Pseudo-left PCO comes to defense of Flávio Bolsonaro and his counterrevolutionary platform in Miami

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The petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Workers Cause Party (PCO) have launched, following the second round of Brazil's presidential elections, a campaign in defense of Flávio Bolsonaro, the defeated fascist candidate. In almost daily articles in *DiCaprio Hausa Operatic* (DCO) and in a series of interviews given by its president, Rui Costa Pimenta, the PCO portrays as a victim of "political persecution" and "law fare" a right-wing politician who fled the country to conspire, under the protection of the Trump administration, against the outcome of the vote.

On the night of October 27, two days after losing the election, Bolsonaro crossed from Foz do Iguaçu into Argentina with his wife and daughters and boarded a private jet that took him, via Ecuador, to Miami. The escape defied an order of the Supreme Federal Court (STF), which had canceled his passports. The press revealed that Santiago Caputo, the chief adviser to Argentina's fascist president Javier Milei, helped coordinate Bolsonaro's departure, expediting passports and flight documentation in Puerto Iguazú. *Clarín* went further: American agents reportedly took control of part of the airport and coordinated the boarding, and Milei reportedly sent Caputo to the region to ensure the success of the escape operation.

In Washington, the Trump administration had already announced visas for the Bolsonaro family, and the American president himself had declared: "I didn't take sides, but it looked like another rigged election."

Once in the US, Bolsonaro released a letter in which he presented himself as "the true president-elect of Brazil," later amended to "the leader of Brazil," explicitly invoking the example of Juan Guaidó, who in 2019 proclaimed himself president of Venezuela with Washington's backing. Days later, at a Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) dinner at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, Bolsonaro warned: "This is not the end yet, a lot can happen." Washington has openly provided the platform for a conspiracy to overthrow Brazil's constitutional government.

For the PCO, none of this deserves attention. The escape, according to Pimenta, was "a decision, in my opinion, a wise one on his part." To the right-wing "libertarian" podcaster Monark, he repeated: "I think Flávio Bolsonaro had to leave. … It is a case of persecution. It's ridiculous."

This is the same party that in 2022 proclaimed itself "the spearhead of Lula's campaign," which brought to power the Broad Front government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers Party (PT). Four years later, the PCO has assumed the role of political advocate for the defeated fascist candidate. Behind the absurd and provocative character of this position lies a definite orientation: the adaptation of a petty-bourgeois nationalist party to the shift to the right of the entire Brazilian political system.

Covering for US imperialism and the fascists

To turn Bolsonaro into a victim of political persecution, the PCO must erase the central pieces of the conspiracy, which expose the clear political relationship between the Bolsonaros and the government in Washington amid a violent escalation of US imperialism against Latin America. This includes Washington's growing military operations, its interventions in electoral processes and the cultivation of a series of fascistic puppet governments, organized under the "Shield of the Americas," with Milei as its main spearhead.

On all of this, the party that dares to present itself as the "vanguard of anti-imperialism" in Brazil has not said a word! In an interview with *Folha de S. Paulo*, the PCO president declared that the letter Bolsonaro published from Miami was "nonsense"—that is, that it did not merit attention.

With these elements removed, what remains is the explanation Pimenta gave on the party's social media channels right after the result:

> Because he got almost 60 million votes. Because he has a majority, he has a very significant bloc in the Senate and in Congress. He could get certain STF justices impeached. So the persecution is because of that, it's a power game.

Pimenta thus reproduces the declared aims of Bolsonaro, whose letter makes the opening of impeachment proceedings against STF justices its political lodestar. It is the expression of the PCO's orientation toward a "red-brown" political front with the fascists against the judicial system.

In the same interview with *Folha*, commenting on the vote itself, Pimenta used virtually the same formulation as Trump in his attack on the Brazilian electoral process:

> Are you saying the election was rigged? I can't say that, because I have no proof. I can't raise something like that without proof. But I would like to point out that this is very strange, really very strange.

The PCO tries to cover up this scandalous alignment with US imperialism and its puppets on the Brazilian far right with radical-sounding truisms. When PT deputies requested that Flávio Bolsonaro be placed on an Interpol red notice, the DCO denounced the resort to the

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"world police of imperialism, used to persecute the adversaries of the United States." The PT, it added, "set imperialism in motion against its adversary." This pseudo-revolutionary phraseology is a miserable fig leaf for such a naked turn to the right.

"Bolsonarism is not over"

In a text published on November 2, directed against "PT triumphalism," the DCO writes:

> *Bolsonarism is not over. The right has not been destroyed. […] Donald Trump remains in the White House. […] The task is not to celebrate an imaginary defeat of the enemy.*

The PCO makes a frank acknowledgement of the strength that Bolsonarism retains within the Brazilian bourgeois regime: the largest bloc in Congress, state governments and the support of the Trump administration, which, as the DCO itself recalls, remains in power. It is to this situation that its policy seeks to adapt.

