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Latin America

The current situation and the tasks of revolutionaries

- IV Online magazine - 2002 - IV342 - July/August 2002 -

Publication date: Monday 22 July 2002

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At the moment that the United States announced the conclusion of its massive bombardments in Afghanistan and the reestablishment of 'order' in that strategic area of the planet, in Latin America the myth of the invincibility of the 'neo-liberal model' collapsed. The opening of a revolutionary process in Argentina accelerated the crisis of bourgeois political leadership in a context of socio-economic debacle, resistance, protest and social rebellion.

A climate of insurrection and popular disobedience has established itself in the region and although the intensity of its manifestation is not uniform, the scenario is one of instability and ungovernability.

The transitory character of this new period of the class struggle is beyond question, inasmuch as the struggle over what the new relationship of forces will be is far from arriving at an outcome.

In these conditions, imperialism is reorganizing its strategy of recolonization, launching an offensive combining political, economic and military factors with the goal of ensuring its domination. The militant forces of the Fourth International act decidedly in this new period of the class struggle. They share the reflections and the combat experiences of the social movements, the initiatives of the organizations of the Latin American left, as well as the dilemmas, impasses and challenges with which it is confronted. In the same way, the forces of the Fourth International participate in the (re) construction of a critical, democratic, liberating, socialist thought and the refoundation of an alternative program and a strategic horizon, with the perspective of a regrouping of the radical left.

The text that follows is an introduction to the debate within the framework of the preparation of the Fourth International's next World Congress, its draft resolutions and the tasks that the period imposes on the revolutionary forces.

1. Reorganization of imperialist domination

1.1. The vote of condemnation in the UN (supported by the majority of Latin American governments) and Uruguay's breaking off of its diplomatic relations with Cuba; the coup d'etat in Venezuela; the deepening of the war in Colombia; and the economic destruction of Argentina so that the country can be bought up cheaply, to eliminate the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and to impose the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), marks a new phase in US imperialism's offensive on the continent. With Mexico and Central America aligned in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Puebla-Panama Plan, with the Caribbean subjected to the absolute control of Washington, the main battle will now be waged in South America.

This offensive has been reinforced after the events of September 11, 2001 and the international campaign against 'terrorism'; but mainly after the opening of a revolutionary process in Argentina and the crisis in Venezuela.

[https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/FARC_women.jpg]

FARC fighters

1.2. US policy in the Latin American region rests on three pillars: military deployment and the criminalisation of protest and social resistance - in the name of the fight against 'terrorism' or 'narcoterrorism'; a strategy of economic recolonisation via a complete 'trade liberalization' that seeks to guarantee and expand the investments of US companies and the plundering of natural resources through mega-projects (Amazonia, Patagonia, Central American

Isthmus); a redefinition of the role of continental institutions like the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. This policy of 'hemispheric security' is intended to play the role of a shield given the crisis of legitimacy of the local dominant classes, and to act as a factor of stabilization in a scene of political-institutional ungovernability, social protest and, in certain cases, crisis of the system of domination.

1.3. In this context, the governing elites are subordinated and present a pathetic face of misfortune. Simply the contradictions with Brazil and Venezuela (who account for 42% of the GDP of Latin America) around the FTAA, agricultural subsidies, steel and oil, shake the relations of the United States with the governments of the region. Dependent on the imperialist economic shield (the US and European markets and the conditions of the international financial bodies like the IMF, World Bank, IADB), and tied to the rules of the WTO, the local bourgeois elites surrender or weakly demand a 'more just free trade'.

At the recent summit in Madrid, the Latin American governments received a slap in the face. Although they sought a 'solid bioregional strategic association' with the European Union, they were rejected because of a 'lack of integration and stability', whereas Argentina was told to take tougher measures of adjustment and reach agreement with the IMF. In the FTAA meetings in Caracas and Panama (May 2002), the United States insisted on forcing a convergence around its interests, at the same time that it was increasing its protectionist measures on agriculture. The imperialist demands centred on the 'liberalization of markets' in five fundamental areas: industrial goods, agriculture, services, government purchases and foreign direct investments. On government purchases, the United States demands that the rules of the FTAA are applied, not only at federal or national level, but also to state, provincial and municipal governments. In other words, 'governance' downwards.

