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Social upheavals, fightbacks and alternatives

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Introduction

Recent years have been marked by waves of political and social mobilization that have met different fates. In the Maghreb and the Middle East, through the waves of the Arab Spring, though they are not exhausted, have faced a combination of reactionary forces... In Latin America, we have arrived at the beginning of a new cycle after the defeat of the Venezuelan PSUV in the elections. In Europe, after the capitulation of Tsipras, Syriza did not follow through on the dynamics opened by its election or the massive OXI vote of July 2015.

In 2008, Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy sparked off an international financial crisis that provoked many further crises, especially the sovereign debt crisis in Europe. It triggered new social attacks in addition to the upheavals caused since the 1990s by political, economic and social reorganization following 1989 and the new phase of capitalist globalization.

This text aims to provide a succinct analysis of social changes underway in this context and as well as the capacities and experiences of struggles of the exploited and oppressed and developments in social, trade union and political resistance movements and struggles against capitalist attacks.

The question we face is the reality of power relations between classes internationally. This means analysing:

• the social reality of the working and other exploited classes which have experienced many changes over the last thirty years, with globalization and global reintegration of Russia and China into a worldwide capitalist economic system.

• the organized strength of the labour movement and social movements fighting exploitation and oppression overall, which have undergone many upheavals at various levels. The disappearance of the USSR and the end of the USSR / China competition for "socialist" hegemony over anti-imperialist resistance movements have largely changed the political geography in what we called "the three sectors of the world revolution". But now what is the real strength of each of the movements of struggle organizing the exploited and oppressed in these sectors?

• The new fields of radicalization in the last two decades, especially among younger generations. Although the global justice movement is weaker now than at the beginning of the century, nevertheless the question of social justice, the need to fight the power of banks, major international corporations and institutions remains a strong vector of radicalization. There is a clear link between social justice, fair work in factories, peasants' right to farm their fields, and environmental issues. We can also see, in terms of climate change and useless major projects, the desire to exert democratic control over big decisions and against the professional system of power with a lot of uncontrolled politicians. The liberatory desire to live without violence and the enforcement of unfair laws is also a strong impetus to LGBT+ and feminist mobilizations. This has also been the case in struggles against racist discrimination and violence and to put an end to the legacy of colonialist and slaveholding societies. Finally, we can observe the power of new ICT, especially social networks, as an organizer of demonstrations, as a means of information and mobilization in all parts of the world.

• the ability, above and beyond these demands for democracy and social justice, to provide political coherence to struggles, to integrate them into a global struggle against the system in a situation where an "international workers' movement" no longer exists. Refusing the consequences of capitalist policies does not automatically provoke an

anticapitalist consciousness. The social identity of workers does not create a class identity as such. What is the capacity to include these struggles in a strategic political programme of radical challenge to capitalist society, the oppressions it has created or restructured? In this context, how can we evaluate the global justice movement and various international networks that have sought to coordinate struggles in one sector or another? Finally what is the strength and direction taken by the political currents in these resistance movements, whether they define themselves as democratic, anticapitalist or revolutionary at the national, regional and international level?

I. Some analytical elements

1 / What is the evolution of the situation of the working class and the exploited worldwide?

Several important phenomena should be noted. Globalization has accelerated industrial and economic growth in a number of countries (India, China, Turkey, Mexico...) a phenomenon that should logically continue and diversify.

This leads to two important phenomena in so-called "emerging" countries: urban concentration, increase of the number of waged workers at a faster rate than that of the population (75% increase between 1992 and 2012 for a 30% population increase). Obviously, this corresponds to the development of new centres of economic development. Another significant feature has been the relative growth of the service sector as compared to manufacturing, together with the proletarianisation of many jobs previously seen as "professional" such as teaching and health care, with the consequent impact of these groups being increasingly likely to participate in industrial action to defend conditions against increasing speedups, pay freezes, privatisations and other attacks.

But we must always take into consideration that, in the aggregate, a large majority of the workforce in these countries consists of workers in precarious employment according to ILO criteria (unpaid family workers or self-employed workers) and this proportion has been increasing since 2008, which is therefore a counter trend. Similarly, the ILO expects a steady increase in unemployment in the next five years in Asia, Africa and Latin America, already noted since 2008. The consequence is obvious: significant urbanization, rural population becoming a minority with the concomitant destruction of the social fabric, obviously leading to a deterioration in living conditions, even if peasants' solidarity networks persist.

