

Migrations, Employment and Work Under Capitalism

It's a well-known "virtue" of capitalism that it turns all it touches into goods. Water, earth, animals, food, cars, everything's treated as merchandise; life and human beings are no exception.

Neither is employment, usually called work, which today's capitalism pretends to make universal in the form of merchandise. Wage employment is its most explicit form.

The current crisis of capitalism is based on the society that capitalism has created, being competitiveness at an economic, social and political level one of its basic premises. This model has turned employment into merchandise and people into mere tools that produce what the system needs, discarding them when it no longer needs them. They've turned work into something scarce and unemployment into something functional for the economy, forcing workers to sell their work force in very poor conditions in order to survive. Even though human beings are naturally social beings, wage employment places great pressure on them and the individual worker, isolated, confronts others negatively because the system only recognizes one type of work, wage employment.

Europe, as well as USA, faces the issue of migrations only from an economic perspective: freedom of movement of persons and workers (nationals as well as persons from EU countries) forces the suppression of internal frontiers, but also forces more strict controls on external frontiers, for all foreigners or non-EU citizens.

Foreign persons are only viewed as workers useful for national economies. That's the reason for the severe restrictions on their entry and movement. And their rights and social integration are simply ignored.

Migrant person "become" a structural factor for the economy in its growth or crisis cycles, especially in those sectors that were progressively abandoned by native workers due to job flexibility, precariousness and deregulation.

We have to add to that the decentralization of production (subcontractors, service businesses, etc.) and the externalization of basic services (more and more states tend to put on private hands basic rights and services). Migrant persons were and are used under this system than condemns them to integral precariousness (in work and society): forced proletarianization leaves them no alternative but to submit to the rules established by the "labor markets" which they assist.

We must keep in mind that only 13% of all immigrants and refugees go to central countries, where budget cuts are the critical issues to be dealt with. The so-called peripheral countries do not have infra-structure. Where eventually there is legislation, there are not public policies to provide homes, language learning centers, jobs, easily access to papers. Lack of papers increase their vulnerability and their fear of deportation what is a hindrance for their self organization.

On top of that there are other socio-historical prejudices like racism, sexism, lgbtphobia, xenophobia, islamophobia, ... what makes unemployment and casualisation higher.

We must not forget that capitalism, including state capitalism, has exploited humans and earth from its very beginning. Following that route we have run into what some experts call the great threats on the planet, situations that cause much harm to the planet and its population.

Climate change becomes a critical factor that obliges people to immigrate. The same happens with wars – declared or not – and military occupations like the ones in Haiti, Sahara, Palestine and other places.

So if we continue down this path, we'll have to face threats that include:

- ρ Chronic threats such as hunger, illness and repression

- ρ Sudden and harmful alterations in our daily routines (in the household, the job or the community) for which we aren't ready

- ρ Growing predation of natural resources (running out of fossil fuels, desertification, exhaustion of fishing reserves, extinction of many animal and plant species, pollution of water...)

Loss of human safety can be a slow and silent process or an abrupt and noisy emergency. If the planet's destroyed, it will be so for humanity, not just poor people.

Wars and climate change, which are not economic factors, brings up refugees - an immigration with particular features.

What we can say categorically is that classical defects of capitalism such as inequality and extreme poverty are growing every day. The political and economic convulsions which the system is experiencing in these times show that it's incapable of satisfying the needs of society as a whole.

Everything points to the fact that the neo-Malthusian solution decided by those in power, which leaves out of survival a large portion of humanity, is under way.

What will most of that "excess" population do? They'll look for the conditions of survival and they'll look for them anywhere; another issue is whether they succeed or die trying. But also we must not forget history and the relationships that Europe has had with other regions of the world (conquest, slavery, colonization... in short, exploitation of human beings and natural resources), which have profoundly marked the state of affairs in the present, and which is still under way through transnational corporations.

Concretion of dialogue, study and joint action among unions, ecological organizations, feminist organizations, human rights organizations, and those that help migrants and give alternatives to this system is totally necessary in order to build initiatives and strategies which cross national and geographic borders, trying to add everyone's efforts and thus create a powerful response with the sum of the scarce forces that we have separately.

We must imagine the future which is approaching in order to face it with some probability of solving it.

ρ Free movement and residence for all people;

ρ Healthcare, Education and affordable housing are fundamental rights, irrespectively of national status;

ρ Immigrants' cultural identities shall not be repressed nor destroyed;

ρ No to outsourcing: jobs, working conditions, the right to unionize and to strike between workers born in and outside each country must be equal;

ρ Legal rights for all immigrants;

ρ Stop Xenophobia and discrimination