

# What's Left of the Brazilian Left?

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In May 2017, Left politics in Brazil were pretty bleak. It was almost a year after the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT), whose ousting from power brought along with it an onslaught of austerity policies.<sup>2</sup>

Many of these policies had originated during the PT's administration but were now moving forward at an accelerated pace. These reforms included a twenty-year freeze on government spending for public education and health, a change in labor legislation to allow contracts to trump workers' rights laws, the elimination of automatic union dues, a law that makes the outsourcing of work easier for employers, and a major overhaul of the public pension system. Although ex-President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (henceforth Lula) still led in the polls for the October 2018 election, he was also facing corruption charges (undoubtedly politically motivated) and his imprisonment appeared imminent.<sup>3</sup> The violence in the countryside against rural social movements was also at a peak.<sup>4</sup> A year later, the murder of Marielle Franco, a Black, feminist, queer, and socialist City Council member in Rio de Janeiro, would illustrate the same impunity in urban areas. In Brazil, the moment for socialist organizing appeared a remnant of the past.

Yet, also in May 2017, the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST), a movement of farmers fighting for agrarian reform since the early 1980s, organized a seminar on "The Historical Construction of Socialist Pedagogies: The Legacy of the 1917 Russian Revolution." More than 350 activists and teachers from across the country travelled to the MST's Florestan Fernandes National School, a political training school founded in São Paulo in 2005, to take part in the event. The MST leadership invited intellectuals from outside and inside the movement to talk about the organizational and political construction of the Bolshevik revolution; the historical development of socialist education under Soviet leadership; the transformation in the systems and processes of work, peasant agriculture, and agro-ecology; the participation of women and youth in socialism; and the path for implementing socialist pedagogies in the Brazilian public school system. This combining of discussions on politics, economics, and pedagogy exemplified the integration of the MST's agrarian and educational struggles.

Moreover, the organization of the seminar prefigured the type of socialist society the movement hopes to create, with all participants organized into collectives responsible for the cleaning and cooking at the school and the facilitation of the seminar over its three days. On May 26, the last evening of the seminar, the event turned from analysis to celebration, with an elaborate MST *mística*, a cultural performance typical of the movement that draws on dance, theater, poetry, song, and music to embody the struggle for social transformation. The *mística* was a 40-minute enactment of the February and October revolutions, with gripping performances of the murder of Bolshevik leaders and Lenin's galvanizing of the troops, bringing alive in the Brazilian countryside the heroines and heroes of 1917.

Although the past two years have seen a series of setbacks for workers' rights in Brazil, this brief vignette illustrates that concrete struggles for socialist alternatives continue to advance throughout

the country. The MST, one of the longest-standing social movements in Brazil, born out of the return to democracy in the late 1970s and early 1980s, is a reason for cautious optimism. For over three and a half decades, the movement has occupied important spheres of state power, from public schools to agricultural services, and has prefigured within these spheres socialist ideals. I use the term “prefigured” consciously, not to refer to attempts to construct an alternative society outside the current economic and political system, but rather, attempts to implement socialist practices with, in, through, *and* outside of state institutions. The MST has engaged in what Vergara-Camus (2014) refers to as a “pragmatic relationship” with the state, attempting to win concessions at every government level to build their political, economic, and educational program in the Brazilian countryside. This is in contrast, for example, to the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in Mexico, which has rejected all state support.

Of course, the MST’s relationship to the Brazilian state is fraught and full of contradictions. The movement is often critiqued by left activists as selling out, trading in their capacity to mobilize large land occupations for a cozy relationship to the government, and in particular, the PT establishment. I am sympathetic to most critiques of the PT itself, and I support my many friends who have chosen to leave the PT over the past two-and-a-half decades (since the first major expulsion of activists from the party in 1992<sup>5</sup>) to develop other parties and political tendencies with revolutionary potential. However, the argument that the MST has sold out to the PT is simplistic at best, and at worst, this characterization is politically harmful, as it does not acknowledge the real gains this movement has made for socialist struggles. In this article, I will briefly talk about this history, through the particular case of the MST’s educational program, which I define as the movement’s attempt to build in the Brazilian public school system a pedagogical approach that embodies socialist ideals.<sup>6</sup>

