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Brazil

PT left criticizes alliance with right

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The alliance of Brazil's Workers' Party (PT) with the conservative and evangelical Partido Liberal (PL) and with a sector of the Partido Movimento Democrático de Brazil (PMDB) has generated deep internal debate in the party and strong resistance from its militants.

On Sunday June 23, 2002, a large majority of delegates at the PL's convention endorsed the proposal of a joint ticket with the PT. The PL's senator, a textile executive, Jose Alencar, is the Vice-Presidential candidate and the PT's Jose Inacio Lula da Silva will be the Presidential candidate in October's national elections.

In the midst of Brazil's economic crisis and the sabotage induced by the "financial markets" and the lack of foreign investment, Lula and the majority of the PT's leadership are hoping the presence of Alencar on the presidential ticket will reduce the combined opposition of big business, the United States and the international creditors' organizations to a possible PT government in October.

Inside the left of the PT, the criticisms of this electoral strategy have become louder. The new strategy - which originates from the centre-right in the party - calls into question the PT's established programme of 'breaking' with neo-liberalism, a policy around which the party came into existence. The critics of the new leadership policy are mindful that in a number of Brazilian states, the PL is allied with the worst enemies of the PT and in some areas, state leaderships think of the PL as being an "undesirable ally".

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Government troops arrest MST activists

In addition, the critics say that the agreements with Alencar will have negative programmatic consequences in key areas such as the PT's policy of rejection of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (a treaty which has the support of Alencar), for the party's policy on agrarian reform (Alencar has opposed the land occupations carried out by the Movimento Sem Terra (MST)) and payment of Brazil's external debt.

On April 6, the Rio Grande do Sul state meeting of the PT came out categorically against the majority leadership's position for alliances with the PL and a sector of the PMDB.

The meeting stated: "The national conjuncture, marked by the economic crises, the deepening of social impoverishment and the split in the conservative camp, raises the possibility that the PT can lead a broad movement of the masses through which it can win control of the Federal and several state governments. But such a possibility is conditional upon a tactic that transforms electoral differences with other parties into a debate about contrasting policies in a great mobilization that will polarize the country and put into motion millions of workers, youth, unemployed and all those involved in social struggles. Our alliances and our electoral tactic must be consistent with this objective."

In essence, the declaration was a demonstration and open repudiation by the PT rank and file "all over the country to the direction being taken in the negotiations, that contradicted the resolutions of the last National Meeting and which compromised our debate about political hegemony." The declaration concluded by demanding: "No to the policies of an alliance of classes. For the defence of our programmatic unity. No to alliances with the PL and the PMDB. For a broad discussion among party supporters around a programme for national and state governments."

Raul Pont ([see accompanying interview](#)) considers such an alliance a "waste of time". Luciana Genero, a state

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deputy and a militant in the tendency, Movimiento de Izquierda Socialista, is of the opinion that "bringing the PL or the dissidents of the PMDB into the PT is like bringing your enemies into your own trenches." And Pedro Roque Grazziotin, state deputy and a member of the tendency, Articulacion de Izquierda, says, "At a national level, to please some people who are not in our camp, we're taking a step backwards. The unity of our political project is fundamental."

The debate and the resistance in the party to this new course are not limited to the electoral alliance with the PL and sections of the PMDB. It also raises for discussion the party's existing programme and which policies to implement - in the event of the PT forming the government - to deal with the external debt. In this context, many leaders of the PT's left have expressed criticisms of the policies put forward on this matter by Lula and his tendency.