

## The Collective Revolutionary Subject: New forms of social transformation

By David Barkin

The hope for a revolutionary actor that prevailed throughout the XX Century evaporated as a result of the weaknesses of social organizations and the ongoing crises that confront them. Similarly, hopes died for a reformist State that might address the deepening problems of inequality while the impotence of progressive forces ended attempts to bring some measure of dignity to society. In this context, it is essential to identify actors whose visions and abilities might contribute to building new societies with a different balance of power among social and productive forces. The paper examines the potential of an almost forgotten group of revolutionary actors –collectively organized and deliberately involved in processes of social and productive transformation– whose present-day activities involve them in concerted processes to consolidate a different constellation of societies on the margins of the global capitalist system.

Indigenous and peasant communities throughout the Americas are self-consciously assembling to create alternative forms of organizations and governance structures, in many cases taking control of territories that they and/or their ancestors have claimed for generations. A particularly interesting feature of this dynamic is their understanding of the centrality of “surplus”. They are consciously undertaking mechanisms to take control of the production and use of surplus, both that generated in various productive activities they operate and in the mobilization of underutilized resources and peoples’ energies for improving their ability to raise living standards and assure environmental conservation and restoration.

Another important feature of this movement is the degree of coordination and information sharing among the disparate communities. Alliances (regional, national and hemispheric) are emerging and processes for mutual support being perfected to enable them to become more effective in their political organization. They are developing mechanisms that are transforming them into a growing movement offering a model for social and political change firmly anchored in an expanding productive structure.