

NOW THERE'S NO TURNING BACK

A BULLETIN OF REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE REVOLT

YA NO HAY VUELTA ATRÁS N.2 / FEBRUARY 2020
NOHAYVUELTA_ATRAS@RISEUP.NET



NOTES ON THE REVOLUTION TO COMMENCE

1. The class struggle, that is, the manifestation of antagonistic interests within the society, never ceased to exist nor to dig into the foundations of this system of death, for all the zeal put into burying or concealing it by ideologues of every ilk or the governing castes in power. A multitude of conflicts, which place the vital interests of an exploited humanity in opposition to those of the capitalist class, spring up constantly and spontaneously all over. However, there are periods in which these conflicts break out with an unusual intensity, allowing a glimpse of their authentic class character, after years in which that character appeared to have been diluted into dozens of sociologized and parceled categories and identities.
2. By spontaneity we don't mean that the movement which negates the State/Capital arises from the void, or that it lacks consciousness or a specific organization, but on the contrary, that it arises from the bosom of the current society, without the necessity of, or rather in spite of and against would-be leaders, helmsmen or political parties which, just as so many social-democratic sects had and do profess to do, would inject "socialist" consciousness "from without" in order to "conduct it" towards an ideologically fixed horizon.
3. In Chile, this proliferation of social conflicts, though indeed its frequency and force had notably increased during certain periods, hadn't shaped into a

movement that had insurrectional characteristics. Upheavals that were started by student protests (2001, 2005-6, 2011) were the experiences most similar to those that we saw this last October 18th. Massive and extensive days of protest, which included the takeover and paralyzation of activities in educational precincts (mainly in universities and high schools), managed to generate sympathy and solidarity from the rest of the class, but without transcending the sectional borders or overcoming the bureaucratic maneuverings (mainly by the CONFECH in the student context, and the CUT in the terrain of the traditional unions). Even so, it's the adolescent and youth proletariat - fundamentally the secondary school students- who show themselves to be less easy to domesticate, furthermore transcending their own limits as "youth" as a parcel artificially separated from the class.

4. It was precisely in 2019, stemming from the punctual rejection of legal strategies that toughened the repression against this sector of the proletariat, as much through the 'Aula Segura' law as through the proposal for identification checks on minors by the police, that the combativity of the students continued to increase, which would lead to daily confrontations against the police repression at the Instituto Nacional, in the very center of the capital, resulting in various incidents of police brutality and their corresponding response from the youth. The struggle, far from easing up, began to spread, proliferating the rage and determination contagiously throughout a whole class that many had considered to be dead or definitively defeated.

5. The proletariat, strongly animated even further by the movement that had developed in Ecuador a few weeks before against a series of governmental measures that made life in general more expensive, exploded on that historical Friday the 18th, after a week of massive evasions in the metro initiated by secondary school students.

6. The snowball would not be stopped and it transformed with surprising velocity into a gigantic avalanche. By the second day, all the cities of the country saw their streets filled with with furious demonstrators that were in solidarity with their siblings in the capital, but at the same time, showed that the fare increase was only the spark that unleashed this impressive blaze. "It's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years", "Chile awaken", and "Until life is worth living", are some of the most prominent slogans that resonate in the days of the revolt, making the general

rejection of all the misery produced by Capital evident.

Therefore yes, on the 18th of October it was the proletariat that dispersed the thick smoke of the capitalist society. Far from a discourse of a supposed transversality that would unite us as 'chileans', 'citizens', or supposed 'minorities', agglutinated precisely in the function of their fragmentation, the movement generated from the upheaval expressed a clearly proletarian content, of explicit rejection of Capital.

