# New Smoke and Normal Mirrors

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I don’t think the biggest threat is a regression to open barbarism, to brutal survivalist violence with public disorders, panic lynching, etc. (although, with the possible collapse of health and some other public services, this is also quite possible.) More than open barbarism I fear barbarism with a human face – ruthless survivalist measures enforced with regret and even sympathy, but legitimized by expert opinions. Zizek

Such a focus on individual responsibility, necessary as it is, functions as ideology the moment it serves to obfuscate the big question of how to change our entire economic and social system.

ideological mystifications

The first thing that strikes the eye is that, contrary to the cheap motto ‘we’re all in the same boat’, class divisions have exploded. At the very bottom of our hierarchy, there are those – refugees, people caught in war zones – whose life is so destitute that, for them, the pandemic is not the main problem. While these folk are still mostly ignored by our media, we’re bombarded by sentimental celebrations of nurses on the frontline of our struggle against the virus. But nurses are just the most visible part of a whole class of ‘care-takers’ that is exploited – albeit not in the way the old working class portrayed in Marxist imagery was exploited. Instead, as David Harvey puts it, they form a *“new working class”.*

*"El reto al que se enfrenta Europa es demostrar que se puede hacer lo mismo que hizo China de una manera más transparente y democrática".*

las mascarillas ofrezcan "un bienvenido anonimato y la liberación de la presión social" o que los tiempos muertos a los que nos enfrenta el confinamiento sean "fundamentales para la revitalización de nuestra experiencia vital".

It may appear that the basic choice we have in coping with the pandemic is the one between the Trump way (return to economic activity in the conditions of market freedom and profitability, even if this means thousands of more deaths) and what our media decry as the Chinese way (total digitalized state control of individuals).

However, in the United States, a third option is now propagated by the New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and ex-CEO of Google Eric Schmidt, with Michael Bloomberg plus Bill and Melinda Gates in the background – Naomi Klein of the Intercept [called](https://theintercept.com/2020/05/08/andrew-cuomo-eric-schmidt-coronavirus-tech-shock-doctrine/) this option a “Screen New Deal.” It promises safety from infection while maintaining all the personal freedoms liberals care for – but does it have a chance to work?

Cuomo and Schmidt announced a project to *“reimagine New York state’s post-Covid reality, with an emphasis on permanently integrating technology into every aspect of civic life.”* In Klein’s view, this will lead to a *“permanent — and highly profitable — no-touch future,”* in which there is no cash and no need to get out of the home to spend it. Every possible service and commodity is ordered online, delivered by drone, *“then screen ‘shared’ on a mediated platform.”* And making this future tick would be the exploited masses of *“anonymous workers tucked away in warehouses, data centers, content moderation mills, electronic sweatshops, lithium mines, industrial farms, meat-processing plants, and prisons.”*

First, it is the paradox that those privileged who can afford to live in the no-touch space are also the most controlled: their entire life is transparent to the true seat of power, the Big Tech and government combine.