

BRAZILIAN REVOLUTION INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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**GROWING CASES OF COVID-19 IN BRAZIL:
A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED KILLING-SPREE**

There has been skyrocketing cases of infection and deaths by Covid-19 in Brazil since November 2020. In the beginning of the said month, there was an average of 500 daily deaths by Covid-19. On November 17, 2020, this figure has reached 680 daily deaths. According to figures of January 24, 2021, 1.030 people are dying everyday due to Covid-19 in Brazil. Our country has already surpassed 220.000 deaths by Covid-19. In the whole world, only the United States overtakes Brazil in number of deaths.

While more than 50 countries have already begun to vaccinate their populations in December 2020, thus reaching, according to figures of this period, more than 17 million people inoculated world-wide, the national campaign of vaccination in Brazil is still marked uncertainties. Amidst the incompetence of the Minister of Healthcare, general Eduardo Pazuello, and the selfish political disputes between Jair Bolsonaro and his rivals, Brazil remains with no date for the beginning of vaccination, and with no guarantee that it will have enough inputs to immunize its people.

In a situation like this, the role of any government would be informing about the importance of immunization, and to encourage the largest number of people to get inoculated. Acting contrary, Jair Bolsonaro has suggested several times that the available vaccines were not safe, even though not showing any evidence to uphold his assertions. Likewise, he has not mobilized any organ, neither invested a cent to carry on information campaign. Unlike, ever since he assumed the post of President, he has reduced in 21% the budget of such campaigns. Consequently, between August and December 2020, the rate of Brazilians who declared not to have the intention of being inoculated has increased from 9% to 22%, according to a survey that was made by the research center Datafolha.

The bankruptcy of Pazuello-Bolsonaro clique persists on the failure of purchasing inputs. Concerning the necessary needles and syringes, the government has made a bidding to purchase 331 million units, a figure considered enough for the first stages of the immunization program. Nevertheless, it has managed to purchase only 7,9 million units, a little more than 2% of the expected number. This is an inexcusable situation that comes, at the same time, from the explicit negligence of Pazuello, who has made the bidding only by the mid-December, and from the deplorable situation of national industry, incapable of producing on the scale demanded by the current situation, but confident enough to charge monopoly prices.

The purchasing of vaccines in the necessary amount to immunize 70% of the Brazilian population – a rate considered the least necessary to raise a community immunity to prevent the spread of the virus – was only guaranteed by the recent announcement of the purchasing of 100 million dosages of Coronavac, to be produced along this year by Butantã Institute, in São Paulo state. Gathered up with other purchased vaccines, these would sum up 354 million dosages that could be inoculated in 2021. This would be hypothetically enough, in case the PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) tests event, which have rotted in their millions in the government's warehouses, instead of being made

available for healthcare units, does not repeat itself.

Meanwhile, Manaus city, Amazonas state capital, in the Northern region of Brazil, has become the "worldwide epicenter" of the catastrophe and spread of Covid-19. The local healthcare system has collapsed, and it is no longer available to serve the population. The situation is terrifying: referral hospitals are overcrowded; there is lack of inputs to handle the situation, like the running out of oxygen supply in healthcare units, due to low production and misallocation of resources, which were predictable, but not solved by the government; overpricing of oxygen cylinders, through the charge of prices above those that prevail in local market, that are taking place without any care by the government, in face of the prevailing calamity; patients are being transferred under emergency to other states; hospitals and graveyards are overcrowded, and they are being adapted with refrigerating chambers to handle the rising deaths due to the crisis, among other problems.

Up to now, Amazonas accounts the overwhelming figure of 238.980 infected people – 103.312 in Manaus (43,16%), and 135.848 (56,84%) in the rest of the state –, and 6.598 deaths – 4.371 in Manaus, and 2.227 in the rest of the state – since the beginning of the pandemic. On January 20, Amazonas has registered 5.009 new cases of Covid-19 infection – 3.632 were confirmed in Manaus, and 1.377 were confirmed in other municipalities –, and has reached again a new record of daily figures. In the same day, the rate of occupation of intense healthcare Covid-19 beds has reached 94,3%, and the rate of occupation of clinical beds for Covid-19 has reached 98,2%. Because of the unsustainable situation of Amazonas healthcare system, 131 patients were already transferred to healthcare units of other states.

