

MST Leader, Joao Pedro Stedile: “Now it’s time for permanent mobilization”

– Dilma was suspended. What can happen now?

Joao Pedro Stedile: It’s time to mobilize against the coup. A coup with no war tanks, but equally destabilizing: similar to the 2012 coup against Fernando Lugo in Paraguay. Also there, the Vice President, Franco, was the one who promoted the impeachment with no justification. The President has not committed any crime at all and she has been forced out power illegally. Popular organizations have no doubt about that. The working class has no doubt about that. Intellectuals, artists, the progressive church, have no doubt about that. According to the MST and the movements in the Brazil’s Popular Front, Temer-Cunha’s government has no legitimacy because it’s born under the sign of corruption and the return of neoliberalism. We have given the President of the Senate, Renan Calheiros, and the President of the Federal Supreme Court, Ricardo Lewandowski, the equivalent to 3 volumes of signatures against this impeachment process. Meanwhile, we have to gather all the energy we can because a period of struggle and political, social and environmental crisis is coming.

– Temer’s government seems to be a copy of Macri’s government in Argentina: full of businessmen, bankers...

Joao Pedro Stedile: Temer’s government and his party, the PMDB, are from the elites, the dominant classes who are determined to get their privileges back. In effect, Temer is the Brazilian version of Macri. A vain man who wants to end his political career as President, but his head office is in Washington: that’s where the strings are pulled. In Temer’s government we can find the conservative center, the financial capital and a great arch of vengeful forces, determined to subject State interests to the market.

– You have sent a letter to Pope Francis through lawyer Lavenere, who wrote the impeachment against Collor de Mello in 1992. Why? What can the Pope do?

Joao Pedro Stedile: The words of Pope Francis, in the interview in which he sent a message to the popular movements, and the words of Marcello Lavenere —former National President of the Brazilian Bar Association and member of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Conference of Brazilian Bishops— have been important. Lavenere has explained properly why the impeachment against Dilma has no legal nor constitutional basis. The prosecutor has charged President for two unmotivated administrative infractions, which however don't provide a basis for a "crime of responsibility". Finally, the arguments of the accusations are administrative actions of a government and in which the participation is collective; they aren't wilful acts that can be assigned to the President alone.

It's evident that the political party of the opposition, strengthened by the powerful media campaign in their favor, have thought of seizing the opportunity of Dilma's government low popularity rates, with ethics pretexts, which are definitely out of place given the profiles of those who promoted the impeachment. Everyone has their preferences. We prefer fighting for Housing, Land and Work, which are objectives also shared by Pope Francis in the process of the two world meetings with popular movements. And these were also Dilma's government goals, albeit with limitations and the mistake of making an alliance with the strong and powerful.

The references of the parties that have promoted the impeachment are the elites and the financial powers that are behind them. The middle class raised the flag against corruption, but have judge Sergio Moro as symbol. The problem in Brazil is that we are still one of the most unequal and unjust societies. In this context, in a general crisis —economic, political and environmental— that we are facing, corruption is inherent to the functioning of the voracious bourgeoisie which seeks to take over the public resources to get the maximum benefit for them and their businesses. Corruption is the sign of a systemic crisis, not the cause. To solve it, one process is not enough, but we need a Constitutional assembly that can bring solutions to all the anomalies of these kind of politics.

-A group of deputies from right-wing organizations went to Washington before the last elections...

Joao Pedro Stedile: Temer will arrange his government in order to allow the US to control our economy through their companies. This has happened with Chevron, which puts pressure through senator Jose Serra, from the Brazilian Social Democracy Party, to reach the privatization of the resources of the ultra-deep waters. Brazil is part of the BRIC, and another goal is that it can reject the South-South alliance. The intention is to corner Venezuela with the same mechanisms to finally end with the term “Bolivarian socialism”. There is a joint strategy carried out to fight against the conquests in Latin America. Our resistance should also be joint.

Fight against the coup in Brazil “From now on, it’s fire against fire” says MST coordinator

: Rute Pina / Source: Brasil de Fato / The Dawn News / May 14, 2016. Numerous social movements affirm that they won’t acknowledge Michel Temer’s government and promise there will be resistance.

