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Brazil

Hundreds of thousands occupy Brazil's streets against Bolsonaro

- IV Online magazine - 2019 - IV532 - May 2019 -

Publication date: Saturday 18 May 2019

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On May 15th, Brazilian crowds took to the streets in a demonstration against Bolsonaro. Hundreds of thousands of students, educators and workers from many categories gathered in over 160 cities, including all of the country's state capitals, to demonstrate against the government's several attacks against public education. From schools, technical institutes, universities, unions, and social movements came waves of demonstrators, who built the greatest ever mobilization against this authoritarian far-right government.

The movement's catalyst was the popular indignation against the 30% cut in the universities budget, which was announced by the new minister of Education, Abraham Weintraub, and it attained great social support in defense of the public education system. In Brazil, the vast majority of scientific research projects are developed in public universities, which fulfill an essential role in the technological advancement and in the country's social development.

This attack by Bolsonaro is inserted in a context of ideological war against the human sciences and critical thinking, which is reflected in the constant downgrading of teachers and students of the public system. Despite the scenario of little investment, with teachers receiving low wages and teaching units scrapped, the government insists on pointing out students and teachers as responsible for the problems of Brazilian education. In consonance with his rude and sloppy manner, he has even called the demonstrators "useful idiots" in the service of political groups.

At the same time, Bolsonaro defends the exclusion of health and sexuality themes from the school curriculum and proposes domestic education as a way out, further proving his conservative and obscurantist character. He also absurdly defends that classes be secretly recorded and that teachers are inhibited from expressing opinions, taking up after the political persecution practices which prevailed during the previous military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985).

It's important to note the leading role of women in combat against Bolsonaro. In contrast to his sexist and misogynist statements, young female students are leading the fight in their schools and universities beside their teachers, which are also mostly women throughout the country. The recent wave of public school occupations was organized by young feminist students consciously battling the injustices of patriarchal society, and diffusing feminist ideas in an unprecedented scope.

The movement demonstrates the strength of a renewed and vigorous youth which won the sympathies of their family members and of the general population, receiving great support in the neighborhoods and streets where they marched. What became known as the "book uprising", in which the students took books to the rallies symbolizing the defense of knowledge, has stood out at the demonstrations. This movement has just begun, and a new demonstration is scheduled for May 30th to continue the journey.

The May 15th demonstrations showed that the government loses the population's trust by the hour, and can be defeated through popular organization. It is essential that the comrades all around the world support the Brazilian people on this struggle, as every solidarity is needed against this authoritarian threat. The Brazilian resistance is not alone, it is part of the international struggle against the far-right escalation affecting several countries in many continents.

Together we can turn the tables! Our weapon is education! Our struggle is one!

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#15M #LevanteDosLivros #BookUprising #TsunamiDaEducaçÃ£o #EducationTsunami

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