



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 6, 2010

Brazil Elects Clown To Congress, Leftists in Presidential Runoff

Voters in Brazil this weekend had a choice between three leftist candidates for president, two of whom will now be facing each other in a runoff election after no contender reached the necessary 50 percent to win automatically in the first round. And in São Paulo, voters sent Tiririca (Grumpy) the clown to Congress with an astounding 1.3 million votes — almost twice the amount of his nearest competitor anywhere in the nation.



Workers' Party presidential candidate Dilma Rousseff — a former communist revolutionary guerilla who fought against Brazil's military dictatorship and served as a cabinet official in the most recent administration — was widely expected to win the election in the first round. She had the backing of Brazil's popular leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and polls generally indicated that she had a majority.

But that didn't happen. Instead, Rousseff received close to 47 percent of the vote, with Social Democrat candidate Jose Serra earning around 33 percent and Green Party candidate Marina Silva picking up almost 20 percent. One possible reason cited in news reports for Rousseff's worse-than-expected performance was a campaign claiming she may try to lift the country's ban on abortions once in power. Allegations of corruption may have played a role as well.

"I heard many people say they thought Lula and the Dilma campaign were a bit arrogant, and that led them to reject them and force a second round," Geraldo Monteiro, a political scientist at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, told [Time](#) magazine. "I also heard many people say, and our own research confirmed this, that they were dissatisfied with the lack of open debate, and that may also have played a part. People want to hear their proposals and ideas more clearly." Rousseff was not very specific on policy proposals, relying instead on Lula's popularity and platform.

There is also the matter of unsavory associations. "It is interesting in Brazil how many of the leading members of both major parties today, Dilma's Workers' Party (PT) and the Social-Democratic Party fought against the junta as part of the communist party with illegal means," [said](#) Bulgarian journalist Momchil Indzhov, who has interviewed Dilma Rousseff on more than one occasion. "Dilma and Lula have been subjected to criticism that is not unfounded for being too close with people such as Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro. This criticism is justified, especially in a country that experienced rule by a military junta."



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And as it turns out, Lula is actually one of the founders of a [radical revolutionary movement known as the Foro de Sao Paulo](#), along with communist despot Fidel Castro and the Sandinistas. The secretive organization — which includes communist narco-terrorists, leftist political parties, and various social movements — now dominates about two thirds of Latin American governments. According to [experts](#), it uses drug money and “petrodollars” to finance its regional revolution.

But for now, Serra and Rousseff are engaged in a heated battle to attract the Green Party’s votes, and possibly even obtain an endorsement from the defeated candidate, in order to win in the runoff set for later this month. Those voters will be the deciding factor in who wins the presidency, so both remaining candidates are expected to make environmental regulation a top focus of their campaigns.

But a congressional candidate who didn’t focus on serious policy issues at all — Francisco Everardo Oliveira Silva, an actual clown known as Tiririca, or Grumpy — startled observers with a massive win. His slogan: “It can’t get any worse.” His major policy proposal: tax breaks for circuses.

Tiririca basically [told](#) voters that he would watch their legislators and report back to the citizens. “What does a federal deputy do? Truly, I don’t know. But vote for me and you’ll find out,” he said in another one of his catchy campaign slogans.

Prosecutors are seeking to disqualify the clown after Brazilian media reports raised questions about his ability to read and write — a requirement for federal legislators. But his victory was so large that, if he is found to be qualified, he will even be able to use some of his extra votes to bring more of his political associates into office.

Victory in the presidential runoff election, while still technically winnable by either candidate, is largely expected to go to Rousseff. She would become the first female president in Brazil’s history. But the corruption scandals continue to mount, and media reports suggest the accusations are widening.

No matter who wins though, Brazil and the region will likely continue on a leftward march for the foreseeable future. The infrastructure is already in place, and the right is virtually non-existent in the current Brazilian political landscape. Perhaps electing a clown, considering the alternatives, wasn’t such a silly idea after all.

Photo: Workers Party presidential candidate Dilma Rousseff waves to supporters as she campaigns in Duque de Caxias, near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Oct. 6, 2010: AP Images



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