

Brazil's Bolsonaro attacks socialism and COVID-19 lockdowns at UN

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The opening session of the 76th UN General Assembly began on Tuesday, September 21, with a speech by Brazil's fascistic President Jair Bolsonaro. Exactly two weeks earlier, Bolsonaro had led far-right demonstrations that threatened to install a military dictatorship in Latin America's largest country.

In his speech, Bolsonaro openly vindicated his September 7 coup threat. He also defended his criminal state policies, particularly his homicidal "herd immunity" strategy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has already caused nearly 600,000 recorded deaths in Brazil. Bolsonaro personified this criminal policy, as he attended the international event as the only speaker who refused to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Brazilian president opened his speech by clearly presenting the counterrevolutionary perspective that guides his policy. He proclaimed, "Brazil has a president who believes in God, respects the Constitution and its military, values the family and owes loyalty to his people. That is a lot, it is a solid foundation, if you take into account that we were on the verge of socialism."

He went on to say that the epoch in which Brazil "[financed] works in communist countries" is over and that today the country has "the largest investment partnership program with private enterprise in its history."

Based on outright data distortions, he affirmed his government's environmental commitment, including the preservation of the Amazon rainforest, whose devastation he claimed had been radically reduced. While Bolsonaro declared "a 32 percent reduction in deforestation in the month of August," the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE) says that in the first years of his term there was a 56 percent

increase in the average deforestation of the Amazon.

Speaking about the COVID-19 pandemic, Bolsonaro viciously attacked policies based on science and in the interests of preserving human lives. He stated that "isolation and lockdown measures have left a legacy of inflation, particularly in foodstuffs worldwide."

The president also declared himself opposed to "any vaccine-related mandates" and advocated the use of drugs without scientific proof against COVID-19, claiming "[to be] one who has taken the 'initial treatment,' always respecting medical autonomy."

At the same time as he gave this hideous statement, a scandal was revealed in Brazil involving the medical company Prevent Senior, which conducted a barbaric experiment on elderly COVID-19 patients, who were given hydroxychloroquine and erythromycin without their consent, provoking hundreds of deaths. These results, in turn, were falsified to support a "study" that would claim the efficacy of such drugs against COVID-19. Bolsonaro was deeply involved with the organizers of this criminal experiment and systematically publicized its fraudulent results.

The Brazilian corporate media reported Bolsonaro's speech and participation in the UN event as a national "shame." He "has no place in the world," an article by Jamil Chade at *Uol* stated. The press also claimed that the speech was entirely aimed at his domestic ultra-right base and that he refused to "speak to the world."

These assessments attempt to single out Bolsonaro as an aberration, a black stain invading the sea of roses of fraternal international political relations embodied by the United Nations. The profound hypocrisy of imperialist leaders, such as US President Joe Biden, who proclaimed the end of a "period of relentless war" and the opening of a "new era of relentless diplomacy," is portrayed by them as the purest truth.

The 2021 UN General Assembly was, however, marked by the announcement, just a few days earlier, of the formation of the AUKUS military alliance between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. This military agreement exacerbated the threats of an imminent war against China and exposed the deepening conflicts between the imperialist powers themselves—as the unprecedented diplomatic crisis between the AUKUS countries and France unequivocally demonstrated.

While uttering speeches extolling “peace” and “diplomacy” and advocating “humanitarian” policies, the world bourgeoisie walks blindfolded towards the eruption of catastrophic wars, while domestically advancing policies of social murder in response to COVID-19 and of widespread repression against growing social opposition.

Regardless of whether his peers turn up their noses at him, the fascistic Bolsonaro is a legitimate expression of the political degradation of the international bourgeoisie driven by the deep crisis of world capitalism.

Bolsonaro’s attitude of criminal neglect towards the COVID-19 pandemic, known in Brazil as “denialism,” is not peculiar to him either. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson—who this week was highlighted in the Brazilian press for allegedly warning Bolsonaro that “vaccines save lives”—will go down in history for his nefarious phrase: “No more f...ing lockdowns; let the bodies pile high in their thousands.”

Although Bolsonaro focused on promoting his domestic political conspiracies, his speech aimed far beyond his fascistic foot soldiers in Brazil. By attacking socialism, lockdowns and mandatory vaccination, by advocating a chauvinistic policy based on “God and family,” he spoke on behalf of fascistic forces that are being brought to the fore and integrated into capitalist governments around the world.

In conjunction with the Brazilian president’s participation in the UN event, his son and political right-hand aide, Eduardo Bolsonaro, participated in Tucker Carlson’s reactionary program on *Fox News*. With Carlson’s enthusiastic approval, Eduardo attacked New York City’s Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio, declaring he “is a Marxist that follows a lot of what Antonio Gramsci says.” De Blasio had recommended that Bolsonaro get vaccinated before entering the US or

to not come at all.

Eduardo Bolsonaro was directly addressing the base of support of Donald Trump, who, like the Brazilian president, declared the minimal social distancing measures promoted by governors and mayors as “dictatorial” and instigated a fascistic insurrection against them.

Also during the trip to New York, members of Bolsonaro’s entourage, including his Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga and Eduardo Bolsonaro himself, tested positive for COVID-19. Following up on his provocations, Eduardo implied he was making use of the unproved drugs and, in a post on Twitter on Friday, raised doubts about the effectiveness of the vaccines. He wrote: “We know the vaccines were made faster than standard. ... Does that mean the vaccine is useless? I don’t think so. But it is another argument against the vaccine passport.”

The growth of these fascistic forces in Brazil and the world, as well as the growing social inequality and the catastrophic development of the COVID-19 pandemic can only be fought through the mobilization of the working class on an international level.

In this struggle, the working class will advocate the scientific strategy of global eradication of the COVID-19 pandemic. It should oppose both the openly murderous “herd immunity” policy, which attacks any scientific measure to control the coronavirus, and that of “mitigation,” which admits vaccination and mask mandates while ruling out social distancing measures that impact capitalist profits and any international collaboration.

Against the rotten capitalist system and its drive to war and dictatorship, the international working class must raise the banner of internationalist socialist revolution.



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