

Argentina's fascistic president Milei embraces Netanyahu in Jerusalem

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More than any other event, the five days spent in Israel by the fascistic new president of Argentina, Javier Milei, have been a concentrated expression of what his meteoric rise says about the state of Argentina and world capitalist politics.

Milei had entered the political arena only two years before crushing the incumbent Peronist party, Argentina's main political force since World War II, in presidential elections last November.

After failing as a soccer player and musician and being fired as an economics professor, he was suddenly catapulted to fame a decade ago by wealthy local sponsors, becoming an adviser to several banks, institutions and politicians, and turned into a frequently aired TV pundit.

His angry rants against social spending and his slovenly looks became a staple on Argentine television screens. During the last three years, when inflation and austerity under the Peronists drove millions into poverty, his popularity took off. But his election was just the beginning.

Thanks to his plans for "shock therapy" to completely ruin Argentina's working class, the protagonist of the 1969 *Cordobazo* and other historic uprisings, along with his efforts to rehabilitate the fascist-military dictatorship of Gen. Rafael Videla, and his embrace of the US, Israel and Ukraine as key allies, Milei has been turned in a matter of weeks into one of the most prominent figures of world capitalist reaction.

He was welcomed into the White House, the State Department, and by Bill Clinton; Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky traveled to his inauguration amid the US-NATO war with Russia; he was cheered like a rock star at the billionaire's club in Davos after delivering a fascist rant; he received red-carpet treatment this week in Israel; and he will be greeted this weekend by Italy's fascist Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and by Argentine Pope Francis (despite his having been called a "disgusting leftist" by Milei).

On Tuesday, the Argentine delegation, which also included his sister and chief of staff Karina Milei and Foreign Minister Diana Mondino, were received in Tel Aviv by Israeli Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz.

Shortly after arriving, Milei announced to Israeli President Isaac Herzog his provocative decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move Argentina's embassy there. This means officially endorsing the annexation—illegal under the Geneva Conventions—of the occupied territories comprising most of Jerusalem. Plans are also being drawn up by Mondino to declare

Hamas a "terrorist organization," which follows the designation of Hezbollah as "terrorist" by former President Mauricio Macri in 2019.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed Milei before reporters, calling him a "great friend" and thanking him for his decision to move the embassy. He added: "We know that the greatest challenge to peace in our area but also in yours is Iran, and we appreciate the cooperation that we are doing in the field of security and diplomacy and your stalwart support for Israel in so many forms."

While Milei feigned concern over hostages held by Hamas, including 12 Argentine citizens, his visit coincided with and effectively endorsed the decision by Netanyahu to reject an offer by Hamas to release all hostages in exchange for ending Israel's genocidal onslaught against Gaza. The Israeli prime minister has instead called for "final victory" and the destruction of "all of Hamas," even as the hostages fall victim to Israeli bombs and shells.

On the heels of Milei, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also met with Netanyahu and pledged unconditional support, effectively backing his decision to proceed with the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

Milei was then received at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum—characterized by Israeli critics as a "washing machine," where far-right figures go to cleanse themselves of association with antisemitism through their support for Israel—where he declared: "We cannot remain silent in the face of modern Nazism, today disguised as the terrorist group Hamas."

Then, on Thursday, Milei traveled with President Herzog to the Nir Oz kibbutz (farming community), just one kilometer from the fence on the outskirts of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza. As Israeli bombs could be heard in the background, Milei said that the attack led by Hamas on October 7 at this kibbutz was a "crime against humanity that must be redressed ... and cannot go unpunished."

Almost a stone's throw away, Khan Yunis and neighboring Rafah were being leveled while harboring nearly all 1.9 million internally displaced refugees who are being systematically starved to death. With Milei still in Israel, Netanyahu announced the ground invasion of Rafah, which will inevitably result in a massive civilian bloodbath.

Such indifference to suffering and bloodlust was the deliberate message, and moreover, was entirely consistent with the images most widely shared of his trip of Milei wearing a kippah, resting

his forehead on the Western Wall in Jerusalem while praying and weeping.

When he is not talking to his dead dog through his sister, a medium, the president studies the Torah to convert to Judaism with his “spiritual guide” Rabbi Axel Wahnish. According to his friend Julian Goldstein, Wahnish told Milei in a Kabbalistic, mystical reading that he was destined to lead a movement to liberate Argentinians.

