

EDITORIAL.

PEACE, THE TASK IS TO STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION.

By **Tulio Gilberto Astudillo & Alfonso Insuasty Rodríguez.**

Abstract.

We are witnessing a historic moment in Colombia. It possibly marks the end of a bloody armed confrontation of more than fifty years, between FARC-EP and the Colombian government. This very fact per se is very important, but not enough.

Key Words.

Peace; Social Justice, and Transformation.

It is undeniable that an important event for the country, Latin America, and the world, is the current negotiation process between FARC-EP and the Colombian government, we are moving toward an end, in such a long and fateful armed confrontation. We cannot deny either, thanks to the negotiation process, which is being carried out in Havana, the national debate around key, structural, and essential issues, which have been re-opened in order to talk and to build a plural, diverse society, in a permanent fight in defense of its territories, of the development model that the country requires, what kind of society we have today and which one is the one we require, what kind of education we need, the role played by the universities, the one about the academic research in the social transformation, as well as to enlarge the discourse on victims and aggressors (entrepreneurs, politicians, paramilitaries, guerrilla groups, and militaries); the underlying reasons of the brutality that Colombia has gone through, the need to delve into the real participation of communities, in the strategic decision-making of the country, to the legitimacy or not, of an armed conflict, the juridical structure for a society that thinks about peace, etc.; all of these are necessary issues in order to build a stable and lasting peace, from just beyond the cease of the armed confrontation between the insurgency and those who have held the position of being Government.

It is about a complex scenario, but not prudently promising and stubbornly discouraging. In order to explain this statement, it is necessary to recognize the context we are in, as well as the deep and complex social and political conflict, aggravated and supported by a permanent (fratricide) and inhumane armed conflict.

Today, we talk about peace and that is good, but the world revives the barbarity of war for natural resources, which as a region, we are rich; it is a fact that the western world, the civilization in crisis, is experiencing a great economic disaster, which requires of it to deepen in a global capitalist development model, which abuses the planet with the excessive exploitation of the resources, devouring the environment, and with it, the social and cultural fabric built by the inhabitants of the planet. It is an accelerated race to dominate territories, which are easy to be exploited, in order to extract their resources and to boost

the insatiable machine of production, on ascendant scale, with the sole excuse of taking “modernity,” “democracy,” to those underdeveloped countries or just to take them out of the backwardness, hence of “poverty.”

An accelerated extraction policy of natural and human resources, which places some Latin American countries, including Colombia, in a good place to do business by multinationals and foreign capital; low tariffs, weak or no environmental restrictions, corrupted governments, legislators, and army; facilitators of pillage and plunder, intended for cleaning whole territories to guarantee the implementation of mining and energy megaprojects and enclaves. All this policy is accompanied by a media strategy, creation, via mass media, of voracious consumer and solitary individuals, who revive the flow of credit and capital.

As a reaction of communities and peoples in defense of their territories and that of the planet, social struggles are experienced and invigorated, in every part of the continent, claiming sovereignty, the defense of life, the environment, these are networks dealing with movements divided into two logics, one which is government geared aims to re-direct progress by boosting the redistribution of wealth and the nationalization of the strategic production, but keeping the modern scheme of development, and another sector that tends to the development of different processes to the hegemonic neoliberal model that cares about and performs comprehensive relationships with nature experiences, within socio-natural orders, which let humans and non-humans co-exist harmoniously, going beyond the model where the non-human is under the domination and the subjugation of the human, being a vision leading to rethink concepts like “modernity,” “development,” and “economics” and to recognize the importance of the ordinary, the public through the construction of the collective; strong, autonomous communities articulated on the premise that to build another possible world, is not only necessary, but imperative.

The current peace process, which Colombia is going through, has to its credit, a complex environment, the traditional ruling class has endeavored to make people believe that the country has no other way out that to oil the machinery of the Western development, leaving us in the lowest place of the economic activity; the extractive activity and this seems to require peace, as demanded. Likewise, the challenge of dismantling the structural violence as a mechanism of political action and accumulation of wealth, conquering the necessary guarantees that let the country move towards a real democracy.

Today, new and deep social struggles, the environment, water, food sovereignty, sovereignty in the use of resources, the subsoil and the surface, the springs of water, the moorlands, the ecosystems, the responsible consumption, the fair trade, what implies to build values such as solidarity, the respect for difference, free colorful and articulated pluralistic societies, in a common fight, the right to exist and to be in relation to others, in a self-regulatory manner, emerge in the world, in Latin America and thus, in Colombia.