The rules that are good for the globalisation of capital would be imposed down to the local level, once again depriving the people of sovereignty in defining their own paths of development. This new condition is aimed directly at the heart of any program of self-managed democracy and/or Participatory Budget. The increase in imperialist pressure takes place at a time when countries like Brazil and Argentina need to reduce their trade deficits to cover the payment of interest on the external debt and reduce their internal mega-debts; thus, a few months from the Brazilian elections, adding another condition on the future government.

1.4. The strategic reorganization of the United States takes place in a double perspective of accomplishment of a process of continental trade liberalization and repression of the popular movement. The military deployment is taking place in order to control - or more precisely force through - trade globalisation and the social disorders and revolts that it generates. The strategic importance of the Andean region makes it one of the priorities of US security policy.

Plan Colombia (rebaptised as the Andean Regional Initiative) occupies a central place in the counter insurgency strategy. The third biggest recipient of 'military' aid (after Israel and Egypt), the fourth biggest trade partner of the United States, and the fifth biggest Latin American economy, Colombia is a laboratory for large scale intervention.

While Uribe, a far right candidate with paramilitary links promises to involve a million civilians in the war, either armed or as 'toads' (informants), Bush is redoubling the bet. The 68 million additional dollars for the fight against 'narcoterrorism' have already been voted for and in 2003 there will be 98 million dollars to create an 'oil army' of mercenaries to take care of the Occidental Petroleum pipelines. In the 'backyard' and for reasons of security, the United States has decided it will not allow a 'failed State'. Still less in a region rich in oil, coal and mineral resources.

In such conditions, Plan Colombia is not only aimed against the armed insurgency (particularly the FARC) and the social movement as a whole, but acts as a dissuasive mechanism against the popular resistance in Latin America. At the same time it opens up favourable scenarios for US multinational companies. And it is evident that Plan Colombia is not limited by borders or domains; that the US intervention will not stop in any country, or adjust to any other interest than those of the United States.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/galtieri.jpg>]

General Galtieri and henchmen

1.5 As part of this military intervention, the government of Panama is increasing its military presence in the Darién area and is using a clause in the agreement on the Canal that anticipates the possibility that Washington sends troops. Military bases have been set up in Aruba-Curacao, Manta (Ecuador), Comolapa (Salvador), Tegucigalpa and Palmerola (Honduras), Liberia (Costa Rica) and other military activity has included Nuevos Horizontes (Peru), the occupation of Vieques (Puerto Rico), Plan Dignidad in Bolivia, Operation Cabañas 2001 (Argentina), and the training of soldiers in Concepción (Paraguay). All this shapes the list of a bellicose regional schema that enjoys exclusive access to the base at Alcántara in Brazil. The US preoccupation with 'hemispheric insecurity' is expressed in the document of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US army - Joint Vision 2020- published in June 2001, reiterating the ominous doctrine of 'national security', the US military draws attention to the main centres of instability: the 'radical triangle' (Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela), Peru, Panama and Argentina. The same goes for the document - United States Policy With Respect to the Andean Region - drawn up by the State Department on May 17, 2001, which envisages an injection of 'security' aid in the form of Foreign Military Financing and Military training and Education abroad. The United States is mobilizing the CIA, the Drugs Enforcement Agency, the Pentagon, the coastguard service and the Southern Command to implement this policy of intervention.

