

Proposal of paper to the XII Global Labour University Conference 2017:

Reincarnation or Death of Neoliberalism? The rise of market authoritarianism and its challenges for labour

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Since 2013 there has been major protests on the streets of Brazil also due to the approach of the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016, both held in different cities of Brazil. The high investments imposed to different municipalities and the Federal government together with the increase of the bus tickets price in São Paulo lead to a movement called “Passe Livre” (free pass) to call people to go on streets in São Paulo to protest. Also the use of disproportional forces and violence against these protests by the São Paulo’s government police boost other demonstrations in different cities of Brazil in solidarity, against the violence and also struggling against the increase of the bus tickets.

On the one hand, the Brazilian progressive sectors, including PT (Workers Party – Partido dos Trabalhadores) and CUT Brazil (Central Unica dos Trabalhadores - main national trade union confederation in Brazil) took a while to consider these protests as a representative social demand, even though the main demands on the streets were composed by “old” demands of the progressive social movements. As the days passed by, there were groups inside these protests also against any representation of parties or movements on it, independent of the political character. Slowly left and right forces started to join the protests and to organize others. The Brazilian conservative sectors started to join these protests and to use and transform the legitimate struggle of Passe Livre into a political struggle to dismantle the Workers Party that was, at that time, in power. Their protests became one of the most important conservative wave of protests in the contemporary Brazilian history.

Important to underline the roles of the different protests took another dimension and the country faced a high polarization of forces, at the end, in favor or against President Dilma Rousseff from the Workers Party (PT), who was reelected in 2014. With her reelection, the conservative sector advanced its organization and it demanded the impeachment of Dilma, supported by different sectors, including employers organization and the conservative media. However Dilma was never involved in any corruption case and there was no reason to impeach a President who was democratically reelected, so the tension deepen, as the Brazilian progressive forces also went to the streets to defended a project of country which President Dilma represented, but also with some criticism to her economic policies.

This article pretends to analyze these protests that happen in Brazil from 2013 until 2016 and identify its complex divisions and groupings. It also intends to analyze the factors which lead to the polarization of the Brazilian society and the role of CUT Brazil and progressive social movements on how to face the conservative wave advancement. It goes on to the 4th theme: “*Building movements against neoliberalism and neonationalism*”, as it will analyze these protests and its elements taking into consideration the strategies used by the neoliberals to take the power back in Brazil, but not in a democratic way.

Methodological approach: We will analyze the conservative protests expression, agenda and political coalitions, comparing it with the progressive protests and also with the agenda that former Brazilian government was implementing through social policies to reduce social inequalities in Brazil. We will analyze also CUT's and social movements' responses against concrete initiatives that intended to implement neoliberal policies in Brazil. So, in other words, this article pretends to look at the political forces in march in Brazil during 2013-2016 and analyze actions of the progressive social movements, specially CUT Brazil, that were taken to struggle against neoliberal forces.

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