

SCENARIOS

Pandemic or climate change, make good excuses for a lockdown

CREATION

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For some time now, links have been emerging between “Gretist” apocalyptic environmentalism and those who support the general “lockdown” strategy adopted by Western governments, predominantly in Europe, in order to oppose the Covid-19 virus.

Many people will surely recall how in the last few months, in the period of the greatest restrictions because of the pandemic, there were almost triumphant declarations by “green” organizations because satellite photos were showing how in both Asia and Europe atmospheric pollution had dramatically reduced because carbon dioxide emissions had drastically reduced, or even because with the thinning out of human presence in urban and suburban areas, nature was “regaining its space.”

But now the irresistible attraction of environmentalists who are perennially worried about the fate of the ecosystem for anti-pandemic “stay-at-home-ism” is being explicitly vindicated by the primary source of the alarmist campaign that has been underway for almost twenty years about the man-made origin of “global warming” – the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), an *ad hoc* agency operating within the UN. In a study recently published by the IPCC, climatologist Ralf Sussman, after recalling that during the most intense period of the lockdown CO₂ emissions were reduced by 17%, with a peak of 26%, proposes that “in order to reduce the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere over the long term, the restrictions imposed during the pandemic should be maintained for decades. But even that would not be long enough to be sufficient.” In order to respect the commitments made by the countries that signed the Paris accords to stop the increase of the median temperature of the planet at 1.5 degrees Celsius, the scientist continues, it would in fact be necessary to adopt measures that annually double the quota of missed emissions foreseen for 2020.

In short, according to the prophets of climate change, in order to succeed in defeating global warming, it would not be enough to stop industrial production, air and land transport, and urban mobility for two or three months every year. Rather, the general paralysis ought to be enforced to last longer and longer, even to the point of making it almost permanent. Of course, this argumentation alone shows how the Paris accords, like the Kyoto agreement before it, was a gigantic farce for propaganda purposes. Supposing that there really was a correspondence between CO₂ emissions and global temperature, humanity could reach the goals set by the Paris accords only by means of a collective suicide, “turning off” industry, commerce, and communication, and sending billions of people into virtual hibernation for a decade or more. And it is clear that the political classes of the various nations that signed the Paris accords, however sensitive they may be to the sirens of “Gretism,” do not have (at least for now!) any inclination to suicide, nor any desire to return to the Stone Age. Moreover, one gets the evident impression that all of the rhetoric about the green conversion of the world economy is a lot of hot air, and that the impact of such a conversion on climate would be minimal.

But the most surprising thing in Sussman's argumentation, as in that of others who share his firm certainties, is the fact that they speak about the environmental effects of any new restrictions on communal life as if these restrictions would have no effect whatsoever on the individual and collective life of humanity, on the GDP, on *per capita* income, on employment, and on welfare. The single-issue environmentalists focused on the climate and the "salvation of the earth" seem to come from another planet where it is not necessary to work in order to live, in which there is no need to produce, distribute, consume, connect, and move in order to maintain and augment the median standard of living of the population.

What do these people imagine would happen if the production apparatus of the industrialized nations truly "turned off the engines" for a decade or kept them running only at a minimum? What catastrophic chain of recession, unemployment, and increased poverty would be generated? What would be the repercussions of all of this for culture, schools, research (including the sector in which the climatologists of the IPCC work) and collective health (other than Covid-19!)?

Sermons like this really confirm the worst prejudices about the type of environmentalism that is most widespread in the West today: the impression, that for them humanity represents a dependent variable, a negligible entity, a thing that causes "disturbance" with respect to the "ecosystem," which appears to be their only concern. From this point of view, the cultural connection between "Gretism" and "lockdowns," between obsession with the climate and with the pandemic, appear to be not episodic but structural. Both phenomena spring from a radical transposition to the secular level of tensions that are typical of monotheistic religions, and of Christianity first and foremost – in particular millennialism and eschatological/apocalyptic expectation. Such tensions already infested the ideologies of the 19th and 20th centuries, and, as these have declined and the process of globalization has accelerated, this transposition in the West has translated itself into an ever more widespread and contagious tendency towards collective psychosis – a psychosis that has spilled over mainly into environmentalist themes, from the fear of nuclear power to the "greenhouse effect" to climate change, but which has many times in recent decades found an outlet in the fear

of unknown viruses and in the idea of an impending pandemic.

Environmentalism and pandemic catastrophism have this in common: they transfer the sense of sin and expiation from the transcendent plane to the immanent one. The anguish of individuals who no longer have faith finds an outlet in the idea that their personal behavior, their observance of or failure to observe certain “precepts,” contributes in a decisive way to the destiny of the planet or to save humanity from contagion. But above all, both apocalyptic visions transfer the sense of guilt from the individual to the collective level, identifying economic development, capitalism, consumption, growth, and even leisure and recreational activities as the causes of the evils that are falling upon humanity.

For this reason, from both points of view the paralysis of the economy, the recession, and even the limitation of personal freedom are not seen as a problem. Indeed, the mortification of human civilization, and in particular of industrialized societies, satisfies the devouring need for atonement and for sacrifices – even human sacrifices – present in the followers of these “religions.”