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*When the people no longer have anything to eat,  
they will eat the rich.*



**Sources:** Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research [Image: Maruja Mallo (Spain), *La Verbena*, 1927]

On January 8, large crowds dressed in the colors of the Brazilian flag descended on the country's capital, Brasilia. They invaded federal buildings, including Congress, the Supreme Court and the presidential palace, and vandalized public property. The attack, carried out by supporters of the former President Jair Bolsonaro, it was not a surprise, since the coup plotters They had been planning "weekend demonstrations" on social media for days. When Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (known as Lula) was formally sworn in as Brazil's new president a week earlier, on January 1, not there was such a tumult; It seems

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that the Vandals were waiting for the city to was quiet and Lula out of town. Despite all his Swaggering, the attack was an act of extreme cowardice.

Meanwhile, the defeated Bolsonaro was nowhere near Brasilia. He fled Brazil before the inauguration—presumably to escape the persecution — seeking refuge in Orlando, Florida (United States). Although Bolsonaro was not in Brasilia, the Bolsonarists, as He knows his supporters, they left their mark all over the city. Even before Bolsonaro lost the election to Lula last In October, *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil* suggested that the country would experience a "Bolsonarism without Bolsonaro". This prediction is supported by the fact that the Liberal Party, extreme right, which served as a political vehicle for Bolsonaro during his presidency, holds the largest benches both in the House of Deputies as in the Senate of the country, while toxic influence of the right persists both in Brazil's elected bodies and in the political climate, especially on social media.



May (Egypt), *Un soir à Cannes* [An Afternoon in Cannes], 1948.

The two men responsible for public security in Brasilia — Anderson Torres (secretary of Public Security of the Federal District) and Ibaneis Rocha (governor of the Federal District) — are close to Bolsonaro. Torres was minister of justice and public security in Bolsonaro's government, while Rocha formally supported his candidacy. As the Bolsonaristas prepared their assault on the capital, both men seemed to have abdicated their responsibilities: Torres was on vacation in Orlando, while Rocha took the afternoon off on the last working day before the coup attempt. For this complicity in the violence,

Torres was removed from office and faces charges, while Rocha is suspended. The federal government took over security and has arrested more than a thousand of these "fanatical Nazis," as Lula called them. There are good reasons to claim that these "fanatical Nazis" do not deserve amnesty.

The slogans and posters that invaded Brasilia on January 8 they were less about Bolsonaro and more about the coup plotters' hatred of Lula and the potential of his popular government. This feeling share large business sectors – mainly agribusiness – who are furious with the reforms proposed by Lula. The attack was, In part, the result of the frustration accumulated by people to whom that intentional disinformation campaigns and the use of the system judicial to unseat the Workers' Party (PT), the party of Lula, have led to believe that Lula is a criminal, although the courts have ruled that this is false. It was also a warning from the elites. Brazilian. The disorderly nature of the attack on Brasilia is resembles January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol United by supporters of former US President Donald Trump. In both cases, the illusions of the far right, either about the dangers of US President Joe Biden's "socialism" or of Lula's "communism", symbolize the hostile opposition of the elites to the slightest retreat of neoliberal austerity.



Kartick Chandra Pyne (India), *Workers*, 1965.

The attacks on government headquarters in the United States (2021) and Brazil (2023), as well as the recent coup d'état in Peru (2022), are not random events; Below them is a pattern that needs to be examined. Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research has been engaged in this study since our founding five years ago. In our first post, *In the Ruins of*

*the Present* (March 2018), we offered a preliminary analysis of this pattern, which I will develop later.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the withering of the Third World project as a result of the debt crisis, the neoliberal globalization program promoted by the States was imposed United. This programme was characterized by the withdrawal of the State from the regulation of capital and the erosion of welfare policies social. The neoliberal framework had two main consequences: Firstly, a rapid increase in social inequality, with the growth of billionaires at one end and the growth of the poverty in the other, together with an exacerbation of inequality in the other. North-South axis; and secondly, the consolidation of a force "centrist" policy that pretended that history, and therefore political, they had finished, leaving only the administration (which in Brazil is called *bien centrão*, or "centro"). Most of the Countries of the world were victims of both the austerity agenda neoliberal as of this ideology of the "end of politics", which became increasingly undemocratic, advocating that technocrats were in charge. However, these austerity policies, which They fully affect humanity, they created their own new politics in the streets, a trend that was foreshadowed by the "IMF riots" and The "bread riots" of the 1980s and later He merged into the "anti-globalization" protests. The agenda of the U.S.-led globalization produced new contradictions that belied the argument that politics had has come to an end.

