

Bolivia: Reactionaries ratchet up campaign against the government

By
Eduardo Dimas

One of the weapons most often used to divide the poor has been racism. It is a feeling nurtured from childhood, a part of family tradition no matter what the race. "The races must be kept separate because that is God's will," was a slogan taught in South Africa in the apartheid years.

In other, more "democratic" countries, racism assumes more subtle forms. The blacks, Indians and mestizos are relegated to worse-remunerated jobs that prevent them from studying and rising up the social ladder. The idea is to keep them in every way at the level where they were born. Some manage to achieve higher levels of existence and in many cases forget their origins.

In Latin America, racism has also served to divide the poor. Despite the mixture of races, whites, blacks, Indians or Asians are "taught" to see others as "different," as if the common element of being poor and exploited did not unite them. Thus, the poor white can see an Indian, a black or a mestizo as an inferior being. That's the objective.

In any country in the region with ...

[Click to continue reading...](#)

By
Eduardo Dimas

[Read Spanish Version](#)

One of the weapons most often used to divide the poor has been racism. It is a feeling nurtured from childhood, a part of family tradition no matter what the race. "The races must be kept separate because that is God's will," was a slogan taught in South Africa in the apartheid years.

In other, more "democratic" countries, racism assumes more subtle forms. The blacks, Indians and mestizos are relegated to worse-remunerated jobs that prevent them from studying and rising up the social ladder. The idea is to keep them in every way at the level where they were born. Some manage to achieve higher levels of existence and in many cases forget their origins.

In Latin America, racism has also served to divide the poor. Despite the mixture of races, whites, blacks, Indians or Asians are "taught" to see others as "different," as if the common element of being poor and exploited did not unite them. Thus, the poor white can see an Indian, a black or a mestizo as an inferior being. That's the objective.

In any country in the region with a numerous indigenous population, one can find different forms of racism. Guatemala and Bolivia are the two countries where racism in all its manifestations can most clearly be seen -- and even breathed.

In Guatemala, the two candidates with the greatest possibilities of winning, or going into a runoff, are white. Not even Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú has a chance. The Power is for the whites.

In Bolivia, the rise of an Indian, Evo Morales, to the presidency, with a program of social benefit and justice for the poor, could not be accepted by the oligarchy and the bourgeoisie, which are accustomed to seeing Indians as inferior beings.

They simply cannot permit an Aymara to endanger their domination and the transnational corporations' control over the country's economy; much less allow the Indians to read and write, enjoy guaranteed health care and equal rights. It doesn't suit their interests.

That's the ideological background of -- I would say, the pretext for -- the attitude of the white oligarchy, concentrated in the so-called Camba Nation, toward the government. It is the reason for the steps the oligarchy has taken to "topple the shitty Indian," as it described Morales in a plan that Bolivian intelligence services discovered recently.

That's

the name of the plan: "A plan to topple the shitty Indian."
It is signed by the so-called Camba Nation and has four points, some of which have already been put into effect.

• The first is to support the Cruceñista Youth (from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the Camba Nation) so the Constituent Assembly will fail.

The Assembly has been unable to meet since Aug. 15, because of demonstrations by the fascist Cruceñista Youth. The situation has reached such a point that the main leaders of the Assembly have had to suspend the process and summon all the parties, with a view to achieving stability in Sucre.

In response, popular sectors In Defense of the Constituent Assembly have also staged demonstrations that could have ended in confrontations and deaths. That seems to be one of the objectives of the leaders of the Camba Nation -- to create chaos and worsen the government's situation.

Another element proposed in the plan is that of "full capital powers," that is, turning Sucre into the seat of all government powers, an old aspiration of the Chuquisaca Department that would directly affect La Paz, the nation's capital. According to the plan, the opposition will use "the counsel and presence of shock troops of the Cruceñista Youth" turned into the "brown shirts" or "black shirts" of the Bolivian oligarchy.

• The second point of the plan is to look for new confrontations between the departments of Oruro and Potosí, so the government will have no alternative but to support Oruro's demands and allow the department of Potosí to join the ranks of the Camba Nation. Oruro and Potosí are two mining regions.

• The third point, according to the Bolivian Information Agency, posits radical measures to overthrow the government of Evo Morales: "Begin the pro-autonomy movement by calling for civil strikes and permanent mobilizations in the seven regions under our control -- Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, Chuquisaca, Tarija, Potosí and Cochabamba. With this, we shall create a climate of instability that will degenerate in street violence, which must have victims who can be used as banners for our cause."

Further, "once pressure becomes intolerable, the government will fall of its own weight. But we must emphasize that the surrender be total; we

do not want the Vice President [as Morales' successor]. The government must go to the president of the Senate; this is very important."

• The fourth aspect of the Camba Nation plan (once the previous objectives have been achieved) is to utilize Mayor René Joaquino Cabrera of Potosí, considered to be "a useful Indian" who will "serve the Camba Nation to regain its power over the government."

Once Joaquino wins the election, "we shall establish the entire government structure and fill it up with our own people, so Joaquino will be the president but we shall be the rulers."

These are the four action plans drawn up by the leaders of the so-called Camba Nation. The plan has a strong odor of fascism and the classic reaction of the far right. It is a plan reminiscent of the successful coup in Chile in 1973 and the failed coup in Venezuela in 2002, which led to the strengthening of the government of Hugo Chávez, just to give two examples.

It should be pointed out that the fall of the Evo Morales government is of interest not only to the Bolivian oligarchy but also to the transnational corporations, the government of the United States (don't forget that U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia Philip Goldberg is a specialist in "dismembering nations") and some international organizations such as the Christian Democratic Organization for the Americas (CDOA) and the International Federation for the Freedom of Regional Autonomies (IFFRA).

It is difficult to predict how things are going to end in Bolivia, whether in a coup d'état or a resignation that, one way or other, would return power to the oligarchy, or in the strengthening of Evo Morales' progressive government.

If we guide ourselves by the events, it is evident that the oligarchy is on the offensive and has garnered several successes in its effort to topple Morales. It is obvious that the Bolivian government is almost paralyzed, maybe because it does not have the full support of the army or the rest of the repressive forces of the state, which have more ties to the oligarchy than to the progressive government.

The greatest strength of Evo Morales' government lies in the Bolivian people who carried him to power despite all the propaganda made by the media (in the hands of the oligarchy) against him. If he does not

mobilize the people to confront the reactionaries' assault, I doubt he will remain in government.

The Bolivian people have demonstrated that they know what their interests are and who defend those interests. Maybe Evo and the rest of his administration are waiting for the opportune moment, I don't know. But let us remember that the oligarchy is willing to spill as much blood as necessary to retake the power. Wouldn't it be better to ask the Bolivian people to take to the streets before a crisis occurs? I invite you to meditate.