

Colombia: Cast Aside Illusions, Take Up the People's Struggle

This past April 28th marked three years since the Great Popular Uprising [*Gran Levantamiento Popular*] of 2021, the peak of an important wave of struggles, protests, and uprisings that have shaken our country. This process demonstrated for all to see two problems of the ruling classes: the failure of their plans through the policies of the Duque government and Uribism, and the progressive and uncontrollable increase in the people's combative and independent struggle, which every time made greater use of revolutionary violence (of which the ruling classes are so afraid) to defend itself and attack the state's repressive forces.

In that moment of instability for the regime, the "government of change" was the only thing that could pacify the storm of the people's struggle without being a threat to the power of big capital, the large landowners, and imperialism in our country, and was on the contrary, its guarantor. As Alejandro Gaviria, former presidential candidate, expressed it at the time: "we are sleeping on the peak of a volcano. There is too much dissatisfaction. It would be better to have a controlled explosion with Gustavo Petro [Colombia's current reformist president], than to bottle up this volcano."

The path that the Petro government has presented to the movement which it sought to pacify has been a one of promises and illusions: dismantling of the Mobile Anti-Rioting Police Squad (Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios de la Policía – ESMAD), agrarian reform, the release of the almost 200 youth detained in the Great Popular Uprising, and a set of reforms that have been sold as policies which benefit the poor and working class.

As regards the ESMAD, the only change was to its name and its looks. In relation to the agrarian reform, in the words of Álvaro Uribe Vélez himself [former right-wing reactionary president of Colombia], Petro has achieved what he tried to do in two presidential terms but could not. That is, the enrichment (and therefore empowerment) of the big landlords via land purchases and lines of credit worth millions. Meanwhile, after almost two years of the new government, the hand over of land to the peasantry has been negligible.

In any case, the mere promise of agrarian reform has produced the effect desired by the ruling classes in some segments of the peasant, indigenous and Afro-Colombian masses: controlling the popular land seizures. An indigenous person belonging to the Liberation of Mother Earth process (LMT – a process whose distinctive feature has been the seizure of lands belonging to local big landlords and agro-industrial companies by indigenous people) in the North of Cauca, said that with the arrival of Petro to the government "we stopped the process [of land seizure], because Petro promised agrarian reform" and that this government "politically disarmed the LMT process."

The release of young people detained during the Great Popular Uprising is another unfulfilled promise, as has been denounced on multiple occasions by the Jhonatan Sabogal Collective, whose members have carried out several hunger strikes to demand freedom for the detained.

The remaining reforms reflect the fight between different factions of the ruling classes over business (although we have been sold the story that the side of President Petro and his reforms is the side of the people, dragging us into a false polarization between “Petroism” and the right, when the real polarization is between the poor and working class and the ruling classes). Mass organizations must critically analyze what real concessions these reforms have versus what reforms actually correspond to camouflaged anti-people policies.

The now sunk labor reform, in the words of trade unionists which studied the issue, represented concessions insofar as it provided labor legislation for formal workers, but was also an attempt to dismantle independent unionism while reinforcing unions with bureaucratic leadership, in which their senior leaders, instead of maintaining an independent struggle for rights, gave millions (taken from from their members) to Petro’s presidential campaign. As regards the pension reforms, experts have come out to denounce that it largely benefits private funds to the harm of the workers. And as for the higher education reform (Law 30), it was widely criticized by a part of the student movement at the National Meeting of Higher Education Students held last year in Medellín, for representing in many ways an embellished retreading of educational policies from previous governments.

With the healthcare reform there is a lot to analyze. The EPS (Entities for the Promotion of Health) have been a crime against the people. We oppose their continued role as middle-men. But the fact that healthcare funds would be in government hands is no guarantee that this represents a better service. The Social Security of the 80s, which was also state-run, did not represent a better service for its members. Today the regional public hospitals are being used as bargaining chips by politicians and local bosses. Can we trust that granting the management of health funds to national and regional governmental organizations will be a guarantee of improved healthcare for the people? Certainly not.

