

The Rebellion to Come

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Everyone assumes that the president will have the possibility of imposing the candidate of his preference to the presidency, as if nothing had changed in Mexico and in the world during these last decades, but especially since PRI's defeat in 2000. The old system began to deteriorate -and produced endless crises- not because of the capacity or incapacity of individuals, but rather due to that the system conceived after the Revolution had become already incompatible with a modern, big and demanding country. Now, after the pathetic electoral result of last week -it just got through by the skin of its teeth and with an enormous conflict brewing-, the mere pretense of being able to decide on a candidate from the lofty heights of the presidency seems ludicrous. As Marx remarked, history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, then as farce. In the face of this scenario, perhaps there is no more important question for the upcoming 12 months -and, likely, for the next decade- than the way the PRIists will act.

The history of the PRI is the history of being handpicked by the President (the *dedazo*), of the concentration of power -of unipersonal power-, of peace exacted from the center and from vertical control. That is the model that President Peña has attempted to create anew during these years, but its unviability has been the result of the new political, -as well as social, economic and technological - reality that characterizes Mexico and the XXI century. Today's PRI is no longer that of before, because Mexico has changed and the control systems of latter day produce only confusion and then chaos.

The new panorama, just one year prior to the ensuing presidential elections, is not encouraging for such an unpopular government and, above all, for such a sensitive and delicate moment, both internally as well as externally. It is not only the anger of the populace, the criminality that the politicians ignore and disdain or the poor economic performance for an enormous number of Mexicans, but also the evidence of corruption and the flagrant impunity. It is not obvious that these circumstances are distinct from those of the past, but the perceptions indeed are. As David Konzevik says, "the poor are currently rich in information and millionaires in expectations." For whatever reason, the PRI that is gearing up for next year's presidential contest is not living its best moments. The problem of the PRI is certainly nothing new, but the present government has made it worse. To begin with, it has alienated the PRI base: the governing coalition includes

essentially politicians from the State of Mexico and excludes practically everyone else, a situation that has riled up PRIists left and right. In second place, perhaps the most impacting trademark that distinguished the PRI has disappeared: its discipline -almost Leninist in nature- in the quest for power. In the 2015 elections, for example, the government played against the PRI in a palace intrigue but with unmistakable consequences for the party. Third, so distant from the reality has it become that it lost itself in petty tactics to fragment the electorate, ending up becoming the finest promoter of its Nemesis, the Morena -i.e. Lopez Obrador's- political party.

Wherever one looks, the government has turned into a headache for the PRI itself. It is under these conditions that the PRI Party Assembly next August draws nearer. Given the performance of the government and of the party, everything heralds an enormous rebellion among the PRIists, a rebellion against the government or, more specifically, one about how will the new presidential candidate be nominated and by means of which mechanism or criterion. That is, a mutiny against being tapped by the President's finger. A rebellion does not have to imply shouts or blows of necessity, but it can entail a radical transformation of the Mexican political system and therein lies its transcendence and complexity. Transcendence because the system that prevails in governing us, the one that Plutarco Elías Calles built employing as his model -Roger Hansen would say- Porfirio Díaz, remains essentially the same despite the immense transformation that the country (and the world) has experienced in the last century; that is, an anachronism. On the other hand, the complexity of a rebellion such as the one I anticipate resides in that some of the "rebels" would seek to preserve the old system and its privileges, but without the dysfunctionality that the presidential imposition of a candidate entails. In other words, they want to have their cake and eat it too. Others, however, probably a minority, would be promoting a radical reform of the system.

There are to come, consequently, complex months during which the foundations could be set in place for the reconfiguration of the old political system or for its final collapse. Anything is possible, above all because it is easy to start a rebellion, but much more difficult to control its outcome: once it starts, nobody knows how it will end. In a scenario like this, the PRIists would have in their hands the opportunity to create conditions for the construction of a new political system (and initiating the funeral rites of the old one), or to generate chaos by attempting to preserve the privileges without economic or political viability. The difference would be found in who or, rather, what wins: the edification of a novel institutional structure that the country badly needs, or the

attempt to preserve, but under new rules, the world of corruption, privilege and impunity that has been the house insignia from the outset.

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