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**Brazil**

# **On the nature of the Brazilian crisis and the issues, from the point of view of socialists**

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*"You who walk, the path is the trace of your steps and nothing else:*

*You who walk, there is no path, you make the path as you go..."*

Antonio Machado, Proverbios and Cantares XXIX, Campos de Castilla

The purpose of this text is not to go into detail on the dumbfounding national situation. It will not develop the consequences of the non-quashing of the Dilma-Temer ticket [1] by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TES) - there was today a demonstration with a funeral wreath not far from the headquarters of this institution in Brasilia - , nor the consequences of the "hold me back or I'll leave" of the PSB [2], nor the prospects of enlargement of the Diretas Já campaign [3], nor the organization of the second general strike [4] in two months, against the ultraliberal counter-reforms of capital for Brazil [5], which succeed one another in a National Congress that is increasingly discredited.

What we want to do is to attempt an approach to what the current Brazilian crisis means in a broader, more diverse sense (in its economic, social and political dimensions) and also with a longer view in terms of its duration - the crisis we have been experiencing from the beginning of the campaign through which the bourgeoisie united to overthrow Dilma Rousseff through impeachment [6] up until the present. It is therefore an attempt to analyze the period.

## A historic crisis

Our hypothesis is that, since the beginning of 2015, we have been experiencing a political crisis of such depth that, in addition to the serious economic and social crises, it is comparable to the crises of 1929-1930 and 1984.

In the case of 1929-1930, the crisis led to a change in the hegemonic power bloc in the country, that is, to the replacement of the oligarchic sector which had previously dominated by another sector, a nascent bourgeoisie. Then, with the movement of 1930, a lasting vacuum of hegemony appeared; Get lio Vargas [7] consolidated his position from the Paulist revolt [8] of 1932 onwards and he formulated another project for Brazil, basing himself on "tenentism" [9]. This was a national development project based on industry, on the creation of an urban wage-earning working class with a certain type of rights, on a Bonapartist regime until 1937 and leaning towards fascism from then on, despite the maintenance of scraps of concessions to the dispossessed.

In the second case, in 1984, after three years of a profound recession, the end of the "Brazilian miracle," with a third of the people in the streets during the Diretas J  campaign [10], the military regime was replaced, in a process of an indirect election in the Electoral College, by Tancredo Neves [11] and, following the latter's death, by Sarney [12], both closely linked to the military, but nevertheless civilians. All this without actually destroying the repressive apparatus of the military regime.

It does not seem to us that today there is a change of the power bloc on the horizon; but let us remember, neither was there just before 1929-1930.

Some economists argue, perhaps to justify the need for the reforms they defend, that the present crisis is more serious than the previous ones - which seems to us to be excessive, at least in comparison with the crisis of 1930, the result of the stock market crash in New York and the global recession that began that year.

We are in the third year of recession and there is a complete paralysis of the political system - which clearly shows to bourgeois sectors that the regime (a term used here as a synonym for the political system, that is, a given combination of institutions used for class rule) has become dysfunctional for them. A bourgeoisie with global dimensions and interests (by which we mean business) cannot coexist with so much instability and uncertainty about the future for such a long time that the political crisis deepens the economic crisis and is detrimental to both the direct extraction of surplus value and the profits of rentiers within the financial system.

## **What Operation Lava Jato is and the role that it plays**

Operation Lava Jato [13] started from an investigation into money laundering by petrol stations around Curitiba. It could have been in Manaus, Porto Alegre, SÃ£o Paulo or Recife. The fuel distribution sector in our country is richly provided with mafias. It was through this investigation that the specialist unit of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office in Curitiba got to the currency trader Alberto Youssef and from him to the director of Petrobras [14] Paulo Roberto Costa - who was going to provide the starting point for the series of denunciations of the Petrobras and Workers' Party (PT) scandal.

Thus, in the context of 12 to 13 years of governments of class collaboration with the PT at their head, with the damage they caused, especially among sectors of the middle class, but more fundamentally with the signs that appeared at the beginning of 2015, that Dilma Rousseff would no longer be able to fulfil her role of containing social movements nor of implementing the neo-liberal agenda, roles she had fulfilled until then, Operation Lava Jato became a key element of the great script written by the elites to force Rousseff and the PT out of government.

