



Worldwide solidarity to halt the Mexican state repression against the People's Assembly of Oaxaca!

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Anticapitalist and working class forces around the world must also protest this repression and demand the immediate withdrawal of the army and the police, the release of the political prisoners and the handing over of the murderers to popular justice.

For four months, mass popular forces, spearheaded by striking teachers, have organised the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO) which counterposed itself to the state and city administration. Their goal has been to remove a corrupt and oppressive governor, Ulises Ruiz, a member of the Institutional Revolutionary party, or PRI, which ruled Mexico for over 40 years.

The APPO has run local radio stations, organised self-defence, and created a situation of dual power in the state of Oaxaca. During the summer (July to September) this situation coincided with an extended national crisis following on from the presidential elections, which were plainly stolen from the left-populist candidate Lopez Obrador by the neoliberal candidate Felipe Calderon.

The mass occupation of the Zócalo in Mexico City and the holding of huge, millions strong rallies helped to protect the Oaxaca occupations against intervention from the federal government. Since the abandonment of those mobilisations by Lopez Obrador, Ruiz's paramilitary squads thugs have been mounting sporadic attacks on the teachers and the popular forces in Oaxaca. Last week, Ruiz's thugs killed a young American Indymedia journalist, Brad Roland. Plainly the weakening of the nationwide mass mobilisations in October, and the problems of where the Oaxaca teachers' strike and street mobilisations should go now, all encouraged Ruiz and Vicente Fox to make their move.

Last week, officials of the teachers' union finally got through a vote to end the five-month strike by the Oaxaca teachers. This was a heavy blow. It was not unconnected to the failure of the leaderships of the different strands of the mass movement to spread popular assemblies like APPO to the rest of Mexico and to bring the forces of the organised workers into the struggle. An obstacle to the latter is the heavily bureaucratised 'official' unions, tied to the PRI and to the National Action Party (PAN) led by Fox.

The inability of the movement to go forward and the ending of the strike, gave the forces of reaction their first opportunity to crush Oaxaca. The outgoing Mexican president, Vicente Fox, has used the 'outbreaks of violence' - i.e. provocations by Ruiz' PRI thugs - as a pretext to intervene against the very people they were attacking. In short, he wants to crush, what has been called the Oaxaca Commune.

Will he succeed? That depends on the actions of the popular and working class forces in Mexico and the support and encouragement they receive internationally. The mass forces that mobilised for Obrador, against the stolen elections, now need to mobilise to protect Oaxaca. Obrador - bourgeois politician though he is - should have used his position (he has declared himself the legitimate president elect) to call for an indefinite general strike; he should have called on the soldiers to refuse to repress the people. Shamefully, he refused to do so. This shows clearly that he is no 'president of the people'. Now, the mass organisations which supported him should break their reliance on him and call on the urban and rural poor to blockade the roads and to halt the life of the country until the repression against the APPO is ended.

The course of events in Oaxaca has raised key problems which must be urgently addressed.

The strategy of depending on a change of president to make the fundamental changes the impoverished people need, of relying on a Ukrainian style 'Orange revolution,' i.e. occupying public squares and holding huge mass meetings, to overcome the rigging of elections, is not enough. Such methods cannot overthrow a government that still has the support of the army, the capitalist class and indeed Mexico's mighty neighbour the USA, with its world media. Compare the attitude of Bush to 'people power' in Ukraine where he wanted regime change, with his attitude in Mexico where he most certainly does not! Compare the wall to wall coverage by CNN of events in Kiev with the near total blackout of events in Mexico City.

The strategy of the Zapatistas (EZLN) embodied in the 'Other Campaign' - other to the one of Obrador, i.e. winning power at the ballot box, has proved just as useless. This anarchist strategy restricts itself to symbolic confrontations and the supposed 'empowerment' of local communities, but avoids at all cost a mass struggle for power at the state level. The Zapatista leader, Sub-commandante Marcos, now renamed Delegate Zero, has been touring the North, holding local rallies, but this was a complete diversion when a critical point had been reached in the mass struggles in Mexico City and Oaxaca.

Now the EZLN has called for mass nationwide action, blockades etc, and even a general strike, but not until November 20! Raising these demands is a step forward, but it still runs the danger of being too little, too late. Marcos should call on urban and rural workers to strike NOW, before the 'mopping up' operation in Oaxaca is completed.

Either of these strategies - electoralism supplemented by a 'people power' mock revolution or the 'counterpower' of local rural communes - will enable the Mexican bourgeoisie to divide and conquer the forces of resistance.

The enormous scale of the mass mobilisations, the discrediting and crisis of Mexican bourgeois 'democracy', the paralysis of the state for months, all indicated the opening of a revolutionary situation. But such situations will not last forever, nor can the masses be kept on the streets indefinitely, with no perspective as to how the issue will be resolved.

Revolutionary situations hold the potential to erupt into revolution but they rarely do so spontaneously. If the leaders of the masses adopt false strategies, if the trade union bureaucracies block the way to action, then the forces of counterrevolution will recover from their fright, overcome their confusion and strike back - and all the more viciously for the scare they have had.

If the workers and peasants of Mexico want to avoid such a fate in the coming months, they must throw off these populist strategies and take up the weapons of a consistent class struggle starting with the general strike, organised by popular assemblies, at whose core are workers' delegates from the mines, factories, rail and bus depots.

The independent, more militant unions, who have supported the mobilisations, must go all out to win the rank and file workers in the unions linked to PRI and PAN to take action too. A consistent class struggle must be fought to win over the soldiers, arm the masses and seize power in an insurrection of the working people. To win support for this strategy, the number one priority of the militant vanguard in the struggles ahead must be to create a revolutionary party.

All federal troops, police and PRI paramilitary squads out of Oaxaca!

Bring the murderers of the people to popular justice!

For an all out general strike to defend the APPO and kick out Ruiz and Fox!

Popular Assemblies of workers' and peasants' delegates in every city, town and rural commune!

Down with Fox and Calderon - not a left-caudillo regime under Lopez Obrador but a revolutionary workers' and peasants' government based on worker-popular assemblies and armed militias!

Land to the peasants, factories, mines, and means of transport, to the workers!

A Socialist Mexico as part of a United States of Latin America!

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