First, I describe how the MST initially built its pedagogical proposal in the 1980s and 1990s, emphasizing that the MST has always had a politics of engaging the state regardless of the government’s political allegiance, well before the PT took national power. The movement’s goal has been to use state resources, wherever and whenever possible, to further its economic, political, and pedagogical goals. Second, I analyze the period since Lula’s ascendancy to the presidency in 2003, highlighting some of the contradictions that indeed emerged in MST-PT relations. Even in the context of these relations, the movement maintained an important distance from the party, allowing it to engage in contentious actions while also using state resources to continue expanding its educational program and other institutional initiatives. Finally, I analyze the current political moment and the real threats that this regime poses to the movement’s institutional gains. I argue that the MST’s form of engagement with the Brazilian state over the past three decades has produced enough inroads into a diversity of institutions that the federal government will not be able to simply end the MST’s initiatives. The MST’s extensive social-movement infrastructure, developed through the movement’s strategic and pragmatic engagement with the state, continues to position the movement as a critical node of socialist organizing in Brazil and globally.

## **Engaging the State**

The MST’s initial engagement with the Brazilian state and its public schools took place over what we could call three broad conjunctural periods: dictatorship and political opening (1978-1984); democratic consolidation (1985-1989); neoliberalism and state-society conflict (1990-2002). The initial land occupations that eventually led to the founding of the MST took place in this first period, during a military regime. The Catholic Church had an important role in these initial occupations, as priests following liberation theology created the Pastoral Commission on Land (CPT) in 1975 to help defend the rights of rural workers. The first of the land occupations that led to the founding of the MST took place four years later, on September 7, 1979, when 110 families in the southern region of Brazil occupied the unproductive plantation (*fazenda*) Macali. After a year of resisting police eviction and an outpouring of public support, the families were given the rights to this land by the state

government. Following this initial occupation, the CPT helped to organize dozens of other land occupations that took place across the southern region of Brazil, with different degrees of success.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, other important political developments were taking place across the country.

In 1979, a new military president continued the process of political opening (*abertura*). The most important reforms were the granting of amnesty to exiles and more tolerance of protest. In December 1979, the military regime also passed the Party Reform Bill, which dissolved Brazil's two-party system and enabled the organizing of new political parties. In 1980, the oppositional labor movement, Catholic Church activists, progressive intellectuals, and leaders of the emerging social movements, including the landless movement, came together to form the PT. Many of the landless activists who were involved in regional occupations in the south participated in the PT's founding congress. Two years later, the same grassroots leaders that founded the PT came together to create the Central Union of Workers (CUT), a new, combative labor union confederation.

Even before the MST's formal founding in 1984, local landless activists began to organize educational activities as a response to the demands of parents living in the occupied encampments—primarily the mothers who were overwhelmingly in charge of childcare. Sometimes these were isolated activities, but in many camps the women came together to establish camp-wide childcare offerings, with educational activities for the children about the landless movement and the struggle for agrarian reform. Many of these activists already had experience with Paulo Freire's writings on critical pedagogy through their participation in church study groups.<sup>8</sup>

Salete Campigotto was one of those educational activists, inspired by Freirean theory through her local church study group in the late 1970s, who went on to occupy a large plantation in 1981. In 1983, Salete and the other families in her camp won the legal rights to the land, and after more contentious protest, they also won the right to a public school in their community—the first public school located in an MST settlement. Lacking any teachers willing to teach in the settlement, the government agreed to hire Salete to work at the school, thus beginning the MST's thirty-five-year engagement with the Brazilian state. Salete immediately began incorporating Freirean pedagogies into the classroom. As she explained, "In a small school where you are the teacher and the principal ... you have a lot of space to work. I worked during the dictatorship, and our school was watched because it was on a settlement, but I never had to stop helping students critically analyze their reality." This was the MST's first attempt to prefigure its political goals within a state institution, occurring while the dictatorship was still in place.

When the official return to democracy came in 1985, activism and political organizing in Brazil was already at a peak. The MST was among an array of grassroots groups seeking to transform the state by bringing these organizations' participatory ethos inside state institutions. This was a period in which citizenship was being redefined beyond formal rights, as a more active citizenship, which included engagement in social struggles and direct participation in state decision-making (Dagnino, 1998). The constitutional assembly of 1988 was an opportunity for mobilized groups to institutionalize their calls for women's rights, racial justice, agrarian reform, housing, and so on. However, conservative sectors of Brazilian society also began to organize and were able to block many of these social-movement demands. Consequently, although the 1988 "Citizen's Constitution" brought more rights than ever before, it was a far cry from what the movements had initially hoped.

