

Victory for Lula and the Brazilian people

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Dave Kellaway gives a first reaction to Lula's defeat of far right Bolsonaro.

Love defeats hatred! Democracy defeats Fascism! Viva - let's celebrate

A TWEET FROM PSOL (PARTY OF SOCIALISM AND LIBERTY) MEMBERS. PSOL IS A RADICAL-LEFT PARTY THAT BACKED LULA'S CANDIDACY.

When an indigenous child is murdered so that the predators of our environment can make some profit, a part of our humanity also dies with her. That is why we are going to return to proper monitoring and vigilance of Amazonia and fight against any illegal activity.

STATEMENT BY LULA DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

Lula, who was backed by everyone on the left and in the progressive movement, won the second and most important round of Brazil's presidential elections. It was close, the gap was just 1.8%. Once again, the polls underestimated the size of Lula's victory and the scale of the reactionary Bolsonaro's vote and their base in the institutions will mean the risk of destabilisation of a Lula government remains acute. At the time of writing, nearly 12 hours after the close of polls, Bolsonaro has not officially conceded. However, the leaders of many significant countries have come out strongly in support of the new president. Both Biden and Putin have sent warm greetings, as have Canada and the European countries.

After the victory of Boric in Chile, this means there is a pink tide rising again in Latin America with left-of-centre parties ruling in Argentina, Peru, Honduras, Bolivia, and Mexico. Such governments can implement some progressive reforms, but more importantly, provide a more democratic space for the people's struggles and restore confidence that political action can make a difference. More details and analysis of this process can be found in an article by Franck Gaudichaud [here](#).

In the case of Brazil, it brings an end to a regime that had one of the worst records in dealing with COVID, with 700,000 deaths, and gave the green light to the murderous ranchers and miners who

routinely killed indigenous peoples and their supporters in their devastation of the Amazon ecosystem. Bolsonaro also encouraged hatred against the LBGT+ communities. He was linked to armed attacks on local communities and leftist or environmental activists by the police and unofficial militias. Right up until the end, he had the federal police set up roadblocks in the North East, where most of Lula's supporters live, to make it hard for his opponents' supporters to get to the polls. Bolsonaro supporters carried out violent attacks and intimidation throughout the campaign. Just to take one example, Chico Alencar, a PSOL candidate for federal MP in Rio de Janeiro, received a death threat on social media from a Bolsonaro supporter who said they knew where he lived and could send an assassin.

Lula himself was a metal worker from the industrial centre of Sao Paulo. He started the Workers Party (PT), which was a branch of the independent workers' movement. This made it stand out from many traditional cross-class populist movements at that time. Revolutionaries were involved in the formation of this broad left party; they saw it as an important phase in developing working-class consciousness in Brazil. After three attempts, Lula finally won the presidency in 2002. He was president for two terms, from 2001 to 2010. During that time, he changed things like welfare benefits for poor and working-class families. He is still one of the most well-liked Brazilian presidents. When he left office, he had an approval rating of 80%.

During the government of his successor, Dilma Rouseff, he was framed on corruption charges and ended up serving nearly two years in prison. He was convicted by a corrupt judge who later took on a ministerial role under Bolsonaro. Despite being exonerated by a higher court, his conviction at the time meant Bolsonaro did not have to face him (and probable defeat) in the 2018 presidential election. He said yesterday that his victory was the mother of all political comebacks and an appropriate vindication against Bolsonaro.

Lula faces immense problems. Many Brazilians suffer food poverty yet its farmers export huge quantities of food protein.

"If we are the world's third-biggest producer of food and the biggest producer of animal protein... we have the duty to guarantee that every Brazilian can eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day."

(LULA, VICTORY SPEECH)

Rio's and other big cities' sprawling shantytowns, called favelas, have both organised groups of people fighting for change and brutal criminal gangs. The policing of these areas is corrupt and inefficient. Changing that reality will not be easy. In his letter to the Brazilian people that he published last week, he outlined ambitious housing and infrastructure programmes. His tax reform will provide some of the resources for this, along with the increase in the minimum wage and welfare benefits for the poorest.

However, the congress remains a Bolsonarista stronghold, and in order to build a broad coalition,

Lula has allied himself with political currents that will not disrupt capitalist stability in order to effect social change. In the first Lula government, there was a commodities boom that helped finance change. Today we are heading for a world recession.

The key to defending the Lula government and ensuring progress will be the revitalisation of the popular organisations, the indigenous movements and the labour movement. Bolsonarism is still strong. Its support among ordinary people is to a degree organised through the mass influence of the evangelical churches. The left needs a strategy to win over that support. Groups to the left of the PT, like the PSOL, will be working alongside PT activists to try and make this happen. The outcome of the Lula government will not just make a difference for the Brazilian people but for the whole world as further deforestation of the Amazon directly impacts climate change. The left here should work to show support for the struggles of the people of Brazil.

Dave Kellaway

P.S.

- Anti*Capitalist Resistance. 31 Oct 2022:
<https://anticapitalistresistance.org/victory-for-lula-and-the-brazilian-people/>
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