

15 October 2011: a great victory for the Outraged

Monday 17 October 2011, by [TOUSSAINT Éric](#) (Date first published: 16 October 2011).

Since February 2003, this is the first time a call for an international action on a specific date has met with such an echo. In Spain, where the Indignados movement began, almost 500 000 demonstrators marched through the streets of around 80 different cities, including 200 000 or more in Madrid [\[1\]](#). Actions have taken place on five continents. More than 80 countries and almost one thousand different towns have seen hundreds of thousands of youth and adults on the march, protesting against the management of the international economic crisis by governments rushing to bail out the private institutions responsible for the collapse and who are taking advantage of it to strengthen neoliberal policies: massive layoffs in public services, clear-cutting of social spending, massive privatizations, attacks on social solidarity measures (public pension systems, unemployment benefits, collective bargaining...). Everywhere, repayment of the public debt is the pretext used to strengthen austerity measures. Everywhere, demonstrators are accusing the banks.

In February 2003, we saw the broadest international mobilization to try to prevent a war: the invasion of Iraq. More than 10 million people gathered in countless demonstrations all over the planet. Since then, the dynamics of the global justice movement born in the 1990s has gradually faded but never entirely died out.

On 15 October 2011, slightly fewer than one million people took to the streets. Nevertheless, it was a huge victory, because it was the first large demonstration carried out in a 24-hour period around the planet against the people responsible for the capitalist crisis, which has created tens of millions of victims.

The financial and economic crisis, which started in the US in 2007, has spread, above all in Europe, from 2008. The debt crisis faced by developing countries has spread to the North. It is interconnected with the food crisis, which has hit many developing regions since 2007-2008. Not to forget the climate crisis, above all affecting the peoples of the South of the planet.

This systemic crisis is also expressed at an institutional level: the leaders of the G8 member countries know they do not have the means to manage the international crisis. Thus, they have convened the G20. For three years now, the latter has proven incapable of coming up with valid solutions. This crisis also involves a crisis of civilization. There are challenges raised to consumerism, generalized commoditisation, the failure to take the environmental impacts of economic activities into account, productivism, the search to satisfy private interests at the expense of the public interest, goods and services, major powers' systematic recourse to violence, the denial of the basic human rights of peoples such as the Palestinians... Often capitalism is the heart of what is being challenged.

No centralized organization had called this mobilization. The Indignados ("Outraged") movement was born in Spain in May 2011 in the wake of the Tunisian and Egyptian rebellions in the previous months. It spread to Greece in June 2011 and to other European countries. It has crossed the North Atlantic since September 2011 [\[2\]](#). Of course, a series of radical political organizations and organized social movements support the movement but are not leading it. Their influence is limited.

It is a broadly spontaneous movement, mostly made up of young people, with an enormous potential to develop that is very disturbing to political leaders, the heads of major firms and all police forces on the planet. It could die out like a flash in the pan or be the spark that sets off the fire. Nobody knows.

On 15 October 2011, the call to mobilize mostly rallied demonstrators in cities and towns in countries of the North including the planet's financial centres, which is very promising. The outraged 'occupy' movements have sparked very creative and emancipatory dynamics. If you are not yet involved, try to join, or launch it if it does not yet exist where you live. Link up and take part in an authentic emancipation.

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P.S.

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Footnotes

[1] I'm writing these lines from Madrid, where I took part in an impressive demonstration of 200 000 people.

[2] Translators note: in North America and elsewhere it has become the occupy movement after the 'occupy Wall street' protests which were the first of their kind in this region.