The Indigenous and Popular Uprising, a Victory over Neoliberalism

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For two weeks the indigenous and popular uprising took place in the country in opposition to the neoliberal counter-reform measures proclaimed by President Moreno.

The final combats of the struggle of the workers and peoples that took place in the days immediately after the enactment of Decree 883 and the announcement of the Productive Project for the Revival of the Economy lasted twelve days; they shook up the whole society and the country. They culminated in the repeal of the neoliberal measures, the freeing of fuel prices and the suspension of the labor reforms, achieving a victory of historic significance.

**The country in the context of the uprising**

To deal with the fiscal crisis and the huge public debt left by Rafael Correa, the neoliberal government of Moreno signed an agreement with the IMF, which would supposedly help to change the expensive debt for cheap debt with the multilateral credit agencies.

This agreement meant that credits would be approved by the IMF itself, by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development
Bank (IDB) and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), which would be made effective through partial disbursements within three years. This agreement required the country to submit to the policies and dictates of the IMF with the aim of "remedying the fiscal crisis and promoting the supposed development of the economy." This would affect the living conditions of the workers and peoples.

These policies force the government to mainly implement the readjustment of the salaries of the public sector, the expansion of legislation for labor flexibility, the restriction and elimination of the rights of the workers, hourly contracts, in plain language the layoff of more than 200,000 workers and public servants; the elimination of the fuel subsidy system; the reform of the tax system to generalize and increase indirect taxes; the adjustment of rates for services to the citizens; the reduction of public capital spending, of goods and services; the elimination of taxes on currency export; and the sale and concessions of public companies, mainly in communications, oil and electricity.

The government began to comply with the obligations imposed by the IMF; it laid off 53,000 public workers, eliminated the subsidy for premium gasoline, increased the price of extra gasoline [with slightly lower levels of octane than premium – translator’s note], and announced other economic, political and labor measures to comply with the mandates.

These measures led to their rejection by the workers and peoples, their willingness to resist and fight against their implementation. There were some rallies and protests by the various popular social sectors, the unions and associations, but the measures passed. Apparently Moreno had the way clear to comply with the mandates of the IMF and the Chambers of Production.

The discontent of the working masses, the youth, women and peoples simmered and grew. It was their response to their impoverishment, to the high cost of living, the lack of jobs and housing, the high costs of education and health care. It showed the discontent of the people and led to the loss of credibility of the government, from the 70% that it had reached at the peak of its denunciation of the corruption of Correa’s government, to less than 20% before the uprising.

In April of 2019, the National Convention of the FUT [United Workers’ Front] complied with the mandate of the rank-and-file workers to resist and fight against the IMF policies; it proposed al-
ternative measures to confront the crisis without affecting the workers and people; it defended the right to strike and rejected labor flexibility. It called for a national strike to bar the way to the neoliberal policies.

On May 1, there was a first big demonstration of the determination of the workers to stop the neoliberal measures; this was followed by the mobilizations of June 6 and September 5 that prepared the people's willingness to fight for their rights; the hunger strike of the retirees, the mobilizations of the interns on rotation, the demonstrations of the peasants and indigenous people in the province of Bolívar in opposition to large-scale mining, the marches in the Province of Sucumbíos, demanding a solution to their problems, and the combative provincial strike in Carchi, among many others, were examples of the discontent of the masses and the struggle for their interests and rights.

The indigenous peoples and nationalities, led by CONAIE [National Confederation of the Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador], had been demanding from the government the fulfillment of its signed promises and commitments; they debated among their ranks, in their communities and on their lands; they demanded the right to resist and finally, in September, they officially broke with the government.

The fiscal crisis was sharpening, the government had to go into debt, it contracted harsh loans from China, it issued bonds and only managed to pay the debt service, wages and salaries; it continued and increased the debt of the provincial and municipal governments, with the IESS [Ecuadorian Social Security Institute] and the universities. The country’s risk index increased, making it more expensive and difficult to obtain new loans. The IMF carried out periodic evaluations and demanded the full implementation of the agreements; the business owners and bankers also demanded measures in favor of their interests, such as labor flexibility and the reduction or elimination of taxes.

It is an open secret that the government did not have the resources to pay salaries in November, December and the thirteenth salary [a bonus of one month’s salary – translator’s note]; it was rushed into drawing up the 2020 budget, which had to be approved in November.

Moreno, like all the governments of the bourgeoisie, took the path of placing the crisis on the backs of the workers; he decided to
comply all at once with the neoliberal policies demanded by the IMF.

He began an ideological offensive, using all means, regarding the seriousness of the country's situation, the need for unity of all Ecuadorians, the sacrifice of all to save the current situation and obtain benefits in the medium-term future, to ensure social progress and the economic development of the country. He announced that laws and decrees were being prepared which required dialogue and the understanding of all; and, indeed, he talked with the business owners and the representatives of the multilateral credit agencies, with the bourgeois political parties, and he turned a deaf ear to the demands and proposals of the workers, the indigenous peoples and nationalities, the revolutionary left-wing political parties and organizations.

On October 1, 2019, Moreno, the vast majority of business owners and bankers, the bourgeois political parties and the IMF dealt the final blow: the enactment of Decree 883 and the announcement of the Project of Economic Growth.

Decree 883 eliminated fuel, gasoline and diesel subsidies and freed prices according to supply and demand; it raised fares. The Project of Economic Growth proposed a decrease in taxes for the business owners, the reduction of wages, the decrease in vacations and holidays for public sector workers, the establishment of hourly contracts.

He boasted of a historic decision taken up by the country for 40 years. That this was a fair measure, which repealed the policy of subsidies, which benefited the rich, which does not exist in any Latin American country except Venezuela, which is bankrupt; that the fares had not been changed in almost 20 years; that it was a sacrifice of all, which would later lead to the progress and development of the country, for the benefit of the poorest people, particularly the peasants. He claimed that the elimination of subsidies would affect smugglers, that it would reduce the consumption of fossil fuels in favor of caring for the environment and nature.

The capitalist class closed ranks with this decision of the president; it applauded him; it said that political sensibility had triumphed, it praised Moreno's will and courage; the IMF, the World Bank and the IDB applauded him. Trump and the bourgeois governments of Latin America celebrated the decision and recommended it as an example for the development and progress of their countries.
The discontent, indignation and the decision to protest and fight raised the consciousness of the Ecuadorians throughout the country.

The Unitary Collective of Social Organizations, the workers and trade unionists organized in the FUT and the Popular Front, the peasants, the organizations of poor neighborhood residents, small merchants, teachers, youth and women, the indigenous peoples and nationalities led by the CONAIE prepared to respond with demonstrations and struggles against the neoliberal measures. The political parties and organizations of the left, legal or not, mobilized their forces for the popular struggle against neoliberalism.

The popular fights begin to develop into an uprising

On October 2, a combative demonstration in the streets by Popular Unity rejected the rise in fuel costs and the reduction of labor rights; it became the first expression of the decision of the people to put an end to the neoliberal measures. They launched the slogan that later became generalized in the course of the uprising: Neither Moreno nor Correa; Only the People Can Save the People.

The unions, the indigenous communities, peasant associations, neighborhood organizations and small merchants, teachers and students discussed what to do and how to do it to defend their lives and rights. The class struggle was developing in a general way and reached high levels.

The strike of the transport workers

The transport workers declared a stoppage of activities that was almost completely successful starting at midnight of October 3. All interprovincial passenger and cargo transport, urban transport buses and taxis, vans that carry cargo and passengers were paralyzed. The taxi drivers, the vast majority of whom are salaried workers or owners of a single cab, were the main actors on the picket lines, bonfires and barricades throughout the country. The transport bosses unleashed a verbal war that threatened the indefinite continuation of the strike unless Decree 883 was repealed.

The state of emergency was established, several constitutional guarantees were suspended and the armed forces took part in the repression, according to them to preserve peace.

The transportation of cargo and passengers is in the hands of big business owners who possess fleets of trucks, buses, vans and
taxis; the work of driving is done by salaried drivers. There are cooperatives made up of owners of a single unit who are incorporated into the work of transport. The leaders of the association of transport workers are the big business owners, who decreed the stoppage of activities based on their interests, as a means of pressure to get a rise in fares and freight charges, as in fact happened. The strike was suspended after 48 hours. The government claimed victory; it believed that, once the force of the mobilization of transport workers was ended, this would lead to the end of the indigenous and popular mobilization that was growing throughout the country.

Not all the transport workers were willing to stop the strike; in several provinces they continued in the struggle, mainly, the cargo vans and taxi drivers. In fact, the demands of the transport strike had not been met; Decree 883 was still in effect and the declarations of its validity and legality were repeated by the government; behind the scenes, agreements were established for the increase in fares.

All movement continued to be paralyzed, not by the decision of the associations of transport workers but by the development of the struggle of the indigenous people, the workers and youth that was developing in all the provinces.

