



RESIST:

The Responsibility of this Generation

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Photo: La República

According to the dictionary, to resist means to put up resistance, to not give in, to defend one's self. It is precisely this role that we are responsible for today, and that we take on as youth, the students and the social movements that resist in each one of the countries in Latin America and the world.

We are living through a historic moment, in which we see capitalism returning to gain ground, after one of its worst crises. A strong conservative wave, charged with a sentiment of hatred, is passing through the world and generating a climate characterized by the repudiation of politics and the traditional ways of doing politics. We see its effects in the entire world, particularly in Latin America, where we have suffered losses after a good period of progressive and leftist governments in various countries.

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In Brazil, we clearly see the ascent of the conservative elites and an intensification of the class struggle. After thirteen years of progressive governments led by Lula and Dilma, with a wide coalition that spanned from the political left to the centre, which achieved important social and economic advances, that are currently being destroyed by those who attack Brazilian democracy and today usurp power.

In thirteen years, we saw our country emerge from extremely low social and human indexes, lifting millions of people out of hunger and extreme poverty to transition them into active work. Millions of youth entered the universities, which was unthinkable for many before who could not access higher education because they lacked the material means to survive. Or, in many cases, they were unable to study because instead they had to help their families to put food on the table. We managed to double the number of students in universities before the Lula government, with almost 8 million

youth in a university or higher technical track. Today, we see black, poor, and Indigenous people in university, and not only there, but also in the airports, since, as we say, today the poor also fly. Both spaces were previously only for the elite -who get angry they have to study and travel alongside poor, black, and indigenous people. An elite made up of old, white, macho and homophobic men unable to tolerate seeing women empower themselves and enter the presidency, black or Indigenous people respected and protected by public policies, or the LGBT population having a place in society, coming out of the closet, empowering itself and benefitting from public policies.

This is what is behind everything that we are going through. The elite want to regain space. That is why they united in a consortium between the financial market, national industrial sectors, large communication monopolies and the judicial system, in order to guarantee that the crisis is not paid for by the richest, but rather by workers, by youth, by poor people. In this way, the worse National Congress that we have had in our history continues to pass laws such as the Constitutional Amendment Bill (PEC 55 or 241) that puts public investment in

social areas below the rate of inflation, practically freezing investment in health and education, for 20 years. Or like the Reform, for the worse, of secondary education, approved a short while ago by decree without any dialogue with students. This when there was already a long debate process within the education community, together with students, about a deep and true reform.

Now there are bills in progress, like the Social Security Reform, which will increase the retirement age; the Labour Reform, which seeks to increase the workday and remove rights that were historically won, making work relations more precarious; and the bill “School Without Party”, that decreases the decision-making power of teachers over what can or cannot be taught in classes, making it impossible to discuss topics such as sexual diversity and other subjects with “ideologically left content”. Such a law prohibits teaching “content contrary to parents’ religious or moral beliefs”, as if youth could not think for themselves and are easily influenced by teachers. It would be laughable if it were not so ridiculous. Not to mention the ridiculous “anti-Lula Law”, that says that a presidential candidate that