7. Is it a proletarian revolt? For many, to speak of the "proletariat" could sound vintage or doctrinaire. And the reasons to consider it as such are not few: unfortunately, those who used to and tend to (increasingly less, in any case) use these words in their political language, are sects derived from social-democracy, or their equivalent variants in "official" anarchism, that reduce revolutionary theory and its concepts to rigid schematics, dogmatic and unfit. But here it's not a matter of neat definitions, but of comprehending the basic and essential elements that allow us to explain our historical moment. The proletariat is composed of the immense human mass that must sell their physical and mental force to the capitalist class in order to obtain the minimum that allows them to reproduce as manpower and invigorate the consumption of commodities. We are the social class that puts the productive gears of the capitalist economy in motion, but neither possess nor control the means of

production. Yet at the same time, the proletariat only exists when it becomes conscious of its condition and struggles for its liberation, that is, its self-abolition, by attacking the social relations and institutions that keep it dominated and through the affirmation of its truly human interests, neither defined nor mediated by mercantile necessities.

8. Therefore yes, on the 18th of October it was the proletariat that dispersed the thick smoke of the capitalist society. Far from a discourse of a supposed transversality that would unite us as 'chileans', 'citizens', or supposed 'minorities', agglutinated precisely in the function of their fragmentation, the movement generated from the upheaval expressed a clearly proletarian content, of explicit rejection of Capital.

To affirm this, on the other hand, has nothing to do with promoting a schematic and reductionist reading of the conflict. There are social relations of domination that uphold and create other forms of exploitation, and the radical and integral confrontation against Capital requires a simultaneous and effective attack against all of them, since it is that framework which sustains the current misery. It's impossible to dissociate the State from Capital and from the patriarchal relations that allow the subsistence of this society based on exploitation.

9. In a few weeks this explosive movement of generalized refusal has went on to change and to mature. From an initial rage lucidly directed against the state and capitalist infrastructure, including the sacking of commercial centers such as the big pharmacy, supermarket and retail store chains, and despised state institutions, such as the COMPIN (which is in charge of paying for medical leave), various municipal buildings, toll points, monuments and



Proletarian youth refuse to be domesticated

statues that pay homage to heroes of the bourgeoisie and the colonial looting, etc., it went on rapidly to the shaping of autonomous organisms in the territories, the Territorial Assemblies, that coordinated different aspects of the social struggle at this level, experiences that still continue to expand, to coordinate, and to fortify themselves. Furthermore, the forms of street protest are also developing in order to be able to confront an increasingly deranged police force, a prominent example being the organization of the first-aid teams, which provide vital aid in the very center of the confrontations with the forces of repression.

In the same context of the revolt, there also sprout up experiences of struggles which are more specific that are notably amplified, like the denunciation of the looting of the waters perpetrated by many types of industries, or the massive boycott of the testing proceedings of the University Selection Test, which after years of being targeted by critiques coming mainly from the secondary school students' movement, was finally dealt its death blow in 2020, not without this action having earlier received the

odious condemnation of the whole Party of Order, from the right to the left.

10. Overall, there are a whole series of obstacles and limitations which our movement crashes up against, and which are related precisely to the lack of clarity about its class content, and the form in which this is expressed.

11. The nationalist discourse, the necessary rejection of politics which sometimes gets confused with a scorn for revolutionary theory and for our history of combat as a class, and above all, the lack of critique of democracy, which brought many to celebrate the plebiscite of the 26th of April agreed on by the Party of Order, in order to cool down the fever of the movement, constitute flanks which will end up weakening and defeating us if we don't explicitly and concretely confront them.

12. This weakening and defeat happens precisely by separating the sectors that still believe in these statist and democratic paths from the rest of the movement that would refuse to leave the

streets. The State will not exercise a massacre of greater proportions until the movement finds itself effectively fractured by the defense of the administrative "gains" of the first and the necessity to maintain the revolt of the second; when the very "economic development of the country" which the Party of Order takes shelter in is put into question.

13. The 18th of October inflicted such a wound on the capitalist normality that it will have trouble completely healing. From an imposing initial revolt, we are now going through a moment which appears to be irreversible, with the social order deeply disrupted, which glimpses the arrival of a revolutionary process itself. But let's not fool ourselves, the crisis and defeat of Capital always corresponds in the end to our very own struggle to emancipate ourselves completely and definitely from our exploited condition.

14. Therefore, it depends on us, as the exploited class, as the proletarian class, to go beyond the dismal horizons fixed by the capitalist society and to construct a human community based on solidarity and free from all exploitation.