The protest becomes widespread

The demonstrations that were taking place in the cities and the countryside saw in the strike of the transport workers an important way to channel the discontent and indignation of the people to the fight against the neoliberal measures.

The student youth took to the streets of Quito; the workers demonstrated against the measures. In the course of the struggle, the indigenous people, the workers and youth understood that they could no longer bear the costs of the crisis and the harm of corruption; they learned that the recovery of their rights and the achievement of their demands could only be the result of their own action, of the mobilizations and struggle. The government only understood the language of protest; the dialogue that it proclaimed was with the business owners and bankers; it was to strike at the economy of the people, of the poor. The slogans were repeated everywhere: "the struggle is the way," "only the people can save the people."

In most cities, but mainly in Quito, the students and teachers, the small merchants, youth and women took to the streets to protest
against the neoliberal measures; the first confrontations with the police took place.

On October 4, 2019, the Collective of Social Organizations made up of the CONAIE, the FUT and the Popular Front proclaimed the indigenous uprising, the national strike for October 9, and the decision was made that the mobilizations begin immediately and **October was declared the Month of Resistance and Struggle.**

The political parties and organizations of the revolutionary left, the Pachakutik, Popular Unity, PCMLE and other revolutionary parties and organizations, the ecologists, the Yasunidos [supporters of the Yasuni National Park], the women’s organizations and movements were actively involved in the social struggle. The militants of the revolutionary left were always in the front ranks of the demonstrations, in the debates and proposals.

An important group of left-wing intellectuals joined ranks with the popular struggle; some of them were directly involved in the mobilizations, most of them decisively supported them, they wrote and commented on the development of the struggle, they contributed to the analysis of the economic and political circumstances. They were a timely response to the statements and comments of the bourgeoisie, the mainstream media, the ideologues and panegyrists of neoliberalism.

President Moreno transferred the Government Headquarters to Guayaquil, supposedly to safeguard and defend the city of Quito, to preserve peace and tranquility. In fact he fled from the anger of the peoples and youth, he took refuge in the stronghold of the Social Christians [Guayaquil – translator’s note].

On October 6, a meeting of the Collective of Social Organizations in Latacunca gave the order to take Quito and provided for the indigenous people, the trade unions and popular forces to march on the city.

On October 7 and 8, throughout the country, in the cities and the countryside, fighting actions, rallies, barricades, seizures of highways and squares took place. The first indigenous contingents arrived in Quito and took possession of the El Arbolito Park and the premises of the House of Culture. The Central, Catholic, National Polytechnic and Salesian Universities hosted and supplied the indigenous fighters. The capital became the epicenter of the struggle that was developing in all the provinces.
Cuenca, Riobamba, Ambato, Latacunga, Ibarra and Guayaquil were the main scenes of the combat of the youth, the indigenous people, the workers and the poor neighborhood residents.

In their communities and territories, the indigenous people and peasants sponsored the debate and discussion; they made decisions and went into action. They organized pickets and barricades, closed main and roads secondary, collected food, supplies and materials of resistance, crowbars and used eucalyptus branches to counteract the tear gas; all to take part in the fight and bring them to the comrades who were concentrated in Quito.

The assemblies discussed how to strengthen and advance the struggle; the youth, men and women, the adults signed up to go to Quito, they got the agreement of the community and said goodbye in the midst of cheers because they were going to the first trenches of combat, to the capital of the Republic.

This was an uprising that took place in the communities and marched to the provincial capitals where the indigenous people and peasants arrived, made their proclamations and received the support and solidarity of the poor residents, of the democratic men and women. Within hours they occupied the cities; large marches and
mobilizations made greater by the workers and youth, by the women, students and teachers were carried out. The indigenous people took over the governorships in 10 provincial capitals and remained there throughout the uprising; in some cities such as El Puyo this occupation lasted for several days until the governor resigned. These were feats of the popular struggle in Ecuador that had never been seen before.

The indigenous people who were concentrated in Quito became the main protagonists of the courageous days of struggle that took place in the country.

The indigenous people of Tungurahua took over the hills where the television and radio antennas were located and interrupted communications.

Various cities, provincial capitals such as Cuenca, Riobamba, Ambato, Latacunga and Ibarra were blockaded by the protesters; it was not possible to leave or enter them. The residents of these cities understood the situation and sought their own supplies. The bourgeois press, the government and the chambers of production condemned these actions as expressions of vandalism. They organized an air bridge to supply Cuenca and militarized caravans to bring food and medicine to other cities.
In several parts of the country, in the cities and countryside, the protesters and mainly the forces of the indigenous movement, supported by the size of the mobilizations, surrounded and detained the police and military; they were released after negotiations, together with the authorities and repressive forces. The protesters did not mistreat much less torture the detainees.

Mainly in Guayaquil, but also in other cities there were acts of vandalism by delinquents who took advantage of the circumstances to loot supermarkets and stores. The Latin Kings gang was active in the loottings. These events were taken advantage of by the government, the bourgeois political parties and the media to attribute them to the indigenous people, the workers and the youth who were fighting against the neoliberal measures. They created a whole set of maneuvers to try to delegitimize the protest.

**The national strike was an important milestone in the popular and indigenous uprising**

The national strike called by the FUT, the Popular Front and the CONAIE developed in a widespread manner throughout the national territory.

On October 9 the fight became more general. By their own decision, by a resolution of the union assembly or forced by the popular avalanche and the inability to get to the factories, virtually all enterprises were closed. This paralysis by the working class, the laboring people and the public servants was total, with very few exceptions.

In response to the popular struggle, in the face of the massive character and development of the mobilizations throughout the country, the government decreed a curfew limited to the places where government institutions, strategic enterprises and plants, pipelines, water, electricity and communications functioned. Later, on October 12, a general curfew was declared throughout the country. It warned of criminal penalties that would come if that provision was violated, and the armed forces and police patrolled everywhere.

The national strike was expressed in massive demonstrations in almost all the cities, cantons and provincial capitals.

Among the indigenous forces that arrived in Quito, in the communities and provinces, the contingent of indigenous youth was the majority and showed itself courageously in the various manifestations of combat. They formed the indigenous guard, constituted the ad-
vanced force in the combats; they were provided with shields of cardboard and tol [a type of material – translator’s note], they used rockets [fireworks] and put up firm resistance to the police repression.

The student youth, from colleges and universities, the youth from the popular neighborhoods, who generally do not study or work, the indigenous and mestizo youth who came from the countryside were the most courageous and combative contingent of the mobilizations that took place mainly in Quito, Ibarra, Latacunga, Ambato, Riobamba, Cuenca, Loja and the Galapagos, but they also took place in the other provincial capitals, in Guayaquil, Machala, Portoviejo, Esmeraldas, Santo Domingo, in Orellana, Puyo and Lago Agrio.

A good number of young men and women, secondary and university students and medical students formed a force of support and solidarity for the street fighters: they took care of the children of the indigenous women who were in the mobilizations, provided first aid to those who had been tear-gassed and the injured victims of police repression; they became paramedics; they collected food, water, medicines and provisions.
The inhabitants of the cities who were not in the streets also actively showed their solidarity, mainly with the indigenous people; they went to the centers of concentration, to the El Arbolito Park and the House of Culture with their contributions, blankets, clothes, food, water and medicine.

The biggest and most impressive march was in Quito; tens of thousands of protesters marched through the main streets; the mobilization grew with the inclusion of thousands of people who joined and gave it greater force; the same thing happened in the vast majority of cities. The workers, peoples and youth responded decisively to the call for a national strike.

The call for the national strike and its realization in a general and combative manner constituted the most important struggle of the working class and people in several decades; it was one of the greatest milestones of the popular and indigenous uprising.

**The working women constituted a bulwark of the uprising**

Women make up half the labor force in the cities and the countryside, on the farms and in the factories, in teaching and health care and among the students; as such they became involved in the general struggle, in the combats of the workers, the peoples and the youth; at certain times and places they played the decisive roles in the struggle. Now in the course of the popular and indigenous uprising they rose up as a leading force; they were present in the debate, took the floor and decided, on equal terms with the men, the orientations and plans of combat; they were at the barricades that were erected on the highways, streets and squares, in the mobilizations, in the speeches and the confrontation with repression.

The indigenous women, the women of the working class, the small merchants, the housewives of the popular neighborhoods, the teachers, students and activists in the women's movement made up almost half of the combatants in the popular and indigenous uprising. They were there in each and every time and place of confrontation.

The indigenous women joined with their children; they played logistical roles and took part in the mobilizations, in the front ranks of the clashes with the police and the armed forces.

The women fighters were unified around the objectives of the popular and indigenous uprising; their participation grew through the very dynamic of the fight. One extraordinary part of the uprising
was the impressive march of women through the streets of Quito, strengthening the fighting and raising the intensity of the rebellion.

**The pro-Correa forces tried to take advantage of the muddy waters**

The government of Correa and his administration underwent a process of unmasking. Most Ecuadorians are clear that it was an administration that organized the theft of public funds and was deep into corruption. The people are demanding punishment for all the corrupt ones and the recovery of the appropriate resources, the prosecution and condemnation of Correa.

