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Honduras coup

Oligarchic resistance to popular struggles is growing

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Capitalism is seeking to use the current crisis to recompose and extend itself. An immense amount of (mostly fictitious) capital has been destroyed and hundreds of millions of workers have been thrown out of work. The opportunity has been taken to impose wage cuts, attack trade union protection, extend working hours and cancel social legislation.

[<https://npa31.org/IMG/jpg/38059.jpg>]

Employment is subject to perpetual danger and work is carried out in increasingly poor conditions. Capitalism increases the extraction of relative surplus value by increasing productivity (thus lowering the value of goods relative to the reproduction of the labour force), while virtually freezing wages. This adds an absolute value due to the extension of the working day and the free labour that the working family and each of its members must perform to reproduce the labour force.

In industrialized countries, such a policy requires the complicity of the bureaucratized union leaderships that sell out the rights of their members and repressive measures against combative trade unionists and against the immigrants who form a large part of the working class, with the aim of dividing, weakening and disorganising it.

In the less industrialized countries, however, the bulk of capitalism is based on a mix between the landed oligarchy with a "feudal vision" and transnational corporations. It rests on racism of the urban middle classes (white and mixed races) against the rural and urban poor (indigenous or poor black) classes. And to maintain profit margins, capital must reduce the share of income going to workers. This task can be accomplished only by preventing any resistance through a dictatorial power. Attempted coups by those who control the courts, national assemblies, news media and armed forces are therefore on the agenda, and they will continue to be so.

In 2002, there were attempts by the Venezuelan oligarchy, with the support of President Bush and the Spanish Government and urban middle classes, to overthrow Hugo Chavez. A popular mobilization divided the military politically and socially and the coup failed.

Last year, the big soya producers and cattle farmers in Santa Cruz, Bolivia attempted a coup against Evo Morales, which failed through the counter-mobilization of the peasants and the prompt reaction of the governments of Unasur (the Union of South American Nations, created in 2008).

Recently, the brutal Guatemalan bourgeoisie tried to organize a coup against timidly reformist President Alvaro Colom, who it had spied on and monitored since the beginning. The peasant and indigenous mobilization has created an uncertain situation: another coup with the support of middle classes who fear that the social advancement of the popular sectors will cost them their meagre privileges is still possible.

And now there is this coup against President Manuel Zelaya, who has led Honduras in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA). This is another coup carried out by the news media, corrupt judges and politicians in the service of the big landowners, and the pretext that they give is ridiculous.

Nobody is obliged to participate in a consultation which is not binding. And if in the future it was eventually put to the voters whether they want to reform the Constitution, it would be sufficient, then, to answer no (and win the popular vote) to maintain the current situation.

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But the Honduran army intervened at dawn to capture and expel the country's President as well as several ministers. Afterwards, Congress forged a letter of resignation from Zelaya and on that basis, 20 hours after the coup, they deposed him and appointed a usurper as interim President.

The OAS (Organization of American States), the United Nations, the countries of Central America and even the President of the United States have immediately said that they only recognized Zelaya.

As in the case of Bolivia, the presidents of the ALBA group, but also many other more moderate Presidents - Lula (Brazil) Tabaré Vazquez (Uruguay), Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (Argentina) Michelle Bachelet (Chile), Oscar Arias (Costa Rica) - fear a return of 1970s, with coups and dictatorships, because in all these countries the right wants to defend its enormous profit margins threatened by the crisis and by the demands of workers.

Even Obama can no longer do what George Bush would have done (support coups) because he would forfeit the support of US Hispanics and some US workers, as well as that of democrats worldwide, and the recent fruits of his personal campaign of opening to Latin America.

We cannot talk about a new coup by "the gringo embassy" or the "first Obama coup" even if a good section of US transnationals and their representatives in the US establishment (Otto Reich, Negroponte and co.) may be behind the putschists.

However, it is clear that it is not enough for governments to repudiate them to overturn them. It is necessary to crush them in an exemplary manner before their example becomes a precedent, given that capitalism cannot recover within the margins of democracy and the social achievements that have been marked by workers since the Second World War.