Spain’s fascistic Vox party, Latin American right launch anti-communist “Madrid Forum”

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21 October 2021

Spain’s fascistic Vox party has launched an international anti-communist alliance, the “Madrid Forum.” The Forum is a loose association of far-right parties and individuals from across the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America, aiming to “confront the threat posed by the growth of communism on both sides of the Atlantic,” according to a press release on Vox’s website.

The launch of the initiative came at the conclusion of a tour by senior Vox figures around South and Central America, including a visit by Vox leader Santiago Abascal to Mexico in September. Abascal was warmly welcomed by the Mexican ruling class and was invited by the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) to promote his alliance in the Senate.

“Today in the Mexican Senate we presented the Madrid Forum, our initiative to confront the advance of communism in the Iberosphere [Latin America, Spain and Portugal],” Abascal wrote on Twitter. “Thank you to the 15 senators and 3 congresspeople who have signed the Madrid Charter and thank you to @julenrementeria [Julen Rementería, PAN senator] for inviting us.”

The Madrid Charter, the Madrid Forum’s founding document, was drafted by the Dissent Foundation, a far-right think-tank formed by Abascal in July 2020. Abascal created it after travelling to the United States earlier that year to visit US think-tanks linked to the Republican Party, including the Heritage Foundation, the International Republican Institute and the American Conservative Union.

During this trip, Abascal also attended the right-wing Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), which was addressed by former US president Donald Trump. There Abascal also met with Eduardo Bolsonaro, the son and right-hand man of fascistic Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro junior leads the far-right Social Liberal Party (PSL) in the Brazilian parliament and has links to far-right organisations around the world. He is also a signatory to the Madrid Charter.

Eduardo Bolsonaro and the Trump-dominated US Republican Party both are intimately involved in attempts to prepare far-right coups in Brazil and the United States. Eduardo Bolsonaro was in Washington and directly involved in preparations for Trump’s January 6 storming of the US Capitol, organised with widespread support from the Republican Party. Bolsonaro is also the Latin American representative of The Movement—an organisation founded by Trump’s former chief strategist Steve Bannon to coordinate far-right movements in Europe and worldwide.

Jair Bolsonaro also attempted to mobilise a far-right mob on Brazil’s Independence Day, September 7, threatening to storm Brazil’s Supreme Court.

The formation of the Madrid Forum is particularly significant in light of Vox’s support for a far-right coup in Spain. It comes less than a year after reports emerged of a fascistic plot, code-named Operation Albatross, aiming to install a dictatorship in Spain under the guise of a Socialist Party (PSOE)-Popular Party-Vox national unity government. Discussion of Operation Albatross reportedly began in March 2020, as a wave of wildcat strikes spread across Europe against the European Union’s (EU) “herd immunity” policy.

Later last year, WhatsApp chats were leaked in which high-ranking retired and serving generals linked to Vox hailed Spanish dictator Francisco Franco’s 1936 coup and spoke of plans to kill “26 million sons of b*tches”—their estimate of the number of left-wing voters and their families in Spain. Senior Vox lawmaker Macarena Olona later defended the fascist officers at a debate in the Spanish parliament, claiming that they were fighting for the “unity” of Spain and declaring, “Of course they are our people.”

The Madrid Forum and Charter show that plotting for a violent crackdown on left-wing workers is escalating in Spain and across Latin America. The Charter, subtitled “In Defense of Freedom and Democracy in the Iberosphere,” asserts, “The advance of communism poses a serious threat to the prosperity and development of our nations, as well as to the freedoms and rights of our compatriots.”

“The threat is not limited to countries suffering under the yoke of totalitarianism,” it adds. “The ideological and criminal project which is subjugating the freedoms and rights of the nations aims to infiltrate into other countries and continents in order to destabilise liberal democracies and the Rule of Law.”

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The document further claims that “part of the [Iberosphere] is being held hostage by totalitarian regimes of communist inspiration, supported by drug-trafficking and third countries. All of them, under the umbrella of the Cuban regime and initiatives like the São Paulo Forum and the Puebla Group, are infiltrating into the centres of power to impose their ideological agenda.”

