

Brazil's Workers Party leader covers up far-right threats to next government

Miguel Andrade
1 October 2018

With Brazil's October 7 general elections less than a week away, the political life of the country has been dominated by increasing threats to democratic institutions by the military and officials associated with the presidential campaign of the fascistic army reserve captain and seven-term Rio de Janeiro federal representative Jair Bolsonaro.

With Bolsonaro leading the polls, the official "democratic" bourgeois factions are themselves moving sharply to the right.

The latest far-right move in the crisis-ridden campaign has been an interview given by Bolsonaro to the right-wing pundit José Luiz Datena, from the *Bandeirantes* TV channel, declaring that "based on what he sees on the streets," he could not accept an electoral defeat at the hands of the Workers Party (PT) candidate Fernando Haddad.

Bolsonaro gave the interview from a semi-intensive care unit in one of the favorite hospitals of São Paulo's wealthy elite, where he has spent 20 days recovering from a life-threatening knife wound inflicted by a deeply disturbed individual during a campaign rally.

With 28 percent, Bolsonaro leads the latest polls, but is ever more closely followed by Haddad, who is rapidly closing the gap and now polls at 22 percent, largely due to the so-called "vote transfer" from former PT President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Lula had previously led the polls for almost a year. Jailed for corruption, on September 11, after an eight-month legal battle, Lula finally dropped his candidacy in favor of Haddad.

Tied in third place with around 10 percent are Ciro Gomes, the candidate of the oldest functioning bourgeois party in Brazil, the Democratic Labor Party (PDT), and former São Paulo state governor Geraldo Alckmin, from the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), the country's former leading right-wing party. The latest Datafolha poll from September 28 saw every contender

increase his lead over Bolsonaro in a likely second-round run-off election.

The latest ominous threat by the far right follows repeated declarations by high-ranking military officers, especially the commander of the Brazilian Army, Gen. Eduardo Villas Bôas, and echoed by right-wing pundits, questioning the legitimacy of the elections. They have pointed to "foreign interference" by a UN panel that voiced concerns over the treatment of Lula, a potential ruling by the Supreme Court freeing the ex-PT president on appeal and the impact of the attempt on the life of Bolsonaro, who could claim he was denied the right to campaign by the attack.

Villas Bôas' declarations have emboldened Bolsonaro's vice presidential running mate, Gen. Hamilton Mourão, to declare the legitimacy of a presidential self-coup—calling out the military—in face of the widespread opposition Bolsonaro would inevitably face if elected.

They have also emboldened Bolsonaro himself to declare that the Electoral Court may rig Brazil's electronic voting system in the PT's favor, and that this would be the "only" possible explanation for his defeat at the polls.

What is becoming increasingly clear is that the far right will apply maximum pressure in order to guarantee that the next government, whether led by Bolsonaro or by Haddad, is going to be the most right-wing since the fall of the 21-year US-backed military dictatorship in 1985.

Against such a menacing backdrop, the PT is making it ever clearer that it will play the leading role in covering up this threat from the far right, whether it wins the election or not.

The far-right campaign has prompted the PT to dispatch its former chancellor and defense minister, Celso Amorim, to a round of interviews with what passes for the "left" press in Brazil—the local edition of the Spanish

Daily *El País* and PT mouthpieces such as *Carta Capital* and *Brasil247* —in which he has guaranteed that the pack of generals behind Bolsonaro and the army commander Gen. Villas Bôas do not represent “the vision of the Armed Forces.”

Amorim made this media tour in the wake of the PT-organized “Threats to democracy and the multipolar world” conference in São Paulo, which had as one of its main speakers Dominique de Villepin, the right-wing former French prime minister who oversaw major anti-working class “reforms” responsible for the unprecedented growth of the far right in France.

Support from imperialist officials and mouthpieces, such as the *New York Times*, *Le Monde*, the *Financial Times* and the *Economist*, has been a central prop of the PT’s appeals to the Brazilian ruling elite, with Lula receiving supporting letters and jail visits from warmongers such as François Hollande and Martin Schultz.

In his first interview in his PT-sponsored media tour, Celso Amorim told *Carta Capital* that Bolsonaro and General Mourão are “a minority” within the military. He singled out desperate workers willing to cast a vote for the nationalist and populist-posturing Bolsonaro as the greatest threat to democracy.

To *El País*, on the next day, Amorim praised Gen. Joaquim Silva e Luna, Brazil’s first uniformed defense minister since the Army, Navy and Air Force ministries were unified to increase civilian control over the military, for “being constructive” during the proceedings of the Congressional Truth Commission on the 1964-1985 dictatorship. During this process, the military insisted that no prosecution would be allowed for its assassins and torturers and openly threatened mutiny if any attempt were made to hold them accountable.

In the same interview, he dismissed Villas Bôas’s declarations threatening the Supreme Court on the eve of its April 3 ruling on Lula’s Habeas Corpus plea. He said that the army was “attentive to its missions” and “shared the feelings of well-meaning citizens’ against impunity [for Lula].” He added that he didn’t want to “speculate on what he meant” and that “he cannot judge his intentions,” and that “he could not cast any suspicion” on Villas Bôas from what he knew of him as defense minister.

Later, on September 28, he declared to *Brasil 247* that “the military will accept Haddad’s victory,” once again relying on the “constructive” Gen. Silva e Luna, whom he said “has highlighted that the election result would be respected, whatever it is.”

Amorim’s press tour and his promotion of General Silva e Luna constitute a carefully thought-out maneuver by the PT to court the military and present the party as the force best suited to its interests. The clearest indication of this has been Amorim’s reference, in *Carta Capital*, to the need for “a preemptive Marshall Lott.”

Marshall Henrique Lott was responsible for guaranteeing that President Juscelino Kubitschek could take office in 1956 after the threat of a military coup, and for later reining in another coup threat against President João Goulart in 1961, in the so-called “Legality Campaign.”

Amid an escalating military threat and an increase in working class militancy, it was the Communist Party’s insistence that workers subordinate themselves for more than 10 years to “constitutionalist” bourgeois forces like Lott and the Brazilian Labor Party, to which Goulart belonged, that proved the main factor in the final success of the military in the coup of 1964, which initiated a 21-year, blood-soaked regime that murderously silenced any opposition.

The references to Lott and “constitutionalist” military go hand-in-hand with the declarations by PT officials that they are pursuing a “Perón strategy,” of “Haddad as President, Lula in Power.” The Argentine President Juan Domingo Perón, harbored by the fascist Franco regime in Spain after a 1955 Argentine military coup, came back to Argentina after his hand-picked candidate, Héctor Cámpora, won the 1973 elections. He allowed Perón’s return and quickly resigned in order to convene new elections that Perón would win. Taking office amid increasing working class unrest, Perón died in 1974, and his party turned viciously against the working class, founding the murderous Argentine Anticommunist Alliance and purging the unions before being ousted by the military, leaving the working class defenseless, in the face of the 1976 coup.

The PT’s rightward movement is preparing a no-less bloody end. The first task of the working class in preparing itself for the inevitable future confrontations is to consciously break with the PT and all of its “anti-fascist” bourgeois alliance.



To contact the WWSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wwsws.org/contact