“Last Thursday will enter history as a tragic day for popular movements and for the history of the country”, said the national coordinator of the **Landless Workers’ Movement**(MST), Alexandre Conceição. “Democracy was broken and the Constitution was torn apart”, he said. However, he affirms that history won’t repeat the massacre of the people that took place under the 1964 dictatorship, because the resistance of social movements will prevent it. “I’m not saying there was no resistance in 1964. But nowadays movements are more mature and we have more unity. We’ll turn that page”.

The MST, along with other movements, won’t acknowledge Michel Temer’s interim government.

It’s a question of legitimacy

When asked about his opinion on Temer’s ministers, especially Osmar Terra (Ministry of Social and Agriculture Development) and Alexandre de Moraes (Justice), the leader replied that the Workers’ Movement always criticized Dilma for having a pro-agribusiness minister (Kátia Abreu), like the ones of this government. But he

pointed out that any analysis on the ministers of the interim government should always begin with the question of legitimacy. “It’s a ministry of coupists. We won’t dialogue with him, we don’t even have to think about our position regarding this ministry, because it was built to sell our riches —the Pre-Salt, the indigenous lands—to foreigners. It doesn’t represent us”.

Conceição indicated that the MST will support Dilma in order to revert this situation; “not for who she is, but because we defend institutionality and democracy”. The movement has strong criticisms against Dilma, especially on the issue of the agrarian reform.

The leader of the MST affirmed that the left is stronger thanks to the conformation of the Brazil’s Popular Front and the People Without Fear, and informed that the movement would begin to discuss an agenda of intensive struggle. On the predictions about a more violent state, that will be more repressive of social movements, the leader believes that “from now on, it will be fire against fire”.

Youth

Laryssa Sampaio, militant of the Popular Youth Uprising Movement, also believes that progressivism has not been defeated yet. “Despite the coup, the opening of a new battlefield is promising”.

To her, the voting of the impeachment in the Deputy Chamber on April 17 unmasked the interests of the National Congress and opened the eyes of the population.

Therefore, she affirms that the people will react against the coup, despite its success so far. Her organization will convene a course of action with the organizations of the Popular Brazil Front.

Statement of the Popular Brazil Front and People Without Fear

“We’re certain that the President committed no crime with the “pedaladas”. If she had, the process should also punish the Vice President who now occupies the Presidential seat, Michel Temer [whose signature is on the same papers] and Senator Anastasia, former governor of Minas Gerais. That is an institutional and anti-democratic coup,

which didn't respect the will of 54 million voters and was coordinated by conservative sectors of society", informed the MST through a communique.

"The MST will remain in resistance to defend democracy and social rights, along with the Popular Brazil Front and the millions of workers that didn't accept the coup. We'll remain in struggle, against latifundium and agribusiness, for the agrarian popular reform and for the Constitutional right of every rural worker to own land and live with dignity".

Statement of the National Union of Students

"The National Union of Students, which represents two million university students from all parts of the country and is one of the oldest institutions of the national public arena announced that they won't acknowledge the government of Michel Temer".

"We won't give a minute of peace to the enemies of the people. We'll be on the streets, in universities, in social networks, wherever we can denounce the serious harm caused to the country", they expressed. "We're youth from different backgrounds, some are students from rich families, some are from the periphery and were able to attend university thanks to the social programs of the PT. We represent the transformation of the country, and we won't accept setbacks (...). Coupists, be prepared. Here's the student movement. There won't be another night falling on Brazil".

Statement of the Unified Workers' Central

"This is a coup.

"By giving continuity to the ritual prescribed by the judiciary power, senators —many of them accused of corruption— condemned an innocent person. This is unacceptable and a shameful stain on our Republican history.

"The CUT doesn't acknowledge Temer's government and condemns it for being illegitimate, because it disrespects the majorities' will, who chose their President. We will fight against the measures that have already been announced, which include cutting workers' rights, decreasing salaries, privatizing state companies, and cutting

back public policies. We won't accept the oppression of the working class and the poor.

"We call our comrades to resist Temer's government. We fought the coup up to this point, and we will continue to do so, on the streets and in our working spaces, to bring the country back to the rule of law and the democratic regime and to strengthen the people, from which all power emanates, to reform our political institutions according to our needs".

Statement by the Central of Popular Movements (CMP)

"The Central of Popular Movements (CMP), which is part of Brazil's Popular Front, publicly states that it doesn't acknowledge Michel Temer's government, which took the command of the country by assault, through conspiracies and spurious alliances"

"Social movements will continue to resist and struggle against political and economic elites, which over the last years built alliances with the media and the judicial power to overthrow the government, which had been elected by the people's vote, to fit the interests of those who had historically been in charge of the Brazilian nation".

