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**Brazil**

# **“P-SOL is a historical necessity”**

- IV Online magazine - 2005 - IV372 - November 2005 -

Publication date: Friday 18 November 2005

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## **What does the P-SOL bring that is new to the Brazilian political scene?**

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/hh2.jpg>]

The P-SOL provides a refuge for the socialist and democratic Left, a point of convergence between different political sensibilities and a social militancy which for twenty years has advocated for the Left, alternatives that are different from those put forward by the hegemonic sector of the Workers' Party (PT), the sector that has killed the party to which we devoted the best years of our lives.

What constituted its reason for existence has been buried. The PT still exists today from a judicial and bureaucratic point of view, but that's all. I know that all that did not entirely begin with the Lula government; the process of degeneration and bureaucratization had already begun before. Furthermore, it had already been denounced by the above-mentioned left currents in the party, but perhaps we didn't do what needed to be done with the necessary vehemence, with enough force so that the process didn't continue to deepen.

The Workers' Party, to the great distress of all the militants who helped to build the biggest left party in Latin America, is today a mediocre tool of triumphalist propaganda for neo-liberalism. By its actions as a governing party it has legitimised the whole neo-liberal discourse. All of that has represented for us a kind of apprenticeship which has shown us how to avoid running the same risks as those of which we have just been victims, by encouraging the process of internal democracy, articulation with the social movements and the permanent stimulation of the political life of the party.

This experience has strongly troubled people in their very lives, since some go so far as to say: "I have the greatest admiration for you, but who can guarantee for me that if one day you set foot on the so-called sacred soil of government, you won't change camp, you won't commit one more betrayal?" That is in fact what a lot of people think, what a lot of them talk about which many people are asking questions.

But I always reply: it's a risk that we are going to take together. Then I joke by saying that if something like that happened again, then we parliamentarians would be expelled again. [1]

I am joking when I say that we will take the risk together. But we are thinking collectively, so that internal democracy and the participation of the rank and file militants will be permanent, solid, so that the militant collective will reduce the risks of degeneration and bureaucratisation of the party. I think that we can never say that we have the magic formula of 100 per cent absence of risk. But we cannot allow fear, the danger that fear represents, to lead us to the point where we face the possibility of degeneration with sad resignation.. and so we do nothing.

All the experience that we went through in the PT, which culminated in the bureaucratisation and the degeneration of the party, which happened in spite of the admirable actions of the militants on the left of the party, is an important apprenticeship so that we will not follow the same paths as those which led to the horrible situation we see now. [2] The P-SOL is a collective project, built by experienced socialist militants, who will neither sell out nor give up.

## **In what way does the P-SOL rearticulate the struggle for socialism in our country?**

The creation of the P-SOL was a historical necessity. Because it is also what the PT accomplished historically, without speaking of the fact that it didn't have the right to betray, to organise a class betrayal. But it cannot now, with

this betrayal, bury and cancel out all the programmatic conceptions of the socialist and democratic Left. It doesn't own them. And nor will they be the property of the P-SOL. But our party, by historical necessity, was also born to honour the memory of millions of militants of the socialist and democratic Left in Brazil, in Latin America and in the world who have not sold out and who have not prostrated themselves before capitalism. And we are doing that with much joy, with discipline and with love for the working class.

The P-SOL can contribute in a decisive and positive way to building a socialist and people's way out of the crisis. The problem is to know what mechanisms we can use, now and in the future, with the means that we have as a party and with the possibilities for social mobilisation. In order to formulate a way out, we will have to, starting from popular indignation, demand early elections.

We cannot in reality only propose a Constituent Assembly, because with the present electoral legislation, if the Constitution was changed now, it would be for the worse! If early elections do take place, it will have to be for the whole Congress [3] and also to elect the President of the Republic. Because the institutionalised promiscuity, the crony-style relations between the government and the National Congress, are very clear.

I think that if the Brazilian people demonstrates generosity towards us all, it is because it witnessed the process of expulsion that we went through, it experienced our suffering, our tears and our struggle. It saw that we were not accepting the betrayal. I once read, I don't know where, that tears leave scars on the soul, but I always say that our scars are the wounds of people who had not become cowards, of people who went out on to the field of battle and fought for what they believed in.

