

Mexico's election deals devastating blow to old ruling parties

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On Sunday, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (popularly known as AMLO) of the MORENA (Movement for National Regeneration) party and its electoral coalition parties, the Workers Party (PT) and the conservative evangelical Social Encounter Party (PES), swept to victory in Mexico's presidential election in what the bourgeois press has widely characterized as a tsunami. López Obrador will take office December 1.

MORENA's electoral coalition garnered over 53 percent of the vote, besting the coalition of the PAN (National Action Party) by 31 points, and that of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) of President Enrique Peña Nieto by 37 points. These are historically unprecedented margins—no president in the last three decades has won by more than 18 points.

The MORENA coalition easily took the majority in both chambers of Mexico's Congress, with upwards of 60 percent of the 100 Senate seats, and 217 or over 72 percent of the 300 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

The PAN and its coalition partners, AMLO's former party the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) and the MC (Citizens Movement), long linked to the PRD, will likely win 29 percent of Senate seats and 63 or approximately 23 percent in the Chamber of Deputies.

The PRI and its coalition parties, the PVEM (Ecologist Green Party) and the PANAL (New Alliance), will take only 13 Senate seats and 15 seats or 5 percent in the lower chamber.

The MORENA coalition has also won the election for the important post of Mexico City mayor, as well as four of the eight governorships in play. The PAN coalition has won three governorships; its coalition partner the MC prevailed in the governor's race in the state of Jalisco, which includes Mexico's second largest metropolitan area, Guadalajara.

The electoral results are nothing short of a debacle for the PRI, which governed the country from 1929 to 2000, and again for the last six years, a rule interrupted only by PAN presidencies from 2000 to 2012. If the PRI survives, it will be as a minor opposition party.

The PRI was widely hated for its corruption at all levels of political life, incessant and unbearable levels of violence and insecurity, low economic growth, and burgeoning poverty and social inequality. More than half the population—53 million—were increasingly relegated to the misery of a subsistence-level existence, while billionaires and the ultra-rich captured an ever-greater share of national wealth.

The PRI's policies were embodied in Peña Nieto's "Pact for Mexico" legislation, in which the PAN and PRD joined. They included privatizations of Mexico's energy and telecommunications industries, extensive labor and free-market "reforms" at the expense of the working class and the revamping of the nation's education system through attacks on teacher qualifications, hiring and salaries.

The right-wing PAN, likewise widely disdained for joining in these attacks on the population and for its own corruption, has also been severely wounded.

The formerly "center-left" PRD, which was AMLO's party when he ran for president in 2006 and 2012—he left to form MORENA because the PRD supported the Pact for Mexico and entered into electoral alliances with the PAN—is for all practical purposes defunct.

This electoral earthquake reflects the deep crisis of bourgeois rule in Mexico and the aspirations of the masses of working people for a new course.

López Obrador's campaign attacks on the policies of the PRI, PAN and PRD generated popular illusions that he would provide a way out of this morass. He focused on ending corruption and poverty. He even claimed that victory would bring a fourth historic "transition" or "revolution" in Mexico, following on those of Mexican independence from Spain, the liberal reforms instituted under Benito Juárez, and the Mexican Revolution of 1910, which was deeply influenced by the Russian Revolution and promulgated land reform for the peasantry, along with an ideology of unending progress for Mexico's "popular sectors."

But in his victory speech Sunday night, AMLO acted with the utmost timidity toward national and international capital. He made it abundantly clear that there would be no deep changes in social or economic policies.

López Obrador insisted that corruption and impunity from prosecution for it were the main cause of social and economic inequality and violence, and that eradicating them would be the "main mission" of his government. Major changes in economic policies would not be required.

But while there would be no impunity for future corruption, there would be national reconciliation—and no "reprisals"—assuring that corrupt politicians, including past presidents and the current president, Peña Nieto, would not be prosecuted. This means that those responsible for the disappearance and presumed murder of the 43 Ayotzinapa teaching students, along with countless other

massacres by state security forces, will go unpunished.

