

## **Introduction for the WIN debate on Sunday, July 4, 2021**

In recent weeks, several important events, stemming from the mobilization of large proletarian masses demanding democracy, have taken place in Latin America.

**In Colombia**, on April 28 a wave of mass strikes and protests erupted, initially for the repeal of neoliberal tax reform. The repression, killing hundreds and hundreds, and the withdrawal of the reform project, did not stop the movement which became a revolutionary wave calling into question the very existence of a military-police state, mafia and criminal.

The struggle is organized around rally centers and roadblocks, rallied by the precarious, the natives, the unemployed youth, the students, the poor. A first centralized expression of the movement was brought especially by the unions, but their leadership hesitated between negotiations, calls for calm and calls for days of general strike, which no longer corresponds to the real form of the movement, the sectors on strike having polarized large masses of young people, unemployed and Indians.

From the Cali region a new form of self-organization emerged, which had emerged in Bolivia in 1971: Popular Assemblies regrouping into a **National Popular Assembly**. Its first meeting was held June 6-8 and the second is called for July 17-19. There are delegates elected from neighborhoods or workplaces as well as delegates from the most diverse organizations, trade unions, women, natives, sometimes religious, and delegates from roadblocks and assembly points. Local People's Assemblies and the National People's Assembly want to organize the **paro**, on a prolonged basis, with the aim of ousting Duque from power. This is, it must be said, a proletarian revolution aimed at democracy, and tackling in its rise all questions concerning the organization of society.

**In Peru**, a different process results in creating the conditions for a revolutionary crisis. The presidential elections of June 6 saw the victory, against the corrupt ultra-liberal Keiko Fujimori, of Pedro Castillo, a non-party candidate but clearly marked on the left, whose popularity stems from the fact that he led a general strike of teachers in 2017 - Pedro Castillo is, however, a conservative Catholic when it comes to societal issues (the mores) and women's rights. The mass of peasants, wage earners and the poor people consider him as their president and begin to move. The right and the rich oligarchy want to drive him out as soon as possible.

**In Chile**, the mass mobilizations at the end of 2019, confronting the army and carrying out the general strike, finally imposed the election of a constituent assembly, but not having full democratic powers since the capitalist state apparatus and the army - that of Pinochet - are still there. The parties in power, all the right and the bourgeois parties were defeated by the popular vote, which at the same time favored certain traditional left parties, in particular the PC whose most of the known representatives today are women, and “independent” candidates often from popular mobilizations. The question now is that of the full sovereignty of this constituent assembly, vis-à-vis the state apparatus and the army still in place as well as vis-à-vis the imperialist multinationals.

We focus here only on the countries where popular movements, with revolutionary reach, have occurred recently and have had the most power, but no Latin American state today is spared by the wave of social uprisings. demanding a real democracy, the end of misery and corruption. Nicaragua, Haiti, Ecuador, Bolivia where the MAS has returned to power but having lost popular confidence, Venezuela, all are concerned.

We must say a word **about Brazil** because the victory of Jair Bolsonaro at the end of 2017, coming after that of Trump in the United States, and after the imprisonment of the historic leader of the PT and former president of Brazil Lula, was a defeat for the world labor movement. and weighs on the balance of power across the continent. But the catastrophic handling of the pandemic under Bolsonaro is currently producing a wave of protests with the clear slogan: down with Bolsonaro, Bolsonaro out ! The weight of Brazil and its working class means that if the masses in this country started to have the same level of activity in the forms of Colombia, Peru or Chile, then one could speak of a revolutionary situation in this country and at the scale of the whole continent. Be careful, this is not or not yet the case.

Some important political remarks need to be made to engage in a strategic discussion on these situations.

**First**, these revolutionary or pre-revolutionary crises are already coming a long way. At the end of 2019, mass movements questioned the capitalist states and raised the question of power in many countries of the Near and Middle East, in Algeria, in Sudan, and in many countries of Latin America. Following the year 2019, the pandemic fell. This initially stifled or served to stifle popular movements, but this was only partial and eventually these movements picked up again, often to the point where they had stopped at the end of 2019, as in Colombia. The Colombian paro is the result

of the general strike, the first in the history of this country for decades, at the end of 2019. The election of a constituent assembly in Chile, the crisis in Bolivia, and also the rise of Pedro Castillo in Peru, also come from this same wave.

In all these movements, the use by the masses of old traditional organizations, like the Chilean CP and probably still the Brazilian PT, combines and is often dominated by the appearance of Soviet-type forms of self-organization, but in the conditions of Latin America in the twenty-first century, giving a great place, often even the first place, to the organizations of neighborhoods, villages, and indigenous communities.

**Second**, one aspect of this wave is also its very strong feminist dimension. Chile and Argentina in particular have seen massive movements opposing the Catholic Church on issues of women's right to control over their bodies. However, this question has long been a weak point of movements influenced by *liberation theology*, and conservative positions, dangerous for the cohesion of mass movements of which women are a decisive component, are supported both by Catholic sectors. and especially by the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. Pedro Castillo's attachment to the patriarchy can thus quickly become a problem.

**Third**, since the fall of 2019 the popular revolt movements, against poverty and corruption and for democracy, have in fact made no distinction between neoliberal regimes and regimes claiming to be "anti-imperialist". Nicaragua provides a sad example of a typically neoliberal corruption led by a political clan coming from the left. The people of Venezuela, victims of plunder and misery, are just as revolted as that of Colombia. Cuba, which liberalizes its own economy, is no longer the fulcrum and benchmark it once was, even if a US aggression against Cuba would see large masses rise.

Global warming, with the destruction of the Amazon and the melting of the Andean glaciers, raises the question of an economy that is turning away from extractivism and the predation of natural resources, timber and soil. This is incompatible with the domination of capital, and also incompatible with the "Andean capitalism" of the former leader of the MAS and Bolivian president Morales, theorized by its vice-president Garcia Linera, which is based on the extraction and sale of raw materials.

**Last point:** the social content of all these movements is proletarian, in the broad sense, and the forms of organization are for us Soviet forms (popular committees, popular assemblies, strike

committees) adapted to a social situation where the majority of the proletariat is often unemployed or insecure, precarious. Global demands are democratic: outside the power in place, outside the military, outside the corrupt, constituent assemblies. This democratic content is fundamental and in no way diminishes the proletarian content with anti-capitalist potential of these movements. True democracy is indeed incompatible with capitalism, and a true constituent assembly demands that it must not be under the control of a state apparatus or a president, that it is not granted, but that it must be elected under the control of the popular committees, mandated by the social sectors in struggle and subjected to their pressure.