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Brazil

The coup took place: An unprecedented neoliberal attack is on the way.

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For most of the time, Rousseff's impeachment was an act of the gangster Eduardo Cunha, supported by former allies of the PT government, that set up an institutional coup a la Honduras and Paraguay. Also in these little brother countries in Latin America, elected governments were dismissed by parliamentary-judicial maneuvers trampling their own constitutions.

As an indirect result of a cycle of thirty years of struggles and victories of the Brazilian workers, the PT government were defeated by the right wing, which is now willing to express itself in its pure form, without class conciliation. They were defeated by the more physiological right wing parties, the majority of big capital (banks, industry, commerce, agribusiness, mass media), supported in all. It was the most reactionary wave of middle-class street mobilizations since 1964. For all that, because the balance of power changed against the underprivileged majority, the exploited and oppressed have to prepare for a resistance for their rights, advancement of conservative and draconian neoliberal measures.

It is not just the fall of a corrupt and unpopular government, due to a momentary imbalance. It is the failure of a "development model", on the one hand based on the export of minerals and agricultural raw materials, which was favored by the international conjuncture during the first decade of the century (the "boom" of commodities), and, internally, the reconciliation of classes led by the PT, with a coalition of parties from opposite backgrounds

The PT's political strategy of coming to power and staying in it (for social changes, they used to say) by institutional means, in alliance with sectors of the bourgeoisie... failed! It is never enough to remember that it was with the coup leaders that Lula and Dilma were allied before, and that it was with them that Lula, Dilma and the PT tried to achieve "governability". That is how they built the way for this defeat, that will bring enormous consequences for the vast majority of the Brazilian people.

Temer, with his white-males-only government, is turning to the application of "pure" neoliberal policies, even if this means making us lose basic democratic rights. These servants of capital will make every effort to end any welfare, redistributive and still-surviving democratic public policies of the last 13 years.

The challenges of the next period

This cycle of change and government, in the middle of a brutal economic crisis hitting the country, announces a period of strong polarization and social tensions. Brazil has suffered two full years of recession, 11 million people are unemployed and there is no prospect (in a short-term) of recovery on the international situation. We - the social movements and the socialist left - have the challenge of preparing the fightback and the tough fights that will be necessary to defend social labor and democratic rights against the danger of a historical regression.

Once Michel Temer had signed the 'transition documents', he gave an interview to a national network TV saying he aimed to make strong reforms on the welfare and labor system, to raise the age of retirement and destroy rights guaranteed by the labor legislation. In addition, the coup government settled a Political Reform as a priority. It means a reform that permits to deal with parties like the PSOL, and to restore private financing of campaigns. This way, we have the first tripod of structural attacks on social security, labor and democratic rights.

There are 55 proposals running in the Congress that have deep consequences for national sovereignty (like the law that permits the privatization of state enterprises) and for the rights of the working class, youth, women, black people, indigenous and LGBTIQ. Attempting to reform the Labor Code, for example, will be the most serious attack in the history of labor laws. Not even the military dictatorship tried to do it. It is not only the return to the situation prior to the 1988 Constitution, but it is the attempt to end one of the most fundamental and historic rights of the Brazilian working class.

We need to face this new situation

In this new period, it will be necessary to adopt tactics of broad unity. We must take part in a left front, for the defense of rights in all areas, including some unitive actions with the social movements related to the ex-government, despite their usual vacillations (such as the low effort they put in the “Out, Temer – Fora Temer” demonstrations).

Now it is vital that the left unity defends the majority of the population of the attacks of the capitalism. Of course, this unity must allow the socialist left to keep its own profile and its critical balance of the PT project.

We have to take to the streets with willingness to fight Temer’s government, the capital and the conservative fundamentalism and not to encourage a “Lula, come back” in 2018 elections, because we do not want to back this bankrupt class collaboration project.

The Fearless People's Front (Frente Povo Sem Medo), a front with several social movements’ and political parties’ activists (including PSOL's), has a unifying role that can be decisive as this united front seeks the affirmation of a left and strategic outcome to the crisis. It has to build spaces or large meetings, with the left parties and the social movements, to prepare the social struggles in defense of our rights and the consolidation of a political platform of demands and popular reforms.

Immediately, now in September, the month in which the municipal election campaigns “heat up”, it is essential to include in the activities and in the election pamphlets the slogan “Fora Temer”, denouncing the neoliberal reforms and the attacks on our rights, with their concrete consequences to the working class, calling them to prepare resistance.

Starting points

First, we demand “Fora Temer” and general elections. Even if the impeachment process has finished, it is still and even more important to maintain and fly these flags and build a mobilization or a general feeling in the majority of the population. It would prevent the consolidation of Temer’s government and question his legitimacy on the streets permanently.

We must denounce the unpopular reforms that Temer has already announced (social security and labor) in campaigns led by united fronts for mobilization.

It is necessary, finally, to use the municipal elections processes, in which PSOL has a significant place, to amplify the fight against the coup, the “Fora Temer”, the aim of general elections and the defense of the rights of the exploited and oppressed.

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It is time, therefore, to prepare a new period of struggles and start building a real answer from the left, popular, democratic, anti-capitalist and socialist forces in Brazil.