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Bureau statement

Trump's defeat interrupts momentum of authoritarian right worldwide

- IV Online magazine - 2020 - IV551 - December 2020 -

Publication date: Wednesday 2 December 2020

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– The US elections have brought a serious defeat for Trump's project. Biden has obtained 80 million votes and 306 electors in the electoral college which means a lead of more than 70 in opposition to Trump. Despite the difficulties imposed by the pandemic, these elections appear to have had the highest participation since 1908. This broad margin made it very difficult for Trump to continue to challenge the result and opened the way for Biden's accession. We welcome Trump's defeat, which represents a weakening of the most reactionary and authoritarian forces on the planet.

– Trump continued on his path of not acknowledging the defeat and raising false fraud accusations for three weeks. But lacking any plan and organization, this was a losing battle to subvert the electoral procedure. He lost support even within the Republican party, and has been forced to more or less accept Biden's win. However, his peddling of conspiracy theories and undermining of the electoral procedure is having broad diffusion among his voters, and will certainly contribute to degrade further the poor democracy of the USA.

– This is part of a larger trend where new forms of authoritarian, antiscientific, conspiratorial theories are spreading quickly across many countries. These kinds of ideas reflect the despair of the situation and the mistrust against established institutions and are animated and manipulated by forces of the far right. In the absence of mass mobilizations and victories driven by progressive forces, these kinds of ideas might continue to spread. It is our task to try to isolate these currents, fight them and denounce them by any means, as they open the way for the most extreme authoritarianism.

– In this context, Trump's defeat is indeed a breath of fresh air, an event that breaks the momentum of the spreading authoritarianism around the world in Poland, Hungary, Turkey, India, the Philippines and Brazil eliminating the most powerful of these new authoritarian leaders.

– Biden's new administration represents the business as usual of American democracy, where the government, be it Republican or Democrat serves the interest of big corporations and American imperialism. His first appointments show that he does not plan to change this course, and will continue to take distance from and isolate the emerging left elements within the Democratic party. On the other hand, social struggles in the United States continue as nurses and teachers and some essential workers in transportation, food distribution, and other sectors engage in strikes, protests and job actions to protect their health amidst the pandemic now spreading uncontrolled throughout the country. Blacks and Latinos, almost always now supported by whites and Asians, continue to protest the ongoing racist police violence against their communities. The enormous anti-racist protests involved about twenty million people and impacted public opinion, as well as sparking an international movement.

– In other parts of the globe, mass social movements and some victories also give us reason for hope that despite setbacks and repression, popular defensive and aspirational movements will continue to arise. We have seen the victory of the MAS in Bolivia, which managed to reverse a US based backed coup with a massive popular support and mobilization. In Chile, the popular movement has succeeded in overturning Pinochet's constitution, opening the way for deeper changes in society thanks to mass mobilization. In Poland, an unprecedented mass movement led by women is challenging the reactionary hegemony in the country. In Brazil, the left has managed an historical breakthrough in the municipal elections. In Thailand, Belarus and Hong Kong we are witnessing mass mobilizations, which show that people are willing to organize and fight for a better future, despite the difficulties, the obstacles and state repression.

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- Despite all this the general situation remains very difficult for the popular classes and emancipatory struggles. The second wave of the pandemic is hitting hard across the world, raising the number of deaths and people requiring intensive care. The measures imposed to try to stop the spread of the virus are all the less accepted by the populations because they are seen as the consequence of government's failure to act to extend and strengthen health care in the first wave of the pandemic.
- The lock-downs and partial lock-downs are also having deep effects on the economy, with the worst projections becoming the most likely scenarios. The cost of this crisis seems, will be paid by the popular classes and a worsening of their social and economic condition. As we have previously noted the hardest hit will be those who are already victims of social and economic injustice, in the migrant black and ethnic communities, women and LGBT people.
- Furthermore, lock-down measures and curfews are being used by governments to limit and curtail democratic freedoms, making it more difficult to organize and mobilize. Nevertheless even where there are not mass movements such as in Chile or Thailand, there are localized workplace, neighbourhood and community struggles that also show the rejection of lockdown and repressive policies that try to compensate for governmental failures to plan for the foreseeable second wave. More and more clearly governmental policies favour big business even though certain sectors (notably hospitality and travel for mass consumption) have to be to a certain extent sacrificed. Where public expenditure has been boosted, it has been through an explosion in public debt which worsens the ongoing problem and ultimately shifts all the costs to the working class.
- Feminists have continued to organize particularly, although not only, on the question of violence against women. The increase in domestic violence during periods of lockdown was evident and pushed certain governments to put in place schemes to enable women to report incidents and to leave homes shared with violent partners. These, like other pandemic measures, were insufficient and too short-lived.
- One of the sectors that concentrates the contradictions is the education sector with the risk of infection in bringing different generations together in conditions where physical distancing and barrier measures are difficult to implement, there is the right for young people to a decent education and where online teaching is an insufficient response if devices, reliable internet access, appropriate working conditions cannot be guaranteed, there is the right for teachers to work in safe conditions with adequate technical resources for online teaching provided. Governments are using popular concern for the right to education and a future of young people to keep educational establishments open despite the real danger this can represent in the spread of Covid-19.
- The movement against climate change has continued to organize making use of virtual meetings, very much alive and well in its radicality and diversity. It is well placed to hold to account Biden's pledge that the US will rejoin the COP under his presidency. The issue of the fight for climate justice, for an end to carbon emissions, and for a deep transformation of our energetic and production system, must come again to the forefront in order to fight for a real alternative to the capitalist and extractivist system.
- The issue of democracy is an overriding principle in many of the current struggles. People are demanding the right to decide against the rising authoritarianism and the disconnection of political and neoliberal classes from the suffering of the popular classes. We promote these struggles pushing for self-organization and self-determination.
- We enthusiastically support and fight for the victory of the struggles and movements whether they be local or at a broader level, while striving to underline the objective convergence between them. We underline the failure of all capitalist governments to adequately respond to the pandemic, their increasing recourse to conspiracy theories, reactionary ideology and authoritarianism. It is thus urgent need to fight for anticapitalist structural measures (expropriation of banks, big pharma, energy,...) and exceptional taxation on the rich and the big corporations, and for

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a global alternative based on social, economic, gender and ecological justice.

30 November 2020

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