The MST's first five years as an established organization were during this vibrant moment of civil-society mobilization. As more families received land, there continued to be a demand from the movement's base to construct schools in new settlement communities. The redundant decentralization of the Brazilian education system, which allows state and municipal governments to administer schools in the same geographical location with relative autonomy, created opportunities

for these activists. If a municipal government was antagonistic, the movement could circumvent that government level and pressure the state government to build a school—and appoint sympathetic teacher-allies to teach in the schools. Freire continued to be an important reference for the movement; however, the MST leadership also began to seek out other pedagogical inspirations. As Salete told me, “We were looking for a new educational proposal for our schools, and we thought, where in the world have they attempted to create a school system for a socialist society?” One answer was the Soviet Union, and in particular, the schools organized by Soviet educators such as Nadezhda Krupskaya, Anton Makarenko, and Moisey Pistrak.<sup>9</sup> Local activists began reading these Soviet texts and attempted to implement similar practices in their schools. In July 1987, the MST leadership formalized these already widespread grassroots educational initiatives by officially founding a National MST Education Sector.

The vibrant social movements of the 1980s, and the hope they brought for promoting an alternative economic and political model in Brazil, faced a huge disappointment in the 1989 elections, when Fernando Collor de Mello narrowly defeated PT candidate Lula. This led to a period of neoliberalism and intensive state-society conflict. The 1989 election also redefined the internal dynamics of the left itself. A group of leaders who vied for power within the PT and who advocated for a more “pragmatic” party structure for winning elections eventually achieved hegemony within the party in the mid-1990s. Over the next decade, the candidates who ran on the PT’s tickets were not ideologically homogenous, but rather, had differing relationships to grassroots movements and varying levels of support for participatory democracy and socialist politics.

It was during this period of neoliberalism and state-society conflict that the MST’s first state-sponsored educational initiatives emerged, as activists found diverse allies within different federal agencies and subnational governments. The establishment of formal educational institutions increased the movement’s knowledge and expertise about how to participate in and co-govern the public education system. The educational programs also integrated new activists into the movement, especially women, equipping them with formal degrees that helped them negotiate with public officials and obtain jobs in other institutional spheres that the movement wanted to occupy. Often, it was the MST’s own capacity to implement programs that convinced governments to support these initiatives. For example, in 1990 the MST organized a two-year-long high-school degree and teaching-certificate program in Rio Grande do Sul for MST activists working in schools and lacking a high-school degree (a common occurrence, although officially illegal). Many conservative mayors agreed to co-sponsor the program, as they also had teachers in their schools without high-school degrees. The MST’s organizational capacity to deliver something useful eclipsed local governments’ concerns about partnering with a socialist movement. The MST led dozens of Freirean-based literacy campaigns and other adult education programs through these types of partnerships. In 1995, the MST opened its first independent educational institution, the Josué do Castro Educational Institute (IEJC, also known as ITERRA), with the approval of the state government of Rio Grande do Sul.

Then, in 1998, the movement won its most important educational victory: the National Program for Education in Areas of Agrarian Reform (PRONERA). This program, created by neoliberal President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party, was a product of the violence of that period. On April 17, 1996, police massacred 19 MST activists in the state of Pará. The massacre was caught on camera, sparking international outrage and national sympathy for the movement. In February 1997, the MST organized a national march on Brasília for agrarian reform, culminating on April 17 with 100,000 people. Then, in July 1997, the MST organized a National Meeting for Educators in Areas of Agrarian Reform, demanding a national educational program. In April 1998, the two-year anniversary of the massacre, Cardoso created PRONERA. Over the past two decades, PRONERA has allowed thousands of MST leaders access to higher education, transforming the MST from a movement of, at most, high-school graduates, to a movement of activists with

university and graduate degrees.

## The PT Era

When President Lula took office in 2003, his administration represented a complex compromise between the movements that were the base of his party and the economic and political elites with whom he had allied to be elected. One of his first initiatives was to cut back the public pension system for civil servants, which resulted in an exodus of left-leaning political groups from the PT and the founding of a new left party in 2004, the Socialist and Liberty Party (PSOL). Then, in 2005, the *mensalão* (big monthly payment) scandal broke, revealing that PT leaders had been making payments to congressional representatives in exchange for political loyalty. The scandal led to additional prominent congressional representatives leaving the PT and joining the PSOL.

