

Reaffirming the right to health, defending the SUS, and building social justice: Cebes Thesis 2021-2022

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FOLLOWING ITS MISSION TO EXPAND KNOWLEDGE and critical thinking in health and to give voice to the numerous social and health demands of the Brazilian people, the Brazilian Center for Health Studies (Cebes) held, on December 9 and 10, 2021, its 8th Symposium¹, guided by the theme Sanitary Reform in Times of Fascism and Neoliberalism. As has been the practice since 2009, when the 1st Cebes Symposium on Health Policies was held, in the process of re-founding of the Center, the biannual symposia aim to analyze and discuss the sectoral, social, and political situation, defining the guidelines and orientations for the action of the boards, centers, and other instances of the entity.

The 8th Symposium was an opportunity for debate between members of the Cebes and experts and leaders of the social movement. At first, the debate was attended by João Pedro Stédile, from the Movimento Sem Terra (MST), and Professor Sonia Fleury, who addressed the national and international situation characterizing the evidence made explicit by the health crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic and the deep crisis of capitalism, with dramatic consequences for health. The tragic administration of president Bolsonaro in the management of the country and in the confrontation of the pandemic was highlighted as part of a project of radicalization of liberalism with a frank alliance with the market and redirection of the role of the State, which withdraws from the attributions of protecting its population. This dismantling country projects practiced in Brazil suffocates and constrains democracy through several mechanisms, and it is especially recognizable in its authoritarian bias and support in the armed forces. The situation and sectoral challenges were discussed by two guests and members of the Cebes, Jairnilson Silva Paim and Ligia Bahia, who analyzed the national health sector, the challenges of the Unified Health System (SUS) and the characteristics and relationships that have been guiding the private sector. Such reflection points to the dismantling of successful health policies and the intense and growing valorization of the private sector, confirming the process of financialization of the sector, especially the assistance, with profound consequences for the right and universal access to health. Reaffirming Cebes' thesis on the importance of political organization and mobilization to face the dismantling of the right to health, this debate identifies and values the vigor of social movements in defense of democracy and health, which has been growing and diversifying, despite the restrictions of all sorts¹ that have been imposed.

Celebrating the participation of over 300 people, the Cebes believes that the 8th Symposium confirms the relevance, the need, and the topicality of the fight for sanitary reform, reaffirming

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the demand that it be the north of the propositions and the fight of the democratic field for the health. In this sense, much has been debated about the election year and the urgency of the right to health agenda among candidates' platforms, both for the presidency and state governments, congresspeople, and senators. This will be the central task of Cebians in 2022: to discuss the defense of the right to health in its expanded sense and the expansion of the public SUS with progressive candidates.

That is why the Cebes built and published its Thesis 2021-2022², debated and consented among Cebians throughout the year and approved at its General Assembly on December 10, 2021. The Cebes theses consolidate and express the debates on the international situation and show the context in which health and the SUS are affected. For its elaboration, it counted on the contribution of several meetings called 'Cebes Debates', held throughout the year, with the participation of leaders and specialists in the most diverse topics related to health and democracy. This process, which was crowned at the 8th Symposium, updates and systematizes conclusions that consolidate the principles and strategies for the action of the entity as a whole in the coming years.

Under the motto that founded the Cebes, HEALTH IS DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRACY IS HEALTH, the thesis discusses the current global pattern of universalization of malaise, with the worsening of inequalities and the exponential increase in hunger and misery, demonstrating the incapacity of capitalism, increasingly financialized and concentrated, to provide security and well-being to populations. It highlights the need to expand popular participation and organization for the construction of democratic alternatives aimed, in fact, at the majorities. In the Brazilian case, the thesis highlights the exclusionary pattern of our history, which returns, today, with force, in the neoliberal and authoritarian project of our elites, without commitment to national interests. The SUS does not escape this concentrating model, dealing daily with attempts to restrict it, weaken it, to favor private interests, at the expense of the resources and the health of Brazilians.

The Thesis² emphasizes the principles and guidelines of the Cebes' struggle.

Irrevocable principles of the Cebes

- To defend the universal right to health and social justice.
- To uncompromisingly defend democracy with the expansion of critical awareness for rights, fighting and reversing the destructive tendencies of capitalism.
- To speak out firmly against all wars, against the war industry, and against the right to carry weapons.
- To fight against fascism and all forms of intolerance.
- To repudiate and denounce all forms of violence, including death penalty, urban, domestic, gender, institutional and health violence.
- To defend social pluralism, denouncing and repudiating patriarchy, homophobia, lesbophobia, transphobia, and racism.

- To advocate for the decriminalization of drugs.
- To defend the legalization of abortion and sexual and reproductive rights.

Basis and principles of the Cebes' struggle for Democracy and Health in Brazil

- To defend the health system for all Brazilians 100% free of charge, comprehensive, of quality, with state providers, and without incentives or subsidies to private practice.
- To fight against the expansion of the private health sector.
- To disseminate and publicize to society the limitations of private health insurances in relation to the public system.
- To advocate for the elimination of new SUS contracts with the private sector and review current ones.
- To advocate for the elimination of subsidies, tax exemptions, and debt forgiveness for the private sector.
- To defend the extinction of processes of privatization and outsourcing in health.
- To fight for fair and adequate funding for health and the SUS, with emphasis on the role of the Federal government.
- To defend that the decision forums of Councils, Boards, Collegiate Boards, and deliberative bodies of all State Agencies (National Supplementary Health Agency – ANS, National Health Surveillance Agency – Anvisa, and other agencies) are equal, with 50% of votes and participation of users in each regulated sector.
- To support the strengthening of popular participation for the construction of popular democracy in health.
- To democratize state, municipal and local health councils and make them deliberative.
- To advocate for a national health workforce policy.
- To advocate Career and Salary Plans for healthcare professionals.
- To defend the care model that goes beyond the medical-privatist perspective and is based on human care and the principles of universality, equality, comprehensiveness, and autonomy.
- To support adjustments in the academic training of health professionals, bringing them closer to the needs of the SUS.

- To fight for the devolution of the power to administer, plan, and execute networked health care to the Ministry of Health, with emphasis on Primary Care, with the extinction of the Agency for the Development of Primary Health Care (Adaps).
- To defend the democratization of the National Health Information and Informatics Policy (PNIIS) and social participation in the Management Committee of the Digital Health Strategy.
- To promote dialogues between academic entities, unions, political parties, and social movements, summarizing the struggle for social security, universal and health policies.
- To fight for the revocation of counter-reforms and setbacks to social rights, especially the spending cap (Constitutional Amendment no. 95).
- To advocate for a tax reform that redistributes the tax burden, such as taxations, fees, and social contributions, lowering taxes on the poorest and middle class, such as consumption taxes, and increasing taxes on the richest.
- To contribute to electing representatives for the Executive and Legislative branches of the popular democratic field, privileging the interests of the population and full democracy.

With these principles and guidelines, Cebians will fight in 2022 to change the government and institute a new Nation project: sovereign, democratic, fair, and solidary for all Brazilians.

Collaborators

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