Using the clear evidence of corruption in the PT - and in the PP [15] and the PMDB [16] and others - in the Petrobras affair, fundamental sectors of capital took advantage of Lava Jato to unleash a movement in the streets and in the institutions that hatched and executed the institutional coup d'état of April 2016. It was not only the prosecutors and the judge of Curitiba, nor only the deputies of Congress in the pay of the corrupters, nor only Temer, nor just the media, nor even the magistrates of the Supreme Courts. All these agents had a fundamental role in the plot, but without Lava Jato the coup would not have happened.

The 2016 coup d'état was not a fascist coup, with the physical destruction of the militant vanguard and the complete destruction of representative bourgeois-democratic institutions (although in Brazil these institutions are anti-democratic, because they are oligarchic and segregationist). The coup was not Bonapartist; in other words, it did not suspend the existing institutional order or attempt to destroy directly and immediately at the political level the class opposition (although it is now attempting to do so with political reforms). But that does not mean that there was no coup d'état or that it is not fundamental.

## **What is at stake in the conflict among "those above"**

Each phase of contraction of the economic cycle is for capital a phase of fierce conflict for markets and capital. With neo-liberal globalization, the conflict involves mainly transnational companies, and of course also the Brazilian multinationals, the "green and yellow" [17]. But the novelty, the key element of the present framework, which aggravates the crisis and the divisions within the bourgeoisie itself, is the political crisis that is raging.

The diagnosis that the petistas [18] make of the current situation is that there is a conflict between the "national bourgeoisie" and "big globalized financial capital". This may sound like the truth but it is not, because the Brazilian bourgeoisie is fairly globalized, as the shareholders of Petrobras, Vale [19], the giants of the construction industry, JBS [20] and the banks prove; there is only one major foreign bank in the Brazilian deposit bank market: Santander [21]. There are sectors of financial capital that depend much more directly on state action, of course, but it is very likely that what is at stake is the form in which the state deals with "economic affairs".

We are making the assumption that a sector of the state apparatus that has become autonomous, represented by a fraction of the Federal Police, the Public Prosecutor of the State of Paraná and Judge Moro, is trying at present to "clean up" the political personnel trained in the old patrimonial school - to employ the language and analysis that the employers use. This sector wants to "moralize the business environment" in Brazil. And it is doing so by striking other sectors of the business world - all largely beneficiaries of the years of Lulopetism [22]. It is willing to chop off the heads of its class brothers. In this sense, what we are seeing is a conflict for the "modernization" of the state.

It should be remembered that one of the great interpretations of the formation of the nation, the one that is most taught by the judiciary in the training of its cadres, is none other than *Os donos do poder*, the work by Raymundo Faoro - a lawyer, which is no accident. This is a classical liberal vision and in this sense it is not a matter of democratizing government but of putting in place stricter and more "republican" (anti-oligarchic) rules for the way the government handles its relationship with capital.

## The sorcerer's apprentice

The batteries of the Federal Police, the Public Prosecutor's office of Paraná and Judge Moro directed their fire, with the support of a large majority of the bourgeoisie and broad popular sectors (Greens and Yellows) [23] mobilized by the mass media, mainly against Dilma, the PT and Lula, in order to consecrate the coup d'état. But, contradictorily - because nature, society and philosophy are contradictory - from the moment that these batteries were put into action, with the legal mechanism, hitherto unknown in our country, of *delações premiadas* [24], the Lava Lato operation escaped the control of the leaderships of the political representatives of the bourgeoisie and even the orientation of the judicial authorities.

The operation, which served the coup d'état so well, went beyond the limits of the existing system, making it impossible for former leading figures of the regime (president, parliamentary group leaders, supreme courts) to retain absolute control over the targets and extension of the process. It is this reactionary origin and this contradictory evolution that many comrades of the socialist left find it difficult to understand in Marxist terms. Ultimately there is a strong temptation to understand the facts in a linear fashion. There is strong pressure to analyse starting from completely anti-Marxist concepts like that of "political caste", taken from the heterodox majority leadership of Podemos, a concept that means nothing from the point of view of the objective relations between really existing social classes .

We affirm that Operation Lava Jato, under the Temer government, is taking a turn that is decisive for the crisis of those above and that it opens up breaches so that those below will gain time to reconstitute their forces in the struggle against the agenda of capital. And yes, it is a positive thing that this process exposes, with numerous sordid details, the intricacies of the political system of private financing of campaigns, the promiscuous relations between the big companies, the parties, the political representatives and members of the police and the judiciary. But none of this, in our eyes, means that on the programmatic level the PSOL, and even less revolutionary socialists, should play this game and start applauding the operation and its investigations - for a lot of reasons.

