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End of the Age of Abundance (of whom?)



Sources: Infolibre

French President Emmanuel Macron has decreed the "end of abundance" ([see here](#)). And it has immediately sparked a debate as interesting and timely as it is fraught with the poison of language traps. What do we mean by "abundance"? Who should give up "free liquidity"? Who should say goodbye to "the products and technologies that seemed permanently available to us"? "Let's not give in to demagoguery," Macron concluded, and in the latter one cannot but give him all the reason. The problem, I think, is the previous

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basis of his reflection, an exercise in premeditated ignorance, cynicism or – precisely – pure demagoguery.

I explain myself (or at least I try).

To decide that we have been living in an era "of abundance" is to blur reality or look at it with the glasses of socio-economic classism or political sectarianism. If we take a look at the official statistics on inequality or on the risk of poverty, France (like Spain) watches helplessly or passively to the growth of the gap: **one in five citizens lives on the verge of extreme poverty** ([see here](#)). And the border is no longer the fact of having or not having a job: the number of working poor multiplies, in parallel with the growth of precariousness, temporality, insecurity in employment.

So this "age of abundance" was lived (and still is) lived by a minimum percentage of the European population, **a demographic set despite everything privileged**, yes, with respect to what happens in most of the world, but in any case an absolute minority. Suffice as an example the following fact: the number of billionaires has grown after the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, while the percentage of citizens dragged into poverty also skyrocketed ([see here](#)).

To get to the point, there are (at least) two ways to approach the reality of the multiple crisis we face (energy, climate and inflation). One is the one proposed by Macron, **very much in line with the neoliberal remedies already known in previous crises**: curves are coming, so let's all tighten our belts, let's practice a generalized "austerity" that in reality only practices (or we practice) those who are forced to it. And two: how about we consider addressing this gap of galloping inequality, in which those who had the most multiply their wealth while the poor become poorer and the middle classes (historically objective basis of all social or revolutionary change) narrow in a supposedly unstoppable trickle towards extreme poverty?

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We are witnessing a bombardment of data and supposed news about hyperinflation. But very rarely are the focus on the origin of it: 83% comes from corporate profits and only 13.7% from wages ([see here](#)). Expressed in another numerical way: **business turnover has been on the rise for 16 consecutive months**, while wages accumulate a rise of just 2.6% in 2022 ([see here](#)).

But if the Minister of Labor thinks of saying ([see here](#)) that **it is necessary "more than ever" to raise the Minimum Wage**, whatever the employers say, there are political, economic and media sectors that throw their hands to the head predicting little less than the end of the world or at least of the "era of abundance". It would be useful to begin to portray in a little more depth the Spanish business class and its high representatives, who do not miss an opportunity to blame the left, the unions and the workers for all the evils that haunt us. And one wonders if at some point it will be opportune to ask why the only proposal that all these influential sectors have to face any crisis is the recipe of "austerity". The austerity of whom? Of the wage earners? Of the multi-employed? Millennials? Because there is still only one occasion to be proven in which in the face of a local or global economic crisis what professors Antonio Ariño and Joan Romero lucidly called "**the secession of the rich**" does not occur.

End of abundance? **Welcome**. The response allegedly given by the Swedish Social Democratic leader Olof Palme to a leader of the Portuguese revolution who explained it as an instrument to "end the rich" has been repeated ad nauseam. "Well, in my country what we want is to end the poor," Palme would have replied immediately. Today, any progressive democrat should remember Palme and take Macron at his word to qualify him: the age of abundance is over, okay. Let us now try to put an end to obscene excesses and fight to **reduce inequality and fiscal injustice**. It is a key vault of the change of epoch and perhaps the only way to strengthen democracy.

Source: https://www.infolibre.es/opinion/columnas/buzon-de-voz/abundancia_129_1305359.html

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