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European Languages

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12.11.2023

"Less tourism, more life"



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Last weekend the Social Counter-Summit on Tourism, convened by a good number of entities and organizations of the island's civil society. It was organized into in contrast to the celebration, on 30 and 31 October, of the Summit of the Ministers of Tourism of the 27 Member States of the European Union, on the occasion of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

It was not the first time that an informal council of ministers had of European tourism met in Mallorca. The previous meeting was held in 1995. It's interesting to remember it because in the year Immediately prior to the first European ministerial meeting, there had

been A total of 7.9 million tourists have arrived in the Balearic Islands. The The number of tourist arrivals in 2022 reached the spectacular figure 16.4 million. This data speaks for itself of the impressive footprint on a small, fragmented and fragile territory (resources natural resources, infrastructures, resident-visitor coexistence, etc.)

Is It is also pertinent to recall that 18 years ago those responsible for European tourists have already talked about the problems caused by this tourist footprint, to which they added their supposed concern about the labor needs, or working conditions. Elapsed Eighteen years ago, this year's official summit was held around a blushing slogan: "The path to social sustainability of the tourism in the EU" (sic). Another blah, blah, blah, bureaucratic-institutional which is nothing more than an acknowledgment, full of subterfuges, but that tourism capitalism is absolutely determined to Ignoring the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic and the warnings of the scientific community.

It is clear that the pandemic lessons and science recommend a decrease in tourism, and, consequently, reduce the unsustainable (economically, socially and democratically) tourism monoculture; provide much greater protection to work salaried and self-employed in the tourism sector; and advance warranty of the material existence of the subordinate classes, independently of the labour markets.

That's why I had so much It makes sense to convene the Social Counter-Summit on Tourism to discuss The Other Side of Tourism, on the Uncomfortable Truths of the Model unleashed from touristification in the context of the current voracious capitalism. Truths in terms of industry input to global warming, from denial of quality of life to the residents, of the growth of execrable inequalities social issues, of the multiple – and structural – precariousness (not only generated by tourism, the incompatibility between touristification and the true exercise of the right to the city (or to the island, in our case), etc. In short, it was about sharing analysis critics and imagine desirable futures to undo the nefarious thinking of the inevitability of what there is. And, indeed, in the debates at the Social Counter-Summit on Tourism have taken place a lot of Diagnosis of the alternative situation to mainstream discourse.

The The counter-summit of the social movements was articulated on the In the previous events, two important round tables: "For a tourism model that we do not impoverish", organised by the neighbourhood movement of the city of Palma, was the title and content of the first of them. The second led the title of "Less cruises, more life. A global struggle," and he was organized by the Platform Against Mega Cruise Ships and the Forum of the Civil society. Already in the counter-summit, properly speaking, the debates revolved

around: 1. Transport and tourism; 2. Tourism and change climatic; 3. Job insecurity and tourism; and 4. The Society (gender, migration, anti-racism, prostitution, space public, housing, neighbourhood and everyday life).

The organisers of the Social Counter-Summit of Tourism proposed that I take part in the Debate on job insecurity. What follows is a slightly more version An excerpt from my opening statement in the debate:

Four aspects for an alternative diagnosis to the mainstream.

1. The concept of precarity has been too much associated – almost exclusively – with the the world of work, especially paid work, as if in the areas of unpaid work, which are so essential such as those of caring for life, there was no precariousness, among others things, because of the relations derived from the patriarchal system of power.

Is It is logical that this should be the case for two main reasons: Paid work continues to be the main mechanism of redistribution of the wealth generated. (b) There continues to be a important sector of society – and of critical thinking – that, contrary to All evidence holds that "the working class" remains the subject Major Revolutionary. I, by the way, am – following in between others to Sandro Mezzadra- more of the "movement of movements and the multitude" as the true subject of change.

Be that as it may, the The current precariousness is a socio-political construct that is the result of decades of setbacks in vital securities. It is a triumph of neoliberalism that It has succeeded in establishing a model of society in which only the people Rich and very rich have vital securities.

