

Jacobin falsifies Trotsky and historical record to promote popular front in Argentina

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Martín Mosquera, editor-in-chief of *Jacobin América Latina*, has published a lengthy strategy document, “How to Defeat Milei,” whose purpose is to supply a theoretical justification for subordinating the Argentine working class to Peronism and a “broader progressive bloc” ahead of the 2027 elections.

Jacobin Magazine is the semi-official press organ of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). The DSA is a faction of the Democratic Party in the United States. Its international wing formally affiliated in 2023 with the São Paulo Forum, the regional bloc of Chavista, Peronist, and other bourgeois-nationalist parties.

The argument is as follows: the Argentine working class has suffered a “social defeat” that rules out revolution. The fight against the fascistic administration of President Javier Milei will therefore be decided on the electoral terrain, where the left must offer Peronism “specific, critical and delimited” support; and this requires abandoning any “sectarian” insistence on working class political independence in favor of “unitary” blocs that include bourgeois and reformist forces.

Attempting to dress up his position with pseudo-Marxist credentials, Mosquera falsifies the positions of Leon Trotsky and revives a decades-old slander that Trotsky was “sectarian” on France and Spain in order to rehabilitate the Popular Front. Every element of this argument is false.

Mosquera is a regular contributor to *International Viewpoint*, the publication of organizations that make up the remnants of the former Pabloite United Secretariat, and more generally, the dregs of global pseudo-leftism. The publication in turn identifies him as a member of Democracia Socialista, which it describes as “part of” the Pabloite section in Argentina.

In fact, it is part of a grouping that calls itself Poder Popular, joined with neo-Guevarist tendencies. It extols the legacy of Mario Santucho, who briefly fused his petty-bourgeois nationalist organization with the group headed by the Argentine Pabloite Nahuel Moreno, before following the logic of the Pabloite line of liquidation into Castroism and launching an armed guerrilla struggle that ended in catastrophic defeat, taking the lives of many, including his own.

A “social defeat” invented to disarm the working class

Mosquera’s proof of a “social defeat” in Argentina consists of a string of statistics: the lowest number of strikes in two decades (465 labor disputes registered in 2025), a 53 percent collapse in *piquetero* roadblocks since 2023, and what he calls the absence of “sustained processes of workplace self-organization.” He defines a social defeat as “the loss of the capacity of the popular classes to block regressive offensives that, at another moment, would have met far more intense resistance.”

“We are not in the 1930s,” he argues, and “revolution is off the political

horizon.” From this, he draws the conclusion that the rising approval ratings for Socialist Workers Party (PTS) electoral figurehead Myriam Bregman do not reflect “a radicalization of the masses toward the left”—merely, he argues, personal sympathy among broad layers.

This is but a snapshot of the tempo of struggle that he tries to explain away by ignoring its underlying drivers: the poverty rate bounced back to 31.8 percent, real wages have fallen roughly 9 to 13 percent under Milei, and the government, by the IMF’s own description, has imposed “the most significant fiscal adjustment of an economy in peacetime.” Four general strikes have already been called against Milei, on top of nearly weekly demonstrations by pensioners, the plant occupation at the FATE tire factory and countless militant strikes nationwide.

But even more importantly, Argentina’s crisis does not unfold in isolation; it is intensifying alongside mass opposition against similar policies across the region and globally, including a seven-week Bolivian general strike. The wars in the Middle East and Europe, escalating US aggression in Latin America, the spiraling trade wars fueled by Trump’s economic nationalism, the structural slowdown of China, as the introduction of AI, automation and other industrial shocks is pushing class tensions worldwide to the brink. Argentina is not an exception to that process but one of its sharpest expressions.

The gap Mosquera identifies between Bregman’s personal popularity and voting polls for the FIT-U electoral coalition that PTS belongs to is real, but his conclusion is incorrect. A mass constituency searching for an alternative to Milei’s shock therapy, unable to find one in either Peronism or an electorally marginal pseudo-left, is not evidence that revolutionary conditions are absent. It is evidence of exactly what Trotsky identified at the opening of the Transitional Program, that “the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.” Mosquera’s own prescription, subordination to Peronism, is a recipe to fatally prolong, rather than resolve, this crisis.

The popular front revival

Because he has ruled out an independent working class struggle for power, Mosquera’s practical conclusion follows automatically: “the fight to defeat Milei will foreseeably shift to the electoral terrain,” where progressivism “is on the defensive, trying to avoid the worst.” Any left radicalism would be irresponsible since, in his words, “constructing a left-wing version of that radicalism does not bring the left closer to the masses; it disconnects it from the real levels of popular consciousness and combativeness.”

From this premise he draws his key conclusion: “some kind of specific, critical and delimited support cannot be ruled out for whichever candidacy is in real conditions to defeat [Milei], foreseeably arising from Peronism

or from a broader progressive bloc.” The “central problem of the period,” he writes, is “how to avoid sectarian isolation without diluting political independence, and how to build a unity that accumulates real force to defeat reaction.”

This is a proposal for a Popular Front, adapted to a period in which the mass reformist parties of the twentieth century no longer exist. Politics is narrowed to “unitary, specific and transitory action, structured around a limited and precise objective: blocking the path to reaction and defending threatened democratic freedoms.” The independent mobilization of the working class to oppose tens of thousands of layoffs and draconian social austerity—not to speak of its struggle for power—is not merely postponed. It is redefined, in advance, as sectarianism.

Trotsky against the Popular Front: what he actually wrote

To make this program respectable, Mosquera imports the claim made by Perry Anderson, the longtime editor of *New Left Review*, that Trotsky showed “flexibility” toward alliances with non-working class sectors against Nazism and during the Kornilov affair of August 1917, yet fell into “sectarian errors” in opposing the Popular Front in France and Spain. This is a grotesque fabrication.

