

The October revolution lessons: The socialist alternative revival today for LAC

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The economic crisis continued impacting destructively on the world economy, and this process had already transformed it into the longest duration crisis in the capitalist history. As never before - except maybe with the Great Depression in 1929 -, the uncertainty has taken control positions, while the margin of maneuver of economic and financial authorities has decreased considerably in the entire world. At present time, a true bewilderment prevails at the epicenter of the capitalist world, in the developed countries, especially in the United States, and in more recent years in the eurozona and Japan.

Capitalism is seriously questioned. The crisis cannot be considered another simple crisis; neither represents an example for the recurrent character of the usual ones. This is one of those moments where the old way of getting away from the impacts cannot continue and a replacement becomes necessary to maintain the system, or to discontinue the established order. See Brexit or Trump electoral campaign as very recent examples.

The current crisis doesn't only question the theory of the economic cycle, but - and mainly - questions the structural limits to gaining more profits, the origins of capitalist accumulation and the process of political dominance from which the crisis emanates. That is to say, the world is not confronting a normal period of recession, but rather new depressions seem to become normal processes for the world economy. What we are witnessing is not a temporary phenomenon, but an organic crisis of the capitalist system. Conditions for the emergence of alternative socialist ways are present.

It is crucial that the fight for wage, housing, health, education and the social appropriation to build historical sociocultural values continues and it has to be carried on by wide popular sectors (formal and informal workers, small peasants, craft makers, indigenous communities, local and community organizations, etc.). There lays a crisis when the capital cannot reproduce its cycle like capital money, as productive capital, and these crossed processes are essentially for the class conflict.

In this context, additionally, the crisis shows the internal problems of the capitalism core relate to the hierarchical system according to the dimension of the capitals (its organic composition), and the structure of the international system of countries. In both cases, there is a hegemony dispute in two levels: at the capitalist core and in the world system of nations, both scenarios are crossed by the fight among dominant and dominated social sectors.

The left challenges

In 1848 fifty revolutions in Europe and Latin America put a definitive end to the monarchy in France, absolutism in Denmark and the feudal serfdom in Austria and Hungary. In 1917 the two Russian revolutions started to put in practice the ideas by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in a famous Manifesto, published

precisely in 1848. In 1968 the specter of revolution toured the world again with rebellions against the established order in Paris, Prague, Mexico and many other cities and campuses.

In a study titled "World Protests 2006-2013" Isabel Ortiz from Columbia University and Sara Burke, from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in New York, record and analyze strikes, demonstrations, rallies, riots, road blockages, occupations and other protest actions in almost ninety countries worldwide. The 2010 figures double the number of protests registered in 2006 and the first half of 2013 double it again, with 111 events recorded, fifteen of which with over one million people participating.

Between 2006 and 2013 seventy events with global demands inter- regional characters were reported, but nine out of ten protests are directed at national governments. The demonstrations occurred worldwide, but were more numerous in the high-income countries as a result of the financial and economic crisis and its aftermath, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean. Many protests have several demands, or evolve in their claims, as was the case in Brazil, where huge marches against the price of public transport turned into protests against corruption. More than half of the total, the protests were motivated by issues of economic justice, against austerity measures, unemployment, poverty, taxes and inequality.

Over 40 percent of the registered events (376) were directed against the political system, protesting corruption, demanding democracy, justice and transparency. Global justice was the generic theme of 311 protests, directed specifically against the International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions, trade agreements or to protect the environment.

Frustration with politics as usual and a lack of trust in the usual political actors, left and right, coupled with a willingness even on the part of the middle classes to embrace direct actions—resonated in the other places as well. Frustration with politics led thousands of people to occupy public spaces in large assemblies that became experiences of democracy and a new form of protest, based on principles of autonomy and solidarity.

The "contagion" of examples and the non-satisfaction of the craving for real democracy and economic justice are likely to feed further movements. Integration can be one of the alternatives; possible revolutions can also take place. With a new quite protectionist President in the White House, with a very strong saying provoking all possible Governments to start a III World War, the Nuclear one, the year that ultimately makes it into the history of world revolutions may well be 2017.