold towards greater non-ordo-liberal self-regulation but of "mixed economy", effectively raising the issue of an increasing return to national economic policies (the states that with France at the head refuse, in 2020, to resort to the aid of the so-called ESM that is subject to rules based on the ordo-liberal rejection of debt *tout court*) and states that are, instead, determined to make—thanks to their situational power in fact, the result of social and ideological cohesion—the ESM a tool to move towards stronger control (national, note) of the technocratic levers of Europe. However, the decisive factor is always the national and asymmetric control—together with the quality of the people appointed—of the appointments of European bureaucrats, so as to have possession, by regulatory means, of the economic and social life of all other states [23].

Germany—due to the effects of the historically endemic conflict with France and within itself between the de facto situational powers of its polyarchy—could diverge between supporters of absolute ordo-liberalism, as described, and another Germany, which is slowly dragged towards change by virtue of its own Bourbon and Bavarian history, that is, from the historical, ideal, and economic bond with Italy [24], Spain, and the South of Europe, all the way down to Turkey: Turkey, which, after all, is already in the very heart of German social life with worker migrations and is destined for a new international role in the power conflict between the weak Eurasian Russian giant and the dominion of that Atlantic lake, which is the Mediterranean, is now contestable. In this way, Turkey challenges US dominance and downgrades Italian and French

presences in the area. It can do this strong with the support of the polygamous Sunni states and Egypt. Egypt stands out in history as the new Germany of the Greater Middle East, after Syria, due to the Iranian wars of Shiite fundamentalism against the Wahhabi-origin Sunni one—and therefore Saudi—destroyed that ingenious agreement which was the Franco-English Sykes-Picot Treaty [25]. Today it has been devastated by the emergence—here is a new very dangerous form of state disintegration—of proxy war in Iraq, in Yemen, and in Syria and throughout the Greater Middle East. Hence the emergence of that asymmetric state, which is Islamic fundamentalism [26], which is nothing more than a terrible chapter of what I want to discuss in this book: the de-statization of the world.

Europe is inert in the face of these tragic processes. The French Empire cannot dominate them and Russia must rebuild its Eurasian power. Only the democratic awakening and therefore the confederal or federal rearmament (whatever it is as long as it is the result of what is tragically lacking today: a European Constitution), only the rearmament of Germany can change the course of events. If this does not happen, the spirit of the German scorpion will rise again and kill the frog that carries it to the shore, making everyone drown, not just Europe.

And on this I will say in conclusion of this complex of reasoning.

The temptation to suicide is always present in German history.

A great change is underway and binds and connects, without unifying, all the jagged faults, the uncertain fractals of the world that emerges from the pandemic crisis, revealing everything.

Moreover, as I try to discuss and propose in a central part of this book, the fundamental link to grasp among all the ongoing transformations is that of the changing structure of world polyarchies.

I speak of the growing role of technocratic situational powers gradually conquered by unelected structures endowed with non-legitimized compulsive power, but imposed, instead, by the transformation undergone by national legal systems due to the growing role assumed by de facto transnational systems, of a technocratic nature. De facto systems that once, before the Second World War—if we make the exception of the UN, an institution born from the Wilsonian brain of the dreamers of perpetual Kantian peace—did not exist.

It is this global institutional transformation that makes us say that the deepest legacy that a national culture has given to today's world, the world that most believe to be that of so-called globalization, is, instead,

the return of Prussian cameralism. It is the “magical” legacy of a very powerful national culture in terms of formative power to the *Zeitgeist* of today. It was unsurpassably interpreted—and not by chance—on the North American shores at the beginning of the twentieth century by Albion Small [27], who wrote the best book on such cameralism in the heart of the emerging most powerful state monopoly capitalism in the world. This reference to Small is fundamental for me to interpret how current it—cameralism—is, more than it was yesterday, to understand today. A topicality, moreover, already wonderfully evoked by Schiera [28] and Miglio [29] in the fervent years of my youth.

