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People stand up to the oligarchy and imperialism

Declaration of the Fourth International on the political situation in Honduras

- IV Online magazine - 2009 - IV414 - July 2009 -

Publication date: Thursday 23 July 2009

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One week after the coup against President Manuel Zelaya, the popular mobilizations continue and could defeat it. International solidarity must be broadened.

Once again, Latin America is at the centre of the international news. Once again, unfortunately, a military coup d'etat affects one of its countries: Honduras.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Hondurasdetr.jpg>]

Photo: Indymedia US

Some thought we had entered a new era in Latin American political life. Social relations would be allayed. Democracy would be the norm.

Once again when their interests are at stake, the oligarchy and Army chiefs, even under 'democracy', overthrow Presidents and repress the popular movement.

The Honduras lives under the domination of an intractable oligarchy organized between conservatives and liberals. Balancing between them is an army equipped and assisted by the United States and steeped in the internal security doctrine. A political model, originating from the 1982 Constitution, has been set up out of several periods of brutal dictatorship when all political parties were prohibited. In the 1980s class violence continued and the death squads continued to assassinate opposition activists in their hundreds. The country was the basis of US operations against the liberation process in Central America and the recycling of Argentine torturers.

Today, the fascistic right presents the overthrown President Zelaya as a dangerous radical whereas he is a liberal oligarch forced to make concessions in a context of a social upheaval which has become unmanageable. In April 2008, the people demonstrated massively against rising prices. Zelaya signed an agreement for an exchange of agricultural products against oil with Venezuela and entered into the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas. This cooperation allowed him to finance some social programmes without however giving him the support of the three trade union confederations and the popular organizations participating in the Popular Bloc of Honduras, who were not convinced of a genuine break.

The Honduran people are violently affected by the blockages of a deeply inequitable society where national wealth is cornered by a minority and granted to multinational companies (mining, oil, water, and forest resources). Landless peasants continue to be shot down by the goons of the big landowners. Already sapped by poverty which affects 80 % of the population and dependence on the economy of the United States, the country was devastated by Hurricane Mitch in October 1998. The Free Trade Treaty concluded in 2005 with the United States amounted to an abandonment of the country's sovereignty. Another equally harmful treaty is being negotiated with the European Union, with the aim of completion in July. For their part, the social movements demand the setting up of a constituent assembly, an inconceivable idea for the oligarchy, the United States and the multinationals.

The words of Obama are one thing, the links the US politico-military apparatus and the top brass of the Latin American armies another.

No clear condemnation of the coup was issued by the United States, which equated the two camps. The putschists were in permanent liaison with the US embassy to defeat the popular consultation. If Yankee imperialism is to keep its influence in this key stronghold the Obama administration will, faced with this brutal and clearly unforeseen coup,

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find itself in an uncontrolled situation which bodes ill for a refoundation of relations with Latin America.

This coup follows that of April 2002 in Venezuela, defeated through popular mobilization, and that of Bolivia in 2008, defeated through the determination of Latin American governments not to see a new Pinochet emerge. This crisis is revealing of the polarity of the political-ideological currents that compete in the region. There is no question for the reactionary bourgeoisie of seeing the processes independent of imperialism promoted by the Venezuela-Ecuador-Bolivia-Nicaragua-Cuba axis extend. There is no question of leaving the initiative to the popular movements that everywhere resist the reconquest of the continent by multinational companies with the endorsement of their lackeys. We see the US manoeuvre promoted with the approval of the Latin American oligarchies: the possible return of President Manuel Zelaya in return for impunity for the putschists - who completely control the institutions of the Honduran State - and especially the abandonment of the main demand of the national front against the coup, the installation of a national constituent Assembly.

What the putschists and their allies had not bargained for is the extraordinary resistance of the Honduran popular movement that decades of repression have failed to silence and which now takes courageously to the streets.

The putschist regime (employers, oligarchy, the Church hierarchy and army) is hit by total diplomatic isolation, deprived of international funding and Venezuelan oil. Some of the employers seek a crisis resolution negotiated with the United States. No goods are going through the borders thanks to popular blockades and the neighbouring countries have closed their borders.

In playing the card of the threat of supposed invasions at the Nicaraguan border supported by Venezuela, the putschists hope to find an echo within the country, highly polarised as it is, via media which are completely controlled, and to justify the repression. They also hope to regionalize the crisis. Therefore, only popular resistance in Honduras and the international solidarity of peoples will put an end to this coup.

Executive Bureau of the Fourth International