

From the favela for social inclusion



By Roberto Morejón

Brazil's presidential candidates, campaigning for the October 30th runoff election, are touring the country in a frantic crusade to attract followers.

While the current president, the ultra-right-wing Jair Bolsonaro, was attacking progressive governments in Latin America from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva was entering a highly dangerous area, without abandoning his plan to talk to evangelical sectors.

Former president Lula boldly entered the German Complex, a slum area in Rio de Janeiro, where he promised to implement policies to increase social inclusion.

The former metallurgical leader, of humble extraction, seemed to evoke his origins when he spoke to his fellow favela residents about his hope to return to the My House My Life project, implemented during his previous terms in office, to generate jobs for the poorest.

Adults living in disadvantaged areas of Rio de Janeiro recall the cable cars and the Growth Acceleration Program, works paralyzed by Bolsonaro.

The fact that Lula campaigned in one of the most dangerous suburbs of Rio de Janeiro highlights his eagerness to dispute voters to his political rival, who, to the astonishment of many, won supporters in that region.

This was thanks to the fact that activists of the powerful evangelical church, sympathetic to the extremist Bolsonaro, are active in Rio's insecure poverty belt.

But not only the followers of that creed promote the vote for Bolsonaro, but also police officers accused of exceeding their repressive functions and agents of parapolice squads, whom the former army captain defended, because in his opinion they are useful in the clash with organized crime and drug trafficking.

Knowing that the influence of the evangelicals catapulted Bolsonaro to the presidency, now Lula talks with some of his segments, an opportunity to reject falsehoods such as the one that assures that if the left wins on October 30, the churches will be closed.

With great skill and persuasive power, Lula is stripping himself of the stereotypes that the right wing foists on him and broadening consensus, as evidenced by his instructions to his followers to wear white instead of red.

Da Silva and the Workers' Party thus make it clear that the project defended by them rests on a broad coalition with parties of the left and center.

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