

The growth of international class struggle and the crisis of bourgeois rule in Latin America

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On this May Day, workers and youth in Latin America, as across the planet, are confronted with two opposite but interconnected processes: the development of the capitalist crisis and social revolution. The two most acute expressions of this period are the eruption of global warfare and the intensification of the international class struggle.

In recent years, workers across the globe have experienced in countless forms the catastrophic consequences of the capitalist domination over society: a devastating pandemic, spiraling inflation, growing state repression, the reemergence of fascism, and now the risk of nuclear annihilation.

The war in Ukraine has direct implications for Latin America. In this region, as elsewhere, the intensification of the exploitation of the working class to finance imperialist armaments and pay for the financial crisis requires the suppression of all social opposition and its detour into the reactionary channels of nationalism. In Latin America, this program is promoted by all the supposedly left-wing Pink Tide governments, including Brazil's President Lula of the Workers Party (PT).

The fact that Latin America is being transformed into a stage of ever more intense diplomatic, economic and military disputes is graphically expressed by Lula's attempts to balance between the US-NATO imperialist powers and the rising economic and political influence of both China and, to a lesser extent, Russia, in the hemisphere.

During his recent trip to China, Lula distressed his imperialist friends—and part of the Brazilian

bourgeoisie—by vocally challenging the hegemony of the US dollar, asking, “Why should every country have to be tied to the dollar for trade?”

But the same Lula, in his visit to the US only two months ago, declared that he was seeking to “reposition Brazil in the new world geopolitics” and released a joint note with Biden condemning Russia for the “violation of the territorial integrity” of Ukraine.

Far from a perspective for “diplomatic neutrality” or a path to “world peace,” Lula's unprincipled maneuvering on the world stage points to the fact that the feeble Latin American bourgeoisie is incapable of securing any genuine independence from the imperialist efforts to redivide the world.

Such calculations have also been expressed by Chile's “Pink Tide” President Gabriel Boric, who has publicly embraced the imperialist war against Russia as an opportunity for the Chilean bourgeoisie to reap increased profits. Boric declared on state television that the cutoff of Russian energy and mineral exports as the result of the war and sanctions “give us a very promising position in the face of what is coming from the world.” He added:

The same war in Ukraine has led to the need for many developed countries to get rid of the dependence they had on Russian energy sources. Green hydrogen appears, for example, as a tremendously important energy for the world's future, where Chile has unmatched conditions to be able to develop it and thus a series of other opportunities, by the way, of copper and lithium and non-conventional renewable energies.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro’s oscillations between denunciations of the US sanctions regime imposed on the country and seeking a rapprochement with a US government that continues to seek his overthrow expresses in a most direct form the crisis confronting the bourgeois governments in every Latin American country.

Far from the illusions in a so-called “new multi-polar world order” promoted by elements of Latin America’s petty-bourgeois nationalist pseudo-left, the US will not passively cede its hegemony over a region it has historically regarded as its own backyard.

US Southern Command chief General Laura Richardson stated the following during her testimony on Latin America before the Senate Armed Services Committee: “The world is at an inflection point. China has expanded its ability to extract resources, establish ports, manipulate governments through predatory investment practices, and build potential dual-use space facilities, the most space facilities in any combatant command region.”

In other words, Latin America, just like the rest of the planet, will be a field of battle in the drive toward a Third World War. But in Latin America, as over the entire globe, the capitalist crisis is pushing the working class into major revolutionary struggles.

As part of a wave of working class struggles throughout the world, in March, 140,000 Bolivian teachers went on a national strike that has continued throughout this month. Similar actions have erupted in the education sector across the region. In February, a spontaneous work stoppage by contract maintenance workers at the state-owned oil company Petrobras in Brazil threatened to repeat major refinery and off-shore platform stoppages in direct confrontation with Lula’s new PT government.

The Pink Tide governments throughout Latin America are unable to make any appeal to the working class and are intensely hostile to its rising struggles. Their response is characterized by the strengthening of the repressive state apparatus and the promotion of economic nationalism in alliance with the corporatist unions that support them.

In each of these struggles, the working class is entering into a direct confrontation not only with the corporations, but against the capitalist state and the trade unions, which are working today to suppress

every expression of opposition and keep them isolated from broader sectors of workers.

As Brazilian and other Latin American workers enter into struggle against huge cuts in wages and social programs and for the defense of their interests, they will find their greatest and indispensable allies among workers in the United States, Europe and internationally.

Independent rank-and-file committees—unified across national boundaries through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees—will be the organizational expression of the working class in this new historical revolutionary moment.

All those watching this May Day Rally must turn to the only social force capable of ending war, dictatorship and social inequality: the international working class.

The workers of Latin America have demonstrated their immense determination and self-sacrifice in countless battles. They must be politically armed through an assimilation of the lessons of the long struggle carried out by the Trotskyist movement against all those opportunist and revisionist tendencies that sought to subordinate the working class to bourgeois nationalism, with catastrophic consequences.

It is on this principled foundation that a new revolutionary leadership will be built through the establishment of sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in every country.



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