Since the explosion of revolt that shook this territory on the 18th of October of the last year, and which still continues to shake it up sporadically up to today, it has become undeniable that what unleashed the paralysis of the large part of the infrastructure of capitalist normality was the unfurling of a massive and unusual violence; Violence which our class as a whole has unfurled. However, though indeed it has been our class which has flooded the streets, confronted the police and thwarted the mechanisms that allowed the uninterrupted functionality of our everyday servitude, the key role that the proletarian youth has had, as much in the development of the revolt as in its preamble, is unquestionable.

Dominant ideology tells us so often that rebellion is a typical reaction of the youth against the order of the adults, a stage which will be followed by the passiveness and resignation of the supposed maturity typical to adulthood, that the supposed relation between youth and rebellion is well known. Nevertheless, the truth is that, in a way that escapes the bourgeois comprehension of society and the world, this old premise is particularly accurate for the youth of our era. And the thing is that, in order to invigorate its existence throughout time and perpetuate its reproduction, Capital has put an end to many of the material conditions that allowed the exploited from 15 or 30 years ago to form themselves as a labor force and integrate with a certain success into the labor market and, on the basis of that, to materially secure their existence. In other words, today Capital is incapable of providing its youngest labor force with the same conditions that had assured past generations with a minimum

of stability on which to situate themselves.¹This translates into increasingly more precarious and unstable jobs for the proletariat in general, but especially for the youth; into millions of young professionals incapable of selling their specialized labor force and obliged to do whatever kind of work; into a situation where the only way that a proletarian youth can secure a roof over their head is by cohabiting with others in similar conditions to their own, since neither their income nor the cost of their habitat allows them to live even minimally similar to the way that their parents did at their age.

With distinct shades and particularities, the conditions which had served before as a justification for the existence of capitalist exploitation, since they provided the comfort and sustenance for those who would integrate with it, went up in smoke around the world. Added to that, the increasingly more evident and progressive deterioration of the biosphere -itself a product of the capitalist devastation-, could do no more than add to the perspective of the youth that for them there is no possible future.

This progressive precarization of the vital conditions of the youngest proletarians makes itself so much more brutally evident in countries like Chile. If we add the growing precarization of the youth to the precarious condition which characterized the proletarian families of the past generations in this region, any perspective for a future in these same conditions goes up in smoke. This being so, to the bourgeois farce of the future and its ideology of effort and of the compensation for sacrifice, which intended to make of the youth the fuel with which to continue invigorating the decadent capitalist machine, the proletarian youth responded with a healthy and intransigent refusal.

For those of us who pay attention to the dynamic of capitalist reproduction and the class struggle linked to it, this mass

1. This is due, in a large part, to the fact that the constant technological revolutions which capital develops, in its incessant search to appropriate human labor and convert it into profit, has ended up creating an ever increasing number of "excess" humans. That is to say, human beings who are not necessary for capital and who, in fact, encumber it.

refusal of the existing conditions was already to be glimpsed in the multiplicity of diffuse practices which the youth of this region have come to demonstrate since many years ago already. But, to pinpoint the theme which concerns us here, it was at the high-schools where this intransigent refusal prefigured, better than in other places, the rupture that was to come which would sweep away the everyday normalcy as we had known it up until then. Prior to the upheaval this refusal was demonstrated for a long time in the disruptive and anti-police violence in which hundreds of youths organized themselves to take to the streets, block transit and confront the police with diffuse demands or, rather, without any demand in particular but the subversion of the existing order itself.

Even when the discourse of the bourgeoisie pointed out that they were not directly affected by the transport fare hike, it was the youth of those same high-schools who began to organize to adopt the only lucid attitude in the face of the misery and the precarization to which local Capital subjects us every day. These young people, endowed with the youth and the courage that they had already acquired through struggle, be it through organizing themselves to face off against the police, or in spontaneous

action that meant resisting, all together, against the entrance of the cops into their high-schools; reunited thanks to this struggle with their sense of community and the confirmation of their own power, feeling themselves to be capable of everything, decided to organize to do tangibly that which the common sense of the majority could only do in the imagination: massive evasion of fare-paying in the most complex and secured public transport in Santiago, which millions of people were obliged to pay daily. Only a few days later, the recognition of that same power and sense of community would radiate throughout the entire class.

