

Argentine pseudo-lefts denounce Milei as a “traitor to the Fatherland”

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Last week, Gen. Laura Richardson, US SOUTHCOM commander, in charge of Washington’s military operations in Central and South America and the Caribbean, received a warm welcome to Argentina by fascist President Javier Milei and Vice President Victoria Villarruel. Both are virulent defenders of the mass killings and torture under the US-backed dictatorship that ruled the country from 1976 to 1983.

Her arrival on April 2 coincided with the anniversary of the outbreak of the war between Britain and Argentina over the Malvinas islands in 1982. During the 10 weeks of bloody and one-sided battles between a superior British imperialist expeditionary force and Argentina’s poorly equipped and abysmally led conscript soldiers, US President Ronald Reagan gave political and military support to British imperialism.

In military fatigues, Milei expressed to Richardson his willingness to “strengthen its strategic alliance with the United States” and cement the total subordination of his government to US imperialism and its agenda of war against China.

The April 2 events in Argentina, from many angles, demonstrate the reactionary character of Argentine and all other nationalisms in oppressed, semi-colonial countries as the capitalist nation-state system toboggans again to world war and barbarism, this time posing the threat of nuclear annihilation.

Incapable of shaking off their class nature regardless of how close the world gets to the abyss, the Argentine pseudo-lefts organized in the Left and Workers Front (FIT-U) have joined the Peronists and military veteran groups in attacking Milei from a right-wing, chauvinist standpoint.

In numerous statements from their press, from legislatures across the country and at nationalist rallies, these forces have gone into a frenzy denouncing Milei for betraying and committing a crime against the “Fatherland” while abandoning the just cause of re-taking the Malvinas from the British empire.

Milei hands the Pentagon keys to new military bases

Throughout the week, Richardson made several stops in locations associated with strategic natural resources and military and commercial chokepoints that US imperialism seeks to control against China. These included the northern “waterway” along the Paraná and Paraguay rivers that connect Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Uruguay, the lithium deposits across the north, the oil and gas deposits in Neuquén and the southernmost city of Ushuaia.

The Milei administration plans to hand the US vast control over a new “Antarctic Logistics Pole” in the navy base in Ushuaia, oversight over the Paraná River in the north, and a new so-called “humanitarian base” in Neuquén. Milei signed an agreement on cyber-defense with the United States and received the green light from Washington to buy 24 used

American F-16 fighter jets from Denmark, even though he claims there is “no money” and the poverty rate now surpasses 60 percent.

Next month, Argentina will welcome the US 4th Fleet, led by aircraft carrier USS George Washington, as it patrols the southern Atlantic.

The Argentine navy has provocatively driven out Chinese fishing crews, and the government announced an inspection of the Chinese-led station in Neuquén, dedicated to deep space exploration, in response to concerns expressed by Washington. Milei also removed Chinese companies from bids for future infrastructure contracts.

This week, Milei traveled again to the United States—this time to meet Elon Musk, the fascist owner of Tesla who has expressed interest in Argentine’s lithium.

On April 2, as Richardson was arriving, Milei gave an anniversary speech saying he favored returning the Malvinas to Argentina through “diplomatic means” and “in the long term.” These remarks however, were only a segue into endless, repetitive statements lionizing the Armed Forces and promoting nationalism.

Milei has long expressed his admiration for Margaret Thatcher, the right-wing Tory British prime minister during the war, and said he would officially respect the illegal British occupation.

FIT-U coalition tries to outdo Milei’s chauvinism

Ahead of Milei’s speech, Gabriel Solano, the leader of the Partido Obrero (PO) said in the Buenos Aires legislature that any agreement with the Kelpers (the pejorative name given to the current inhabitants of the islands) was “a barbaric act and is tantamount to an act of treason against the fatherland.”

Then, the party’s publication *Prensa Obrera* stated in its coverage of Richardson’s visit: “The Milei government’s policy of handing over everything and subordination implies subordinating national interests to those of the imperialist powers.” It calls for a “national and sovereign policy” against “foreign interests.”

The founder of the *Partido Obrero*, Jorge Altamira, who now leads an external faction, wrote that Milei was committing a “crime against the Fatherland” by welcoming the Pentagon to the Southern Atlantic and lamented the loss of the “territorial sovereignty of Argentina” over this “strategic” area.

