

Alternative for Germany leader supports Brazilian President Bolsonaro's plans for dictatorship

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Jair Bolsonaro's recent attempts to establish a dictatorial regime in Brazil shed new light on a meeting held two months ago between the deputy leader of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), Beatrix von Storch, and the Brazilian president.

Von Storch and her husband Sven met with Bolsonaro at the latter's presidential palace on July 21. Von Storch subsequently publicised the meeting on Instagram, posting a picture of Bolsonaro giving them both a friendly hug.

She wrote, "An impressive meeting in Brazil: I thank the Brazilian president for the friendly welcome and am impressed by his clear understanding of the problems in Europe and political challenges of our time. At a time when the left is pushing its ideology on a global level through its international networks and organisations, we conservatives also need to network more and stand up for our conservative values at an international level."

During their trip to Brazil the Storchs also met with Bolsonaro's son Eduardo, the president's right-hand man. Eduardo Bolsonaro leads the ultra-right Social Liberal Party (PSL) in parliament and maintains links to far-right organisations around the world.

Among other connections, Eduardo maintains close ties with Donald Trump and his family. When Trump and his supporters tried to prevent the confirmation of Joe Biden as president by storming the Capitol on January 6, Eduardo Bolsonaro was in Washington and directly involved in preparations for the coup. He is also the Latin American representative of The Movement, which was founded by Trump's former chief strategist Steve Bannon to coordinate far-right movements in Europe and worldwide.

On Instagram, Storch praised her meeting with the president's son in the highest terms:

"Important stop on my Brazil trip: a terrific meeting with Eduardo Bolsonaro. Shared values are the basis for good, international cooperation. In the plenum of the parliament, next to the seat of the president of the parliament: the Bible."

It has long been known that Jair Bolsonaro regards the military dictatorship that exercised a brutal reign of terror in Latin America's most populous country from 1964 to 1985 as a role model to be emulated, and he himself strives to secure his rule by dictatorial means. On September 7, however, these efforts reached a new climax.

Bolsonaro had been trying for weeks to mobilise a far-right mob on Brazil's Independence Day. International media outlets warned that, like the putsch attempt in the US on January 6, there could be a storming of Brazil's Supreme Court or a takeover by the military, where Bolsonaro has considerable backing. He has included ten high-ranking military officers in his government and placed 6,100 others in ministries and agencies.

Then, on Independence Day, large numbers of the president's supporters took to the streets. Bolsonaro himself spoke at two mass meetings. He vowed in the style of a dictator that only God could remove him from the government palace, called for defiance of the Supreme Court and threatened it with violence. The Supreme Court is currently investigating Bolsonaro and his supporters for inciting violence and spreading false information.

Bolsonaro's coup preparations are a reaction to growing opposition of the working class. His murderous Corona policy, which rejects any form of protection against the virus, has so far claimed 586,000 lives, with 600 more dying every day. In addition, the country is in the grips of a severe economic crisis with more than 14 percent of the population unemployed, a substantial increase in poverty

and homelessness, and soaring inflation.

When Beatrix von Storch and her husband visited Bolsonaro a few weeks before Independence Day, the mobilisation of the fascist mob was in full swing and their meeting with the president was a clear public demonstration of sympathy for his coup plans. At the same time, the pair confirmed how deeply rooted the AfD is in fascist ideology and practice.

Following the defeat of Donald Trump in the US election, Brazil, where Bolsonaro retains all the powers of state, has become a centre of international right-wing extremism. The president's son not only works together with the Trump family and Steve Bannon, he has also appeared alongside Santiago Abascal of Spain's Vox party and the Hungarian head of government, Viktor Orbán. Vox stands in the tradition of the fascist Franco dictatorship, while Orbán is intent on establishing what he calls an "illiberal democracy," based on subjugating the Hungarian judiciary and media while suppressing all opposition.

These far-right movements learn from each other and imitate each other. They develop common themes—agitation against refugees, bans on abortion, climate change denial, refusal to vaccinate, LGBT discrimination, etc.—to mobilise a right-wing mob, copying the techniques for a violent far-right putsch.

Beatrix von Storch is a senior figure inside the AfD. The 50-year-old has been a member of the far-right party since its founding in 2013. She is the deputy spokesperson of the AfD and deputy chair of its parliamentary group. With respect to both her politics and biography, she embodies continuity with the Nazi regime.

Von Storch's maternal grandfather, Count Schwerin von Krosigk, was Hitler's finance minister for twelve years and was convicted as a war criminal in 1949. Her paternal grandfather, Hereditary Grand Duke Nikolaus von Oldenburg, who lost his throne in the November Revolution of 1918, was a member of both the NSDAP and Hitler's Sturmabteilung (SA). At the beginning of her political career, von Storch campaigned, among other issues, for the restitution of land to East German *junkers* (feudal landowners) who had been expropriated after World War II.

Storch has always stood on the right of the already far-right AfD, repeatedly making a name for herself with vicious, inhumane statements. In 2016, for example, she called for the use of firearms to repel refugees, including women and children, at the German border. Her agitation against Muslim men led to legal charges against her for

incitement. More recently she has regurgitated Trump's lies about a "stolen" US presidential election.

Some German newspapers reported on the Storchs' trip to Brazil, but there were no protests raised in the media or by politicians. This was not surprising, given that the German government itself maintains the closest relations with the Bolsonaro regime.

Two years ago, the German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas (SPD) visited Brasília and lined up with the far-right Brazilian president to support the coup attempt by the US puppet Juan Guaidó against the Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. "Both sides reaffirmed their recognition of Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president," the pair announced at the time in a joint statement.

When it comes to advancing their own economic interests and suppressing the working class, the German government and all of the established parties align with right-wing, authoritarian regimes. This applies not only to Bolsonaro in Brazil, but also to al Sisi in Egypt and many others.

This also determines their attitude towards the AfD. The party is courted in the Bundestag and state parliaments across the country. Its members have been entrusted with the leadership of important committees. In refugee policy and in the build-up of the country's security apparatus, the government has long since adopted AfD policies. The secret services, police and military are all teeming with AfD supporters.

Faced with the deep economic and political crisis of capitalism and growing class struggles, the ruling class in every country is turning to authoritarian and fascist methods of rule. Only a socialist movement of the international working class can stop this dangerous development.



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