

Argentina's fascist President Milei hailed as a "beacon" at Buenos Aires CPAC conference

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On Wednesday, the most prominent gathering of fascists internationally, the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) held its first iteration in Argentina, promoting the administration of fascist President Javier Milei as the blueprint for the incoming Trump White House and for the far right globally.

In the past year, CPAC has taken its far-right roadshow to Japan, Washington, Hungary, Brazil and Mexico. Now the screens at the Hilton Hotel in a wealthy Buenos Aires neighborhood boast the slogan, "Make the World Great Again."

The forum is credited with forging the Milei-Trump relationship, including the organization of their first encounters and the politically symbolic visit by Milei as the first foreign leader to meet with Trump after the US elections.

Lara Trump, co-chair of the Republican Party, spoke first and in the name of her father-in-law's incoming White House. She said, "Argentina is showing the world what is possible. ... In just months, he [Milei] eliminated dozens of government agencies and huge swaths of the budget. Tens of thousands of high-paid government workers were fired in just a few short weeks."

"And now in America we have Elon Musk," she continued. "He wants to head up DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency. So we are going to do the same thing in the United States. Every useless agency, every corrupt bureaucrat, we are going say to them 'Adios' and, as Donald Trump says, 'You're fired!'"

Speaking remotely, Steve Bannon, chief White House strategist for part of Trump's first term, said "Argentina is the key in this global fight," the "tip of the top of the spear" for the "Judeo-Christian West." Other international speakers called Milei a "beacon," "star of Bethlehem," and "symbol of liberty."

Milei's "model"

Milei has acted as a dictator since "day one," just like Trump has promised. His first actions included imposing an anti-protest protocol to criminalize street protests and strike leaders and participants, and an executive decree with 366 measures aimed at scrapping corporate regulations, government agencies and numerous social and democratic rights.

He has responded to mass protests and strikes with rubber bullets, tear gas, mass arrests and even police beatings of retirees opposing pension cuts, along with the criminal prosecution of protest leaders.

Last June, Argentina's Congress approved Milei's "Omnibus bill," which declared a "public emergency in administrative, economic, financial and energy matters" for a year (possibly longer) that grants the president despotic powers. It is worth adding that Milei has relied on the

Peronist union bureaucracy, guaranteeing its privileges in exchange for isolating and suppressing strikes and protests.

Within weeks, Milei brought to zero the government deficit by cutting the budget by a third, which is equivalent to the \$2 trillion cut that Musk is proposing in the United States. The owner of Tesla, Space X and X has been in discussions with Argentina's minister of deregulation and state transformation, and has met four times this year with Milei.

While claiming to target the "corrupt caste" of state bureaucrats, Milei has dumped almost the entire weight of his shock therapy on the working class as a whole. He shut down 13 ministries and fired over 30,000 public employees, halted all public works, leading to the loss of 100,000 construction jobs, devalued the peso by 53 percent in one day, ended rent-control, numerous subsidies for the poor, price controls for utilities, emptied soup kitchens, halted most assistance to provinces and eliminated numerous other regulations on corporations. Hundreds of thousands have been dropped from scholarships and other social assistance programs.

On Sunday, the Catholic University of Argentina (UCA) reported that in Milei's first year, poverty increased from 19 million to 23 million people, or half of the population, and extreme poverty from 3.4 million to 6 million.

The rallying around Milei by ruling elites globally represents an endorsement of not only this frontal assault on the social position of the working class, but also the political forms necessary to implement this unpopular program, namely the destruction of the remaining trappings of bourgeois democracy, the turn toward fascist counterrevolution and a shameless clientelism with imperialist powers.

As the final speaker on Wednesday, Milei gave a rambling and often deranged screed on "socialism" that candidly laid out what he called "the method" and "revolutionary theory" for his movement.

He prefaced his remarks by noting that so-called progressives "will cry, they will say that I am a totalitarian. Let them cry! I don't care anymore." After laughing, he abruptly yelled in anger: "The point is that we don't give a damn about politicians' opinions on almost all issues."

He explained: "Politically speaking, we can't use muskets in the age of drones. In the cultural battle, they [his opponents] set the rules. ... We must not retreat in the face of evil. We must fight it with more strength. We must not retreat in the face of socialism. Let's fight it with more strength and kick their asses out!"

He defended his supporters who have vowed to establish an "armed wing" of his movement claiming that they are peaceful and will be armed only with cellphones. He cautioned against those who "compare us to the sons of a thousand whores" in the left-wing guerrilla movements of the past.

For more than 20 minutes, he then spoke about violent battle plans and divine intervention to defeat the "neanderthals" of the left and the "lukewarm right."

"We have to be like a phalanx of hoplites [Greek armed militia] or a Roman legion," he said, adding:

Forms are means; they are evaluated according to their effectiveness in achieving certain ends. And today, to comply with the forms demanded is to raise a white flag in the face of a merciless enemy. Fire is fought with fire, and if they accuse us of violence, I remind them that we are the reaction to 100 years of outrages. ... I am going to repeat it because they have got me rotten, not to say with my balls on the floor: they are obsessed with forms and tolerance because raising their voice is for them worse than the systematic violation of our fundamental rights.

