Presentation of the Working Group (Intercoll): "Sovereignty and social movements"

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WHY DOES THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY SHOULD INTEREST SOCIAL MOVEMENTS?

This text aims to provide an open framework for discussion about the question of political sovereignty with a view to boost the work of the working groups on "Sovereignty and social movements." It attempts to address this project from the question of how sovereignty constiture a strategic issue for social movements.

From all sides, people's sovereignty is trampled by the financial markets and the representatives of their interests in international institutions, regional integration and states. To impose their interests and wishes to the people and circumvent the choices that they express through collective deliberation - or even reduce them to zero if necessary - the nominees of financial capitalism powers evolve and act in spaces and linkages institutional, legal and territorial multidimensional and interconnected, that organize and reorganize permanently in terms of principles that borrow more to the critical self-organized system of starling flight than the one of centralization.The European Union (EU) system that combines inter-state relations and political and technocratic institutions (European Commission, European Parliament), legal (EU Court of Justice) and financial (European Central Bank) supranational constitutes, in this matter, an archetype of what can be described, at the scale of a world-region, as a global power acting against people and social movements that express resistance and alternative attempts to resolve concrete problems that they face.

The balance of forces between globalized powers and people must be analyzed while the democratic life of the latter, and the insertion of individuals in the production and work still stay regionalised, except in an asymmetrical movement for hyper-corporate executives and migrants. The first "foraging" poles of wealth in rich clusters according to the opportunities and the latter follow, at the expense of their lives, the dynamic current of value capitalists chains to try to escape their condition of poors and victims of first line of planetary conflicts related to the development of poverty and inequalities, wars or climate change.

This relationship globalized powers/people must also be measured taking into account the fact that states have significantly self-divested many powers they detained in economic and financial sovereignty. Proceeding from the 1970s to the full liberalization of capital operations and the permanent extension of areas of social life "commodified" (transport, food, health, education, environment, etc.), States have switched a dual dynamic of progressive loss of control of their economic control instruments (currency, capital controls, taxation, etc.) and collective regulation of companies (work, social cohesion, industrialization, education, etc.). In doing so, they have undermined their own political and moral legitimacy, as well as their power, leaving markets a growing part of the services they provided to the population and by renouncing to the levers that allowed them to secure and develop their resources.

This situation reduced - de facto - the scope of intervention of popular sovereignty in the economy. Many issues (monetary, financial, etc.) that directly affect the daily lives of people are indeed more sovereignly decided by them, nor by the states that dominate their societies and territories. In doing so, this has, in the process, also degraded the power of action of political forces within the State, especially when it comes to left forces that seek to limit the power of money on the society. Moreover, this situation leads to a weakening of state capacity and institutions to provide protection to individuals, worsening their crisis of legitimacy. This is perfectly identified by peoples and explains why structural abstention in elections is increasing. The decline of political participation actually corresponds to the development of a rational collective behavior in society. People take note of the impotence of politics to ensure the relay of their claims in the State and in the institutions and measure the weakening of state structures against the financial power. This finding is coupled with a clear perception of the role of political parties, especially those which are positioned at the center of sysems of political power and whose interests were merged with those of oligarchies and money, thereby canceling any autonomy of politicy in front of economy and finance.

In this context, the recent and tragic transformation of Greece into a protectorate of financial interests is a further step in that process now largely engaged everywhere. Financial capitalism and political/intellectual "élitocratie", and media-pro system that administers the interests have a political model: market authoritarianism. Democracy is now only heard as a tolerated model until it does not question the frameworks and rules that ensure the primacy of financial interests and the enrichment of hyper-rich. This is what governments must submit to as well as democratic deliberation. In this perspective, the market authoritarianism is a model that promotes the repression – cultural and violent – of social movements and of contestation of the established order.

Faced with this configuration of powers in the world developed for the benefit of the powerful, what should be the action and the contribution of social movements for building a world more fair, more equal, more democratic and more peaceful?

Should they act for the resettlement of the "demos" at the heart of decision-making process, particularly in the state, to provide a method and collective levers of peaceful resolution of the crisis of the world system? Should they commit to a relocation of powers left to finance in the sphere of political sovereignty? The latter may it become a technical humanization of society, economy and the world in the service of a project to build a better world based on the principle of social justice and inclusion of subordinate sectors in the affairs of state - whose function must be to work for the redistribution of wealth - are the engines of prosperity?

But the state - only law subject of sovereignty - is it a force field and a relevant instrument of struggle for social movements or is it rather an instrument of domination, a power preventing the exercise of real democracy?

Is sovereignty a relevant concept or an abstraction, a fiction? Political sovereignty, popular sovereignty, national sovereignty? What are we talking about ? How to inscribe fights for food and energy sovereignty beyond the territorial sovereignty? Is there an effective correlation between sovereignty and democracy in a world shaped by its global economy, the growing interdependence of states and societies, the global spread of a dominant consumer culture and the alteration of traditional forms of state sovereignty (in economic and commercial matters, but also military, collective security, information due to the technological grip, mass spying, etc.)?

The role of social movements should not be, in these circumstances, to contribute, facing the influence of financial capitalism, to build a world society, the emergence of new political communities and the renewal of legal and political forms that govern our societies, beyond the "sovereignty"? Is it possible to transform the global field and beyond, the world, in political

territory? If so, how would be organized the participation and the democratic accountability?

On the contrary, could it be that for the first time in its history, humanity will not be able to build a general democratic political space corresponding to the one it gave birth in economy.

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P.S.

* https://intercoll.net/Why-does-the-issue-of-sovereignty-should-interest-social-movements