Old and new social and popular struggles are renewed, strengthened, and articulated. The current negotiation process should trigger the articulation of the social and popular movement, activate the struggle and rethink the formation of political subjects who may understand the historical context and the task of the moment, rescuing its role in the construction of a new society, recover the utopia. It should lead to a rationality, which in

addition to promote the unity of the Left, starting from an articulating agenda, can recover the subjects on the Left, based on their peculiarities and diversity.

Among all these reflections, a key question, for those who wander by the so-called academic and university world, arises: what is the role that is being played and must play the University in this construction of a stable and lasting peace?

It is assumed that the University is essentially the place where society is critically thought, where the constant transformation of society is thought towards decent, humane, environmentally responsible conditions. That would be the ideal and redeemable thing to do, but today, in Colombia, we are witnessing institutions, which have bureaucratized the production of knowledge, trapping it in the logic of the academic market and the positivist metrics. The University of the Market has been trapped in the fallacious relationship among University-Enterprise-State, a one in which Large Enterprises and the State act in unison, leaving the University, as a submissive maid, at the mercy of funding for projects; the one who finances sets the conditions, limiting the freedom of production and thinking. Just analyze the way as Colciencias has been structured, not giving opportunities to the Social and Human Sciences, the same is true with Publindex, delegating its task to bibliographic databases, such as Scopus and Isi, responsible for defining what knowledge is, what science is, in a pluralistic and diverse country, it seems as if we had not gotten over the discussions about science, truth, knowledge, and reality.

Even this panorama, and diverse voices and organizational proposals arise, which fight for another educational model, another measurement model, and standardization of those which are supposed to be science, is a scientific publication. It is worth mentioning that thanks to the current negotiation process, networks like “RedUnipaz,” is taking on this dissident task, of thinking other ways of being of the University, to recover the word and the feelings of Masters like Orlando Fals Borda, one of the founders of the Faculty of Sociology in Colombia, and Camilo Torres Restrepo, by taking a stand on the real role that the university should play in a country like Colombia, to build knowledge from a personal perspective in order to better the living conditions, dignity, sovereignty, well and good living of those who inhabit the Colombian territory.

In 2012, the Sixth National and the First International Peace Congress took place, in 2015, the Seventh National and II international Peace Congress will be held, in the city of Ibagué, in order to think, to discuss, and to articulate the academy with the social and popular organizations with the purpose of building a country that thinks itself and proposes concrete actions of transformation.

That is the reason for this publication, which is to contribute to the discussion and the debate of a country, based on what we are and what we want to be.

References

- Balvin Alvarez, J., & Insuasty Rodriguez, A. (2008). *Victimas Violencia y Despojo*. Medellín: Litoimpacto.
- Bastidas, W., & Insuasty Rodriguez, A. (2010). *Victimas en Medellín*. EL AGORA USB, 367-397.
- Bonilla González, R. (2005). *Problemas económicos una salida integral a la crisis*. Bogotá: Fescol.
- Boron, A. (2004). *Estado capitalismo y democracia en América Latina*. Quito: Clacso.
- Fajardo, M. d. (2012). *Panorama Minero de Colombia*. Recuperado el 13 de 2 de 2014, de Razón Pública: <http://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/econom-y-sociedad-temas-29/3468-panorama-minero-de-colombia.html>
- Insuasty Rodriguez, A. (2012). *¿crear ambiente para la Paz?* Ceba(16), 41-46. Obtenido de http://revistacepa.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/3/7/13372958/crear_ambiente_para_la_paz.pdf
- kavilando. (2012). *Reflexiones sobre el mandar a nivel local*. Kavilando revista virtual, http://www.kavilando.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1205:reflexiones-sobre-el-mandar-a-nivel-local-congreso-de-los-pueblos-&catid=42:editorial&Itemid=84.
- Pax Christi. (2000). *Red Nacional de Iniciativas Ciudadanas por la Paz y contra la Guerra (REDEPAZ)*. Obtenido de paxchristi.net: <http://www.paxchristi.net/member-organizations/colombia/190>
- RedProdepaz. (2010). *Red Prodepaz*. Obtenido de redprodepaz.org.co: <http://www.redprodepaz.org.co/programas-de-desarrollo-y-paz>
- Semana. (2 de 2014). *Seis millones de víctimas deja el conflicto en Colombia*. Recuperado el 15 de 2 de 2014, de semana.com: <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/victimas-del-conflicto-armado-en-colombia/376494-3>