

Canada's New Democrats and the Coup in Bolivia—A reply to a reader

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In an article published Nov. 15, the WSWS exposed the role played by the Canadian government in abetting the US-sponsored coup in Bolivia. Right-wing elements within the military forced the ouster of the country's president, Evo Morales, and, after Morales fled to Mexico, unleashed a wave of terror against his supporters and Bolivia's workers and toilers.

Washington and Ottawa gave the greenlight for the coup through a series of provocative actions. These included: repudiating the October 20 presidential election, even before an inquiry into the vote led by the North American-imperialist controlled Organization of American States (OAS) had finished; withdrawing recognition of Morales' government; and declaring that new elections must be held.

Our analysis pointed to the critical role the social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) played in providing the Trudeau Liberal government with a "progressive" cover as it intervened alongside the United States in yet another Latin American country to orchestrate regime-change. We wrote, "This reactionary record makes a mockery of the claims of Trudeau and (Foreign Minister Chrystia) Freeland to be standing up for 'democracy' and 'elections' in Bolivia. To the extent that this preposterous propaganda campaign retains any credibility, it is thanks to the efforts of the New Democratic Party and the trade unions, which never tire of proclaiming Trudeau's Liberals to be a 'progressive' alternative to the right-wing Conservatives. NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, who met with Trudeau yesterday to discuss the NDP's terms for propping up a Liberal minority government, has not said a word about Ottawa's support for the coup in Bolivia. This is a case where silence denotes consent."

This was apparently too much for one reader of the WSWS. Seizing on the fact that a belated tweet on Bolivia issued by NDP leader Jagmeet Singh as the WSWS was

going to press was not mentioned in the article, "noahbody" wrote: "The NDP came out last night with a statement condemning the Bolivian coup and saying the Canadian government should not be supporting it. Please edit your story to reflect that, otherwise Canadian progressives and left-wingers are going to wonder if anything else in the article is false and if this site is fake news. And showing this article to Liberals who are on the fence would backfire. It's hard enough explaining Canadian foreign policy to these people already."

Leaving aside for the moment the description of a personal tweet issued by Singh five days after the event as an "NDP statement ... condemning the Bolivian coup," an uninitiated reader could be forgiven for concluding on the basis of "noahbody's" comment that the WSWS deliberately suppressed Singh's tweet to conceal his party's opposition to Canadian imperialist interventions in Latin America.

In reality, the opposite is true. In his tweet, Singh wrote, "The worsening situation in Bolivia is alarming. Instead of supporting the self-proclaimed interim President that has a record of attacking indigenous people, Canada must condemn the anti-democratic actions that led to this coup and are still getting worse. The Canadian gov't must support a new election that includes all parties. The gains Bolivia made under the Morales government in terms of the rights of indigenous peoples, health, and development must not be lost and the safety of Morales & his colleagues must be assured."

This is a classic case of double-bookkeeping. While Singh would have the Trudeau Liberal government "condemn the anti-democratic actions that led to this coup," he demands in the next breath that Ottawa intervene to bring about "a new election that includes all parties," i.e. the very same US and Canadian demand that served as the trigger for the right-wing coup.

Moreover, with his unreserved praise for the bourgeois

nationalist Morales government, Singh neglects to mention that its welcoming of the OAS investigation and resignation in the face of the right-wing coup plotters facilitated the military coup, and has left workers and peasants at the tender mercies of the Bolivian army and fascist thugs.

Singh and the NDP fully accept the prerogative of the US State Department and Canadian Foreign Ministry—whose personnel bully, threaten, and intrigue against governments and leftwing movements every day—to interfere in Bolivia, provided they confine themselves to the “democratic” tasks of overseeing elections and rendering verdict on them. Only when the imperialist powers’ intervention shifts into higher gear, helping bring to power and supporting a military-backed government that is attacking workers and poor indigenous people in the streets, do Canada’s social democrats become squeamish.

Could there be a clearer example of the NDP’s political function, which we aptly described in our initial article as lending support to the Liberals’ “preposterous propaganda” about their concern for “democracy in Bolivia,” and portraying them as “a progressive alternative to the Conservatives”?

The reality is that the NDP is a pro-imperialist party. It promotes the lie that the Canadian state is a force for “peace” and “democracy” in the world, or, at the very least one that can be pressured to act altruistically—not the instrument of a Canadian bourgeoisie that has predatory global interests, and upholds them through intrigue, aggression, and war.

The NDP’s lengthy record of providing “humanitarian” and “dovish” political cover for the aggressive actions of Canadian imperialism is too long to catalogue here. But it should at least be recalled that the New Democrats were conspicuously silent when the Martin Liberal government deployed Canadian troops to Haiti in 2004 to help topple the country’s democratically-elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in league with Washington and far-right forces. Earlier this year, the NDP touted Juan Guaido, the US-backed leader of an attempted coup in Venezuela, as the country’s legitimate president, while urging Canada’s Liberal government, which helped organize the US-orchestrated regime-change drive, to intervene and help “secure a democratic and peaceful solution.”

The NDP has perfected this type of duplicitous politics over the past two decades, while supporting Canada’s participation in virtually every major US military

intervention around the world. After the Canadian Armed Forces assumed leadership of “counter-insurgency” operations in southern Afghanistan in 2006, then NDP leader Jack Layton made much of his party’s opposition to the Afghan war. Two years later, Layton reached a coalition agreement with the Liberals that committed a Liberal-NDP government to wage war in Afghanistan through 2011. In 2011, behind incessant claims about the “responsibility to protect” the “human rights” of the Libyan population, the NDP twice voted to support Canada’s involvement in NATO’s bombardment of the oil-rich North African country. The war claimed the lives of tens of thousands, resulted in the lynch-mob murder of Muamar Gaddafi, and plunged Libya into a civil war that continues to this day.

Now, after an election during which the NDP remained totally silent on the Liberals’ plans to hike military spending by over 70 percent, Singh and his fellow social democrats are more than eager to offer their support in keeping a minority Liberal government in power. Whilst the trade unions and NDP sing the praises of the “progressive” Liberal government, Trudeau will, as he did in his first term, deepen Canadian imperialism’s integration with US imperialist aggression around the world, including against Russia and China.

If “Canadian progressives” and “Liberals who are on the fence” have a hard time understanding the predatory and aggressive character of Canadian imperialism’s foreign policy in light of this record, and the NDP’s critical role in providing it with “democratic” cover, may we politely suggest that the source of the problem lies in their politics, not ours. In any event, we remain convinced that *WSWS* readers and class conscious workers have no difficulty comprehending the NDP’s duplicitous, pro-imperialist politics. A genuine movement against Canadian and US imperialist intervention in Bolivia and around the world will only be built in irreconcilable struggle against them.



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