



"דעותנו", במה לשיח חינוכי רעיוני
מזכירות "הנוער הציוני העולמית" - ישראל

"Deotenu", ideological forum for educational dialog
Mazkirut "Hanoar Hatzioni Olamit" – Israel

THE FORGOTTEN ONES

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In this last day of the year, it seems important for me raise some questions about events to which we do not pay due attention, but which we should not forget.

The purpose of these questions is to make an analysis of the social results of a process of globalization which started during the eighties with the accession to power of R. Reagan (USA) and M. Thatcher (UK), representing an extreme right-wing capitalistic ideology, weakening trade-union movements and any other organization watching over workers' rights. From that moment on, and using a deliberately unlimited external commerce policy, together with a constantly increasing consumption by Western population (possessing most of the resources), the world has been the victim of a New World Order as regards to labor. If until a few years ago the workers could have the right to a steady job with more or less respectable conditions, during the last years the mobility used as a behavior towards the workers has left them helpless versus the technological and regional changes in which we live and where we have acted.

The prevalent theories of capitalism spoke about an ideology going hand in hand with democratic and liberal values. But the example of China has made us reevaluate this basic assumption. The Asian giant is to a large degree the responsible for the economic instability experienced today by the whole world, where the West is the most affected. The extremely cheap manpower has generated the fact that entire sectors have shut down, as they are not profitable and since they cannot compete with this Asian country, where a dictatorial communist government system prevails, but on the other hand its economy has opened to the world and competes with any country in any trade. From the Chinese point of view, Gorbachev, as leader of the former Soviet Union, has committed a mistake by proposing political reforms as his first approach to the West, later bringing an open market policy. China understood that this was not the way, and decided not to submit its political system to the "adventures of democracy"



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and created only an economic system which converted this country in the largest manufacturing plant of the planet (for example: more than 90% of the toys in the world are manufactured in that country, 50% of the textile sector and more than 60% of the television sets).

And nobody is able to compete against a country in which the salary of the workers is less than a dollar a day, where the workers have one vacation day a year, and where most of the population work more than 50 hours a week. All this without taking into account the lack of freedom of the mentioned regime, where the access to Internet is controlled by the government and the words freedom and democracy have been censored (and no such thing as human rights exists).

This globalization process has broadened the social gaps in the world, also in developed countries where most of the traditional sectors are being displaced. We could take General Motors as an example in the automotive sector. The company cannot stand opposite its Asian competitors, as its cars are assembled in the USA and they are compelled to pay a minimum wage, as well as social benefits and a dignified pension to each worker. Because of that (among other reasons), the company lost more than 4 billion dollars in 2005 and is at the edge of bankruptcy (and we are talking about the largest automotive company at world level). In order to try to survive, GM has decided to dismiss more than 30,000 workers, besides closing 17 production plants.

This example bring us to the root of the reflection in the present article, where on one hand we have an increasing number of workers left without employment, and on the other hand, those succeeding to keep their working place are forced to work extra hours in order to make ends meet. Absurd, isn't it...

And in this world "populations" and "forgotten" geographical areas are starting to appear, failing to survive the changes that globalization, together with an unrestrained capitalism, generates. The African continent is the best case to explain the phenomenon of the forgotten ones. Less than 1% of the foreign investment reach that continent, which goes on among poverty, hunger and malnutrition, full of diseases



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like AIDS, without any sign of change in that trend. In spite of the efforts by artists like Bono, who are trying to cancel the external debt of the African countries, there is clear world indifference for whatever happens in the above mentioned continent. After all, with the exception of Nigeria, there is almost no oil in the rest of Africa, and we are talking about black people which on top of everything are also poor...

However, not only Africa has been affected by this phenomenon. Also developing countries like Latin America suffer the consequences of what this article discusses. We can take Argentina as a symbol of what the FMI and the World Bank predicted as a model country fulfilling all the demands posed by those organizations regarding its policy of privatizations, and look at the results...

The arrival of gigantic international companies talking about improvement and efficiency in the management of public companies actually reduces employment to the minimum together with lower salaries. And this is because the main objective of the private industry is to increase their profits to the absolute maximum.

Israel has not escaped this fierce capitalism. In 2004 the two large banks of Israel (Hapoalim and Leumi) decided to cut by 10% the number of their employees. Curiously, that same year both companies reached record earnings not achieved before during their history. That is to say, the economic growth of the above mentioned banks has left thousands of workers without a job, they now represent an economic burden for the State, and the owners of both banks can keep enlarging their fortunes.

It is important for us to be aware of this new industrial revolution, which, as in 18th century England, is creating ever increasing groups of poor, unemployed, sick, and handicapped people. All these people which many times we prefer not to see nor hear, and that have become only groups of "forgotten ones".

I regret to end 2005 in this manner, but if we will not achieve a critical vision of this world which is taking us all towards uncertainty, we may be the next to fall in this category of people with no stable economic or working future. Let's think together



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how we can save ourselves from this trend at the micro level, and what conceptual alternative of the world at the macro level we would like for us and for our children.

Happy 2006!!!