1.6. The continental counterinsurgency strategy is accompanied by multilateral operations in the perspective of a Latin American intervention force - a kind of armed 'antiterrorist' body of the OAS itself. In effect, the institutional aspect of this reorganization is also developing. The OAS is being revitalized and is constructed as a paradigm of 'democratic solidarity' for the countries of the continent (Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted in Lima soon after September 11, 2001) articulating 'the defence of human rights' and good 'regional governance'. Meanwhile, the repressive apparatuses are modernized, impunity for state terrorism is ensured and the 'social cleansing' of the 'disposable' subjects (as in Colombia, Guatemala, Chiapas, Argentina and Brazil) is part of the fight against 'organized crime', 'contraband', 'drug trafficking', the 'delinquency' of the 'illicit economy' of the 'dangerous classes'.

This inter-American 'governance' seeks to restore a right of interference, consigning to the wastebasket the principles of non-intervention and respect for national sovereignty, very much alive in countries whose whole history is marked by struggles against imperialism and foreign intervention.

1.7. Simultaneously, the crisis of legitimacy and governability of the bourgeois elites impose mechanisms and laws of social control and inroads on the democratic rights of 'civil society'. The 'democratic' State increasingly assumes a police, authoritarian character repressive of all manifestations of protest and disobedience.

Precisely, the crisis of the 'neo-liberal paradigm' as current phase of capitalist globalisation, and the failure in 'modernizing underdevelopment', is one of the key factors of this loss of legitimacy and cohesion of the dominant discourse. Even very broad sectors of the 'middle classes' can no longer be seduced with consumerist promises, on the contrary they pass to militant opposition through mobilization, protest votes, or abstention.

The crisis of legitimacy and governability has been a constant in recent years in Latin America, which brings out the political instability in the region. This crisis has completely overrun the waterline of 'representative democracy'. Institutionality has been broken by the democratic struggles of the masses, that in the past three years have overthrown presidents elected, re-elected or imposed by parliaments and congresses: Cubas Grau (Paraguay), Bucaran and Mahuad (Ecuador), Fujimori (Peru), De la Rúa and Rodríguez Saa (Argentina). It is another singularity of Latin America, where the popular movement has exercised the principle of revocability and direct democracy, setting aside the delegation of powers.

1.8. It is in this context that a 'multifunctional architecture' - at the economic, military and political level - is being constructed that would allow the relegitimation of imperialist supremacy. The objectives that figure on Washington's

agenda appear clear: to crush the new rise of popular combativity, the breadth of civil disobedience, and the radical character of the social struggles; to reverse the revolutionary process opened in Argentina; to co-opt, neutralize or directly sabotage a possible Lula government in Brazil; to defeat the armed insurgency and ensure the supply of Colombian oil; to destabilize the government of Chávez - guilty of a nationalistic discourse and alliance with Havana; to crush the Zapatista resistance in Chiapas and that of the indigenous communities, peasants, settlers and trades unionists who are against the robbery represented by the Puebla-Panama Plan; to continue with the blockade and inflict final defeat on Cuba; to create conditions of 'democratic stability' that allow the safe entrance of US capital in the struggle over markets with the European Union.

2. An overwhelming socio-economic crisis

2.1. The socio-economic crisis of the 'neo-liberal model' and the crisis of the projects of subordinated regional integration (MERCOSUR, CAN - Andean Community of Nations, Central American Common Market) was accelerated by the 1997-1998 financial crash and the offensive around the FTAA. Still we have not heard the last word with regard to the FTAA: on the one hand, due to the new (protectionist) conditions that the US Congress has imposed on Bush in the context of fast-track authority for trade agreements; on the other hand, due to the increased mobilization and social protest against the FTAA. At the same time, the gravity of the crisis not only demonstrates the destructive effects of the neo-liberal program of counter reforms, but also the brutal consequences of a genuinely neo-colonial project imposed on the Latin American countries. This is one of the causal factors behind the reorganization of the imperialist strategy of domination.

