

The current situation in Latin America

Today we start publishing some important editorials of AND from Brazil. We report on the current political development in the countries of Latin America with the own voices of the people's newspapers and the publications of the Maoist parties and organisations. In the future, we will publish the most important documents from these sources here. We plan to do the same with Asia. Likewise, the development on the other continents will follow.

Against the Racist Order: Revolution!

The brutal murder of João Alberto, in the premises of Carrefour supermarket, on the 19th, in Porto Alegre, shows how far the social degradation of an order based on colonialism, slavery and feudalism can go. Centuries of slave trade, latifundia and permanent counter-revolution have erected this bureaucratic-landowner state, a thousand times racist, the gendarme of its own people. As long as this genocidal apparatus remains in place, this country will not know freedom.

Reflecting on the episode, Hamilton Mourão and Bolsonaro made the same argument, *ipsis litteris*. According to them, "there is no racism in Brazil", but an attempt to "import" this problem. This is the old discourse of the military regime, which was based on the notorious thesis of "racial democracy", already demoralised. The "mestizaje" mentioned by these gentlemen is the pure fruit of rape and barbarism; the objectification of enslaved bodies (so present, even today, in the sexualisation of the "mulatto"); the subordinate integration of black people into the "republican" order, as the cheapest reserve of labour, a situation that remains unchanged until today. It is not by chance that Gilberto Freyre (who did not defend this thesis with all his words, never denied that they did so in his name) was a Udenist, a staunch anti-communist and, later, a supporter of the coup of 1964.

So, when these impostors say what they say, they simply repeat the historical revisionism they learned in the barracks. Take the High Command of the Armed Forces and you will see that its composition denies the theses that these same institutions intend to spread. Black, poor and indigenous people are the squares. The officer corps has always been recruited from among the sons of knights and the "middle classes", except for a few diverse cases that in no way affect the rule. It could not be otherwise: this is the only reliable composition for waging war against one's own people, the primary mission of the armies of a semi-colonial country. The same is true at state level with the police, immediate agents of the hunt for rebel slaves, today as well as yesterday. Racism is the bread and butter there: it is the ideology that justifies the daily atrocities in hidden alleys or up in the hills. After all, it is typical of man to need justifications for action, even though he is the most miserable man and the most inhumane act.

Racism, therefore, has its roots in the five centuries of latifundia and slavery. Racism and large estates are an inseparable part of our history; they are our original sin. After the Abolition, those who were not trapped in agriculture - the majority of former slaves, now in servile condition - either came to form the most exploited layers of the urban proletariat and semi-proletariat or escaped to deep areas of the national territory forming isolated communities and quilombola reminiscences. Hence the occupation of the conventillos and slums, periodically assaulted by eviction orders and massacres, in addition to the punitive

expeditions of the troops in the service of the landowners in the rural areas. It is this population that today receives the worst salaries, provides the heaviest and most unhealthy services, swells the ranks of the unemployed, suffers most from the dismantling of public services, is murdered and imprisoned en masse. To speak of the struggle against "structural racism" without mentioning the struggle against the economic order that feeds it, reproduces it and serves as its foundation; not to mention the struggle against the military apparatus that supports it, is not really attacking the structure. Worse than the logical contradiction, are its political consequences.

Yes, there is no capitalism without racism. Contrary to what certain vulgar historiography teaches us, the "progressive" march of the capitalist system had as its premise the increase in slavery: in 1700 the slave population on the American continent was 330,000; a hundred years later, it reached the figure of 3 million; and it reached its peak in the middle of the 19th century, with 6 million slaves. Of these, a large proportion were in Brazil. It is clear that the same bourgeoisie that fed on the profits of the slave trade and on what it produced could not, consequently, be anti-slavery. Montesquieu, in his famous treatise *The Spirit of the Laws*, a fundamental document of liberalism, justified slavery in the new world by resorting to the old mist of climate determinism: "that the courage of people from cold climates has kept them free. It is an effect that derives from its natural cause". In the United States itself, after the Civil War, institutionalized racial segregation prevailed for a century. Marxism, on the contrary, which represents the point of view and the interests of the proletariat, the modern dispossessed class, can understand the point of view and the interests of the dispossessed in general, removing the link between class oppression and colonial oppression:

"Whilst the cotton industry introduced child-slavery in England, it gave in the United States a stimulus to the transformation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery, into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage workers in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world. (...) If money, according to Augier,¹⁴ "comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek," capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." (K. Marx, *The Capital*, Book 1, Ch. 26).