Milei’s ties to neo-Nazism

This has not stopped Milei from integrating into his government neo-Nazis like Solicitor General Rodolfo Barra, who was arrested for attacking a synagogue, and vilifying impoverished workers and opponents as “subhumans,” a term popularized by the Nazis (*Untermensch*) or advancing tropes against “cultural Marxism” that are identified with neo-Nazis.

Whether his “spiritual” delirium is authentic or not, Milei has been elevated by the most powerful elites because he gives voice to a renunciation of all reason, morality and humanity, which imperialism needs to normalize genocidal violence and all forms of barbarism the world over.

More specifically, the Argentine ruling class is drenching its hands with the blood of Gazans as a means of renewing, on the most active basis, its historic counterrevolutionary relationship with the Israeli bourgeoisie. This relates particularly to the massacre of 30,000 leftist workers, youth and intellectuals during the 1976-1983 Argentine military dictatorship.

During the late 1970s, as the Jimmy Carter administration was pressured to cut back military aid to the fascist dictatorships in Latin America due to mass opposition at home, Israel became the top arms and training supplier. In large measure, it redirected some of the billions received as the top beneficiary of US security assistance.

Journalist Hernán Dobry documented in *Operation Israel: The Argentine Rearming during the Dictatorship* that the supply of military equipment by Israel between 1978 and 1983 amounted to \$700 million (the equivalent of \$2.2 billion today). The arms sales and military ties gained public attention in August 1978 when three Israeli generals visited Gen. Pinochet in Chile and Gen. Videla in Argentina.

For the fascistic Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (1977-1983), the prevalent antisemitism and slaughter of Jews by the Videla regime was not an impediment. Begin had previously led the Irgun, a Zionist militia that massacred Palestinians and famously bombed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1946.

According to different estimates, as many as 3,000 Jews were killed by the dictatorship, and about 400 fled to Israel. Survivors have said that prisoners of Jewish origin were tortured more brutally, and that the detention centers had pictures of Hitler on the wall.

At the time, like today, between 220,000 and 250,000 Jewish people lived in Argentina. While Jews accounted for roughly 1

percent of Argentina’s population, they made up 12 percent of the victims killed by the military junta.

Researchers Mario Znajder and Luis Roniger found that, beyond a wide support for Nazism, the Argentine military elite was particularly influenced by *The Total War*, written by General Erich Ludendorff, after the book was translated and published in Buenos Aires in 1964. Ludendorff, a Nazi antisemite, argued that politics should be subordinated to war, which should be waged against both the external as well as internal enemy, that is the working class. Many of Argentina’s generals were also obsessed with the “Jewish question,” believing in a mythical “Andina Plan” for creating a second Jewish state in South America’s southern cone.

That Milei publicly venerates such a pathological regime steeped in antisemitism and Hitler worship poses no obstacle to his forging a close alliance with the government of Israel.

Today, a return to forms of fascist counterrevolution are seen as necessary to enforce the policies of unfettered capitalist exploitation that Milei is attempting to implement in Argentina.

Speaking to a meeting of businesspeople on Wednesday, he responded to the failure of the Argentine Congress to pass in a disciplined fashion the entire 646 articles in his “omnibus bill” by describing his opponents as “criminals,” “traitors” and “disgusting filth.”

Speaking like a commander forced into a temporary retreat, he explained that he had to withdraw the bill after Congress had discarded some of his privatizations and attacks on social and democratic rights. “I would rather have no law than a bad law,” he said, while insisting that he will continue to implement a “hard orthodox adjustment.”

This decision followed the use of overwhelming and disproportionate police repression against demonstrators protesting his bill outside Congress.

In the Argentine media, warnings of a “social catastrophe” and reports of Milei’s falling popularity are widespread. By December, average private sector wages (after taxes and discounts) had fallen to 62 percent of the poverty line, while annual inflation reached 238 percent in January. A national strike already saw more than 1 million people take to the streets against Milei last month.

Milei’s embrace of Netanyahu—and, for that matter of Zelensky—gives concentrated expression to the reality that the emerging third world war through which imperialism is attempting to redivide and recolonize the world is at the same time a counterrevolutionary war against the working class internationally.



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