The pro-Correa forces, exposed before the great majority of Ecuadorians as an expression of corruption and theft, of authoritarianism and repression, still has a certain support among the voters. They are seeking to regain their positions and take advantage of the anti-popular policies of the Moreno government and the agreements with the IMF to show themselves as the political force that is fighting against these measures. In the immediate past, they tried to organize demonstrations and protests; they even decreed a peasant strike that failed. They tried to take advantage of the discontent and struggle of the indigenous people and workers to promote a project of conspiracies and coups which they had been carrying out.

The pro-Correa forces tried to become spokespersons of the general protest; from the very beginning they called for the government's departure, early elections and the crossed death [a provision in the Ecuadorean Constitution that allows the Parliament to remove the President or allows the President to dissolve the Congress – *translator’s note*]. It was a conspiratorial plan to take advantage of the popular struggle, the complicity of some sectors of the bourgeoisie, the local institutions that they led as prefects; they used large material resources to mobilize and pay the protesters.

The pro-Correa forces, the gang of the Latin Kings hired as mercenaries infiltrated the mobilizations, tried to capitalize on them for their purposes; they tried to create confusion and carried out acts of provocation such as the seizure of and setting fire to the Comptroller's Office and the Television Channel Teleamazon.
The political positions of the majority sectors of the indigenous movement, of its leadership, as well as the clear ideological and political positions of the trade union and social organizations making up the FUT and the Popular Front, the firm and consistent positions of the political parties and organizations of the left, as well as the denunciation by the government of the pro-coup attempts of the pro-Correa forces prevented the coup d’état of Rafael Correa from coming to fruition. The slogan, **Neither Moreno Nor Correa, Only the People Can Save the People**, was the battle cry that disarmed the pro-Correa forces in the very course of the development of the struggle. After the mobilizations and the results, the pro-Correa forces were unmasked and isolated by the social struggle, by the demarcation of lines.

**The government and the right-wing tried to orchestrate a diversionist pole.**

The bourgeois political parties, headed by the Social Christians and supported by the government, tried to create a deterrent force, using the masses and raising the slogan of peace and defense of democracy and its institutions.

In Guayaquil, using the public resources, the Mayor's Office and the Prefecture closed the Bridge of National Unity “in order to
prevent the arrival of the indigenous people” who, according to them, were coming to take Guayaquil; they described all the demonstrations of the national strike and the uprising as vandalism; they uttered racist, anti-indigenous statements.

Using large public resources, they organized the so-called the Peace March; they dressed in white and concentrated in the heart of Guayaquil. Neither the large propaganda nor the millions in expenses led to a great march. Just over 15,000 people gathered and held a rally that was the platform for Nebot’s presidential campaign.

The racist declarations of Jaime Nebot revealed him before a good part of the popular sectors as reactionary and authoritarian, his presidential aspirations were lowered; he became, as he himself said, one of the losers in the social confrontation.

These demonstrations were repeated in several cities with little participation; they were the followers of the government and of the right-wing political parties. They had no major significance.

In reality, the divisive attempts of the bourgeoisie, which sought to divert the attention of public opinion and the people, failed completely. These attempts were swept away by the justness of the demands raised by the CONAIE, the FUT and the Popular
Front, by the massive size of the demonstrations, and the identification of the entire capitalist class with the neoliberal measures.

**The repression brutally attacked the social fighters and the masses**

The police repression took on brutal dimensions; it tried to quell the protests with tear gas, with the cavalry, with the onslaught of motorized vehicles and tanks, with rubber bullets, with outrage against the protesters and with arrests. According to the Public Advocate, there were 11 people assassinated, 1,340 injured and 1,152 arrested. These figures do not count those injured and bruised who were treated by paramedics and helped by the population.

When combatants fell, victims of police brutality, the masses involved in the uprising and sizeable social sectors who did not participate directly were outraged and strongly rejected the assassinations. The fallen became heroes, they were paid homage to and the fight resumed with greater courage and determination.

The Police acted arrogantly, following the orders of the President and the Minister of Government.

After the State of Emergency was promulgated, the Armed Forces went out to quell the social protest; they did this in a forceful but measured manner; apparently their commanders did not make the decision to crush the rebellion with fire and sword; their role, in fact, was to contain the popular anger. The existence of officers committed to the pro-Correa forces is now being discussed.

The behavior of the Police and the Armed Forces must be understood with the balance of forces that existed, during and after the uprising. On the one hand, millions of people were mobilized, at different levels, throughout the country. They demanded the repeal of Decree 883; this was the opinion of the majority of Ecuadorians supporting the struggle. On the other hand, the government tried to apply neoliberal measures all at once, not gradually. The President had unmasked himself, contradicting his democratic postures and the politics of dialogue. It was an uprising that grew to great degrees; it was the government that lost the initiative.

The suffocation of the popular struggle with blood and fire could unleash a popular insurrection that might lead to the end of the regime. In these conditions the police used unrestrained repression. The military carried out the work of containment.
Revolt of the popular neighborhoods: a new fighting experience

In the popular neighborhoods, the sound of banging pots rang out from the houses, doors and windows; the residents took to the streets and roamed the neighborhoods, condemning the proposed neoliberal measures and the government, setting tires on fire and putting up barricades. Also in the petty bourgeois neighborhoods the sound of banging pots rang out, demonstrating support for the uprising, in condemnation of the proposed measures, as a social and political expression of the democratic sectors of the middle classes and strata. This was the response of the people to the curfew decreed by the government; they challenged the repression and lost fear.

The residents of the towns close to Quito, of the rural parishes, the villagers, the young people and women became the leaders for shutting down the roads.

During the day on October 12 and 13, the pots fell silent and the popular assemblies, the picket lines and barricades became generalized. Men and women, young people and adults discussed the
nature of the struggle; they condemned the measures, the uprising and courageous struggle of the indigenous peoples was enlivened.

What happened in various cities, but mainly in Quito, Cuenca, Ambato, Latacunga and Ibarra to produce such a revolt in the popular neighborhoods?

These cities were the center for large indigenous, workers, women and youth mobilizations; they intensely experienced the days of struggle and they felt the impact of the brutal repression. These circumstances created outrage and rejection, and inflamed the mood and decision to continue the struggle in their home areas.

The popular neighborhoods are made up of workers, indigenous migrants and peasants, unionized teachers, small merchants, secondary and university students, the unemployed, the poor and the destitute. To a large extent these people are members of unions or of social organizations; they have organizational and fighting experience and the advanced sectors hope to for social change, they agree with the ideas of the left.

The inhabitants of the poor neighborhoods are directly affected by the increase in the cost of living, rising prices of food, medicine, transportation and education and they were unhappy, dissatisfied.
These conditions triggered the dissatisfaction, turning the discontent into struggle, into actions that were based on their own interests and rights. The oppressed people turned into a people in rebellion.

**New and varied forms of struggle**

During the days of the popular and indigenous uprising, between October 2 and 13, tens of thousands of combatants, indigenous peoples, working masses and youth, small merchants, teachers, poor neighborhood resident and housewives involved in the fight against the neoliberal measures deployed numerous new forms of struggle, several of which were the result of the experience accumulated over many years, of the popular workers’ movement, of the combats of the youth; others were the result of the movement's own dynamics, of the lessons learned in the heat of the struggle.

We as proletarian revolutionaries, integrated by day-to-day combat, learned, and directly received the lessons of dozens of thousands of fighters, from the acts of the men and women who participated decisively and fearlessly, demonstrating courage and self-denial in their resistance to gas attacks and who fought back
with stones and shouts, projectiles and shields developed by the combatants themselves.

The community assemblies, debates and decision making: on the march for the continuation of the struggle; the union assemblies, of the indigenous communities, of the peasant and neighborhood organizations, the merchant associations, the university courses to discuss the causes and the reasons for the fight, to counteract the government infiltration and its propagandists showed the significance of the Organization, the importance of discussion, the making of democratic decisions gave them authority and the decision to apply the orientations that were the product of their opinion and will. The rank-and-file assembly was duplicated at the intermediate levels, in the cantons and provinces, in the coordinators that were reconstituted and/or created in the midst of the struggle in the area of the popular and indigenous uprising.

At a general level, in the Agora of the House of Culture, in El Arbolito there were also debates among the proponents of the uprising. There were concrete activities, a tribune was used, opinions were express and decisions made. It did not deal with formal proposals or motions but was a dynamic expression of the events. The
discussions expressed the diversity of opinions about how to move forward, how to achieve the objectives, generally based on the established paths. However, there was no lack of points of view and vacillating proposals that always received a variable response from the most committed forces.

The men and women involved in the social organizations, the people who do not have organized membership and who had joined in the various days of struggle were motivated by the fairness and legitimacy of the cause, by the movement's own development; one sector was emotional, other sectors because they felt identified with the cause; both were in the fights and in the discussions; they resisted, offering opinions, threw stones and raised reasons. The popular uprising incorporated into the struggle the political debate and lessons, the consciousness of the role of unity, organization and struggle. It was a school of political education of the masses.

