

Hope does not die when we dream together

WE SAID GOODBYE TO THE YEAR 2016 WITH VERY LITTLE TO CELEBRATE and with the country immersed in a serious political and economic crisis. However, we must celebrate: the 40th anniversary of the Brazilian Center for Health Studies (Cebes) and the militant action of the Cebian activists in the dozens of nuclei scattered throughout the country, who fought, denounced, occupied and mobilized in defense of democracy and against the excesses of the illegitimate government that took power through a parliamentary coup. The anniversary of Cebes is, at the same time, the anniversary of its periodic ‘Saúde em Debate’ (‘Health in Debate’), which has been fundamental in the process of Brazilian health reform and in the field of national and Latin American collective health as a space for the dissemination of critical thinking.

In the health field, there are bad news left over for the Unified Health System (SUS), and especially for its users, which will significantly increase in the face of the soaring unemployment that already reaches the rate of 11.8%, leaving 22.7 million people unemployed or underutilized (IBGE, 2016).

The most nefarious of measures from Temer government was the Proposed Amendment to the Constitution (PEC) which set a ceiling for public spending for the next 20 years. For the health and education sectors, the freeze begins in 2018, and for the others, already in 2017. Although opinion polls show that more than 60% of the Brazilian population is against the freezing of resources for the health and education areas, congressmen and senators defined that for two decades the amounts spent by the federal government could be corrected only by the inflation of the previous year. In the Chamber, there were 359 votes in favor and 116 against (PEC 241), in the Senate, 53 in favor and 16 against (PEC 55), resulting in the Constitutional Amendment (EC) no. 95/2016 (BRAZIL, 2016). We shall not forget!

Reducing federal investment in health will certainly lead to increased financial pressure on municipalities and states that will have to respond to the growing demands for health services in the face of population growth and the ongoing demographic and epidemiological transition.

The PEC of the public spending ceiling, as it became known, was the first in a series of reforms of Temer’s government whose main objective is to reduce social rights. This is the most difficult fiscal adjustment to be made by the Brazilian State since the 1988 Constitution, under the command of a government that has most excluded rights and regressed in terms of democratic practices.

The general feeling is that 28 years of efforts to build a universal health system in Brazil have been destroyed in less than a year. However, this does not discourage us: the Cebes and the periodic ‘Saúde em Debate’ were born in a difficult conjuncture of military dictatorship, with the purpose of defending democracy and health as a right, with the motto ‘Health and Democracy’. Today, 40 years later, we renew our purpose and we remain at the same disposition to fight for a universal and quality health system for all.

That is the spirit of the Cebians, which we record here, in some fragments collected from exchange of vows on the last day of 2016 in a WhatsApp group.

Cristiane thanked all the Cebians, “... *it is very good to participate with you in this process of fighting for a public and quality health! Thank you for all the learning*”. Luis Bernardo replied with a text by Nara Rúbia Ribeiro, who was inspired by Eduardo Galeano’s ‘The right to delirium’:

¹ Poetry by Eduardo Galeano, read by the author in an interview in 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3A9NybYZj8>.

May our souls remain united in the utopia of a world where the greatest madness is the dignity of all men. Where the joy of one is not rooted in the misery of countless others. Where hope will survive the chaos. Where our daily bread is at the table filled with dream and poetry. (RIBEIRO, 2015, P. 1).

Grazielle wished the “*beloved ones from Cebes*” “*a 2017 of victories in our struggles and joys in our lives. Thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow so much with you*”. Isabela thanked the “*fellas*” and wished “*a fairer 2017 for us, a more solidary Brazil, a less violent and more tolerant world in which we can be more united*”. Marluce toasted the group with the poetry ‘The stone’ by Antonio Pereira (Apon):

The distracted man in it stumbled, the brute man used it as a projectile, the entrepreneur, using it, built, the peasant, tired of the road, made of it a seat. For the boys it was a toy, Drummond poetized it, David killed Goliath ... At last; The artist conceived the most beautiful sculpture. In all cases, the difference was not the stone. But the man. (PEREIRA, 1999).

And she suggested that we should “*end the year 2016 knowing what to do with the next stones*”. Helen responded by saying, “*I’m here collecting one by one*” and wished her a happy 2017. Patricia wanted “*a path of joy, companionship and great love to all*” and challenged: “*Come 2017, there is nothing to fear*”. Cristiane concluded by saying that “*the most beautiful part of being people is this. The hope of better days is never over! Being happy is an imperative that moves us in pursuit of dreams... That’s what being Cebes is! Dreaming together for better days ...*”.

Maria Lucia Frizon Rizzotto
Scientific Editor of the periodic Saúde em Debate
Brazilian Center for Health Studies (Cebes)

Ana Maria Costa
National Director of the Brazilian Center for Health Studies (Cebes)

References

BRASIL. Presidência da República. Emenda Constitucional nº 95, de 15 de dezembro de 2016. Altera o Ato das Disposições Constitucionais Transitórias, para instituir o Novo Regime Fiscal, e dá outras providências. *Diário Oficial [da] União*, Brasília, DF, 15 dez. 2016. Disponível em: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/emendas/emc/emc95.htm>. Acesso em: 1 jan. 2017.

INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA (IBGE). *Pesquisa Mensal do Emprego*. Disponível em: <http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/indicadores/trabalhoerendimento/pme_nova/>. Acesso em: 1 jan. 2017.

PEREIRA, A. *A pedra*. Disponível em: <https://pensador.uol.com.br/autor/antonio_pereira_apon/>. Acesso em: 1 jan. 2017.

RIBEIRO, N. R. *Morre Eduardo Galeano: eternize-se o direito ao delírio*. Disponível em: <<http://www.contioutra.com/morre-eduardo-galeano-eterniza-se-o-direito-ao-delirio/>>. Acesso em: 1 jan. 2017.