In cameralism, as is known, elements of administrative science, economics, finance science, politics, and agricultural and industrial technique aimed to establish—as it was—a “possible” unitary science of the State. The State was understood as a “machine” that could achieve social balance by avoiding conflict, thanks to the continuous recourse to an “order” composite and multidisciplinary, imposed legally or with “de facto” regulations. All this without addressing the perennial problem of political science: that is, that always open and always dangerous problem for both order and economic growth which is the Constitution and what follows from it: parliamentary democracy.

Hence the relevance today of cameralism when the State built “around” and “for” parliamentary democracy is unraveling all over the world. Hence the role of neo-cameralism in what, more and more, is defined as “globalization”. It is nothing else, instead, than “the search for an economic interdependence” at least superior to that prevailing in the world before the First World War.

In this book, an attempt is made to give a non-transient explanation of this very complex phenomenon, which is presented in veiled forms by the ideologies of Kantian peace or by the equally unrealistic revanchist wills of neo-anti-Semitic and neo-fascist, Weberianly aimed at understanding. The State and the welfare of the State are the center of social order: the public finance system is the possible solution and at the same time the perennial problem of national order. In this sense, the “cameralists” were not economists, but “unelected theorists of politics”, politics that they were called to exercise without popular mandate.

Hence the “silent” overcoming of any theory of sovereignty: it was replaced by the theory of the State [30].

But there is a problem that should make it clear to the whole world what global neo-cameralism cannot solve and much less what global

ordo-liberalism can deploy. I am talking about the immense problem of migrations, the destruction of stable human settlements that are shattered and dissolved with immense clouds of pain, suffering, death, and obfuscation of any humanitarian thought (where have the theorists of perpetual Kantian peace gone?). Mass emigrations are the most devastating and painful phenomenon of the present time. Only politics as a “virtue of the best” [31] can solve problems of this kind.

In the past, the time of the creation of the expanded accumulation of capitalism (on which, it must be admitted, Marxism or not Marxism, Rosa Luxemburg [32] wrote the essential and unmatched pages), the State, the States, set themselves the task of coordinating and regulating, with the collaboration of intermediate bodies (religious organizations *in primis*), human trafficking that was supposed to guarantee capitalist accumulation and often the creation of new global capitalist nations with overseas migrations. Today, however, the market and therefore the deregulation administered by the underworld fulfills this task that is not “accompanied” by the action of the immense “regulatory” superstructures. They, while spreading the humanitarian thought of the cowards in the face of war, mass death with new genocides, rampant neo-slavery, withdraw from the role they should instead fulfill. A role that the numerous NGOs certainly cannot replace. All this is shaping up as a vile lie that hides the power struggle behind the veil of the lost lives of millions of suffering people, in a world upset by local wars and national conflicts.

A tragic human comedy is based on a deployed liberalism that allows crime and human trafficking to spread, while that dominant neoliberalism fails to find an “order” that can not only resolve, but at least contain the problem.

The mask of the world is a satanic grin: the grin of a weak thought that cannot hide the infamy. Or rather: it succeeds very well. And this is a real tragedy: spiritual.

In this global context of institutional dissolution that the professionals of magic and the neoliberal and ordo-liberal exorcists call globalization, the “Old Mole” of history returns: it digs. But in which direction? The “political planet” is immobile and dragged into the dust by the *soft powers* external, which are no longer just those of the European powers or the North American one, but Chinese.

And the USA is hit by an internal conflict never seen before, with a polyarchy that is quickly moving towards increasing losses of international power.

And China is collapsing [33]. It is the power struggle that is veiled, also in this case, as I try to explain in this book: veiled by the unrealistic ideology of the heirs of Leo Strauss [34] who have forgotten the realism of Kissinger to actually hide the power struggle.