From the end of 2014 to the end of 2016, Lava Jato was fundamentally an operation directed against the PT. There was material, denunciations and evidence to justify investigating the PSDB [25], the DEM [26] and especially the party that is the symbol of the political system of the New Republic: Temer's PMDB. If this was not done, it was because a decision was made not to do it. Inspired by Operation Clean Hands in Italy [27], the young prosecutors of Curitiba made the conscious decision to look in the direction of the PT and also, to balance things a little, of the PP. During this period, singing the praises of the trial as a policy meant getting dangerously close to the anti-corruption and anti-class right. This is what the comrades of the MES and comrade Luciana Genro [28] did, during their campaign for the municipal elections in Porto Alegre in 2016, by deciding to cut back on the programme of the party, and their own programme, in order to try and win "Green and Yellow" sectors.

It was a mistake to support Lava Jato, not only because the operation was selective - and on the legal field selectivity already means a lot. But also because, as far as revolutionary politics are concerned, it encourages those who listen to this discourse to develop illusions about bourgeois judicial power, which will supposedly resolve questions which only the independent mobilization of the exploited and the oppressed is capable of resolving. And even more so, because in a polarized country, with a fascist-punitive right in particular, it was and remains necessary to challenge the idea that punishment at any cost can be the solution. It is not that the corrupt do not deserve punishment and imprisonment. The problem is that the easy solution of prison for the corrupt forgot, and continues to forget, the debate, which should not be postponed, on the 622,000 Brazilians who are imprisoned, all of them poor, almost all "black because of being poor" [29]. In our view, it would have been correct to denounce the coup d'état, to demonstrate the selective and pro-coup character of Lava Jato, to denounce the corruption of the PT as a consequence of the political and social project of this party. It would have been correct to steer well clear of the easy punitive solution.

## Why Joesley Batista/JBS informed on Temer and aggravated the political crisis

After having caused historic damage to the no less historic business and profits that giant multinational construction enterprises have realized with the Brazilian state, Lava Jato began a few months ago to look into the affairs of the Lula-Dilma era between the BNDES [30] and the so-called "national champions" - an expression by which Keynesian economists designate the companies which, in their opinion, they should choose to help by giving them broad access to credit, to contribute to "national development".

Luciano Coutinho, who was president of BNDES for nine years under the Lula and Dilma governments, applied this policy in muscular fashion. Large construction companies, all involved in Lava Jato, received 40 billion reais [31] from the BNDES between 2006 and 2013 to trans-nationalize themselves (they operate throughout Latin America and in some countries in Africa); JBS, Marfrig [32], Bertin [33] and BRF [34] in the meat sector, received 14 billion reais; Fibria [35], Oi [36], LBR [37], in the dairy products sector, and EBX [38], owned by Eike Batista [39] also received substantial loans and capital inflows. It would be a mistake to think that only Lulopetism has acted in this way. The financial sector had already been cleaned up and capitalized under the FHC government [40], between 1995 and 2001, through the Proer programme [41]; and the Brazilian financial sector is almost entirely national (private and state sectors, concentrated in Bradesco, ItaÃº, BB and Caixa).

The time had come for Lava Jato to spoil the party of the globalized "super champion", the meat industry. Lava Jato was already manoeuvring towards the encirclement of JBS and its sources of funding, while at the same time promising, and keeping its promise, to tighten the vice around Lula. The Batista brothers - 90 per cent of whose companies were already installed outside Brazil - in agreement with the leading circles of the PT, decided to take revenge on the new government and help bring down Temer (while at the same time making some money on the foreign exchange market).

## The consequences of the ongoing trial

The established political personnel of the present parties (which is different from the bourgeoisie: they are its constituted political representation, with a certain autonomy in relation to it, like the personnel of the judiciary) will do everything possible to ensure that this crisis ends up with the cake being shared. In other words, that it concludes by preserving the current rules of the game, or with even more undemocratic rules of the game.

But at least part of the judiciary will not go back on the "great anti-patrimonial clean-out" and the conflict can continue. It will certainly come before the TFS [\[42\]](#) (Carmen Lucia has already defended the project of a plebiscite or a referendum for political reform). That does not resolve the economic crisis, but it can bring down the New Republic [\[43\]](#) as a regime, around which converged the PSDB as well as the PT, in addition to all the "physiological" parties [\[44\]](#).