*The marches along the roads and highways* were a form of struggle involving thousands of peasants and indigenous people, and student youths from the cities. Coming from the countryside in the provinces of Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Bolívar, Tungurahua and Imbabura; from the Amazon in Pastaza and Ñapo they walked along
the highways to get to Quito, to participate directly in the fight. From the countryside and cantons thousands of indigenous people and peasants walked to Cuenca, Riobamba and Latacunga to join the workers and fight together for the same cause, the repeal of Decree 883. As time was pressing, in sections the marchers used vehicles that came from their own communities, vans and small trucks which were part of the logistics of the uprising.

The occupation of strategic sites, with the purpose of making the indigenous struggle visible, such as sites where the radio and television antennas are located in Tungurahua; in the strategic streets and squares of the cities. The purpose of this was to show the rest of the Ecuadorians the courage and the determination of the fight.

In the same way the successive marches were directed towards the National Assembly and to encircle Carondelet [the seat of the government of Ecuador], the taking of the governorships.

The pickets and barricades: In almost all the provinces, in particular in the provincial capitals by the student youths, small merchants, women, popular neighborhood residents, housewives organized decisive actions, small marches and rallies, debates and tribunals, barricades of burning tires. In these days, at the same time as mobilizations were taking place in the center of the cities, in the neighborhoods the struggle actions were increasing, sometimes in each block there was a picket of social fighters.

The fighters, men and women, young people and adults, teenagers joined together in the fighting, in the general mobilizations and neighborhood barricades; they learned how to face tear gas attacks, they used handkerchiefs, the fire produced by burning eucalyptus branches and paper, shields for defense, stones and sticks to repel horses and motorized vehicles. There were injured and prisoners, they were helped by paramedic volunteers.

The size of the protest, the decisiveness of the indigenous masses confronted the Police and the Armed Forces. At some times and places the mobilizations, due to their size, surrounded dozens of police and soldiers and held them back; always respecting the dignity and human rights of the detainees; there was never any abuse much less torture. As a result of negotiations they were released.

These events showed the courage of the protesters, but also their correct behavior towards the prisoners. They show the power
of the masses in action and of course the vulnerability of the forces of repression.

**The workers and the people against neoliberalism; Imperialism and the ruling classes against the people**

The popular and indigenous uprising, the heroic struggle that led to the repeal of the neoliberal measures decreed by President Moreno, polarized Ecuadorian society.

Below, in the popular trenches were the indigenous peoples and nationalities, the workers and peasants, small merchants, teachers and students, the political parties and organizations of the revolutionary left, the alternate media. Above were the government of Moreno, the big business owners and bankers, the chambers of production, the bourgeois political parties, the big media, television and the press, all under the control and monitoring of the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. Department of State: Below were the poor, above were the rich. In the countryside, in the streets and the squares there were hundreds of thousands of fighters from the cities and countryside; in
The Presidential Palace, in the National Assembly, were the enemies of the people, the oppressors.

The capitalist class and their masters, the imperialists, used all means to justify their measures as a necessary and just measure for the country’s development as a historical decision taken by President Moreno, which attacked the indigenous people and workers as enemies of peace and development, as vandals and criminals, as violent and terrorists. They called for calm while ordering repression; they proclaimed peace while decreeing a state of emergency and a curfew.

The social fighters, the combatants and leaders of the popular and indigenous uprising denounced the anti-popular nature of the measures and the economic and labor proposals presented; they proclaimed their right to resist and unmasked the lies of the rulers and their lackeys.

The popular and indigenous uprising turned into one of the sharpest expressions of the class struggle in recent decades; the organization, unity and struggle developed it as a pole of Ecuadorian society and its protagonists are recognized as dedicated fighters.
As events developed, no room was left for intermediate positions. Either one would impose neoliberal policies, or one would fight decisively against them.

The polarization of the society is continuing after the end of uprising. The bourgeoisie is closing ranks against the uprising; it describes it as vandalism, an attack on private property and peace. It condemns the popular struggle, it prosecutes the leaders and it says that these events should never be repeated. The indigenous peoples and nationalities, the workers and peasants that make up the majority of society demand the implementation of the agreements. They are organized and active in the People’s Parliament. **The popular and indigenous uprising has inspired society; it was a historic turning point. It profoundly affected the minds and struggles of the workers, women and youth of Latin America.**

The promulgation of Decree 883 and the announcement of the Bill of Economic Growth which reduced wages, decreased vacations and holidays was the trigger that set off the social struggle that quickly became an avalanche that developed into the general uprising that grew throughout the country.
Why did the opposition to the proposed neoliberal measures grow to such an extent that it defeated the government, the International Monetary Fund, the entreaties of the ruling classes and the bourgeois political parties?

On October 2, when the fight began, it was a turning point in a process of mounting discontent that had begun earlier, in the times of the Correa administration; more recently the mounting discontent has been transformed into protest and struggle by important sectors of the poor and middle peasantry who mobilized in the countryside and roads in a demand for fair prices; by commune members and anti-mining peasants of various provinces, but, mainly in the province of Bolívar; in the popular struggles in the province of Sucumbíos, in the combative paralysis by the workers and the peoples of the province of Carchi.

For several years the discontent, the anger of the masses in response to inequity, injustice, social inequality was contained; unemployment was growing and millions of Ecuadorians, 6 out of 10 of those able to work do not have any kind of employment or are swelling the ranks of the underemployed or casual workers; the cost of living increased steadily and wages were frozen. Hundreds of
thousands of young people who finished secondary school could not enter the universities; the number of those who do not study or work increased; university graduates had no secure jobs.

The whole of society was torn by the privileges of a few and the poverty of millions, the gap between the rich and the millions of poor widened daily.

The neoliberal measures were the trigger for the mass dissatisfaction of the works and youth. The popular and indigenous uprising was the result of millions of Ecuadorians who said no to neoliberal policies.

**The international significance of the popular and indigenous uprising**

The exploitation and oppression by the capitalist class, the tentacles of the monopolies and the imperialist countries affect thousands of millions of workers; they plunder the natural wealth of the dependent countries. The dire effects of capitalism are expressed in the hundreds of millions of unemployed, in mass impoverishment, the spread of hunger and misery to the farthest reaches of the Earth; they closed off These were expressed in some countries in the elec-
tion of alternative governments which were established with the support of the workers, peoples, the youth, political organizations and parties of the left; they proclaimed themselves as "left," "revolutionaries," "21st century socialists" and appeared as alternatives to neoliberalism and the right.

After a few years, these governments were unmasked as another version of capitalism, as reformist proposals that boosted capitalist development and affirmed dependency on imperialism, including towards China and Russia, as well as the United States; they failed to solve the problems of the workers and youth, in the proposal of a new path for social and national liberation.

In some countries, those governments were defeated in elections by the traditional political parties, by the neoliberal right. In those countries, as in the other states where neoliberal governments had always remained, the situation of workers and youth is getting worse day by day. Discontent and dissatisfaction is also growing every day, workers' strikes, youth mobilizations and peasants are developing.
The popular and indigenous uprising of Ecuador that developed in October 2019 was a qualitative leap of the mass movement, a social explosion against neoliberalism.

In that same month of October, in Chile, massive and combative mobilizations of the youth and workers, retirees, teachers and the unemployed developed against neoliberal policies, against the Concertacion [coalition governments] made up of Social Democrats and the liberals that continue developing the "Chilean miracle," as set out by Pinochet.

In Haiti, a struggle of the workers and youth against corruption and tyranny has been developing for months with the objective of overthrowing the government that, supported by Yankee imperialism, is promoting neoliberal policies.

In Colombia, Panama, Peru and Honduras, the workers, peasants and youth have been expressing themselves through strikes and mobilizations in opposition to neoliberalism and corruption.

In Brazil, the workers, youth, democrats and revolutionaries are defending freedom and democracy; they are fighting against the neoliberal policies promoted by the fascist government of Bolsonaro.
In Uruguay a great march of the people was the prelude to the defeat, in the referendum on the proposal for the creation of a repressive force, to supposedly fight insecurity, in reality to quell the popular struggle and protect private property.

In Argentina, the workers and youth defeated neoliberalism at the polls. Despite the bourgeois character of the Kirchner forces, the vast majority of voters embody the opposition to neoliberalism.

In Bolivia, the failure of Morales's social reformist policies has led to social unrest, to the political manipulation of half of the population by liberal, reactionary proposals. Morales's decision, after having been defeated in a referendum, the tampering with electoral results and his self-proclamation as president exacerbated the social and political confrontation. The Armed Forces and the Police intervened; Morales resigned and created a power vacuum which they are trying to resolve by reestablishing the institutions through elections.

In Venezuela, the policies of the government of 21st century socialism are leading the country, its workers and people to a deep economic, social and political crisis that shows the failure of social
reformism and allows reaction to count on the support of a good part of the working masses and the youth.