This is a barely veiled threat to foment coups across Latin America. The São Paulo Forum (FSP) is an organisation set up by the Brazilian Workers’ Party (PT), which governed Brazil between 2003 and 2016, first under the presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and then Dilma Rousseff. The Forum comprises parties of the nominally “left” capitalist governments of 10 countries in Latin America, including Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela.

The FSP was initiated by Lula and the PT in 1990, as a venue for “left” capitalist parties across the region to discuss how best to suppress the working class. This August, the Democratic Socialists of America, a leading US pseudo-left group, passed a resolution to formally affiliate with the FSP.

The Puebla Group, meanwhile, counts among its members Argentine President Alberto Fernández of the Peronist Justicialist Party; former Spanish president José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of the social democratic Socialist Party (PSOE); Irene Montero, Minister of Equality in the ruling PSOE-Podemos coalition in Spain, and partner of former Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias, and former Bolivian president Evo Morales, of the pseudo-left Movement Towards Socialism (MAS).

While none of these figures in reality have anything to do with Marxism or the interests of the working class, the explicit founding of the Madrid Forum against “communism” gives an idea of the type of movement Vox aims to build. Opposition is rising among workers to the criminal policy, pursued by ruling elites internationally, of letting COVID-19 spread unchecked, and to attacks on wages, jobs and social conditions. The spectre of communism haunts the bourgeoisie once again. Vox aims to rally the far-right to assault the working class against a growing international wave of class struggles.

Vox claims the Madrid Charter has been signed by over 8,000 people from more than 20 countries, including Peru, Argentina, Venezuela, the US, El Salvador, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Sweden, Costa Rica and Cuba. These include over 150 politicians and other media and cultural figures, including judges, magistrates, journalists and lawyers from across Latin America, the US and Europe.

Representatives of Vox and the Dissent Foundation also travelled to Ecuador, Peru and Columbia over the summer, where they were received by members of government and allowed to present the Madrid Charter, collecting many signatures.

At the end of September, Abascal also visited Lisbon to meet with the leader of Portugal’s fascistic Chega (Enough) party, André Ventura. Abascal reported on Twitter that Ventura had also signed the Madrid Charter. “It is an honour to include André Ventura in this alliance against communism,” Abascal stated.

Among the signatories of the Charter in Mexico are 14 senators from the PAN, more than half of this party’s 25 members in the Mexican Senate. At least two Mexican deputies from the misnamed Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) also signed the Charter. The PAN and PRI had been the main two ruling parties in Mexico until AMLO’s Morena (Movement for National Reconstruction) party was swept to power in the 2018 elections.

The PAN warmly received Abascal, posting a photo on their official Twitter page of the Vox leader posing for the camera with around 20 PAN parliamentarians. The tweet was later deleted after a popular outcry against the party’s bootlicking of the Spanish fascist.

Other PAN representatives went out of their way to flaunt their alliance with the fascists. Elsa Adané Méndez, a deputy in the regional Congress of Querétaro, tweeting a friendly photo of herself and the Vox leader captioned, “An honour to meet @Santi_ABASCAL, very soon we will have a “VOXMexico”.

Significantly, Mexican President López Obrador, the darling of the pseudo-left, also welcomed the Vox leader. AMLO stated, “Mexico is a free country, and I say that if the gentleman from Vox [Abascal] wants to come again, he can. The doors of our country are open.”

Amid a deep economic and political crisis of capitalism and growing class struggles, the ruling elite in every country is increasingly turning to authoritarianism and fascistic forms of rule, with the full complicity of social-democratic or “left populist” governments. In Spain, the PSOE-Podemos administration have pandered to Vox at every turn, adopting their policies on the pandemic and migration, and downplaying the threat of the far-right.

The struggle against the far-right can only be carried out through a complete break from all of the parties of the bourgeoisie, as part of an international struggle for socialism. This requires the building of sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in every country.

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