

Lula Free, Bolsonaro in Rage

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A ruling by the Constitutional Court provisionally released Lula. An important part of the Brazilian people welcomed the news with joy and hope. But Bolsonaro reacted with rage and called him “guilty scum”.

Last Friday, November 8, 2019, former President of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva walked out of a prison in Curitiba and was greeted by throngs of supporters, many of whom had camped out since he was sent to jail more than a year and a half ago. The next day, hoarse from the ordeal and past throat cancer surgery, Lula [spoke](#) for 45 minutes before thousands gathered in São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo, Brazil’s automotive capital and the heart of labor activity in the country. It was a sea of red, as many wore the crimson t-shirts of the Metal Workers Union, whose offices provided the backdrop to the speech.

The Supreme Court of Brazil was finally compelled to admit that Lula had been wrongly imprisoned before his appeal had been heard, in conflict with the country’s constitution. The former president had been accused of accepting a beachfront penthouse apartment as a bribe, just as he announced his candidacy for a return to the presidency. He was swiftly convicted and sentenced to twelve years for corruption, with ultra-conservative Jair Bolsonaro becoming president.

But the penthouse had not even been built and Lula had bought a simpler apartment in a building behind it, away from the beach. Nevertheless, Judge Sérgio Moro found Lula guilty. Moro was subsequently appointed Justice Minister by President Bolsonaro. In June 2019, Glenn Greenwald and David Miranda of Intercept Brasil [released](#) “an enormous trove of secret documents” showing “improper and unethical plotting” between chief prosecutor Deltan Dallagnol and Moro.

Lula said that he felt energized about continuing to fight. On Friday night, he said on social media,

“I am free to help liberate Brazil from the insanity that is happening in this country.”

On Saturday, he displayed the congeniality that endears him to his supporters and also, he said, helped him “make friends” in prison and “spiritually prepare” himself for his return.

Switching between two failing microphones with a hand that lost a finger in a work accident, he described his humble roots in Brazil’s impoverished Northeast and the opportunities the

union and worker solidarity afforded him.

“I was born in the city of Garanhuns. I left there and came to Sao Paulo when I was seven years old. I was raised by a mother and father who were born and died illiterate. I have always said, since 1979, that my political evolution was the product of the political evolution of the working men and women of this country.... I owe everything to my mother, who died illiterate, and to this union,” pointing to the Metalworkers Union headquarters, where he was offered courses in political science and economics.

“For 580 days in solitary confinement, I prepared myself spiritually” to free himself from hate and the need for vengeance. “I doubt that Moro can sleep with as clear a conscience as I do. I doubt that Bolsonaro can sleep with as clear a conscience as I do. I doubt that the minister in charge of demolishing dreams, destroying jobs and destroyer of the Brazilian people’s corporations, whose name is Guedes, can sleep with as clear a conscience as I do. And I want to tell them that I’m back!”

University of Chicago-educated Minister of the Economy Paulo Guedes has been under investigation for fraud since 2018 concerning his investment and loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in state pension funds.

Lula also called for a proper investigation into the assassination of Rio councillor Marielle Franco and clarified that

“Bolsonaro needs to understand that he was elected to govern for the Brazilian people, not for the military men in Rio de Janeiro. We must not allow these military men to wreck our country.”

Current President Bolsonaro reminded his supporters that Lula has yet to be exonerated, admonishing them to not “give ammunition to this momentarily free but still guilty scum.”

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