Thus, the PT that ascended to power in 2003 was a different PT than the one that had consolidated in the 1980s. Nonetheless, despite this conservative shift, Lula implemented many important social programs, including the largest cash-transfer program in the world, *Bolsa Família*. Between 2002 and 2005, this program reached more than 11 million families and helped in reducing poverty by 15 percent (Ondetti, 2008, p. 204). The PT also institutionalized much more social-movement participation at the federal level. For example, Lula created a Special Secretariat for Policies to Promote Racial Equality, inviting leaders of the Black movement to administer the office (Paschel, 2016). During Lula's first term, his administration organized 29 national conferences and hundreds of state and municipal conferences to promote civil-society debate on a variety of topics. Nevertheless, many activists criticized these efforts as having little effect on policy (Goldfrank, 2011, p. 173). As for the administration's agricultural policies, although Lula publicly supported agrarian reform, in practice he continued many of Cardoso's market-based agrarian initiatives (Pereira & Sauer, 2006). Due to strong international prices, favorable exchange rates, and the PT's support, agribusiness boomed during Lula's first term (Ondetti, 2008, p. 205).

These are the developments that have generally led to the claim that the PT era represented a "regulating" of social-movement and union activism, what Brazilian political scientist and former PT leader Andre Singer called (2009) *lulismo*, or what more critical scholars have described as "reverse hegemony" (Braga, 2012; Oliveira, 2007). There is much truth to these arguments, especially in the case of the main oppositional union confederation, the CUT, which certainly organized fewer strikes during this period. Many CUT leaders defended this demobilization as a strategic exchange for direct negotiation of their demands with the Ministry of Work. Similarly, the MST leadership had much more access to the Ministry of Agrarian Development during the PT administration, and the amount of resources available for the development of agrarian reform settlements increased significantly.

However, in the case of the MST, although the movement's national leadership supported the PT in four consecutive presidential elections, contestation never ceased. For example, in 2005 the movement organized one of the largest and longest marches in its history, with 1,200 people marching for two weeks to the capital city of Brasília (Carter, 2015). As Figure 1 illustrates, the number of new land occupations during President Cardoso's administration (1995-2002) and Lula's (2003-2010) had comparable highs and lows. Notably, there was a significant decrease in new land occupations after 2009, mostly during Dilma Rousseff's first two terms (2011-2016). This was a consequence of multiple factors, most significantly the economic prosperity in the country in 2010 and 2011 and social programs such as *Bolsa Família* that made convincing people to occupy land more difficult. Although the MST's goal is for the redistribution of the means of production, the majority of people occupy land due to immediate economic hardship. It is only through the process of political formation in the camps and courses that new participants begin to embrace socialist ideals. Thus, for better or worse, *Bolsa Família* removed one of the most common entry ways into the

movement: extreme hunger. In addition, as illustrated in Figure 2, the government radically decreased the redistribution of land after 2006. The PT's alliance with large agribusiness (which accelerated during Dilma Rousseff's two terms) blocked the party's ability to implement wide-scale land redistribution. Although the PT continued to invest resources in MST settlements, which still included more than 350,000 families, there were also tens of thousands of families living in MST-occupied encampments for more than a decade without receiving land rights.<sup>10</sup> Poor rural families were even more hesitant to participate in new land occupations with these future prospects.

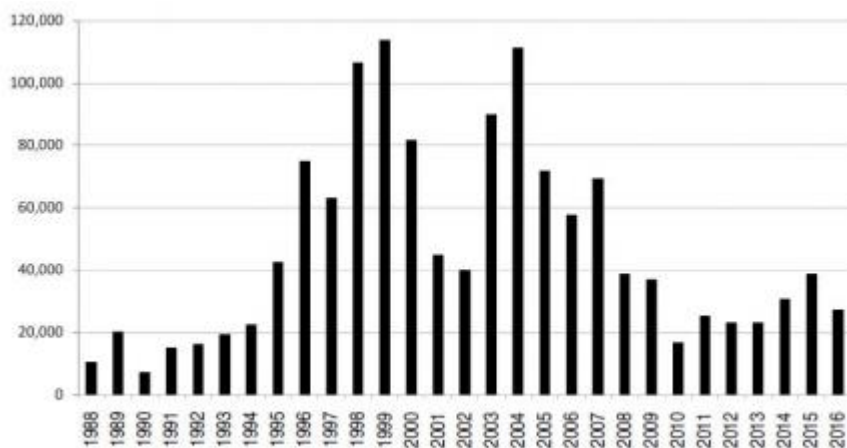


Figure 1: Number of Families Participating in New Land Occupations, 1988-2016 (NERA, 2016)<sup>11</sup>

