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Indignad@s movement

15-O: global indignation

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The day of October 15 (15-O) was the first coordinated global response to the crisis and saw the emergence of a new international movement. With the revolutions of North Africa as the initial impetus, through an effect of emulation and imitation, the protest reached the periphery of Europe. The Mediterranean world has thus stood at the epicentre of this new wave of social opposition, at a time where we enter a second phase of the crisis which has as its focal point the crisis in the euro zone.

Gradually the rebellion of the indignant has been taking a real international dimension, beyond actions of sympathy and solidarity. First there was the Greek protest movement, prior to the Spanish and the revolts of the Arab world, which integrated the symbolism and the methods of 15 M and inserted its logic in the emerging international dynamics. Later, there has undoubtedly been the start of the protest in United States, still at an early stage, the most important variable for the time being, whose fate will be crucial to the overall development of the movement.

October 15, 2011 was the most important global protest since the big day of global mobilization on February 15, 2003 against the war in Iraq. Of much more modest dimensions, it nonetheless expresses a deeper social dynamic than the historic event against the war which was simultaneously the peak and the end of the upward phase of the international cycle of anti-globalization process which exploded in November 1999 during the Summit of World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, and that had been gestating since the January 1994 Zapatista uprising.

“The world has two superpowers: the United States and world public opinion” wrote the *New York Times* after February 15. Since then, however, the international coordination of protests has languished and instruments launched by the anti-globalization movement like the World Social Forum have lost strength, centrality and practical usefulness. The current context is very different from that in which the anti-globalisation movement emerged at the end of the previous century. This cycle occurs in a systemic crisis of historic dimensions and therefore the depth of the social movement in course and its social roots is undoubtedly greater. The vitality of October 15th in the Spanish state again surprised both domestic and foreign opinion, thus refuting some impressionistic analyses on the crisis in the 15-M movement that had proliferated in recent weeks. We are not dealing with an episodic phenomenon or a temporary one, but the beginning of a new wave of opposition that expresses a deep groundswell that will not evaporate.

The very nature of global capitalism and the magnitude of the contemporary crisis impel the internationalization of social protest. The slogan “United for global change” expresses well this new “internationalism of indignation” that emanates from 15-O, whose challenge is to trigger a global movement to bring about another way out of the current civilizational crisis.

In contrast to the period of anti-globalisation, the interrelationship between the different spatial levels of action, the local, the national and international, is now much stronger. The link between the local and global, the concrete and general is very direct and clear. With the echoes of demonstrations in the Arab world, 15-M broke out as a protest in the Spanish State with demonstrations in several cities. It quickly dispersed geographically to an endless number of neighbourhoods and districts of the big cities. The neighbourhood assemblies which emerged strengthened the feeling of being part of a general movement. Its activity localized global claims and goals of the movement and globalized specific problems. There is a return ticket from the neighbourhood to 15-O and vice-versa.

Since its outbreak the movement has resulted in our country in a strong process of re-politicisation of society and a revival of interest in collective affairs. The indignant tide has not yet achieved enough consistency to provoke a

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change of course and paradigm, but it has resulted in an unprecedented challenge to a very sickly neoliberalism of ailing legitimacy which attempts to socialize the cost of the crisis, something which until a few months ago seemed incontrovertible.

The route that runs from 15-M to 15-O has sent a message of hope in collective ability to influence the grim course of humanity. Indignation is not in vain, it is precisely, as the philosopher Daniel Bensaÿd said, “the opposite of habit and resignation”.