

One year of pseudo-left Boric government in Chile: A program of pro-imperialist and anti-working class reaction

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March 11 marked one year since the pseudo-left-Stalinist Apruebo Dignidad administration of President Gabriel Boric took office in Chile.

Apruebo Dignidad came to power amid soaring inflation and goods shortages triggered by the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, along with the normalization of COVID-19 infections and deaths and historic levels of social inequality.

Contrary to its promises of more equality and justice, the Boric administration has within the space of a year proven itself to be among the most right-wing, pro-imperialist and anti-working class governments of the so-called *Pink Tide* in Latin America.

Backed by the international and Chilean pseudo-left, its social and community organizations and satellite Morenoite tendencies, its main function has been to suppress the class struggle and to smother the opposition to capitalism that has been percolating over the last decade and which violently exploded to the surface in 2019.

Among its key components are the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Party for Democracy (PPD), all seasoned agencies of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement with a combined 180 years of experience. This includes the formation of Stalinist-inspired Popular Front governments in the crisis-ridden 1930s and again in the 1970s to save capitalism from an existential threat from below, paving the way to the bloody dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

President Gabriel Boric's own political amalgam, the Frente Amplio (Broad Front), is composed of a newer generation of professionals, state functionaries, academics and trade union bureaucrats that reached maturity during the present crisis of bourgeois rule following the global financial breakdown of 2008.

This upper middle class political tendency, like its counterparts internationally, is concerned only about securing for itself a more equal distribution of political power and a greater share of the wealth derived from the exploitation of the working class.

When they constituted a rump in parliament beginning in 2014, Boric and his cohorts cynically used left rhetoric and radical-sounding phraseology, mouthing off invectives against Chile's "neoliberal" education, health and pension systems, and claiming to be opposed to the Trans-Pacific Partnership and other economic arrangements.

Yet during periods of crisis, Boric and Co. have also proved themselves useful to the capitalist state. In 2019, Boric entered into national unity talks with the right-wing Piñera administration, helping to suffocate that year's mass anti-capitalist demonstrations, channeling them into futile calls to change the constitution—which, after all the fanfare, is presently being rewritten by Pinochet's

political heirs in the right and parliamentary center-left.

Promoted as progressive and radical by not only the international liberal media, but also the most staid voices of finance capital, Apruebo Dignidad has first and foremost played an instrumental role as a regional mouthpiece for the Biden administration's foreign policy objectives. This is under conditions where the whole weight of American imperialism is being exerted on Latin America to try and regain lost hegemony vis-à-vis China, Russia and Europe.

Boric has repeatedly condemned the invasion of Ukraine by Russia as a "war of aggression" at international forums, while remaining silent on NATO funneling tens of billions worth of military equipment, mercenaries and military forces into Ukraine. Nor has he uttered a word about Washington's stated aim of inflicting a strategic defeat against Putin, ending Russia as a military power and balkanizing the Russian Federation.

Likewise Boric, who does not miss an opportunity to denounce "human rights abuses" in Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, remains mute about the uninterrupted and systematic violation of the democratic, political and social rights of the masses by US imperialism in the region.

Writing on the Summit of the Americas last June, the *Washington Post* reported that Boric had told Biden it would be wiser for him to invite these countries to such gatherings, not out of concern over their suffering decades of debilitating sanctions imposed by successive US administrations, but rather to help further US interests.

Reportedly, Boric explained to Biden that he could have pressed the leaders of the uninvited countries on issues such as political prisoners etc. Instead, "the United States is now giving them a perfect excuse for victimization," Boric said. This account speaks volumes.

In the same spirit, Apruebo Dignidad rushed to support the Peruvian regime of Dina Boluarte, who assumed power after a US-backed coup removed from office and detained President Pedro Castillo last December. The Chilean government took more than a month to meekly raise concerns over the police and military crackdown on mass protests that has claimed 70 lives and wounded hundreds in Peru.

While the petty-bourgeois nationalist governments in Latin America offer no way out to the masses, it is abundantly clear that it is not they who have imposed debilitating economic sanctions and financed right-wing coups, regime change, assassination plots, destabilization missions, interventions and invasions, but it is Washington who has carried these out.

Opposing imperialism requires a principled orientation to the international working class, countering the ever-growing danger of

dictatorship, neo-colonialism and world war with the struggle to mobilize this immense social force on an independent socialist path.