That consciousness which those entrenched in the old leftist traditions so sorely missed, was soon manifested everywhere with a violent eruption which brought back to the scene those who had never really gone away, since their existence will endure as long as class society exists, the class to inherit the exploitation of all epochs: the proletariat and its youth. And, even if it's certain that it was the initiative of the secondary school students which lit the match that only a few days later would detonate the capitalist normality, the youth who have protagonized the revolt are immensely more ample than the mere studentry, secondary school and university students included. Rather, it has been an ample spectrum of youths who we had mentioned at the beginning: all of the the youngest among the proletariat, for whom there is neither a future nor certainties under these conditions of existence.

This consciousness has shown to be more present than ever in the outbreak of the revolt: soon, the acts of the youths seemed to evince that it had been understood from the beginning that this order of things was worthy of no more than scorn; that the police are not there to protect us, but that we protect each other when we act against them; that public transport doesn't exist in order to make our lives easier but that it forms a part of the machinery that plunges us into inertia and servitude; that there is nothing honorable about paying for the commodities that permitted consumption offers us, but that we recover a part of what they rob from us every day when we loot it; that the progress that they tell us about is not for us, but it's the progress of capital at our expense; that solidarity, which until recently was unknown to us in practice, permits us the collective appropriation of a world that was removed from us, and shows us now that anything is possible when we act jointly.

Like so, the mega-machine that has always presented itself to us as the guarantor of our survival and future, permanently recreated by the advertisements on the television and the internet, appeared in everyone's eyes to be that fraud to which we had been grudgingly subjected and which we would have broken very long ago if we had only received the push that we needed.

The spontaneous action, at times so vilified, demonstrated that what, seemingly, we didn't consciously comprehend entirely had always been there, latently, as an intuition, and that all what was needed were the practical conditions that favored a revolt of this breadth in order to put them afloat. Because

consciousness is not merely theoretical nor is it inserted from without, but it must arise from the practice of struggle itself. None of us would have foreseen the magnitude of this refusal if we hadn't witnessed the massiveness of the struggle in the street, of the looting, the symbols of power being vandalized, etc., nor would we have confirmed the communitarian potential that lives within us without having experienced its emergence stemming exactly from these actions, carried out mainly by the proletarian youth.

What came later, like the necessity of organization, the propaganda, the territorial assemblies, etc., appeared after this first confirmation.

These conclusions are not at all intended to substitute what the proletarian youth could say for themselves about their actions, since they have been sufficiently eloquent in making the content explicit by the acts themselves. And the thing is that the revolutions and revolts are always a clarification through actions of the previously existing problems and contradictions of the societies against which they emerge. With respect to the conclusions that Capital and its agents extract from this, we will let the economists cry over their millions in losses, and the city-planners mourn the destruction of their uninhabitable sceneries, we will let the contract thinkers seek the apparent reasons for what to them appears to be the absurdity of the revolt, and let conservatives of all types suffer for the churches and temples which now do indeed illuminate; the bourgeoisie and their armed lackeys, little by little, are comprehending the principal reason that they have to fear us: we have become conscious of the fact that we are the force that moves this society and that, as such, we are its mortal menace.

For our part, we believe that the role of a publication like this is not only to justify the rebels, but also contribute to clarifying their reasons; to theoretically elucidate the truth already contained in their practical activity. It is in its practical particularity that the sense of violence resides, be it by defending a demonstration or by displaying the refusal towards social domination through acts. And it's from this perspective, in its practical dimension, that the violence must be weighed.

It's not necessary to make apologia for the violence to admit that a large part of it, which soon will appear evident, was thanks to the sparks of young and proletarian violence that seemed to illuminate that which for a long time we seemed to have intuitively known to be part of the problem. Like so, the resignation only needs a spark in order to transform this passive scorn into an open offensive against the violence that they impose on us and which, from now on, we will return in their faces.

