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Brazil

On the Results of the First Round: Return to the Streets to Win on 30 October!

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Lula da Silva won the first round with 48.4 per cent of votes (57,279,509) against 43.2 per cent for Bolsonaro (51,072,504), that is, with a lead of more than six million votes. Nevertheless, what the result highlighted – contrary to the expectations of all polls – was that Bolsonaro did much better than expected. Regarding Lula’s result, the polls remained within the margin of error, with 1.6 per cent for Lula to win in the first round. They were, however, wrong in the votes for the current president and, above all, in the state elections for governors and the Senate.

What explains this, in some aspects, is the migration of votes towards Bolsonaro in the last hours, a kind of reverse useful vote of the most backward sectors that were with Ciro Gomes and Simone Tebet; [1] along with an intense mobilization of the Bolsonaristas on networks and in the streets for polling day. Therefore, in the first round Bolsonaro had already mobilized (almost) the maximum set of his forces. That is why it is important to characterize concisely what happened. Lula will have to win 4% of Simone Tebet’s and Ciro’s vote to consolidate his victory; in addition to promoting a strong movement in the streets, which we will talk about later.

The phenomenon of actual results going against the polls has already occurred in other elections with extreme right participation: Trump in the United States and the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, among others.

The electoral map also shows a divided country. In the North and North-east, the scenario was that of a victory for Lula and his candidates; on the other hand, in the mid-West and the interior of the country, the stronghold of Bolsonarism won by quite a margin. In any case, in capitals such as São Paulo and Porto Alegre, Lula won important votes for the PSOL in the legislative arena.

The fight continues for the coming weeks and our electoral victories, decisive for the coming years in the country, will be at the service of Bolsonaro's electoral defeat.

Weeks worth years

Given this scenario it is necessary, more than any other task, to expand efforts at the base of society, convening and coordinating political and electoral actions that bring us into dialogue with the majority of the people who reject the Bolsonaro government. To do this, our electoral results serve as a point of support for actions by the working class, youth, women, blacks and the poor as a whole. We must cohere an anti-fascist front to contest the social forces mobilized on the ground, in the peripheries and among young people.

The first round was marked by a certain apathy and little social mobilization. Unlike other past elections there was neither ferment nor large demonstrations, not even in the universities, although there were significant actions in some cities such as Porto Alegre, Curitiba and Salvador, as well as demonstrations in the south and east of São Paulo.

In the spirit of “vira-voto” (turning votes around) we call on all militants, especially PSOL’s electorate, to assume the role of voluntary vanguard in activities of growth and debate to ensure a final push for Lula’s election. It’s only in the streets that we will be able to confront and stop any escalation of political violence –there were already unfortunate episodes in the first round–, and the Bolsonarist coup story being circulated. We have to dialogue openly with people, discussing specific issues in relation to everyday life. This is the urgent and immediate challenge.

Where the far right has grown stronger

Bolsonaro's vote grew in the final stretch, as has been said, after appealing for an all-out effort but even so, he will have difficulties beating Lula in the second round. However, the extreme right had important victories, which we want to point out and understand.

The most relevant were victories in the Senate, where former ministers and leading figures of Bolsonarism ran, starting with Vice President Hamilton Mourão (Rio Grande do Sul), Marcos Pontes (São Paulo), Rogério Marinho (Rio Grande do Norte), Tereza Cristina (Matto Grosso), among other abject figures, elected with the support of Bolsonaro, such as Damare Alves (Federal District), Magno Malta (Espírito Santo), Claitinho (Minas Gerais), Seif (Santa Catarina). At the level of governors, Bolsonaro also had important victories with Ibaneis Rocha (Federal District), Claudio Castro (Rio de Janeiro) and Romeu Zema (Minas Gerais), settling first-round contests in strategic states. The good results of Onyx Lorenzoni (Rio Grande do Sul) and Tarcísio de Freitas (São Paulo) – against the polls– also illustrate a complex panorama.

These results corroborate that there is a social movement of an important layer that goes from sectors of the middle class that earn between two and five times the minimum wage and extends to the richest middle class and the bourgeoisie. A social movement that moves beneath the superstructures of communication and/or traditional organization, which has a consolidated extreme right ideology (anti-feminist, racist, anti-scientific, anti-communist) very similar to Trumpism and the rest of the right-wing movements in Europe. That has its own mechanisms, benefiting from the state apparatus, with its own communications networks that spread its parallel truths (the so-called “alternative facts” of former Trump adviser, Steve Bannon).