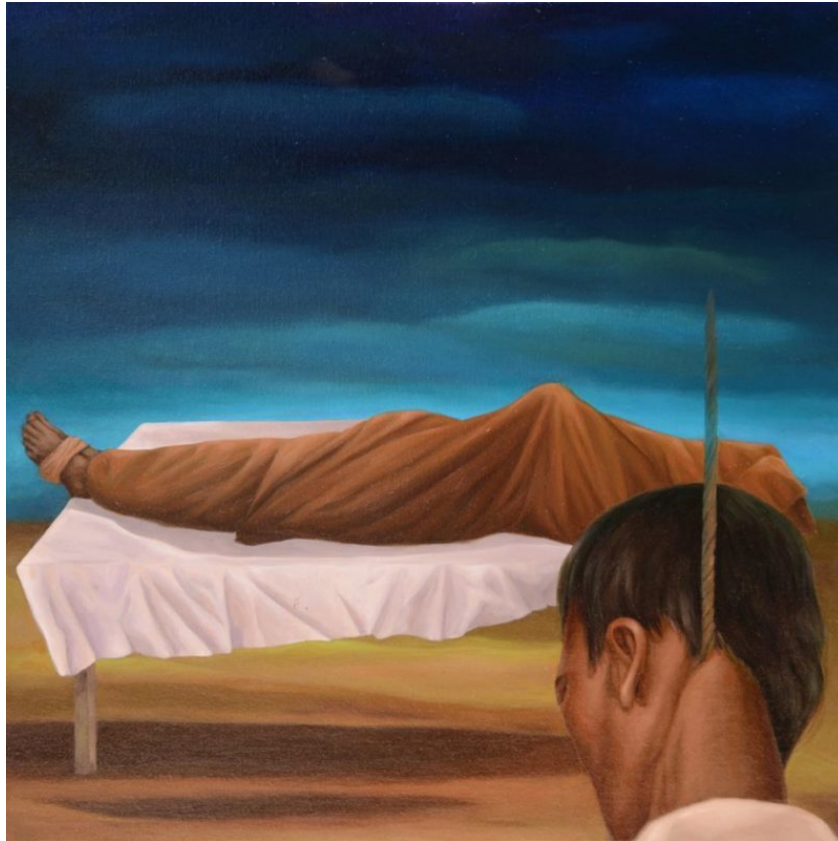
The Great Recession that began with the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 increasingly invalidated the political credentials of the "centrists" who had managed the austerity regime. The *World Inequality Report 2022* is an indictment of the legacy of neoliberalism. Today, wealth inequality is as severe as in the early years of the 20th century: on average, the poorest half of the world's population owns only \$4,100 per adult (in purchasing power parity), while the richest 10 percent owns \$771,300, roughly 190 times more wealth. Income inequality is equally harsh: the richest 10% absorb 52% of global income, while the poorest 50% have only 8.5%. The situation gets worse if we look at the ultra-rich. Between 1995 and 2021, the richest 1% wealth grew astronomically, hoarding 38% of global wealth, while the poorest 50% only "reached a terrifying 2%," the report's authors write. Over the same period, the share of global wealth held by the richest 0.1% rose from 7% to 11%. This obscene wealth — largely untaxed — provides this small fraction of the world's population with disproportionate power over political life and information, and increasingly reduces the survivability of the poor.

The World Bank's *Global Economic Prospects* report (January 2023) predicts that, by the end of 2024, the gross domestic product (GDP) of 92 of the world's poorest countries will be 6% lower than the level expected on the eve of the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2024, these countries are expected to suffer a cumulative loss of GDP equivalent to approximately 30% of its 2019 GDP. As central banks in richer countries tighten monetary policies, capital is exhausted for investments in the most and increases the cost of debts already incurred. The total debt of these poorest countries, notes the World Bank, "is the highest in the last 50 years." About one in five of these countries is "effectively locked in global debt markets", compared to one in fifteen in 2019. All these countries except China "They suffered a particularly sharp contraction in investment, of more than of 8%" during the pandemic, "a deeper decline than in 2009", in full Great Recession. The report estimates that aggregate investment in these countries will be 8% lower in 2024 than expected in 2020. Before this reality, the World Bank offers the following forecast: "The slow investment weakens the growth rate of potential output, reducing the capacity of economies to increase average incomes, promote shared prosperity and repay debts." In other words, poorer nations are they will sink deeper into a debt crisis and fall into a debt crisis. permanent condition of social crisis.

The World Bank has sounded the alarm, but the forces of "centrism"—beholden to the billionaire class and austerity policy—simply refuse to turn away from the neoliberal catastrophe. If a center-left or left-wing leader tries to pull his country out of persistent social inequality and the polarized distribution of wealth, he faces the wrath not only of "centrists," but also of wealthy Northern bondholders, the International Monetary Fund, and Western states.

After Pedro Castillo won Peru's presidency in July of 2021, he was not allowed to practice even a Scandinavian form of social democracy; the coup plotters against him began before he took office. The civilized policies that would end with hunger and illiteracy they are simply not allowed by the billionaire class, who spend huge amounts of money on *think tanks* and media to undermine any project of decency and finance the dangerous forces of the extreme right, which displace the blame for the social chaos of the tax-free ultra-rich and capitalist system towards the poor and marginalized.

The delirious insurrection in Brasilia arose from the same dynamic that produced the coup d'état in Peru: a process in which the forces "Centrist" policies are financed and brought to power in the South Global to ensure its own citizens stay in the end of the tail, while the wealthy bondholders free of Global North taxes remain at the forefront.



Ivan Sagita (Indonesia), *A Dish for Life*, 2014.

On the barricades of Paris, on October 14, 1793, Pierre Gaspard Chaumette, president of the Paris Commune who himself fell into the guillotine to which he sent many others, quoted these beautiful words of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "When the people no longer have anything to eat, they will eat the rich."

Source: <https://thetricontinental.org/es/newsletterissue/brasil-ataque-ultraderecha/>