In summary, although there have been fewer land occupations over the past decade than in previous historical moments, this downward trend did not start immediately after the PT took power; furthermore, even the recent lows are still higher than the late 1980s and early 1990s. Cooptation is too simplistic an explanation for these trends.

In terms of the MST's educational program during the PT era, activists continued engaging in the contentious co-governance of public education within different subnational governments and federal institutions. For example, Lula's administration opened up much more space for participation in the Ministry of Education (Tarlau, 2015a). Among other programs, the Ministry of Education funded a baccalaureate-level teacher certification program for rural teachers, which provided resources to hire hundreds of new professors at forty universities in what was essentially a geographically based affirmative action program. PRONERA also received much more funding during this period.

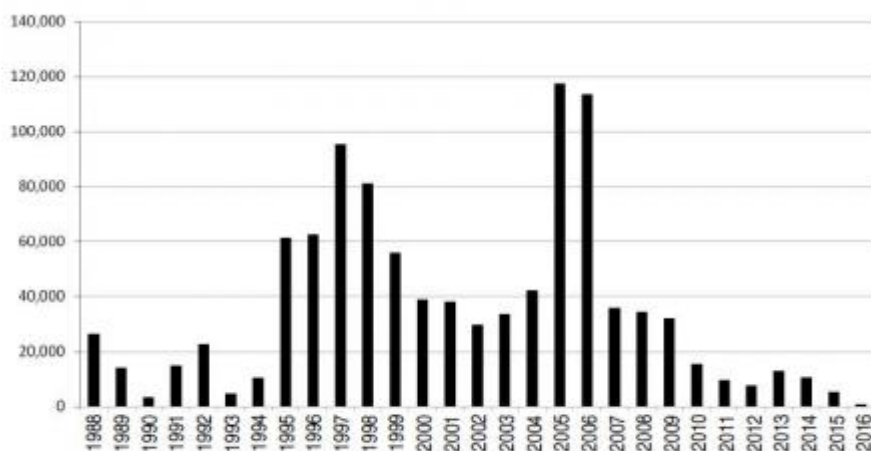


Figure 2: Number of New Families Issued Land Rights in Settlements, 1988-2016 (NERA, 2015)

Again, it is important to emphasize that there were internal critiques of many of these funding relationships. Most significantly, a group of MST activists left the movement in 2011, criticizing the leadership's emphasis on the development of agrarian reform settlements over the organization of

new land occupations. Nonetheless, during my 15 months living in MST settlements and camps during the 2010-2011 period, I observed activists engaging in countless contentious actions, including large land occupations, while also strategically using government funding to invest in their schools, cooperatives, health posts, and other internal movement infrastructure. I also heard MST activists at all leadership levels openly critiquing the PT's agricultural policies. In fact, *Jacobin* recently published an interview from 2010 with MST national leader Gilmar Mauro (2017), who states that "my honest opinion is that the PT is a party of the established order, and it's bound to be this more and more." Any claims that the MST is simply an uncritical follower of the PT are clearly false.<sup>12</sup>

The argument that I make here is not that there is no tension between an institutional strategy and social-movement building. However, there is ample evidence that the MST has been able to negotiate these tensions by strategically using all forms of state power to build its social-movement infrastructure. Thus, the PT era, while certainly representing a class compromise at the macroeconomic level, also represented a continuity with the past in terms of the MST's pragmatic engagement with the complex and contradictory Brazilian state.