Vowing to discard all legal and democratic considerations to crush his opponents, he raised his voice to a Hitlerite howl, and the 2,000 attendees gave him a standing ovation.

Then, suddenly mumbling in a somber tone, he called on his supporters to be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice and abandon all personal considerations for the cause of “the historic idea of the West,” going back to the Greek and Roman Empire and the colonial conquest of the Americas.

Making a mystical reference to the “Holy Scriptures,” he concluded that their opponents seek “to exterminate us, our women, our children and to seize our spoils,” so “Heaven will crush them.”

Milei’s movement, which calls itself the “Forces of Heaven,” currently lacks a mass character like Mussolini’s blackshirts and the Nazi brownshirts; however, the glorification of foulmouthed Milei makes clear that the Argentine ruling class and dominant sections of the American ruling class are moving headlong to cultivate such movements in Argentina, the United States and internationally.

CPAC lays foundations for another Operation Condor

During his speech Wednesday, Milei also indicated that the function of CPAC will be to “establish channels of cooperation across the world, we could call ourselves a Right-wing International.”

The gathering went far beyond a discussion of ideas on “cultural” propaganda, as participants pointed to coordinated efforts to subvert governments, install dictatorships and prepare continental and even global repressive operations. The Argentine daily *Página12* compared CPAC Argentina to the September 1980 Congress of the Anti-Communist Confederation in Buenos Aires, hosted by the fascist dictatorship under Gen. Rafael Videla with the support of others among the military dictatorships that ruled most South American countries at the time.

Operation Condor, which was launched with the assistance of the CIA and held its first meetings in Argentina even before the military dictatorship took power in 1976, was in full swing, as dictators collaborated in hunting down left-wing workers, youth and intellectuals around the world.

The CPAC gathering undoubtedly continued behind closed doors, just like the 1980 congress. But what was discussed in public already points in the same direction:

- Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro spoke remotely only two weeks after he was indicted along with 36 allies and former officials for launching a coup plot that culminated in the January 8, 2023 attack on government institutions aimed at keeping his elected successor Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from power and establishing a dictatorship. The plot included orders to special forces to assassinate Lula, his vice presidential running mate Geraldo Alckmin and then electoral court chief Alexandre de Moraes.

- Fernando Sánchez Ossa, a legislator of the Chilean Republican Party

that openly embraces the legacy of the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship, asked Milei to extradite Galvarino Apablaza, a former Chilean guerrilla leader of the Stalinist Communist Party who had been granted political asylum in Argentina.

- The leader of the US-backed opposition in Venezuela, María Corina Machado, who is working closely with Washington, Buenos Aires and other governments to escalate regime change provocations to oust President Nicolas Maduro, spoke remotely. She promised to “cut all ties with all regimes that are enemies of Western democracies such as Iran, Syria, Belarus ... We will turn Venezuela from an international crime hub to an energy hub of the Americas.”

- Branko Marinković, the former minister of the fascistic coup regime in Bolivia under Jeanine Áñez, claimed wildly that Iran has established military bases in Bolivia. This follows claims, also unfounded, by the Milei administration that there are Iranian troops in Bolivia. This propaganda campaign signifies a threat of military and civil conflict as imperialism seeks to oust the crisis-ridden Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) government and secure control over Bolivia’s largest lithium reserves in the world.

- Several panelists presented Trump’s January 6, 2021 coup as a model, which was based on fraudulent claims that the 2020 elections had been stolen, with speakers already claiming the next elections in their countries are rigged.

If there were any doubt about the social interests represented by these fascist forces, the forum not only glorified the criminal underworld of oligarchs like Trump and Musk, but featured the third-richest Mexican, Ricardo Salinas Pliego, whose stocks collapsed the previous Monday as his companies refuse to pay \$3.8 billion in back taxes. Salinas declared: “To businesspeople, I say don’t be cheap. Learn to spend money to support those who have a good cause. These are misunderstood savings ... Leftist sh** should be sent back to the sieve, to the sewer from which they emerged.”

Other speakers included the ministers of Security and Economy of Argentina; Santiago Abascal, leader of Spain’s Vox party; the actor-producer Eduardo Verástegui from Mexico, Lima mayor Rafael López Aliaga from Perú; a representative of the Viktor Orban government in Hungary, among others.

While they hope to exploit the bankruptcy of the nominal “left” due to its own pro-business and austerity policies—like the Peronists in Argentina and the Democrats in the United States—the far right believes that the elections of Milei and Trump will open the floodgates for the implementation of the diktats of the local fascistic oligarchies and US imperialism.

These policies will encounter massive opposition as their real character becomes clear. The threat of fascism and war, however, can be smashed only by a mass political movement in the working class that fights consciously to transfer state power into its own organizations and replace capitalism with socialism internationally. Such a movement requires a revolutionary leadership steeped in the lessons from past betrayals at the hands of Stalinism, social democracy, revisionism, Castroism and all forms of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalism.



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