Both the Partido Obrero and the Morenoite *Izquierda Socialista* finished their reports on Richardson with the same copy-pasted appeal for,

... the broadest unity of action to repudiate Richardson’s visit to Tierra del Fuego, the surrender of our resources and in defense of national sovereignty against this new US offensive by the hand of

President Milei. And we join the claim of the Malvinas War veterans and of the trade union, political and social organizations over control of our islands, for the defense of our sovereignty, while we accompany the denunciation by war veterans for the violations of human rights of soldiers in the Malvinas War during the military dictatorship.

As an expression of this, the *Multisectorial de Neuquén*, a coalition of mixed nationalist groupings currently directed by trade union leaders belonging to different FIT-U parties, organized a rally to denounce the visit by Richardson as “an insult to our fatherland.” In a statement to the media, the *Multisectorial* also declared that the subsmissiveness of the Milei government “shames us as Argentine people.”

The Morenoite Socialist Workers Movement (MST) joined a demonstration of nationalist veteran groups on April 2. Their press vindicates the bourgeois chauvinist claim that “taking back the Malvinas” is “a national cause that is more relevant than ever.”

Waving an Argentine flag at the demonstration, MST leader Vilma Ripoll said in a video for social media that she was applying “unity of action” with groups demanding another military adventure to take back the Malvinas.

The Socialist Workers Party (PTS) wrote on April 2, “The Malvinas cause must be retaken because of its just character and its relevance as an anti-imperialist struggle ... Betting on the defeat of imperialism in this territorial dispute becomes an essential task.”

In its press, the PTS recalled how in 2015 their legislator Nicolás del Caño voted against the Chinese-run space observation and exploration center in Neuquén, calling it a “true sellout of Argentine sovereignty.” It equated this with a vote in 2018 by the PTS against the building of the Neuquén military base in Neuquén.

The entire pseudo-left has taken the same right-wing nationalist standpoint long advanced not only by the Peronists, the preferred ruling party of the bourgeoisie for most of the time since World War II. But it is taking the same positions as fascists like Juan José Gómez Centurión, a veteran of the Malvinas and the 1987 Easter fascist military uprising, who has been the most fervent promoter of the claim of the Malvinas as a “national cause” while denouncing the Chinese space station as a “ceding of sovereignty.”

This nationalist perspective plays directly into the hands of US imperialism. *Izquierda Socialista* and the MST have openly backed the US-NATO war in Ukraine against Russia, claiming it is “a just war by the Ukrainian people to defend their right to self-determination against a foreign power,” as summed up by the MST recently.

Both have sent donations and fighters to the Ukrainian forces, while their other partners in the FIT-U—the PTS and Partido Obrero—have provided a “left” cover for this open support for US imperialism, which provoked the war as part of its longstanding objective of subordinating the territories of the former Soviet Union to the status of semi-colonies.

All these tendencies uphold the “right” of the bourgeoisie in the backward countries to defend their state boundaries and exploit the workers, resources and markets within them. They endow the bourgeoisie with the leading role in the resolution of democratic questions, above all the fight for liberation from imperialist oppression.

The corollary to this is a suppression of the class struggle and the promotion of popular fronts with the bourgeoisie. This is a class perspective that corresponds to the interests of privileged layers of the middle class in the trade union bureaucracy, NGOs, politics and academia, which are objectively linked to a defense of Argentine capitalism.

The Morenoites stand in same “military camp” as the bourgeoisie

The IS, MST and PTS all have their origins in the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party founded by Nahuel Moreno, which was named the Socialist Workers Party (PST) before 1982. The Partido Obrero has for decades provided a left cover for the Morenoites.

The IS and MST continue to consider themselves Morenoites through-and-through, while the PTS continues to adhere to Moreno’s fundamental national opportunism, including his attitude toward the Malvinas War and the struggle against imperialism.

In making a balance of the Morenoite movement during the war, PTS co-founder Gabriela Liszt, who joined Moreno’s PST in 1981, has insisted that, “the PST correctly defined the character of this as a progressive anti-imperialist war ... placing itself in the military camp of the dictatorship although without giving political support.” The claim of not giving political support while presenting the war as “progressive” and joining the “military camp” of the junta is entirely dishonest and exhibits a total lack of principles.

Liszt hails the appeals made by the PST during the war to the Peronist union bureaucracy “to reorganize the workers’ movement,” claiming that the Peronists, a bourgeois political movement, were advancing an “anti-imperialist” struggle.

