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PERU

Out with the Fraud of the Dictatorship and the Colonial Arbitrage

For an Independent Workers' and Peoples' Solution

In April the mass activity defeated the re-election in the first turn and menaced the dictatorship and the electoral fraud. In the ballotage, imperialism and Toledo, taking advantage of the fact that the toiling masses trusted the latter, once again pushed the situation into the electoral channels. Today it looks as if Toledo were upsetting the apple cart, for he is telling people not to vote, but his policy, dictated from Washington, is the same: demobilise. Today once again the toiling masses have the task of independent strife for a workers' solution.

Elections in Peru are a monument to Fraud. Apart from the already known scandals of a million forged signatures with which Fujimori legalised his candidacy, or the censorship in the media, the illegal use of State resources, the manipulation of the policy of social assistance and the stealing of presidential votes in the first turn, now new fraud is being unveiled such as the stealing of votes for congressmen and all the vices that had been reported in the first turn and are still there now.

It is the dictatorship that for decades has had the country under the disastrous neo-liberal plans that now promotes the machinery of fraud, together with the regime of terror caused by genocide, unlawful executions, the vanishing of people, tortures and jailing of thousands of workers' activists falsely accused of terrorism. Add to this all the corruption linked to the privatisation money, the negotiation of foreign debt and quite a few links with drug dealing. This regime of Fujimori-Montesinos is no other than the one that had been sanctified from Washington and ASO after the coup in 1992, and legalised in different occasions by elections that were always frauds.

The difference we can see today is a growing activity of the toiling masses that has been swelling ever since 1996-97. This mobility became evident as soon as the "change" of the results became known: more than a million people in the streets defeated the dictator's attempt at proclaiming himself the victor of 9 April and started a relentless count-down for a regime – no matter what the results of the elections may now be.

The game of imperialism

Fujimori's "popularity" vanished in 1996, when after six years of "Fuji-shock" and new adjustments, the toiling masses were confronted with a frightful unemployment and bitter misery caused by the IMF plan. According to official statistics, fewer than 4 out of every 10 people of employable age has a formal job and at least 5 out of every 10 Peruvians do not fulfil the conditions of survival, in other words, they live in absolute poverty. By mid-1997 the country suffered another recession form which it has not yet been able to get out. In spite of all this, the dictator through letters of intention and setting aside between 1500 and 2000 million dollars a year for the payment of the foreign debt and increasing all the advantages for multinationals who are now the new owners of Peru. Fujimori resigned national sovereignty to the new colonialism that rules the continent, not only starving the people, but also transmitting the policy of imperialism in the region not unlike what had already been seen in Colombia where a military intervention was actually requested.

It is this dictatorship that has now suffered mortal wounds inflicted by the activity of the masses. Since the dictatorship has become the main element of political stability, imperialism will try a change with Toledo, pressing the dictatorship but trying by all means to contain the activity of the masses. In April, when the masses threatened with uprooting the whole electoral process and with pulling the dictatorship down through new and democratic elections, The State Department and the OAS imposed a ballotage in order to drive everything back into the terrain of fraudulent elections. Toledo, faithful defender of the neo-liberal plan – just as the Argentine Fernando de la Rúa whose a staunch admirer he says he is – became in charge of this policy and played an important part in the

demobilisation. All the bourgeois parties rallied, too – and not surprisingly – most of the left organisations, who even called for an electoral support for Toledo with the excuse that it was a lesser evil and part of a democratic struggle.

This policy, which merely served the purpose of concealing and supporting the fraud – backfired on them, for the dictatorship, clinging on to power has shown that there is no possibility of regenerating these elections.

Just as he had discovered powder and, with barely ten days before the ballotage, Alejandro Toledo announces he will not take part in it if it is to take place on May 28, and even if it is postponed but the fraud is not corrected. Together with that he called for “no voting” on May 28. He has not, however, resigned nor has he withdrawn his candidature and he keeps on waiting for the international pressure to impose a postponement – something that is not to be altogether discarded. This is not a merely formal contradiction. Toledo has announced a plan of “pacific” meetings expressly opposing the demonstrations and strike referred to in the National Day of Struggle the workers’ and peoples’ organisations have agreed on for May 25.

What Toledo and the bourgeois opposition are proposing is that the fate of Peru be decided by Washington, encouraging a deeper colonisation of the country. There have even been some speculations about a feasible coup d’etat. The fact remains that, behind this demobilising policy of Toledo’s, Fujimori is advancing towards his re-election with the suggestion that he will regulate his regime in a not clearly specified future. In this way, Toledo becomes the victim of his own game and leads the masses that believe him towards a cull de sack where re-election will be legitimised.