The only way the people can conquer better healthcare is by strengthening their capacity for organization and mobilization. Today the people are forced to fight with the EPS (private and public) to get their healthcare treatments. And if the reform is approved tomorrow, you will have to continue to organize for your right to healthcare, but now against the regional and national state powers. Nothing has fallen from the sky for the people, they have had to conquer everything with their own struggle.

Regardless, through its reforms, the current government has not been able to impose its factional interests as much as it would have liked. Now it talks about a constitutional assembly and for this reform [the government] once again demands popular support.

In the face of this discourse of “change”, the government’s promises, and the calls it makes to the people to defend its policies, the following statement by Lenin (Russian revolutionary leader) fits: “Every reform in capitalist society has a double character. A reform is a concession made by the ruling classes in order to stem, weaken, or conceal the revolutionary struggle, in order to split the forces and energy of the revolutionary classes, to cloud their consciousness, etc. Therefore, revolutionary Social-Democracy, while by no means renouncing the use of reforms for the purpose of developing the

revolutionary class struggle, will under no circumstances make half-way bourgeois-reformist slogans 'their own'."

Petro and his reforms attempt to give some concessions to contain and pacify the people's struggle, to corrupt their conscience with the illusion that the people can change their situation through elections and the State. As history shows, everything that the State concedes to the people has been taken through popular strength, handed over because of those above's fear of an explosion from those below. We must use these rights we have won to continue strengthening class-conscious struggles and organizations, independent from the State, not support the corporatism, reformism, and pacifism promoted by the current government.

Petro is surely going to break the vast majority of his promises, and in a few months he will come out and wash his hands of it all. For his failures he will blame the attorney general, the opposition, independent contractors (as with the water tankers for La Guajira), or other [political] "children" he did not raise. He will go out and allege that his enemies didn't let him do it or even blame the people for not sufficiently pledging themselves to his reformism.

In any case, the government's main task, for which it answers to the ruling classes, has not yet failed: to put the brakes on the development of combative popular protests, contain the rebellion of the people, appease their hearts, and sow the illusion that change is possible through the old institutions of the State. But it is a task condemned to failure, since they will not be able to contain the struggle of the masses forever.

We still have not yet conquered the deepest demands of the Great Popular Uprising. Because of this, there is an air of disillusionment in a sector of the masses. A sign of this disillusion is the inability Petro has had to mobilize the youth who supported him in his campaign in his current calls.

The recent marches against the government and its policies are another sign of this disillusion. The right was the one that promoted the mobilizations and it is this sector that is mainly capitalizing off of them. But this does not deny that there are broad popular sectors that took to the streets to reject the reduction of their rights and the worsening of their living conditions (for example, truck drivers complained against the increase in fuel prices and a part of the health sector complained against a reform that worsens their working conditions). Which shows that not all those who went out to march are "fascists" or "uribistas [supporters of the former reactionary Colombian president]."

Even though one may believe the opposite, this disillusionment with the government that has been occurring is very positive for the people. It gives us the task of reorganizing and remobilizing our organizations and movements from below [*desde la base*], in order to lead the struggle under our interests and demands, basing the hopes and possibility of conquering victory on our own forces and not on trust in laws and State bureaucrats. The central issue today, as Lenin said for the Russian workers movement, is to develop and to apply a class line within the popular movement.

That is to say that, the popular movement, with its organizations, following its rich historical experience, has the task of taking the revolutionary path and through it, leading the struggle for its rights. It has to put forward its own agenda, its own program, and its own slogans. It is from below that it must define its demands and from the rank-and-file, from below that it must define its methods.

With this task we are confronted with, it is worth emphasizing that not every voice opposed to the government can be labeled as “uribista”, “rightist” or “fascist”. We have the right and the duty to oppose any anti-people measure by the government, even if whoever is at its head says sentences that seem to be pro-people. The more organized and firm we are, the more we will be able to direct the force of our rebelliousness towards the struggle for our rights and demands. The less organized and firm we are, the more they will be able to use our rebelliousness for interests alien from our own (from the “left” or the “right”).

