

Bolsonaro's coup plots in Brazil, under the shadow of January 6

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The fascistic demonstrations in support of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro on September 7, Brazil's Independence Day, made clear to the world that Latin America's largest country is threatened with an authoritarian coup.

The recognition in Brazilian and international newspapers of the imminence of this threat is unprecedented in the 35 years since the fall of the bloody military regime that came to power in a US-backed coup in 1964 and ruled Brazil for more than two decades.

September 7 marked a new stage in Bolsonaro's drive to establish a dictatorial regime in Brazil, which he has advanced since his first day in power. It is the culmination of a series of moves in recent months that have included the unprecedented dismissal of the military command and a campaign demanding the introduction of "printed ballots" to lay the groundwork for charging that Brazil's next presidential elections in 2022 will have been rigged if he is defeated—as now appears likely—at the polls.

Tuesday's events were prepared over months by Bolsonaro and his clique of fascistic civilian and military advisors, and directly coordinated with extreme right-wing allies in the US and internationally. With the organized support of far-right groups, police commanders, business associations and other reactionary institutions, crowds composed of the most reactionary elements of the Brazilian middle class, off-duty police and other backward elements were brought to the streets with the stated goal of legitimizing Bolsonaro's assumption of absolute power.

The main banners raised by the far-right protesters called for immediate military intervention, the overthrow of the Supreme Court (STF) and the "criminalization of communism" in Brazil. Posters and t-shirts worn by the demonstrators had slogans in both Portuguese and English, signaling their identification with the far right in the US.

Bolsonaro participated in the two main events, in São Paulo and Brasília, where he gave rabid speeches after staging helicopter flights over the demonstrations. In Brasília, where he spoke alongside his vice president, Gen.

Hamilton Mourão, and cabinet ministers, Bolsonaro defined the day as "an ultimatum" to all three branches of the Brazilian government.

He turned his most violent attacks against STF minister Alexandre de Moraes, who is conducting inquiries into threats to the constitutional order that involve the president himself and his supporters. Bolsonaro stated at the event in São Paulo that he "will no longer comply" with "any decision by Mr. Alexandre de Moraes." And, in the language of a mobster, he exclaimed: "I want to tell the scoundrels that I will never be arrested!"

Bolsonaro explicitly threatened the overthrow of the judiciary system, demanding that either its president, Luiz Fux, brings Moraes to heel, "or this power may suffer what we do not want."

These speeches unequivocally legitimize violent actions by his fascist supporters. During the day, there were serious concerns over a potential invasion of the supreme court building by Bolsonaro's supporters in Brasília, emulating the Capitol siege during the January 6 coup attempt in the United States.

On Monday night, on the eve of the demonstration, a horde of protesters broke through Military Police barriers and entered the "Esplanada," or the outdoor mall between the ministry buildings, claiming they would storm the STF the next day.

The lack of any police effort to contain the invasion, as well as the officers' refusal to search the demonstrators, set off an alarm in the upper echelons of the Brazilian state. Concerned that an attack would take place without any police interference, the STF discussed calling in the Armed Forces to defend its headquarters from fascistic forces incited by the president of the republic.

To interpret the fact that the invasion of the STF was ultimately not carried out as a reason to dismiss the serious threats raised by this episode would be an act of criminal political complacency. But such complacency abounds within Bolsonaro's supposed opposition, the Workers Party (PT) and its petty-bourgeois pseudo-left satellites. The PT,

which has curried favor with the military and urged confidence in its “constitutionalist” loyalties, will work only to politically disarm workers and prevent any resistance to a coup.

The Morenoite website *Izquierda Diario*, which had previously claimed that last January’s storming of the US Capitol was *not* a coup and that Trump had no real intention of remaining in power, today strives to deny the unquestionable relation between the January 6 coup in the United States and the September 7 coup rehearsal in Brazil.

An article titled “Protest in Brasilia: too far from the Capitol and from Bolsonaro’s predictions,” by the Brazilian Morenoite leader André Barbieri, seeks not only to diminish the significance of January 6 in the US, but to say that what happened in Brazil was even less important. The article concludes by saying that “Bolsonaro has no possibility to ‘apply coups’ given the enormous division in distinct segments of the ruling class, the opposition of other institutions of the bourgeoisie and the antipathy of US imperialism headed by the Democratic Party.”

The dismissal of dictatorial threats in Brazil by the Morenoites, based on the crudest pragmatic calculations about “divisions” within the ruling class, or the supposed distaste of the Democratic Party—the same party that was in power in 1964—for coups, confirms the assessment made by the *World Socialist Web Site* that with its dismissal of the January 6 coup, they were “not only anesthetizing and politically disarming US workers who face a continuing threat of fascist dictatorship, but they are setting the stage for advancing this policy in other countries.”

The connection between the events unfolding in Brazil and the coup promoted by Donald Trump in the US is glaringly obvious.

Jair Bolsonaro has carefully studied the “gospel” of Donald Trump, inspired by his actions in the 2020 US election to claim a threat of electoral fraud in Brazil, thereby laying the groundwork for a coup. But there is also direct coordination between the Brazilian fascists and their allies in the United States and elsewhere. As was revealed by the WSWS, Eduardo Bolsonaro, son of the Brazilian president, directly participated in the preparations for the invasion of the Capitol in Washington on January 6.

Serving as an intermediary between Bolsonaro’s plans in Brazil and the international far right, Eduardo Bolsonaro participated in meetings in recent weeks with promoters of the January 6 coup and representatives of the fascist Alternative for Germany.

In the second week of August, Eduardo promoted his father’s coup maneuvers over the “printed ballot” at Mike Lindell’s “Cyber Symposium.” And just three days before September 7, Eduardo inaugurated the Brazilian edition of

the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), which had the virtual participation of Donald Trump Jr. and the presence of Trump’s former adviser Jason Miller, who met personally with Jair Bolsonaro while in Brazil.

The development of these fascist forces around the world and their promotion to important positions in governments of different countries is not an arbitrary process. Its objective roots lie in the profound crisis of world capitalism that has been radically exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The explosion of social inequality and the capitalist policies of normalization of social murder are fundamentally incompatible with democratic forms of government.

This is being graphically demonstrated in Brazil, where the billionaires have doubled their share of national income during the pandemic, while tens of millions of Brazilian workers were thrown into poverty. Recorded COVID-19 deaths are approaching 600,000, while the spread of the Delta variant is fueling a devastating new wave of infections and deaths.

This same crisis is driving an international wave of working class struggle, with strikes that are challenging the decades-long domination by the corporatist union bureaucracies and mass protests against the bourgeoisie’s murderous response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Bolsonaro’s turn toward dictatorship fundamentally represents a capitalist reaction against the class struggle that is explosively unfolding in Brazil.

Against the coordination of fascistic forces in the US, Brazil and around the world in the promotion of coups and brutal new dictatorships, the international working class must unite across national boundaries in a common struggle for socialism. The most urgent question confronting workers and youth determined to fight against a return to dictatorship, the murderous response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the deepening of the social crisis is the building of a new revolutionary leadership based on the program of socialist internationalism. This requires the construction of a Brazilian section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).



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