Throughout all of Latin America, the struggle of the masses in opposition to neoliberalism, the right wing and fascism is gaining strength.

It is becoming clearer, among the advanced sectors of the working class, the young combatants that it is very important to fight against neoliberalism, but that it is necessary to direct these combats against capitalism and for the social transformation, for the revolution and socialism.

Each of the Latin American countries has a concrete, specific reality, in which the social and political forces of the popular camp are confronting common enemies, the capitalist class, in its social democratic version or in its neoliberal politics; however, the community of interests of the working class regardless of the country in which it is producing the wealth, the problems which confront the people and their countries, the imperialist exploitation and its historical and language bonds enable them to develop a tendency towards struggle and unity, given that that they face the same enemies and
policies, that the diverse expressions of struggle support and encourage each other.

The events in Ecuador, the popular and indigenous uprising forms part of this trend; because of the magnitude of its development it was a turning point in the struggle of the workers and peoples in several of the countries of Latin America.

**The protagonists of the popular and indigenous uprising**

These great and heroic days of struggle put an end to the neoliberal measures; they forced the repeal of Decree 883, and reverted to the conditions and prices before the uprising and suspended the labor reforms. The peoples and indigenous nationalities under the leadership of CONAIE, the workers’ movement under the leadership of the United Workers Front (FUT), and the social movement of the workers, peasants, merchants, poor neighborhood residents, teachers and students integrated in the Popular Front (FP) played a leading role. Tens of thousands of indigenous youth, workers, students and unemployed; tens of thousands of indigenous, mestizo and black women, women workers, students and activists of the
women's organizations, as well as thousands of inhabitants of the popular neighborhoods and housewives participated in them.

The Indigenous peoples and nationalities, the CONAIE

From the beginning to the end, the indigenous peoples and nationalities, the indigenous movement played the most important role, under the leadership of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and its regional affiliates, the Confederation of Peoples of the Kichwa Nationality of Ecuador (ECUARRUNARI), the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Coast (CONAICE), and, in addition, the indigenous communities integrated in the Federation of Evangelical Indigenous of Ecuador (FEINE), and the National Federation of Black and Indigenous Peasant Organizations (FENOCIN).

The Spanish conquest was brutally imposed on the indigenous peoples and cultures throughout the continent with the sword and
cross of the Spanish Empire. In the territories that now constitute Ecuador, it meant the crushing of the indigenous people’s resistance, who battled bravely but were defeated due to the superiority of the conquerors’ firearms and horses.

This meant the extermination of hundreds of thousands of people caused by the war of conquest and the introduction of contagious diseases brought from Europe, the subordination of indigenous cultures and the imposition of a strange culture, the Catholic religion, the customs and traditions foreign to the native ideas and knowledge, slavery and the subjection of hundreds of thousands of indigenous people to feudal servitude.

In opposition to the crimes and the cultural and social oppression a passive resistance developed, which occasionally flared up in uprisings aiming to eliminate the chains imposed by the conquerors.

Bloody fights, uprisings, fires and the destruction of the cities founded by the Spaniards developed against the invasion following the conquest. The uprisings were crushed by fire and sword during the conquest. During the 300 years of colonialism, several uprisings took place. Most of them were crushed by repression, death and the hanging of their protagonists. In the Republic, heroic battles were
waged against the oppression of the State of the landowners and the bourgeoisie, and against the tithes imposed by the Catholic Church. Many of these struggles grew into uprisings in which the peoples, men and women, young and old, participated, accompanying the unrelenting struggle of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, with defeats and also new struggles, further defeats and important victories. None of the rights that indigenous peoples and nationalities have now was given by anyone. They were the result of their demands and actions, of the local and national uprisings.

The indigenous movement and especially the CONAIE has been playing a leading role in the social and political life of the peoples of Ecuador.

The indigenous uprising of 1990, in which they demanded land and territory, their cultural and national rights, made them, in fact, actors, with their own voice, in defense of their interests and rights, in the course of building a fraternal and equitable interculturality in the Plurinational State of Ecuador.

The indigenous movement was victorious in 1990. Earlier, the indigenous peoples had written heroic pages of resistance and struggle on a local scale, but that year it was celebrated at the na-
tional level with a great victory, with the winning of territorial spaces in the Amazon, with a new law of agrarian reform and with bilingual intercultural education and, in a special way, it became a social and political reference point for the blacks and mestizos, for the workers of the cities and countryside, and for the youth.

From then on, we in the PCMLE fully grasped the nature of the indigenous movement and the characteristics of its struggles. We reaffirm the concept that the Ecuadorian revolution counts among its protagonists the indigenous peoples and nationalities. We learned through the events that in addition to the demands for land and other immediate material claims, it is necessary and indispensable to grasp the national question, the aspirations and the political and cultural demands of indigenous peoples and nationalities.

The men and women of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, in their vast majority, not only are a part of the working classes, of the creators of wealth, of the rural workers who provide the food for the 17 million Ecuadorians, for the construction and factories workers, but they also play prominent roles in the country's recent history.
In 1992, a new indigenous uprising developed throughout the national territory in commemoration of the 500 years of resistance. It was part of the events of commemoration that took place all over the continent. It rekindled the idea that the so-called "discovery of America" had been in fact the imposition, with the sword and cross, of another culture and other patterns of development. On the contrary, the Spaniards and the ruling classes of the Latin American countries celebrated what they called "the meeting of two worlds" with great fanfare, to celebrate the discovery of new lands and the plundering of their immeasurable riches.

In 1996 and 1997, the indigenous movement led by the CONAIE took an active part in creating the Patriotic Front, which was the deliberative and action body that led the struggles that culminated in the removal of Abdala Bucaram. Battles were waged by the workers and youth, mainly secondary and university students, and democratic men and women throughout the country and principally in Quito. They culminated in the overthrow of the Bucaram government. The social and political crisis that shook society developed and was decided in the streets. The bourgeois parliament endorsed the demands of the workers and youth, who demanded the
removal of the government. The inter-bourgeois contradictions were settled by compromises and agreements within the framework of the bourgeois institutions. The highways, streets and squares were filled with protesters mobilized against the corruption and ineptitude of the rulers. Although they had the strength to overthrow a tyrant, they lacked the strength, leadership and ability to establish a government of one of their own. Once again, the indigenous movement, the CONAIE, played a leading role in these struggles, demonstrating its capacity of protest, of demands, its democratic and patriotic positions, an option for change and its left-wing positions.

In 1998, Jamil Mahuad was elected President of the Republic through a scandalous electoral fraud, pretending to represent a "young leadership," with the aim of dismantling the workers’ movement and, mainly, of isolating the UNE [National Union of Educators], and diverting and manipulating the indigenous movement.

The Mahuad government faced one of the deepest economic crises in history. It established the bank holiday, froze the savings of thousands of Ecuadorians and raised interest rates. In a few months, 16 banks and dozens of savings and credit cooperatives went bankrupt. There was an unprecedented wave of migration, during which
hundreds of thousands of Ecuadorians fled the country because of unemployment and poverty; they went mainly to Spain, Italy and the United States.

The Mahuad administration was resisted and fought by the workers, peoples and youth. Two national strikes took place as well as a popular uprising in the middle of 1999. During those struggles, the Patriotic Front was formed, made up of the FUT, the Popular Front, the CONAIE, dozens of workers’ and peasants’ organizations, and the left-wing political parties and organizations. At the end of 1999, the popular movement grew, the indigenous people played a prominent role, and the Mahuad government was discredited.

In January of 2000, a large indigenous march left their territories, under the banners of democracy and freedom, and against corruption. The march went through the cities and countryside; it received the applause and support of the people and was strengthened with the addition of new volunteers.

They arrived in Quito and took possession of El Arbolito Park, where they spent several nights. They received the support of thousands of Ecuadorians who provided food, blankets and medicines, but above all the encouragement to continue the struggle and the addition of new demonstrators.

The concentration of the indigenous people was strengthened with the constant marches of the youth and workers, who, together with the mobilizations of the indigenous people themselves, marched to the Ministry of Defense and to Carondelet Palace.

The economic crisis intensified to the extreme, to the point that the Sucre [the national currency] was devaluing by thousands day by day; the banks went bankrupt, hundreds of small, medium and large companies closed and thousands of workers became unemployed. Imperialism and the ruling classes found the remedy to the crisis in dollarization [making the U.S. dollar the national currency – translator’s note]. They devalued the Sucre from 15,000 to 25,000 Sucre to the dollar, as parity to dollarize the economy. They hurt millions of Ecuadorians who saw their savings reduced to tiny amounts or disappear. The people more than paid the cost of the crisis.

On January 21, a group of army officers led by Lucio Gutierrez joined the indigenous uprising, changing the rules of the game. A large Assembly elected a Governing Board made up of Colonel
Gutierrez, of the President of the CONAIE, Antonio Vargas, and Judge Solorzano Constantini. That Governing Board lasted a few hours. The Military High Command, the Catholic Church, the National Congress and the bourgeois political parties took advantage of the struggle of the indigenous people and the workers and restored the constitutional succession.