Besides all the mentioned problems, the present reason for major concern is the lack of medical oxygen to treat patients who show severe symptoms (like pulmonary failure) when infected by Covid-19. On January 14, in Manaus city, a total collapse of oxygen supply has taken place for 5 hours, thus causing the death of many people. Since then, a ceaseless race has begun to set the necessary logistics to carry this input to Amazonas state, since the capacity of the state to produce oxygen has been deficitary for days.

Amidst the oxygen crisis in Manaus, solidarity has prevailed among the Brazilian people and the peoples of the world. Artists, institutions, political parties, trade unions, and associations, have been mobilizing on their own, with no sponsor by the governments, to grant oxygen to hospitals and healthcare units of Manaus.

The Brazilian people welcome and celebrate the uninterested support of Venezuelans, who have been, under directives of their main leader, Nicolas Maduro, the first brotherly people from abroad to begin the donation of 107.000 cubic meters of oxygen to Manaus city in January 15, 2021, despite the prevalence of the hostile and pro-US regime of Jair Bolsonaro. Besides the donation of oxygen, the Venezuelan people has granted to Amazonas state a committee of 107 resident doctors to alleviate the collapse of the local healthcare system.



On the issue of emergency relief amidst pandemic

As it is already known, Covid-19 pandemic that spread over the capitalist world has accelerated an already smouldering crisis. In Brazil, the pandemic has intensified the economic crisis that began in 2014. The lockdown on economic activity due to Covid-19, without proper support for the toiling masses and the small and middle-scale entrepreneurs, has resulted in wiping off tens of millions jobs and growing distress. Just like other countries in the capitalist world, Brazil has entered into a debate on granting a emergency relief that could economically support social distancing.

Jair Bolsonaro, in collusion with his Minister of Economy, Paulo Guedes, has stated that an emergency relief could ruin the government accounts, that already face annual public deficits of 300 billion reais (USD 55.1 billion). Because of the spread of famine and ransackings that were seen in the markets of urban centers, they stepped back and proposed a monthly 200 reais (USD 36) relief for unemployed and semi-unemployed toilers. In face of such whimsy amount (according to figures of March 2020, the minimum necessary amount for a family of four persons to survive would be 4277 reais a month, USD 786), parliamentary opposition has protested, and the government had to grant the payment of a 600 reais (USD 110) emergency relief from April 2020.

The fact that more than 60 million Brazilians fitted the necessary criteria to receive the relief shows that unemployment in Brazil is much larger than the official number of 15 million unemployed. With the end of the payment of the relief in December 2020, tens of millions of Brazilians are returning to starvation.

Bolsonaro repeats the lie that keeping the relief would ruin Brazil, on the reason that is costed 322 billion reais for the public safes, when already by the beginning of pandemic, the government has granted 1.3 trillion reais (USD 239 billion) to help local bank conglomerates.

Due to the demand for the returning of the payment of emergency relief, Paulo Guedes has been using the issue as a bargain to impose his anti-people and pro-finance agenda: he agrees with the returning of the relief, since it is allowed, at the same time, to cut rights of public employees, and to cut funds on Education and Healthcare budgets. The many strata of the Brazilian ruling classes currently find themselves in a harsh dispute to put the emergency relief issue on their own favour.

The Brazilian mass movements, on their side, are carrying on the claim for returning the emergency relief without the removal of any right. Their more militant strata are raising the flag of the minimum-wage (1100 reais, USD 202) emergency relief.



Down with the attempts of shutting down democratic voices in Brazil!

