

## BRAZILIAN STATE OF AMAPÁ IN THIRD WEEK OF BLACKOUT, PROTESTS RAGE

The masses are rising up in the state of Amapá in response to the latest shutoff of water, fuel, and electricity caused by a fire at the state's main substation.

Knowing that the blackout would cause unrest, the military police sent troops into the area, planning to suppress demonstrations before they began. After three days of the blackout, people took to the streets, erecting and burning barricades and demonstrating.

The military police has used rubber bullets and tear gas bombs to try to quell the unrest, in a particularly heinous act they even shot rubber bullets at a family with a baby.

They have been targeting residents who are outspoken in fighting for their needs. Video footage documents a worker being tracked down and shot after his words of resistance at a demonstration. This cold-blooded murder further fed the fire of the people's anger, and soon after the protesters forced the military police to retreat.



The blackout has caused numerous issues for the people of Amapá. The lack of running water and waste management poses a severe health hazard, especially during the pandemic, and without electricity, people suffer from intense heat. Yet local elites and judges have 24 hour power even during the blackout.

Furthermore, a report compiled by the Ministry of Mines and Energy [MME], the National System Operator [ONS] and the National Electric Energy Agency [Aneel] stated that the operators had already known that substation was at risk of collapse. When the project was contracted, there was a contingency that the addition of two back-up transformers be available, however one was never added and the other was under maintenance at the time of the explosion, thus leading to the blackout. This further indicates how the blackout is an effect of the overwhelming negligence of the state in providing for the people.

The issues of resource management and the suppression of people's dissent is a repeating pattern in Amapá. In May 2019, workers blocked off the Salvador Dimiz highway after they were without water for 15 days.

Instead of addressing the communities needs, the state targets those willing to fight for their class. Yet people's anger has not been restrained.

"We can't keep silent. We cannot accept what they are trying to impose on us. We have to go to the street to demonstrate, to go after our rights. Our food is running out, spoiling," shouted Juliana de Jesus, 28, during a protest in the neighborhoods Remédios II, in Santana.



*This is an unofficial translation of an editorial from the revolutionary newspaper A Nova Democracia. Para ler o artigo original em português, visite [anovademocracia.com](http://anovademocracia.com).*

Since Tuesday, 11/03, the people of Amapá have bitterly endured the horrors of returning to the 19th century, while just two months away from entering the third decade of the 21st century. Lack of light, water, fuel and, above all, answers, have plunged 14 of the 16 municipalities of the state into an endless darkness. In the first statement after the blackout, Admiral Bento Albuquerque, Minister of Mines and Energy, promised that everything would be restored... in 15 days! Meanwhile, the people, left wanting, could only count on their solidarity and self-organization to survive without the minimum sanitary conditions in the middle of a pandemic.

As expected, the troops arrived soon, and the Marine Corps were installed

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in the capital of Amapá before generators. On Saturday 7th, dozens of spontaneous protests occurred in several cities and were savagely repressed by the Military Police. There were reports of gunshots, rubber bullets and injuries. In the face of the denunciations, the commander of the corporation declared: "We will be surveying areas where demonstrations are expected [translators interpretation] and try to fight before the thing happens." In Amapá, the third world, the constitutional right to demonstrate was simply suppressed by the discretionary act of a policeman!

It is barbarism, as we can see. Or the crudest portrait of a bureaucratic capitalism and of an old rotten state, which denies the basics to the majority of the population, and then denies them the simple act of demanding that their right be effected. Those who think that the Amazon is a large, untouched green forest whose environmental problems are reduced to burning are mistaken. It is also the stage for the human tragedy of anachronistic labor relations [slavery, serfdom, etc.] in the worst rubber plantations, lack of basic sanitation [according to the Trata Brasil institute, in a survey released in 2019, 90% of the population of Macapá has no access to sewage systems, and 58.5% have no treated water at home, chronic unemployment according to the IBGE, the unemployment rate in Amapá in 2018 was 20.5%, the highest in the country], the prevalence of old local oligarchies, as rich and influential in Brasilia as the poor are its electoral corrals. This is the so-called deep Brazil, marked by what Professor Nelson Werneck Sodré called heterochrony, that is, a country in which to travel through its interior is also to go back decades or centuries in time.

This "great regression" is, in fact, typical of a time when the imperialist system is on the brink. We could say that Amapá is like the whole world; or the whole world is like a gigantic Amapá.

In fact, the public observes, astonished, that the much-lauded "greatest democracy in the West" of the United States does not even follow the basic principle of universal suffrage ["one citizen, one vote"], maintaining a political superstructure that is, in everything and for everything, a rigid oligarchy. In fact, that phrase emerges before everyone as a myth, manufactured and exported like any other piece of trinket. Because "liberal democracy," even in its golden days of bourgeois revolution, lived with slavery in its territory [the case of the United States] and with colonialism overseas [the case of Western Europe]. Then, in the era of imperialism, these political systems, so glorified by their stability, were fed by an impressive succession of wars of aggression and military coups, genocide and crimes against humanity in the Third World. So anyone who says, with "progressive" pretensions, that liberalism is the political philosophy of freedom, is only lying. It was not so

when it was established; and it is even less so now, when the bourgeoisie has become an agonizing, parasitic class, able to take advantage of any and every atrocity whenever its domination is at stake. The USA itself, from McCarthyism to the admission of racial segregation and lynchings, well into the second half of the 20th century.

Donald Trump, with all his cynical denial of the pandemic and its entourage of corpses, with the scorn of the whole "liturgy" of the office and with the most shameless defense of racist, neo-Nazi and other social groups, captured more than 70 million votes, among which a not inconsiderable share was given to him by Black, Latino and impoverished masses of the old industrial cities- to the scandal of English-speaking Tupiniquins. The "overwhelming victory" of the conciliatory discourse of the Democrats against the "Trumpist"

radicalization did not come. In fact, Joe Biden, a rogue who has been behind the scenes of Yankee genocidal politics for decades, was unconvincing in his role as a "renovator." Soon will come the escalation of the economic crisis, the resurgence of the dispute for world hegemony and the succession of internal massacres that are in the DNA of that nation. The true polarization, between the reactionary imperialist state, on the one hand, and the popular masses, on the other, will continue, further fueled by frustrated expectations.

By the way: Marxism teaches us that one can measure the level of progress of a given society from the position occupied by women. With this in mind, unworthy but not surprising, the misogynistic reaction of our times, of which the most recent example was the humiliation to which [Brazilian digital influencer and rape victim] Mariana Ferrer was subjected, judged and condemned instead of her aggressor. This is a very illuminating case, in fact, because it took place in the middle of the court, before the Judiciary, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Defender's Office. These bodies, representing the "constitutional guarantees" [pointed to by bourgeois feminism as the safeguards of women's rights] were there, diligently fulfilling their role as bastions of the reactionary order. Imagine what is happening to the poor and black people in the corners of this country.

As noted, 2020 will mark not only a brutal economic crisis, but also a very serious ideological crisis in the field of reaction. All the mantras repeated to exhaustion in the last 30 years, about the regulating role of the markets, bourgeois democracy as the end of history, the technological revolution, and other nonsense are more like a house of cards. In despair, the bourgeoisie, through its wisest spokesmen, denies its own challenges, using a false critical thought that advocates "fragmentation," "diversity," "defense of minorities," just when a unified strategy and action of the exploited is more pressing than ever. It will fail, however. Just as the sun dissipates the mists in the morning, the acute class struggle will continue to break the illusions without mercy.

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