

# The West and the Majority World: Repression Versus Openness. Socially Destructive Neoliberal Policies Applied Since 1980s

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*In 2004, Fidel Castro and Pres. Hugo Chávez founded what is now the Bolivarian Alliance of the peoples of our America, ALBA which now includes Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and the Caribbean island nations of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, St Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda and Santa Lucía. A year earlier, in 2003, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was formally constituted, which now includes China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan and Iran. Both organizations share practically the same principles of solidarity, equality among their members and mutual respect for different ideologies. This suggests that, at that same time, in different poles of the majority world, a common decision arose to build a world free of the economic strangulation and neocolonial aggression of the United States and its allies.*

Since its inception, the leaders of the ALBA countries have denounced North American and European imperialism's brutal exploitation and domination and its gangster diplomacy of "Do what we want or else...". In May of this year, President Daniel Ortega declared at the 21st ALBA-TCP Summit:

"They have not stopped practicing the Monroe Doctrine, they have not renounced the Monroe Doctrine. In the name of democracy, they impose a tyrannical, imperialist, terrorist, international policy... imperialism has not changed, the essence of Imperialism is there, a totally criminal essence."

At that same meeting, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro expressed,

"Enough is enough of the centuries of plunder, of invasions, of threats, of imperial hegemonism, this is our century! The 21st century... and our path is that of Latin America and the Caribbean, of ALBA, of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, this is our path, the path of equals, the path of respect, the path of inclusion, the path of unitary convocation, that is our path."

At the same summit, Cuba's President Miguel Díaz Canel also expressed the commitment of the ALBA countries to unity among diversity

"In the face of attempts at exclusion and selectivity, it is urgent to strengthen the authentic mechanisms of Latin American and Caribbean to integrate and act in concert. Together we will be able to effectively defend our sovereignty and self-determination without interference or external pressures....We call to unite, not to divide; to contribute, not to subtract; to dialogue, not to confront; to respect, not to impose."

After decades of increasingly aggressive provocations on the part of the United States and the European Union, in February of this year the Russian Federation finally acted to defend itself. And in his historic speech on September 30, President Vladimir Putin elaborated the vision of a multipolar world, based on the same principles of ALBA and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, genuine cooperation, respect between equals, unity in diversity, a commitment to dialogue and international law. The similarity between the ALBA country leaders' vision and the vision expressed by President Putin in his speech is very striking.

He spoke of the faith of the majority world's peoples in a multipolar world in order to "strengthen their sovereignty and, therefore, to acquire true freedom, historical perspective, the right to independent, creative, authentic development, to a harmonious process." President Putin made clear that it is also about faith in the human capacity to overcome differences, collaborate for the common good and create a world of solidarity. He stated explicitly, "Our values are love for neighbor, mercy and compassion."

The contrast of these common visions of the ALBA countries, of Russia, China and their allies, with the practice of the West could not be stronger. As President Putin puts it,

"Western countries have been saying for centuries that they bring freedom and democracy to other nations. Everything is just the opposite: democracy becomes repression and exploitation; freedom, slavery and violence. The entire unipolar world order is inherently undemocratic and devoid of freedom. It is mendacious and hypocritical to the core."

The truth of this categorical condemnation of the United States and its allies is self-evident in the colonial history of imperialism from its origins to its evolution over the last century to neo-colonialism. In the United States and Europe, since the introduction of universal suffrage last century enabled the Western elites to pass off their nations as democracies, in practice essentially, in exchange for guaranteeing their populations' socio-economic development, those elites have been able to count on their countries' peoples to collaborate in the looting of the majority world. This ensured that the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America paid the costs of the prosperity and development of Western nations as, one way or another, they continue to do.

However, the scope of geopolitical power and control of majority world resources by Western elites is now more limited. In part, this setback for the West results from the growing cooperation and commercial and financial power of the nations of the Eurasian space. In turn, the increasing economic and diplomatic activity of China, Russia and their allies has promoted the development of their relations with the nations in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially with the countries and peoples committed to the defense of their sovereignty.

The desperate response to the relative decline of their global power on the part of the American and European oligarchies takes three main forms. First, in their own countries, the exploitation of the labor force and the repression of dissent are increasing. Secondly, they act with greater aggression of all kinds against Russia and China and their regional allies such as Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua or Syria, Iran and the Democratic Republic of Korea. And the third form of the Western reaction to their decline is to apply greater intimidation and harassment against countries vulnerable to economic pressure to ensure that they remain obedient.

In North America and Europe, neoliberal policies implemented since the 1980s have normalized repression and economic exploitation. In the United States there is a permanent political offensive against the social security system and investment in public services generally. In Europe, public services are being cut or privatized. In the United States and the European Union there have been huge transfers of wealth to corporate elites both during the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and as part of the financial measures in response to the economic collapse caused by measures addressing Covid-19. At the same time, even the IMF recognizes that labor remuneration in the West has fallen in real terms. Likewise, the terms and conditions of work for people throughout the West are becoming increasingly precarious. Only 10% of the workforce in the United States is organized into unions. In European countries the average is 23% and generally much lower.

It is impossible to summarize concisely all the nuances of this reality. But among the main effects associated with increased domestic economic repression in Western countries and increased aggression overseas, have been censorship on social networks and suppression of information in the media, especially on international events. These practices reinforce the West's extensive and intense psychological warfare against the majority world and facilitate the economic and military aggression and terrorism of the United States and its allies against any nation that tries to defend its sovereignty and independence.

This marks a deep and irreparable collapse of moral and intellectual integrity on the part of Western elites and their peoples, signaling a comprehensive, insidious spiritual defeat. On the other hand, a growing number of the majority world's governments and peoples insist on their sovereign right to manage their international relations at the international so as to open up and promote new possibilities for national, regional and international development. Perhaps the most important expression of this faith in the future is the broad support for the so-called BRICS+ group of countries, originally organized by China, Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa, from countries around the world, including Iran, Algeria, Turkey, Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Thailand and even Nicaragua.

A great many majority world nations clearly agree with the views of Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves of St Vincent and the Grenadines who observed this year on July 19th in the Plaza de la Revolución in Managua, at the 43rd Anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution,

"I come from a small country in our hemisphere, but this small country believes and subscribes to large principles: The defense of sovereignty and independence, non-interference and non-intervention in our own affairs; so as to be able to lead ourselves and our civilizations onward, and to be able to walk together with all the peoples around the world, in friendship but not in subordination. In that sense, we are friends with everyone and aspire for a Better World."

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