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Mexico

The national situation after December 1st

- IV Online magazine - 2013 - IV456 - January 2013 -

Publication date: Sunday 20 January 2013

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At midnight on December 1st there began, in a militarized Presidential Palace and city centre, the ceremony of transfer of power between Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN). This democratic masquerade revealed the fraudulent and illegitimate character of the new regime.

At dawn, the first clashes between groups of ultras and the forces of the police began at San Lazaro, around the Parliament building where the new president would take the oath. "Clashes" is certainly not the most appropriate word, because at this point the police were just stoically taking the blows. It was around seven o'clock in the morning, when the first student contingents of the "I am 132" movement [1] arrived on the spot, and while the groups of ultras were withdrawing, the order was given to the police to retaliate strongly with tear gas and rubber bullets, causing many demonstrators to be injured, two of them seriously. Following an apparently well-prepared scenario, the repressive apparatus, under the responsibility of the Federal government and the "progressive" government of the capital, which thus demonstrated its allegiance to the regime, fell on peaceful demonstrators. Pictures showed people dressed like members of the ultra groups moving freely, without being challenged, among elements of the police in the protective perimeter that was inaccessible to the protesters, clearly illustrating the presence of infiltrators who played the role of provocateurs.

The people who were arrested were picked up much later and far from the scene of the morning clashes. Among them, and there are also some pictures which prove this, were peaceful demonstrators, but also many passers-by who were going about their business in the city centre and who were caught up in the impressive police dragnet. The message of the new government was therefore extremely clear: it could have been you...So better stay at home. Some of those arrested have been released for lack of evidence, while fourteen of them have been released on bail pending a trial in which they will have to face charges, of a political nature, "of disturbing the public peace". Despite the aggressive lynch-mob politico-media campaign against the protesters, a movement for the release of the political prisoners and the prosecution of those responsible for the excesses committed by the police was immediately set up and has demonstrated on several occasions, obtaining the release of all those detained.

A movement that is in reflux, but has not been routed

Although they were not massive, demonstrations refusing the imposed election of EPN took place in many cities in the country. The big movement that arose in the pre-election period, whose aim was to prevent a return to power of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) [2] and which turned into a movement against electoral fraud and the imposed election of EPN after the elections of July 1st, has therefore entered a phase of relative reflux that may well be temporary.

In the course of its history, Mexico has experienced episodes of massive repression and the crushing of big movements, followed by long periods of reflux. This was the case of the movement of railway workers at the end of the 1950s, and of the student movement in 1968, which was drowned in blood. Nothing like that has happened this time. Despite its authoritarian character and the repressive inclinations that it has never abandoned, the regime today faces a popular movement which, although fragmented, has conducted numerous battles and accumulated large forces over recent years. The weakening of the Convention against the Imposed Election is mainly due to the refusal of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) [3] to work with it and to initiate a consistent fight against electoral fraud. It therefore fell to the "I am 132" movement to take on the awesome responsibility of conducting this battle. Meanwhile

AMLO bears the heavy responsibility of having channeled into the institutional labyrinth the huge civic and popular movement that his candidacy had aroused, thus preventing the trial of strength with the regime that had been foreseen.

The need for an alternative policy

The PRD, after having betrayed AMLO for the first time in 2006 by endorsing the fraudulent election of Felipe Calderón [4], lost no time in doing it for the second time, this time pushing things to their logical conclusion by signing a "Pact for Mexico" with the PRI and the PAN. The PRD has thus completed its mutation by quite openly rallying to the neo-liberal, authoritarian and repressive agenda of the Mexican oligarchy. An important part of the institutional Left which did not want a candidacy of AMLO had to reluctantly accept it because of the momentum created by the Movement for National Regeneration (MORENA), while trying to impede it whenever they could.

After a series of local and state congresses, the National Congress of MORENA was held in late November in Mexico City. This congress, after a consultation process, which was not without problems from a democratic point of view, took the decision to launch the process of obtaining its legal recognition from the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE). Some of the cadres of the future party are relatives of AMLO, who were co-opted and not elected, on the pretext that they were "respectable" people. It should be noted that the National Congress took place without debate, the only speech being made by AMLO. Due to its multi-class composition and to a programme that attempts to reconcile strongly conflicting interests, MORENA will therefore have all the features of a new PRD.

In the context of this important process of political recomposition, the decision taken in mid-December by the National Executive Committee (CEN) of the Political Organization of the People and the Workers (OPT) [[The OPT, a proletarian alternative to the crisis of political parties](#)] to attempt to obtain legal recognition from the electoral authorities is also of particular importance. The OPT, whose origins lie in the struggle of the Mexican Electricians' Union of (SME) but which now includes other social forces, represents the backbone of what could become a future workers' party (in the broad sense, not just the industrial working class), equipped with a classist programme for a break with the capitalist regime. The OPT will therefore embark on this costly and difficult battle and attempt to meet the drastic and strongly anti-democratic conditions imposed by Mexican legislation.

This battle is doubly important at a moment when sectors of the population who participated in the election campaign of AMLO, disappointed by his climb-downs and by the conciliatory orientation adopted by the future MORENA party, could choose to join a party rooted in the struggles of the most advanced sectors of the working class. The socialist and revolutionary Left must understand the full importance of this battle and become fully involved in it, because it represents the opportunity to see a part of the working class break away from the social-liberal Left, come out of the fold of the PRI and finally conquer its political independence.

[1] "I am 132" is a student movement formed in May 2012, the initiative for which came from a video made by 132 students and shown on YouTube.

[2] The PRI was in power continuously from 1929 until 2000

[3] Candidate of centre-left Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD.

[4] Candidate of the National Action Party, PAN, liberal Right.