

## **WHAT IS POPULAR POWER? XII GLOBAL LABOUR CONFERENCE IN INDIA**

### **“What is popular power? The rise of market authoritarianism and its consequences for labour under the recent coup in Brazil”**

This paper will debate the recent Brazilian coup d'état in Brazil, focusing in what kind of popular power comes to match and dispute the usurper government recently implemented in Brazil. At the same time this paper wants to go deeper in the consequences of the present moment in Brazil; using a dialectical inductive approach, it wants to investigate the permanent and universal forms of popular power. As we want to address the debate into the practical consequences for the workers, with the just recently announced pension and labour reforms, altogether with practical economical and political challenges for the labour class, we want at the same time, to be able to determine what popular power is, in its permanent aspects of resistance, organizing and revolutionary constitution.

This paper proposes, at first, a brief historical background of Latin American recent political instabilities at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century through parliamentary coups focusing in Brazil, where the newly arrived government, seen as a usurper government by a large parcel of the population, would attempt to bring its legitimacy from a due legal process, passing both through the judiciary as the parliament, and finally the world recognition based market authoritarianism and its order. We shall investigate the relevant aspects of the rise of market authoritarianism, political instability, and its challenges for labour across the continent focusing in Brazil.

This paper will bring as a second proposal, three analysing aspects of popular power existent in Brazil, but would compare these aspects with different universal aspects of popular power and definitions: What is popular power? Its aspects of resistance, organizing and revolution. Its first aspect will be brought as the resistance to the assuming government. The resistance to the neoliberal reform agenda brought by this same government. But also, the universal anti-capitalist resistance, that goes beyond the resistance against this particular bourgeoisie government. The second aspect, it is a patient grassroots construction, a day by day organizing work. The second phase is a long patient construction of popular power, from its rudimentary individually focused,

narrow economically oriented or corporative resistance. How the organizing construction is on the way to be a companion to an incipient resistance. Organizing is presented as the popular power structural construction, its constitution coming from its beginning until a mass construction. And how can we compare the construction of popular power in Brazil and the relevant aspects of organizing across the world. The third phase is a revolutionary momentum. We shall infer that both resistance and revolution are easily reckonable; the problem it is to identify the length and the strengthening of the organizing period, its consistence, the composition of popular power as a fluid and diverse theory and momentum. The revolutionary break up may be rare though it is definitive in its composition. So what are the possibilities of a structured popular power in Brazil and the present important correlative experiences abroad?

The conclusion of the paper will bring the essential aspects of popular power identifiable in Brazil, compared in its relevant aspects in Latin America, though it wants to sign relevant correlative aspects within South Africa and India, looking up to link Latin America, Africa and Asia. The unifying aspects of an anti-capitalist universal power as a power of an internationalist power of the working class. If is there a capitalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a universal neoliberal face, so is it possible to also have a universal anti-capitalist popular power? If neoliberalism is more than alive so is it its opponent? Could this power be based on the economical evaluation and its own centrality with mass grounded labour and community organizing? We shall look to our local particular recent political coup again, and see what kind of popular power is rising now in Brazil? Is it mainly defined as a feeble resistance to the coup? What are the reasons for its fragility and the perspectives for a rise of popular power in Brazil? If there is a working class popular power experience across the history, what lessons Brazilian popular power can add to it? We shall present some police initiatives and solutions for debate

"The maximum development of the productive force and the maximum expansion of the existing wealth will coincide with the depreciation of the capital, the degradation of the worker and the more strict exhaustion of his vital capacities. These contradictions lead to explosions, cataclysms, crises, in which, by the momentary

suspension of labour and the destruction of a large part of capital, the latter is violently reduced to the point where it can fully utilize its productive capacities without committing suicide. However, these recurring catastrophes lead to their repetition on a higher scale and finally to the violent destruction of capital. ... The violent destruction of capital, not by circumstances external to it, but as a condition of its self-preservation, is the most forceful way in which capital is advised to withdraw and give way to a higher state of social production" KARL MARX ("Grundrisse", 1858)

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