Faced with the Miami conspiracy, Pimenta asks: "Where is the fascism?" And he answers that "fascism, as far as I know, has never taken power anywhere without the support of the Armed Forces." He says this at the very moment that Bolsonaro, in his letter, appeals to the "institutions" of the state to "restore the balance between the branches of government," in the language with which Bolsonarism has always invoked military intervention. Along the same lines, Pimenta has called for a "pacification" of the country that would include the pardon and restoration of the political rights of Jair Bolsonaro, sentenced to 27 years in prison for conspiring to stage a coup d'état together with the military high command.

The victory of Lula's Broad Front, in fact, represents no real defeat of either the fascist threat or imperialism. The re-elected government is already beginning to bow to the ultimatums of finance capital and to implement the austerity program the bourgeoisie expected from Bolsonaro. It is through the predictable discrediting of the PT before the masses of the Brazilian population that the fascists intend to grow.

But far from objectively reflecting political reality and its dynamics, the PCO's assessment expresses a petty-bourgeois conformism that cravenly accepts the dictatorial turn of the ruling class. It is "realistic" only insofar as it suppresses the subjective element of the analysis—that is, the capacity of the working class to organize an independent response to the crisis of Brazilian and world capitalism; or, in other words, its capacity to break politically with the PT and its political and trade union apparatus and build its revolutionary leadership. It is against this perspective that both the PCO's current policy and the one that preceded it are directed.

In this, the PCO shares essentially the same perspective as the Morenoites of the PSTU and the MRT and the other pseudo-left organizations that supported Lula's re-election and now promise to "pressure" his government. Both start from the acceptance of bourgeois rule as the given reality, to which workers and youth must subordinate themselves.

"I wouldn't vote for him, but I understand the point of view"

Four years ago, the PCO staked everything on promoting Lula's return to power as the solution to the crisis facing Brazilian workers under the government of Jair Bolsonaro. It launched the "Lula President 2022" campaign as early as December 2020 and supported the PT candidate from the first round. This year, however, the PCO not only abandoned its promotion of the PT in the first round, but was one of the only so-called left-wing organizations in the country not to join the campaign for Lula's "comeback" against Flávio Bolsonaro in the second round. It advocated a null vote whose political content was not any assertion of class independence against the two reactionary bourgeois alternatives, but rather an avoidance of burning bridges to either section of the bourgeoisie.

With the election over, this orientation continued with the defense of the defeated fascist candidate, and the DCO makes no secret of its fruits. Reporting on a November 7 program hosted by Pimenta, the newspaper notes with satisfaction:

> *The defense of Flávio Bolsonaro's guarantees, he said, attracted the attention of right-wing people, who began to praise the PCO's positions without adhering to its communist program.*

Days earlier, on a right-wing podcast, Pimenta said of those who support Flávio Bolsonaro: "I wouldn't vote for him, so much so that we proposed a null vote, but I understand the point of view." And he characterized Bolsonaro's Liberal Party (PL): "The PL is a bourgeois party, it is not nationalist." The PCO's reservation about the most right-wing political formation in the history of Brazil's post-dictatorship regime is that it is not nationalist enough. Combined with the "I wouldn't vote for him, but I understand," the formula turns the refusal to support Bolsonaro's PL into a contingent decision, surrounded by sympathy for the forces that support it.

The GSI's struggle against the PCO

The PCO is a party systematically oriented to the national bourgeoisie and its institutions. For it, the question has always been which faction of the ruling class to lean on at any given moment. It was this orientation that stood at the center of the political struggle waged by the Socialist Equality Group (Grupo Socialista pela Igualdade, GSI) against this party in recent years, on both the national and the international political terrain. At every stage, this struggle exposed the tendencies that are now openly manifesting themselves.

In January 2024, on the first anniversary of January 8, the PCO came to the defense of the Lula government against the WSWS's exposure of its policies:

> Attacking the left-wing government when the far right is also attacking it can only have one result: becoming an auxiliary of the coup d'état.

"The correct policy," it continued, "is not to attack the Broad Front government, it is to attack the right wing of the Broad Front." The formula presented the government not as bourgeois, but as contradictory: a "left-wing" government that workers should protect from its own right wing. The PCO has never explained the turn that took it from the unconditional defense of this government—headed by the same Lula and resting on the

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same Broad Front—to the position it adopts today.

But its unconditional defense of the Lula government was already accompanied by the denial that the coup conspiracy of Bolsonaro and the military, which had planned the overthrow of the elected government and the assassination of its leaders, even existed. January 8, 2023, according to the PCO, was the "peaceful coup d'état that exists only in the heads of the petty-bourgeois left." If, with regard to its declared support for the Broad Front, the PCO has made a 180-degree turn, with regard to the fascist conspiracy it has remained true to itself: the denial of the coup unfolded into the campaign for amnesty for the conspirators, the denunciation of the trial of Bolsonaro as a "farce" and, now, the forging of an opportunist front with Bolsonaro and the PL.