So we see a numerical increase of the working class, but with different overall characteristics shaped by the overall development of societies where this development occurs.

In the "old industrial countries", the development of the proletariat, has most generally gone hand in hand with trade union and political struggles against the bourgeoisie in a national framework and, whatever the violence of class struggles of the twentieth century, with obtaining social rights on the nation-state level, crystallizing power relations between classes. Recognition of collective rights of the working class did not only concern employment contracts at the company level but also collective social rights as part of civil society; the bourgeoisie conceding that a share of capitalist profits should finance systems of contribution and tax redistribution on which most industrial societies were built in the twentieth century. Thus there were social compromises, development of the "welfare state", related to the ideological legacy of positivism and social Christianity. These ideologies and compromises were the necessary antidote to the significant development of Marxist and socialist currents. All this is no longer required today and industrial development in emerging countries has not at all come about in the same context. For instance, the automotive production industry "moving east": Except for Mexico, Argentina and Brazil, the major development areas are in Eastern Europe, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India and China. In these cases, production lines and qualifications are the same as in old industrialized countries, but social rights and labour legislation are not at all the same. There are similar schemas in many other industrial sectors. In these new areas of industrial development, the social

compromises of the last century no longer hold sway. In the old industrial countries, neoliberal austerity policies are already broadly challenging these compromises. Moreover, we can observe semi-slavery situations, especially for migrant workers, and underground factories escaping any legislation.

2 / Evolution of worldwide rate of exploitation.

The economic changes of recent years have also produced various consequences. Not only have wages stagnated in the old industrialized countries, recent years have seen an increase in productivity at the expense of wages, accentuating the trend seen since the 1980s of payroll losses for the benefit of capital. In the same vein, more precarious contracts and moves to introduce new, more restrictive labour laws have been a key element in these productivity gains in the old industrialized countries (zero-hour contracts in Britain, the Italy Jobs Act, mini-jobs in Germany....). Despite the sudden brake on production in 2008, in most new production areas workers have won real wage increases, especially in China. Although these have been economic strikes, carried out workplace-by-workplace or company-by-company, they have had tangible effects.

So, elements of social tension in the labour market persist in both the “emerging” countries and in old economies, either through the increased pressure of unemployment or by a gradual deterioration of employment conditions and social protection systems. Almost half of the workers in the world live outside wage labour, in extreme precarity. And the trend is the spread of precarious contracts and legislation minimizing legal protection against layoffs. These developments increase the flexibility and ability of capitalists to alter maximum working hours and number of employees according to daily needs. This goes along with a logistical organization of chains of production and distribution that reduces costs as much as possible by resorting to myriad subcontractors. Many new treaties allow big corporations to escape national laws: TTIP, TISA, etc.... Within the European Union, every month, new laws are superseding old national laws. De facto, at the international level there are now two levels of power: state power and corporate power and the second one is stronger and stronger in terms of trade organization and workforce contracts.

The debt crisis over the past decade has shifted from the South to the advanced capitalist countries: household debt crises in many countries (USA, India, etc.), sovereign debt crisis in Europe. These crises accelerate social attacks, precariousness and situations of social misery, they also sharpen the requirements for auditing, the control of populations to block these policies.

All these changes weaken the capacity for lasting collective organization and structuring collective resistance within companies. At the same time, they stimulate the need to fight back and the dynamics of self-organization. This also calls for the development of local social organizations able to regroup isolated or temporary workers above and beyond the workplace level.

3 / Concerted attack on peasant populations

Although fewer and fewer people are farmers, agriculture employs 1.3 billion men and women, 40% of the working population. Peasants are still the majority of working people in Africa and Asia. Over the past two decades, in Asia, Africa and Latin America, peasants have faced “conservative modernization” policies that have posed deep challenges to peasant societies in the attempt to adapt them to capitalist globalization. The peasantry faces many threats, but beyond the future of food systems and environmental balance; the powerful rise of agribusiness, land grabbing, and expansion of export-based monocultures at the expense of food-producing agriculture, pressure on natural resources. Takeover of lands is a global phenomenon, undertaken by local, national and transnational elites as well as investors and speculators, with the complicity of government and local authorities. It leads to the concentration of landownership and of natural resources in the hands of major investment funds, plantation owners and major firms involved in forestry, hydroelectric power stations and mines. It is also caused by the tourism and real estate industries, and authorities managing port and industrial infrastructure.

