

EDITORIAL

Between telluric events and sovereignties: political earthquakes and socio-natural disasters in Our America

Entre sismos y soberanías: terremotos políticos y desastres socio-naturales en Nuestra América

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Venezuela and Colombia have just been shaken by violent earthquakes that caused destruction and death, but also by political processes that are becoming serious threats to the peace and independence of the region.

On January 3rd, “the day of national humiliation,” Venezuela was militarily and geopolitically intervened in by the United States, stripping it of its independence and turning it into a “protectorate.” Major decisions regarding Venezuelan politics, government, and the economy are made in the United States, whose president, mocking the Venezuelan people, has threatened to make it the 51st state of the Union.

On August 7, in Colombia, a representative of show politics linked to international drug trafficking and promoted by the same northern country, took office as president —after a questionable and manipulated electoral process— reactivating a policy of hatred, dependence and violent confrontation, clearly linked to the interests of the global north.

Therefore, both countries were shaken by violent earthquakes: one political and the other telluric.

We are in a time of profound civilizational crisis in the West and the Global North, in which a world system Capitalism—profoundly destructive—transforms nature into an extractive commodity for the global market and threatens the life of the planet; an economic system that produces, on the one hand, hyper-accumulation of wealth and, on the other, precariousness and poverty, while simultaneously promoting a civilizational project that generates multiple forms of oppression and

inequality. Its global leadership, headed by the US and the old European world, is suffering a profound ethical, political, and economic crisis. Its only recourse to maintain its excessive power is to guarantee its control of the continent, increasing its dependence and colonialism, using its historical resources for its own benefit: force, war, and domination.

As Gramsci rightly said, we live in the “interregnum,” in which the old has not quite died and the new has not quite been born, and in this chiaroscuro arise the monsters that—like Trump, Netanyahu, Milei, De La Espriella, Machado and all the racist and supremacist European far right—seek to impose the power of their elite minorities over the interests and hopes of billions of inhabitants of the planet who aspire to live in a world where we all fit and have social justice, peace and tranquility.

Given this scenario, calling things by their name becomes an ethical imperative: the political earthquakes that strip away sovereignties and the socio-environmental seismic events that devastate our territories and the lives of our peoples are not inevitable fatalities, but the tragic expression of the same civilizational project in crisis that exposes the most fragile and oppressed in the world, especially those of us who were colonized and who today inhabit and are geopolitically located in the global south.

It is precisely at this crossroads that earthquakes—both those that shake the political landscape and those that rattle the Earth's crust—cease to be isolated events or mere “natural disasters” and become facts that reveal the profound fragility and



precariousness of societies whose structures have been eroded by dependency and dispossession. There are no exclusively "natural" disasters: every catastrophe is, ultimately, a socio-environmental and geopolitical phenomenon.

However, the history of Our America demonstrates that of the greatest seismic upheavals and from imperial forces, also emerge the forces of people's dignity and popular community reconstruction. Faced with the attempt to turn the crisis into business, tutelage, and dispossession, it becomes essential to decipher the true nature of these earthquakes that are shaking our land and our destiny today.

Therefore, for the critical thinking in health that permeates this Journal, this approach constitutes a political challenge and an epistemological and ethical imperative. Confronting the ravages of these earthquakes—both, political and socio-environmental—demands a definitive break with the Eurocentric and neocolonial frameworks that dominate Western science. Decolonizing our public health and epidemiology means reassuming health as an inalienable right of human dignity, linked to health sovereignty, social justice, and the care of

life. Only from an emancipated critical science (or sciences), built from and for the realities and knowledge of our peoples of the Global South, will we be able to heal the wounds of dispossession and build the true peace that our region demands.

Faced with this crisis of Western civilization, we have the urgent task of naming and intervening in reality from our own perspective. It is impossible to protect life, or to understand the social determinants of health, by reproducing the dogmas of the Global North. It becomes essential to decolonize our science, our public health, and our epidemiology, dismantling the Western colonial project of the 21st century that naturalizes and renders invisible the critical structural processes of human suffering and socio-environmental disasters.

Starting from solidarity with the peoples of Colombia, Venezuela, but also those of the entire continent, we assume the defense of health and life, which necessarily implies fighting for a new civilizational project, the restoration of our scientific sovereignty and the reaffirmation of the commitment to a praxis put at the service of the emancipation of our peoples.



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