A peoples’ and workers’ way out of the crisis

The need to challenge this process sets the task for the workers and the youth, of their political and trade union organisations, the task of mobilising in a centralised and effective way so as to end, once and for ever, the dictatorship of Fujimori-Montesinos and the armed forces and so open the space for free and democratic elections and a real democratisation of the country, for the recovery of national sovereignty and the achievement of our long overdue economic and social demands. The CGTP and the Regional Fronts must carry out a plan of action and its first step must be a summons for Thursday 25 of a genuine National Day of Struggle. If the dictatorship insists on carrying out its farce on the May 28, these organisations should issue a call for abstention, warranting the necessary conditions for an active boycott with the people in the streets.

The current situation has made the real drama of the country conspicuous: it is the absence of a genuine alternative leadership. To confront the dictatorship and the imperialist plan, we must create our own workers’ and peoples’ way out. We want the CGTP, the Sutep, the Regional Fronts and the youth organisations summon a **Congress of all the People** that would represent all the oppressed and exploited people. This Congress will discuss a Plan of Action that will tackle the serious problems of the nation beginning by dissolving of the institutions of the dictatorship: Judicial Power, Electoral Power, the Congress following the example of what the peoples and Natives of Ecuador did. This would be a step towards the establishment of a Government of the Workers and the Peoples.

Executive Committee of PSTU – Peru.

EU Lisbon Meeting

The summit ... of the American dream

Between the 24 and 25 of March, the heads of the government of the European Union (EU) met for the Lisbon Summit, with Blair and Aznar starring.

Rhetoric was a fundamental part of the summit. Rather than representatives of governments, the Prime Ministers sounded like priests preaching the faith of a “new economy” meant to save us from the hell of crisis and ensure a heaven of permanent growth. They even went as far as to promise “full employment” within five years and to outstrip American imperialism in 10. There is still the reasonable doubt as to whether they would have been equally exuberant had the summit taken place, say, 20 days later, when the so-called technological values plunged down, and in barely a week, Wall Street lost the equivalent of 4 times the Spanish IBP.

The defined the “new economy” as a combination of new technologies, total liberalisation of markets and the “modernisation of the European social model”. The jargon of all these gentlemen can be summarised in the following words uttered by Schröder: *“there is a general agreement to change the old industrial society for a society based on knowledge”*.

And yet, the practical agreements of the “summit of the new economy” did not fit such sublime designs. Disagreements with the French government prevented them from determining a date for the liberalisation of home market for energy and transport, while the opposition of the finances of the London City, with Blair in the middle, turned an agreement to homogenise fiscal treatment of capitalist profit impossible. And as for the great issue of the social achievements of European working class they have not, so far, been able to go much beyond recommending *“a research into the question of sustainability of the pension system”* that would allow the different national governments to lean on in order to break the public system of pensions and put them at the disposal of financial capital.

The economist P. Schwartz, propagandist and guardian of neo-liberal orthodoxy summarised the Lisbon results in the March 28 “Vanguard”: *“The council of European Union, at a recent Lisbon meeting, came up with interesting proposals aiming at liberalisation of telecommunication, at facilitating innovators, at publishing a letters of the Small and Medium Enterprise, at taking the new technologies of information to classrooms. But the European leaders gathered there have been more vague in the matter of social security and employment. It is all very well for Europe to want to overtake USA in the use of Internet and that means are to be sought to spread and make cheaper the access to the net. But nobody dares to face the ridiculous idea that Europe has to differ from the Americans in the defence of the Welfare State and the legal protection of workers”*. He went on to say that the Americans, *“stand out for their flexibility in the labour market. In the non-trade-union companies – and these are the majority – labour relations are ruled by the trade law, that is to say, by the free contract between the parties. Only in some states there are minimum salaries fixed. The situation is different in the companies where the trade unions are effective, where collective agreements are signed. In some cases, as such as car industry, airlines and motorcar transportation, trade unions are powerful as shown by the influence of the Democrat Party. But there is a way to make the free competition overcome and it is the possibility of replacing striking workers by those who are willing to accept the conditions proposed”* by the owners, just the way Reagan did with the air controllers.”