This concentration of property has entailed local populations facing expulsion from their lands and forced displacement – especially of the peasantry. It has brought about human rights violations, in particular of women's rights.

Financial institutions such as banks, pension funds and other investment funds have become powerful motor forces for land spoliation. Simultaneously, murderous wars and conflicts are waged at this very time to seize control of natural resources.

Land grabbing goes hand in hand with growing control by private business over agriculture and food through greater control over resources such as land, water, seeds and other natural resources. In this race for profit, the private sector has strengthened its control over food production systems, monopolising resources and gaining a dominant position in decision-making processes.

Peasant women and men, landless people and Indigenous peoples, and especially women and youths, precarious farm workers, are dispossessed of their means of subsistence. These practices also destroy the environment. The Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities are chased from their lands, often by force, which makes their lives fare more precarious and in certain cases amounts to their enslavement.

On all continents peasant movements lead mobilizations. These acts of resistance have multiplied over the past two decades, centred on food sovereignty. Moreover, these peasant populations are at the heart of all the crises the world is facing now; economic crisis and the consequences of public and private debt, food crisis, climate change that fuels migration, attacks on the rights of women and minorities. Governments of countries in the South, most often under the pressure of debt payments, have in recent years multiplied agricultural export and extractivist policies. There again, peasant populations have borne the brunt of the consequences via environmental destruction and control over their lands by agrifood trusts.

4 / What are the consequences of the significant increase in migration?

There are significant population displacements in several regions of the world: 250 million international migrants, 750 million internal migrants (displaced persons...). These movements are often due to structural economic changes with significant regional disparities: thus South Africa and Angola attract migrants from neighbouring countries, as do Argentina and Venezuela in Latin America, Australia and Japan in East and Southeast Asia. The Gulf States attract large numbers of migrants from the Horn of Africa, Turkey, the Indian subcontinent and the Philippines. In the latter country, nearly 20% of the working population live and work abroad, 50% in the Middle East, mostly women. Two-thirds of international migration is between countries of a comparable level of development of and a third turn to the USA (Mexico) and Europe, mostly from its former colonial empires. But added to these phenomena are also permanent displacements due to wars, in particular from Syria, Iraq, Eritrea and Afghanistan, and now climate change.

This acceleration of migration is obviously an important political question and an ongoing social phenomenon. The industrialized countries are perfectly capable of welcoming migrants who wish to go there, but the latter have become the target of xenophobic campaigns in many countries including the US, Australia, Europe and South Africa. The dual challenge to the labour movement is to fight this xenophobia while helping the welcoming and organization of these migrant workers who are strengthening the working class in many old countries. Some Gulf countries and even Israel resort to immigrants reduced to a situation of semi-slavery on a mass scale to develop industrial activity.

5 / Impact of the environmental crisis

We are facing environmental disasters of unprecedented scale with anthropogenic climate change as their most dangerous feature.

Desertification, salinification and floods are making large areas of the planet unsuitable for human habitation or growing food. Climate chaos is creating extreme weather events in which loss of life and destruction of dwellings and infrastructure have brought death, disease and further poverty to millions.

In many parts of the world, the last decades have also seen population movements provoked by climate change and other facets of environmental catastrophe. These will become increasingly important, involving people who are among the poorest on the planet. One of the effects of capitalist projects (mega-dams for example) and devotion to even more extreme methods of fossil fuel extraction in many parts of the world has also taken the form of a new offensive against entire communities: in the Philippines, Canada, the Amazon, plans to transform entire regions are frontally attacking people who often belong to First Nations and other groups already facing discrimination. Fronts of popular self-organization and struggle against climate disasters and destructive projects are taking form in these areas.

