

Morenoites act to keep Brazilian workers and youth trapped in Lula's "Broad Front"

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On the eve of the first round of the Brazilian elections, the *World Socialist Web Site* warned that the pseudo-left organizations presenting "independent" candidacies would return, in the second round, to the camp of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers Party (PT). "Nothing indicates that 2026 will be any different," we wrote. The prediction has been entirely confirmed. The Morenoites of the United Socialist Workers Party (PSTU) and the Revolutionary Workers Movement (MRT), heirs of the tendency founded by the Argentine Nahuel Moreno, are calling for a vote for Lula in the second round, scheduled for October 25. The Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and Popular Unity (UP) are doing the same.

The formulas vary. The PSTU speaks of a "critical vote." The MRT proclaims "not a single vote for Flávio Bolsonaro" and insists that it gives "no political support" to the Broad Front, Lula's coalition with traditional parties and figures of the bourgeoisie, epitomized by Vice President Geraldo Alckmin, former governor of São Paulo for the PSDB. These "critical" addenda to their support for Lula's reelection do not serve to overcome illusions in the policy of the Broad Front. They serve only to reinforce them, precisely at the moment when its catastrophe is being exposed before millions.

The first round, on October 4, was a devastating verdict on the policy of the Broad Front. The fascist Flávio Bolsonaro, son of former President Jair Bolsonaro, finished in first place with 47 percent of the valid votes, against 45.2 percent for Lula. His Liberal Party (PL) elected the largest bloc in the Chamber of Deputies since 1988, and abstention was the highest ever recorded. The strategy of "stopping fascism" through an alliance with the "democratic" parties of the bourgeoisie has only strengthened fascism.

It is in the face of this collapse of the PT's project that the pseudo-left is now performing its most important function. The PT is mobilizing its apparatuses to win back the youth and the millions who have turned their backs on it. These organizations serve as a bridge between Lula's campaign and the layers that have moved away from it to the left. Their formulas of "class independence" are the cover for reconstituting the authority of the government and of the trade union and student apparatuses that sustain it.

The "March for Democracy"

The operation took shape in the streets immediately after the first round. Student assemblies and marches that emerged at the universities early in the week, outside the official agenda of Lula's campaign, were rapidly taken over by the National Union of Students (UNE) and other bodies associated with the PT and the pseudo-left. They were joined by the "Turnaround Agenda" caravan of Guilherme Boulos, of the Socialism and

Liberty Party (PSOL) and a minister in the Lula government. Rallies in at least 13 states on Thursday, October 8, culminated on Sunday in the "March for Democracy" on Avenida Paulista in São Paulo. The newspapers reported it as the largest left-wing demonstration at the site since the protests against Jair Bolsonaro.

In less than a week, the mobilization had been officially integrated into the campaign. Vice President Geraldo Alckmin, Fernando Haddad, Boulos, Simone Tebet, Marina Silva and governors from the Northeast climbed onto the sound truck on Avenida Paulista. Lula spoke for about an hour. He made a calculated self-criticism before sections of the youth clamoring for a more engaged and combative campaign against Flávio Bolsonaro. "It is not enough to do things from the top down," the president said. He presented the end of the 6×1 schedule, six days of work for one day of rest, as the great banner of his campaign. And he declared that the country "cannot lose democracy, however bad it may be."

Many of those who joined the rallies were moved by a legitimate opposition to fascism and imperialism, expressed in slogans against Flávio Bolsonaro's alignment with Donald Trump. Especially to the pro-PT sections of the middle class, which made up the majority of the demonstrators, the first-round result came as a shock. One year after Jair Bolsonaro's conviction for attempting a coup d'état, the fascists may return to power through the "front door," a possibility for which the PT did not prepare the population in the slightest. The PT called these rallies precisely because it feels the pressure of layers demanding a more militant and left-wing response to the fascist threat. Their essence, however, is to renew the fraud that the PT's Broad Front is the only possible and necessary path to such a response.

This is where the Morenoites become indispensable. The record abstention expresses a rejection of the entire bourgeois political system, including the PT, by broad layers of workers and youth. The government's rhetoric does not reach them. That of organizations that speak of "class independence," "struggle" and "self-organization" may. Their politics seek to corral these behind the Broad Front.

The Morenoites' "critical" endorsement of the Broad Front

PSTU is the leading section of the International Workers League (LIT-QI, in its Portuguese acronym) founded by Nahuel Moreno. The PSTU's statement on the second round of the Brazilian elections describes Flávio Bolsonaro's candidacy as an "authoritarian project" that brings "serious dangers" and the "deepening of capitalist barbarism." The conclusion follows: "we will cast a critical vote for Lula." This treacherous operation is entirely in the Morenoite tradition. It preserves the appearance of the "political independence from the different capitalist projects" that the PSTU claims to defend, while handing the vote to a bourgeois party. The

adjective “critical” makes it possible to say “vote for Lula” and “don’t trust Lula” at the same time. But a vote is an objective political act, and whoever calls for it assumes responsibility for the government it helps to elect.