I don't think we lend Sufficient attention should be paid to the following: The generalization of Precariousness puts the model of democratic representation in crisis. We are in the presence of de-democratized societies, without momentum egalitarian as a consequence of the rightward drift of the left Abandon the goal of ending social inequality, By substituting it for an unspecified objective of reducing it, it has obvious consequences! Societies of precarity In short, there are many "states of insecurity" from which Isabell Lorey speaks to us in "State of insecurity. Govern the precariousness", where insecurity and precariousness are governed so that nothing substantial changes; where the social majorities suffer, with more or more less intensity, a whole range of anxieties.

These precariousness (work, existential, health, housing, cultural...) They practice today the effect of social discipline of the subaltern classes that In the past, it exercised the "industrial reserve army" (Karl Marx).

2. Touristified societies are societies with precariousness democratic. Here are some examples that justify this claim:

a) An "official ideology" is imposed. Public or public mechanisms deprived of mass touristification of minds, of alienation tourist. It is well known that in global neoliberalism "it is easier imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism." In societies To imagine the end of the infinite tourist growth is as difficult as imagining the end of capitalism. Critical Thinking about the effects of touristification becomes almost criminal, and, at best, marginalized from public debate.

b) These are societies with a brutal lack of democratic transparency. For example: The amount of public expenditure on promotion is hidden or denies the institutional public debate of reports such as Greenpeace's that explains the legal engineering mechanisms of the airlines – with the collaboration of the institutions – to skip the the EU's ban on public subsidies Direct.

The Most Scandalous Example of Deficit in Transparency The democratic challenge of touristified societies is, perhaps, denialism and contempt for the science they practice. It cannot be described as In the case of the Balearic Islands, the recommendations of the Committee of Experts for the Energy Transition and Climate Change in the Balearic Islands, and the science is ignored sociological and statistical, in order, as has been proposed, to establish qualitative socio-environmental indicators beyond the neoclassical, or, at the height of denialism, the reluctance to measure, with the criteria set by the EU (which is not exactly a command radical eco-social crisis), the volume and causes of in-work poverty that generates tourism.

3. Incredibly, in this diagnosis of the situation it cannot be ignored that there is still no political will to overcome the difficulty of delimiting tourism work. And yet, it is certain that tourism employment is the bulk of employment[i] that makes up the situation of full employment in the Balearic Islands.

According to the results of the recently published Population Survey Active Revenue (EPA) for the third quarter of 2023 – the three months the estimated number of people in work was 675,500, the activity rate was 67.22%, and the unemployment rate was 5.72%. The first is the highest and the second the lowest in the Kingdom of Spain. These are figures that, with slight variations, are recorded throughout the year. Therefore, the government authorities, the employers' associations and the large On the contrary, the trade unions have no qualms about praising uncritically a situation of full employment.

But there's another side in these employment figures: Precariousness. For example, this summer a 40% of the employees had a contract seniority of less than a year, and nearly 1 in 4 of these wage earners had Less than one year of seniority in the company. With the open bar, and the price of the salary, of the dismissal, it is intensely precarious work, without safety. Another aspect of this other side of the employment figures is the Existence of Blind Spots of Tourist Job Insecurity: Rental tourism, luxury industry, cruises and the ever-hidden labour exploitation, i.e. those business practices – very frequent in tourist areas- considered crimes against workers' rights in the Penal Code.

These Precariousness explains, in part, why full employment has not been able to improve at-risk-of-poverty figures. According to a recent report by the Network European Commission for the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion of the Balearic Islands (EAPN-IB) on the State of Poverty in the Balearic Islands 2023, on 2022 AROPE indicator (including poverty rate, deprivation and the low intensity of work in the home) It stands at 21.5% of the population. More than 252,000 people are in at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion, and 200,000 below the poverty line poverty, as a result of the low intensity of work in the and severe material and social deprivation.

The magnitude of the risk of poverty shows that, together with the extraordinary touristification and embarrassing corporate profits, work (especially the employee) does not regain his or her ability to ensure social inclusion and the impact of this risk reaches, at the same time, less in terms of insecurity, to the, let's say, "middle class." That is why it is safe to say that the "distressed class" is expanding. At the same time, psychosocial risks are increasing, mental health problems, medicalization in general, and anxiolytics in particular. In short, the specter of possible exclusion is closely associated with touristified societies under the tourist monoculture.

