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Spanish state

The revolt of the indignad@s: moving on to the next stage

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Description:

It has been almost four weeks. Four weeks that have changed the political landscape of the whole Spanish State with the emergence of a movement which no-one expected and which has been credited with two political victories, first against the Board of Elections and then against the attempted eviction in Barcelona. It is a movement which has, above all, put an end to passive resignation at the attacks on our social rights.

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After days of intense activism, the effects of fatigue and exhaustion have made themselves felt in the protest camps. The difficulties of managing many of them are also noticeable. The time for camping is over.

Protest camps and occupations of public squares are not an end in themselves. They have simultaneously acted as a symbolic reference and a base, a lever to propel future demonstrations, and a loudspeaker to amplify the ones happening now. To rise up still further from a position of strength, keeping up the rhythm of the struggle, and not to go into a spiral of decline, something we have seen signs of over the last few days, is the step to take now. And it is indeed the step that many still occupying the plazas are taking now, admittedly with some difficulty.

The challenge is to know how to manage our success, to go on to the next stage and use the energy of the protest camps to move forward. A schedule for immediate mobilisation is emerging from the camps, something which should serve both as a culmination of the phase which began on May 15 and also mark the start of the next phase, and begin to move the center of gravity of the movement.

First are the demonstrations this Saturday, June 11, in many locations to mark the establishment of new municipalities, following the brutally repression of the protest outside the Valencian Court on February 9 during the opening session of the legislature and the inauguration of the new right-wing regional government.

Second are the demonstrations at the offices of several institutions against the policies of cuts in social services in the wake of demonstrations on June 8 outside the Congress of Deputies in Madrid against the reform of collective bargaining and Friday 10 at the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour. Among the rallies planned, the 14 and 15 of June in the Catalan Parliament to organize a protest camp, rally and blockade of the Parliament is of special importance. A good mobilisation on the day when the full Parliament starts discussing the budget can be a key moment in the struggle against the cuts than have been being planned over the last few months for months in Catalonia, especially in the health sector and also in education. This can also be a reference for future mobilisations in other regions, where they will also begin to announce cuts from next autumn.

Thirdly, we need to prepare the day's events for June 19 throughout the Spanish state, whose general theme as proposed by the camp of Barcelona is "The streets are ours. We will not pay for your crisis", which should serve to translate the solidarity that has arisen throughout the protest camps into a movement on the street and jobs and to reinforce the mass nature of the movement. The challenge is to demonstrate the political and social expansion of the May 15 movement.

Beyond the immediate mobilization for the next week, we need to establish a roadmap for the next stage. It is also necessary to draw up a list of basic demands that combine a general discourse critical of the current economic model and the political class, in the spirit of the slogan of May 15: "We are not commodities in the hands of politicians and bankers", with concrete proposals. Given the lack of a commonly agreed program from the protest camps, the proposal created in Barcelona seems the most consistent and politically it is a good benchmark for future protests.

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In this new period we cannot lose sight of the symbols that the protest camps and occupations have established. To maintain these symbols as an element of continuity and of memory is important. Hence, many camps, on deciding to break up, agreed to keep a small infrastructure in place (information bureaux, etc) and to convene regular meetings.

The paths that we must take in the coming months seem clear. First, to strengthen the grassroots movement, empowering local assemblies and establishing stable coordinating mechanisms. We will have to find ways to combine local roots and common activities without losing sight of our common objectives. The proposals for social consultation which some of the activists in Plaza Catalunya in Barcelona have outlined can, along with other initiatives, serve this purpose. Second, to seek ties with the working class, those in struggle and militant trade unionists, and to keep up the pressure on the main trade unions, who are disconcerted by a change in the political and social landscape that they did not anticipate. The challenge is to shift the anger to the workplace, which is still dominated by fear and resignation. Third, to prepare for October 15 as the date of mass mobilisation and seek to make it a global day of action at a crucial time for the internationalisation of the movement. Fourth, to combine the development of a general movement, the "movement of I@s indignad@s," which criticizes the current overall political and economic model, with the concrete struggles against the cuts and policies that seek to shift the cost of the crisis onto the workers.

One stage ends and another begins. Without our having noticed, we are dealing with a movement whose potential we are just beginning to discover.

11th of June, 2011