Mexican president-elect assembles right-wing cabinet

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After a sweeping victory in the Mexican presidential elections, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), the leader of the Movement for National Regeneration (Morena), has proposed a cabinet for his upcoming six-year administration that is dominated by leading figures of previous reactionary Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and Party for National Action (PAN) administrations.

AMLO, whose coalition included Morena, the Evangelical Christian right-wing Social Encounter Party (PES) and the Workers Party (PT), won more votes than any other Mexican presidential candidate in history and more than twice the number of votes as the runner up, Ricardo Anaya of a coalition including the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) and center-left Party for Democratic Revolution (PRD).

The Morena-led coalition will have a super majority in both houses of congress and the mayorship of Mexico City, the second largest city in Latin America. Morena also won governor races in five out of the nine states that held elections. The new federal and state governments will take office on December 1.

The election results are another indication of a leftward shift in the population. Over 30 million people voted for AMLO and Morena, many of them based on the illusion that the new administration would implement measures to address rampant inequality, the country's advanced state of militarization, and the plight of immigrants on both sides of the border.

Studies have shown that the purchasing power of the population has declined by as much as 80 percent in the past three decades, while the homicide rate is equivalent to, if not worse than, war-torn countries. Highlighting the collaboration of the Mexican government with the US deportation apparatus, a recent report by the BBC revealed that the Mexican government detained—often under deplorable conditions—and deported over 138,000 Central American children under the outgoing Peña Nieto administration.

AMLO's cabinet is very close to the one he proposed last December. While the media and pseudo-left have hailed the "progressive" gender composition of his cabinet (eight men and eight women), the appointment of well-known figures from former administrations is yet another reassurance to the powers-that-be that he is a "responsible" bourgeois politician who can be trusted to safeguard their interests.

Esteban Moctezuma, the proposed secretary of education, was an interior and social development minister under former PRI president Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000). On Wednesday, Moctezuma stated that the national teacher evaluations would stay in place, albeit with removed provisions that tie scores to hiring and pay. He also stated that teachers who missed working days while on strike should be subject to punishment by the school administrations and the unions. In June, a strike by more than 80,000 teachers was betrayed by the teachers' unions, which urged them to vote for AMLO as a supposed solution to their demands. This has been exposed as a reactionary fraud.

For the position of secretary of the interior, AMLO has tapped Olga Sánchez Cordero Dávila, a former member of the Mexican supreme court and a Zedillo appointee. Sánchez Cordero has already backpedaled on AMLO's campaign promise to dismantle the Mexican intelligence agency Cisen. The agency came under fire last year after an investigation by the *New York Times* revealed that the Mexican government had purchased software to hack into the phones of journalists and political opponents.

As overseer of the Cisen, Sánchez Cordero has

expressed her enthusiastic support for the repression of social struggles. "It is imperative that we rule using intelligence. ... Imagine that there is a social movement in Guerrero or Oaxaca and that we do not have knowledge of these social movements, that we do not have knowledge of what is happening in Mexican society," said Sánchez Cordero. "That would be very serious."

The proposed secretary of finance, Carlos Urzúa, is an economist and World Bank consultant. He has reiterated promises to maintain "fiscal balance," i.e., to not raise taxes on the rich or undertake significant spending on social programs. Instead, the AMLO administration has proposed "consolidating social welfare programs" and "centralizing government purchases" to finance his minuscule new programs. In other words, even with control of the legislature and the presidency, the new government will not carry out any significant measures to address the country's social crisis.

Urzúa has elaborated on AMLO's campaign promise to improve "competitiveness" along the US-Mexico border by slashing the value added tax (VAT) in half. Last week, Urzúa detailed that the "free zone" would extend around 30 kilometers south of the border, encompassing the cities of Tijuana, Mexicali, Ciudad Juárez and Reynosa.

Recent studies have estimated that such a policy would create a budget shortfall of 30.3 billion pesos per year (about US$1.6 billion). Given that AMLO has promised an "austerity budget," lowering taxes will be paid for by attacks on social programs and the creation of a super-exploited labor force for transnational corporations.

Alfonzo Durazo, AMLO's new chief of public security, was a former member of the PRI before being appointed as private secretary of former PAN president Vicente Fox (2000-2006). Durazo has vowed to create a new border police force to round up and deport immigrants. "We need to create a border police force that will be highly specialized. ... They need to apply the law," stated Durazo in a recent interview.

As for AMLO's nebulous campaign promise to "fight corruption," Durazo disclosed that this meant increasing the salaries of law enforcement officials and creating more police academies to double the number of security personnel that could receive training each year. AMLO has previously backed centralizing the country's police forces and holding daily briefings with military brass.

The repressive measures that organically flow from AMLO's right-wing policies are spelled out by the inclusion of Manuel Mondragón, who is infamous for coordinating the assault on demonstrators during the inauguration of Peña Nieto in 2012. The assault on the peaceful protesters led to one death and the injuries of dozens of students. After AMLO confirmed that Mondragón would join his security team, the hashtag #MondragónNoEsCambio (#MondragónIsNotChange) became a trending topic on social media.

As objective conditions draw the masses into struggle, illusions that AMLO or Morena will address the intolerable social and economic conditions confronting millions of Mexicans may dissipate sooner rather than later. AMLO is not rejecting the "mafia in power," which he has blamed for the country's social ills, but rather incorporating them into the highest levels of his government.

The task of socialists is not to lend "critical support" to AMLO, but to politically educate and prepare the working class for a revolutionary struggle to put an end to the capitalist system. This requires the unification of the Mexican working class with workers in the United States and across the Americas, who are also being driven into struggle.

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