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Final crisis, permanent crisis and the possibilities of the system

No "law" governs the functioning of capitalism, as the philosopher of Trier (Trier) rightly pointed out; the system works by "tendencies", a correct idea that eliminates determinisms and leaves a wide field to human construction, to politics.



Faced with the dimension of the current crisis of capitalism, predictions of all kinds are produced, from those who minimize its most acute forms to those who predict a kind of "final crisis". In the ranks of the left, these expressions are also manifested, ranging from a kind of responsible pragmatism to calls for the final battle and predicting the birth of a new civilization. These analyses, in many forms, republish similar debates within the left

when the system seemed to collapse ([World War I](#) and [October Revolution](#)) or when similar processes seemed to be inaugurated after the defeat of fascism in [World War II](#) and the [rise of the Socialist Camp](#).



Some elements of the current one are certainly of enormous impact and could justify predictions of this kind. Indeed, the [economic crisis of 2008](#) has not really been overcome by the measures of governments and seems to have become a form of permanent behavior of the system (with more or less intense ups and downs but without reaching forms such as [the Great Depression of 1929](#)); the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the enormous limitation of States to face such a challenge, no less than the current war in Ukraine whose outcome seems increasingly unpredictable and which according to the most pessimistic voices could even lead to a nuclear war, although with the use of atomic bombs of a lower impact than the classic ones and giving a new form to the "cold war".

