

Vijay Prashad* and Zoe Alexandra**: Lula and wild capitalism

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Juliana Cardoso sits in her office in front of a lavender, orange and yellow mandala that was made for her. She has been a member of the Sao Paulo city council since 2008. On October 2, 2022, as a candidate for the Workers' Party (PT), she won a seat in the Brazilian Federal Chamber of Deputies. In April 2022, Cardoso wrote that the rights of indigenous peoples they did not come from the goodness of those in power, but from the centuries-long struggles of indigenous peoples. Although guaranteed in the Constitution [de 1988] daily these rights are threatened. His political work has been defined by his commitment to his own indigenous heritage, but also by his deep antipathy to the wild capitalism who has cannibalized his country. Bolsonaro had accelerated a project that Cardoso described as avalanche of savage capitalism. It is a capitalism that kills, that destroys, that makes a lot of money for few people. The current beneficiaries of this capitalism refuse to acknowledge that the days of unlimited profits are almost over. These people –whose majority supported Bolsonaro– they live in their own bubble; with a lot of money, with swimming pools. Lula's recent electoral victory will not immediately stop his politics of death but it certainly opened up a possibility. New studies on poverty in Brazil reveal alarming facts. The one from FGV Social in July 2022 found that almost 63 million Brazilians –30 percent of the population– live below the poverty line (between 2019 and 2021, 10 million people added to that percentage). The World Bank has documented the spatial and racial divisions of Brazilian poverty: three out of 10 poor people in Brazil are Afro-Brazilian women in urban areas, while three-quarters of children on the poverty line live in rural areas. Bolsonaro's upward wealth redistribution policies during and after the pandemic contributed to overall poverty in the country, and exacerbated already existing social inequalities of race and region. This, says Cardoso, is evidence of the wild capitalism that has trapped his country and that has left tens of millions of Brazilians in a hollow, without hope of living. Juliana entered politics through the struggles developed by the Base Ecclesiastical Communities (CEB) of the Catholic Church, learning its ethics through liberation theology through the work of Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns and Paulo Freire. You have to engage with people in their struggles, have a dialogue with them about it, said. This attitude toward building struggles and conversing with anyone defines Juliana as she prepares to go to Brasilia to assume her seat in the right-wing-dominated Congress. we are not bureaucrats said. We are militants. People like her who will now be in Congress will use the instrument of the mandate to advance an agenda to improve the conditions of daily life. Pointing to her mandala in her office, Juliana says: I think the purple part is my shyness. His active life in politics, he says, somehow changed me from being a shy person to a much more assertive one. There is only one reason why I'm here he says, and that's it to sow, to have hope for seeds that will fight with me for the working class, for women, during this difficult class struggle Lula will be sworn in as president on January 1, 2023. He will have to face a Congress controlled by the right. This is not new, although the center, the opportunist bloc in Parliament that controls things, will now have to work with the far-right members of Bolsonaro's movement. Juliana and her left-wing allies will be in the minority. The right, she says, enters politics with no desire to open a dialogue about the future of the country. Many right-wing politicians are tough, made up of fake news and a stifling attitude toward money and religion. Hate, weapons, death: these are the words that seem to define the right in Brazil. It is because of them that politics it is very violent Lula is an ace says Juliana. Few politicians have the ability to dialogue and convince others about the correctness of their positions. The left is weak in the National Congress, but it has the advantage of Lula. Lula will need to be the big star Juliana said. You will have to lead the charge to save Brazil from rampant capitalism. globetrotter indian journalist Journalist and co-editor of Peoples Dispatch