2.2. This 'new colonial pact' implies a gigantic transfer of diverse types of resources towards the big imperialist groups (industrial-commercial-financial companies) and towards a minority of its local partners. This project incorporates a monstrous corruption and a parasitism typical of a dominant class that has more confidence in a bank account opened in the United States, Switzerland or some tax haven, than in its own country. A transfer of wealth of such extent that it involves the destruction of whole social layers and an unprecedented degree of concentration of wealth, social disaster, financial- economic crises and increasingly prolonged recessions. The shock involves an industrial destruction of countries that - like Argentina - had a relative development. The blows of a globalisation of capital that forces the 'underdeveloped' countries to contract their economies in the logic of 'structural adjustment' and the payment of the external debt, to satisfy the trans-national demands of the imperialist countries and their trans-national groups, have destroyed the potential of the region. Virtually everything has been privatised and what remains is for sale: water and oil reserves, electricity, land, mines, ports, health services.

2.3. The structural causes of the economic crisis are accentuated with the imbalance of the four great transformations registered in the region: 1) the increase in the foreign debt from the 1980s onwards; 709,000 billion dollars (1999) while between 1982 and 1998 796,000 billion was paid in interest; the payment on the servicing of the debt jeopardizes the future of the nations since it is equivalent to 39% of GDP and 201% of exports; 2) the destruction of the industrial fabric in many countries, with the backward movement of industrial branches related to development (strategy of import substitution) and with the implantation of sectors closely linked to the export strategy of the big trans-national companies; 3) the deterioration of the terms of trade, that is the respective value of exports in relation to imports (trade deficit); 4) increased poverty and inequality: 44% of the Latin American population are poor, while 90 million people survive on less than two dollars daily, and 10% of the population account for more than 50% of the national income. If for the cynics of the World Economic Forum of Davos and New York, poverty is first of all 'lack of information', the data for the region exposes all the ideological deceits of the owners of money: in the era of the Internet, almost half the Latin American population does not have access to a telephone line and the average period spent in education is 5.2 years.

2.4 The global recession directly affects the Latin American periphery: the growth of exports fell from 12% to 2% in

the last year, foreign investment contracted and the stagnation of growth of GDP at 0.5% (2001) could rise to 1.1% in the best of cases. The debacle is concentrated at the moment in Argentina. The external debt surpasses half of the GDP and is equivalent to five years of exports, a debt that has increased with the scandalous privatisations. The fall in GDP will reach 10% in 2002, in the last two years more than 3,000 companies have closed, unemployment touches 20% while 18 million are living in poverty (of which more than 4 million are destitute). Simultaneously, the costs of the devaluation have been paid by the wage earners, who have lost 40% of their spending power since December 2001. This gigantic robbery of resources, this net transfer of wealth, expropriation of income and privatisation of the State has nevertheless met a colossal response from the popular movement. And it chimes in with a new period of class struggle in South America.

3. The revival of popular struggle

3.1. We are witnessing a revival of popular mass struggles, a reorganization of the social movements and a reconstruction of class consciousness. In other words, the worst period of regression has been surpassed. Although there are still situations of fragmentation and confusion, this process of outright expansion of the boundaries of socialization of the diverse experiences of struggle has a broad and radical character, linking demands and programs that incorporate economic, social, political, democratic, ecological, cultural and ethnic components. This process was not halted by the ideological intoxication of the attack on the Twin Towers and the terrorist campaign of imperialism and the media. On the contrary, social polarization was accentuated following September 11, 2001. The 'argentino' and the popular revolt against the attempted coup d'etat in Venezuela, as much as the growth of massive protests, strikes and caceroleos in Uruguay, and the increasingly broad radical struggles in Paraguay and Bolivia, confirm this new period of class struggle.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/wsfbrazil.jpg>]

Protest at the World Social Forum, Brazil

3.2. These struggles of the social movements raise programs and demands that take on an 'anti-neo-liberal' visibility, but they are situated within a concrete dynamic of the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist character of the resistance. Movements and struggles like that of the Coordination for Defense of Water and Life in Cochabamba, the cocacoleros of Chapare and the peasant marches in Bolivia, the Ecuadorian CONAIE and the MST in Brazil, the Zapatistas in Chiapas, the mobilization impelled by the Democratic Council of the People in Paraguay, the teachers, students and mapuches in Chile, the popular settlers of Vieques, the public employees and popular movements in Colombia. The innumerable mobilizations of trades unionists, peasants (who have had in Via Campesina a fundamental motor), unemployed workers (the example of the piqueteros has extended to several countries) the black movement, women, activists for human rights and against impunity, students and neighbourhood activists, community radios, play the role of articulators of the different dimensions - still partial - of a counter-offensive.