Schwartz pins down the problems of European capitalist. In Lisbon, the problem has not been, precisely, diagnosis. All the rulers of Europe agree as to the fact that the great battle European capitalist must fight is to make up for the handicap the American capitalists have over them and that a good part of this is due to the pre-existence of rights and achievements of the European workers. They all agree, too, that the remedy consists of forcing the direct and the indirect salaries back, dismantling the public systems of social protection produced during five decades. This is precisely the secret for equalling American competitiveness.

The Frenchman’s reticence to Blair or Aznar is not due to deep discrepancy. Jospin’s problem is that he is ruling as a sub-result of the great unrest of the end of 1995 and he knows that if he bullies the workers he is up to trouble. And just as he was attending the Lisbon meeting, teachers and students swarmed the streets by the thousands against the neo-liberal plans and demanding the resignation of two of the ministers. Jospin expressly agreed that “public services... cannot be left out of the new economy” but he requested that they should not be pressed and be allowed to “adapt themselves to modernity (...) in a different way”.

This is the case of France, but it is also the Norwegian case. In the early May, just a month after the Lisbon summit, the greatest social conflict of the Norwegian post-war broke out. Workers of the private sector carried out a week-long belligerent strike that ended in victory and availed them with an important lineal salary increase, a fifth week of paid holidays for the year 2002 and other demands. It is important to point out to the fact that the strike was carried out against the opinion of the leadership of the official trade union, after the workers had rejected the agreement reached between the bosses and the trade union a week before.

The great problem is that it is much easier to preach than to give out corn. There was a time when the Maastrich criteria were veiled due to the commitment of the social democratic parties – in France it was in alliance with the CP and the Greens – and thanks to the co-operation of the great trade unions. The current general strategy of European capitalism is still the same because they are not strong enough to launch a direct attack.

The euphoric neo-liberal speech was meant to veil not only the scarcity of practical results of Lisbon, but also the very crisis of the European project. The summit expressed not only differences regarding the liberalisation of markets or fiscalisation. It also reflected conflicts of interests in the Balkans and disagreements about the position to adopt with respect to the Austrian government of coalition with the extreme right, now with the majority visualised through “normalisation”.

But these differences are doomed to become deeper in view of the great extension eastwards foreseen for the forthcoming months. This integration will change the profile of European Union for it will give room for a group of 13 countries with a standard of living very much below current average of the EU and with a destiny that has already been decided: to become semi-colonies territories with plenty of cheap labour to serve the great European multinationals, particularly German. This new wave of countries will exacerbate the contradictions between the different European capitalisms. It will force a institutional reform and a new discussion on community funds, which will re-create the struggle for German supremacy, the French attempt at maintaining the old status, the resistance of the decadent British imperialism – converted into an American plane carrier – to yield to German predominance and be swept away.

European Union is the common platform of the different European imperialisms for the pillage of dominated nations, to confront American imperialism in better conditions and to co-ordinate forces against European toiling masses. But at the same time, European Union is also the battle field where battles for supremacy are being fought, particularly the German supremacy against the rest of the union, especially French.

European Union reflects a high degree of economic unity of the continent. It also reflects the imperious need to eliminate frontiers and national states. But European union will not lead us to a united Europe because no imperialism – as long as it keeps on being an imperialism – is prepared to understand unity in any way except on the basis of hegemony of its own imperialist interests and that means, among other things, that they are not prepared to give up that vital tool of domination that their own national state is.

It will be the historic mission of the workers to unify Europe leaning strongly on the firm bases of internationalism. The struggle for salaries, against privatisation, against lay-offs, against unemployment, for the 35 hours labour week, against flexibilisation and labour deregulation, for the rights of the immigrants, for the right to self-determination of the oppressed nations, for the international co-ordination of the workers' struggles, these are the bases for a combat whose ultimate aim is non other than the expropriation of the capital and the edification of the United States of Europe from Lisbon to the Urals.

Victor F.

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Mexico

International Encounter of Students' Struggle

Between the 20 and 24 April, the premises of the Teachers' Training School of Mexe, in the Mexican state of Hidalgo, were the site of *First International Encounter of Students* called by the General Council of Strike (CGH). This important event was attended by about 1500 students coming from different centres and universities of the country. Another highlight was the presence of students from 16 countries. We are publishing here the Resolution passed.

During this meeting, an **International Net of Students** was constituted for the organisation, information and formation of a plan of action and preparation of a second international meeting.

The activity of the net hinges around the following guidelines:

- Reject the neo-liberal policies of imperialism dictated by the IMF, the World bank and the OCDE. We also pronounce ourselves against the governments that carry them out. We particularly reject these policies applied in education.
- Struggle for a more ample educational budget. It should reach the 12% of NIP. The resources for this increase should come from the budget foreseen for the payment of the foreign debt in those countries where resources are set apart for these payments.