In the poorest middle classes, this movement is highly regimented by the evangelical churches. This fundamentalist movement showed a great capacity for mobilization on 7 September [2] and was kept alive in all activities of Bolsonaro's campaign. And this mobilization was undoubtedly contagious, silently permeating this social sector, in such a way that the real magnitude of the phenomenon did not appear in the polls. This move was aided by a relative improvement in economic indices such as the drop in the price of gasoline and the relative decrease in unemployment.

We cannot define the Bolsonaro government as a fascist government as it does not face situations of revolutionary offensive by the workers, as European fascism did in the 1920s and 1930s. It is not that Bolsonaro did not desire it, but that he was prevented from doing so by democratic resistance from the street along with class fractions that defend the institutions that constitute the bourgeois-democratic regime. But Bolsonarism as a movement contains all its potential elements, which can unfold differently in this period in which we live, or rather, it is already appearing as neo-fascism. They become more and more reactionary as they enlarge their mandate, and this will happen in Brazil if Bolsonaro wins. If this happens, there would be a great possibility of a change of political regime towards right-wing totalitarianism, as is already happening, for example, in Hungary.

Our Election

PSOL underwent an important electoral growth, overcoming electoral barriers [3] and being placed amongst the most voted parties in important cities and states. We grew in National Congress, reaching 12 seats in the Chamber of Deputies in our own name and 14 as PSOL REDE Federation. [4] PSOL won more votes than the PSDB and the PDT, consolidating itself as the second force on the left and presenting new leaders of the key struggles that have gained strength in recent years. It is, more than that, a party that continues – for the moment, as a minority alternative – despite the course adapted towards the reformist left that the leadership has chosen. The PSOL

continues to maintain its own personality and profile.

It also elected 22 state deputies, and in this context the Movement of the Socialist Left (MES) obtained important victories. In the first place, for being part of PSOL and the relentless fight against Bolsonarism. We have enlarged our federal caucus with Sâmia Bomfim (226,000 votes) and Fernanda Melchionna (200 thousand); with four state deputies with Luciana Genro (111,000 votes) in Rio Grande do Sul, Mônica das Pretas (106,000) in São Paulo, Professor Josemar (28,000) in Rio de Janeiro, and Fábio Felix (51,000) in the Federal District.

Vivi Reis greatly expanded her voting in relation to 2018, jumping to 52,000 votes and being the most voted of the Party in Pará; with a combative campaign, which mobilized the youth, people of colour and women. Unfortunately, as a result of the huge workload faced by the Party's leadership in the state, we were unable to regain the seat that PSOL Pará had in the Federal Chamber.

As an example the fact that the PSOL is the most voted party in Porto Alegre and in Rio Grande do Sul with Luciana Genro as spokesperson, the second most voted deputy in the state, and Fernanda Melchionna achieving a record number of votes, despite the strengthening of the conservatives; that Fábio Felix was the most voted state deputy in the history of the DF/Federal District; Sâmia Bomfim obtained 226,000 votes with an "organic" election, in the most competitive race in the country, with very high profile names; and Josemar Pinheiro de Carvalho and Cleide Pretas are a leap forward for us, especially as they are well-known as grassroots Black activists.

PSOL obtained almost four million votes, adding 3.57 per cent to our federal deputies vote at the national level, placing ahead of parties such as Podemos, Partido Democrático Trabalhista, [Democratic Labour Party] and Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira [Brazilian Social Democratic Party, in number of votes gained. Guilherme Boulos, obtained more than a million votes in São Paulo and, as we said, we were the party with the most votes in Porto Alegre, obtaining almost 20% of the valid votes in the city.

The MES is promoting the construction of female and black leadership. This is already part of the growth of our current and its electoral balance. Since we do not limit our action to struggles for civil rights that help but do not replace the universal interests of the proletariat, we do not absolutize this criterion, of course. But it is a fundamental criterion for building our party and must be strengthened as it reflects a structural question of the social formation of the Brazilian working class and is part of the development of the consciousness of hundreds of thousands and even some millions who rely on this construction. These sectors – although they do not have an anti-capitalist consciousness or defend a revolutionary programme – have become aware of the importance of defending the struggles of women and blacks.

Anti-sexist and anti-racist causes taken to their ultimate conclusions play an important role in the collapse of the capitalist system, since the oppression of women and, also in the case of Brazil, of people of colour, is a structure of capitalism and both must be highlighted as decisive for the universal defense of the interests of the proletariat and are an essential part of our programme. And at this point our programme meets an embryonic mass consciousness that must be strengthened and contested in a socialist perspective.

