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Peru

The putschist right removed Castillo - we must fight to get rid of congress reforms, for new elections and a second ballot for a constituent assembly

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From the first moment that the right realised that it had been defeated at the polls in the second round of the general elections, this racist and classist political, business and media right would not accept that someone from the countryside, a rural teacher, a Quechua speaker who wears a hat would be the president.

Even though Castillo does currently not put the economic interests of the capitalist class at risk and has a line of neoliberal continuity, they still do not accept that a president with these characteristics won the elections; classism and racism is the combination that gives life to the coup.

Seeing that they had been defeated, Fujimori and López Aliaga [1] made the declaration of war on the day of the second round. The coup plotters carried out manoeuvre after manoeuvre from the very first day; knocking on the doors of the OAS, of armed forces headquarters, and even trying involve the judiciary in the electoral results.

Then the offensive from the Congress continued: in 15 months the reactionary benches, whose axis was to question, censure ministers and seek the fall of P. Castillo, promoted two unsuccessful attempts at impeaching him. They turned Congress into a bulwark of corruption at the service of power groups turning back referendum reforms with anti-democratic counter-reforms, even curtailing the right to a referendum for a constituent assembly, whilst shielding the corrupt, doing and undoing at will. At a time of crisis and great needs, this Congress works by turning its back on the workers and the people.

Shortly after assuming the presidency the Castillo government lost its political course and was faced with the dilemma: to rely on organisation and mobilisation to advance with the process of change, or adaptation to the regime; the latter path was taken prioritising continuity to survive. In addition, the issue of corruption in Castillo's circles was a concrete fact that weakened the government. As much as it was the popular vote and a programme for change that brought Castillo to power, in reality he was never of the left.

After two impeachment attempts by the right, today, December 7, the third impeachment motion was being discussed in Congress whilst, in parallel, the right had a plan B which is the suspension of governmental functions for five years because of a complaint from the prosecutor's office charging Castillo with treason, which the Congressional constitutional complaints commission quickly authorised for discussion next week. In the morning Castillo, without discussing with his cabinet, makes a wrong move, a desperate measure without force that cost him the presidency – thirty minutes after announcing the dissolution of congress, ten of his ministers resign. And so various sectors were speaking out, leaving Castillo more and more alone and weakened.

The only thing that this measure achieved is that the right took advantage of it and parliament obtained the coup it so longed for; Castillo dismissed and detained. Dina Boluarte (vice president) had already distanced herself from Castillo by resigning from the cabinet. In a political calculation, she seeks an agreement with liberal sectors and decides to replace Castillo. In her first statements, she calls for national unity and concluding a governability pact with the fascist right, saying nothing about going to general elections. Even though this tsunami has not passed, the political board is rearranged and the different sectors are processing this new situation.

Our policy and the construction of a strategic tool

The absence of a consistent direction, of rupture with the model that drives the mobilisation and fight for the demands of the different social actors, is obvious. This is a longer-term task to be resolved, meanwhile we have to seek to promote a large popular and constituent bloc.

The authoritarian right wants to stay entrenched in Congress, something which we cannot allow; they should all go and an early election should be called. But not with the current rules. Given the lack of political representation that we experience, changes or reforms in electoral regulations are needed to guarantee that they are more democratic and participatory.

At the same time, the Peruvian people, especially the most vulnerable, are going through very critical economic times and this crisis will surely worsen and hit even harder. An emergency plan that begins by, for example, imposing taxes on mining superprofits, ending evasion and exonerations and collecting debts from companies that owe millions to the state, is needed.

And finally, as a way out of the crisis, there needs to be a second ballot on election day so that the people can decide on the need for a Constituent Assembly.

To achieve these demands, organisation and struggle are a necessary fundamental tool that we workers and the people have, and today more than ever we must obtain registration for Nuevo Perú/New Peru with the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones [2] on the path of building a reference point for the left

Lima, 7 December 2022

translated by David Fagan for International Viewpoint.

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[1] Translator's note: Keiko Fujimori, leader of the right-wing Fuerza Popular (Popular Force) and Rafael Bernardo López Aliaga Cazorla, businessman and leader of the Renovación Popular (Popular Renewal) constitute the main opposition to Pedro Castillo's government

[2] Translator's note: The JNE/National Jury of Elections oversees Peru's electoral process.