### **Mobilizing Under Conservative Resurgence**

Finally, I want to touch briefly on the challenges of the current political moment, which we can broadly call a period of austerity and neoliberal fundamentalism. There has been an outpouring of insightful political analysis of the developments that led to the PT's ousting from power in 2016 (e.g., Braga, 2016), which I will not elaborate in this article. My focus is on the implications of this political moment for social movements in Brazil. Since Dilma Rousseff's impeachment, the MST leadership has been one of the most vocal voices defending the PT and decrying what the movement refers to as an institutional coup. The MST is an active participant in one of the two national fronts leading the anti-coup efforts, the Brazilian Popular Front. The other national coalition, the People Without Fear Front, consists of organizations that identify as more critical of the PT, including many left-leaning tendencies within the PSOL and the powerful Homeless Workers' Movement. Nonetheless, these two fronts have collaborated in most major political actions over the past two years, critiquing the coup as an advance of the right and a direct attack on workers. The only major left group that analyzes the PT's impeachment as an advance for workers is the PSTU (Unified Workers' Socialist Party), a party founded in 1994 after the expulsion of their members from the PT; notably, the PSTU's controversial position led to a major split in that party.

After Lula was arrested in April 2018, both national fronts critiqued this action and called for his release. The MST has set up a permanent camp outside the prison where Lula is being held. Despite the PT's questionable support in the past, the MST leadership believes that Lula offers the best possibility for workers movements to continue consolidating their political and economic goals. It is unlikely, however, that these mobilizations will lead to Lula's freedom. Although Lula is still leading in the polls, with 32 percent of the vote, the second in the running is the fascist politician Jair Bolsonaro, with 17 percent. The rest of the dozen or so center-right and center-left candidates have fewer supporters than the total number of predicated null votes. The PSOL candidate, the charismatic leader of the homeless movement, Guilherme Boulos, has less than 1 percent.<sup>13</sup>

Looking at electoral politics, the prospects for the Brazilian left are grim; nonetheless, there is still some hope that the social movements that have emerged over the past three decades will continue mobilizing even in this increasingly conservative context. The MST, as one of the most important contemporary social movements, is a good thermometer of the overall state of the left under these new political developments. Let me be clear: It is important not to be overly optimistic about the prospects for this grassroots movement. In addition to legislation that cuts back workers' rights, government spending, and public services, the current President Michel Temer has also

implemented a series of strategies to weaken the MST. Some of these strategies have been attempts to repress the movement, including spying, disbanding land occupations, and arresting MST leaders (under a law enacted during Rouseff's administration). Another government strategy has been to cut the funding that supported the MST's alternative economic initiatives, including the termination of the entire Ministry of Agrarian Development. However, the most detrimental action Temer has taken is to push for policies that "regularize" families living in settlements, issuing them land titles so they no longer qualify for loans or other special programs designated for areas of agrarian reform. By transitioning families from the status of "settled" to "landowners," the state effectively rids itself of any social obligations to this sector of the Brazilian population. MST leaders also fear that land speculators will take advantage of the privatization of settlements and buy up large swaths of these areas. Even in the unlikely scenario that a left-leaning president wins in 2018, more than two years of a well-orchestrated, frontal attack on the MST, through a diverse set of strategies, will undoubtedly serve to weaken the movement.

Yet, there are also reasons for some cautious optimism. First, the spike in violence and repression against the movement, along with the increase in economic inequality that the current policy regime is likely to produce,<sup>14</sup> has the potential of generating a surge of support for the MST and willingness to participate in MST-led occupations and protests. After all, it was in the era of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002), when there was an escalation of violent repression, that the MST had its broadest support and won the most land redistribution. The youth involved in agrarian reform is the second reason for optimism. Today's MST is a movement of young people who grew up in settlements and camps, obtained education through the movement's programs, and participated in MST activities and events. Through these experiences and the *prefiguration* of direct, popular democracy within their schools and settlements, these youth have become "political subjects" (Paschel, 2016) who defend their right to participate in the political process. Third and finally, the MST is now engaging in this contentious political struggle with a new arsenal of material, ideological, and socio-political resources, what I have referred to as the MST's social-movement infrastructure.

The MST's educational struggle offers one of the best examples of why the movement's institutional gains cannot easily be reversed. Over thirty years, the MST has been able to win access to 2,000 schools with over 8,000 teachers attending to 250,000 students. State and municipal governments administer almost all of these schools, and many of these subnational governments allow the MST to participate in educational co-governance. While 2016 and 2017 marked the ousting of Rouseff and the passage of many of Temer's conservative economic proposals, these years also marked the opening of four new high schools on MST settlements in the northeastern state of Ceará. In addition, the MST leadership has helped to develop programs for adult literacy, primary and secondary schooling, high school, and bachelor's and graduate degrees with more than eighty different educational institutions. Although government support was initially critical for funding these programs, many university professors who became committed activists through their involvement will continue to work with the MST, independently of the federal government. And perhaps most importantly, the MST's National School Florestan Fernandes continues to be an international hub of political education and socialist organizing, with hundreds of social-movement leaders from around the world studying at the school each year, prefiguring socialist pedagogy and practice.

