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Brazil's Workers Party praises imperialist officials and Brazilian military involved in Venezuela regime change operation

The European tour of the Brazilian Workers Party's (PT) 2018 presidential candidate, Fernando Haddad, meeting with and praising imperialist officials at the forefront of the regime-change operation in Venezuela, is yet another exposure of the party's bogus claims to represent an "anti-fascist" opposition, both in Brazil and abroad.

Haddad was in Portugal and Spain in the third week of January in order to promote the formation of a so-called Progressive International, announced in late 2018 by US Senator Bernie Sanders and former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis.

The timing of the trip was designed to coincide with the World Economic Forum in Davos in order to allow Haddad to present himself internationally as the alternative to Brazil's fascistic new president, the ex-army captain Jair Bolsonaro, who was invited to give the keynote address to the billionaires' summit.

Haddad met with Portuguese and Spanish government officials, at the same time that the Spanish government was publicly criticizing and pressuring the European Union from the right for not joining the US regime-change operation in Venezuela, which the PT ostensibly opposes. He also held talks with the Tsipras administration in Greece, which has imposed brutal austerity and rules in alliance with the right-wing, militarist Independent Greeks party backed by Greek billionaire shipping magnates.

The move to involve Tsipras in the "anti-fascist" front represented by the Progressive International also explodes Varoufakis's claims that he has broken with Syriza after

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helping it forge the alliance with the Independent Greeks, and lay the trap of the fraudulent austerity referendum of 2015, in which a clear majority voted against the austerity measures to no effect, as Tsipras applied them anyway.

This attempt to present government officials who are pillars of the European Union as a bulwark against fascism and political reaction is in line with the PT's relentless political cover-up of the role of the Brazilian military in the crisis-ridden Bolsonaro administration. This effort is ever more concentrated on presenting Bolsonaro's vice-president, Gen. Hamilton Mourão, as a "reasonable," "nationalist," "democratic" and even "pro-abortion" alternative to Bolsonaro, above all praising the supposed restraint he is exercising in the face of the Venezuelan crisis, which has brought praise for Mourão to a feverish pitch.

Such praise has been chiefly voiced through the PT's sycophantic mouthpiece, *Brasil247*, with a series of concocted reports of Mourão's "battles" against Bolsonaro and his foreign minister, Ernesto Araújo, whom *Brasil247* refers to with cynical light-mindedness as "insane" for echoing the Trump administration in formulating Brazil's attitude towards Venezuela.

If one reads *Brasil247*, one is sure that Mourão, twice punished by the Army High Command for inciting the military against Presidents Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer in 2015 and 2017, would lead a selfless and redeeming coup against Bolsonaro to rid Brazil of fascism and Christian bigotry, if only he had enough support.

On Mourão's first days in office as interim president while Bolsonaro was in Davos, *Brasil247* eulogized: "while Bolsonaro runs away from press conferences, Mourão praises the media." After Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL) Congressman Jean Wyllys announced in late January that he would leave the country due to death threats from criminals suspected to have executed Rio de Janeiro city councilwoman Marielle Franco in March 2018—and who have connections to Bolsonaro himself— *Brasil247* wrote: "Mourão confronts Bolsonaro and says threats to parliamentarians are a threat to democracy." The fraudulent report never mentioned that Mourão, in the next sentence, said, "despite that, we don't know what he was up to," suggesting that Wyllys might actually have been targeted due to himself being involved with organized crime—the exact allegation used by the far right to justify Franco's assassination.

After the brother of imprisoned former PT President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva died and Lula was denied a leave from jail—where the PT says he's kept as a political prisoner of the military—to attend the funeral, *Brasil247* wrote: "Mourão says Lula should go to the funeral: it's a humanitarian issue."

Then on February 1, after Mourão was interviewed by the Brazilian daily *O Globo*, *Brasil247* reported: “Mourão defends abortion: it’s the woman’s decision,” adding that he was “directly confronting ‘Bolsonarism,’ especially its fundamentalist wing” and that the declaration was “explosive and should open another intestinal crisis within the government.” No comment was made of the fact that Mourão declared it to be “his personal position, not in a government capacity,” basically the same declarations that Bolsonaro had given in his campaign, that he thinks women should have the right to abortion, but would never touch the issue while in power—which was precisely the PT’s position during its four terms in power.