What stands out in this new scenario is the 'resurgence' of the indigenous peoples, their organizations and demands. Indigenous peoples that rose against the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the conquest of America. Also, the continuity of the armed insurgency in Colombia in the context of a war without lull and with tens of thousands of victims. This new period of struggles and radical democratic awareness explains, among other things, the (provisional) victory of the poor masses against the coup in Venezuela. Provisional to the extent that the populist-nationalism of Chávez does not assure the crushing of the counter revolutionary conspiracy, nor the autonomy of the Bolivarian Circles, nor the self-organization of the radically anti-imperialist forces that emerge inside the 'Bolivarian revolution'.

3.3. All these struggles - they are not limited to the periphery of 'social exclusion' or 'deproletarianisation', nor can they be characterized as struggles of an amorphous and eclectic 'multitude' without class reference - include ever

broader sectors of the exploited classes, link up with the growth of a movement of resistance to capitalist globalization, and the campaigns, networks of solidarity and big confrontations against the international financial institutions, confirming simultaneously the emergency of a renewed internationalism (whose massive expression has been seen from Seattle to the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre). It is in this antagonistic movement of class struggle that a new radical social left arises, that not only reflects and writes on 'the socialism of the future' or 'the other possible world' but also participates in the class struggle, carries out rebellions, challenges the relationship of forces, daily exercises the construction of a latent 'counter power'.

3.4. The argentinazo has accelerated this recomposition of the popular movement as well as its radicalisation. It represents a decisive historical event in the course of the class struggle in Latin America. And although one should not underestimate the capacity of the bourgeoisie and imperialism to organize a counter-revolutionary outcome, the force of the popular movement is slowly establishing new forms of rank and file democracy. There is a line that connects the mass struggle in Argentina (and Latin America as a whole) with the revolts of Seattle and Genoa, with the movement against capitalist globalisation, as well as with the insurgencies, the civil disobedience, the protests and, above all, with the formidable radicalisation of ever broader layers of youth on a world-wide scale. And, in the case of Latin America, of the women workers, unemployed, the heads of households, who play an essential role in the recomposition of a radical social left. The argentinazo has strengthened this anti-imperialist climate that is the main threat to the recolonisatory project that the United States has designed around the FTAA.

3.5. The argentinazo has meant a qualitative leap in this revival of the social movements, not only as articulators of the 'anti-neo-liberal' resistance, but in the perspective of construction of an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist movement. In the same way, it has served as a key factor in the delegitimation of the neo-liberal programme and discourse. It is the opening of this revolutionary process, which questions as never before the trans-national role of the IMF and capital, the foreign debt, privatisation, and betrayal of the ruling elites. The multiform revolutionary process that has opened, of experience of direct and decentralized democracy, allows an interaction between the diverse structures that arise: piqueteros, neighbourhood assemblies, groups of small savers, workers in services and factories. This confluence narrows the traditional division between 'employees', 'unemployed' and 'middle-class'.

The experiences of the piquetero movement and neighbourhood assemblies allow the possibility of the construction of a revolutionary movement, a democratic popular power with a socialist perspective. The 'great revolt' has put on the agenda the question of a strategy that links resistance and the struggle for power, representative democracy and/or the principle of revocability, the 'saqueos' as acts of self-subsistence in food. Inclusive experiences of workers self-management, that is, of questioning of private property and the monopoly of the production process.

In Argentina, an immense mass, democratic and radical movement has subverted and dislocated all the mechanisms of political and institutional representation. To put in question the monopoly of capitalist state power and, potentially, express a possibility of advancing towards forms of dual power. In this sense, Trotsky's affirmation assumes its full vigour: 'the masses do not make the revolution with a preconceived plan of society but with a clear feeling of the impossibility of continuing to put up with the old society'.