This conflict has already resulted in a conclusion that is important for the popular camp, by banning corporate donations to election campaigns, an important democratic demand. In the United States, the Supreme Court has legalized the removal of the ceiling on corporate donations to election campaigns, reinforcing their character as a media show of bourgeois gangs. We can also content ourselves with noting that the bourgeoisie no longer manages to govern as it did before the crisis, on the one hand, and on the other that it has no clear project, apart from increasing exploitation. And finally, that the struggle is still open for sharing out the cake.

## What is the nature of this crisis and what kind of outcome should be proposed?

The two questions are related, because from the analysis and the more or less profound understanding of what we are experiencing flows the answer to the second question.

The Brazilian crisis of this period has all the characteristics of a "national crisis" in the sense that Lenin gave to this term. We insist: we are talking about the crisis that began when the majority of capital decided to exchange the Lulopetist project through impeachment; it then supported the masses in the street in favour of the coup d'état, implemented this coup and catapulted Temer to power. It has given a boost to the ultraliberal agenda and has not only come up against unpopularity and popular resistance to this agenda; it has also begun to have a taste of its own poison through Lava Jato.

A national crisis is a political crisis of domination, a crisis of the whole of social relations. It is no coincidence that, in parallel with the crisis in the Union's budget, states going bankrupt, barbaric revolts in places of detention [\[45\]](#) and the no less barbaric repression of the rebels by the punitive state - bringing to light the brutal way in which a "hidden" part of the segregated society is treated. Nor is it a coincidence that we are seeing the strengthening of militias, of organized criminal groups, of territories that are "free" for trafficking.

It is no coincidence that, with 14 million unemployed, social benefits cut through fiscal adjustment and bankrupt states, the statistics of urban violence are exploding and along with that increasing cases of massacres of black youth and the popularity of fascist solutions. It is not by chance that the denunciations of violence against women are increasing. In a national crisis like the one we are experiencing, the way in which classes relate to each other must be redefined, in depth and not superficially. This is the meaning of the fact that the Brazilian bourgeoisie has finished with Lulism and has come to support an ultra-liberalism, aligning itself with what is taking place on the international scene.

## "Dysfunction" of the political system

Since it is part of this general framework of national crisis, the crisis of the political system of the New Republic is quite deep. This system no longer functions as it did before, it stutters and staggers; and this historically determined combination of oligarchic-republican institutions that has given substance to the domination of the bourgeoisie in Brazil since 1985, and more formally since the 1988 Constitution, creates problems for those who sponsored it. This system or regime was based on a coalition-based presidentialism (where a party can never govern alone), supported by a Congress that is always very diverse (33 parties, the biggest number in the Western world!), where there reigned, as old Plinio [46] put it, the law of "take here, give there" (parliamentary amendments, vote-buying, trading votes against posts, etc.); or according to the words of a baron of the lower clergy [47], "it is give-and-take", all the members of parliament having been elected in campaigns copiously financed by private capital. In this system a "party" that has never been a party but rather a meeting-place of bosses of regional organizations, called the PMDB, has always played a central role. This led the political analyst Marcos Nobre to speak of a "pemedebist" regime.

The end of private financing of campaigns is a serious problem for the rules of the game of the old New Republic. The growing popular rejection of politicians, traditional parties and institutional politics is a symptom of crisis. It is a capital problem that its entrails of crapulous combinations and illicit enrichments have been exposed to the public for two years and that a very high percentage of elected representatives are accused or cited in the denunciations of Lava Jato. The increasingly autonomous role, sometimes that of a protagonist, that is being played by the judiciary in the face of the loss of prestige and the inaction of the executive and Congress, also represents a serious problem for its functioning. It is an almost lethal element for the regime that, while its institutions are desperately seeking to find formalist solutions for the succession to Temer, and while he is stubbornly trying to cling to power, 95 per cent of the population wants direct elections.

## National crisis versus revolutionary crisis

A national crisis, let us recall, is not a "revolutionary crisis". The most well-known concept of the latter, developed by Lenin in *The Collapse of the Second International*, is as follows:

"(1) Impossibility for the ruling classes to maintain their rule in an unchanged form ... (2) Aggravation, more than is usual, of the misery and distress of the oppressed classes. 3) Marked accentuation, for the reasons given above, of the activity of the masses (...), towards independent historical action."