Only recently has there been a forced return to realism, as happened in the run-up to the two world wars of the twentieth century due to the emergence of a revisionist power. Then it was Germany: today it is China. It too, like Germany, has benefited from the “new Munich Treaties”. Today the spirit of Munich is represented in its resurgence from China’s entry into the WTO in 2001. And today as yesterday, the divisions between nations permanently established in the global power game are essential to understand what is happening: then it was France against Germany, while the USA was enticed by possible isolationism until Pearl Harbor. Today it is Germany divided from the USA on the attitude to take towards a China now decidedly aggressive all over the world, starting from the Pacific and Eurasia. Evidence of this is both the always latent Sino-Indian conflict and the continuous violations of maritime law in the South China Seas and the Indian Ocean, which also signal the Chinese maritime military effort (also here with impressive similarities with the pre-war situations of the twentieth century).

It is astonishing (as astonishing were the cowardice and blindness of the ruling classes before the two world wars) the blindness of the peaks of European capitalism incapable of centralization and that of global finance despite numerous real and proper manifestations of this aggression.

And it would be enough to read, as an example of such guilty blindness or interested cowardice, the texts of a refined intellectual like Yan Xuetong [35], who presents us with a refined exemplification, but no less threatening, of the designs of the current Chinese leadership group.

It is necessary that we realize, in the present history, the danger that civilization is running, and it is necessary that everything does not resolve into a historiographic problem: once again.

This time the reproduction of civilization would be seriously endangered. As it was, moreover, in the face of Hitlerian and Stalinist threats.

But as I try to demonstrate in this book, China is collapsing under the weight of the inherent contradictions in its structure of monopolistic state capitalism and terrorist dictatorship. So what will happen?

Will it drag the whole world with it?

These questions well express the drama of this time.

It is certain, however, that the great global game is only, again, once again, at the beginning. And this time, again and again and again, it will be the conflict between sea powers and land powers that will decide the future of the world.

The USA seems to be waking up from a long sleep and no one predicted it. The USA made manifest, at the end of July 2020, a transformation of their geopolitical orientation that could not have been clearer. The meaning of the naval exercises that took place simultaneously in the Indian Ocean in cooperation with the Indian Navy and in the Pacific in close cooperation with the Japanese Navy was evident to all. They were directed against China.

A new course of world foreign policy began that sees the USA laying the foundations, at the same time, both for the abandonment of the ruinous unilateralism on which David Calleo [36] wrote prescient pages, and at the same time inaugurating a new cold war. This, while targeting China, will inevitably lead to an unstoppable strengthening of the USA's approach to Putin's Russia. The Indo-Pacific Command, based in Hawaii, controls 52% of the planet's waters and more than any other example makes manifest the thalassocratic power of the USA. At the same time, further east, in the Philippine Sea, the US Navy was engaged, as I said, in a maneuver that saw the Royal Australian Navy and the Japanese Self-Defense Naval Force united. Everything took place on that eastern passage of the quadrant of the South China Sea, which the Pentagon—and now, it seems, also the State Department—has identified as a containment bulwark against Beijing. The bipartisan agreement in the USA was ratified in 2020 between the parties and the situational powers of fact—always unstable—of the North American polyarchy, which sets in motion its global servomechanisms, despite the very tough electoral confrontation, proving the historical importance of the decisions taken.

The USA once again demonstrated their unsurpassed global centrality.

But the weakness of the powers that base their dominance on the sea, as history well explains from the Peloponnesian Wars to the Napoleonic Wars and the Second World War and as Alfred Thayer Mahan, still unsurpassed theorist of maritime power struggle, is however based on the need to defend heterogeneous and distant territories. Thalassocracy is a form of exercise of power, therefore, extremely expensive and to understand it just think how much a well-armed fleet in the growing technological confrontation requires huge investments, not only in materials, but also in troop training, more specialized than ever.