For the first time in the History of the Republic an indigenous person had assumed the responsibility of joining a Government Board. This event symbolically changed the role the indigenous people had been playing; it reshaped the image they had of themselves, and it changed the conceptions and subjectivity of the mestizos and blacks in Ecuadorian society. The indigenous people had risen to the position of a deliberate and decisive historical subject. The bourgeoisie, reaction and the "whites" demonized these events; they began to panic and therefore acted in defense of the institutions and of private property.

In January and February 2001, the country was shaken again by an indigenous uprising and the bold and combative development of the youth movement, which culminated in large demonstrations that raised the highest level of important demands by the social fighters.
In all the actions of the workers for the upholding of democracy and freedom, in all the battles against exploitation and oppression and in opposition to corruption, the indigenous peoples and nationalities participated with their own voice.

The ten years of Correa’s government meant harassment and persecution of the workers and peoples, of the unions and the workers’ committees in the enterprises, of the teachers’ organizations, the UNE, the student organizations, the FESE [Federation of Secondary Students of Ecuador] and FEUE [Federation of University Students of Ecuador], the indigenous movement, mainly the CONAIE. It also meant the co-optation of the leadership of certain organizations and the division of others, the creation of trade unions, trade union federations, organizations of teachers and students that were parallel, organized and led by the government.

In the case of the indigenous movement, the negative action of the Correa administration was persistent. It managed to co-opt some national leaders as well as several intermediate and local leaders. It offered ambassadorships and high positions in the central government, in provincial and municipal bodies, in economic projects for the infrastructure and entrepreneurship. It used threats, persecution,
prosecution of the consistent indigenous leaders; it imprisoned them, it repressed with force the indigenous communities, as in Dayuma and Macas, and during the 2009 indigenous uprising, Bosco Wisuma, an indigenous leader, teacher and activist of the UNE, was assassinated by the police forces.

The Correa administration managed to demobilize a sector of the indigenous movement, to reduce its capacity to resist and fight that had characterized it. It struck at the unity and organization of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, but it could not silence them, tame them, much less destroy them as a social and political subject. It was confronted with resistance, reflection and, in some cases and times, with tactical retreat.

The preparation and development of the popular and indigenous uprising, the massive participation of tens of thousands of indigenous people of the Amazon, the Sierra and the Coast, of their territories, the communes, the indigenous inhabitants of the cities are based on the renewed appreciation of the cultural identity among their members, the recognition of themselves, the meetings among their peers throughout the country, in the cities and countryside.

The indigenous people asserted themselves, once again, as social subjects, as an important part of the peoples of Ecuador, as actors, together with the workers, the mestizos and blacks, in the struggle for social change, as protagonists of the present and builders of the future. The rest of the workers of Ecuador, the mestizos and blacks, adopted a different view of the indigenous people. The ideas of inferiority and cultural limitations became obsolete and disappeared, and the feelings of fraternity and solidarity were brought to life. (These statements do not ignore the persistence of cultural prejudices among the mestizos regarding the inferiority of the indigenous and black people, as well as the existence of ethnocentric and revanchist positions among the indigenous people and blacks.)

The strength of the indigenous movement, of its main organization, the CONAIE, has to do with the sense of national identity, of belonging to the more than one million indigenous people, to the resistance against the discrimination, to the contempt and oppression that were intensified during the Correa administration. The dissatisfaction, rejection and indignation of the indigenous peoples and nationalities grew. They healed their wounds, took up again their traditions of organization and struggle, they entrenched them-
selves in their territories and prepared to fight for their rights in unity of action with the black and mestizo workers, with the women and youth.

With time and the evolution of events, new generations were placed at different levels of leadership of the indigenous movement. New and numerous leaders emerged within the community, in secondary organizations and at the national level. These people were not put in place at random, they are men and women involved in social activities, in the debates, the organization and struggle since their adolescence and who now occupy prominent positions. These are young leaders, who have an important wealth of experience.

The indigenous movement and CONAIE grew further in the course of the uprising and gained more adherents. The rank-and-file of other indigenous organizations, the FEINE and FENOCIN, took part. The movement actively involved tens of thousands of indigenous people who live in the cities and who had been losing their links of identity with their brothers and sisters who remained in the rural community.

The indigenous movement is an expression of a political and cultural nature, CONAIE is an organization of a national nature; the human beings who recognize themselves as indigenous, who form ranks in the movement, who are integrated into the social and community life of the peoples that make up the CONAIE belong, from the class point of view, mostly, to the working classes, to the working class, to agricultural laborers, to small and middle peasants, to artisans and small industrialists, to merchants, who are professors and professionals; therefore they are part of the classes exploited by the class of the capitalists, they are oppressed by the bourgeois state. This class position gives them common interests. As workers and wage earners, they have the common enemy of capitalism; as self-employed workers they have immediate and medium-level differentiated interests; on the other hand, like all peoples of Ecuador, in a similar way to that of the black and mestizo workers, they are permeated by the ideas of the ruling classes, by individualism and the search for the satisfaction of group interests.

This means that both the indigenous movement such as the CONAIE and the other indigenous organizations, they do not constitute a monolithic whole in the ideological and political spheres, that in their ranks there are differentiated opinions, political tendencies and programmatic proposals that can unite against common
enemies and for high national objectives but that, also, they can present debates, fissures and contrary positions.

Several of the indigenous leaders have repeatedly shown that these differences strengthen them, that they are part of their diversity, of pluralism. But, it is evident that among the indigenous peoples and nationalities there are differentiated political proposals, that some of the cadres and the indigenous voters are located in the ranks of the traditional bourgeois parties, the Social-Christians, CREO [Creating Opportunities movement, meaning also “I believe” in Spanish – translator’s note] and, of course, in the political organizations and parties of the revolutionary left, in the party of the proletariat.

**Marxist ideas in the indigenous movement**

The indigenous movement has been forging itself in the resistance to the national oppression of which they are victims.

In the process of development of the indigenous movement, cultural ideas and conceptions are expressed that rescue and reposition the Andean worldview, national identity, community life; Marxist ideas and conceptions are present; and, of course, the ideas
of the ruling classes, individualism, entrepreneurship, the aspiration to accumulate wealth in a personal way; and, also the proposals of the bourgeois political parties.

The Communist Party understood from its foundation the need to organize, unify and lead the struggle of the Ecuadorian working class and indigenous peoples. Several of the leaders and communist militants linked themselves to the life and demands of the indigenous peoples; they participated in their struggles, in the seizure of the plantations, in the organization of the first intercultural schools. In the Communist Party, Dolores Cacuango, Transito Amaguaña, Amadeo Alba and Agustin Cualavisi were indigenous leaders who fought for decades with the guidance of Marxism-Leninism. Many other indigenous leaders were communists. Marxism-Leninism, the revolution and socialism, its objectives and achievements were not separated from the indigenous movement; the ideals of communism raised by the red flags that fluttered on the barricades built by hundreds of indigenous fighters.

Since its foundation, the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party has focused its cadres and members on the organization and struggle of the indigenous peoples and nationalities.
The Socialist Party directed a good part of its political work to the organization of the indigenous movement.

In the uprising of 2019, the “Indigenous Guard” bore on its shields the symbol of communism, the hammer and sickle; the speeches and actions of a good part of the most prominent leaders of the CONAIE and the indigenous movement had a class character, they were definitely from the left. A part of the indigenous youth who fought with determination and courage proclaimed themselves revolutionaries.

The ideas of Marxism, the proposals of the revolution and socialism, have a fruitful reception in a section of the indigenous movement, are bearing fruit in subjectivity and consciousness.

This means that the work of the Party has to be multiplied to better understand the nature and potential of the indigenous movement; it has to knuckle down and develop.

In 2001 in the text, “Ecuador, nation, peoples and emancipation” we said:

“The indigenous peoples are acquiring a greater awareness of their role in the life of the country, they are demanding an active and participatory role, they are assuming the understanding that the elimination of social inequality will be a consequence, the result of their actions united with the organization and the struggle of the blacks and mestizos, of the workers and youth.

“The ruling classes are clear about the power, organization and demands of the indigenous peoples; they know that they have to implement their policies and projects taking into account the existence of the native peoples; that is why they attack and slander them, they try to divide them; but they also have the disposition to win indigenous leaders and groups for their projects.

“The workers and the other forces that are part of the popular movement are certain of having one more organized and combative force for the development of the social and political struggle.

“We revolutionaries are now more aware than before the nature and strength of the indigenous peoples, of the movement that is growing within them, of the revolutionary potential and the need to work together, coordinating ef-
forts and projects, unifying dreams and hopes, fighting together for social and national liberation.”

**The workers, the FUT and the Popular Front**

The working class has been playing an outstanding role in the struggle of the toilers and peoples. It is present in the small and large struggles that are being waged in defense of labor interests and rights, in opposition to tyranny, and for freedom and democracy.

