

The scene after the coup

THE TRIAL OVER THE PAST DECADES TO BUILD NEW FORMS OF DEMOCRACY, giving other meanings to equality and freedom, is threatened by the clash with the economic and political elites that legitimize the power of capital in our country.

The parliamentary and judicial coup that took place on August 31, 2016, which removed definitively President Dilma Rousseff's from the presidency of the Republic, indelibly marks the Brazilian society, threatens democracy, and leaves a thick shadow of uncertainties over the classes who depend on work and that claimed, over those years, the guarantee of fundamental social rights.

It is not only about alternation in power, it is about the conservative restoration of a ultraneoliberal political project, openly pro-capital, which aims to resolve the impasses of the compulsive accumulation logic and favor the less than 1% super-rich of the country. Neoliberal orthodoxy of the 1990s helped transform Brazil into one of the most unequal countries in the world where a minority voraciously appropriates the wealth produced while great majorities are placed on the edge of survival. If that equation was ameliorated in the last decade, through public policies that removed Brazil from the Hunger Map (FAO, 2014), the developments of the coup clearly point to a return and expansion of the huge inequalities that still characterize the 7th largest economy of the world.

As it has been stated repeatedly, the neoliberal project aims to transfer the weight of the national accumulation crisis onto the shoulders of workers. For that, it recovers radical mechanisms of exclusion and social marginalization, materialized in proposals that reduce rights (pension reform and stagnation of health and education spendings for 20 years), increase the precariousness and the flexibility of labor relations (reform labor), mortgage the future of the next generations (sale of pre-salt), receding and leaving aside a huge mass of the population.

The argument that there was an excessive growth of primary spending on health (and education) does not hold. The federal public health expenditure remained stable between 2002 (1.66% of GDP) and 2015 (1.69% of GDP), while the health participation in primary expenditure was reduced from 10.5% in 2002 to 8.6% in 2015 (VIEIRA; BENEVIDES, 2016).

Therefore, the great responsible for the imbalance of public accounts were not and are not social policies, but the public debt, which was never audited, and in 2015 consumed 42.43% of the Union's general budget for the payment of interest and amortization, while for health it was allocated 4.4% of the budget (FATTORELLI; ÁVILA; COLARES, 2016).

If indeed it is intended to balance the public accounts, it will not be by reducing the meager 4.4% of the federal budget invested in health, which, as we said, represents only 1.69% of GDP, but by interrupting the transfer of almost half of the federal budget to the private sector through interest and amortization. Speculative capital and the private sector (presumably creditor of the State) are the only ones who benefit from the maintenance, by the Central Bank, of the highest basic interest of the world at this time in 14.25%.

The current Brazilian situation imposes on the field of social movements and progressive forces a forceful action before this project and the threat of the establishment of authoritarian forms of exercising politics. An open temptation on the international scene in which we

observe the rebirth of conservative movements in Europe and the USA.

What is at stake affects not only our aspirations for a more just society, but the Latin American trials put into practice here and in several countries in the region early this century. It is against those trials that the conservative elites (supported by the transnationalized media industry monopolies that control the formation of public opinion) invest daily. And they do so, here, fighting the achievements of the principles and values set out in the Federal Constitution of 1988, which express the democratic consensus established with the end of the military regime.

However, if on the one hand the current crisis indicates the return of neoliberalism (even more aggressive than it was in the 1990s), on the other hand, it points to possibilities of recovering the main role of social movements that characterized the years of 1970 and 1980 as years of struggle for redemocratization and expansion of social rights. At that moment, in the opposite direction of the international situation that put in check the welfare state (remember Margaret Thatcher in England, Helmut Kohl in Germany, and Ronald Reagan in the US), the constituents, driven by the social movements, signed in the letter of the Law, for example, health as a right of all and a duty of the State. Now, once again in an adverse international environment, it is up to social movements to build a national project which confirms the achievements in the Constitution, in which all Brazilians must fit.

The civilizing project that Brazil deserves and desires is incompatible with the interests of a total market society, proper of the financial, speculative and unproductive capital. It will be built by many hands, arms, hearts, and minds in the process of radicalization of democracy.

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