

Before the Next Revolution

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Last week my most recent book, which shares the same title as this article, was presented at the prestigious Casa Lamm cultural centre in Mexico City, at an event attended by a large group of Mexican politicians, intellectuals, academics, journalists, national and international trade union leaders, business people and workers representing various sections of the national economy.

Its subject, which continues to be controversial, has appealed to lots of people who are interested in and seriously concerned with hearing different views and proposals for tackling and overcoming the crisis that we in Mexico, along with many other places in the world, are experiencing. My initial comments were that talking about revolution still scares lots of people and worries others, but what is absolutely certain is that for the privileged, for those who have benefited inordinately quickly compared to the vast majority of the population, it is something that makes them feel uncomfortable and can seem like a provocation.

The thing is that over the past three decades in Mexico at least, since the most extreme form of economic liberalism was introduced in an unexpected and at times shameless fashion, the country has changed and inequality and poverty have become part of one of the most serious and bare-faced capitalist tactics since economic progress with social wellbeing was curbed and replaced by growth, trade openness and liberalism itself. The model has been designed to make a handful of people, perhaps around 300 families who seized control of political and economic power in Mexico, wealthier. This was why during the presentation of the book I opened with the question, who does Mexico belong to?

The book's main concern is for the future of the working classes and their families, as well as every sector of society more widely, above all with regards to how to reach a state of fair and balanced social, economic, political and cultural equilibrium. It is also concerned with how to achieve humane and responsible exploitation of extractive industries, protect the environment and maintain decent jobs in the face of the challenges posed by the technological innovation of the 21st century, commercial dependency on just one market and external political



pressures, particularly those arising from the new US government administration, led by Donald Trump, which puts us in a very weak and vulnerable position.

There are currently a series of elements of instability that prevent the country's activities from making progress on any front; low revenue and the clearly corporate-driven policy of recent governments have left Mexicans feeling frustrated, people who have been pushing to build a better future on a daily basis, defying the crisis in which we find ourselves every day, thanks to passivity and incompetence on the part of government.

Recent administrations over at least the past 30 years, settled into the comfort that power offers, without demonstrating any concern or vision for the changes our country would need to reach a new, more advanced stage of economic development, which could have propelled us towards a world of improved wellbeing, safety and social peace. Everything is different now, because the consequences of the corruption and impunity of the last six governments have clouded the prospects and hopes of Mexican people, who currently live in a state of real, widespread anxiety and uncertainty.

Many people are convinced that certain politicians, authority figures and business owners don't really bear any love for Mexico at all. They have a very specific aim, to have and hold power, control and influence over the management of resources for the benefit of themselves, their families and the interest groups they belong to. Therein lies the root of one of the most serious problems that have not only led to the failure of government, but which have also intensified social inequality and increased poverty. That is why my book offers analysis and touches on current issues, because protests and social unrest have been spreading in Mexico, as we have warned, including to political parties, unions, academics and intellectuals, as a result of the decades-old strategy petering out, a strategy in place ever since neoliberalism was installed and which has allowed only a small section of society to become filthily rich, leaving behind the popular classes, on whose labours our nation's advances were once built. As the book asserts, great conflicts and grievances are not simply resolved, rather they are left to neglect and indifference, in the hope that time will bury them and let us move on from the profound problems and abuses caused by men in power, and the people who befriend them.

The revolution proposed by the book is not an emblematic bloody, violent revolt, but rather one of exchanging ideas, transforming our current model to enable us all to put our dedication, efforts and energies towards reaching a new development model that I have called



shared prosperity and responsibility. In today's world we need to come together in solidarity, join forces and fight as one to bring about this major shift in attitude, ideas and mentality to propel our nation towards a better future where trade is diversified and our independence, sovereignty and dignity all mean something, making Mexico a better place to live for everybody.