

Teachers union reaches agreement with Mexican government as blockades spread

Neil Hardt
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As protests and barricades in support of striking teachers spread across Mexico, the National Organization of Educational Workers (CNTE) and the National Regeneration Movement (Morena) party of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador are maneuvering to bring the growing movement under control.

Yesterday morning, the CNTE announced an agreement with the administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto to continue negotiations aimed at bringing a weeks-long teachers' strike to an end. The CNTE and the government also scheduled a publicity stunt meeting between the government and victims of the recent massacre in Oaxaca. On June 19, police fired on a demonstration in the rural village of Nochixtlan, killing 13 teachers and supporters and wounding dozens more.

Adelfo Alejandro Gomez, a leader of CNTE Section 7, announced the government negotiations would "give way specifically to the theme of justice for the recent events in Asuncion de Nochixtlan, Oaxaca. There has been a willingness on both parts to attend to and resolve all of the harms caused by the repression exercised by the federal police."

In reality, there is no willingness on behalf of the Mexican government to bring justice to the friends and relatives of those killed demonstrating against the right-wing education reforms. The government's response has thus far been first to lie about the killing and blame the attack on the teachers themselves.

The CNTE's agreement is aimed at instilling illusions in the Mexican state as it works in conjunction with Wall Street to privatize public education through the right-wing Pact for Mexico austerity program. The massacre of June 19 was not a misunderstanding, it was a calculated maneuver to defend the interests of Mexico's ruling class. The agreement will allow the

government to hold a photo-op meeting next Wednesday, posing as sympathetic to family members of victims.

The Mexican government made clear it has no intention of repealing or revising the education reform. Speaking alongside Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Ottawa yesterday, Peña Nieto told the media that his government "will not give in to any provocation" by teachers. Trudeau applauded his Mexican counterpart and called for a "strengthening of the rule of law" in Mexico.

The CNTE's efforts to instill illusions in Peña Nieto and the Mexican state come as opposition within the working class to the education reform continues to grow. On Monday, teachers and workers captured two police officers in Oaxaca, disarmed them, and forced them to hold a banner denouncing the Nochixtlan attack.

Teachers, workers, and peasants have also set up several new roadblocks throughout Mexico's southernmost states, including in Chiapas, where the highway connecting Mexico to Guatemala has been blocked, and Oaxaca, where access to the state's primary airport has been at least partially blocked.

On Monday night, the Independent Workers Union of the Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM) called a 24-hour sympathy strike at five campuses in Xochimilco, Iztapalapa, Azcapotzalco, Cuajimalpa, and Lerma in a further indication that the teachers' strike is gaining broader support in the working class. Smaller demonstrations took place across the country, and Mexico City saw no fewer than six separate marches yesterday, following Sunday's rally that gathered hundreds of thousands.

The size of Sunday's demonstration, organized by Mexico City mayor and ex-presidential candidate

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and his Morena party, is an indication of growing dissatisfaction with state repression, social inequality, poverty and relentless attacks on the living standards of the Mexican working class. Demonstrators shouted slogans calling for Peña Nieto's immediate resignation.

This demand was explicitly opposed by Lopez Obrador, who called for Peña Nieto to remain in power until the 2018 presidential elections but appoint a new cabinet in the interim. Although demonstrators chanted "to the Zocalo" in an attempt to direct the demonstration to the central plaza where hundreds of thousands could converge, Lopez Obrador and Morena directed the crowd to the Angel of Independence monument in accordance with a city government decision to bar the march from reaching the Zocalo.

The unpopularity of the Peña Nieto administration and the ruling Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI), as well as widespread disdain for the National Action Party (PAN) and Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), have given rise to widespread expectations that Lopez Obrador may win the 2018 presidential elections.

Lopez Obrador is not the humanistic father-figure he pretends to be. He is an experienced bourgeois politician with a long political history who is consciously maneuvering to prevent political opposition among workers and youth from developing on an independent, socialist basis. The political formulations he puts forward are carefully constructed to instill illusions in the sanctity of the Mexican state and in harmony between the classes. He is a defender of the capitalist system and an opponent of the working class.

Speaking Sunday, Lopez Obrador called the Nochixtlan attack an "irrationality" and implored teachers to "resolve your demands and avoid repression and violence." He called for a "revolution of the minds" and said "this will result in an investigation and in the punishment of those that are responsible."

The catastrophic conditions besetting Mexican society cannot be changed through moralistic appeals to a ruling class that has proven time after time its willingness to impose the diktats of Wall Street with violence. The recent maneuvers by the CNTE, Morena, and Lopez Obrador are aimed at taking the initiative from striking teachers, disarming workers and youth,

and transforming widespread social opposition into a vehicle for Lopez Obrador to ride to power in 2018.



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