

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Juan J. Paz And Miño Cepeda

29.11.2021

Everything for the people, but without the people

The welfare policies that different European countries are implementing – with heavy taxes and redistributive purposes – would be considered in Latin America as excessive attributes of the State, in the eyes of neoliberal business-governments.

The absolute monarchs of Europe, during the time of enlightened despotism (second half of the eighteenth century) and with the purpose of preserving the Ancien Régime, decided to promote policies for the material progress of the nation, but accompanied by social benefits. They served the people, but did not allow any access to power. The phrase that identified them was: "Everything for the people, but without the people."



The triumphs of the European bourgeois revolutions and the establishment of capitalism did not bring new social benefits, because for long decades the workers had terrible wages, strenuous hours and lacked labor rights. However, the constant and growing workers'

struggles during the nineteenth century forced changes and states began to intervene to guarantee minimum rights to workers. Only in this way did wages progress, working hours were reduced, living conditions improved. Among the various nations Germany stood out, under Otto von Bismarck, the "Iron Chancellor" (1871-1890), who, at the same time as he fought socialism and the workers' movement, sought the support of the workers to the Reich by implementing, for the first time in the world, the system of health insurance (1883), accident insurance (1884) and pensions and pensions (1889). financed with contributions from employers, workers and the State. Paradoxically, he was accused of being a "socialist".



Sindicalismo clasista y lucha revolucionaria. Organizaciones obreras y sindicales



Octubre de 1917 – La revolución socialista

Sin duda, la Revolución Rusa (1917) y la instauración del primer Estado socialista de la historia contemporánea, lograron un progreso humano sin precedentes en el gigante país. El temor a una revolución similar fue cortado por los totalitarismos en Italia y Alemania. En EEUU la crisis de los años 30 fue solucionada por Franklin D. Roosevelt a través del

New Deal que implantó un Estado social, con amplios beneficios para los trabajadores, que incluyó la seguridad social. Pero fue la experiencia de la II Guerra Mundial la que determinó el paso de los países europeos a la construcción de los Estados de Bienestar que caracterizaron su progreso económico y el mejoramiento de la vida para las poblaciones.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the man of the New Deal

In essence, it was a consensus between social classes to build the *social market economy*, based, mainly, on strong regulatory capacities of the State, redistributive taxes of wealth, universal public and free services in education, medicine and social security, important labor rights, guarantees to private companies, protection of industrial development. A collective consciousness was thus fostered to maintain and advance the essential benefits of common interest, that is, taken advantage of by both employers and workers. Northern European countries even developed economies identified as "Nordic socialism." The deregulations from the 1980s and particularly those that came after the collapse of Soviet-type socialism, altered many of the past achievements and that is why there was talk of the exhaustion or end of the Welfare States.



Miguel Alandia, "La educación", Monumento a la Revolución Nacional, Fresco Mural, La Paz. Bolivia.

But in Latin America the processes followed other paths. The colonial era brought no social benefits, despite absolute monarchies. The construction of republics was based on primary-export economies and oligarchic states. There were few and isolated changes to affect those forms of domination long maintained by the oligarchies. It was only after the Mexican Constitution of 1917 that the States began to regulate wage labor and impose labor and collective rights, at different rates, in the various countries. With the advance of the twentieth century the first rulers to address the "social question" are the classical populists. But after World War II and the expansion of the Cold War, in Latin America the economic elites judged as "communists" all kinds of claims or social advances, which in Europe were conquered by welfare states. So in the region, forms of class consensus were not cultivated, but dissent and structural conflict were sharpened. Given the region's presidential system, the peoples have trusted some "savior" president, capable of fixing the economy and leading to well-being. But every time any government has attempted social reforms, it has received the unstoppable reactions of the power elites, which prevent any alteration to the enjoyment of their wealth and their control or influence over political power. Historically, this is what explains the radical reactions against the left, social movements and against the rulers of the first progressive cycle in the region during the twenty-first century, on which all legal and institutional darts were thrown to persecute, proscribe, delegitimize and discredit them, so that a similar phenomenon is never repeated. The class consensus in European countries has taken on new expressions in the present and there is talk of "The New Well-being", especially after the dramatic experience of the Covid-19

pandemic. In Europe, it does not occur to anyone to dismantle labor rights to favor business "competitiveness" and even worse to privatize services such as education, medicine and social security. Nor shrink States to the point of abolishing the tax system that guarantees the maintenance of resources for works and services of collective benefit. There is a generalized mentality regarding these issues, which also drags down entrepreneurs, despite the penetration of neoliberal ideas that has also occurred. In Latin America, little is known about the progress towards the New Welfare, an issue that illustrates possible paths for the region, where the ideal of a U.S.-type economy predominates. In Italy, for example, on November 18 (2021) the "single subsidy for children" was approved, a monthly allowance of up to 175 euros, which drops to 85 for adult children between 18 and 21 years old. It will be received by families depending on the number of children, the presence of the disabled, the income and work of both

parents(<https://bit.ly/3x9pNeu>). It is a "bonus" that in Latin America would be seen as a more or less despicable "populist" act. And, in addition, it is a true universal income for all families with children, for which an initial sum of 20 billion euros has been allocated. Other countries such as Germany and France have similar subsidies. And the Nordic countries include a series of "bonuses" for home, studies, etc., nothing uncommon in the rest of Europe. They are welfare policies that among Latin Americans with neoliberal business governments are considered as excessive "expenses" of the State, which should only be reduced. Of course, the "New Welfare" is based on heavy taxes, which now target large corporations and fortunes, which were recently agreed by the European Union, for redistributive purposes.

The underlying Latin American problem is that the region lacks business, economic and political elites willing to reach class consensus to aim for the creation of welfare social economies.

The business elites, whose class background is still influenced by the old oligarchic mentality, which is joined by neoliberal slogans that look "modern", are unable to understand the mechanisms that make possible the construction of social economies. They base their competitiveness, modernization and progress on the impact of labor, social and environmental rights. They strive for the greatest possible flexibilities on working relationships. They resist paying taxes. They intend to privatize all public goods and services, to turn them into private businesses, regardless of whether they take advantage of socially erected property, or that it destroys achievements already achieved in education, medicine or social security. The inability to understand the origins of wealth and poverty leads them to consider the social manifestations of discontent as the work of violent masses and dangerous mobs. Under these conditions, social conflict is still latent and it is not possible to predict when it will erupt or how deep it will be. It is only possible to consider that there is a historical process of definitive social change underway and unstoppable.

Juan J. Paz and Miño Cepeda for the Pen

Edited by María Piedad Ossaba

Published by Blog History and present, November 22, 2021

Visit the network of the Krítica Route collective, the new blog for the dissemination of alternative thought and communication

La Pluma. Net 25.11.2021