

Mexico's 'Forgotten Man' Seizes Streets, History

by Gretchen Small

A new phase of struggle opened July 30 in Mexico, when Presidential contender Andrés Manuel López Obrador, addressing as many as 3 million people packed in and around Mexico City's central plaza, the Zócalo, called upon Mexicans to set up 47 "permanent encampments" in the heart of the city, and man them 24 hours a day, until the Federal Electoral Court orders a vote-by-vote, polling station-by-polling station, recount of the contested July 2 Presidential election. The call was a masterful political move, which, despite catching even many of López Obrador's own supporters by surprise, met with enthusiastic popular response. By midweek, tens of thousands of people had joined the camps, with more arriving daily from other states, transforming the center of Mexico City into a hotbed of political discussion, and animated, revolutionary *fiesta*.

The LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM) immediately set up a "permanent camp" at the Juárez Monument, strategically situated in the middle of the camps stretching for miles out of the Zócalo. Bringing a computer, loudspeakers, and audio-visual equipment to the streets, their camp has become a base for classes on everything from nuclear energy, to LaRouche's physical economics, to one on Synarchism titled simply: "Who Is Screwing Us, and Why." The LYM is singing, and people are fascinated by their public chorus rehearsal. Fifty people came around one night for a reading of Edgar Allan Poe's *Mask of the Red Death*. Discussions are raging on how the financiers behind López Obrador's opponent Felipe Calderón are the same financiers who are dismantling industrial capacity in the United States, and seek to unleash global war through Lebanon.

In short, as one of several large banners at the LYM site explains, they are dedicated to sparking the intellectual ferment required to bring about the new global renaissance which is ultimately the only path to securing real change in Mexico. Deploying squads daily to organize at the other camps as well, the LYM engaged hundreds of people in dialogue, starting with their leaflet with Lyndon LaRouche's analysis of the global war in which Mexico's battle is occurring, and what to do about it. Thus, word is spreading that there is a U.S. statesman who is supporting the fight for justice in Mexico.

Real History Is Taking Over

Upon being briefed on July 30 on López Obrador's "permanent encampment" move, LaRouche responded that the

oligarchy now has a problem, because this move escalates the mobilization of the majority of the population. Four days later, LaRouche elaborated upon the strategic significance of the process unfolding in Mexico:

A real mass movement is being created, he said, a revolutionary situation in the most generic sense of the term, in which the people are becoming a factor. This is no “Mexican” phenomenon. Worldwide, the lower 80% of the population—the same “forgotten men and women” who Franklin Roosevelt rallied to save the United States and the world from fascism in his day—have been systematically excluded from a direct participatory role in shaping policy. They have been allowed to come around and “boola boola” for this and that kind of scheme, but not allowed to get in on the dialogue which shapes policy. Now, in the United States—with comparable things in other parts of the world—you have people who are beginning to sleepily come out of the stupor and realize they have to do something different. It’s not yet clear to them what they have to do, but they know it has to be something different.

So, you have a real mass movement, LaRouche said. A mass movement does not necessarily come into being with a clear list of programmatic businesses. Idiots always say “Well, we have point one, point two, point three,” but real history does not work like that. And you are coming into a time of crisis where *real* history, as opposed to what has been going on for years, is coming to the fore.

No ‘Lebanon’ South of the Border

The *Ancien Régime* in Mexico—the Vicente Fox government and the global Synarchist financier interests which prop it up—are alarmed. They had foreseen demonstrations against the fraudulent victory of their candidate, the National Action Party (PAN)’s Calderón, perhaps lasting for weeks, but they expected that ultimately some deal could be cut, Calderón’s victory would be accepted, and the ferment would dissipate.

López Obrador, however, has refused play by the rules of a system which has impoverished millions of Mexicans. Refusing any negotiation on a deal, including offers of a coalition government, he is sticking to his demand that the entire vote be recounted, under more impartial observers. As he said in the Zócalo on Aug. 2, how can election results in which so-called “arithmetic errors” have been documented in the tallies of 60% of the polling stations, be considered valid? If Calderón is so confident of his victory, why does he refuse to accept a recount of that vote?

As the mass ferment builds, a debate is raging within the *Ancien Régime* camp, as to how to move, before the situation gets completely out of their control. Despite the media headlines screeching “City Held Hostage,” everyone knows that López Obrador’s forces have not yet done anything compared to what *could* happen, should their solid case for a recount be turned down.

Some fanatics have raised the possibility of using force to close down the encampments. Interior Minister Carlos Abascal declared the camps “illegal” on Aug. 2, and demanded that the Mexico City government, headed by López Obrador supporters, shut them down. The day prior, President Fox had ominously stated that it is the Army’s role to guarantee legality and the country’s “institutions.”

LaRouche warned on Aug. 4: Any such attempt to dislodge the camps by force would be a scenario for a blow-up of the entire country. People in Washington should consider, that should the Fox government attempt to carry it out, the United States may face a “Lebanon” on the south of its border.

Acting on Behalf of Generations to Follow

Through direct personal leadership, López Obrador has kept the building anger of millions of Mexicans channeled into peaceful civic resistance. Personally living in the Zócalo as long as the camps are needed, he is visiting each of the 47 camps (one each for the 31 states and the 16 districts of Mexico City), returning nightly to give a wrap-up of where the battle stands at the end of the day.

Over and over, he reminds people to not be provoked, to ignore the press lies. It is enough to be secure that the cause which we are defending is just, he told them. At issue here, is that “we cannot keep living in a country where a few have everything, and the majority lacks even what is most indispensable.” He has pointed to the economic issue underlying the mass strike. We are fighting to “better our people’s conditions of life and work,” he told people on Aug. 2. Real democracy must bring real change. Look at the 2000 Presidential election, after which “the same economic policy continued, the same anti-popular and sell-out economic policy which benefits a few, at the cost of the suffering of the majority of our people.”

He is constantly reminding his largely poor and humble supporters, that their battle is a continuation of battles for justice which Mexicans have fought throughout their history. “We must remember that everything achieved in our country regarding freedom, justice, and democracy, has been won through the organization and struggle of the people. Nothing, or almost nothing, has been a free concession of power,” he told the millions gathered on July 30. “We were an independent country not because the Spanish Crown so decided, but through the people’s fight headed by Hidalgo and Morelos. Democracy, like justice, like freedom, is not begged for; it is won.”

So, too, on Aug. 3, he reminded those gathered in the Zócalo: “We are not struggling only for ourselves, for our generation, but for those who come after us. Let our children not reproach us tomorrow; let us be able to look them in the eye, and tell them that we rose to the occasion. It is a matter of pride to participate in a movement such as this. Circumstances such as this do not occur very often in our existence, in what is our history.”