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**Brazil**

# **A bad internationalism - and unenlightened ideas about the Brazilian PT**

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The October issue of IV carries [another contribution by Francois Sabado](#), analysing and seeking to give guidance to the Brazilian left. In his text, Sabado ignores basic principles of revolutionary internationalism - the relationship based on solidarity amongst revolutionaries of different nations and respect for the national party building processes in each country - and acts in a factional manner.

As a leader of the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League) in France and of the IV International, Sabado's stance breaks with precisely the fruitful relationship we have had between the LCR (representing the IV International) and DS, especially in the 1980s, when it was a relationship of mutual respect, based on the exchange of experiences and the attempt to build a pluralist internationalism. That was an attempt to correct the enormous mistakes made by the IV International at other times and in other parts of our region.

Although this is not the place to go into it at length, we should remember that a balance sheet of the IV International in Latin America is needed. A brief glance at the continent shows us a depressing picture. Almost all the political organisations that were members or sympathisers two decades ago have disappeared, have split and/or are badly weakened. And they have not been replaced with a new generation, even though we are in a much more favourable regional situation than in the 1990s. (The development of DS has been an exception.)

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/lulaconf.jpeg.jpg>]  
Brazilian president Lula speaks at a conference on global poverty

Sabado returns to the old vices of, on the pretext of internationalism, carrying out a factional struggle in another country (supporting a minority group that has broken with DS). In Brazil, his analysis and his proposals are far apart from the real social and political movement that is struggling to overcome neo-liberalism. While claiming to criticise the limits and contradictions of this movement, he breaks with it, and in its place he puts the typical schemas of the sects.

Socialist Democracy will continue on the path democratically decided by its members at its National Conferences and in its general activity. We accept and promote innumerable internationalist debates, so long as they are conducted in the framework of an internationalism without any guiding party (or section) and without factionalism.

## ...and its unenlightened ideas...

Readers who want to know the opinion of Socialist Democracy on the political situations of the last three years can go directly to the texts we have published on our site [www.democraciasocialista.org.br](http://www.democraciasocialista.org.br).

Here in this article we aim only to clarify a few of our points of view for Inprecor readers who have read the article in question and to correct some point of information, because much of what is in the Sabado text is incomplete or pure fiction.

1) Sabado adopts the position that the Lula government is the neo-liberal continuation of the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC). This position was debated and defeated in two consecutive conferences of Socialist Democracy, in November 2003 (VII Conference) and in April 2005 (Extraordinary Conference). The resolutions are on the site mentioned above.

## A bad internationalism - and unenlightened ideas about the Brazilian PT

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Sabado knows this, but he takes no account of it for one simple reason: the aim of his intervention in the “debate” is not to collaborate with the positions developed by DS. His intervention is the continuation, by other means, of factional activities against our current.

2) Sabado refers to DS as the “governmental left” that is fighting for an “illusory re-orientation” of the PT. Here too he adopts the positions of a small circle of ex-members of DS, who took part in the Extraordinary Conference, whose positions were democratically defeated and who did not accept the resolutions approved by a large majority.

Indeed they did not take part in Raul Pont's campaign for national president of the PT. They supported the campaign of Plinio Arruda Sampaio. The members of this group are not “the left wing of DS”. They left DS, in between the first and second rounds of the internal elections for PT president and joined the PSOL. As is well know - but it is worth repeating because it was also spelt out by our most recent conference - Socialist Democracy is an internal tendency of the Workers Party. And only its members, and its democratic structures, have the right to decide who is a member of DS.

3) Sabado's balance sheet of the PT's internal election (the PED, or Process of Direct Elections) is completely confused and leaves out important information in an attempt to bolster the argument that the dispute within the PT is an illusion. He says that the majority sector retains 60% of the National Leadership. How so!? He doesn't know the PT and doesn't realise that the crisis in the PT has permitted an important internal reorganization. The old “majority camp” has 42% on this body and is deeply divided and less able to unite than in the recent past. Raul won 48% of the votes in the 2nd round.

Sabado gives no importance to the 315 thousand voters in the first round of the PT internal elections. Dear readers, do you know of any similar experience in any other part of the world? In the middle of its biggest crisis, without the financial resources to conduct a campaign in the internal elections as it did in 2001, faced with a tremendous campaign to demoralise the party from the right-wing press, 315 thousand people turned out to vote and gave a clear message that they want the PT to change direction.

And the second round of the internal election was an extraordinary phenomenon. Raul confirmed his leadership role in the PT and for broad social layers and the critical intelligentsia, with positions clearly in favour of changing the course of the PT and the government. It was a very intense public campaign. You can read the manifesto of intellectuals in support of Raul - a broad spread of allies on the left. You can read the support of Leonardo Boff, Marilena Chaui, Luis Fernando Verissimo, Paul Singer, Emir Sader, among many others. You can read the expressions of support from the MPs and senators of the party. Raul's candidacy united forces within the PT and in democratic sections of society, with a real chance of winning. We lost by very little!

And the little we did lack was to be found in the ranks of those who supported the candidacy of Plinio for president and who announced their departure from the PT on the eve of the second round, amongst them Plinio himself, the comrades of APS (Popular and Socialist Action), the MPs Orlando Fantazzini and João Alfredo (the latter had also supported Raul in the first round). They left before the fight was over, to the benefit of the other candidate.

Sabado does not mention this fact. Why? Because in order to assert that the fight for the PT is illusory he cannot admit that Raul could have now been the National President of the PT. It should also be pointed out that there were some who left the PT and from the outside openly campaigned against a vote for Raul. They said it was the worst thing that could happen. A left president of the PT? How awful! One more pearl of sectarian lunacy!