Though we must not be inordinately proud of the marks left by this battle, they nevertheless represent memories of the months of glory of the Lula government, during which we did not sell out. It must be said that during those glorious months, at the time when we were being expelled and no one wanted to speak up, people thought we were crazy, extremists, who were incapable of understanding the historic moment we were living through.

And we had the courage, the nerve even, to honour the memory of many others had found themselves on the battlefield and who are not remembered, those who washed away the blood of the comrade who was wounded and buried the one who was dead. They were those who wept and then returned to the struggle. That is why the Brazilian people love us.

It is not a question of personality. It is because they identify with us. Even people who, because of the circumstances of their lives, were not able to break with a particular power structure in order to realise their dreams, identify with our struggle.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/psolhh1.jpg>]

Luciana, Heloisa and Baba

It is only because it was not an individual project that I was ready to build a party. If it was a question of an individual project, I would go and take care of my personal life. I put at the disposal of the party my heart and soul, my health and my socialist fighting strength, because I know that it is not a personal project, because I know that it is not just the fight of Luciana [4] of Baba [5] but the anonymous struggle of thousands of militants spread across the whole of Brazil, and who are experiencing situations much more difficult than ours.

They have to swallow their fear, as we have to swallow our own fear, overcome our weaknesses, to keep on fighting day after day. Because there are many more people who are fighting every day much more than us, facing difficulties much greater than those that sometimes threaten to exhaust our ability to react day after day. That is why we place ourselves at the service of these people.

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Many parliamentarians, both in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate, whom we have opposed throughout our history and whom we will continue to oppose with anger, because they have a project that is contradictory with ours, even they, when we were in the process of being expelled, were visibly embarrassed. Those who were the enemies of the Lula project and who are treated today like the darlings of the government, who are there living off public resources, as in fact they have always done, and many others who are our class enemies and who will certainly never call a truce in the battles that they wage against us, even they can respect us.

We are in this fight because we know that there are millions of generous, courageous and socialist hearts all over the country who are fighting for a new world, rich with bread, peace and happiness.

And we welcome into the P-Sol with open arms the fighters of the PT, since there is almost no space left in the PT for whoever calls him or herself a left socialist. These people will be welcomed by all of us with a great deal of affection and solidarity. They will be welcomed to help us build the present with the help of an instrument of struggle for the working class, an instrument that is not yet ready but is in the process of being elaborated.

Many among us represent different traditions from the point of view of the international left. We have gone through different experiences, we come from different traditions, but we respect each other because we are socialists. If we did not have this attitude towards each other, then we could not be together. I hope that these comrades will be able to come and help us build the P-SOL as an instrument of struggle in the service of the Brazilian working class. They will not simply be integrated into a project that is already built, we will build the project together.

And we have already won a battle. We were many militants spread all over Brazil, who were suffering and who were filled with anxiety, but we did not allow ourselves to lose hope. We began to build the P-SOL and won its legalisation by collecting 450,000 signatures. Some of us had already had other party experiences and suffered other betrayals, but the bitterness of the past did not make us incapable of fighting. And many other people, who had not gone through the experience of founding a party structure, simple, ordinary people, who had not previously seen themselves as internationalist socialists, came towards us out of generosity, tenderness and respect because of all this process of inquisition through which we had passed. All these people were essential to help us to get through this first stage: the legalisation of the Party of Socialism and Freedom.

*\* Heloisa Helena is a member of the Brazilian Senate. Expelled from the PT in 2003 for opposing its neo-liberal policies, she was one of the founders of the P-SOL. This interview was given to the Brazilian bulletin Palavra Viva. We have translated it from the web site of the Swiss-based journal A l'Encontre: [www.alencontre.org](http://www.alencontre.org).*

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[1] A reference to her expulsion from the PT in 2003 for expressing her disagreement with the first counter-reforms of the Lula government, on social security

[2] A reference to the fact that in addition to the neo-liberal policies followed by the PT leadership, the party is now mired in scandal and corruption

[3] The Congress is in two parts, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate

[4] Luciana Genro, MP for the state of Rio Grande do Sul

[5] Joao Batista Baba, MP for the state of Parana