In this sense, it is worth mentioning the election of Josemar as state deputy of Rio de Janeiro. He is one of the few black leaders of PSOL, the only black person amongst the elected deputies who lives in the powerful and convulsive São Gonçalo area on the periphery of the city. Once he is known in his new role his 28,000 votes could quickly turn into much greater support. In the state in which Marcelo Freixo suffered a defeat as crushing and profound as his opportunist turn, perhaps a greater opening will exist for the construction of new leadership. We must overcome the phase of middle-class white leaders in Rio de Janeiro without Marxist training.

In São Paulo, more than 100,000 votes obtained by the candidacy of Mónica Seixas, from Los Pretas, re-elected her along with seven black women (Ana Laura, Rose, Leticia, Pollyana, Najara, Karina), in line with the strategic role of the mandate of councillor Luana Alves in the capital. Fabio Félix, also known for his LGBT and black activism, made history in the Federal District as the most voted district deputy, with almost 52 thousand votes, multiplying his 2018 vote by four. This was a leap for PSOL and the MES in the country's capital.

It is also worth mentioning candidates that we support and/or are part of PSOL's left camp, with important victories, such as Glauber Braga in Rio de Janeiro, Renato Rosseno in Ceará, Hilton Coelho in Bahia and Camila Valadão in Espírito Santo.

We salute the elected PSOL federal deputies. In addition to Fernanda and Samia: Boulos, Erika Hilton, Sonia Guajajara and Luiza Erundina for São Paulo; Tarcisio Motta, Talíria Petrone, Chico Alencar, Glauber and Henrique Vieira for Rio; Celia Xakriabá for Minas Gerais; in addition to state deputies Livia Duarte for Pará, Linda Brasil (Sergipe), Hilton (Bahia), Camila Valadão (Espírito Santo), Dani Portela (Pernambuco), Matheus Gomes (Rio Grande do Sul), Carlos Giannazi, Bancada Feminista, Ediane Maria and Gui Cortez (São Paulo), Renato Roseno (Ceará), Renata Souza, Flavio Serafini, Dani Monteiro and Yuri Moura (Rio de Janeiro), Marcos José de Abreu (Santa Catarina).

Polarization was expressed in the deputies elected by the PT and Bolsonaro's party

The PT and the PL (Liberal Party for which Bolsonaro ran) grew in the legislature, while the so-called Centrão (centre-right) maintained their positions. It was an election marked by the contradiction between a multimillion-dollar electoral fund and a low participation of society, as already mentioned. It is important to point out some more general elements of the legislative framework: the growth of blacks in the new parliament for which PSOL is one of the main agents, although not the only one; the election of trans women as a response to the reluctant LGBTQphobia of the Bolsonaroistas (Erika, Duda Salabert and Linda Brasil); the election of Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra [Brazilian Landless Workers Movement] cadres, with two national and four state deputies; the entry of indigenous leaders, such as Sonia Guajajara (São Paulo) and Célia Xakriabá (Minas Gerais).

The extreme right chose their own, with Carla Zambelli, Eduardo Bolsonaro and Eduardo Pazuello and Ricardo Salles, all from the PL, as stars of Bolsonaroism in the Chamber of Deputies. There were also delegates and police "surfing" on aggressive speech.

The PSDB had its worst election, being left out of the second round in São Paulo, falling from 22 to 13 federal deputies, announcing another chapter of its exhaustion as the main project of the Brazilian liberal bourgeoisie. This is demonstrated by the defeat, after numerous re-elections, of José Serra, in addition to the difficulty of a contest where acronyms compete in the second round. It is important to point out that important parties did not meet minimum requirements required to access public funding and free time on radio and television. Significant parties such as PTB, Solidaridad, Partido Republicano da Ordem Social [Republican Party of Social Order/ PROS] and Partido Novo [New Party] had fewer votes than the PSOL/REDE federation, which shows the strength of our party.

The role of Lula and the PT

Lula's campaign failed to mobilize militants as much as the Bolsonaroistas did during the first round and, especially, on

September 7. As we said, there were important street actions, however, this was not the tone of the first stage of the campaign. The PT managed to elect 68 federal deputies, approaching the PL as the largest group, but this was far from its peak in 2002, when it had 81 elected federal deputies. In 2022, the party won important states in the Northeast, such as Rafael Fonteles (Piauí) and Fátima Gomes, re-elected in Rio Grande do Norte. The party also managed to defeat Ciro Gomes (PDT) in Ceará, and elected Governor Elmano Freitas. After seeing PT allies win in the first round in Pará, Amapá, Maranhão, the governments of São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Bahia and Sergipe remain in dispute for the second round.