3) Let us get some things straight. Sabado says that Joao Alfredo left DS with 2/3 of the members of the current in the state of Ceara. Where did he conjure up this information from? It is true that many people from the youth wing

there left. But it should be said that all the trade union sector and all those with leadership positions in the Fortaleza municipality stayed in DS. To back up this (erroneous) information, he says that Ceará was the region with the second largest number of DS members. Again, where did he get this from? In any case, it is not part of the DS tradition to create a “competition” or “rankings” amongst our regions. Our concern now is to support the sector in Ceará that remains in DS, help it organise to face the challenges we have in the Fortaleza Mayor's Office and in the political disputes in the state. That is the important thing.

Sabado states that the APS left the PT and joined the PSOL. It is true that the leadership of that current made a complete turn towards the PSOL. But many valuable militants of that current stayed in the PT, some have already joined DS and we are talking to many others to see if the same can happen in the near future.

Sabado says that the PSOL has two Senators. The information is out of date. The senator for Acre, Geraldo Mesquita, left the PSOL because of accusations about giving jobs to relatives (nepotism is a cancer in Brazilian politics) and the receipt of inappropriate financial benefits. When he mentions the creation of the PSOL he forgets the third founding deputy of this party: João Fontes, a conservative politician from Sergipe who was elected for the PT. With no public explanation, one fine day he left the PSOL and reappeared as a member of the PDT.

Sabado says that the federal deputy Orlando Fantazzini, ex-member of DS, went into the PSOL with “several hundred militants”. He failed to say that if such a contingent existed, they were not members of DS. The only DS members who left with him were those employed in his office and ten or so others!

Sabado tells us that Jorginho, a national leader of the CUT, went over to the PSOL. But he doesn't tell us that among the leadership of his own union, the Shoe Workers Union in Franca (São Paulo), out of 30 members only two followed his lead, and that only nine members of the PT in that city left.

4) Sabado insists on his now aging thesis, that there should exist a convergence between militants of the PT left and those of the PSOL. This thesis only exists on the other side of the Atlantic. Over here, below the Equator, there is only sin. The main aim of the PSOL is the destruction of the PT and especially of the PT left. No collaboration is possible and it is not true that the PSOL has taken initiatives towards unity.

5) And, once again, the elections of 2006. For Sabado the dispute in 2006 will be between Lula and Heloisa Helena! With one magic wave, the author causes the entire Brazilian right to disappear! As a new specialist in Brazil, Sabado should read the country's newspapers and magazines. He would have seen that there is a real right-wing campaign underway, led by the PSDB and the PFL and supported by the mass media, not only to defeat the Lula government, but also to wreck the PT as a legal party.

Although Sabado insists that the Lula government is neo-liberal, that it represents the interests of finance capital, etc, etc, the bankers and big businessmen, along with their political parties and their media, do not think the same. They are fighting for the return of the PSDB and the PFL to government. As the banker and president of the PFL, Jorge Bornhausen, put it, they (the right) are taking advantage of this crisis (of the PT), “to be rid of these scum for the next 30 years”. And by “these scum” he means not only the PT but also, as a target of the right, the MST and later other social movements too.

Only sectarianism and schematism prevent some groups from seeing that the central question of Brazilian politics today is a fight between left and right. This short-sightedness leads them to prioritise, from a mad leftist point of view, the attack on the PT and, above all, on the left of the PT. In the history of the workers and socialist movements there have been other moments in which irresponsible leftism have aided the strategy of the right. We in DS are working with determination to avoid the tragedies of the past repeating themselves in the present as farce.

## An internationalism of the XXI Century

Lastly, we wish to take the opportunity of these brief remarks on a case of “bad internationalism”, plagued with the vices of the XX century, to recall what we really need: a debate on an “internationalism for the XXI century”, which recovers the values and legacy of the four internationals, but which also makes a balance sheet of the mistakes. Which identifies the new political actors that exist today, as well as those that remain (after the general crisis of the left at the beginning of the last decade), but which above all is capable of promoting an open and plural internationalism, closely linked to the political struggles underway. Something which in our region is emerging as an ever sharper struggle between a pole of resistance to US imperialism (headed by the Venezuelan revolutionary process and in which the PT is a strategic ally), and the initiatives of the Bush administration for the region.

At the level of “global civil society”, DS members in the social movements have played a prominent part in building international spaces and links like the World Social Forum, the Assembly of Social Movements, the Continental Campaign against the FTAA, the Continental Social Alliance, the World Women's March, the Southern Cone Co-ordination of Trade Union Confederations, the forums of workers in the social economy, among other initiatives that have been important advances in the struggle against neo-liberal globalisation, imperialism, war and capitalist patriarchy in our continent. The big impact of the recent actions at the People's Summit (called by the Continental Social Alliance) in Mar del Plata, against Bush and the FTAA, was living proof that this strategic orientation is the right one. There is now an intense mobilisation across the continent for the January 2006 World Social Forum in Caracas, which should be a watershed for this process.

Nonetheless, at the level of political parties there are today no articulations that can be considered the “counterpart” to this process of civil society. We face the challenge of building international and regional spaces of the political and party left (or of reformulating existing ones like the São Paulo Forum) so that they can interact with those processes of global civil society. The revolutionary left, including the IVth International, must respond to this challenge. This is the task to which the members of DS are devoting themselves. (But beware! Repeating a worn-out and “bad internationalism” will separate irretrievably from this path all those who insist on the errors of the past.)