López Obrador went on to assure that all, including “the rich,” would be welcome to participate in his reconciliation of all classes and sectors of society. There would be “business freedom.” Expropriations of businesses and confiscations of wealth were ruled out. Taxes would not be increased. Financial and fiscal discipline would be maintained; government debt would not be increased. Mexico’s Central Bank would remain independent.

Far from implementing his past opposition to the energy reform, oil exploration and production contracts with foreign oil companies would be respected, save for those procured by corruption, which would be attacked, if necessary, only under the law in national or international tribunals.

During his campaign, the view was widespread that AMLO was only making such assurances to business magnates and international banks and investment funds in order to temper their opposition to his candidacy. But with victory in hand, it is now clear that his promises had been entirely sincere.

After voting on Sunday, AMLO held a private meeting with business tycoons to assure them of his sincerity. The former president of the Mexican Business Council and one-time AMLO nemesis, tycoon Claudio X. González Laporte, told reporters after the meeting that AMLO said in the meeting that he had “to calm the country.” González enthused, “He is the person who can do it because he has the mandate to do it and then we must take advantage of that mandate to calm the country.” Popular demands and discontent be damned.

In his speech Sunday night, López Obrador also announced that former PRI and PAN officials would be appointed to key cabinet positions. This reveals the essentially right-wing nature of his economic program and guarantees continuity with the anti-working class policies carried out by both parties.

Alfonso Romo, owner of the massive OXXO convenience market chain and former official in the PAN presidency of Vicente Fox, will be coordinator of the Office of the Presidency. Carlos Manuel Urzúa, the former finance secretary of the federal district government and long-time consultant to the World Bank, will be treasury secretary. These two are to lead AMLO’s economic and financial team during the transition period.

Donald Trump, perhaps the most hated man in Mexico—after Peña Nieto—congratulated López Obrador in a tweet Sunday night, declaring himself “ready to work with” the Mexican president-elect to benefit both countries. This led to a half-hour call Monday morning between the two.

AMLO later reported that they had a “respectful exchange” in which he proposed to Trump that they explore an “integral accord” over development that would generate employment in Mexico, thereby reducing migration and improving security. The two discussed renewing the NAFTA trade agreement with Canada, or Mexico negotiating a separate, new accord with the US.

Trump told media at the White House that he and AMLO “had a great conversation,” in which they discussed frontier security, commerce, and NAFTA.

López Obrador has long been considered across the political spectrum, including amongst the pseudo-left, as a “leftist.” But by now it could not be clearer that MORENA and AMLO represent

the interests of capitalism and privileged layers of the middle class.

López Obrador opposed the struggles of Mexican workers and oppressed such as the “gasolinazo” protests against spiraling energy costs and the strikes of teachers, instead seeking to deflate them with condemnations or toothless appeals for negotiations.

A López Obrador administration will respond to increasing economic turmoil, and to working class demands, not with significant concessions, but rather with attacks in defense of the interests of the financial elite that now embraces him. This can only lead to a sharp intensification of the crises that have beset Mexico, and new dangers for its working class.

Those who claim to be left or socialist that support López Obrador, whether outright, or even “critically,” are leading Mexican workers into a trap.

Foremost among those peddling such illusions is the Workers Party, MORENA’s electoral coalition partner whose victories in the congressional elections have provided it with its majority.

The PT was founded by self-avowed Maoists. Despite AMLO’s capitalist ideology, the PT claims to be anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and to pursue the political program of “socialism of the 21st century,” that is, policies along the lines of those adopted by Latin American leaders like Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, Rafael Correa of Ecuador and Evo Morales of Bolivia. In the final analysis, such politics can only serve the interests of capitalism and imperialism.

The only alternative for the working class is to construct a new revolutionary party, independent of all bourgeois sectors, that fights to unite the struggles of the Mexican working class with those of workers in the United States and throughout the Americas to put an end to capitalism. This means the building of a Mexican section of the International Committee of the Fourth International



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