4. Building an anti-capitalist left

4.1. In Latin America and in particular in South America, an exceptional situation exists. It combines the intensity of a socio-economic crisis and a crisis of the 'neo-liberal model' with an institutional crisis (of governability) and a crisis of bourgeois political leadership. The process of counter-reform has lost all its political and ideological legitimacy, and the broad and radical nature of the popular struggles raises with more force the necessity of a 'programmatic refoundation' in an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist sense.

In this context, both the united front and the unity of the left, like the construction of a revolutionary force with mass implantation and the capacity to lead, are fundamental and immediate tasks of the radical left. These tasks cannot be thought about in the solitude of the 'self-affirmation' of 'our identity'.

And the revolutionary Marxist nuclei in the different organizations, groups and currents of the Fourth International must choose, without hesitation, a political orientation of regrouping of the radical left, of unity of the revolutionary left.

4.2. The extreme polarization of acute class struggle sharpens both the relationships and the debates on the Latin American left around what strategy to follow. And, in particular, it opens a breach in the relationship between social resistance and alternative political project.

The question of articulating social resistance with political project in a strategic perspective of power is back on the agenda with more force and actuality. The unilateral reading of 'reform or revolution' today gives way to the urgency of reform and revolution, for the 'transformation of the prevailing order', as Rosa Luxemburg proposed.

The distance between a radical left, whose confrontational nature is indubitable, and another left which - although continuing to have a broad social base and also of resistance - is located in a strategic horizon focused on the institutions, becomes more evident.

As the time that the first accentuates its 'resistant' and para-institutional characteristics, the second consolidates itself in terms of municipal governments, parliaments and, in some cases, as national electoral option. While it retreats at the programmatic level and adapts itself (in a still conflictual manner) to the rules of the system of domination, it polarizes with the right on the question of 'models of country'. This course is confirmed in the main organizations that make up the Sao Paulo Forum.

4.3. In the left that predominates in the big parties and fronts, a political strategy of class conciliation, 'agreement' and alliances with 'progressive' or directly liberal business sectors. This 'progresismo' increasingly resembles the social liberalism of the 'plural left'. It is the case with the PT, the Frente Amplio and the FSLN.

Caught up in the syndrome 'neither De la R  a, nor Ch  vez, but neither Allende', the majority leaderships advance a program of 'alternative model of development', with emphasis on 'the social' in the 'eradication of poverty' to overcome 'the heavy neo-liberal inheritance': indebtedness, denationalisation, unemployment, poverty, a productive structure dominated by trans-national capital.

Nevertheless, in their programs we see neither a debt moratorium, nor the taking back into state ownership of the public companies that have been privatised and the privatised social security funds, nor a tax reform expropriating capital, nor a break with the conditions imposed by the international financial bodies, nor protectionist policies with a certain disconnection from the 'globalising' logic. Nor do they involve a strategy of democratic rupture' or 'democratic revolution'. What prevails in the vision of the majority leadership is a reformism without 'structural reforms' (in the anti-capitalist sense that Ernest Mandel ascribed to such reforms).

In the majority left there predominates a 'redistributive' vision without radical measures of redistribution of income and wealth.

4.4 Nevertheless, in Latin America the dimension of the crisis and imperialist dominance has acquired such magnitude that the space for 'progresismo' has evaporated. The disastrous experience of the government of the Alliance in Argentina is the best example. And when there appears a timid process of nationalism and social

populism, as in Venezuela, the right, the reactionary sectors of the Church, the military and the multinationals, with imperialism behind them, organize destabilization.