It is obvious that the third element does not exist in Brazil, at least up to now.

Let us remember a few examples more or less close to a revolutionary crisis: during the Venezuelan Caracazo (1989) a revolutionary crisis occurred, which opened a revolutionary situation, because the insurrection of the poor districts of the cities of Venezuela over a few days was sudden and spontaneous. Under the government of Siles Suazo, Bolivia (in 1982-1985) experienced several consecutive revolutionary crises. The relationship of forces was generally very favourable to the exploited and the oppressed, and in general (this was not the case with the spontaneous Caracazo), they were organized in their own independent institutions. Generally, almost always, a vacuum of power was created for a few days.

For Marxism, no pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation or revolutionary crisis can open up under the action and the will of social sectors other than the working classes and their dispossessed allies, going on the offensive and organized independently. There is no evidence to support the thesis of a pre-revolutionary situation opened up by Lava Jato [48].

This is why the Gordian knot of the Brazilian crisis is the disproportion between the depth of the crisis of those above and the relative - relative to the dimension of the crisis of those above – fragility of the offensive and the organization of those below. The new rise in struggles from March to the present is extraordinary; the great general strike of April 28 was a resounding victory and we must work hard for the success of the strike on June 30 and of new mobilizations and mass public actions against the reforms. The speed of recovery can accelerate exponentially and the situation can become really tense by the offensive of those below. But we must start from the fact that the relationship of forces, after the defeat of the coup d'état of April 17, 2016 (but it must still be admitted that there was a coup d'état), has only begun to change very recently and the mass movement in Brazil still has on its back the weight of the trade union bureaucracies: right-wing (mainly Força Sindical); Lulopetist (CUT, MST); and linked to the PCdoB (UNE, CTB) [49]. And we will need much, much more strength and combativeness to bring down the reforms.

## Distinguishing the political from the social

There are around us, in the social movement and in the PSOL, many currents and unorganized comrades, formed during the defeat of petism, who confuse politics with syndicalism or "movementism". They honestly believe (at least the youngest ones) that slogans such as "48-hour general strike" or "build workers' councils" – like those of the PSTU [50]- are political solutions. As if these words were more radical than democratic projects aimed against the regime. For them, to indicate a solution on the terrain of the institutional solution represents institutionalism, electoralism. This is a complete negation of the tradition of the method of the transitional programme.

This is without saying anything for the moment about those currents, such as the MES, CST [51], LS [52], LRP [53], which simply do not attach any importance to the fact that there has been a coup d'état, or even deny that there was one, as well as an unfavourable turn in the relationship of forces in 2016, and which tend to put a sign of equality between the Lulopetist governments and the present one, thus flirting with the anti-corruption right.

Without that contradicting in any way our support and participation in struggles and strikes, we need solutions on the real terrain of radical politics, of the radicalization of bourgeois democracy, to such an extent that the bourgeoisie of the oligopolistic epoch cannot support it, because it is not democratic. And still less the Brazilian fraction of the global bourgeoisie, whose origins and practice lie in slavery and oligarchy, and which is fundamentally opposed to popular participation. These are issues based on recent history, remembered by workers and the people, and on the real relationship of forces between the classes in Brazil.

Lenin's specific contribution to revolutionary politics is the affirmation of the centrality of the political struggle and its distinction from the social struggle. This is what Daniel BensaÃd analyzes: "Everything leads Lenin to understand that politics has its own grammar and syntax. It is the place of an elaboration, of an apparition, of a representation, in which it is a question of presenting what is absent." [54].

The social struggle demands that we continue to remain firm and as well organized as possible in the trenches of the building of the new general strike of June 30th. The social struggle demands that we mobilize our categories, the nuclei of the PSOL that we organize and our popular base, trade-union and student, in order to continue fighting against the counter-reforms of capital by strikes, blockades and other forms of mobilization. None of this prevents us from having political slogans to respond to the will of workers, young people, women and LGBT people who reject the indirect president hypothesis and ask us every day what president we would vote for if direct elections were held.