Each government, including the present one, has attempted to use various methods to suffocate rebellion and promote peace. It is thus also worth emphasizing that a very valuable historical lesson that we have learned, and that is elevated to the category of law, is that only independent and combative struggle will give us the possibility of achieving victories. Our struggle does not fit within the narrow margins that the state is anxious to impose on us.

Many may be thinking that Petro was not allowed to govern and that is why the promised transformation has not occurred, others may feel deceived and think that this is more of the same. Beyond that, on today’s May First, a date that belongs **exclusively** to the working class and the popular classes, we must reaffirm that the path of achieving our rights and demands through laws, institutions and State officials is a failed path. On the contrary, the path of conquering rights through independent and combative popular struggle is the only path that has the possibility of success.

We cannot lose sight of the display of strength that we showed in the Great Uprising of 2021 and the heroic days that preceded it (21N, September 9th to 11th). It is among the people where the strength to transform Colombia from its roots truly resides. It is up to us to guide that strength. We need to organize ourselves in an independent, class-conscious, and combative way, we must discard the illusion that some solution is going to come from outside and take up the historic path of popular struggle.

New Democracy

Ecuador: May 1st in Ecuador

A clear line of demarcation must be established between the leadership of the labor movement and its rank-and-file members. Today's May 1st march expresses the state of our class' spirit; their levels of organization and platforms of struggle.

We are not going to blindfold ourselves, the union leadership in our country is aged, backwards, revisionist, opportunistic, and traitorous; still they run to the masses to lead them along the path of bureaucracy. But we have hopes and we are optimistic, a new union movement is being organized, is growing, and shows its determination to be a strong and firm ideological instrument that allows us to advance in our revolutionary tasks.

If we do not fight revisionism and opportunism, we will have done nothing! There cannot be construction without destruction; there is no room for the generation of new unions and people's organizations if we do not destroy the old electoral unionism along the way. We must crush the bureaucrats, the ones who traffic with the organizations of the people and our class.

There are three fundamental principles that must be observed and applied by the new trade unionist current in our country; being anti-electoral, anti-imperialist, and consciously serving the fundamental tasks to unleash the development of New Democracy, as always, at the service of the World Proletarian Revolution; because outside of these tasks, there will never be anything new under the sun.

From the FDLP-EC we salute the rural and urban workers who marched and demonstrated through the streets of the country; nevertheless; these mobilizations are not called to measure forces with the fascist pro-large landowner regime of Noboa. No, they are called to generate class consciousness to strengthen our organizations in the face of the historical responsibility that the proletariat has being the most oppressed, exploited and, at the same time, most advanced class of society.

ORGANIZE, COMBAT AND RESIST!

WITHOUT STRUGGLE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS ARE NOT CONQUERED!

Front for the Defense of the Struggles of the People - Ecuador

Mexico: Raise High the Banner of Boycott Against the Electoral Farce!

To all workers and the working class

To the democratic and independent unions

Comrades:

Our class, called to be the grave-digger of capitalism-imperialism, is inspecting its forces around the world. On this day billions of proletarians are taking to the streets and firmly embodying the words of the great Friedrich Engels: *as one army, united under one flag*. Along with the proletariat the people of the oppressed nations, who suffer with their own flesh the flames of imperialist aggression and plunder, courageously stand up.

Commemorating the international day of the proletariat by firmly upholding its historical program is absolutely necessary in the midst of a deepening of the general crisis of imperialism, whose origin is none other than the relative overproduction of commodities that leads the Imperialist States to collude and contend to maintain their perverse world order at the cost of the sweat and blood of the workers and oppressed peoples.

We must observe how the imperialist powers and superpowers collude around anti-worker and anti-popular policies by shifting the weight of the crisis onto the backs of the masses. We should observe how these same imperialist powers and superpowers enter into contention with each other and the oppressed peoples for a new division of the world in multiple places, such as the war of aggression of Russia against Ukraine that already exceeds two years; or the war of occupation and the genocide against Palestine, that extends by the hands of the Zionist war-mongers conflict to the entire Middle East. In that same context Our America [Latin America] is confronted by the new interventionist and militaristic plans of US imperialism as can be seen in countries such as El Salvador, Ecuador, Argentina or Haiti. Our country does not escape this either, on the contrary, during the last four decades different governments have each in turn reinforced the semi-colonial burden that weighs on Mexico by acting as servants of gringo imperialism.