Whatever weaknesses aside, Liszt concludes that, “the PST policy can generally be considered principled” and that Moreno had “intervened generally in a correct fashion during the Malvinas War.”

The Malvinas war was an imperialist aggression by Britain against an oppressed country to secure an illegal possession. The claim made by the military junta in relation to the British-colonized islands and the decision to attack on April 2, 1982, however, had nothing progressive about it. Facing a growing wave of working class and popular protests and a world economic crisis, it was a desperate diversion to create a climate of chauvinism and safeguard class rule.

Marxists had to defend Argentina on the basis of creating the best conditions for world socialist revolution. The British and American working classes had to be mobilized to fight for the defeat of British and US imperialism and their overthrow, and the Argentine workers had to continue fighting on their own accord for the overthrow of the Argentine military junta and bourgeoisie.

Opposing imperialism in Argentina implied a fight against any efforts to subordinate workers to the bourgeoisie and suppress the class struggle. Workers had to be mobilized independently, through their own methods and for their own revolutionary aim to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism.

But Nahuel Moreno and his PST refused to call for the arming and independent mobilization of the working class for the overthrow of the junta, instead demanding that workers subordinate themselves to the “anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist banner” of the bourgeoisie.

The PST, which had asked to join the *Multipartidaria* coalition set up by bourgeois parties as a vehicle for the capitalist transition out of the crisis-ridden military dictatorship, provided a “left” cover for the bourgeoisie to block the revolutionary movement of the working class.

After the war, Moreno wrote a pamphlet *1982: The Revolution Begins* where he describes the replacement of dictator Gen. Leopoldo Galitieri for another military dictator, Gen. Reynaldo Bignone, as a successful “democratic revolution” that had resulted from the “united and revolutionary mobilization of the masses against imperialism” during the war. According to him, it was inevitable that the bourgeoisie remained at the helm of this revolution since “the masses in struggle” had not established their own organs of power. Thereby, Moreno simply refused any struggle for building such organs. Instead, he called for the return to power of the same bourgeois Congress of 1976 and the 1853 Constitution,

which today is Milei's favorite document.

The treacherous role of the Morenoites in this period was irrefutably exposed by the ICFI in a 1989 statement titled "Argentine Workers at the Crossroads," written by Bill Van Auken:

The generals launched the adventure to divert the workers' revolt with a wave of nationalism. The Morenoites became the junta's willing assistants in this enterprise, proclaiming themselves in the same "military camp" with the junta and immersing themselves in the petty-bourgeois chauvinism which was whipped up by the junta. They refused to raise any independent class demands aimed at mobilizing the proletariat for its own revolutionary socialist aims. Then, with the end of the war and the collapse of the junta, Moreno had the gall to bemoan the lack of proletarian organs of power to justify once again bowing to the bourgeoisie.

As the document makes clear, even as the military junta remained in power, Moreno endowed a progressive historical role to the Argentine bourgeoisie and for the nth time rejected Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which states that the establishment of a workers state, as part of the world socialist revolution, is necessary for resolving the tasks of the democratic revolution in semi-colonial countries.

Today, the right-wing chauvinism of the FIT-U again serves only to disarm the working class politically. It facilitates the efforts of the fascist Milei to succeed where the earlier dictatorships failed in imposing the savage attacks on social spending and living standards demanded by Wall Street.

In "War and the Fourth International," Trotsky compared the capitalist national state to a house "fit not for living but merely for dying" that must be "razed to its foundations." He wrote: "A 'socialist' who preaches national defense is a petty-bourgeois reactionary at the service of decaying capitalism."

Regarding Latin America, Trotsky then indicated that imperialism seeks to "disunite, weaken, and enslave" the region. He added:

But it is not the belated South American bourgeoisie, a thoroughly venal agency of foreign imperialism, who will be called upon to solve this task, but the young South American proletariat, the chosen leader of the oppressed masses ... The national problem merges everywhere with the social. Only the conquest of power by the world proletariat can assure a real and lasting freedom of development for all nations of our planet.

Since Trotsky wrote this in 1934, Stalinism, Morenoism, other variants of Pabloism and other petty-bourgeois nationalist tendencies have joined the bourgeoisie as crucial agencies of imperialism helping subordinate workers to the capitalist nation-state, and thereby making possible the continued neo-colonial division and enslavement of Latin America. Meanwhile, the development of the productive forces and the globalization of the world economy have left the national state rotten to the core and entirely incompatible with life, much less anything democratic or progressive.



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