

## **The relation between the advancement of conservatism and the attacks on LGBTIQ rights**

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1. There is a major increase of the consequences of brutal domination for the working and 'progress defeated' classes, which has been initiated since colonial exploration in several of our countries. It has been deepened by hundreds of years of slave regimes and is combined with decades of authoritarian regimes and dictatorships. In the context of the ideological dispute marked by the collapse and failure of the experiences of "real socialism", there has still been a cycle of promotion of more democratic and popular governments in Latin America. However, the dominant classes - whether via coups or through elections - were able to break the continuity and "historical memory" of socialism among the workers;

2. With the productive restructuring of capital and neoliberalism, the most basic traditions of class struggle and organization were disrupted. It seems to us that the immediate task for today's times, obviously, is not to abstractly organize popular insurrection, or to build an electoral alternative of government, but to contribute to the ongoing reconstruction of social movements, to encourage self-organization of workers, to initiate the reconstitution of the socialist movement.

3. One characteristic of the left that we are trying to build has been the reaction against catastrophism and the pragmatism of the traditional left. This left movement, facing the capitalist crisis, focuses its efforts on the "struggle for leadership" of small organizations. We are used to fratricidal struggle between tendencies, instead of concentrating energy on the consolidation of popular organizations, to win partial and progressive conquests, swimming against the sign of fragmentation and operating for unity among organizations, etc.

4. In this context of the "alternative crisis" in which the left is found, and also of the need to recreate a socialist counterculture and the support of popular organizations, the socialist LGBTIQ can contribute with a fundamental debate: who is the working class? What do they fight for? For what is ready to fight? What is its contribution to the strategic and not just tactical definitions of leftist organizations? From these reflections, we can understand 1) what is the contribution of LGBTIQ movements in the fight against reactionary forces and 2) what is the contribution of revolutionary organizations, not only with LGBTIQ activists, in reaction to conservatism and reactionaryism.

- a. Even as involved in the struggle for human rights, political movements (at least in Latin America in the 70s) followed a rather misguided tradition of

questioning whether the "gay struggle" (at that time known in that way) should not be a settled issue after the "social, political and economic transformation of the capitalist system", that is, an absolutely secondary agenda;

- b. There was an understanding that the most important agent of the class struggle, would be the factory labor, masculinized, and, in the Eurocentric tradition of socialism, the white man. The understanding of these groups was that the LGBTIQ experience was a petty-bourgeois deviation, not a true expression of gender and sexuality. It gained strength because the discourses of hatred and violence against deviant sexualities of the heterosexual "standard" that were (and still are) propagated by the Church and other ideological apparatuses, with evident relation on how these forms of discourse assume the structures of capitalist domination.
- c. On the other hand, groups of the LGBTIQ movement argued against the left, accusing that Marxist orthodoxy relegated any "identity struggle" to irrelevance. This positioning gained strength as many leftist organizations demanded that their activists keep secret on their non-heterosexual and non-cisgender identities. Moreover, the discourse of these organizations was that the "identity struggles" would divert the focus from the main struggle: "the end of capitalism."
- d. There was then the LGBTIQ movement pressed on the one hand by an orthodox left with its bourgeois morality that made fun of the LGBTIQ movement and, on the other hand, the LGBTIQ groups that ignored any possibility of combining its own struggle with the class struggle, of the exploited and oppressed;
- e. It was the experience and victories of socialist LGBTIQ struggles, and the politicization of activists who had joined some of these parties and radical left-wing organizations that were able to provoke displacements so that organizations would cease to attract LGBTIQ activists just to become the basis of organizations, seeking to recognize them as independent and legitimate movements, who decided their own tactics in the struggle for LGBTIQ liberation. From this important step emerged the possibility of party programs include many other elements of the LGBTIQ movement. It is essential to advance in this understanding, of deep intersection between LGBTIQ struggle as a working class struggle, under the perspective and methods of class struggle.
- f. The consequences of these conceptions can still be recognized in many left-wing organizations. Although LGBTIQphobia contributes as a fundamental aspect of capitalist development - by the precariousness of the workforce and by the control of bodies - there is a great number of organizations that do not

understand the dimension of LGBTIQ struggles in their strategic construction. Although LGBTIQphobia is rejected in its programs and ethical rules, there are few LGBTIQ leaders in our organizations, few questioning on cisgender and heterosexual privileges, giving less importance for self-organization of LGBTIQ, and conflicting relations between LGBTIQ and non-LGBTIQ activists. There is difficulty in reflecting on how to put into practice the political formulation of LGBTIQ as part of the general confrontation with the attacks of capitalism. It seems to us that this can lead to three situations:

f.1) Leftist political organizations that, when they ascend to power through the institutional path, don't give importance nor advance the women and LGBTIQ's rights (not to mention the lack of progress in relation to the demands of black movements). In addition, many democratic and popular governments (especially in Latin America) are known to govern in alliance with deeply reactionary parties and social groups, supported by groups of religious fundamentalists, landowners and representatives of the arms industry. In search of governance and flexibility for the composition of Ministries, governments such as the PT in Brazil allowed several reactionary sectors to grow. In an association between the lack of democratization of the media associated with the emptying of the discussion about gender and sexuality in the schools, these governments ceased to dispute the mass consciousness, allowing absurd setbacks to take place at the expense of the advance of reactionary forces and right.