Only imposture, or ignorance, as can be seen, can attribute to Marxism a "Eurocentrism" or make it the source of the bourgeoisie's world view. On the contrary, Marxism was born from the most radical and revolutionary criticism of all this liberal pseudo-progressivism, attacking it not in the abstract terrain of ideas and morals (where it can rest at will), but in the worldliness of its material interests. This philosophical-political critique became the critique of weapons in the 20th century and, through proletarian revolutions and wars of liberation in Asia, Africa and Latin America, it achieved for its peoples in decades that surpassed anything the bourgeoisie was capable of conceding in whole centuries. The same is true for the women's question, the millennial oppression that the bourgeoisie maintains. Bourgeois liberalism, and pseudo-Marxist reformism, have nothing to offer to the black people and the poor in general, except illusions and crumbs, accompanied by frustration and humiliation. Liberation will not be achieved by reform, but by revolution, whatever strikebreakers and strike-leaders say "for the English to see" in the class struggle, moderate politicians, passing influences or stupid and well-meaning people, who are less shocked by the silent and systematic violence of those above than by the just rebellion of those below. Our motto must not be a "return to Africa", but the conquest, by the oppressed, of all humanity.

Amapá World

Since Tuesday, 3rd of November, the people of Amapá have been bitter about the horrors of returning to the 19th century, two months before entering the third decade of the 21st century. The lack of light, water, fuel and, above all, answers, plunged 14 of the 16 municipalities in the state into an endless night. In the first statement after the blackout, Admiral Bento Albuquerque, Minister of Mines and Energy, promised that everything would be restored ... in 15 days! Meanwhile, the people, eagerly abandoned, could only count on their solidarity and self-organisation to survive without the minimum sanitary conditions in the midst of a pandemic.

As expected, the troops soon arrived, and before the generators, the Marines were installed in the capital of Amapá. On Saturday 7th, dozens of spontaneous protests took place in several cities and were brutally repressed by the Military Police. There were reports of shots, rubber bullets and injuries. In response to the reports, the commander of the police forces declared: "We will be acting in the surveys of the main points where there will be a demonstration and we will try to solve it before the thing happens". In Amapá, the Third World, the constitutional right to demonstrate was simply suppressed by the discretion of a police officer!

It turns out to be barbaric. Or the crudest portrait of bureaucratic capitalism and an old rotten state, which deny the basics to the majority of the population, and soon after that deny them the simple fact of demanding that their right becomes a reality. Anyone who thinks that the Amazon is one big virgin green forest, whose environmental problems are reduced to fires, is wrong. It is also the scene of the human tragedy of anachronistic labour relations (slavery, servitude, etc.) at the bottom of the rubber or Piaçabal plantations, lack of basic sanitation (according to the "Trat Brasil" institute, in a study published in 2019, 90% of the population of Macapá do not have access to sewage and 58.5% do not have treated water at home), chronic unemployment (according to IBGE, the unemployment rate in Amapá in 2018 was 20.5%, the highest in the world). In the country the predominance of the old local oligarchies, as rich and influential in Brasilia as they are poor, are their electoral corrals. This is the so-called deep Brazil, marked by what the master Nelson Werneck Sodré called heterochrony, that is, a country in which travelling through its interior also goes back decades or centuries in time.

This "great regression" is, in fact, typical of a time when the imperialist system is on the brink of the abyss. We could say that Amapá is like the whole world; or the whole world is like a giant Amapá.

In fact, the public observes with amazement that the much-praised "greatest democracy in the West" does not even follow the basic principle of universal suffrage ("one citizen, one vote"), preserving a political superstructure that is by no means and for everything a sclerotic oligarchy. In fact, that phrase emerges before everyone as a myth, manufactured and exported like any other trinket. Because "liberal democracy", even at the height of the bourgeois revolution, lived with slavery on its territory (the case of the United States) and overseas colonialism (the case of Western Europe). Then, in the era of imperialism, these political systems so glorified by their stability were fed by an impressive succession of wars of aggression and military coups, genocides and crimes against humanity practiced in the Third World. Thus, whoever says, with "progressive" pretensions, that liberalism is the political philosophy of freedom, will only be lying. It was not when it was established; and even less it is now, when the bourgeoisie has become an agonistic, parasitic class, capable of using any and all atrocities when its domination is at stake. The United States itself says

so, from McCarthyism to the admission of racial segregation and lynchings, well into the second half of the 20th century.

