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05.05.2022

Ecuador: Workers' Day

Given such a panorama, it is obvious, historically speaking, that social conflict has become more acute, with unpredictable meanings for the future life of the nation.



May 1, [Labor Day](#), which not only remembers the events of Chicago in 1886 and the [martyrs of that day](#), is also commemorated in Ecuador since 1911. At that time the salaried working class was incipient, under a pre-capitalist system, dominated by a powerful agrarian, commercial and, above all, banking oligarchy. However, thanks to the [Julian](#)



May Day March in Quito – Ecuador. photo: Wambra community media

As expected, according to the historical experience of both Latin America and Ecuador during the final decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the business-neoliberal model restored since 2017 and the interest of the political and economic right to prevent any alternative project of social economy and much less headed by some left force, they have provoked, in just five years, the reversal of the social achievements of the immediately last decade, the modification of political dominance and the hegemony of a power bloc headed by high economic, banking and media groups. In such circumstances, although some macroeconomic indices suggest a conjunctural recovery, in Ecuadorian society poverty increased, as well as unemployment and underemployment, [according to INEC data](#), while the concentration of wealth in the capitalist class was accentuated, favored by recurrent government measures, as shown by the [different studies of the IIE-UC](#). Deinstitutionalization grew in the different functions of the State, as well as public and especially private corruption (tax evasion, tax havens, INA Papers, Panama Papers, Pandora Papers, etc.), citizen insecurity has skyrocketed, the emigration of Ecuadorians again takes off, hopelessness and uprooting are reflected through social networks, there is no longer a Latin Americanist sense, while a "culture of privilege" (ECLAC) has been forged thanks to the flourishing of private power, in the face of a State victim of "shrinkage", which has severely affected the provision of public goods and services. The fundamentals of the neoliberal-business path must be completed through "privatizations", new free trade agreements and the definitive labor reform. Given such a

panorama, it is obvious, historically speaking, that social conflict has become more acute, with unpredictable meanings for the future life of the nation.



Consequently, the commemoration of Labor Day in Ecuador has summoned not only workers' organizations, but also the various political sectors of the left and, in addition, a multiplicity of independent, organic and "informal" social forces, which express the common hopelessness in the face of the national reality, which has constituted a new situation for years, and which has been tried to disqualify as the conjunction of "destabilizing" forces. In any case, there is a complex situation for the popular sectors, still with strong disunions and weak in front of the bloc in power. There is no doubt that there is a reaction against the neoliberal-business path and today, moreover, plutocratic. The demand for democracy, respect for social mobilization and constitutional rights has also been expressed. However, at the same time, it is necessary to warn that the urgency of reconstituting the workers' movement is evident, exhausted by multiple limitations, which include the political ubiquity of different leaderships, as well as the subjection to traditional positions, which no longer respond to the dynamism of the changes that the historical evolution of the country has experienced.

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Edited by [María Piedad Ossaba](#)

Source: [History and Present](#) – blog, May 2, 2022

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La Pluma.net 04.05.2022