It was in the international relations sought by the PCO that this orientation first emerged. In this arena, petty-bourgeois nationalist parties such as the PCO take even more unprincipled positions, which not infrequently anticipate the reactionary turns underway in their national politics.

In 2023, the WSWS exposed the PCO for its celebration of the re-election of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an. "Erdogan's victory was a defeat for imperialism. Therefore, it was a victory for all the peoples of the world," wrote the PCO, whose statement was fraudulently amplified by official Turkish outlets as the position of the "Brazilian Trotskyists." The reaction was furious. The PCO attacked the supporters of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in Brazil as a "pro-imperialist gringo group" and launched a series of dirty provocations against the GSI.

In 2025, the PCO attacked the analysis of the ICFI's Turkish section, which characterized the crisis in the country as revolutionary: a mass political uprising against Erdo?an's dictatorial escalation, fused with explosive strikes by the Turkish working class that continue to this day. The trigger for the uprising was the arrest of Ekrem ?mamo?lu, mayor of Istanbul and the main presidential candidate of the official opposition, on the basis of a fraudulent case. In the face of the regime's violent repression, with thousands of political arrests that struck left-wing organizations and the workers' movement, the PCO shamelessly took the side of the reactionary Turkish bourgeois regime.

On that occasion, the PCO—which today defends the fascist Flávio Bolsonaro on the grounds that no political disagreement "authorizes the state to arbitrarily strip a citizen of his individual guarantees"—supported the authoritarian tightening of the Turkish regime and the repression of the mass protests that answered it, arguing: "The arrest of Imamoglu is, regardless of its legal merit, a defensive measure by Erdogan."

Significantly, the model the PCO presented for this position was its attitude toward the Chavista regime: "What is fundamental in Venezuela is not criticism of the government's possible errors," it wrote. The events that followed in Venezuela expose with brutal clarity the bankruptcy of this reactionary perspective of subordination to bourgeois nationalism. A few months after the PCO wrote these lines, US imperialism invaded Venezuela and abducted President Nicolás Maduro. Chavismo, under Delcy Rodríguez, became the direct agent of the openly neocolonial order imposed by Washington, which seized control of Venezuelan oil.

The PCO has gone from defending the Chavista and Lula regimes to a glaring silence on the role of the Trump administration in Bolsonaro's conspiracy—a tacit acknowledgement that imperialism "remains in the White House" and that one must adapt to it. It watches these developments in bewilderment and accepts them as irresistible.

The PCO's reactionary trajectory is not an eccentricity, but a direct product of the revisionist attacks launched against the perspectives of the Trotskyist movement over the course of nearly a century.

Causa Operária emerged from a split, in 1978, with the Internationalist Socialist Organization (OSI), the Brazilian section of the tendency led by Pierre Lambert and his French Internationalist Communist Organization (OCI). The OCI, which had taken part in the ICFI's struggle against the revisionism of Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel in the 1950s, broke with the International Committee in 1971, after adopting the very conceptions it had previously fought.

The essence of Pabloism was the liquidation of the struggle to build independent Trotskyist parties and adaptation to the existing leaderships—Stalinist, social democratic and bourgeois nationalist—which it claimed could be pushed to the left and carry out revolutionary tasks. Lambert began to proclaim that the Fourth International had been "effectively destroyed by Pabloism" and needed to be "rebuilt," which served to leave the OCI's hands free to forge all kinds of unprincipled relations.

In Brazil, this orientation found expression in the building of the PT. In 1980, Causa Operária, following the OSI and the other Pabloite tendencies, joined Lula's party. The OSI's leaders rose into the apparatus of the PT, the trade unions and the state. The PCO, expelled from the PT in 1995, maintained a radical facade for two decades, until it became, after 2016, an open defender of Lula, the PT and national capitalism. Its most recent turn toward Bolsonarism is only the most grotesque manifestation of the dead end into which Pabloism's orientation to the nationalist bureaucracies has led. Faced with the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism—from the PT in Brazil to Castroism in Cuba and Venezuelan chavismo—the PCO turns to the bourgeois force that appears to it to be on the rise.

In June 2025, we wrote that the PCO's left-nationalist pose was "merely a tool to prevent the emergence of the working class as an independent political actor" and that "once this process erupts, they take the side of bourgeois reaction ever more openly." The year and a half since has confirmed this characterization with even greater force. The escalation of US imperialism in Latin America, from the abduction of Maduro to the Miami conspiracy, and the dictatorial turn of the ruling class as a whole are advancing hand in hand with the eruption of working class struggles internationally.

No maneuver between factions of the ruling class, such as those proposed by the PCO and the rest of the pseudo-left, offers an answer to the problems workers face. These derive from the basic contradictions of the imperialist epoch of capitalism and can only be resolved in the struggle for international socialist revolution. Building the revolutionary leadership of this struggle—the GSI, the Brazilian section in formation of the ICFI—is the decisive task of the moment.

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The crisis of Pabloite revisionism

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