The shift of resources from ground troops to those of sea and air (with the consequences in the distribution of the military-industrial-bureaucratic power that derive from it) will have to be, if the confrontation with China is definitively accepted, enormous. As US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo significantly stated in that fateful 2020, and as the diplomatic incidents that followed in 2020 in the US against the spy network of Chinese parallel diplomacies demonstrate, the path chosen by the US was then traced and the consequences in every field of associated life will be enormous. Even Xi Jinping had to face the problem of controlling the armed forces, greatly reducing the power of the Army—prince of war when the enemy was the USSR and then Russia—to shift the weight of weapons and therefore of the centralized military-industrial complex of the CCP on the navy and aviation, which are the tools par excellence of maritime power. After all, the US faces this problem with NATO: but the fall of the USSR was not followed by the possibility of reducing the price to be paid to land defense to shift, instead, all the axis of resources towards the weapons of the sea and sky to which the future of the threat of war and therefore of world peace belongs.

Europe, as the events of 2020 demonstrated in relation to anti-pandemic economic intervention plans, is sinking in the quicksand of land power. Only Atlantic France and Mediterranean Italy, with the Southern States, Greece, Spain, and Portugal together with French imperial power, could face the new battles that await European states in the Mediterranean when the neo-Ottoman and neo-pharaonic pushes of Turkey and Egypt will threaten the power of European states in Libya, in Cyprus, even in Israel itself, squeezed between a declining Lebanon and a very fragile Syria with dangerous tendencies to dismemberment throughout the Greater Middle East. The only trend that can oppose such dismemberment is the evolution of the economic, political, diplomatic relationship, therefore, between Israel and the Arab states of the Gulf, despite their schismatic divisions, as seems to be confirmed after the agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates of 2020. Certainly in anti-Iran function and against the neo-imperial expansion of Turkish power in neo-Ottoman version, but certainly decisive, and this trend is destined to change the fate of the Mediterranean and the Greater Middle East, thus changing the fate of the world.

Italy returns, with the states of Southern Europe [37] and with France, to have a fundamental role in ordering the irreversibly contestable Mediterranean—whether it wants to, understands it or not—while the

solely terrestrial German power cannot absolutely succeed in representing and unifying its economic destinies with all of Europe. Without an army, German geopolitical weight can only strengthen in the void of military power and therefore only by always allying itself with the enemies of the USA and other European states that threaten its dominance, as has always been the case in German history, since Prussia found its alliances against the Austro-Hungarian Empire and with the United Kingdom against France, as fully revealed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and as it now awaits to reveal itself again. History cannot be escaped. China is now this “resulting” power, which serves Germany to assume that geopolitical role that it cannot assume without an army, if not by fighting against those medium or large powers that should be, instead, its allies. Now and always the same story repeats itself. China is much weaker than it appears. But, as the history of the last thirty years of Europe shows, that is, after the fall of the USSR and the German reunification that none of those historical powers desired, the alliance between all European states and the USA is essential for world order. A power without an army like Germany can lose its head and do more damage than one might think, precisely because it is a disarmed power, but economically powerful. The void that it causes in the system of thalassocratic alliances must be filled by vassal powers of the imperial maritime power. For this reason, Italy becomes, with its own geographical positioning, potentially strategic in the new balance of world power, whatever its government. Indeed, for the powers with imperial impulse, the more technically unprepared the better: they, geopolitically more prudent, could—as already happens “fractally”—use its geopolitical potential, and it is to be hoped that they are not destructive powers. The power of China must be contained, in fact, also in the Mediterranean, which is the door of Africa and the Greater Middle East.

It is this danger of dispossession that European governments run when they are prevalent constructs of internationally multi-affiliated mercenary companies to the powers that compete for what can be conquered in the international power system, while the new cold war is outlined. But the pivot of the thalassocratic powers has always been the need to have loyal allies with whom to face the costs and strategic challenges of world domination through the seas and skies. Let’s remember recent European political history. Even the Balkan wars of the nineties of the twentieth century constituted an unexpected and, for most, an unpredictable turning point. Action had to be taken and the dominance of

the skies and seas was again essential, as was the unfolding of the US thalassocratic dominance.

