

Mexico: foundation of the Political Organisation of the People and Workers

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On 27 August 2011, the founding congress of the Political Organisation of the People and Workers (OPT), “for national liberation and social emancipation” took place.

This initiative had been announced in October 2010 by Martín Esparza, general secretary of the Mexican Electricians’ Trade Union (SME), during a meeting which attracted more than 60,000 people to the Aztec Stadium in Mexico City.

Behind this initiative lay the growing awareness inside the SME, which faces governmental opposition, and the catastrophic situation of the country, the struggle at the political level had become more necessary than ever. The Calderón government has done everything to show that it is the sworn enemy of all workers, and in the exclusive service of the oligarchy and imperialism. In this sense, the OPT clearly refers to the struggle for the conquest of political power and the necessity of overthrowing the political class, representative of the oligarchy, currently at the head of the country. It should be noted that the participation of the OPT in elections did not appear among its priorities, and that it does not intend to be the prisoner of any institutional calendar.

The appeal of the SME has been heard by other worker, peasant, indigenous, popular and political organisations and represents a historic step in the conquest of the political independence of the workers. Organisations identifying with socialism have always existed in Mexico, but no party has ever won to its ranks the bulk of workers while defending a programme of class struggle. For historic reasons, the trade union organisations have always been linked, in a corporatist manner, with the party-state (the Institutional Revolutionary Party) which has governed the country for 70 years. The conquest of the most elementary trade union freedoms is far from being realised, as shown by the governmental hostility to the SME.

National liberation or Socialism?

In recent months significant debates have taken place and have allowed the sketching of the contours of the new OPT. If the documents adopted explicitly mention the need to struggle for a radical transformation of society, designating the current economic and political model as being responsible for the current catastrophe and adopting an anti-capitalist tone, socialism, although mentioned, appears as a distant horizon to be reached, without a real strategic vision or elements of transition.

The emphasis of the programme seems rather focused on national liberation and the struggle against imperialism, which, in the Mexican tradition, means above all a nationalist and distributive orientation. It should also be noted that internationalism plays a strong role in the documents of the organisation and that the latter explicitly refer to the revolutionary processes underway in the Arab world and the rebellions in Europe. Certain organisational aspects which have given rise to important debates, like the right to organise tendencies inside the organisation, as well as the tactic

to adopt for the electoral process of 2012, will be debated during the next congress of the organisation which will take place in March of next year.

Beyond the congress

Although the congress undeniably represented a significant success in assembling more than a thousand delegates from 22 states, the OPT must face a situation of ever more uncontrollable violence and a still more significant presence of US military personnel. The OPT will launch its first recruitment campaign in a few days, In a context of sharpened political and social crisis and faced with an inept regime, the birth of this new force represents a significant step in the sense of the organisation of the oppressed. Together with the Movement for National Regeneration (MORENA) of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the OPT can contribute to an acceleration of confrontation with the regime, which appears inevitable in the medium term, as is happening at the same time in many places around the globe.

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