

Greetings from the ICFI to the SEP (Australia) 2022 Congress

The political crisis in Brazil and the fight for the revolutionary party

Tomas Castanheira
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These remarks were delivered by Tomas Castanheira to the Sixth National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia), held from September 24 to 27, 2022. Castanheira is a leading member of the Socialist Equality Group in Brazil, which is in political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International.

I'm very pleased to address this congress in the name of the Socialist Equality Group in Brazil.

The resolutions being discussed here testify to the immense strength of the socialist internationalist perspective of the Socialist Equality Party in Australia.

The program you are raising against the imperialist war, the capitalist crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the development of an authoritarian state will highly resonate in the Australian working class. But, more than that, it is a program that will allow Australian workers to reach out to their brothers in China, and all over the world, unleashing their true revolutionary potential as an international class.

As this congress is being held, Brazil is heading to its presidential elections, which represent the highest political crisis in the last four decades.

Back when the US-backed military dictatorship collapsed, undermined by economic crisis and the explosion of rebellious class struggle in the major industrial centers, bourgeois rule was stabilized through the reintroduction of a democratic regime. This maneuver was critically supported by the Pabloites, who were the fundamental promoters of Lula's pro-capitalist Workers Party (PT).

The crisis we are experiencing today, as the fascistic President Jair Bolsonaro, following the steps of Donald Trump in the US, is openly attempting to contest the

elections, has brought the specter of authoritarian dictatorship once again to Brazil.

Exploding the claims of the corporate media and the pseudo-left that these attacks were nothing but delusions of a madman, the military have been de facto transformed in the real arbiters of the political system. For the first time, the armed forces will conduct a parallel checking of the ballots, with soldiers stepping in all across the country to define whether the process was legitimate or not.

The nomination of the next president will anxiously wait for the last word of the generals.

There are divisions among the ruling class. A large section of the Brazilian bourgeoisie, fearing the breakdown of its political system, support the return of Lula and the PT to the presidency. He is joining the most right-wing forces in the state and is prepared to promote ferocious capitalist attacks against the working class with the critical support of the PT-controlled corporatist trade unions.

However, there is no doubt that such a reactionary PT government won't represent a revival of democracy in Brazil. The single ability of a new PT government will be to deepen the contradictions of the bourgeois regime, and potentialize the explosion of class struggle. The ruling class will use this interval to better prepare its dictatorship against the working class.

The character of such government is already being anticipated by the so-called left-wing parties that rose to power in Latin America in recent years. They are taking brutal austerity and repressive measures against the working class, which strives against ever greater conditions of misery, and have already earned their most sincere hate.

But as the bourgeoisie and its political superstructure rots on its feet, an overwhelming movement of the working class is developing in Brazil and throughout Latin America. Massive protests have spread in the last few years across the region, confronting social inequality, police brutality, and calling for a revision of the political setup of the last thirty years.

But most importantly, there is a political shift in the working class.

Only ten days before the elections, we have published an article in the *World Socialist Web Site* about the sabotage by the PT-led union of the struggle against layoffs in Mercedes-Benz. The broad support for this article, which reached thousands of readers in a few hours, is especially significant. Workers have reached out to us, and they have expressed no doubt that union and management are one and the same thing. They have protested against the union trying to impose a vote on the PT while sabotaging the struggle for their jobs.

While the PT and the pseudo-left call for saving “democracy” through a reactionary bourgeois political front, trying to suppress the existence of the working class as a social force, the class struggle is exploding in their faces. And the ICFI is the only political organization able to give genuine expression for this movement.

I recall some critical words said in this respect by comrade Nick Beams during his tribute to the Australian Trotskyist Barry Jobson. I would first like to say that I was very moved to participate in that event, and felt the strongest bond to comrades in Australia. And it was very clear, as it is now, that we are more than in international solidarity; we are waging an internationally unified struggle against capitalism.

Just days after the January 6 coup attempt in the United States, marking a turning point in the breakdown of the global political stability, as he reviewed the meaning of comrade Barry’s life and the struggle for the Trotskyist party in Australia, Nick said:

The fundamental task of the working class is not to develop its militant struggle, not to develop resistance to capitalism. That will come, and that will develop, but the question is where is this movement to go. The historic task of the working class is not to put pressure on the

bourgeoisie to force it to retreat and make some gains. The role of the party is to mobilize the working class to seize political power. And Trotsky once said, for that seizure of power an instrument is needed, it has to be forged and has to be developed.

Comrades, this is the challenge you are facing today in this congress. And we draw so much inspiration from how you are advancing this fight.



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