**The Wild State**

How to Acquire Citizenship When You Have Nothing

*What do I think of Western civilization?*

*I think it would be a very good idea.*

Mohandas “Mahatma” Ghandi

Citizenship is an obsession. Every person is made out by his/her encounters and negotiations with other people, not by decree or papers. The author became part of band of Bushmen only by performing the duties of little girls (ostrich-shell bead making), the ones in charge of human status-delivering in the Kalahari desert. Citizenship is not to be demanded, but must be acquired by action.

On the other hand, citizenship is static, while mobility is becoming the paradigm of the third millennium for masses that have nothing left because of war, famine, poverty, forced migration. These mobile people consider the centre (themselves) as the fifth cardinal point, according to which they develop variable-geometry territories and communities. If citizenship is connected to status, why should I care about it when and where status has no meaning any more? Citizenship is intrinsically connected to possession and sedentarity. The over-modern fluid survival strategy is flexible and therefore requires forms of de-citizenship. Flying *from* prevents people from thinking about flying *where to*. Their question is: «What’s going to be the weight of citizenship?»

In ethnographic communities – like the Turkana pastoralists studied by the author – culture “brands” all members by body mutilations and deformations; therefore “citizenship” is forever. We must find ways to transform citizenship in a process of antropopoiesis (factory of men/women): therefore the State must not concede it to a person as a right, but as a duty; and the individual must live it as a direction, not as a condition.

State, society and community are not synonymous. While the State has derived by society the model of citizenship called “Blood & Soil”, communities are bound by experience and daily negotiations of individual identities. Realizing that cultural identity is the mother of any war or racism, it should be banned by law. Social mutants with a fluid identity are prosecuted by States, while they are the only evolutionary people: today’s “normal” citizens are bound to extinction, as clearly proved in Europe, a nomads’ camp at the border of History.

By field observations among various populations, the author developed the concept of “jelly-border”: volatile, transparent, permeable, but with some difficulty. It’s a form of three-dimensional no-man’s land. All forms of de-citizenship semi-permanently occupy such liminal territories (physical and cultural) by a collective transition of “nothing people”. They attack the – invisible but real – State borders, limits and frontiers, becoming a liquid world periphery, because to them citizenship might be lethal. Daesh is the negative face of this process: it retraces borders and transgresses States with ideals that – distorted and perverted as they might be – cannot be bombed.

Having noticed that in many African languages there is no word for “poor”, the author – in order to make a step forward – reports the sentence by a Dinka boy in Southern Sudan: «Poor is whoever cannot help or be helped anymore». Only relationship and no material goods involved. Therefore, the life stories by de-citizenship people tell us that disaster communities are bound by the strong wiring (entanglement) of four weak threads: sharing, reciprocity, compatibility, complementarity.

The author hopes that society wouldn’t feel lonely without him.

No bibliography annexed, not to prevent the reader from any personal escape route, to be sought after in the field.

Alberto Salza

Human terrain analyst