

As Bolsonaro coup trial begins in Brazil, Lula government and pseudo-lefts prepare patriotic Independence Day demonstrations

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This week the trial of Brazil's fascistic former president Jair Bolsonaro and his principal accomplices in a conspiracy that culminated in the attempted coup of January 8, 2023, began in Brasília.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, defense statements were heard from the former president and the other seven accused of being the “crucial nucleus” of the coup conspiracy. They are almost all military personnel, including former commanders of the Armed Forces and four-star generals.

The decisive trial sessions, where Supreme Federal Court (STF) justices will present their votes and an expected conviction of the defendants for crimes such as “Coup d'État” and “Violent Abolition of the Democratic Rule of Law,” are scheduled for next week.

The trial of the coup attempt led by Bolsonaro and the military high command is a historic political event in Brazil. In a country that spent 21 years under a bloody military dictatorship, between 1964 and 1985, this is the first time that generals sit in the defendant's dock and that crimes against democracy are prosecuted.

The explosive implications of this event are exacerbated by the accelerating global crisis and, particularly, by the shocks of the violent eruption of US imperialism. What has been described as the “trial of the century” in Brazil is unfolding in the face of Washington's blatant intervention against the country's political institutions.

The Donald Trump administration has imposed punishing 50 percent tariffs on Brazil, openly justified as a means of coercing the Brazilian state to abandon the case against Bolsonaro, which his American ally has called a “witch hunt.”

The trial of the coup attempt in Brazil runs directly counter to Trump's ongoing dictatorial project in the United States. Bolsonaro's fascist conspiracy directly copied Trump's January 6, 2021 Capitol coup attempt in Washington. Trump looks to Brazil and undoubtedly thinks “there but for the grace of god—[or in his case the Democratic Party]—go I.”

The coordinated attacks between Bolsonaro and the Trump government were referenced in the trial's opening by the case's rapporteur, Justice Alexandre de Moraes, a direct target of US sanctions and threats. “In the course of this action, the existence... of a true criminal organization was verified,” he declared, which attempted to “coerce the Judiciary... and submit the Court's functioning to the scrutiny of a foreign State.”

Far from representing the final nail in the coffin of a defeated fascist offensive, the trial of Bolsonaro and his accomplices occurs amid the persistence and intensification of their efforts to overthrow democracy in Brazil. Supported by broad sectors of the political establishment, the military, and American imperialism, they are already actively preparing a violent confrontation against the decisions being made by the court.

The Brazilian working class stands at a historic crossroads. To confront the mortal dangers of imperialist violence and fascism, it is necessary to understand their real origin in a world capitalist system in crisis. But, above all, Brazilian workers need to understand the source of their own strength: their profound unity of interests with the international working class.

The perspective promoted by Brazil's ruling Workers Party (PT) and the pseudo-left organizations runs directly counter to these interests. In response to the explosive political situation, all their efforts are concentrated on building reactionary patriotic acts on September 7, Brazil's Independence Day.

The celebration of Independence Day, which is deeply associated with the political legacy of the military dictatorship and Bolsonaro's fascist project, will occur precisely amid the trial of the coup attempt. It is expected that the far-right will use the occasion to launch an offensive to implode the case's proceedings.

The PT and the pseudo-left present the need to counter these efforts as a fraudulent justification for building the acts

they convene under the slogan “Sovereign Brazil.” The leader of the Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL), Guilherme Boulos, said: “The streets cannot be left only to the far right on September 7. This is a contradiction.”

But, more profoundly, the embrace of Brazilian chauvinism and all its sordid traditions is part of a reactionary effort to build a “National Front” in response to Trump and Bolsonaro. The fundamental axis of this policy is to subordinate the Brazilian working class to the rotten national bourgeoisie and its state.

This objective is clearly expressed in the call for the demonstrations, signed by trade union confederations and social movements linked to the PT and PSOL. Explicitly addressing the “military” and “party leaders” and bourgeois “parliamentarians,” it declares: “Government, entrepreneurs committed to the homeland and workers must bet on strengthening domestic consumption and conquering new markets for our exports.”

This sordid official declaration signed by the major trade unions was accompanied by an “independent” declaration from CSP-Conlutas, the trade union federation led by the Morenites of the Unified Socialist Workers Party (PSTU) and supported by allied groups like the Revolutionary Workers Movement (MRT).

Explicitly demonstrating the anti-Marxist character of these organizations, committed to occupying the role of “left wing” of the bourgeois national front promoted by the PT, the Conlutas note states: “September 7 this year gains great importance in the face of the imperialist attack by the US against Brazil and needs to be a milestone in the struggle for true independence.” Based on this, they call for “the broadest unity of action to confront imperialism”—in other words, for overcoming class and political divisions in the name of national defense.

The supposed “opposition” of this pseudo-left sector to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s government is merely a device to divert workers and youth in the process of political radicalization. Their “alternative” program is reduced to a demand that “Lula’s government has to take concrete anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist measures.”

The degree of desperation and political rot expressed in the reactionary maneuver of the PT and the pseudo-left is best understood through an examination of the political event they intend to appropriate. In the final years of the Bolsonaro government, September 7 celebrations served precisely as the main political platform for promoting his coup conspiracy.

In 2021, the *World Socialist Web Site* warned:

September 7 marked a new stage in Bolsonaro’s

turn toward establishing a dictatorial regime in Brazil...

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.

These efforts were escalated the following year, which “saw an unprecedented unification in the streets of supporters of his fascistic political project and military forces, with the generals’ consent.”

In the absence of a mass fascist movement, the reactionary celebration of Brazilian patriotism and militarism on September 7 was embraced by Bolsonaro as a popular facade for his dictatorial project. His ability to carry out this maneuver without significant state resistance and with military support demonstrated that Bolsonaro’s conspiracy—much more than a personal project—was a symptom of the trajectory of the entire bourgeois regime.

It is precisely this lesson that the PT and the pseudo-left seek to erase this September 7th.

The PT’s attempt to reestablish its bankrupt bourgeois “Broad Front” based on patriotism as a new common political denominator will have catastrophic results, which are already beginning to emerge on the surface.

During the promotion of Independence Day acts, PT party president Edinho Silva proposed “having as a focus the creation of a broad front of support for [next] year’s [elections].” Particularly, Silva expressed the objective of deepening relations and forming a federation with the right-wing União Brasil and Progressive Party (PP).

On Tuesday—as the STF trial began—these two right-wing parties announced their departure from the PT government and the ministries they occupied and declared adherence to the campaign for amnesty for Bolsonaro and all those involved in the January 8 coup attempt.



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