The overall picture is that of a world undergoing massive changes in many regions with an increase of the number of waged workers bringing about significant social upheaval. This is happening at a time when economic development is not occurring alongside nation-states developing structures and services able to ensure better living conditions. Exactly the opposite in most cases; we observe a worsening of daily living conditions in many ways, aggravated in many regions by war and climate change. Women and young people are the most severely affected by this situation.

II / Resistance on different fronts

1 / The uneven development of the labour movement

We obviously see a significant growth of trade unionism among new employment sectors, in countries where there is expanding industrialization and significant resistance to management demands through strikes. But this occurs, overall, in a situation where the social gains won by the “old working class” (pensions and social security, in particular) far from being extended to emerging countries, are being challenged in Europe and other industrialized countries in the name of austerity plans. Likewise, in China, which has experienced in a large number of local strikes in recent years, especially over wage issues, this has not led to the creation of trade unionism independent of the state apparatus.

Quantitatively, the working class is constantly growing. It should be noted that its centres of growth have strongly shifted to Asia, probably tomorrow to Africa. In these areas the development of trade-union forces follows numerical growth, the growing social weight of wage workers, lay the bases for class consciousness but in general they do not have the strong political structures that provided a political backbone to the European labour movement, although the contradiction in that model was to often to delegate ‘political’ questions to political parties.

Powerful workers’ struggles are still taking place not only in the old industrial countries, in Latin America, but also in South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, in Turkey, in the Indian Subcontinent, and in Asia.

But in the era of globalization the need for trade unions to take up broader issues including racism, all forms of discrimination and housing has become greater and a spur to radicalization. While there have been some attempts to

organize some of the most precarious workers, such as fast-food workers in the US and to a lesser extent in Britain, in general, in old industrialized countries, the most precarious workers (younger with a higher proportion of migrants and women) are the least organized.

Other strategic questions are also posed by the current situation. Unions in many sectors are exploring the question of whether 'chain of value' organizing should replace industrial unionism in the era of globalization, i.e., a coordination of all sectors that make a single production possible. This is all the more important as the maximization of profits leads to splintering of production processes, resorting to subcontracting, on the same site, or most often, on an international level. Further, the question of union democracy is essential in building effective organizations.

The creation of a single trade union, ITUC, bringing together the vast majority of union forces worldwide, cannot hide wide disparities especially in terms of capacity to defend the interests of employees and to oppose capitalist plans. The weakness of unions and political organizations with a Marxist and class-struggle background and conducting education among their membership has led to a lack of class-consciousness

The trade union movement is thus confronted with several crucial problems:

• Its ability to integrate all the social issues that arise in society (racism, homophobia and discrimination against women, housing). The need to integrate environmental dimensions is also a major imperative. The tension between safeguarding jobs and the struggle against harmful factories and productions require establishing a system of demands making it possible to go beyond these contradictions.

• to take into account the reality of precarisation in all its forms and therefore stimulating and creating the structures to organize all those concerned, in particular by the development of structures beyond enterprises, in the zones of industrial activities, neighbourhoods and localities.

• the imperative need to co-ordinate this organizing on an international scale, relying on the actual networks of the production chains in which the workers are competing against each other.

• the pressing need to create, out of the struggle for rights, a class identity providing resistance movements the programmes necessary to challenge the capitalist structures of society and to carry through a project of overthrowing this system.

2 / Self-organization and cooperatives

In many countries, in the face of layoffs and business closings, most often by major international companies, there has been a movement to take back such firms, on the model of Zanon in Argentina, where in the wake of 2002, there are now more than 300 firms taken back by the workers. In the same vein, in Europe, a network of self-managed firms is developing around Fralib, Vio-me, and Rimaflow...

Moreover, up against major companies and agrifood trusts, many struggles by peasant communities have led to the founding of production cooperatives that seek to control distribution themselves.

These experiences, albeit limited, put forth the question of control, of workers taking back the means of production, and also the choice of production linked to social needs.

3 / Debt struggles

Over the past ten years and since the beginning of the financial crisis, the debt crisis has taken on a dimension far exceeding its previous dimensions: beyond the North American sub-prime crisis and the sovereign debt crisis in the European Union, the populations of India, the Spanish state and many European countries have been and are affected, especially with the more than ten million families expelled from their homes in recent years, and also, as in the US, with student debts.

