

Presidential Election in Mexico: Salute the declaration of the National Indigenous Congress and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation!

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In light of the declaration of the National Indigenous Congress and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation: The path toward a campaign for organizing and struggle.

The Revolutionary Workers Party of Mexico (PRT) welcomes and celebrates the announcement by the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) of initiating a consultation on the proposal of an indigenous woman candidate in the 2018 presidential elections as CNI spokesperson.

The PRT believes that this initiative can present an alternative focus for struggle and organization for those who are resisting, from below, capitalist dynamics that are being expressed in the form of so-called structural reforms. These measures are expropriating our communal rights and public goods as well as the rights of working-class people. They come in the form of ecocidal mega-engineering projects destroying our nation's bio-cultural reserves as well as systematic violence and state terrorism that seeks to extract the maximum profit at minimum cost according to capitalist logic.

In a country where violence spirals out of control, where the castes in power display levels of contempt and cynicism toward the people that are everyday more alarming, where mega-projects despoil resources and territories in the interests of imperialists that are promoted and defended by the state power (both executive and legislative branches—a power free from any social control and which has turned against society), all resistance against these attacks take on a powerful national relevance, as the communiqué from the CNI states.

In the face of all this, it is not only urgent to organize in order to resist, but also to struggle in order to win, and the potential for doing so requires a nationally organized political force.

Beyond assessing whether or not they are making a political turn, the Zapatista initiative changes the political coordinates of the upcoming presidential shakeup. The political framework is unsettled in the face of a possible eruption on this terrain from a force that has been absent thus far and is not represented by any existing party, a force that has not been invited to participate, one that would not only represent the indigenous people's opposition to the system, but one that would also include the anti-capitalist left.

This important political initiative raises the potential for a wide anti-capitalist convergence that, through dialogue, can build unity in diversity. The profound transformation needed in our country requires that we add our forces together while we discuss our strategic hypotheses in an open and frank manner in order to make grassroots change from below.

This initiative, if approved by the CNI, should be furthered by issuing a unified call to the whole anti-capitalist left represented in an infinity of struggles being conducted in the countryside, but also in the cities; In struggles being conducted in among the indigenous people, but also among the working class and its organizations of struggle, including unions like the teachers union and the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) and its own initiative, the Political Organization of the People and Workers (OPT).

The workers are not the only movement resisting capitalist barbarity. Women are fighting against femicide and for their rights in the face of state violence and the terrible toll of executions and disappearances (struggles that would be well represented by an indigenous woman candidate).

Obviously, the movement in solidarity with the students of Ayotzinapa and the struggle to return the 43 students, under the banner of “they were alive when they were taken, and we want them back alive” should also form part of this coalition of movements.

Securing the broadest anti-capitalist unity clearly requires dialogue and respectful fraternal debate, which shouldn’t lead to slander and disqualification from participation.

This is what it would mean to say that an independent candidate of the anti-capitalist left would only play into the hands of the right (Those parties of the Pact for Mexico which includes the PRD and the Green Party?) or that it will merely divide the left’s vote or that it is a maneuver against Morena, the party founded by former PRD presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

These sorts of insults are nothing new. Especially coming from the lips of the institutional left who have attempted to portray themselves as the only representatives of the left.

Once the PRD claimed to be “the left.” Now Morena says the PRD can no longer make that claim but that now they are the only true left. In 2006, López Obrador himself, then the PRD candidate, accused the Zapatista’s “Other Campaign” of being allied with the right.

In 2015, when sections of the movement that were fighting against neoliberal power and the structural reforms associated with the Pact for Mexico refused to vote for Morena, and even called for abstention or a boycott of the elections, as the teachers did, López Obrador insulted the educators’ movement, accusing it of being allied with the PRI, doing so even as it suffered brutal repression at the hands of the state.

It must be understood that the anti-capitalist left and the movements struggling against neoliberalism are not represented by the institutional left.

López Obrador has been opposed, up until recently, to the slogan “Peña Out!” (“Fuera Peña”) which was raised at the September 15 protests. He claims he doesn’t want a government of leftovers and proposes that everything be subordinated to the 2018 elections.

In opposition to this, we believe the proposal for an independent CNI candidate can organize a movement of struggle against the neoliberal oligarchy, a campaign not subordinated to the 2018 elections. The proposals put forth by López Obrador and Morena are very different. He has even proposed a transition cabinet with Peña Nieto in order to assure a “peaceful” transition and, in so doing, is offering amnesty for the criminals now in power. He proposes to postpone the struggle until the elections of 2018 with a transitional cabinet, meaning a government of conciliation.

In reality, now is not the time to define the voting formula for 2018; instead, we must continue our struggles against the oligarchic power and its neoliberal program contained in the logic of the demand “Peña Out!”

At the same time, it is possible to discuss a strategic perspective of an independent campaign; whether it officially registered with the electoral commission or not (as was the case with the 1976 independent left campaign). In contrast, López Obrador proposes that we remain tied to the capitalist logic as he recently showed in Sonora when he proposed that international mining interests who displace local people and degrade the environment merely pay a tax.

A candidate of the type proposed by the CNI, one like we had many years ago with Rosario Ibarra—the first woman presidential candidate in the nation’s history (whose slogan in her 1982 campaign was “up with the people from below”)—is a call for organization and struggle from below, but also a plea for unity among those who are fighting to change our country to make it independent, just, equal, multi-cultural, and free from exploitation, domination, and oppression; that is to say, free it from the logic of capitalism.

We especially note that the CNI and EZLN announcement emphasizes that the campaign be headed by an indigenous woman.

This challenges power that is today built on an authoritarian, patriarchal, homophobic base, one that is also racist and homogenizing. And this questioning is even more meaningful now because women not only suffer patriarchal oppression in the family, at work, and in society, but also threats to their rights in the form of a severe wave of violence whose most inhuman extreme takes the form of femicide.

For the PRT, a candidate like this would become a symbol of the critical struggles of the indigenous people who not only fight for their own right to autonomy, but are confronting all the projects destroying natural resources, territories, and culture throughout the entire country.

It would also be a symbol for all the women who are today yelling, “Enough!” against patriarchal abuse and violence. When official politics are built on an authoritarian, patriarchal, and homophobic basis, putting forward those who suffer worst from the crisis is a form of questioning the roots of the regime which is itself authoritarian and patriarchal.

It would be a symbol of unity with the teachers as well as a for dignity and struggle for all workers. An indigenous woman candidate would become a symbol for the youth and for all those denied their rights, those suffering oppression, those held in contempt, those excluded by a system that cares only for making more money and nothing for life and respect.

We believe that this proposal opens the potential for a broad anti-capitalist convergence based on dialogue, one that can build unity from our diversity. This includes unity between anti-capitalists who propose a struggle for power and those who do not. The profound transformation needed in our country demands that a joining of force as well as frank and open discussions regarding strategic hypotheses for grassroots change from below.

October 18th, 2016

Mexico City

**Political Committee of
The Revolutionary Worker’s Party
(PRT)**

Link to the Declaración conjunta del Congreso Nacional Indígena (CNI) y el Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN):

<http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2016/10/14/que-retiemble-en-sus-centros-la-tierra/>