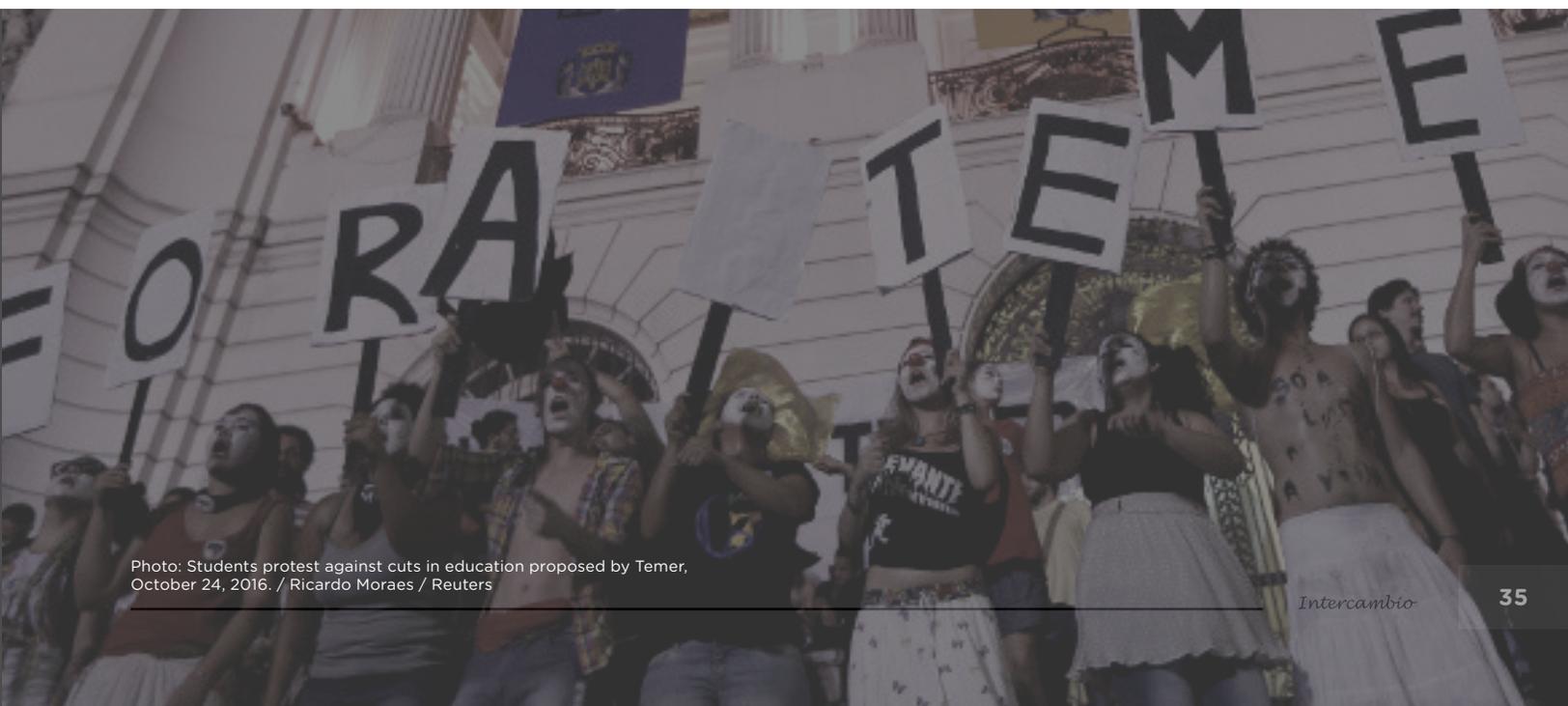


Photo: Students protest against cuts in education proposed by Temer, October 24, 2016. / Ricardo Moraes / Reuters



was already president on two occasions cannot run again (this only applies to two people: Lula and Fernando Henrique Cardoso). They made this law out of fear that Lula, who today appears in first place in the polls for president in any scenario, would be re-elected in the 2018 elections.

We have sought to strengthen and create processes for unity, that in Brazil today are made up of two action fronts of the social movements and political parties: the Popular Brazil Front and the People Without Fear Front. Each day it becomes more necessary, in the countries and in the region, to have the precious popular unity.

And as if we were not sufficiently shocked, I could continue to talk about the millions in cuts to investments in education, scientific research, culture, etc. But I would rather end as I began, speaking about resistance. Throughout the history of humanity, the grand revolts and revolutions, in the large confrontations that we have had, youth have always had the central role of RESISTING. And today it is no different. Together with workers, women, blacks, Indigenous peoples and others, it is our responsibility, as this generation, to resist any setback to our rights. This is our role that history now calls for us to take on. We will not allow one more chapter of history to be written by the

conservative elites who have always devastated our people. We remember the struggle of educators like Anísio Teixeira and Paulo Freire; intellectuals and liberators like José Martí, Simón Bolívar, José Artigas, O'Higgins, José de San Martín, Sucre, Miranda, etc.; revolutionaries like Fidel, Che, Frida, Anita Garibaldi, Zumbi, Allende, Chávez, Sandino, Farabundo Martí, Zapata and so many others that continue to inspire the dreams of generations for a new world, a new society, a new man... UNITY AND RESISTANCE!

"History is written by the people, history is written by men (and women), history is in our hands, this story has just begun."