- Struggle to defend free state owned education in all the levels and all over the world
- Demand the democratisation of universities and institutions of higher education and, therefore, of its forms of government as well as respect for their autonomy.
- Reconsider the role and the tasks of universities in search of a more humanistic nature.
- Link the students' struggles with the struggles of the other sectors, namely: workers, peasants, Indigenous communities, immigrants, homosexuals, so as to achieve a united form of struggle in defence of their rights.
- Demand freedom for the UNAM prisoners as well as for all the political prisoners in the world.
- This net will remain independent from the governments and from political regimes.

After a discussion, the following agreement was reached:

The CGH has a horizontal form of organisation, with revocable and rotating representatives who are subject to the assemblies they represent and will keep on perfecting its democratic practice and hopes to contribute with its experience towards other organisations. We declare our respect for the organisational autonomy of each group that joins this net. (This decision had the support of 24 delegations. If we take into account the position taken by the CGH, that would add up to 25) (...)

Declarations:

- We reject the part played by the Brussels European Commission for it obeys the ideology that is behind the capitalist game in the university, trying to "harmonise" the education system of European Union and actually aligning it behind the American model. It perceives university as business and pretends to implement a new industry: teaching from afar. This business has to sell its products in the continuous teaching market ruled by the law of demand and supply.
- We declare our solidarity with the Bolivian students, workers and peasant and we repudiate the repression.
- We declare ourselves to be against the repression inflicted on the Brazilian comrades on April 22 and we demand freedom for those who we jailed.
- We declare ourselves to be against the militarisation inflicted on the people of Chiapas.

Plan of action:

- On 1 May, in memory of the international workers' day, each delegation will issue in their respective country a declaration of the constitution of International Students Net.
- **Latin American Days of struggle will be held between 19 and 23 of June** and it will end with a great demonstration. During that week cultural and political meetings will be held. The guidelines of this activity are: defence of state owned and free education, freedom for all the political prisoners, stop repression, increase the education budget to reach 12% of NIP.
- An international rally of similar characteristic will be held from 16 to 20 October.
- That each country is to promote encounters for the forthcoming month of October during which local and national state education is to be studied together with ways of defending free state education.
- That each delegation should promote creation of media such as local broadcasting stations, papers, magazines, Internet, etc. Additionally, each delegation should try and avail themselves with filming equipment so as to strengthen their work.
- That each delegation should create adequate condition to reach self-government of the markets apart from calling to block the importing of products that may jeopardise the health of our people, for example, transgenic wheat from Mexico.
- Encourage the multicultural respect of the peoples
- The next International Students Encounter is to take place in Quebec, Canada in April 2001.

To the public opinion, to the international press

We, the students' organisations of the country present at the I Students' Encounter, declare to be in favour of the following:

- Defence of free state education at all the levels
- Against the education policy drawn abroad by the World Bank and the IMF and applied by the government of this country

- For the separation of all the institutions of higher education from the National Centre of Assessment in Higher Education (CENEVAL) and disowning of ANUIES.
 - We demand the nullification of all fees in all the institutions of state education of the country and we are against the imposition of political-academic schemes that imply privatisation of education.
 - We are for a democratic, critical, scientific and peoples' model of university
 - We declare our support to the students of the rural teachers' training schools grouped in the Federation of Socialist Peasant Students of Mexico (FECSM).
 - We repudiate the repression inflicted to progressive students' organisations, who oppose education models contrary to the interests of the people of Mexico in different states of the Republic.
 - We oppose the privatisation of our cultural heritage, of education, electricity and other sectors strategic to the development of the country.
 - We demand full compliance with the petition of CGH-UNAM and also total fulfilment of the agreements of San Andrés de Larrainzar.
 - For the liberation of all the political prisoners of the country and the restitution alive of all the missing people.
 - We shall abide by the resolutions of this I International Students' Encounter held in Mexe, Hidalgo, on 20-24 April, 2000.
 - We invite all the students' and social organisations of the country to express solidarity with the struggle for a free state and peoples' education.
- Brotherly,

Students from the states of Puebla, Guadalajara, Oaxaca, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Chiapas, Coahuila, Sonora, San Luis Potosí, Veracruz, Yucatan, Lower California, State of Mexico, Tabasco, Guerrero, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas and the Federal District.