These illegitimate debts have been the vector of the creation of many movements and struggles for audits.

4 / Peasant struggles

Many local struggles have rallied peasant and Indigenous movements in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. The questions of land monopolies and of food sovereignty are at the heart of all these struggles. They have all been marked by transversality of struggles, anticapitalist, environmental, feminist, against discrimination and ethnic oppression, for migrant rights. The question of democracy, of sovereignty and the right to decide in the face of governments and multinationals is also at the heart of their demands. Via Campesina, which federates more than 160 organizations in 70 countries, has succeeded in over 20 years to bring together millions of peasant men and women, small producers. And in particular to put feminist, indigenous and environmental issues at the heart of its concerns.

In Central America, in Latin America, the struggles for the rights of Indigenous communities and the right to the land play a part, and often face murderous repression, as in Brazil and Honduras. In Asia, in Africa – for example, in Mali – peasants mobilise against land monopolization.

5 / Place of democratic and social justice movements

Starting out from the Indignad@s movement, de movement of Public Squares in major cities in the Arab regions, the Occupy movement, since 2011 a long wave of democratic struggles emerged in Africa, in Europe and in Asia, in Mexico, with a strong youth influence and linking democratic and social issues. The wave of revolutions in the Arab region, in the Maghreb and the Middle East, had its source in democratic and social justice issues. The Indignad@s and Occupy movements in the USA and in Europe had the same roots. Recent years have seen many movements in Sub-Saharan Africa to impose democratic consultations (Nigeria, Senegal, Burkina Faso). In South Korea, President Park was brought down in March 2017 following a long democratic mobilization against corruption. Questions of dictatorships and presidents for life, postponements of elections, and corrupt regimes have been powerful motor forces for mobilization in recent years.

6 / Place of youth without jobs in society

In Africa, as in Latin America, young people, particularly young students, form a social stratum exposed to unemployment and the crisis. The revolts of young Brazilians against transport costs, the student strikes in Chile, Quebec, 15M, and the various Occupy movements echo the strength of social mobilization in Tunisia, and in Egypt. In the many democratic and anti-corruption mobilizations that have taken place in many West African countries, the question of living conditions and the future of youth was very present.

In all these mobilizations, the strength of youth is on the scale of the structural insecurity, the mass unemployment experienced by young people in many parts of the world, even as educational levels are rising. These movements

highlight demands for political democracy, challenging the political system controlled by the capitalist and rentier oligarchies. Young people have been in recent years the driving force of revolutionary mobilizations, and have also played a key role in progressive political developments from the election of Jeremy Corbyn in Britain, the birth of Podemos or the movement behind Bernie Sanders in the US.

7 / Women's rights and mass mobilizations against violence, rape and femicide, for the right to abortion

Another important factor of social mobilization in recent months has been the response to violence against women, in the first place femicide in India, Turkey, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Mexico. Since the huge demonstrations in India in December 2012, many other mobilizations have occurred in other cities: Madrid, 500,000 women 7 November 2015 against the proliferation of violence and assassinations; in Argentina, hundreds of thousands of women rallied in 2015 after several murders that marked the country. In Mexico, the increase in murders and disappearances of women to a previously unknown level has also provoked strong protests in the states also marked by drug trafficking. These mobilizations also refer to the high level of violence experienced by several countries – violence which affects women in first place – and also impact social reality: most Central American countries, including Mexico and Brazil, almost all countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa are at the highest level for non-war killings.

The election of Donald Trump sparked off an international wave of demonstrations on 21 January 2017 called by the women's movement, not only in several US cities, but also in several cities in the world. In this dynamic, the 2017 IWD demonstrations saw a significant growth in mobilization leading to hopes for a new growth in the movement.

The different reactionary governments that have come to power on the wave of liberal offensives are all attempting to challenge abortion rights won through struggles in earlier decades. These challenges have faced mass mobilizations to defend and extend this right, notably in the Spanish state in 2014 and in Poland in 2016.

