

Senectus Mundi – Fascism Without Futurism: The Aging of the Western Population

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Abstract: In the past century Fascism was essentially based on youth, expansion, futurism. Now it is rather expression of impotence of an old declining white population.

Keywords: Fascism, population, West, war

I'm seventy-five years old, and in the last years I've become the main subject of my own research. Not because I'm particularly selfish or narcissistic, but because I think that understanding senescence is the best way to go to the heart of the western psychosis.

The reason why I have decided to reflect on the process of becoming nothing, the slow inexorable disintegration of the body, the dysphoric perception of the bodily self, the desperation that proceeds from the loss of autonomy..... is not (only) personal.

As far as I know the psycho-political implications of the unprecedented aging of the average white population has not been thematized by philosophers, or political thinkers of our time.

One century ago, in the years following the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, Oswald Spengler wrote a book about the decline of the West (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*).

He was interested in the spiritual decline, that was widely thematized by the writers and artists of the *Finis Austriae*.

I'm not so interested in the spiritual, much more in the bodily and psychological dimension of this decline.

I have engaged in this embarrassing self-analysis because I think that here lies an important key to understand the contemporary descent of the western white world into a sort of psychological marasmus that explains self-defeating choices like the American wars on Afghanistan, Iraq and most disastrously, the war in Ukraine, and also explains something of the reactionary turn of the political spectrum of the parliaments of Europe, and, most important, of the population of the European countries. And not only of these.

The conjoined effect of prolongation of life and decreasing birth rate have created an unprecedented situation at the psychological level, but also at the level of political attitudes: loss of memory, mental confusion, marasmus, and finally, furious aggressiveness for the humiliation and impotence that the fall of energy has provoked.

The presidential race in the US is marked by the cruel spectacle of two old men who are exchanging insults on the brink of senile dementia: it is the best depiction of the descent into a chaotic nightmare.

Since the end of the past century western strategists have chosen Ukraine as the place for a final confrontation with the declining potency of Russia, destroyed by the conjoined effect of neoliberal reform and plundering of the national resources. Then came Putin, who decreed to reverse at all costs the Russian decline; so after 2014 the Ukrainian issue became the test bench of the Russian self-assertion.

Just before the Russian invasion, in a TV interview, Hillary Clinton promised to provide a new Afghanistan to the Russian President, as a revenge for the support that the Kremlin had given to Donald Trump. The new Afghanistan was located in Ukraine, of course.

Ukrainian people were cannon fodder for this American political game.

Furthermore, the war at the Eastern border of Europe was an unmissable opportunity for the Biden administration: the conflict allowed the breakdown of the economic relations between Russia and Europe, particularly between Russia and Germany.

Eventually the war in Ukraine has turned into a catastrophe for Zelenskyy, for the American instigators, and for the European sponsors.

First of all, it is a human catastrophe for the Ukrainian people, whose future has been destroyed in the name of rancid ideals of national pride.

Secondly it is an economic catastrophe for the European countries, particularly for Germany, while the Russian economy has rapidly recovered, turning into a system of war economy.

Finally, it is a strategic catastrophe for the West as a whole, because it has accelerated the convergence between the enemies of the West, Russia and China, while failing to isolate Moscow at the international level.

The Ukrainian is an inter-white conflict, opposing the “free world” and the Ruski-mir, two worlds that are similarly declining in demographic terms, two worlds where senescence has become the main trend at the cultural and psychological level.

The despair of the white culture worldwide (the loss of energy, the loss of mental focus, well known features of impending senility): this is the mental background of the (apparently) unstoppable ascent of the ultra-reactionary movement worldwide.

Dynamics of the Nazi-liberal wave

In order to interpret the rise of rightwing parties in most countries of the West, political thinkers and commentators employ the categories they have at their disposal: democracy, liberalism, socialism, fascism and so on...

But these words do not capture the essence of the process, which is not so new at the level of ideological enunciations, whilst it is radically new in its anthropological and psycho-cognitive dimension.

The traditional dynamics of parliamentary democracy and social struggle appear to have been overcome, as if a cyclone of unprecedented

strength swept away the defenses that society built after the Second World War.

But the cyclone is not made (only) of nationalist rhetoric or racist assessments: it is made of senescent despair and furious revenge against the senile humiliation. The impotence of will in front of ungovernable phenomena like mass migration, climate change and precarity of labor: this is the fuel of that rage.

Can we identify what is happening as a return of the historical fascism? I don't think so: fascism and nationalism are the rhetorics, the ideology, the postures and so on. But the psycho-political substance of this movement is far away from the bold aggressive Futurist stance.

Futurism was the aesthetic projection of a young population of aggressive males, conquerors, invaders, who pretended to be the bearers of civilization. Now the posture is the reverse: fear of being invaded by hordes of migrants, fear of future, exhaustion. And panic.

What is emerging is a phenomenon of gigantic scope, which cannot be explained in political terms because it is rooted in the techno-anthropological mutation.

One may criticize my insistence on senescence as a key to understand the reactionary wave by pinpointing that many young people are among those who vote for Trump for Meloni and for Javier Milei. Actually, when Milei celebrated his triumph on December 10th 2023, the square in front of the Casa Rosada was filled with young people chanting Libertad Libertad!

This is true. But my definition of senility is not limited to the chronological age.

I refer to the disease that permeates the cultural sphere, the disforia that permeates self-perception at the social and sexual level, as Paul Preciado has observed in *Disphoria mundi*.

I refer to the psychopathologies spreading among the whole of the western population, particularly among youngsters, clearly visible in the explosion in consumption of drugs like Fentanyl.

In recent years psychiatrists have denounced an unprecedented increase in anxiety, depression, and panic syndrome among those who have been born in the new millennium.

Certainly, the Covid pandemics has accelerated the trend, fueling dysphoric unease, loneliness, and a sort of phobic sensibilization to the body of the others.

At the same time the connective mutation of technology, particularly of communication technology, has provoked an effect of mental distress and cognitive disturbance.

The post-alphabetical mind is less and less able to discriminate true and false enunciations: the widespread diffusion of fake news is not a novelty in the history of politics and communication. What is new is the inability of the social mind to distinguish information from bullshit.

The post-alphabetical mind is less and less able to construct an individual path for processing information and living experience. This ability in fact depends on available processing time, and time is scarce as the unceasing flow of info-input destroys the ability of critical processing.

In the case of young people who spend six, eight hours in electronic environments, time for critical processing and for emotional elaboration of the information input is reduced to zero.

The distinction between truth and falsity of statements is not only made difficult, but is irrelevant, as when you are in a gaming environment. In such an environment it makes no sense to approve or disapprove of the violence of the green men invading the red planet. Doing so would only lead to losing the game.

The connective configuration of the contemporary mind is increasingly indifferent to the distinction between true and false, between good and bad.

This is in my opinion the anthropological framework of a mutation that cannot be reduced to politics, and will not be cured (only) by political action.