Donald Trump, with all his cynical denial of the pandemic and his entourage of corpses, with all the "liturgy" of the post - up to the scandal of the American-speaking Tupiniquins - and with the most shameless defence of racist groups, neo-Nazis and other social rubbish, captured more than 70 million votes, among which a not inconsiderable portion was given to him by Black and Latino voters and by the impoverished masses of the former industrial cities. The "crushing victory" of the conciliatory democratic discourse against the "Trumpist" radicalization did not come. In fact, Joe Biden, a rogue elected for decades behind the scenes of the US genocidal policy, was not convinced of his role as a "renewer". Soon will come the escalation of the economic crisis, the resurgence of the dispute for world hegemony and the succession of the internal massacres that are in the DNA of that nation. The real polarisation, between the reactionary imperialist state on the one hand and the popular masses on the other hand, will continue, increased now by the fuel of frustrated expectations.

By the way: Marxism teaches us that the level of progress of a certain society can be measured from the position of women. Bearing this in mind, the misogynist reaction of the time, the most recent example of which was the humiliation to which Mariana Ferrer was subjected, judged and condemned in place of her aggressor, is unworthy but not surprising. This case is quite illuminating, in fact, because it occurred in full, before the Judiciary, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Ombudsman's Office. These bodies, representatives of the "constitutional guarantees" (pointed out by bourgeois feminism as the safeguard of women's rights) were there, diligently fulfilling their role as bastions of the reactionary order. Imagine what is happening with the poor and Black people, in the corners of this country.

As it was pointed out, 2020 will mark not only a brutal economic crisis but also a very serious ideological crisis in the field of reaction. All the mantras repeated over and over again in the last 30 years, about the regulatory role of the markets, bourgeois democracy as the end of history, technological revolution and other nonsense are more like a house of cards. In desperation, the bourgeoisie, through its most astute spokesmen, disputes its own challenge, using false critical thinking that advocates "fragmentation", "diversity", the "defence of minorities", precisely when unified action by the exploited is more urgent than ever. However, it will fail. Just as the sun clears the morning mists, the sharp class struggle will continue to break, mercilessly, the illusions.

The Amazon for peasants, indigenous people and quilombolas

A fortnight ago, Jair Bolsonaro posted on his social networks a video in which a very frightened policeman filmed a demonstration by the League of Poor Peasants (LCP) at Camp Manoel Ribeiro, the last stretch of the Santa Elina farm, between the municipalities of Corumbiara and Chupinguaia, in southern Rondônia. In fact, for days the entire landowner's press in that region had already reflected on the death of two policemen, in an area near the Tiago dos Santos Camp, in the municipality of Nova Mutum-Paraná, in the north of that state. They accused (and continue to accuse) the peasants of this camp, without evidence, proof or serious arguments, for the murders of those policemen; this venal press only spread the police version. According to the same police information, these crimes occurred under very suspicious circumstances. After the communion of the reactionary forces of the state and the abandonment of Bolsonaro, the breeding ground was prepared to justify the massacre of more than 600 families in the camp (2.4 thousand people) and to guarantee the monopolisation of these lands. The government has been accused of the "Galo Velho", one of the largest landowners in the region, who was convicted and imprisoned for buying sentences and falsifying land registry documents and, according to the democratic entities of the state, a notorious financier of gunmen.

For more details and developments of the episodes, we recommend reading the note of the National Commission of Poor Peasant's Leagues (LCP) and the communiqué of the Brazilian Center of Solidarity with the Peoples (Cebraspo) and the Brazilian Association of People's Lawyers (Abrapo). For our part, it seems essential to highlight some points, of national political scope:

1) We have already drawn attention, in previous editorials, to the connection between land grabbing, land concentration and the fires that devastate the Legal Amazon and the Pantanal. It is not the peasants, quilombolas and indigenous people who are devastating the forest, but rather the thieves of unoccupied public lands who are appropriating that territory outside the law, counting on the connivance or even direct action of the various government agencies. This includes the protection of police forces during conflicts over them.

2) As a consequence of the previous point: to pretend to discuss an "environmental issue" separate from the agrarian-peasant question is to favour the reaction - and in the end, the devastating latifundia - of throwing a smokescreen over the secular problem, never solved in our history, formation and land ownership relations in Brazil. Therefore, to shout "fire in the forest", but to remain silent in the face of the criminalisation of the peasants, or to pretend to prioritise "food guidelines" dissociated from the acute class struggle in the countryside, is a logical incoherence and a political crime.

