

Oppose all capitalist candidates in the Mexican elections — unite workers across the Americas against US imperialism!

Andrea Lobo, Don Knowland
22 May 2024

Mexico will hold general elections for president and other offices on June 2, five months before the general election will take place in the United States. As neighbors and principal trade partners, with a closely tied history and roughly 40 million people of Mexican origin living in the US, political developments in Mexico have a major and immediate impact in the United States, which continues to impose its politics and imperialistic interests on Mexico.

In the run-up to the US elections, the border with Mexico has witnessed the fascistic Republican candidate Donald Trump and Democratic President Biden outdoing each other in scapegoating and dehumanizing migrants as “illegals.”

The Republicans peddle a lie created out of whole cloth that immigration is somehow creating a crisis that threatens American workers, while the Democrats not only fail to challenge this lie, but embrace it.

Both parties have deployed troops to the border and threatened to “shut it down,” with Republican officials also threatening to invade Mexico, ostensibly to combat drug cartels.

While engaging in endless wars despite claiming to defend “sovereignty,” the two US ruling parties have long agreed on what amounts to a colonial policy toward Mexico and Latin America, which Washington has always considered its “own backyard.”

This has involved repeated US invasions, coups, backing fascist dictatorships and promoting unchecked super exploitation of countless toilers.

In pursuit of its economic war against China, the Biden administration is demanding oversight and veto power over all Mexican trade and foreign investments. And it has largely succeeded in transforming the Mexican armed forces into an extension of the US Border Patrol.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (known as AMLO) sometimes protests and demands “respect” from US officials, but he has submitted to the most essential US demands. Last month, AMLO enacted hundreds of new

tariffs on Chinese imports and suspended all investment talks with Chinese automakers.

In office, both Trump and Biden insisted on opening the factories and letting COVID-19 run rampant. AMLO complied, sacrificing hundreds of thousands of lives and leaving 250,000 children orphaned due to the disease so far.

The Mexican constitution only permits a single presidential term. AMLO has anointed his protégé and former Mexico City government head, Claudia Sheinbaum, as his replacement.

The main opposition candidate, Bertha Xóchitl Gálvez, is running on the slate of an electoral alliance called Strength and Heart for Mexico that includes the three traditional parties of the Mexican oligarchy.

The conservative right National Action Party (PAN) ended seven decades of uninterrupted rule under the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 2000, while the Party for Democratic Revolution (PRD) was formed by a faction of PRI claiming to represent a social-democratic alternative. In 2012, the three parties established a Pact for Mexico backing major social cuts, privatizations and other policies preparing a deeper subordination of Mexico to foreign capital. This was accompanied by widespread corruption and police state repression.

As a result, the PRI-PAN-PRD coalition behind Gálvez is widely hated in the working class and trails behind Sheinbaum by over 25 points in most polls.

Gálvez, a self-promoting tech millionaire, also bungled her debate appearances and infamously slighted her opponent Sheinbaum for renting rather than buying an apartment, declaring, “if you’ve reached 60 and not acquired an estate, you are a real dumbass.”

AMLO himself was a leading member of the PRI, helped to form the PRD in the late 1980s and became its most prominent figure after Cuahtemoc Cárdenas. The PRD quickly became exposed as merely a new face for increasingly discredited capitalist rule.

Subservience to the right-wing political establishment, the so-called “war on drugs” and pro-investor Pact for Mexico were fatal for the credibility of the PRD. In response, López Obrador established the Movement for National Regeneration (Morena) as the next political trap for Mexican workers.

Sheinbaum entered politics in 2000 as Secretary of Environment for AMLO, who was the head of government of Mexico City. She is an energy engineer known for her prior climate change research and has vowed to faithfully continue what AMLO has called the “Fourth Transformation” of Mexico—a slogan that has sought to differentiate his “populist” policies from those of his predecessors.

Despite the rhetoric, this has amounted to little more than a handful of social assistance programs, supplemental pensions and small increases in the minimum wage. As Sheinbaum has recognized, these measures were not opposed by the ruling class.

They were a small price for giving a facelift to the Mexican capitalist state, particularly at a time when soldiers and police were violently suppressing mass protests against inequality.

Speaking for Wall Street, *Forbes* described AMLO’s election as a “window of opportunity.” Through his demagogy, AMLO suppressed opposition to major corporate tax cuts and a massive buildup of the armed forces. This has included the creation of a new military body, the National Guard, and the enshrinement in the constitution of the domestic deployment of troops. This, after his promise to send troops back to the barracks was a major reason for his 2018 elections victory.

Poverty under AMLO dropped only slightly and remained widespread, assuring a continued supply of cheap labor for transnational corporations. The government reports that 70 out of 100 Mexicans with a job make less than 14,935 pesos (US\$870) per month, which falls well below the 18,064 pesos required to cover the basic needs of an average family of four.

Meanwhile, Mexican billionaires have seen their wealth surge 47 percent under AMLO’s government. Little wonder that Mexico and Latin America’s wealthiest man, Carlos Slim Helú, with a net worth of \$105 billion, or about 7 percent of Mexico’s GDP, has been on cozy terms with him.

The real “transformation” of Mexico under AMLO has been the consolidation of its role as a cheap labor source of Wall Street’s super profits, a critical North American platform for the US waging war against nuclear-armed Russia and China.

Like Biden, AMLO has relied on the union bureaucracy to police the working class and suppress its struggles.

In early 2019, tens of thousands of workers involved in wildcat strikes at auto parts, electronics and other key US suppliers in Matamoros walked to the border with Brownsville, Texas to call to American workers to “wake up” and join them in a struggle against the transnational corporations and union bureaucracies in both countries.

So-called “independent” unions allied with AMLO and sponsored by the AFL-CIO and US government parachuted in to channel the movement behind a 20 percent raise and a \$1,655 bonus, while letting corporations fire thousands as a reprisal. Shaken by the strikes, the Mexican president fast-tracked a supposed labor reform demanded by the US and Canadian governments to facilitate the registration and acceptance of such “independent” unions loyal to the State Department.

The American union bureaucracy acts at the behest of US imperialism directly and through its trained bureaucrats in Mexico by isolating workers from their most important class allies internationally and maintaining the race to the bottom used by corporations to cut wages, jobs and conditions.

Now both Gálvez and Sheinbaum propose keeping foreign migrant workers against their will within Mexico, in order to use their desperate and vulnerable situation as a means of pressuring wages down further.

None of these policies are in the slightest interest of the Mexican or the US working class.

The fight against war, and all attacks on democratic rights, jobs and living standards in the United States, is at the same time a struggle against the centuries-long imperialist oppression of Mexico and Latin America, “which for the United States is what Austria and the Sudeten were for Hitler,” as Leon Trotsky wrote a year before World War II.

The presidential campaign of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States has called upon workers, whether living south or north of the US-Mexico border, to break from all capitalist parties and their partners in the trade union apparatuses. They have nothing to offer the working class other than continuing war and economic oppression.

Workers must instead turn to their class brothers and sisters across the border and internationally to build a political movement for world socialism.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact