



The left and the Brazilian Workers' Party

Mon, 30/09/2002 - 22:00

Criticism of the PT's moves to the right has come from both inside and outside the party. The Socialist Democracy current (DS) and its journal *Em Tempo* represents 'the tendency of the Fourth International supporters in the PT', part of the same international grouping as the French LCR.

The DS has criticised the alliance with Alencar. Heloisa Helena, a leading figure of the tendency, resigned as candidate governor in the state of Alagoas in protest at the alliance being imposed on the PT against its wishes. But the DS current is not a rallying point for an intransigent struggle against Lula and the leadership - indeed as the PT leadership has moved right so has the DS.

A recent statement by the DS on the elections, (*International Viewpoint* #344) while criticising Lula for spending his time 'calming the markets' places no sharp demands on the leadership, nor does it present an alternative fighting programme that could rally the rank and file.

Its view of a 'socialist Brazil' merely reflects the reformist views of the PT - 'A left government in Brazil would open new possibilities for the struggle for socialism. The strengthening of national sovereignty, the non-signature of the Free Trade Association of the Americas agreement, a project for economic development breaking with dependency, a vigorous movement of popular participation, public and democratic decision taking on all questions, would be the initiatives which would sketch the contours of another model.'

The struggle for socialism, to break the power of the capitalists, to smash their army and state -replacing it with a workers' council state - is replaced by a programme of democracy with a dash of third world nationalism.

The DS cannot even bring itself to criticise the PT leadership's retreat from the demand to cancel the debt. Raul Pont, DS member and ex-mayor of Porto Alegre was asked point blank by a journalist from a Porto Alegre daily 'Are you in agreement with the new orientation of the PT leadership on the need to negotiate the external debt rather than stop paying it?' Pont replied: 'When we used to say 'don't pay the debt', it was much more within the feeling for a moratorium, of warning that the country would be placed in danger with so much money going to service the debt. To call for not paying was the simplification of a slogan. ... That's why the party decided to put forward the call for an audit of the external debt and the call for its re-negotiation, to reduce the impact that the thesis of non-payment was causing.'

This is how the DS covers up for the leadership's dumping of key demands of the struggle. This interview was proudly reproduced in IV343 with Pont referred to as 'one of the more important politicians in the PT's socialist left'.

Two left organisations are standing against the PT. The Unified Socialist Workers Party (PSTU), presidential candidate Jose (Ze) Maria, and the Workers Cause Party presidential candidate Rui Pimenta. Ze was expelled from the PT ten years ago and is a member of the CUT national executive.

In the last presidential elections the PSTU got one third of one per cent, about 200,000 votes out of an electorate of 119 million. The PSTU sought an electoral alliance with the PT last year that came to nothing as Lula preferred to link up with the Brazilian Communist party and Alencar. The PSTU could improve on their position in these elections but it remains a small centrist party with a few roots in the vanguard.

The task for revolutionaries in Brazil in these elections is to relate to the majority of the vanguard and the tens of millions of workers who want Lula in office. The bigger the vote for the PT, where this can be done without voting for the PL, the less excuse Lula will have in the eyes of the masses for sticking to his agreement with the PL. Voting for a small centrist party with inadequate policies does nothing to bring nearer the day when the masses and the vanguard make a revolutionary break with the PT's reformism.

Source URL: <https://fifthinternational.org/content/left-and-brazilian-workers-party>