In general, on key issues of feminist struggles, the situation has been contradictory in recent years. With the current mass presence of women among waged workers, the women's movement has developed many different forms and mobilizations in all regions of the world but faces a reactionary offensive in many countries, linked to the rise of neoconservative and fundamentalist currents. This offensive undermines fundamental rights, including the right to be financially and socially independent from men (fathers, brothers, husbands), to choose what to wear and to control their fertility – including access to free, safe and legal abortion.

8 / LGBT+ struggles

In many countries (apart from the Muslim world and most of sub-Saharan Africa), the strength of LGBT+ organizing has made possible decriminalization of same sex relations and to limited rights for trans people. In this process, same-sex marriage has obtained recognition in many places, not just rich countries, but also for example South Africa and increasingly in Latin America with most often, a broad consensus in society. Other battles are still to be won – particularly full rights for trans people and for LGBT+ parents.

The issue of violence and homophobic campaigns weighs heavily. The key role of the reactionary religious currents in opposition to the LGBT+ movement is evident everywhere, whether these currents are Christian – Catholic or Protestant –, Hindu or Muslim as well as the violence and bigotry of far right groups not tied to any religion. In emerging countries, anti LGBT+ violence is often justified by a discourse against European/American cultural models. In return, in recent years a homonationalist current has developed justifying imperialism, notably US imperialism, against the Arab countries, as a force that can contribute to progress in LGBT+ rights. This also poses the question of intersectionality, the need to build links among all struggles against oppression.

9 / Organizations against racism and in defence of migrants

The organization of the black-led Black Lives Matter movement in the US focused particularly against police racism but highlighting broader questions of state racism is the most significant development on racism in the US since the demise of the civil rights movement. In Europe, as the murderous effects of borders and immigration policies become more visible we have seen the growth of important movements of practical solidarity as well as political demands most notably in Greece but also in Italy, Germany, Britain and in Catalonia. The context of the struggle against terrorism as well as austerity policies have led to the resurgence of a racist discourse, a legacy of the colonial past and restructuring discriminations against racialised popular classes, the first victims of unemployment and precarity, in particular in Europe and North America.

10 / The growing movement against global warming

The rise of powerful movements against climate change in many countries can and must play a leading role in the coming years in challenging the overall system. These changes are harming and will harm the lives of hundreds of millions of women and men in the coming years. Indigenous peoples, populations living in the most precarious conditions are often the first affected, as they are affected by the policies of deforestations and large capitalist projects encroaching on their living areas. In many regions, the populations organize themselves and seek to build networks integrating other social organizations.

This shows that the questions of unemployment, working conditions are intertwined in many regions with many other social issues of prime importance and perceived as such by the populations concerned.

III / Questions of political change, struggles and anti-capitalist strategy

The essential question is of course emancipatory perspectives able to structure these social and political movements. The experiences of Via Campesina, of several labour union sectors, and of climate coalitions show that, especially among youth, undertaking action directly on the international field and challenging capitalist society is a natural process.

But many of the structures resulting from the rising wave of alter-globalization (WSF, World March of Women, ATTAC, ...) experienced a brake on their development in this confrontation and entered into crisis. Via Campesina and the CADTM have managed to ensure their development, with the central focus on the one hand on peasant resistance struggles and on the other on the debt issue in recent years as well as the process of citizen audits. The situation is difficult for the traditional labour movement on which national policies of consensus or compromise with austerity policies weigh heavily. And even the wave of alternative unions in Eastern Europe has run out of steam in recent years. Similarly, all the experiences of large-scale anti-capitalist groupings in the aftermath of the social forums were halted; also linked to the crisis of European organizations that were involved in it (SWP, SSP, LCR / NPA, etc.).

We must address new challenges in the construction of an international revolutionary movement, an anti-capitalist movement based on the defence of rights and social justice.

There is, of course, a battle of a new order in many parts of the world.

As discussed above, social attacks, austerity policies, and the fragmentation of old structures of social compromise create an increasingly powerful social anger. This anger turns against the national and international institutions, the leaders and the parties responsible for these attacks, which were often the traditional pillars of political systems. This wearing out, this erosion, poses a strategic question at the international level: it gives the revolutionaries, the currents of the social movements which fight against these reactionary policies, the responsibility of proposing a political perspective that can give a progressive, revolutionary vector to the rejection of the system.