This counter revolutionary operation - of a type which is already spoken of if the Frente Amplio wins in Uruguay - will intensify if the PT gains a victory in Brazil. The right cannot count on force to prevent an electoral triumph by Lula, but it can bring down his government: through destabilization and sabotage, or through complete denaturation. At the moment, the multinationals and the 'investors' speak of 'waiting for six months before making decisions' if faced with a PT government. In this context, the evolution of the PT leadership and Lula, has stopped being 'contradictory', and consolidates itself towards 'social agreement' and a programme of developmentalist 'maturity' without any point of rupture with the logic imposed by capitalist globalisation and imperialism.

4.5 A programmatic 'refoundation' of the Latin American left cannot be carried out in isolation from the 'concrete tasks' in a period of radicalisation of the class struggle. That is, of intervention in the social struggles for 'another possible world'... without capitalism; of linking with the radicalising popular sectors that are in practice questioning private property and constructing alternatives to 'market democracy'; of the battle against the posibilismo that today permeates the majority leaderships of the left and the defeatism and loss of self-esteem that permeates the Marxist and revolutionary forces.

This 'transitional program' takes up questions like the character assumed by economic recolonisation and the question of national sovereignty (concrete anti-imperialism); the reformulation of processes of regional integration as alternative to the FTAA (a project for genuine development); the non-payment of the debt; the fight against privatisation; the question of political democracy, of re-appropriation of the confiscated rights, as well as the character, scope and limits of an orientation of participatory democracy at local or municipal level (the Latin American left governs capital cities as well as small towns in Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, or Colombia); the relation between urban and rural struggles; the relation between social resistance and political organization; the new forms acquired by the 'subjects' that are reproduced in the heat of the fragmentation of the working class (piqueteros, popular assemblies, land and housing squatters, experiences of self-defence, districts which fight for services, spaces for the young, women who organize self-sufficiency, the different experiences of the barter economy); the policies of social and political alliances (in the context of a programmatic proposal of a united front); the options for construction of organizations of the revolutionary left.

4.6 To construct in the present context a revolutionary force with mass implantation and leadership capacity assumes an immediate character, precisely because the crisis itself accelerates on every front. Without that leading force, the vitality of the social resistance and the radicalisation of a political vanguard enter an impasse, reducing the transforming potentiality to a simple vindication of the 'rebel'.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/marcos.jpg>]

Commandante Marcos - at an impasse?

In Mexico, the Zapatista movement could not translate its capacity of mobilization in the Consultas and Marches into a political alternative of the left. There was no modification of the relationship of forces. The theory of the 'indefinite anti-power' or 'changing the world without taking power' has produced neither a process of radical reforms, nor a revolutionary process. In any case, the political crisis of all the formation and parties in Mexico - accentuated with the election of Fox - points to a recomposition, realignments and the emergence of new options. In this framework, in order to rise to the height of the circumstances, there must be a recomposition and refoundation of the revolutionary and socialist left. A regrouping that transcends the impasse of Zapatismo, and the declining efforts of a 'Cardenista left' that seeks to transform a PRD mired in the logic of institutionalism, clientelism, conciliation, corruption, and compromised with 'governability'.

In Argentina, the lack of this leading force is the main factor holding things back. The different 'Trotskyisms' (with the

partial exception of the MAS), use the 'revolutionary crisis' and the various scenarios of popular struggle, workers' self-organization and direct popular democracy, to impose themselves on the neighbourhood assemblies, create their collaterals in the piquetero movement and recruit new militants. Without taking concrete steps towards a project of unity of the anti-capitalist left with 'Autodeterminación y Libertad' (Zamora).

This favours, partially, the projects of 'horizontality' and questioning of the political organizations of the 'traditional' left. In Ecuador, the crisis and rupture of Pachakutik, and the conciliatory tendencies that have appeared in the CONAIE, have prevented the enormous insurrectionary potentiality of the social movement from being capitalized on.

In Colombia - in the middle of a war - the Frente Social y Político takes its distance from the militarist strategy of the FARC and the ELN - and approaches a strengthened version of social democracy after the electoral constitution of the Polo Democrático.

The right turn of the Frente Amplio has left almost in isolation a Corriente de Izquierda which, in spite of its weaknesses and internal contradictions, maintains a horizon of questioning of reformism from a radical perspective.