In any case – and this is what The question is not whether the employment situation is full-fledged employment or not. The question is whether we have overcome the dynamics that reinforce job insecurity and accentuate the devaluation of work in tourism (I won't dwell on listing them, But, for an approach to the subject – and to that of the complexity of determine what tourism employment is – I recommend reading Ernest Cañada in "Global Touristification"). However, I would like to point out that these specific Tourism trends to the precariousness of work have to do with extraordinarily unequal power relations.

In In any case, for what we discussed in this Social Counter-Summit of the Tourism, the really relevant question is the following: Is it a A social model of "social zone" sacrifice"? That is to say, is it a model of society based on inhabited territory that suffers permanent

negative socio-environmental impacts as a result of of an industrial activity – the monoculture of tourism – highly pollutant? It is very pertinent to remember that in the canonical definition of slaughter zones or areas specifies that, originally, functioned as a promise of improved economic conditions and development of local communities.

One last point about this part of the diagnosis. The great historian Eric Hobsbawm, In his work "History of the Twentieth Century", he argues that, in the aftermath of the Second World War, war in the capitalist countries, with very few exceptions (Hong Kong), there was a great deal of political commitment from governments to the full employment, but at the same time its commitment to reducing economic inequalities was much lower. Is this at the time when The effects of the climate crisis will be (and already are!) a very powerful Factor of inequality - the Balearic model of society of "full employment"? I have the impression that 'Full employment' without a transition of model economic and social reality is an undesirable repetition of the history.

4. The fourth aspect of this diagnosis has to do with with the very few labor conflicts in the core sectors of the tourism. Today in the Balares Islands there are almost two generations of workers in, say, the hotel and catering industry restoration that has never done or experienced a strike.

Another form of unionism should be possible, but news such as "[Hoteliers want to create the largest pension plan in Spain](#)" does not seem to herald a stage of intensification of labour conflicts.

The moderators of the panel "Job insecurity and tourism" had asked us I asked for two proposals that went beyond the short/long term. Not in In vain, the table was subtitled "Regenerated Our Imaginaries."

No It was an easy task, because imagining the future of tourism and work with the uncertainties caused by the climate crisis, the artificial intelligence, and human stupidity is a matter of the Edgar Morin's theory of complexity.

In any case, I have Here are two ideas that, in my opinion, give meaning to the struggles and proposals of today and the day after tomorrow.

I like to imagine a Mallorca (and all the "sacrifice zones" in the world that are such as as a result of touristification) that:

1. For the sustained effects over time of a Universal and Unconditional Basic Income (UBI), and the application of the "[Welfare Law for present and future generations of the Balearic Islands](#)" has gone through a comprehensive strategy of tourism degrowth, in which the various anxieties of the non-classes have disappeared. Strictly rich and very

rich, unsustainability has been overcome of the great inequalities, where the subaltern classes are guaranteed the material existence outside the market of GDP, and GDP has been replaced as the macroeconomic indicator supreme for a quality of life indicator with consumption criteria eco-social.

2. It is no longer a platform for multinationals that export environmental and cultural strategists, and denial of the effective application of human rights (from the declaration that this year marks the 75th anniversary of [emerging human rights](#)). I like to imagine that all this has been achieved through an unwatered "[International Legally Binding Instrument on Business and Human Rights](#)" of which the social movements of Mallorca (and the world) have been fundamental in its achievement.

Coda: The culmination of the Social Counter-Summit on Tourism was the demonstration on the afternoon of Monday, October 30. The mere summons was already a success. It is no small feat to have the courage that a plurality of organizations, in a context of demobilization and transformation of the "All Tourism" model in one of "Tourism Tyranny", will convene Mallorcan citizens to demand "Less tourism, more life". That the demonstration was well attended was an indication that the weariness of the of tourism stratactivism on the lives of residents it's on the rise.

Timothy Snyder, in his book "On Tyranny" – very pertinent in the times in which we live, resist and fight – states: "We are only free when we ourselves draw the line between when we are seen and when we are not seen." The demonstration showed that it is possible to mobilize against this Tourist Tyranny, that we can be free, because they saw us!

Notes:

[i] The services sector is the one with the highest concentration of employment (85.5%), followed by construction (8.4%), industry (5.4%) and agriculture (0.7%). EPA Data IVT2023

[ii] My translation of the Catalan text.

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Source: <https://www.sinpermiso.info/textos/contracumbre-social-del-turismo-menos-turismo-mas-vida>

Rebellion 10.11.2023