

PUBLIC STATEMENT FROM CNTE ON POPULAR PROTESTS IN BRAZIL

Since June 12, Brazil has seen numerous protests, mostly organized by the youth, which began after the announcement of increase in the price of public transportation in cities across the country.

The current dimension of the demonstrations shows that public transportation is just one of the claims of the protestors. The people in the streets, although with no traditional leadership - either by people or organized entities - has expressed discontent with government spending to build stadiums for the 2014 FIFA World Cup, as well as the historically insufficient public investment in education and health, with the patronage and political corruption across the three spheres of the federation (Union, States and Municipalities) and lack of participatory democracy, which would enable the periodic public consultation on topics relevant to society, such as the allocation of 100% of oil wealth for public education.

CNTE sympathizes with the legitimate and urgent agenda presented by the majority of members of these protest movements, but is against vandalism, violence, looting and damage to public and historical property, in alignment with the very orientation of most of the protesters trying to prevent these actions during the demonstrations.

We acknowledge much of the popular discontent - in fact, it comprises continuous claims of the working class, in particular of teachers - but we believe that the Democratic State, in the current context of civilization, must be preserved by Brazilian society without risks of setbacks that marked the history of Brazil and the Latin American continent.

To this end, CNTE considers political reform a top priority for Brazilian society, empowering parties - making them true representatives of various segments of society - and expanding participative democracy in the country. Feelings of disbelief and disgust of young demonstrators for politics (a trademark of the protests across the country) express the urgency of this agenda to Congress.

As a consequence of political reform, the youth and all of Brazilian society shall demand structuring reforms to consolidate the current process of inclusive development and opportunities for all, which is something that requires tax reform and a priority given to income proportionality of taxes; greater access of youth to school, higher education and employment; guarantee of health, transportation, security, housing, and other public policies provided for in the Federal Constitution.

CNTE also understands that the current claims come at a time of consolidation of democratic structures in Brazil and, consequently, of greater awareness and freedom of speech which the Brazilian people can benefit from. However, we must overcome anachronistic political practices imposed by oligarchies who still rule the Congress and most of the powers across the states and municipalities, in order to qualify politics and make it the main area of contention for the youth, workers and society in general.

Finally, there is a need for being cautious toward opportunists, especially those from the mainstream media - who sponsored the 1964 Military Coup along with sections of the national bourgeoisie - for they are already attempting to link popular protests to actions against the very political actors who have been, by and large, promoting emancipatory public policies and citizenship across the country. This attempt has the clear purpose of confusing public opinion and thus leveraging in favor of regressive sectors trying to return to power at any cost. And if that happens, protests for further social advances will be seriously compromised.

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CNTE Executive Board