4.7 Furthermore, the construction of this leading force is, also, decisive to dispute with the strategy and programme of reformism and the social democratic and social-liberal tendencies on the left. And, in particular, to prepare the popular movement for the confrontation with the bourgeois right and imperialism. Because if we say that there is a new rise of popular mobilization and a sharpening of the class struggle, we also recognize the counter tendencies: democratic authoritarianism, democratic regressions, selective or massive repression, destabilization of left or populist-nationalist governments, counter revolutionary outcomes.

This leading force is fundamental to impel a process of massive self-organization whose universal characteristic responds to periods of intense and prolonged mobilization. Also to organize the self-defence of the struggles and to criticize the reformist illusions of the institutional 'change' without confrontation and violence.

4.8 We are in favour of the construction of the 'hard core' of the left and the movements of antagonism and resistance. This perspective cannot be constructed on the basis of a 'small group pathology' nor by supplanting strategic thought and audacious initiatives for the defence of 'our Fourth Internationalist identity'. The frameworks and militants of the Fourth International committed to playing a role in the construction of this leading force face a double task.

On the one hand, to contribute to maintaining and strengthening the unity of the left and popular (in a broad sense) forces; they take part in the (re) construction of a left camp as alternative to the conciliatory currents in formations of broad unity (PT, Frente Amplio, Frente Social y Político). At the same time, they do not lose sight of the hypothesis of crisis and rupture of this broad left to the extent that their program and strategy simultaneously comes up against the radicalism of the social resistance and the popular demands.

Simultaneously, and although with different rhythms and dimensions, they act with a perspective of regroupment of the revolutionary left as expression of the radicalism of the social resistance. This perspective of radical political regroupment is expressed in new experiences like the Corriente de Izquierda (Uruguay), Presentes por el Socialismo (Colombia) the Frente Socialista (Puerto Rico) and the Convergencia Popular Socialista (Paraguay).

4.9 In this social context of crisis and struggle, the forces of the Fourth International have an active role. They promote and in many cases they organize these daily popular struggles. They participate in all the mobilizations, campaigns of solidarity, networks and forums that express the different experiences of resistance, as well as spaces of reflection of the social experiences and programmatic elaboration as is the case with the World Social Forum; but

The current situation and the tasks of revolutionaries

also in ATTAC, the World March of Women, opposition to the FTAA, the campaign for non-payment of the debt, against Plan Colombia, the Sao Paulo Forum, in class struggle trade union currents and co-ordinations of social movements (Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Uruguay).

These experiences also allow the enrichment of the political and programmatic accumulation of the Fourth International itself, as long as it is able to establish a relation of give and take, of interchange, proposals and common tasks for reflection and action.

This perspective of regroupment of the radical and anti-capitalist forces demands that we locate our accumulated experience in a dimension of revolutionary pluralism, that transcends our own organizational borders.

A perspective that is located in a period where political and social confrontations are accelerating. As much as the crises and the self-critical recompositions of revolutionary currents, including some originating from the diverse 'Trotskyisms'. From this follows the necessity of creating networks and agreements that allow the socialization of the different experiences and political-strategic options; and the necessity of opening our 'instances' and abandoning microclimates of paralysing 'self affirmation'.

It is true that 'our tasks' are located in a context plagued with difficulties like approaching in a timely and systematic manner the new problems of analysis, of tactical options, programmatic redefinitions and strategic approaches. And in a situation where our institutional visibility (with the exception of Brazil) is very weak.

Thus, the organizations of the Fourth International are constructed in situations where tensions and ruptures have not been absent, and by processes where nuclei of militants with experience and continuity are combined with militants who come from other traditions and experiences of struggle, or with the incorporation of radical young people who dynamise reflection and action. To tune into or to administer this diversity generates conflicts and confusions on the political options to take. Nevertheless, our forces in the continent continue to be involved as much in the struggles of the social movements as in the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist political combats.