In the fight against neoliberalism that developed since the 1980s, the working class was the protagonist of a dozen national strikes, actively participated in the popular uprisings that overthrew Bucaram, Mahuad and Gutierrez. In the fight against Correa’s government, in the great mobilizations of 2015, the working class organized in the United Workers Front, FUT, the social organizations of the teachers, merchants, and students, centered in the Popular Front, were protagonists of the first order.

Correa’s government, in addition to unleashing an anti-union policy, to imposing anti-labor laws and regulations, worked intensely to co-opt union leaders, to divide the workers, to organizing corporatized employers' union federations. These policies weakened the workers’ and popular movement but did not eliminate it. It was always fighting.

Against the government of Moreno, the FUT emphatically supported the defense of the interests of the workers and the people, the restitution of the trade union rights cut by Correa’s government; it is a determined combatant against the policies ordered by the International Monetary Fund. The Popular Front, the workers' and social organizations that make it up, are raising strong opposition to neoliberal policies.

In opposition to the attempts of Moreno and the business owners to place the crisis left by the Correa administration on the backs of the workers and peoples, through the creation of new taxes, the rise in prices of fuels fares, through the sale of public enterprises, the FUT has always raised its voice in condemnation; it consulted and debated in the union assemblies, it convened several National Conventions and, in the April 2019 Convention, it decided to organize the National Strike in order to curb the neoliberal measures announced by the government.

From the FUT and the Popular Front, activities were developed to seek unity with the indigenous peoples and nationalities, with the
CONAIE in order to reconstitute a great front to organize the fight against neoliberalism imposed by the Moreno government. From the CONAIE there was always a positive response. However, the unitary efforts were made concrete, after several debates, in the course of the October uprising itself.

The successful national strike on October 9 demonstrated the validity of the organization and struggle of the working class and other workers in the cities and countryside. Throughout the country, in the cities and fields, the orientations of the FUT and the Popular Front were fulfilled.

The proposal and the struggle of the workers led by the FUT denounced in a timely manner the labor reforms as the way to strengthen labor flexibility; they raised their proposals with determination and succeeded with these slogans in mobilizing a large part of the workers’ movement. The national strike, the popular and indigenous uprising prevented the carrying out of the labor reforms and then achieved their elimination in the Project of Economic Growth. The popular and indigenous uprising and the national strike were victorious; they achieved their proposed objectives.
In the streets and squares, in the mobilizations and debates, the unity of the workers, the validity of the FUT as the legitimate representation of the trade union movement, as one of the columns of the social and political struggle for freedom and democracy against neoliberalism could be affirmed.

The uprising, in its own development and for the continuation of the struggle, raised the need to affirm the unity between workers and the peoples, the task of consolidating the Collective of Social Organizations and building the Parliament of the Peoples for the discussion of the problems of the masses and the country, to play a more significant role in the destination of the country.

It is essential to continue fighting for unity. It must be understood that there are enemies of this unitary process, that the government, business owners and imperialism are the main interested parties and beneficiaries of this division.

Unity is built in an uninterrupted process; it is never definitively completed; it is necessary to work for it as a programmatic unit, to solidify the links that are forged in action, with decisions adopted democratically among all.
The peasants fought in all the provinces

The poor and middle peasants were expressing their disagreement in mobilizations that demanded a policy of price control for agricultural inputs and for agricultural and livestock production, and, access to water for irrigation, monopolized by the large agricultural entrepreneurs.

On repeated occasions they closed the highways, demonstrated in front of the Ministry of Agriculture, got involved in the demonstrations called by the FUT and the Popular Front.

The cultivators of rice, corn, potato, and milk demanded subsistence prices and the responsibility of the State to create collection centers to avoid abuse by the large merchants; the irrigators carried out mobilizations demanding water for irrigation.

The peasants and artisanal fishers integrated in the Single Federation of Peasant Social Security Affiliates, FEUNASC, have been developing in a sustained manner the defense of Peasant Insurance that the Correa and now the Moreno administration tried to eliminate.

FEUNASSC includes peasants from all the provinces, indigenous, mestizo and black; as such they were integrated into the popular and indigenous uprising. They fought in a special way, led by FEUNASSC in Azuay, Cañar, Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Bolivar and Pichincha; in Guayas, Manabi and Esmeraldas; in Sucumbios and Pastaza; in all the provinces they were integrated into the general mobilizations and they organized concrete actions.

The small merchants fought decisively against the neoliberal measures.

The small merchants make up a large mass of the labor force of the country; they are developing their activity in all the cities; they directly feel the impact of the economic crisis, they are victims of usury and repression by the municipalities; they constitute an important segment, by their number and their struggles, of the popular movement.

The Unitary Central of Retail Merchants, CUCOMITAE is one of the national organizations of small merchants; it is part of the Popular Front and participated actively and courageously in the different days of the popular and indigenous uprising.
In the mobilizations and marches that took place in the different cities, the small merchants were present, flying the flags of the Popular Front; they fought on the barricades and pickets that were organized in the popular districts and markets.

One part of the small merchants joined in the logistic activities, the provision of food and drink; they were present in the activities of solidarity with the wounded caused by the repression.

The struggle strengthened the unity of the CUCOMITAE, contributed to the political education of the rank-and-file, to the understanding of the unity of the workers and peoples, of the need for the struggle for winning and maintaining their rights.

**The youth was a leading protagonist of the uprising**

Ecuadorians between 15 and 30 years old account for about 30% of the population; the vast majority of them are children of city and rural workers, and suffer more directly the impact of inequality and injustice.

Young peasants, indigenous, mestizo and black suffer cultural discrimination and segregation. They lack land and live close to
their parents' house. A part of them have no access to secondary education and only a small proportion can attend university. They do not have assured work all year round; they do not have access to social security, health care, sports and recreation. They have no alternative or opportunity in life. The vast majority of them own cell phones, access the internet and are active in social networks. To a large extent they know the reality beyond their surroundings; they are familiar with general events.

The new generations that live in cities are immersed in the conflicts of society; they are victims of the scourge of capitalism. In recent years, since the Correa administration, hundreds of thousands of boys and girls annually have no access to the public university due to the system of examinations and quotas. More than 1,300,000 young people between the ages of 18 and 30 do not work or study. A good percentage of university graduates cannot find jobs. The youth in these times are living in the era of cybernetics and the internet, in the communications revolution; they spend much of their time on social networks; they have created their own scenario, but they also communicate with the world, with the problems and phenomena of society.
The bourgeois thinkers and analysts have baptized them as "the owners of the world," as millennials and centennials; they enclose them in their own, exclusive, apathetic environment, for which only social networks exist.

Certainly, a sector, perhaps a considerable one, of the new generations are embedded in the world of social networks; they entertain each other and forget society, they are locked in individualism and selfishness. But, an appreciable segment of internet users have also found, in social networks, in the new spaces of communications, a way to integrate into the world, its social problems and concerns.

Young Ecuadorians, in their great majority, are children of the workers of the city and countryside, and as such they bear upon their shoulders the oppression and exploitation of the capitalists. They have no prospects, they cannot imagine, much less build, a life project.

The ideological offensive of the Correa administration, the condemnation of the youth struggle and the promotion of academic meritocracy and efficiency impacted broad strata of youth, to the point of marginalizing them from social and political concerns.
That offensive was left without support due to the force of events: While condemning the “riff-raff,” universities were closed to hundreds of thousands of young people. The youth were left without horizons or hope, without opportunities.

Capitalism and the ruling classes, the laws and institutions, governments and their policies, repressed but did not eliminate the dissatisfaction and rebellion of the youth, they built a dike that held back the dissatisfactions of the working masses and particularly of the new generations.

The neoliberal measures of the Moreno government, the size of the indigenous mobilization, the organization and struggle of the workers were the trigger for the rebellion of the indigenous and peasant youth, of the young workers, of the secondary and university students, of the boys and girls who unleashed their energy and turned them to active participation in the uprising.

The teenagers and young people of the first decades of the millennium learned to fight in the streets; they joined the experienced fighters and became a battering ram in the struggles of the community, in marches and walks, in confrontation with repression, in street fighting, on pickets and barricades, also in logistics and soli-
dativity activities. They used their cell phones, the internet and social networks to coordinate the struggles, to denounce the repression, to spread the struggles and exploits of the popular combatants, to raise the enthusiasm and the decision to continue in struggle.

These facts show that cell phones, the internet and social networks are instruments, tools, weapons that serve the purposes of those who use them. If the capitalists and their lackeys do it, they serve for misinformation, for alienation, for the maintenance of bourgeois ideology and reactionary policies. If they are used by social fighters, leftists and revolutionaries, they serve the cause of the people, of emancipation.

The management of social networks in revolutionary propaganda poses the challenge of learning to better handle these instruments and to socialize their use in a massive way, by the great majority of combatants.