The gravest of lies, however is that Mourão is defending a “non-interventionist” policy towards Venezuela that represents the position of the Brazilian military, in contrast to Bolsonaro’s alignment with the US-led regime-change operation in Caracas. Throughout the development of this operation, *Brasil247* has run innumerable reports taking at face value Mourão’s declarations that Brazil would not intervene, and charging that intervention was “the will of Bolsonaro.” Editorial board member Celso Amorim, the PT government’s former foreign minister, wrote last month that the military could “save Brazilian foreign policy.” He then stated in an interview that “Mourão ends up being the most reasonable in refusing an intervention.”

On February 3, *Folha de S. Paulo* columnist Igor Gielow finally exposed the real content of the “non-interventionist policy” of the Brazilian military: they were against support for the Lima Group, which required Brazil to cut ties with the Venezuelan military, because this would isolate the Brazilian military from “the reality on the ground.” Not reported by *Brasil247* was the fact that Mourão had already stated to *Folha de S. Paulo* on January 31 that he believed the crisis in Venezuela “would be solved once their military realized the status quo could not be maintained,” and that “this was near.” In other words, there was a strictly tactical divergence within the Brazilian government on how best to further the interests of national capital abroad, in which the military believe they needed to keep their channels open to its Venezuelan counterparts in order to assist in the organization of a coup. This was promoted by the PT’s mouthpiece into a determined resistance by the Brazilian military to imperialism and its agent, Bolsonaro.

The nakedness of this feverish pro-military campaign by PT’s propaganda conveyor belt in the press, unions and academia has already resulted in an attempted cover-up, with columnists feigning surprise that “the vice president appears to have turned into an opponent of the president, gaining the sympathy of lots of people on the left,” as João

Filho wrote on The Intercept. Gustavo Conde, on February 2 reacted with rage in a column published by *Brasil247*, denouncing the “progressive puritanism that is an enemy of democracy” of those “saying that the left ‘flirts with Mourão.’” Such attitudes, he writes demonstrate “that not only the right wing can’t interpret a text.” He concludes by defending such support, saying that with “a jaunty Mourão causing problems for the incompetents around Bolsonaro, the political scene tends to turn toxic for this underdeveloped fascism that has taken over Brazil. This is the point to be observed *and potentialized* (emphasis added).”

Such utter prostration before the increasing dominance of the Brazilian military, goes all the way down to the pseudo-left. The self-styled “Trotskyists” of Resistência, which operates inside PSOL, featured on their *esquerdaonline.com.br*, an article by Luis Felipe Miguel expressing hope that Mourão is “capable of steering the ship without so many crises” and that his “more reasonable government might nod to internal and external public opinion by changing its composition—sacking an environmental criminal from the Environmental Ministry, for example.”

What unifies the pseudo-left, the PT and Mourão is their class position. The PT and the pseudo-left are expressing their bourgeois and upper-middle class hatred and contempt for the working class. They see it as responsible for voting out the “prestigious” PT governments, which fostered—not unlike Venezuela’s *chavistas* themselves—record stock market profits that they now fear will be threatened by Bolsonaro cutting ties with China and the European Union, on the one hand, and provoking an explosive development of the class struggle, on the other.

No one expresses these positions as clearly as Eliane Brum, a fixture of the right-wing Blairite *Guardian* opinion pages who campaigned for the PT in the second round of last year’s election. Her unfettered and unabashed hatred for the working class has been on display many times. She declared that the election of the fascistic Bolsonaro was the “the takeover by the average man,” and, during last May’s truckers’ strike, she wrote that the hundreds of thousands of workers were striking because they saw their “masculinity threatened by growing LGBT and women’s protagonism.”

The support for Mourão among these layers was explained in her January 30 column in *El Pais* titled “Mourão, the moderate.” Intended as a criticism of the praise for Mourão, she ended up writing about herself, declaring: “even those who campaigned against everything Bolsonaro represents rooted for one of his aides to do what he is paid for, because now he is Brazil, and Bolsonaro’s shame is everyone’s humiliation.” A complete break with the

right-wing politics of the PT and its apologists is the essential task confronting the working class in Brazil in order to defend itself from political reaction and wholesale attacks on its social conditions.