In conclusion, the MST's struggle has always moved forward under contradictory and conflictive relations with the Brazilian state. However, the movement's relationship to the state has never been primarily about electoral politics. Throughout the 1990s, MST leaders found countless allies and state configurations to institutionalize their political, economic, and educational goals—partly because the mobilizations of the 1980s had transformed Brazilian society. Lula's victory in 2002 shifted the terrain by creating more openings at the national level, but it did not ultimately change



the MST's strategy of finding different access points within the state for promoting institutional change and social-movement co-governance in different forms and varying levels of intensity across the country. Now, in the context of a conservative, anti-participatory, and old-school-neoliberal federal government, MST leaders have to defend their previous gains through mobilizations and protests, find new institutional arrangements at subnational levels to support their political project, and perhaps most importantly, use the accumulated fruits of their thirty-year war of position to sustain the many movement activities that do not require a formal political-institutional expression. Now is the test: We are going to see the true strength and limits of the MST's "long march through the institutions."

## Footnotes

1. I am borrowing this phrase from sociologist Tianna Pasblog postchel's keynote address to the Brazilian Studies Association in April 2106, entitled, "What is Left of the Latin American Left."
2. I summarize some of the major developments after the first year following Dilma Rousseff's impeachment, including the multiple national mobilizations and the April 2017 general strike, in this blog post.
3. Lula was convicted and jailed in April 2018.
4. See Gregory Duff Morton's gripping account of this violence against rural social-movement leaders.
5. This was the expulsion of the Trotskyist tendency Socialist Convergence, whose activists founded the Unified Socialist Workers Party in 1994. For more on internal dynamics of the PT, see Dan La Botz's (2015) previous *New Politics* article, Francisco de Oliveria's (2006) *New Left Review* article, João Machado's reflections on building a Trotskyist tendency within the PT, among many other sources.
6. The following analysis is based directly on my forthcoming book, *Occupying Schools, Occupying Land: How the Landless Workers Movement Transformed Brazilian Education* (Oxford University Press).
7. For more information on this history, see: Branford & Rocha, 2002; Carter, 2015; Fernandes, 1996; Fernandes & Stédile, 2002; Poletto, 2015; Wright & Wolford, 2003.
8. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* became a reference for clergy following liberation theology and, in particular, was used in the Basic Ecclesial Communities (*Comunidades Eclesiais de Base*).
9. Krupskaya was Lenin's wife and the Soviet Union's Deputy Minister of Education from 1929 to 1939; Pistrak worked in the Ministry of Education in the 1920s and 1930s; Makarenko was a Ukrainian educator who set up a school for war orphans after the 1917 revolution. I have written extensively about the MST's use of these Soviet pedagogies in the other venues (Tarlau, 2012, 2015b).
10. The total number of families living in occupied encampments and settlements is not captured in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, as these graphs only show the number of *new* land occupations and *new* families issued land rights in settlements each year.
11. These numbers represent all land occupations, not only MST-led land occupations, as there are dozens of organizations in Brazil that occupy land. Researchers at NERA (the Nucleus of Research on Agrarian Reform) only began recording the organization leading the occupations in 2000. Between 2000 and 2016, the MST led 63 percent of all land occupations.
12. Interestingly, Mauro (2017) critiques the Brazilian left's *pinça* (tweezer) strategy of "compet[ing] in the institutional realm with the goal of strengthening social movements," claiming that the institutional dispute became the strong arm and social movements the weak arm. Nonetheless, Mauro also defends the MST's attempt to combine these political and social struggles, emphasizing the movement's investment in the political-ideological formation of its base, which has made the MST a "worldwide reference for political formation." Juarez Guimarães elaborated the "estratégia da

pinça” (tweezer strategy) in 1990.

13. especiais.gazetadopovo.com.br/eleicoes/2018/pesquisas-eleitorais/cnt-mdm/pesquisa-cntmdm-para-presidente-maio-2018/ (accessed 5/29/18).

14. As I am writing this article in May 2018, Brazil is in political economic chaos as truck drivers are striking throughout the country over gasoline prices.

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