However, given the situation of general passivity and the lack of mass mobilization, the PT, due to its bureaucratism and the weakening of the union apparatus cannot mobilize broad sectors on its own. Lula also wavered, having good moments, such as when on Ratinho's programme, where he managed to be natural enough to go for Bolsonaro; but the Globo debate, and moments in which an "already- won» attitude disarmed the necessary fight against Bolsonarism.

From the start of the campaign, Lula presented himself as the saviour of the New Republic. [5] That is why he won the support of important representatives of capitalism, especially Henrique Meirelles, [6] however the growth of Bolsonaro raised more doubts and more demands. After all, if he wins by votes and not by a coup, it is not necessary for big business to reject Bolsonaro, because, amongst other things, his neoliberal policies are guaranteed without the political instability that a coup would generate. As international capital prefers Lula, the tendency of the big bourgeoisie is still to negotiate with the PT. But an important part of the bourgeois social base that was with Bolsonaro has been reinforced, especially with Tarcisio's victory in Sao Paulo. [7]

An orientation to fight and win on 30 October

There is a mediated consciousness in the mass movement, which is capable of commenting, lamenting, denouncing but it does not do anything, does not produce strong reactions against reactionary, racist, misogynist, anti-communist brutality; does not yet produce large mobilizations. This would change if there was a coup, but this doesn't seem like the most likely prospect.

Within this complex framework, of which we must make a broad evaluation and discuss in depth the political situation, starting at an international level, our orientation is resolute: go out into the streets in great numbers and combativeness to ensure Lula's victory on the 30th. We must join forces in all kinds of initiatives to make this a reality.

We have to take the lead: encourage new forces to continue the campaign, as of tomorrow, win the streets; go out and talk to people: without fear, be straight-forward, take the initiative.

The challenge is to vote against fascism. For this, all support is welcome, must be sought and must be accepted. We are not looking for posts in a possible Lula government. On the contrary, our party was born to be an independent left and we insist that it continue to be so. We cannot limit ourselves to commenting on our results. They are good when seen in the context of a danger of a further advance of the reactionary wave that will deepen if Bolsonaro wins. But this danger can be avoided.

PSOL must take advantage of its accumulated political capital to act in unity. As an important reference point for the radical left, the party needs to be in the front line against the extreme right in this second round, offering an example of mobilization that collaborates with others in the defeat of Bolsonaro and showing that it is an alternative for those broad sectors that seek a coherent left both in the anti-fascist struggle and in the struggle against neoliberalism.

On the Results of the First Round: Return to the Streets to Win on 30 October!

We count on the strength of the people and we will dedicate ourselves to the work groups in the territories, seeking to win the social vanguard to PSOL, whilst implementing a broad affiliation campaign.

Right now the destiny of future years is at stake and the membership of the MES will be prepared.

National Secretariat of the MES, 5 October 2022

Translation and footnotes by David Fagan for International Viewpoint.

PS:

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[1] [Ciro Gomes](#) Presidential candidate of the Partido Democrático Trabalhista, PDT (Democratic Labour Party) polled 3 per cent in the first round. [Simone Tebet](#), Presidential candidate of the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro, MDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement) polled 4.2 per cent in the first round.

[2] 7 September 2022 marked the 200th anniversary of Brazil's independence from Portugal.

[3] Electoral reform in 2017 introduced a minimum number of votes that parties must obtain in order to access public electoral funding and free radio and television time

[4] PSOL ran as an electoral federation *Federação PSOL REDE* / PSOL REDE Federation with the environmentalist Sustainability Network (REDE).

[5] Term denoting the period in Brazil that began on 15 March 1985, after the fall of the 21-year old military dictatorship.

[6] [Henrique de Campos Meirelles](#), Brazilian manager and former [Minister of Finance](#) is an executive of the Brazilian and international financial sectors and former president of [Central Bank of Brazil](#).

[7] [Tarcísio Gomes de Freitas](#), Bolsonaro's former Infrastructure Minister competes against [Fernando Haddad](#) of the PT for the governorship of São Paulo in the second round run-off on 30 October.