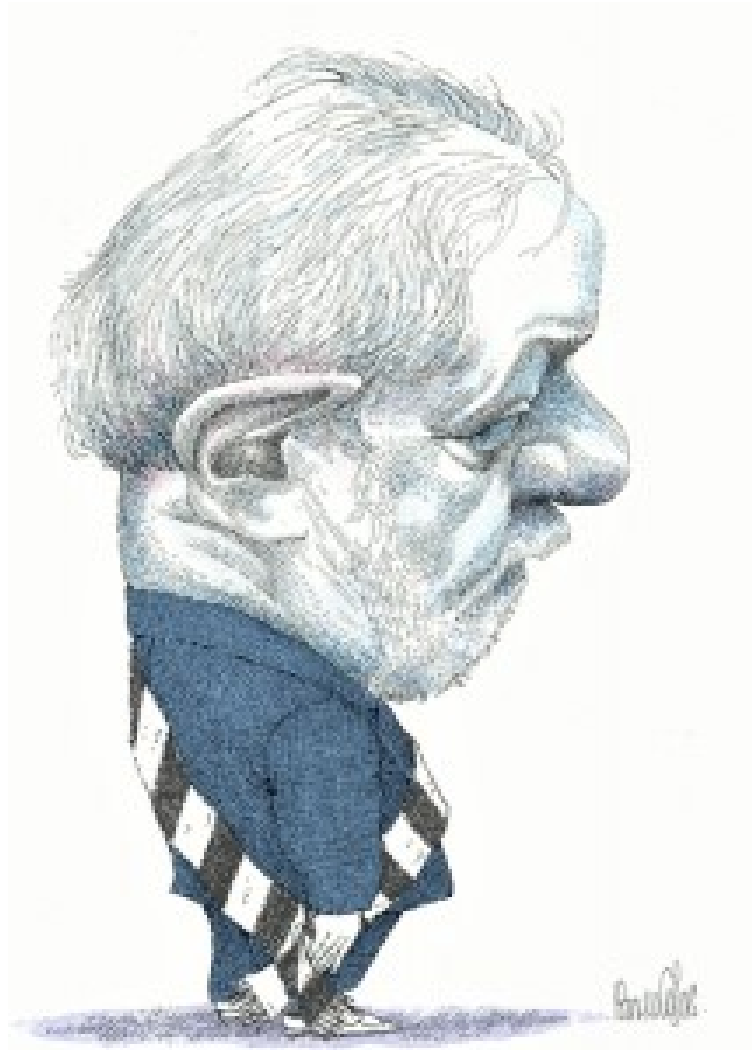


The profound deterioration of the institutions of the capitalist system is also clear. Political parties offer a panorama of deep attrition, with leaders whose role as puppets of big capital appears with such evidence that it subtracts, if not eliminates, citizen trust. It is the crisis of politics that would explain the deep erosion of these institutions even where trust in leaders and institutions had been considerable, as confirmed by phenomena such as increasing electoral abstention even in countries where high participation has been traditional or the resurgence of the grossest and most primitive forms of politics fostered by an extreme right that are so reminiscent of fascism and Nazism. traditional that they believed themselves overcome. Abstention affects sectors of little political culture as well as significant groups of youth who see in institutions and political parties little or nothing that deserves the least confidence.

It is not surprising the advance of an extreme right that gains followers among sectors of low or scarce political culture and especially among petty bourgeois sectors that always view with hostility the wage earners and critical intellectuals. It is the renewed version of the classic "*neighborhood shopkeeper*" that served as initial support for the Nazis in Germany. As always, big capital awaits the evolution of events to use the traditional bourgeois parties if the crossroads is overcome by civilized means or, on the contrary, a collapse of the system of unpredictable consequences advises giving the extreme right the decisive role, as it once did with fascism. That seems to be the current scenario and the debate then focuses on whether the system can resolve its contradictions by abiding by the rules of democracy or on the contrary fascism will have to be allowed to assume command.



This panorama in the metropolises is repeated most dramatically in the New World. And here the left is debated in very similar terms although to the internal factors must be added the external factor, the modern forms of imperialism. [If Lula wins in Brazil](#), it would increase the advances of the center-left in the continent, which is mostly committed to reforms agreed with the political and social center, seeking favorable international alliances with the new economic powers and thus closing the danger of a triumph of Creole fascism. In the end, these center-left governments broadly coincide with the policies of many European governments that promote partial reforms to the neoliberal system, reforms that in the best of cases would mean a certain return to the dismantled Welfare State. Here the opposition of big capital is important but as long as a very deep crisis is not precipitated, it is quite likely that they will opt for the path of these reforms.



In Latin America, the governments of the center-left are promoting reforms that harmonize the interests of the majority with a key sector of local business that is very affected by "*openness*" (neoliberal) policies. If in the Old World it is a question of remaking even partially the old Welfare State in the New World, it is a question of overcoming enormous social inequality and economic poverty, provoking the bitter opposition of the big bourgeoisie. Here as in the rest of the world that big bourgeoisie does not represent more than 1% of the entire population but gets not inconsiderable support that includes popular sectors that allow it in some cases to win the elections or subtract much power in the institutions from the forces of the center-left. The left then has the challenge of convincing those popular sectors that support the right of the coincidence of their reforms with the interests of those sectors.



Nothing allows us to say that the system is about to collapse; not at least immediately. The prudent thing for the left is then to push for the reforms that are possible and try to prevent the extreme right from advancing. It is about finding civilized solutions to the crisis (even if it is within capitalism) or finding ourselves doomed to face new forms of fascism.

Capitalism has found ways out of its crises and thwarted the emergence of an alternative social order. These alternatives were not always fascism but world wars with an immeasurable cost to humanity. Revolutionary exits as formulated by some tendencies of the left that consider that we are facing the "*final crisis*" of the system and that therefore the only way out that must be supported is precisely that of establishing a new social order, essentially different from capitalism do not seem to correspond to the real correlation of forces. Reformist formulas of capitalism can be applied and then give a way out of the crisis of the system even if it is only temporary; fascism is not necessarily their only alternative.



It is the *"concrete analysis of the concrete situation"* that makes it possible to design an appropriate strategy and indicates whether it is time for reform or revolution. Quite another thing is how this immediate reformist goal is harmonized with the medium- and long-term revolutionary goals. No *"law"* governs the functioning of capitalism, as the philosopher of Trier (Trier) rightly pointed out; the system works by *"tendencies"*, a correct idea that eliminates determinisms and leaves a wide field to human construction, to politics.

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Edited by [María Piedad Ossaba](#)

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