One inevitable consequence of the trend towards fascism in Brazil has been the attempts of shutting down the voices of the masses' champions, and the voices of the opposition against Jair Bolsonaro's regime.

A tragicomic event that gained repercussion in December 2020 was a contract that was signed between the Ministry of Economy and "BR+ Comunicação" company, with the intention of manufacturing a "blacklist" of personalities and social media "influencers", which would be, according to at least questionable notions, "slanderers" of Bolsonaro's government. Despite the reasonable questionings that such "contract" could be a "smoke curtain" to undercover a possible money laundering, it is necessary to emphasize the following facts: the reactionary government is aware of influential people which, on a certain measure, carry on opposition; the reactionary government has material resources to carry forward an attempt of shutting down the voices of opposition.

The year 2021 has barely started, and similar events are taking place again and again. "Repórter Brasil" media press, a respected mean of opposition against Brazilian reactionary classes, has suffered hacker attacks between January 6 and January 12, thus causing instability in the access to its webpage. On January 6, an anonymous e-mail message has blackmailed Repórter Brasil to continue the attacks, unless the news published between the years of 2003 and 2005 were erased. In the following day, the headquarters of Repórter Brasil has suffered an attempt of breaking in. The headquarters' door was broke down, but the housebreaking could not continue because of the presence of neighbors. On

January 13, a new anonymous e-mail message has threatened not only to take the website down, but to "harm" employees of Repórter Brasil as well.

On January 1, the people's attorney José Vargas Junior was arrested at Redenção municipality, Pará state, Northern region of Brazil, under the false charge of taking part in the disappearance of Cícero José Rodrigues de Souza, former city councillor of Redenção. The police has used WhatsApp audio messages, in which Vargas speaks ironically and playfully about the mentioned case with his associate, as a pretext to arrest him. Nevertheless, this is virtually about an arbitrary arrest against a people's attorney who has defended the farmers of Santa Lúcia estate, which, in 2017, were victims of Pau D'Arco Massacre, when civil and military policemen have slaughtered ten poor peasants. Almost four years after the bloodshed, the assassins remain free, while the arbitrary imprisonment against Vargas is maintained.

Besides, Vargas was not only responsible for defending the farmers of Santa Lúcia estate, but also for upholding Kayapó indigenous people, whose ancestral domain was being encroached by mining companies. Vargas was also responsible for a symbolic victory of a lawsuit moved forward by landless farmers against the big JBS company. Therefore, Vargas is a reference in the struggle of the oppressed peoples in a region where the oppression of landlords and capitalists reign, one of the few voices who courageously denounces the arbitrariness of the powerful ones. His arbitrary arrest, that was made in front of his wife and children, represents an attack not only against his person, but also against all of those who uphold the Brazilian toiling masses.

THE SHUTTING DOWN OF FORD PLANTS AND THE BOTTOM OF BRAZILIAN DEINDUSTRIALIZATION

In the beginning of January 2021, Ford has announced that it will shut down, in Brazil, the manufacturing operations in the plants of Camaçari (in the state of Bahia), Taubaté (in the state of São Paulo) and Horizonte (Ceará state) municipalities already by this year. The alleged pretext was the “persisting poor economic environment”, and the “additional pressure caused by pandemic”. Nevertheless, this is about more complex causes. In 2019, the company had already shut down its plant in São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo state, after 52 years of operation.

A study carried on by the Inter-Union Bureau of Socio-Economic Statistics and Studies (“Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Socioeconômicos”, DIEESE, in Portuguese) has shown that such decision will impact up to 118.800 jobs in Brazil, among direct and indirect workers, and also in correlated jobs in trade and service sectors. The same study also indicates that the impact caused over the income of the workers of Ford expanded production chain will hit up to 2.5 billion reais (USD 459.5 million).

According to the Metallurgist Workers’ Trade Union of Taubaté, in the plant of the city alone, the company is being targeted by about 280 labor lawsuits that may cover consolidated liabilities of up to 25 million reais (USD 4.58 million), even though the company has received tax exemptions from the state, and 4 million reais (USD 744 thousand) of municipal exemptions over the last five years.