The government of AMLO [Mexico's current reformist president] has been no exception. The recent approval of the entry of US troops into national territory to train the Mexican army is an unprecedented reflection of this, as well as agreements such as T-MEC and the migratory agreement that makes our country the largest border control post at the service of the US. The mega-projects of plunder and death have the same tenor: the badly named "Maya Train", the Inter-Oceanic Corridor of Tehuantepec Isthmus, the Morelos Integral Project, among others, where US imperialism has perfectly taken command of everything, in collusion with different imperialist powers that play a second and even third role in the semi-colonial domination of our country. As we have explained before, the balkanization of

the national territory by the hands of paramilitary groups and warlords fulfills the double role of deepening semi-feudalism through a ruthless regime of serfdom, establishing territorial dominions that finally serve to justify the interventionist discourse against Mexico.

Now in the midst of the electoral circus looking towards the June 2nd election, the big bourgeoisie debates which of its candidates and which of its factions will have the blessing of US imperialism, which is the actual big decider. No candidate argues against the economic ruin of the masses, no candidate argues against militarization, no candidate argues against the terrible war in Mexico which has left hundreds of thousands of people murdered and missing. The answer to why is simple: no candidate does it because none of them are interested; to do this would be to go against the decisions of their imperialist masters and that will never happen.

No one should be confused: not a single one of the three regime-sanctioned candidates, regardless of their sex or party affiliation, represent any kind of alternative for the workers and oppressed peoples. The three completely personify the bureaucratic capitalist model of oppression and exploitation of the masses.

What we have proposed in the CALL TO THE WORKERS AND PEOPLE OF MEXICO IN THE FACE OF THE ELECTORAL SITUATION, is both clear and still totally relevant.

Regarding this 1st of May we consider that the organizations of the proletariat and the workers, particularly the independent and democratic unions which for decades have given life to the working class labor movement of our country, and which in the most tragic hours of tyranny and repression knew how to firmly maintain the struggle of our class, should today more than ever, unify their tasks around the construction of a powerful Proletarian Unity Movement that breaks with parliamentary cretinism and class collaboration. That is: break with opportunism, reformism, and revisionism of all types, which act as firefighters against the revolution within the workers movement.

Today the struggle of the proletariat must stand up against basic shortages, for the increase of wages, for the right to strike, for collective contracts, for the return of pension and retirement rights for all workers, for freedom of association, and union autonomy, etc., but they must also elevate these demands to that of political struggle to stop the war against the people and State terrorism. That also means to struggle against the militarization of the country and against the imposition of imperialist mega-projects of plunder and death. To struggle for justice for the victims of State terrorism: for the disappeared to be returned alive, for the punishment of the murderers of our people, for the freedom of political prisoners, for the safe return of the displaced, etc.

All of this demands that the labor movement and the workers seriously consider the need to unify their struggles with the struggles of the poor peasantry, of the indigenous-oppressed peoples and the deepest masses of our nation. This demands that we discard our illusions and prepare to fight, building our own agenda, independent of the needs and electoral campaigns of the regime, showing in the streets the

correct class slogan in the current and next period of struggle: *Whoever governs, the rights of the people must be defended!*

Comrades:

Today the central task of the proletariat in our country is to firmly assume the reconstitution of the heroic fighter of the class, that is: the Communist Party of Mexico, from the perspective of proletarianization, bolshevization and militarization of the revolutionary vanguard.

In addition to this, there are two slogans of action that are today present in assemblies, meetings, forums and all the popular unity spaces built from below: **1) Stop the war against the people, and 2) Boycott the bourgeois electoral farce.**

It is imperative that each class conscious worker, that each upright worker and each union or people's organization that it is left-wing or revolutionary, takes a position on it.

RAISE HIGH THE BANNER OF BOYCOTT AGAINST THE ELECTORAL FARCE!

Committee for the Reconstitution of the Communist Party of Mexico