Taking power by storm in Brazil

: Atilio Borón / Source: Rebelión.org / The Dawn News / May 13, 2016

A gang of bandits has taken the Presidency of Brazil by storm. Three main actors make up this gang: First, a majority of Parliamentarians (of whom two thirds are accused of corruption), most of whom earned their seat thanks to an absurd electoral law that allows a candidate with only a few hundred votes to obtain a seat due to the obscure mathematics of the "electoral ratio". These eminent nobodies were able to destitute provisionally a President who earned her seat with 54 million votes.

Secondly, a judicial power that is equally accused of collusion with the generalized corruption of the political system and repudiated by many segments of the population of the country. But the power of the state is hermetically sealed to any kind of democratic comptrolling, profoundly oligarchic in its cosmovision and viscerally

opposed to any sort of political alternative that proposes to build a country that is more fair and egalitarian. On top of that, like legislators, the judges and prosecutors have been trained for almost two decades by their North American peers in training courses that are supposedly technical but always have a political undertone with a clear ideology.

The third protagonist of this giant fraud to the sovereignty of the people are mass media, whose coupist affiliation and profoundly reactionary ethos are widely known, because they have always been active detractors of any type of social change, despite Brazil being one of the most unequal countries in the world.

By separating Dilma Rousseff from her functions (for a maximum of 180 days, during which the Senate must vote if the accusation against her stands or not —the decision would be ratified with the positive vote of two thirds of the Chamber), the Presidential seat will be occupied by an obscure and mediocre politician; a former ally of the PT who became an obvious conspirer, and finally, a traitor: Michel Temer. Sadly, everything indicates that in a little while, the Senate will turn the temporary suspension into a definitive destitution, because in the vote that confirmed the impeachment against Dilma, the conspirators obtained 55 votes, one more than needed to destitute her.

The plot of the Brazilian right had Washington's support —imagine how the White House would have reacted if something similar had happened to themselves!—. Barack Obama sent Liliana Ayalde as ambassador in Brazil, an expert in promoting “soft coups”. Before being transferred to Brasilia, she was ambassador in Paraguay, just as Fernando Lugo was “institutionally” deposed. But the empire is not omnipotent, and to make the reactionary conspiracy in Brazil viable, it needed the complicity of several countries in the region, such as the Argentine government, which labeled the coup as nothing more but a “routine parliamentary exercise”. In sum, what happened in Brazil is a very serious attack destined not only to remove Dilma but her entire party, the PT, which they couldn't defeat in the elections, and pave the way to also judicially condemn Lula da Silva, so as to prevent him from running in the next presidential elections. In other words, the message that the coupists sent to the Brazilian people was: “Don't ever vote for the PT or anything like it again, because

you may win in the polls, but we will win in the Congress, the Legislature and the Media, and that counts more than your millions of votes”.

It's a sad setback for Latin America as a whole, which adds to the defeat suffered in Argentina and forces us to think what happened, or ask ourselves, following the great advice of Simón Rodríguez, where we went wrong and what didn't we invent, or what we invented wrongly. In these dark times —of open war against the government in Venezuela, insidious press campaigns against Evo Morales and Rafael Correa, political setback in Argentina, conspiracy in Brazil— the worst thing we could do is refuse to make a profound self-criticism to avoid making the same mistakes.

In the case of Brazil, one of the most serious ones, was the PT's tendency to slow down the mobilizations and de-organize the popular movement that had begun in the first stage of Lula's administration, and that, years after, would leave Dilma unprotected against the attacks of the right. And, connected with this, another mistake was believing that Brazil could be changed from Ministerial offices only, and without the active, conscious and organized backing of the people. The coups attempted in Venezuela (2002), Bolivia (2008) and Ecuador (2010) were only repelled because those countries hadn't fell for the institutionalist illusion, like Brazil did. The third mistake was discouraging internal debate and criticism within the party and the government, and instead promoting a blind following of slogans that obstructed the identification of mistakes and therefore prevented the possibility of making them right before the damage was irreparable, as it is now. Machiavelli said that one of the worst enemies of the stability of mandataries was the nefarious role of their advisers, always ready to praise them, and therefore completely unable to warn about dangers. Let's hope that the traumatic events that happened in Brazil at least serve us to learn these lessons.