

There's still time to win by way of reason

***Laissez aller, Laissez passer* or Nationwide Pact and National Emergency Council?**

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A "new" Minister of Health, alone, will not turn things around... however well-intentioned he may be! Brazil has gone too far into recklessness and, thus, has fail to pursue competent and effective actions to face the Coronavirus pandemic. A year's past and we still endure a terrible crisis, which is no longer related to healthcare alone, but reaches all segments of society. However, the worst is surely yet to come. With the increase in cases and deaths by COVID-19, our models foresee the edge to chaos, with the likely collapse of public health and a sluggish economy. The consequences can take on unimaginable dimensions with the speeding up of contagion and ineffective social distancing measures directed by the states and municipalities (and not – we must underscore - led by the Union). The pandemic requires proper management at a new level (integrated into a single system, new strategies) and a shock doctrine!

It's time for real action already. There is no longer any need to appeal to the guarantee of individual freedoms or doubts about statistical findings, irresponsible examples of denialism. The devastating impact of the wreckage that has become the management of the Coronavirus pandemic crises, especially at the federal level, imposes a structurally logical and orderly solution, conducted necessarily under centralized strategic command. Minimum standardization and control of the situation, with basic and pre-defined guidelines, must be imposed. It is no longer reasonable to tolerate excesses and discontinuities in urging the population to take and adopt due precautions and mandatory attitudes about procedures that have ample scientific evidence and uncontested results worldwide. The preparation of a strategic plan for the federation, with diligent monitoring of tactical and operational measures, has become a *sine qua non*. Only then, the Union, states and municipalities will be able to act with total synergy and optimization of procedures.

Standing tall as wisest and unavoidable advisor under all circumstances, the Federal Constitution offers alternatives for extreme situations, such as the States of Defense and Siege. Both, in the limit, are at variance, in their origin, with

the case at hand - because both must be enacted and then "executed" by the President. For obvious reasons, such measures are far from feasible to us in our current predicament. While there is nothing to do about it, one possibility we must entertain is to create a National Emergency Council (CNE), to gather experts and representatives from the three branches of the government. Sided by the Council of the Republic and the National Defense Council, with the help of all supporting institutions, this group of notables would assist the government in tackling emergencies, while respecting the particular traits of each unit of the Federation.

In support of its effective performance, perhaps a Nationwide Civil Society Pact could be negotiated; a movement supported fundamentally by the private sector, as a way to effectively realize the premise of its social responsibility. Both areas of activity (government and private sector) are not mutually exclusive; they complement each other, without losing any required engagement by the State. It is also an alternative to not create just one more "Broad Council".

In any case, we cannot launch measures nor follow perspectives inspired by Thomas Hobbes, where the State is the Great Leviathan. In fact, John Locke's ideas and principles is what we really need, and that begs reflection and proper attitudes by everyone. This is what the challenge ahead demands, especially at a moment when the Union, states and municipalities act in an uncoordinated, disconnected and disorganized fashion, which is due, above all, to the inertia and incompetence of the federal administration. Hence the need for a specific advisory body to ensure, albeit temporarily, effective command and leadership. It is, perhaps, the last hope that we have to preserve our freedom and our civil rights, to overcome the pandemic, to maintain social order and to reestablish the bases of a thriving economy. We've had enough of personal whims.

There is still time, as liberal philosophers advocated, to save the nation by way of reason.

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