The stakes have been masterfully summarized by Alessandro Mangia:

It is an area, the Franco-German one, all of land that is today under pressure from the sea both from the west and from the south, that is, from the Mediterranean, through Italy. The ongoing occurrences are not casual, for the simple fact that geopolitics has its own logic and that, as Schmitt understood very well seventy years ago, the mythological monster of land, the Behemoth, is destined to always be strangled by the mythological monster of the sea, the Leviathan. Once the American power balances have finally stabilized, it will only be a matter of time before the Anglosphere regains control of the small giant of Earth, and reduces to reason a tool - actually an experiment - of regional government that has slipped out of the hands of its creators and that has been sold to the populations of this part of Eurasia as a “European dream”, stuffing it with references to Kant, to “perpetual peace”, to the ideology of rights in impossible, perennial expansion, to the “balanced” economy of ordo-liberalism, and to other amenities of the kind. [38]

For this reason, the European land swamp must be cyclically reclaimed from obstacles that oppose this dominance. But will the means to do this still be found?

The answer risks not being affirmative if we look at the cultural changes taking place in the so-called Western world, that is, in that cradle of universal civilization that were Europe and Mesopotamia and the other civilizations that sprouted from the “European miracle” and the Greater Middle East: the USA and Latin America.

This is what Giambattista Vico reminded us of:

... Now with such a Recourse of Civil Human things ... let’s reflect on the comparisons, which throughout this Work in a large number of subjects have been made about the first and last times of the Ancient and Modern Nations; and the whole History will be explained, not just particular, and in time of Laws, and of the deeds of the Romans or the Greeks; but on the identity in substance of understanding, and diversity of their ways of explaining themselves: we will have the Ideal History of eternal Laws, on which run the facts of all nations, in their risings, progress, states, declines, and end, even if it were, which is certainly false, that from Eternity were born, from time to time, Infinite Worlds. [39]

The finiteness of the present time is made evident by the destruction of the historical statuary on which the image of the becoming of nations is based, with that overwhelming and different thing that always accompanies their history. It now denies itself with the rites of the scapegoat that, as Girard taught us, emanate from the foundational mimicry of human beings. Nowadays mimicry is rampant, with a worldwide regularity and based on the national tragedies of the nations that have been the cradle of the world in the time of modernity. Yes, mimicry is rampant, whether it is triggered by sexual difference in births no longer recognized as foundational of being or whether it is triggered by agnatic roots overflowed from the times of the formation of the modern world of emerging extractive and once slaveholding capitalism. Well, these differences do not become a reason for spiritual enrichment, as they should and as Vico always teaches us.

They are the result, instead, of mimetic laceration, foundational of the scapegoat, which Girard masterfully discusses in chapter XII of his masterpiece, dedicated to “The Demons of Gerasa”. Here is what it reads:

What can motivate an entire herd to self-destruct without being forced by anyone? The answer is obvious. It's called herd spirit, the one that makes a herd a herd; in other words, the irresistible tendency to mimicry. It is enough that a first pig falls into the sea, by chance or for any reason, due to sudden fear or the convulsions caused by demonic invasion, for all its congeners to do the same. The frenzy of following along goes perfectly well with the proverbial docility of the species. Beyond a certain mimetic threshold, the one that defines possession, the entire herd instantly reproduces any behavior that seems out of the norm. It's a bit like the phenomenon of fashion in so-called advanced societies, in the sense in which we say advanced that of Gerasa. [40]

These are the unforeseen but recurring phenomena that will mark the fate of future societies.



Extraordinary Changes

Recent human history shows substantial changes in the international correlation of economic and political forces on a global scale, imposing a reflection on the reconfiguration and rearticulation of the world political system.

The heart of the global crisis is in Europe.

How long will that thread that holds together the European nations without its tearing plunge history back? Will it throw it back to the Treaty of Verdun that marked the end of the Holy Roman Empire and paved the way for the painstaking construction of a concert of nations that lasted in European history only a moment, after the industrialization of the continent?

That is, in that span of time that the already mentioned Karl Polanyi [41] defined as “the peace of a hundred years”: from 1815 to 1846 peace was, in fact, guaranteed by the armies of the “Holy Alliance” after Napoleon’s defeat.