Such a strategy stands in irreconcilable opposition to the politics of Apruebo Dignidad, which is organically hostile to the working class and terrified of its revolutionary potential being unleashed.

One year of anti-working class measures and police state repression

Boric became Chile's president in runoff elections, garnering 55.8 percent of the vote in a historic turnout of workers, students and youth amidst a profound crisis of bourgeois rule.

Masses of people took to the streets to celebrate what they perceived as a victory against fascism and an advance for the struggle against social inequality, poverty and repression that had earlier triggered multi-million anti-capitalist demonstrations in 2019.

In the lead up to the presidential election, the pseudo-left cultivated enormous expectations and placed immense pressure on the working class and youth to vote for Boric as the only way to stop his opponent, the fascist, José Antonio Kast, from coming to power.

Jacobin, the journal of the Democratic Socialists of America, asserted that Boric represented a socialist alternative to authoritarian barbarism: "For Chileans, the Choice in Today's Election Is Socialism or Barbarism" blared its headline.

The Guardian commented that Kast and Boric offered "antithetical agendas" in which Boric represented "inclusivity and progressive social values" and "espoused an egalitarian, feminist and ecological future for Chile."

Meanwhile, Boric's pseudo-left coalition was breathing political life back into the traditional center-left parties, deeply despised for their role in maintaining the military dictatorship's free market policies. It cynically brought the Socialist Party and PPD forward as part of a so-called anti-fascist front, secretly promising them positions in the next cabinet.

In opposition to the euphoria around the pseudo-left's victory, the *World Socialist Web Site* noted that "Boric had already shifted the axis of his platform to the right during the campaign, picking up talking points on 'security' and other issues from the playbook of his fascist opponent." The WSWS warned that sooner rather later he would "work to immobilize the struggles of the working class ... straitjacket any movement against capitalism and at a certain point unleash state repression."

This began immediately upon Apruebo Dignidad's assuming office.

While Chile's right and extreme right parties, aided by the corporate media, bear primary responsibility in creating a climate of fear and hysteria around the threat of organized crime and delinquency and fomenting a foul xenophobic political atmosphere against migrant refugees, indigenous communities and the poor, the pseudo-left government has doubled down on law and order.

Boric's reaction to the outbreak of hunger riots, school occupations, road blockades, strikes and land seizures in the course of the year has been to unleash the Carabinero special forces and deploy the Armed Forces—the institutions at the center of gross human rights violations on an industrial scale in the past 50 years.

Social media is awash with evidence of riot police and the military violently beating striking workers and protesting children,

indiscriminately using water cannon and tear gas, firing lead pellets at unarmed civilians and conducting mass arrests.

The Boric administration has expanded the arsenal of the Carabinero forces, purchasing armored fighting vehicles, helicopters, drones and other military grade equipment as part of a 4 percent increase in the public order and security budget.

The administration has also ceded to the military an increased role in public order functions, including their deployment to protect "critical infrastructure."

A quasi-permanent State of Exception has been decreed for the regions of Biobío and La Araucanía. This is a continuation of the militarization policy begun by the Piñera government where the Armed Forces are being used in the southern regions against the indigenous Mapuche populations claiming ancestral lands.

More recently the government ordered the deployment of the Armed Forces to the Peruvian and Bolivian borders for an initial 90 days. The measure is being applied in the regions of Arica-Parinacota, Antofagasta and Tarapacá, which have seen a large influx of refugees in the last five years.

The measure authorizes the Armed Forces to use force against mainly undocumented Venezuelan, Haitian and Colombian refugees fleeing humanitarian catastrophes caused by years of instability, largely caused by US imperialist sanctions and meddling. Refugees began detouring into Chile in 2016 when their destination of choice, the US, was closed off by the resumption of mass deportations by the Obama administration, which only escalated under Trump and Biden today.

While the previous right-wing Piñera administration brought pieces of law and order and anti-immigrant legislation forward at the end of 2019, it is Boric who has implemented them. Apruebo Dignidad's shift from pledges to initiate "transformative" changes to police state measures should serve as lesson to the working class and the youth internationally as to the role of the pseudo-left and its promises of social reforms through the capitalist state. There is no way forward outside of a new orientation towards revolutionary socialist politics.



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