The PSTU knows this. Its statement admits that “an electoral victory for Lula does not, by itself, defeat the political strength and the social bases of Bolsonarism.” It acknowledges that the government “not only failed to repeal the labor reform as it had promised, but carried out attacks on the workers,” and that “it was the very project of the PT leadership that led the Lula government to help feed the Bolsonarist threat.” It even asserts that “this permanent policy of voting for the lesser evil every four years ... always leads to a strategic defeat.” And, in the same document, it calls for a vote for Lula.

The position is not new. In 2022, the PSTU ran its own candidate at the head of its “Socialist Revolutionary Pole,” presented as an independent alternative to the PT, and in the second round called for a vote for Lula. Six years earlier, it had made the opposite turn: with the slogan “Fora Todos” (“Out with them all”), it provided left cover for the right-wing campaign for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. These are 180-degree turns around a single axis: the tether to the bourgeois national state. The candidacy of the PSTU’s Hertz Dias in this year’s first round served the same function as that of 2022: to collect protest votes and hand them back to the PT in the second.

As a practical complement to the vote for Lula, the PSTU has advocated “unity of action against Trump and the far right.” The Morenoite party promises to be “on the front line of building the mobilizations of workers, youth and social movements against Bolsonarism and Trumpism.” Concretely, this “unity of action” takes shape in the rallies called by the PT and its apparatus, which culminated in Lula’s speech on Avenida Paulista. The PSTU presents itself as part of the bloc that calls them.

The position of the MRT, the Brazilian section of the Permanent Revolution Current (CRP) led by the Argentine Socialist Workers Party (PTS), is essentially the same as that of the PSTU. However, while the latter at least acknowledges its call for a vote for Lula, the MRT seeks to disguise it under perfidious abstractions. Choosing as its slogan “not a single vote for Flávio Bolsonaro,” the MRT summed up its position in one sentence: “insofar as we confront with all our strength the votes for Flávio Bolsonaro, side by side with every young person and worker who wants to support Lula, we give no political support to Lula’s Broad Front.”

In plain language, the MRT tells workers and youth: we support your being deceived by the bourgeoisie, but we refuse to take any political responsibility for it.

The foundation of this position appears in an article published by *Esquerda Diário*, the MRT’s organ, on October 9, titled, “Elections 2026: Once again, how did we get here?” It reads:

The differences between Lula and Flávio Bolsonaro are real and have concrete consequences for millions of people. Ignoring them would be a serious political error. However, recognizing these differences does not imply accepting that the immediate confrontation with the far right should require the permanent renunciation of building an independent alternative of the working class.

The decisive word is “permanent.” The MRT is absolutely willing to “momentarily” renounce the building of an independent alternative of the working class to join forces with the PT and its bourgeois front in the second round of the elections! And it wastes no time. “The next two weeks demand a relentless fight,” writes *Esquerda Diário*.

Selling illusions in the pro-Lula demonstrations and the reform of the bureaucratic apparatus

To stand “side by side” with the PT, the MRT has largely suspended its criticisms of the government. On the Paulista rally, *Esquerda Diário* wrote that “a crowd filled Avenida Paulista, with Lula and the entire Broad Front government,” in a “strong show of force against Flávio Bolsonaro.” It added: “The rally was called by the government, with the limits of the political line of conciliation it has pursued until now. Despite this, the contingent that was in the streets showed that there are social forces that want to fight Bolsonarist reaction and US imperialism in the streets.”

Behind this operation lies the central illusion promoted by the MRT: that the rallies can be converted into a revolutionary mobilization, and the bureaucratic apparatuses that call them into its instruments. According to *Esquerda Diário*, the demonstrations “constitute one of the most important events of the new situation.” They are “initial mobilizations, with strong electoral contours,” whose development “will depend ... on the capacity to establish links with broader sectors of the working class and to develop the perspective beyond the elections.” The character of the rallies is reduced to a passing contour, supposedly to be overcome by their own dynamic.

The same applies to the MRT’s cult of the student “assemblies,” presented as a form of independent self-organization. Glorifying the “massive assemblies, not seen in years at the universities,” the MRT declared that “these assemblies send a very clear message to Flávio Bolsonaro, Nikolas Ferreira, Cleitinho, Pavanato, Eduarda Campopiano [far-right legislators], we are not afraid! You will not make us retreat!” The assemblies that have multiplied at the universities to mobilize in support of Lula’s reelection are controlled by the same student apparatuses that led the mobilization on Avenida Paulista. To treat them as independent organs of struggle is a total fraud.