A peace that bends the social storm of industrialization thanks to the role that was also played, unlike today, by that social force that Maurice Lévy-Leboyer [42], in his unforgettable 1964 book, first defined as *l’haute finance*. That is, the redistributive force, private and public, which on the one hand determined the balance of power of nations—since none of them trusted each other and there was a need for a clearing room of power—and on the other provided the financial means to build a

relative social peace on which the first experiment of Bismarckian welfare and the first social insurances (of which the Italian Ina was a clear example in the Giolittian age) would rise: here is the “European Concert”, which from the Franco-Prussian War onwards determines a balance of power that no one challenges until the First World War. From 1815 to 1914, the great European powers suffered and provoked only eighteen cumulative months of war (the main one is the terrible one between Prussia and France that lasted only one year), while in all the previous centuries more than half was spent in war. This kind of miracle was made possible for Polanyi [43] by the simultaneous affirmation of four “institutions”: the balance of power system between France, unified Germany, and the United Kingdom; the international gold standard (governed by powerful social forces and dedicated institutions); the emerging capitalist market; the liberal state. In this context, international finance, completely self-regulating without any kind of supranational infrastructures as are today the technocracies of the International Monetary Fund or the OECD or the EU, structured itself as an organic link between the political and economic organization of the world. It provided the tools for public debt, disciplined the states, worked in concert with them, and, when they arose, linked itself to the national central banks without however depending on them.

High finance was a sort of “sovereign agent” that enjoyed the trust of national states and international investors: in this way, in case of crisis, a regulation mechanism between economy and politics could always be regenerated, because homeostasis was a social product, not artificially generated: the national power forces constituted, with their *entente cordiale*, the balance of these international “natural” and “functional” institutions and prevented the entropy of the system.

This entropy is instead what is creeping in Europe today, where the fixed exchange rate system through a single currency operates without political unity, without integrated fiscal systems, without agreed welfare systems, with financial deregulation that plays against the states with speculation on debt instead of working as it once did to its integration with the states and their political classes. Hence the European disintegration that we are witnessing every day in a condition of impotence because the technocratic European institutions are not homeostatic and work against each other armed. Hence the resurgence of the spirit of power crudely called sovereigntism, neonationalism, and so on, proving

the ignorance and lack of culture in which the world of the published and the publishable has sunk.

The great finance described by Polanyi worked, instead, for peace among the great powers because its long-term investments were based on stability, monetary, and political, in a way completely different from what happens today.

Hence the disintegration and the impossibility of reconstructing a *entente cordiale* European, subjected as they are to the role of finance that operates in a very short time in a steel cage that is much more rigid than the golden base, because it predetermines politics and the circulation of the same political classes, preventing their formation on the basis of consensus on economic policies. These, instead, are imposed from above with an autopilot. Naturally, the most abstract and invisible to the people was chosen, such as ordo-liberalism, which is based, precisely, on the inverse principle of Polanyian peace: the automatic and algorithmic processing of debt with the growing liberalist disintegration of social forces and political forms that had historically formed on the basis of the national needs of the people. These have been replaced, instead, by rules that only work in German, Dutch, and Scandinavian cases, and which are historically inapplicable in the French and Italic part of continental Europe and the South. Hence the crisis of almost all European political systems: there is not one that functions in classic forms, that is, as described by traditional political science: the circulation of elites in democratic polyarchy has jammed and only power elites are formed against each other. The inability to form parliamentary political majorities in almost every European state is the consequence of the process briefly described here and not its cause, as is commonly said.

Italy is no exception, indeed it is the case immediately understandable according to this model, if the disintegration of the international system is superimposed on this reasoning, which sees the USA unable to escape from the trap of unipolarity in which they fell thanks to the advent of a deregulating finance that has formed a speculative alliance with the Chinese power elites against the military and industrial forces of the North American establishment. The struggle that has been going on for years in the establishment in the USA is nothing but the reflection of this process.

Only a new *entente cordiale* between the USA and Russia can overcome unipolarity and the disproportionate force of deregulating finance. But to do this, the void of European politics must be filled by giving