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Brazil

Popular revolt is legitimate! Down with repression!

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This statement by the Partido Socialismo y Libertad [Party of Socialism and Freedom] was adopted on 14 June 2013.

The Partido Socialismo y Libertad [Party of Socialism and Freedom] expresses its total support for the mobilizations that have taken place across Brazil against the increase in the prices of public transport and vehemently rejects the police violence that has tried to repress the legitimate right of organization and expression.

The increased intensity of the protests – which have taken place in the cities of Porto Alegre, Natal, Maceió, Goiania, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo - broke through the blockade of the big mass media and they have become a theme that has mobilized society.

The governors of the bloc that “beats and jails” do not understand that the revolt caused by being stuck for six hours in poor quality transport that consumes a third of one’s wage is the reason for the popular support for the demonstrations. The revolt, which began with young people, is the tip of the iceberg of a great collective dissatisfaction. To respond with intransigence, violence and police brutality is to throw oil on the fire. Alckmin (governor of the PSDB in the state of São Paulo), Haddad (mayor of the PT in the city of São Paulo), Paes (mayor of the PMDB in the city of Rio de Janeiro) and Cabral (governor in the state of Rio de Janeiro) must assume their responsibilities for the repugnant and senseless repression, and their inaction. In addition, it is not helpful for Minister Cardozo, supposedly the Minister of Justice, to foment the truculence of the Federal Police in the repression of the movements.

At the same time, the increased violence promoted by the military police, mainly in the recent protests in the state capital of São Paulo, demonstrates that the totalitarian policy of the local governments and the state cannot live with discord, criticism and opposition, which results in the criminalization of the social movements and demonstrators, an unacceptable fact in a democratic society and which is repudiated by the PSOL. We demand the immediate liberation of all the prisoners. In addition, penalizing activists with payment of absurdly high bails of and denunciation of conspiracy is inadmissible.

In accusing this broad and legitimate movement as a whole of vandalism, rulers without scruples and the Brazilian elite try to manipulate public opinion, but it has not succeeded as shown clearly by the polls which show an enormous popular support for the demonstrations and repudiation of coercion and police violence.

It should be indicated that recently transport prices were exempted from paying PIS and COFINS taxes, which would have been able to prevent the increase. It is absurd that, in spite of these tax breaks, the companies increase the price of transport, with the consent of the mayors and governors. This collusion between the public transport companies and the governors is not unrelated to the fact that the public transport companies subsidize the electoral campaigns of the latter, who now accept the increases as a way of “paying the bill”.

In the cities governed by the PSOL - Macapá (AP) and Itaocara (RJ) - there was no increase in bus prices, by political decision of the mayors. Our logic of government is to serve the workers and youth, not to agree with the company owners who transform the right to public transport into a simple business. We believe it is possible, with a balanced budget and the political will, to advance measures such as free passes for students and even a zero rate. The defense of these proposals, therefore, does not have anything unreal or absurd about it, but rather guarantees the constitutional right of the citizens to mobility.

Popular revolt is legitimate! Down with repression!

The PSOL follows in defense of the right of protest, in defense of the right to quality public transport and against police violence. Goi nia and Porto Alegre have gained victories with the reduction of the price of transport. It is time to follow forward and to conquer. Only by fighting will we win.

Brasilia, Brazil, June 14, 2013.