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## **Protests in Latin America: Carriquiry (former PCLA Secretary-Vice President) to SIR, “we are witnessing the explosion of a pressure cooker of poverty and inequality”**

“What is happening in Latin America is like a huge explosion of a pressure cooker”. It is caused, in the midst of epochal changes, by a number of factors, including inequality, subversion of the social order, corruption, failed economic models, and lack of political credibility. This is according to one of the leading experts on the continent, Guzmán Carriquiry Lecour, who in recent years has been secretary and vice-president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America (PCLA). In an extensive and detailed article entitled “What is really happening in Latin America?”, to be published in Spanish on the PCLA website and whose contents were anticipated to SIR news agency in an interview, Carriquiry argued: “It seems like in some way Latin America is entering a new phase of its political hustle and bustle, without that continuity that can ensure genuine political, social and economic progress. It is under everyone’s eyes that the continent is on the verge of a strong social upheaval, with people spontaneously taking to the streets of Haiti, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile. I feel, however, that there are few answers in the political and intellectual debate in Latin America. Or, at least, few reasonable and convincing answers. The financial, political and intellectual elites in Latin America could not predict and understand what was about to happen. And even the Church in Latin America is now called to discern the ‘signs of the times’, by listening carefully to the reality, as Pope Francis invites us to do”. It is clear, the expert said, that the “protests are triggered by poverty and inequality”. And all this - according to the PCLA former vice-president - is happening because, “when times were good”, between 2007 and 2014, “Latin American countries limited themselves to ‘sucking resources’ out of the so-called ‘new extractivism’, without making the necessary structural reforms to address the historical social inequality, to reform taxation, and to improve public services. They remained dependent on raw materials, without even having an active international policy to regulate market prices. And in 2017, poverty began to grow again. Today, 184 million Latin Americans, 30.2% of the population, live in situations of poverty, and 62 million (10.2%) in extreme poverty”.

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