Ford issue clearly shows that the empty talk made over the last decade along all the governments, on the “necessity of reforms”, and on “austerity on public expenditures”, besides other measures to hold the economy in face of one more world capitalist cri-

sis, is nothing more than neoliberal apologetic to try to sustain the profits of imperialist companies. No evil anti-worker and anti-people reform has brought any positive economic result for the country: it has only threw over the shoulders of the toilers the burden of the crisis, who have been suffering more and more the effects of this crisis in their daily lives, with the absolute loss of basic rights.

Clearly, this is not a situation that has developed only because of individual decisions of the governments, and that could be solved by well-intentioned candidates who are going to run for the next sham elections that will take place in 2022. The Ford issue illustrates the situation of a semi-colonial country like Brazil, that shrinks its industries to consolidate itself as a mere exporter of agricultural products and raw materials to the big powers.

In 2020 alone, 5.500 factories were shut down. Between 2015 and 2020, 36.600 factories were closed down. It means that 17 factories have been closing every day in Brazil since then.

Carlos Von Doellinger, current Chairman of the Institute of Applied Economic Survey (“Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada”, IPEA, in Portuguese), has upheld that Brazil should give up on supporting the industrial sector, and should invest in agri-business and mining alone. His statements have gained big repercussions among manufacturers, but they clearly show which path is being taken by Bolsonaro’s government, as well as by the economic management of Paulo Guedes, that aims at deepening the submission of our country to foreign interests, throwing our entire people in distress to guarantee the profits of his masters.



Partial figures on the class struggles in the Brazilian countryside in 2020



In the year of 2020, despite the pandemic, the trend of a high number of agrarian conflicts has prevailed in Brazil. Far from preventing them, the failed attempts of imposing social distancing were taken by the ruling classes as a way to carry on a crackdown against rural populations. Rising deforestation and land-grabbing that took place in Brazil over the last year have gained worldwide repercussions.

According to partial figures of 2020, recently broadcasted by the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT, "Comissão Pastoral da Terra", in Portuguese), 1.083 cases of "violence against land occupation and land tenure" took place against 130.137 farm families, in comparison to 1.254 cases, covering 144.472 farm families, in 2019. 178 "cases of invasion" took place in 2020, covering 55.821 farm families, in comparison to 9 cases that have covered 39.697 farm families in the year of 2019 (54,5% of the affected victims were indigenous people, 11,8% were Quilombola folks, and 11,2% were landless peasants' families). Besides, in 2020, 62 occurrences of armed attacks took place against 3.859 farm families, in comparison to 21 occurrences in 2019. If we take such criteria into account, it is even possible to speak about a substantial increasing of rural reactionary violence.

Though still according to partial figures, there was a decrease in the number of activists and or-

dinary toilers who were assassinated during agrarian conflicts in 2020. Nevertheless, this figure must not obscure some grotesque events that took place along that year.

In July-August 2020, in Amazonas state, Northern region of Brazil, after some local bureaucrats have encroached a territory claimed by Maraguá indigenous people to carry on illegal sports fishing in the middle of Abacaxis River, it has begun an agrarian conflict that resulted in harsh militarization and suppression imposed by the Special Operations Command and the Environmental Battalion of the Military Police. Villagers have denounced intimidations, spanking and torture made by the police in the villages along Abacaxis River.

In the month of August 2020 as well, the evil actions of Minas Gerais state (Southeastern Brazil) Military Police to attack the struggling peasants of Quilombo Campo Grande (Ariadnópolis Sugar Mill) village took place in Campo do Meio municipality. A convoy of hundreds of strongly armed military policemen, even snipers, was mobilized to "re-establish land tenure" of companies that owe tens of millions reais to public safes.

There are no doubts that, in 2021, the persisting attacks of the reactionary classes against Brazilian rural masses will demand an even larger solidarity.