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**Brazil**

# The impact of the June mobilizations

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**Between 13 and 30 June, Brazil experienced its biggest demonstrations in 30 years. In more than 400 towns and cities, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in daily demonstrations. On at least two days – 17th and 20th – well over a million people protested across the country. (On the second of these days, there were more than a million people on the streets of Rio de Janeiro alone.) Most of the demonstrators were young (students and young wage-earners), but later other sectors joined in, especially those living in poor communities in and around Brazil's biggest cities.**

There were three main reasons for taking to the streets: a) against the price increases on public transport (and for a reduction in ticket prices, as well as an improvement in quality); b) against the high level of spending on the Confederations Cup and 2014 World Cup, and their elitist character, while the rights of affected communities are disrespected (with the eviction of local residents to make way for infrastructure projects; c) against the repression unleashed on the demonstrators themselves. Other themes were also present, like the struggle against the corruption of “politicians” (and against the political system itself), and the struggle against the influence of religious conservatism and racism.

On the issue of public transport, the movement scored a rapid and impressive victory. All those (municipal and state governments) who had recently raised ticket prices were forced to reverse the increase. In many places, ticket prices were actually reduced. In others, free passes were introduced for students or young people, along with plans to improve the transport system.

On the question of repression, we can also say the movement won an impressive victory. After 13th June, the legitimacy of the protests was widely accepted and the repression diminished considerably, although not in all cases. In Rio de Janeiro, the level of repression remained higher, which was probably one reason why the protests continued with greater strength in this state, and why the political cost – revealed in a series of opinion polls – was greater for the governor, Sergio Cabral, of the PMDB (but also supported by the PT). Indeed the protests have continued in Rio (albeit with fewer taking part), as has the “Out with Cabral” movement, demanding the resignation or impeachment of the governor.

There were victories on other issues, like the struggle against the influence of religious conservatism – the central issue here was the withdrawal of a project to authorize psychologists to carry out “gay cures” (treatment of homosexuals).

Government at all levels, from the federal to the municipal, was put on the defensive and saw its authority eroded. For example, opinion polls put support for central government at around 60% before the protests (it had already fallen slightly before that); after the protests it fell to about half that figure.

On the other hand, the more traditional organizations of the Brazilian social movement, the vast majority of which support the government, were also put somewhat on the defensive. This happened with the CUT and with the unions in general, with the UNE and even with the MST. These organizations, after being largely absent in June, called a “day of stoppages” on 11th July, but the results were rather feeble.

The view spread by sectors of the PT and the leaders of these organizations – that the protests, in large measure showed the strength of the right and the influence of the media – does not stand up. There were moments when sections of the right were indeed very active and the big media did try to influence the movement. However, when we

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look at the overall outcome, we can see that the slogans of the right carried little weight, and it is very clear that a new period has opened up in Brazil, one which is more favourable (or less unfavourable) for the socialist left.

*29 July 2013*