## The importance of the Diretas J campaign

In spite of the fragility of Temer and the division of the bourgeoisie, we are not at the point of the immediate collapse

of the government, much less a positive outcome of direct elections for the presidency of the Republic. There are very many signs of negotiation among the political representatives of the bourgeoisie, who obviously include Lula as one of the protagonists, around a broad agreement for indirect elections and the replacement of Temer by a transitional term of office of "national unity".

Included in this agreement is the continuation, albeit only partial and delayed, of the implementation of the adjustment plans. The fall of Temer is the first step towards inflicting a defeat on the counter-reforms. Unfortunately, one of the main obstacles within the vanguard to the broadening of the movement for the Diretas JÃ is the prejudices and misunderstandings of a part of the socialist left concerning the central role of this slogan. By frontally opposing the defence of Diretas JÃ, the PSTU, the CST/PSOL, LS, LRP and other groups on the same line are demonstrating the bad position they are taking in this conjuncture. Not having seen or not having considered as important what took place on the terrain of the relationship of forces between the classes with the institutional coup d'état of 2016, these comrades continue to put an equal sign between Dilma and Temer and express what they should be expressing if nothing had happened: for them, who is going to govern or who stops governing is of little importance.

That is not what we think, and that is not what we are saying. For us it is fundamental that Temer falls and his successor is elected by the people.

Diretas Já!

19 June 2017

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<http://www.insurgencia.org/%E2%80%8B sobre-a-natureza-da-crise-brasileira/>

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[1] Dilma Rousseff (Workers' Party, PT) and Michel Temer (PMDB) were elected respectively President and Vice-President of Brazil in 2010 and re-elected in 2014.

When Dilma Rousseff was dismissed on 31 August 2016 by the Senate, Michel Temer took her place, despite having been ordered by a court in 2015 to pay a fine of 80 000 reais for exceeding the authorized level of financing of the campaigns of his party in 2014, which ought to have made him ineligible. But the Supreme Electoral Tribunal stated that it would only make a ruling on this question in the event of Temer standing in an election, which did not prevent him, as vice-president, from replacing Dilma Rousseff as president.

[2] The PSB (Brazilian Socialist Party) is a centre-left party that was part of Dilma Rousseff's governing coalition, alongside the Workers' Party and the PMDB, until 2014.

[3] Diretas JÃ ("Direct elections now") is a campaign aiming to prevent President Temer from being replaced by a simple agreement between political party machines, without an election, if he is removed from office, as the movement demands.

[4] Against the counter-reforms of the Temer government, a general strike took place on 27 April 27th. A second general strike is called for June 30th.

[5] As soon as Dilma Rousseff was forced to step aside by the commencement of impeachment proceedings, on May 12th 2016, Michel Temer, first of all as acting president, formed a government which announced a reduction in public spending while voting an increase in the salaries of members of the executive, judges and police officers. He became president in September and announced an increase in working hours and the retirement age, the reduction of the "bolsa familia" (a programme to combat poverty set up by the Lula government), budget cuts, with a freeze on any increase in public spending for 20 years, the privatization of airports and electrical and petroleum installations, and the abolition of "popular pharmacies" (which enabled the poorest people to obtain medicines at low cost)...

[6] Dilma Rousseff was first removed from the presidency on May 13th, 2016, and finally removed by a Senate vote on August 31st for "false presentation of public accounts". Her impeachment was a "constitutional coup d'état".

[7] Get lio Dorneles Vargas (1882-1954) was a Brazilian politician, civilian leader of the armed movement of the states of Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul (called the "Brazilian Revolution of 1930"), which overthrew President Washington Lu s. He governed Brazil from 1930 to 1934 in the Provisional Government, from 1934 to 1937 elected by the National Congress of Brazil, from 1937 to 1945 under the authoritarian framework of the "New State" after a coup d'état, and was then the elected president from 1951 to 1954. His governments instituted the minimum wage, paid holidays, limitation of working hours, prohibition of dismissing employees after ten years of employment... for those who possessed the "Work Card".

[8] The Paulista military revolt began in July 1924 in S o Paulo (which was at that time the industrial and financial capital of the country) following the economic crisis and culminating in six months of popular struggle.

[9] Tenentism was a series of movements based on lieutenants and intermediate cadres of the army, seeking a modern national development of Brazil. Some currents of tenentism evolved to the left, towards the Communist Party of Brazil, others turned to authoritarianism: some of the military dictators from 1964 to 1985 had been "tenentists" in their youth.