f.2) Radical left organizations that do not understand the intersection between different social markers (such as gender, race and class) in working class morphology. They also fail to understand that the LGBTIQ struggle does not refer only to an interest in individual freedom, but to a demand for collective emancipation and the right to existence. In a context in which the right and the reactionary forces are liberal in the economy but conservative in the customs, the traditional organizations can't understand the speed the right advances, becoming much less effective in the resistance against reactionaryism;

f.3) The rise of LGBTIQ organizations completely displaced from the reference of class struggle. With the displacement of the political axis of many organizations that go from radical actions on the streets to exclusively institutional actions (through NGO that compete for private or public funding), phenomena such as pink-money, pink-washing and homonationalist disputes can be much more easily found. In addition, with the deepening of social inequality, it is also much more common to find more elite LGBTIQ organizations;

g. The advance of reactionary forces throughout the world walks together with the exhaustion of the "progressive" political cycle in Latin America, caused by the reordering of the imperialist political centers of power, the deepening of the neoliberal agenda to overcome the 2008 crisis, the draining of the

neodevelopment models based on extractivism. The right tries to present alternatives to overcome the economic and social crisis in the world. The restoration of capitalism in Russia and China paved the way for a very strong capitalist offensive. Imperialism conquers positions on the political, economic, and military ground. The election of Donald Trump in the US, the strengthening of Marine Le Pen in France, the rise of Jair Bolsonaro's in Brazil and Viktor Orbán in Hungary etc., pushes the organizations of the radical left into extremely defensive positions. The reactions are obvious: general strikes in several European countries (such as Greece, France, Spanish State, Portugal and even Brazil) and the electoral rise of an anti-austerity left, as in Mexico, open possibilities for confronting the reactionary forces;

- h. In addition, fundamentalist Christian sectors become stronger, especially in the Americas, due to tax exemptions for church construction, questionable campaign financing, to offer exits in the face of the great hopelessness caused by the crisis and by a strong alliance with neoliberal sectors in politics. Neopentecostalism acts in the logic of moral panic and fomenting hatred against LGBTIQ and finds articulation even in sectors of the Judiciary. The indications of ultra-conservative judges for the Supreme Courts, by Donald Trump and Michel Temer, place the Judiciary as a fundamental agent for the retrogression of LGBTIQ rights and advancement of the conservative right. As examples, in Brazil we have actions carried out by judges for censorship of plays, art shows and even the release of "LGBTIQ cure" methods by psychologists.
- i. These experiences of retrogressions in the field of rights are felt especially in countries where this neoliberal right is also conservative in customs. It expresses, above all, a constant intention to control the bodies - especially the marginalized bodies of LGBTIQ, women, black people, people living with HIV, etc., even without explicit moral grounds. To society in general, the control of these bodies shows the capacity and force of the State. For example, a number of bills such as the criminalization of people living with HIV, the prohibition of the day-after pill, preventing trans people from legally rectifying their name or using toilets according to their gender, explicitly serve to "Show who's in charge", to bring LGBTIQ people's down.
- j. Even with the few rights extended during the progressive cycles - especially in Latin American countries - the patriarchal, racist and neoliberal structure, deepened by the colonialist exploitation is revealed in all political processes, relationships and social institutions with violence, domination, extermination and repression. The reactionary forces, in our opinion, acts on the logic of necropolitics, a concept of Achille Mbembe, a sociologist from Cameroon, who recovers African anticolonial perspectives in a dialogue with Foucault's concept of biopower and sovereign power. Mbembe talks about a power to

dictate who should live and who should die. It is the power of determination over life and death by depriving people of their human status. The process of exploitation in the neoliberal system is seen through the extermination of groups that have no place in the system, a policy that shifts the axis of exclusion to extermination (so present in corrective rapes of lesbians and in the genocide of trans women).

- k. It seems to us, finally, that this context of necropolitics points out the challenges for the organizations of the radical left. The relation between right-wing advancement and the impact on LGBTIQ lives is expressed in numbers. Last year, Brazil figured as the world top of LGBTIQ violent deaths (445 cases, or one every 19 hours). The scene is awful: because of hate crimes and the lack of public policies, the average life expectancy of transgender women is no more than 35 years. In addition to the extremely high murder rates, other forms of violence are frequently suffered by the LGBTIQ population: mental health problems, unemployment, family difficulties, alarming rates of infection with diseases such as HIV/AIDS and syphilis, kick out from homes, verbal abuse, torture, murder, corrective rapes, abandonment in old age, etc.
- l. It seems to us, therefore, that the tasks related to the development of self-activity and self-organization of the subaltern classes acquire a fundamental value in this next moment. It is about doing politics with people deprived of citizenship or social and political rights, seeking to understand who the working class is. Building safe and comfortable spaces for LGBTIQ and its political cultures, setting the basis with democracy, and organized collective action.
- m. The conservative right must be the opposite of everything we have projected to reconstruct the world socialist movement. We need to advance in the protagonism of the women, of the LGBTIQ, of the black people, of the marginalized of the cities. For the reactionary forces, the occupation of politics by these sectors is unbearable, the reason why Marielle Franco was executed four months ago. She was a black councilwoman, socialist, lesbian/bisexual woman and favelada. The only way out to face the right is to speak out, making such brutality public, transforming the pain and the indignation into struggle. Marielle Franco represents all we want to be and all we want to do.

*Marielle Franco vive! Marielle Franco lives!*