

AND Weekly Editorial – The ‘third round’ and coup provocations

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Photo: Fabiano Rocha

The results of the presidential election come as no surprise to anyone: that the winning candidate would win by a very narrow margin and that, if defeated, Bolsonaro would cause

unrest.

Luiz Inácio was elected with 50.9% of the valid votes, against Bolsonaro's 49.1%. The difference is the narrowest in presidential elections in the history of the Republic: 1.8%. Nearly 2 million votes separate the winner from the loser. It is noted that, despite the blackmail and terrorist threat never seen before to move voters out of fear, the unquestionable fact is that 32 million Brazilians registered with the TSE abstained, not counting the 10.9 million - approximately- who did not register and the 5.6 million null and blank votes (a total of 48.5 million who did not vote for any of the candidates).

As if the boycott by almost a third of the electorate were not enough, the narrow margin of the result erodes the supposed legitimacy of the election, all the more so given that the elected representative represents only a third of the electorate. This factor has always been concealed by the beautifiers of the old, corrupt and dying democracy, by the political system itself through its institutions and by the multitude of parties that sustain it, not to mention the media monopolies. With the elections over, the country's political crisis takes a leap: the Bolsonaroist riots, through the roadblocks after the election result, soon recede or in more days, announce the new form that the crisis will take. Bolsonaro kept absolutely silent, only speaking after 48 hours. He laconically declared that the blockades "are the product of indignation and a feeling of injustice at the way the electoral process was carried out", referring to alleged irregularities by the TSE. Given his isolation from the majority of the ruling classes, he added that he overcame the difficulties "even by confronting the entire system". Bolsonaro concluded by claiming to have elevated the values of the "right" (ultra-right), of "god, country, family and freedom", without formally acknowledging his defeat, while demonstrations by the defeated continued across the country.

These provocations have been prepared for a long time. Bolsonaro has beaten the Federal Highway Police (PRF) with promises, effective or not, of salary adjustments and career restructuring, in addition to expanding the area of its intervention beyond the roads, expanding its repressive policing function. There have already been numerous interventions with murders and torture, such as the cases of the worker Genivaldo, in Sergipe, and the 14-year-old Lorenzo, who worked as a delivery boy in Rio de Janeiro. At the same time, all the care taken by Bolsonaro and the PRF not to clash with the immediate interests of the truckers during the last four years was not only for electoral purposes, but also preparations for their coup provocations. This period also saw the persistent infiltration of intelligence agents among the truckers, under the coordination of the Institutional Security Directorate (headed by General Heleno), both to control the dangers of unwanted strikes and to manipulate them. Federal highway agents not only failed to clear the lanes, but encouraged the roadblocks, even participating in them, according to several reports. Impotent, Alexandre de Moraes threatened to enforce the law, with a fine of R\$5,800 for truckers who persisted in the blockades.

Bolsonaro, the Weak, went off on a tangent to prolong the provocations. On the one hand, not speaking formally would mean getting involved from a legal point of view; on the other hand, accepting the results in a defeatist tone would be a demoralising end to the provocations. By filling his statement with attacks on the TSE, he only added fuel to the fire of the deepening political and institutional crisis. Acting so as not to be discouraged and playing for time, Bolsonaro hopes that the situation will become untenable from a social point of view, who knows, in order to enact the "Guarantee of Law and Order", take the Armed Forces to the streets and continue rejecting the STF, seeking to force his opponents to make mistakes and gain positions that will give him better negotiating conditions.

The attitude, so far, of the High Command of the reactionary Armed Forces and of prominent retired generals is an appeasement to the provocations of the extreme right. One of the signs was the speech of General Villas-Boas, former army commander – who is unanimous among his peers – cursing the elected candidate and making serious accusations, on 29/10. It was not an innocent tweet: it came on the eve of the elections, when all military intelligence was aware of the preparations for the mobilisations. Another sign was the fact that the Ministry of Defence did not make public the much-announced report on the “smoothness” of the electoral process.

The aim of the high command is not to precipitate a rupture. They know that Bolsonaro’s level of demoralisation in the ruling classes and his isolation from much of society has dampened the optimism of the far right in the barracks, making it an almost impossible task for even the most passionate Bolsonarista to sustain a rupture now However, such bolsonarista provocations, to which they are permissive, serve to send intimidating messages to the future government, the Supreme Court and all other institutions. Blackmail is on the table: either they accept interventionism and military tutelage (taking steps towards their ultra-reactionary “Nation Project”), or they do not count on their goodwill to confront the extreme right.

The signs of the times are clear. The opportunistic and cowardly slogan of “defeating fascism at the ballot box” is based on the original sin of believing that we are in a secure political system, which vetoes the votes of the voracious ultra-right, even if it has the equivalent of this vote. Illusion! This political system has long been questioned by those on the lower left and by part of those on the extreme right. The election, given its demoralisation, no longer functions, as before, in solving the impasses of the ruling classes, even if it is under a sharp and false polarisation that sends those at the bottom to fight each other to

legitimise it. The deep and general crisis of the old state is such that, after the first and second rounds, the "third round" is opened, to define the correlation of forces in the old state for the times of crisis to come. And, in it, the one who has the majority of valid votes does not win.

The division in Brazilian society is not one of votes or vertical division; it has always been a class division, between the exploited, oppressed and impoverished classes and the exploiting, oppressive and opulent classes. What this political system seeks with the electoral farce and the false polarisation is to cover up the real division of classes in order to dilute the struggle between them. How ironic! While the extreme right invests in ideological confrontation, the false "left" falsely talks of "love", "non-violence" and "peace", while the majority of the people are either starving or eating the minimum to survive; while the nation is debased by the prey of international finance capital, deindustrialising and denationalising the economy and both poles of this polarisation dispute over which offers more stability for such national plunder and oppression.

Thus, the elements of the acute crisis cannot be reduced to the blackmail and threats of this polarisation. After taking office, the PT will have an even more difficult task: to stay in office, as it will be harassed from all sides, by the extreme right, by the High Command of the Armed Forces, by the Congress of the corrupt and by the popular masses resentful of unfulfilled promises. Luiz Inácio, more than ever, is the chosen target of desperate attempts to save the system in a crisis of decomposition: it remains for him to tame himself further or he will have to give way to Alckmin. The task of governing, on the other hand, is impossible. The magnitude of the crisis, colossal and of a general nature, is not properly present in the calculations of the opportunist aristocracy. Whoever took over would have to face the bitter truth: in these circumstances, the country is ungovernable.

It is urgent for democrats and revolutionaries to deepen the mobilisation of the popular masses in defence of their trampled interests, to push forward the popular protest, not allowing reactionaries and opportunists to drag them into confrontations in defence of this covered-up order of exploitation and oppression, or by the old corrupt democracy, or by the military regime. The peasants without land or with little land, the proletariat and other urban and rural wage earners, students, public servants (mainly in education and health), truck drivers and small businessmen and other services, must be mobilised to impose their interests through the seizure of land from the latifundia, with the General Strike of National Resistance, with the occupation strike in universities and schools; it is the only way to conquer what they need and that no new elected government or coup d'état of the ruling classes will give.