The events in Ecuador showed that youth rebellion was not kidnapped by the new paradigms, by individualism and selfishness, which was repressed and exploded. This new situation poses for the proletarian revolutionaries, for the leaders and members of the Revolutionary Youth of Ecuador, new challenges and great reserves for
the incorporation of the most advanced youth fighters into the revolutionary ranks.

The young people erupted in Ecuador, in the course of the popular and indigenous uprising, they are doing it in Chile, Haiti, Panama, Lebanon and France, they will do so in all countries.

The political parties and organizations of the revolutionary left

The workers' and popular movement, the indigenous movement have in their ranks militants and activists of the political parties and organizations of the revolutionary left; the advanced sectors of the working class, the other working classes, the social organizations of retail merchants, teachers and students, the neighborhood committees, the indigenous peoples and nationalities are integrated into the leftist trend, they are incorporated into the fight for social change.

The popular and indigenous uprising, as well as most of the struggles developed by the workers, peoples and youth are not spontaneous; they are not the result of apoliticism and lack of party spirit and commitment that are proclaimed as the signs of the times, as the denial of the class struggle, as post-modernism declares.

The revolutionary left of Ecuador was struck by the collapse of the Berlin Wall, by the collapse of "real socialism," by the policies and the failure of "21st century socialism," but it was not eliminated; the struggle for the revolution and socialism continued.

The Popular Unity and Pachakutik, the left-wing parties that are registered for the elections, actively participated in the preparation, development and outcome of the popular and indigenous uprising. The leaders and members took part in the debates, in the communes and the unions to organize the resistance and the fight against the anti-popular measures of the regime. They were forthright in denouncing the neoliberal measures and in unmasking the ideological and political offensive of the government and the bourgeois parties that sought to legitimize and justify the measures.

In the debates in all social spheres, in the mobilizations and combats various organizations of revolutionary left, the initiatives and organizations of the ecologists, the Yasunidos, the activists in the women’s organizations participated actively. In fact, on the days of the uprising, unity was forged in action.

These circumstances raise the need, urgency and possibility of discussing problems and alternatives, of arriving at specific agree-
ments and coordination of concrete activities. For this it is necessary to put aside the exclusive and sectarian attitudes, to emphasize the confrontation with the common enemy and to open the debate on immediate proposals and policies and on strategic objectives.

The situation demands an open debate, without conditions. No one can impose their positions; no one should assume the right of veto. Only frank discussion will allow for overcoming the prejudices and assuming unitary policies. We must all understand that the unity of the left is built, not created overnight. It is a goal to pursue, a way to go forward.

**The Party of the Proletariat**

Since the founding of PCMLE, we Marxist-Leninists have been working to bring socialism to the workers' and people's movement, to imbue it with objectivity and consciousness, into the organization and struggle of the masses as a material force capable of opening the path of seizure of power.

From the responsibilities that we communists have in the mass movement, in the rank-and-file and in the leadership of the unions
and social organizations, we have been working for political education, for the construction of an emancipatory political project.

We communists were present in the debates in the peasant communities, in the dispensaries of the Peasant Social Security, in the unions, associations and committees denouncing the class nature of the Moreno government, its adherence to neoliberal policies, to the interests of the big business owners and bankers. We integrated ourselves into the mobilizations, the social fighters; we joined the members of the other organizations of the left.

The members of the Party and of the JRE [Revolutionary Youth of Ecuador] integrated themselves with determination in the different struggles, interacted with the other combatants; they were recognized for their decisiveness and courage, established ideological and political relationships; a good number of former members of the party who were in a state of political passivity enthusiastically joined the various forms of the popular struggle, were reunited with the ideals of the revolution and socialism.

The popular-and indigenous uprising left experiences and lessons, broad scenarios for the work of the communists, new challenges to link the party with the masses, to form the revolutionary
movement of the masses, to develop the political struggle of the workers, to work with and build the Party.

**The popular struggle won victory**

The mobilizations of indigenous people and workers, the emergence of large strata of youth, the incorporation of women and the prominence of poor people grew in size and power; they broke up the coalition of the chambers of production, the government and the bourgeois political parties and forced them to discuss a negotiated solution.

The Parliament of the Peoples that was formed and functioned during the uprising accepted the talks proposed by Moreno; it established that the dialogue had to be direct, without intermediaries, that it should address the repeal of Decree 883; it had to be public, with coverage on the television and in the press. The conversations that ended the popular and indigenous uprising took place before the eyes of the whole country. The people achieved a resounding victory, unprecedented in recent decades. Decree 883 was repealed; fuel prices and public transit fares returned to their previous levels; the vast majority of Ecuadorians applauded the behavior of indigenous leaders.

The popular and indigenous uprising won a great victory, it achieved the repeal of Decree 883 and the suspension of labor reforms; it forged new levels of unity among workers, the indigenous peoples and nationalities; it affirmed the struggle as the path of victory, it constituted a great step in the building of the social and national liberation front.

The days of struggle culminated with the triumph of the popular forces, the indigenous people and the workers, with the defeat of the Moreno government, the chambers of production, the big business owners and bankers, the bourgeois political parties, the International Monetary Fund and U.S. imperialism that openly supported the decisions of the regime.

The diversionary actions that the Social Christians and the government tried to mount, the so-called peace marches could not fulfill their purposes; their inspirers and organizers were repudiated by the majority of workers and democratic sectors.

The intentions of the pro-Correa forces to appear as standard bearers of the social protest were unmasked, as responsible for the situation of impoverishment of the people and the corruption that
looted the public money. In the process, positions were demarcated from the acts of provocation they performed; they were put aside and isolated. Now they pondered their defeat.

As a result of the popular victory, the Peoples' Parliament was established and is in operation; it continues to debate and make decisions in a democratic manner on how to secure the gains achieved, on how to dismantle the agreements with the IMF.

The ideas proclaimed by the mainstream media, bank officials and reactionary political parties are false, claiming that because of the so-called vandal actions of the indigenous people and workers, all the Ecuadorians lost the country; that there are neither victors nor vanquished. These lies correspond to the interest of preserving their privileges, of delegitimizing the struggle of the people and finding reasons to prosecute the leaders of the indigenous people and the workers.

The country celebrated the end of the protests, the return of tranquility, the cancellation of the increases in fuel prices and transit fares.

Clearly, only one battle has been won. The capitalists and their servants remain in power, the oppression and discrimination of the
indigenous and black people, the exploitation of the workers, the social inequities and inequalities continue. The reasons remain to strengthen the social and union organization, to affirm the unity of those below, to continue the struggle for the respect of rights, freedom and democracy, in defense of material interests, and for new social gains.

The most important results are of an ideological and political nature; they are the reaffirmation of the need of trade unions and social organizations, of the importance of unity around common objectives, of the validity of the struggle as a way to win victories. And, more specifically, the understanding of the advanced sectors of channeling the organization and struggle for the overthrow of the powerful, the capitalists and the seizure of popular power.

The workers and peoples wrote one more page of the long struggle for emancipation, they learned in the very course of events to recognize each other as subjects of the same cause.

The events, the development of the struggle and the victory of the popular and indigenous uprising reaffirm the need to strengthen the emancipatory project that integrates the workers, the indigenous peoples and nationalities, the Ecuadorian nation into a powerful
liberating flow that lifts up, in equal measure, the red flag of the workers, the wipala of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, and the tricolor flag.

**Perspectives and tasks**

The popular victory of October establishes a new balance of forces:

- The organization and dynamics of the indigenous movement have been strengthened, becoming a reference point for the workers and the black people.
- The workers’ and popular movement has affirmed itself, the FUT and the Popular Front have been positioned in the movement, the subjectivity and consciousness of the workers and the people.
- The youth and women have broken out as the main subjects of the struggle.
- The fraternal and frank debate has become an important tool to build unity.
- The path of the struggle has been affirmed in popular imagination for winning victories.
• The popular combat has become a source of lessons for the days of struggle in the future.

• The ideas and proposals of the revolutionary left have been taken up among the advanced sectors of the workers and indigenous people, of women and young people.

• After extensive debate among the rank-and-file and at the leadership level the Peoples' Parliament has been approved as an alternative economic proposal to overcome the crisis in the country, it is an initiative that emphasizes the decision that the workers and peoples cannot and should not pay for the crisis; that responsibility should be met by those responsible and the beneficiaries of the crisis, the rich.

Moreno's government has been unmasked as a representative of the dialogue, and blatantly appears as lying and repressive. The bourgeois parties are in disarray. Each one is marching on its own path, is preparing for the elections under new conditions.

The conditions for building the Social Political Front as an alternative for the continuation of the struggle in all fields, in the field
of social mobilization and in the electoral struggle in which it is mandatory to participate are growing and being enhanced.

The party of the proletariat has put forward a new scenario, positive conditions for advancing in the fulfillment of the responsibilities of contributing to the building of the revolutionary movement of the masses, for participating in all times and places in encouraging the struggle of the people and youth, for the dissemination of the proposals of the revolution and socialism, to grow and develop the Party.

**Ecuador, October 2019**