[10] The biggest mass political campaign in Brazilian history, with the aim of breaking with the election of the president by secret negotiations in the Congress and installing election by direct popular suffrage.

[11] Tancredo Neves (1910-1985) was Minister of Justice of President Vargas (1952-1954) and Prime Minister of President Jo o Goulart (1961-1962). He became an official opponent of the military regime at the head of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (which became the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement, PMDB, in 1979 when "bipartisanship" was eliminated). In 1984 he was one of the figures of the Diretas J  movement. Elected to the presidency by Congress in January 1985, he became ill and died in April 1985 without having taken office.

[12] Jos  Sarney, chosen by the military junta to be the Vice-President of Tancredo Neves, replaced him on March 15, 1985 and was invested as president on his death. He was replaced by Fernando Collor de Mello, the first president elected by universal suffrage, in 1990 (accused of corruption, Collor de Mello was obliged to relinquish his office in December 1992).

[13] Lava Jato could be translated as "speed wash".

[14] Petrobras is a giant Brazilian oil company, the biggest enterprise in the country and the eighth biggest oil group in the world. It was a state monopoly until 1997. It is now a private company of which the state remains the principal shareholder (32 per cent, with 55 per cent of voting rights).

[15] The Progressive Party (PP) is a right-wing, conservative and neo-liberal party with its roots in the Alliance for National Renewal (ARENA), the party of the military junta from 1965 to 1980.

[16] The PMDB is a right-wing neo-liberal force, now led by Michel Temer. It is an alliance of the interests of local and regional party bosses rather than a national political party.

[17] The two main colours of the national flag.

[18] The members of the Workers' Party.

[19] Vale is a giant in the mining industry, but also a key operator in the Belo Monte mega-barrage, which has displaced 40,000 people, and Bento Rodrigues, which caused the biggest ecological catastrophe in Brazil's history. It is in the process of planting hundreds of thousands of eucalyptus trees in Amazonia, breaking the entire ecosystem over a considerable area.

[20] JBS-Friboi is the leading Brazilian multinational in the agri-food industry, representing about a quarter of the world market for beef. It is run by the brothers José Batista Junior, Joesley Batista and Wesley Batista.

[21] Grupo Santander (banking, finance, insurance) has been the pivot of the concentration of the Spanish market since the 1990s. At its peak in 2010, it was ranked by Forbes as the sixth largest enterprise in the world. Santander has a work force of 188,000, 125 million customers and 12,235 branches worldwide.

[22] "Lulopetismo" describes the period of the terms of office of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, founder and historic leader of the Workers' Party (PT), (who was president from 2003 to 2011) and his successor Dilma Rousseff (2012-2016). It was a period when the socialist programme of the PT was put in the closet and when the party adopted neoliberal "governability", sowing the seeds of corruption.

[23] The nationalist right, not necessarily organized.

[24] Information on a case provided by someone involved, with the possibility of a reduced sentence if the information helps the investigation.

[25] The Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) was created in 1988 by dissidents of the PMDB, including the future president Fernando Henrique Cardoso. It is a right-wing neoliberal party.

[26] The Democrats (DEM, formerly the Liberal Front Party) is a right-wing Christian party. In opposition under the presidencies of Lula and Rousseff, it joined the Temer government.

[27] Operation "Mani pulite" ("clean hands") refers to a series of judicial inquiries carried out in the early 1990s, aimed at personalities from the Italian political and economic world. These investigations uncovered a system of corruption and illegal financing of political parties.

[28] The Socialist Left Movement (MES) is one of the currents behind the founding of the Socialist Party and Freedom (PSOL). It has observer status in the International Committee of the Fourth International. Luciana Genro, a lawyer, leader of the MES, was the candidate of the PSOL in the 2014 presidential election (receiving 1.55 per cent of the votes cast).

[29] Extract from a song by the Haitian Caetano Veloso, which evokes a police charge "against blacks, almost white and almost black because of being so poor".

[30] The National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES) is expected to contribute to development. According to its detractors it has mostly turned into a tool of influence and geopolitics.

[31] At the current rate of exchange, about 11 billion euros.

[32] Marfrig is an agri-food company, the third biggest in this sector in Brazil, behind JBS and BRF.

[33] Grupo Bertin is a conglomerate that invests in infrastructure, energy, agri-food and hotels and employs about 35,000 people.

[34] BRF (formerly Brasil Foods SA) is a food multinational. In 2015, in Brazil alone, BRF processed 1.7 billion poultry and 10 million pigs and cattle.

