

Six months of AMLO: Jacobin defends the Mexican president

Alex González
8 June 2019

Six months after Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) assumed the presidency, *Jacobin* magazine, affiliated with the Democratic Socialists of America, has stepped up its efforts to provide AMLO with a left cover by painting him as a progressive and even a socialist.

Jacobin has intervened to promote AMLO at a moment when the intensification of the class struggle, the mass roundup and deportation of immigrants, and the Mexican government's subservience to the fascistic Trump administration have all exposed his administration as an enemy of the working class in the eyes of millions of workers in Mexico and across Central America.

The May 26 article by *Jacobin*, titled "AMLO Can't Do This Alone," alleges that AMLO is a great progressive but that, despite his best efforts, he is under siege from organized crime, opposition politicians, domestic and foreign finance capital, and even the leadership of his own party, the Movement for National Regeneration (Morena). "Both Mexican and international elites want to scuttle AMLO's progressive agenda," the article begins.

According to *Jacobin*, AMLO possesses "energy, charisma, and frenetic activity" and is seeking to "storm the castle." However, he is supposedly "fighting against a formidable array of forces" and "a party that is being infiltrated by opportunists."

In the face of such a sweeping endorsement of AMLO's credentials, what has been the real record of his administration? Almost a year after his election and sixth months after the beginning of his administration, his government has only deepened and intensified its attacks on the working class, in many cases going further than the openly right-wing parties that have ruled Mexico for 89 years.

Acting as a subservient stooge of the Trump administration, AMLO has escalated the assault on immigrants while cynically claiming to protect their "human rights." In December, his government agreed to violate international law to enact the so-called "Remain in Mexico" policy. This has forced asylum seekers to stay on shantytown tents and makeshift facilities on the Mexican side of the border while their cases process in US courts.

Deportations from Mexico to Central America have tripled under AMLO. He has deported 80,000 workers back to their home countries. Humanitarian visas have plummeted from 11,000 in January to 1,500 in March and almost zero since. After the Trump administration's threat of imposing a five percent tariff on Mexican goods, AMLO has stated that he wants to be a "friend of President Trump" and pledged "cooperation." This can only mean agreeing to carry out ever more ruthless attacks on mostly Central American women and children to please Trump's fascistic base.

If in *Jacobin*'s fantasy being a "progressive" means attacking immigrants, then the magazine's claim that AMLO is a "consummate master of mass organizing" also translates to repressing the class struggle in the service of capitalist property relations and US imperialism.

AMLO's public comments on the massive wildcat strikes which swept through the northern border city of Matamoros earlier this year urged workers to "consider the companies' situation" and find "balance." AMLO's administration actively intervened to shut down the strikes, from declaring them illegal in federal courts to dispatching troops to assault workers on the picket line. AMLO similarly denounced striking teachers in Mexico's impoverished south as "right-

wing” and demanded they go back to work and accept his cuts to education.

The resurgence of the class struggle takes place under conditions of historic levels of social inequality. A recent United Nations report revealed that Mexican society features development indices of Switzerland in the richest areas of the country and Burundi in the most destitute.

Under these urgent conditions, what has AMLO’s “progressive agenda” offered the working class? Of the two examples cited by the article, a railway train in the Yucatan peninsula, is in fact deeply opposed by the local indigenous population for causing deforestation to the region’s second largest rainforest ecosystem outside of the Amazon.

AMLO’s self-described “austerity budgets” are so ruthless that they have even won the praise of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which specializes in giving out loans in exchange for massive cuts in social programs and privatizations. On May 29, IMF chief Christine Lagarde spoke before members of the Mexican Congress and praised AMLO’s “prudent fiscal policy” that would ensure that “inflation stays low.” The message is clear: there will be no increases in social spending or significant moves to increase wages.

Jacobin does make one true statement regarding the character of the AMLO administration. In the article, the magazine is compelled to admit that the Mexican government is subordinated to the global economy and the whims of domestic and foreign finance capital.

“Democracy cannot be allowed in Mexico if the result is a government that bucks international economic nostrums, however mildly,” writes *Jacobin*. “And if it persists in attempting to do so, mechanisms such as free-trade agreements and financial markets must be activated to slap down any of that ‘supreme self-confidence’ it dares to have.”

If this statement is true, why support AMLO and his nationalist program? Ultimately, the subservience of the Mexican economy to Wall Street is precisely why AMLO will always be a puppet of the dominant economic powers in Washington. In the era of globalization, where plants and investments can move to any corner of the world, the framework for a national reformist program has been completely undermined.

This is especially true in a historically oppressed

country such as Mexico. The entire experience of the 20th century attests to the fact that whatever their tactical differences, the ruling elite will make accommodations between themselves and the imperialist powers many times over to guarantee their own interests rather than to risk mobilizing the working class. The article itself admits that AMLO “has not called for a single mobilization since taking office.” So much for AMLO the “consummate master of mass organizing”!

Jacobin and the DSA support a politician that opposes the class struggle and seeks to strike a deal with Trump at the expense of defenseless immigrant workers from areas devastated by over a century of exploitation by US imperialism.

Real socialists seek to mobilize the working class and fight for its political independence from all sections of the ruling class on the basis of the fight for the unity of the working classes of the US, Mexico and Central America. As the WSWS recently wrote, *Jacobin* does not speak for the working class but for “liberal investors, well-paid tenured academics, and other layers of the upper-middle class affluencia who sincerely believe that some of the money sloshing around at the apex of capitalist society should be distributed more equitably among those who fall within the 90 to 99 percent income bracket.” In contrast, socialists call for the establishment of the United Socialist States of the Americas.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)