Struggles for democracy and social justice as such do not automatically lead to a struggle for the overthrow of the systems of oppression.

The last few years have brought forth a clear political question. Confronted with the challenge to the dictatorships in Tunisia and the Middle East, the progressive regimes in Central America or the anti-austerity social eruptions, reactionary forces have taken an offensive course everywhere, notably by strengthening authoritarian regimes capable of confronting these movements of emancipation. This calls for implementation of a strategy capable of both organizing popular mobilization and being able to confront reactionary counter-offensives.

Moreover, a struggle is resurfacing among the popular classes, between class struggle or clearly socialist currents, and reactionary religious or fascistic far-right currents. The influence of religion has always been very strong in popular milieus; often when they organize, rural or urban communities use religious references in putting forward demands for social justice against the rich and the powerful. Cohabitation with organizations with such references is of course possible for revolutionary socialist organizations. But the problem we face in various regions is reactionary religious currents and far right currents. In Europe and the USA, these currents in popular circles play on the usual mechanisms in times of crisis to deflect the anti-capitalist struggle (fear of immigrants and foreigners, nationalist nostalgia...) plus, notably in Europe, on rampant Islamophobia. In other traditionally Muslim regions, organizations have built hegemony over a section of the popular classes that diverts aspirations for social justice or the fight against the imperialist countries to a mythologizing of ancient times of Islam. All these ideologies are based on the popular anger provoked by the crisis and / or the disappearance of the systems of social protection, of public services, the rise of precarity, diverting from an anti-capitalist struggle towards the return to a religious order, an imaginary identity or a nation, evidently carrying all the ready-made reactionary submission to natural order, the patriarchal family, homophobia and misogyny. Often, identity-based issues thus become a structural framework both in imperialist metropolises as well as in dominated countries, which can lead to an infinite logic of falling back on confessional identities.

But this competition for the popular audience makes it necessary for anti-capitalist organizations in the social and political movements to give a new life and energy to the perspective of social equality in a society free from capitalism and exploitation.

But on another level, we must answer another challenge: building mass organizations in the social movement to face off against the attacks and aggressions of the system, and at the same time build all the links necessary to bring together the resistance on all fronts. The dangers of falling back on identities, the weakness of political responses advocating social change can become a common reference, imposing intersectionality more than ever, to work towards convergence of anti-oppression movements, as in the example of the dynamics of Black Lives Matter in the USA.

On the political terrain, the whole question is how to build political strategies which, far from being limited to institutional perspectives, provide the space needed for self-organization of social movements; are in the service of popular demands; and put experiences of institutional administration at the service of this social movement, while directly addressing the capitalists' economic power. On this point, the latest experiences are hardly positive.

Social upheavals, fightbacks and alternatives

In the first decade of this century, only Latin America witnessed the election of governments identified as the extension of these social movements, but without transforming the living conditions of the populations so as to revitalize prospects for social emancipation. The evolution of the Ecuadorean, Bolivian, and Venezuelan governments has not brought about a change of cycle and the need to break with perspectives based on, in particular, extractivist policies. Trade unions and social movements find themselves having to resist politicians who have not kept their promises.

In another way in the Maghreb (North Africa) and Egypt, popular movements, based on the mobilization of youth and trade union forces, made it possible to overthrow dictatorial regimes. They also now find themselves in a stance of resistance. However, we can see the emergence of elements of regional dynamics between movements in the Maghreb countries and those in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Greece, the betrayal by the Tsipras government brought to power by the rejection of austerity policies is now leaving the social movement with the responsibility of rebuilding a political alternative with the radical left political currents. In the Spanish State, Podemos, a direct outcome of the Indignad@s social mobilizations, is today confronting the social movement with a similar situation. The strategic discussions in Podemos carried by Anticapitalistas for a direct confrontation with austerity policies is in resonance with the demands carried by the social movement from which it emerged.

Finally, in the various regions where political changes have taken place through social mobilization, social movements are facing a defensive situation in a context of the development of strong fightbacks that are signs of hope.

The key issue in the coming years will not only be organizing adequately to counter the attacks sustained, but also the political capacity to build, alongside the social mobilizations, a political movement for emancipation capable of frontally challenging capitalism.