[35] Fibria is a Brazilian paper company with a production capacity of about 6 million tons of pulp per year.

[36] Oi (initially Telemar) is the largest telecommunications operator in Brazil.

[37] LBR-Lácteos Brasil is a Brazilian dairy giant, which received 700 million reais from the BNDES in 2010. In 2013 it was put into receivership.

[38] EBX is a group that produces iron ore and has expanded into other sectors.

[39] Brazilian magnate Eike Batista was considered to be the eighth richest person in the world on the 2011 Forbes magazine list and the richest man in South America with a fortune estimated at US \$30 billion. It should be noted that according to the same source he advanced by 130 places in this ranking in six years...

[40] Fernando Henrique Cardoso, known as FHC, an economist and former "developmentalist", was the founder of the PSDB in 1988. He was Minister of Finance from May 1993 to March 1994 and President from 1995 to 2001 and launched the neo-liberal turn of Brazilian politics: he brought inflation under control (but in 2002 the national currency, the real, was worth no more than 25 per cent of its 1994 value against the dollar), privatized a large number of state-owned enterprises, increasing unemployment (from 4.6 per cent in 1994 to 11.6 per cent in 2002) and debt (62 per cent of GDP in 2002).

[41] The Programme to Encourage the Restructuring and Reinforcement of the National Financial System (Proer) was launched by the FHC government in November 1995 and aimed at the re-launching, by ensuring their public funding, of financial institutions that depended on inflationary profits (in 1993 inflation reached 6,000 per cent) and were threatened with bankruptcy.

[42] The Federal Supreme Court, more or less equivalent to the Constitutional Council.

[43] The term commonly used to designate the Sixth Republic, which in 1985 succeeded the military dictatorship

[44] The term used to describe the numerous parties which exist only as support for the distribution of posts, sinecures and various advantages, and which change alliances according to circumstances in order to continue to live at the expense of the taxpayers.

[45] For example, in Manaus last winter, which resulted in the escape of 200 prisoners; more than 60 people were killed, including the victims of battles between the gangs that controlled the prison and those from police repression.

[46] Plá-nio Arrudo Sampaio (1930-2014), was one of the most respected intellectuals of the socialist left of Christian origin. He was the candidate of the PSOL to the presidency of the Republic in 2010 (receiving 0.87 per cent of the votes cast).

[47] This term refers to less well-known members of parliament, who have little national influence but are often very powerful locally, and who only intervene on issues related to their local clientele.

[48] At the end of May, the national leadership of the MES affirmed that "we have almost all the elements of a pre-revolutionary situation in our country".

[49] Brazilian trade unionism takes multiple forms. Força Sindicale (Trade Union Force), founded in 1991 to create a neo-liberal opposition to class-struggle trade unionism, is led by Paulo Pereira da Silva, a metallurgist who became a centre-right deputy. The Unified Workers' Confederation (CUT) was founded in 1983 by PT militants to unify trade unionism. It is, despite its bureaucratization, the main trade union force. The Movement of the Landless (MST) is a Brazilian peasant organization; for a long time it was radical, but it was not willing to break with the PT when the party was in government. The National Union of Students (UNE) conducted a policy of "dialogue and pressure" under the Lula government. The Confederation of Workers of Brazil (CTB) was founded in 2007, particularly by dissenting trade unionists of the CUT.

[50] The Unified Socialist Workers' Party (PSTU) was founded in 1994 by Socialist Convergence militants expelled from the PT. It is part of the International Workers' League (LIT) and situates itself in the Trotskyist tradition of Nahuel Moreno. Its activists organise the combative trade union confederation Conlutas. The PSTU recently split: a part of its national leadership formed the Movement for an Independent and Socialist

Alternative (MAIS).

[51] The Socialist Workers' Current (CST), which emerged from a split in Socialist Convergence in 1992, is a tendency within the PSOL. The CST is part of International Workers' Unity, a split from the LIT, and is also situated in the Trotskyist tradition of Nahuel Moreno.

[52] Socialist Struggle (LS) is a current of the PSOL.

[53] 53. Liberty and People's Revolution (LRP) is a current of the PSOL.

[54] Daniel Bensaïd, "Lénine, ou la politique du temps brisé", <http://danielbensaid.org/Lenine-ou-politique-du-temps?lang=fr>