The MRT’s policy, however, is not a Brazilian peculiarity. The Brazilian crisis is the national expression of a single world crisis: NATO’s war against Russia, the war against Iran, the rearmament of the imperialist powers, the rise of fascist movements and, in response, the radicalization of youth and the working class. In every country where this radicalization emerges, the Morenoites play the same role.

In France, the protests of high school students, which the MRT itself invokes when writing about the rallies in Brazil, erupted outside the control of the trade union confederations and turned into a confrontation with the Macron government, with more than 6,000 young people arrested. As the WSWP has shown, *Révolution Permanente*, the CRP’s French section, is working to lead this movement back to the apparatuses. It demands a mobilization “plan” from the union leaderships and calls on trade unionists to pressure them from within. It limits the goal of the struggle to forcing the government to “back down” and is silent on the question of war. In Brazil, the starting point is the opposite: the rallies already belong to the apparatuses, and the MRT presents them as the embryo of an independent movement. The method is the same. The radicalization is kept within the organizations that exist to contain it.

In an article published on October 6 in *Esquerda Diário*, the MRT formulates the general perspective behind this policy. A “critical and reflective look” at the situation, it writes, “makes it possible to *begin to create something new*, a combative, radical, class-struggle left.” [Emphasis in the original]

What is this “new left”? It is a policy of open doors to political forces of the most diverse traditions implicated in the historical betrayals of the working class over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries: Stalinism, Pabloism and their variants. This was precisely the conception that guided the building of the PT in the 1980s: a “broad” party, without

programmatic delimitation, whose main promoters were the Pabloite renegades from Trotskyism, with the Morenoites in the front row. It is essentially this same operation that the MRT proposes to repeat.

The working class does not need to “begin to create” its revolutionary leadership. This leadership already exists. It is the Trotskyist movement led by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), forged in the struggle against Stalinism and Pabloism. The ICFI did not take part in building these traps: it fought them. Against the Pabloites, it denounced the adaptation to Castroism, the PT, Chavez’s “Bolivarianismo” and the Pink Tide as forms of subordinating the working class to the national bourgeoisie in Latin America. Its program synthesizes the objective historical experience of the working class. The task is to build the ICFI as the mass revolutionary leadership of the working class, in Brazil and internationally.



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Break with the agencies of the national bourgeoisie!

The policy of the Morenoites rests on petty-bourgeois pessimism: it treats an electoral defeat of the PT as a defeat of the working class. We entirely reject this equation and the conclusion that electoral support for Lula constitutes a “necessary stage” in the struggle against fascism. What the first-round debacle represented was a defeat of the fraudulent bourgeois policy of the PT and the pseudo-left, and this defeat has already taken place, regardless of any “turnaround” in the second round.

The workers have not yet had their say in response to this crisis. The necessary condition for halting the advance of fascism is the political mobilization of the working class as an independent force. As long as its political intervention remains blocked, the bourgeois regime will continue to move rapidly to the right, whatever the result on October 25. If Lula wins, his government will continue the policy of austerity, rearmament and rehabilitation of the military that fed Flávio Bolsonaro. A mobilization to reelect Lula and his Broad Front will not “buy time” for building a left-wing alternative. It will prolong the subordination of workers and youth to this bourgeois instrument.

The Socialist Equality Group (GSI) rejects the illusion that the pro-Lula rallies, or the organizations that call them, can be converted into an instrument of struggle against fascism. To the forces that want to fight fascism and imperialism, the GSI says that this struggle requires a break with all the political agencies of the national bourgeoisie: the PT, the pseudo-left that revolves around it, the corporatist trade unions and the student apparatuses subordinated to them.

The social force capable of defeating fascism is already in motion. It is the bank workers, postal workers, teachers and metalworkers who are confronting the Lula government in recent strikes and are being isolated by the same union federations that called the rallies. This struggle must be organized independently of and in opposition to the bureaucracy, through genuine rank-and-file committees linked internationally through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

But the coming movement of the working class won’t develop as a trade union struggle. The crisis of capitalism and of the imperialist system is an objectively revolutionary crisis in development. The working class will not enter the scene to reform the bourgeois state through a renewal of a nationally based unionist or reformist political movement. The crisis of the bourgeois state, manifested in the emergence of fascism and in the crisis of parties like the PT and their bureaucratic apparatuses, is the same crisis that summons the working class to give a revolutionary answer: to abolish capitalism and take political power under the banner of permanent revolution and the establishment of international socialism.