

# **We Should Never Let Them Forget**

## **About Their Humanity**

The concept of democracy came to be established in almost every nation of the world since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. All systems of government which deprived citizens of the possibility of choosing who may represent them proved to be dangerous; they only provoked the accumulation of power on one figure, namely the dictator, and the impossibility of common people to have any voice or participation in public life. One would tend to think that humanity has learned from the atrocities triggered by these systems, and yet it is usual to find in the ruling class some characteristics which make them seem closer to kings or dictators than to mere representatives of the population who have the same basic rights and obligations as anyone else.

Rousseau's words, cited in Nussbaum's book 'Hiding from Humanity', serve as a thorough description of how people in powerful positions behave nowadays. He states that this kind of people think of themselves as 'self-sufficient gods' who fail to understand the ties that join them to their fellow humans. I think it is true that these people feel they are above humans and this 'dehumanization' inevitably leads them to feel no emotion, namely compassion or empathy, towards ordinary people, since they cannot even imagine how the world can be seen from the perspective of common people. This lack of empathy present in powerful people brings disastrous consequences. As an example, we could take the so-called 'austerity measures' implemented by the European Union and the IMF in countries such as Spain and Greece. The basic concept of these measures is to save money by suffering today in order to reconstruct the economy and be wealthy in the future. The irony is that the only ones who suffer -and suffering in this context implies hunger, illness and loss of dignity- are the common people. Undoubtedly, world leaders as Christine Lagarde and Angela Merkel do not know the feeling of being hungry and, as they do not see ordinary people as equals, they will never feel compassion for them or guilt for their own actions.

It is necessary, therefore, to make the ruling class understand and accept the idea that they are as human as the rest of society. And this task is bound to be carried out by common people. It is a relief, though, to see that there are movements in Europe and in the U.S. which protest against a political system that fails to represent them and to satisfy their necessities. This is a clear sign that people are tired and will not allow politicians that only govern for themselves and for the economic power anymore. What people need is a real democracy - in its basic meaning: government held by the population - and not a continuance of kingdoms and dictatorships disguised as democracy.

Naturally, a direct democracy in which every single citizen discusses and makes decisions about measures to be taken in the country seems impossible nowadays. However, it would certainly be a major step towards equality of rights if the representatives of the people felt part of the society and not superior to it. This situation

could only be achieved by means of constant participation of the population in public life in order to never let the ruling class forget about their humanity.

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