3) Grillage of public lands in the Amazon is not a project of this or that government, but a project of the State. Especially since the end of the 1970s, with the expansion of the agricultural frontier sponsored by the military regime, the grille, monoculture, environmental devastation and pistolism form a vicious and inseparable circle. Although the '88 Constitution provides for the expropriation of unproductive and/or illegal land for the purpose of agrarian reform, these provisions were never implemented. On the contrary: in recent decades, as the economy of bureaucratic capitalism in this semi-colony has become increasingly dependent on the export of goods, more that circle of iron formation of large properties and their high concentration versus expropriation of peasants and closed native peoples. Not in vain, we saw a wide political spectrum, ranging from Bolsonaro, through high military commands to the supposed "democrats" of the

media to make a single chorus, that is, the most odious and repugnant criminalization of the struggle for land. Among the opportunism, inspired by the mirage of capturing some secondary positions in the electoral farce, presenting itself as "the most faithful defender of the institutions", the general rule is silence. A strong and meaningful silence.

4) Bolsonaro, the Weak, is now caught between two threads: on the one hand, he needs to get rid of some heads and positions of the extreme right, to play his part in the temporary armistice imposed on him since the arrest of Fabrício Queiroz. On the other hand, by making this move to the military right and the so-called traditional parliamentary centre-right, he risks burning part of his most solid bases on the altars of "governance", and becoming more vulnerable at the negotiating table with his rivals. Inevitably, therefore, it will seek to regain lost ground on the judicial-parliamentary front by radicalising the discourse on the so-called "customs agenda" and in the nod to the "militias" of the countryside and the city. Boquirroto is not so much concerned with medium- and long-term calculations (like the generals, who avoid fuss) as with the here and now, which is the time for his own survival. It may seem paradoxical, but his denunciation made the perpetration of the massacre in Rondônia more difficult than favourable.

5) The decisive factor for the bloodbath promised by the Military Police of Rondônia not to happen so far was the organisation and willingness of the peasants of Camp Tiago dos Santos to resist. This firmness has reaped a broad solidarity among different democratic sectors, not only in that state but also at national level, and has at least stopped the murderous hand of the police and the paramilitary forces in the latifundia for now. This shows that the mobilisation, politicisation and organisation of the oppressed can do a lot, contrary to what the "social movements" of opportunism say and do, which see fascism in everything and call us to flee to the top, that is to say to the agreements and arrangements with the discontented fractions of the ruling classes. The independent line of the mass movement, led by the proletariat, is invincible; on the contrary, the conversion of the popular struggle into a mere appendix of the official bourgeois politics, besides having brought us only deep defeats in the last years (see the case of the labour and social security "reforms", for example), makes the massacres it is said to seek to avoid: massacres sometimes concentrated, sometimes spaced in time and space. This is what the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships have to offer on the mass movement.

6) The agrarian-peasant question is the Achilles' heel of the old reactionary Brazilian state. No matter how much one wants to avoid it with sophistries related to the supposed "modernisation of the Brazilian countryside", or to erase it on the altar of "new problems", such as the climate-environmental one, while the question of land ownership by those who do not work on it is not solved, we will periodically see powerful cycles of revolts and acute class struggles in the countryside. These are tens of millions of people exploited to the limit of their strength, literally sucked in to enrich about 1% of the big landowners, at the same time, big capitalists. These vast deserts of green monocultures clash objectively with the interests of almost all other social classes: with the peasants, the quilombolas and the indigenous peoples, who are the immediate victims of their predatory predicament; the so-called "middle classes" of the countryside, such as small and medium-sized traders and farmers, who are deprived of the consumer market and of the labour force, since the landowners, as we know, employ very little and expel people from there; of the millions and millions of proletarians and semi-proletarians in the cities, whose peasant diaspora is engraved on their skin, and who suffer from urban bloating and hunger, unemployment and the ailments resulting from it - the results of a bureaucratic capitalism whose main support is the latifundia; of all those who live on fixed wages or incomes, crushed by the degree of plunder of the peasant economy which supplies the basic needs of the people, the main creator of the value of the labour force. This is also true for the middle bourgeoisie,

which sees the internal market severely restricted by the non-incorporation of the countryside (the latifundia, besides employing very little, imports almost everything it needs to produce). The devaluation of the currency, which makes the goods produced here more competitive on the world market, hits the purchasing power of the workers; record exports that generate super-profits to the latifundia make the same goods more expensive on the domestic market. In a word, when the landowner wins, the vast majority of the nation loses.

This acute contradiction requires a solution. The Amazon and its struggles have long been on the margins of history.