It erases the distinction Trotsky spent years elaborating between a united front of workers’ organizations for defensive struggle, and a Popular Front government that subordinates the working class politically to its class enemies.

In Germany, Trotsky called for a united front of Communist (KPD) and Social Democratic (SPD) workers against the Nazis—joint action between two workers’ parties, each retaining full political independence. He never proposed a coalition government with the SPD, still less with bourgeois parties. In December 1931 he wrote: “No common platform with the Social Democracy... March separately, but strike together!” The Stalinist KPD rejected even this minimal unity, branding the SPD “social fascists”; the German working class was divided and crushed, and Hitler took power in January 1933.

The Kornilov affair, which Mosquera cites via Anderson as proof of Trotsky’s supposed flexibility, in fact demonstrates the very method he later applied to France. In August 1917 the Bolsheviks fought General Kornilov’s coup alongside troops loyal to the Provisional Government led by Alexander Kerensky, while granting Kerensky himself no political support. Lenin’s instruction, which Trotsky quoted in 1931, was: “We shall fight against Kornilov, but we do not support Kerensky... The distinction is delicate but must not be forgotten.”

This was exactly Trotsky’s approach to Léon Blum’s Popular Front government. He did not call for frontal opposition; Mosquera quotes a June 1936 letter from Trotsky to his French supporters where he predicted that the workers’ next wave of action would be directed not at Blum but at “the two hundred families,” the Radicals, the Senate and the army command. “We do not put Léon Blum in the same sack as [the fascists] de Wendel and La Rocque,” he wrote—precisely as the Bolsheviks had distinguished Kerensky from Kornilov while fighting both. What Trotsky opposed was the Popular Front coalition itself between Blum’s Socialist Party and the Radical Party: a government answerable to the Radical Party, the party of French capital, whose function was to prevent the working class from using its own strength to take power.

Mosquera credits the Popular Front’s 1936 election victory with detonating the French general strike wave that followed, and Spain’s parallel mobilization against Franco, as proof that “confidence” in reformist leaderships can itself trigger radicalization. The record says otherwise. The June 1936 strikes expressed a revolutionary upsurge

already building since the fascist riots of February 1934; the Popular Front’s actual function, once installed, was to shut that upsurge down. Stalinist leader Maurice Thorez, whose Communist Party gave outside support to the Popular Front, declared, “One must know how to end a strike,” as the Matignon accords were signed, trading temporary concessions for ordering workers back to the factories—concessions the bourgeoisie clawed back within two years.

Trotsky called the Popular Front “a society for insuring Radical bankrupts at the expense of the capital of the workers’ organizations.” By 1938, the same Radical Party was ruling by decree against the working class; and by 1940, much of it had gone over to Vichy and collaboration with the Nazi occupation forces.

During the Spanish Revolution, workers and peasants took up arms, collectivized land and factories and built militias not because the Popular Front, including the Socialists, the Stalinist CP and the Republicans, had won the 1936 elections, but because they understood, correctly, that a fascist victory meant their annihilation. The developing social revolution was in fact systematically strangled by the Popular Front government, under Stalinist direction: disarming the militias, restoring bourgeois property relations and physically liquidating revolutionaries and centrists, particularly in the POUM. Trotsky’s verdict in December 1937 was blunt: “Victory will go either to the socialist revolution or to fascism.” That was not sectarianism, but a prediction confirmed with the taking of power of Franco in 1939.

Radicalization through “trust”?

The theoretical core of Mosquera’s argument is the claim that “in many cases, the masses do not radicalize despite trusting reformist leaderships, but through that trust”—that popular mobilization typically begins only once broad sectors perceive a political force capable of translating their demands into concrete results.

This inverts the historical record examined above. The working class took power in October 1917 only because they had broken politically with Kerensky and come under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. Trust in reformist and Stalinist leaderships produced not revolutionary victory but catastrophic defeat: German workers trusted the SPD and KPD, and Hitler triumphed; the independent strike wave French workers had built was demobilized by the very government they had just elected; the Spanish revolution was strangled by the Popular Front.

In each case, the working class’s own independent action expressed and fed back into its radicalization, but only in Russia did the working class have the political party necessary to lead it to power. Confidence in Blum was not the cause of the June 1936 strikes; the intolerable social conditions and confidence in their own collective strength were. This is not a scholastic distinction. It determines whether a party prepares the working class to fight independently for power, or positions itself, as Mosquera does, to manage the disappointment when the leaderships it has counseled workers to trust betray them once again.

The tasks this falsification evades

Mosquera’s own examples confirm what he denies. He cites the coalition between President Lula da Silva (Workers Party- PT) and Vice President Geraldo Alckmin (the former right-wing governor of São Paulo) in Brazil and the New Popular Front in France approvingly, as models of

“unitary, transitory” blocs that stopped the far right without dissolving the left into it. But Lula has spent three years administering the fiscal discipline and labor “flexibilization” the international bourgeoisie demands, while the NFP’s own parliamentary bloc handed the presidency of the French National Assembly to a loyalist to Emmanuel Macron, the “President of the Rich” within weeks of its founding.

The same operation is now being prepared for Argentina, and it is being prepared from two directions at once. *Jacobin*’s “social defeat” thesis and the FIT-U’s own version of the “united front” with Peronists in the trade unions and increasingly in Congress arrive at functionally identical conclusions by different routes.

Jacobin says openly that the masses radicalize “through trust” in reformist leaderships, so the left must work through and inside a broad electoral front behind Peronism. The Morenoite PTS says the same thing in more militant-sounding language: the task is not to win the working class to revolutionary politics against Peronism and the union bureaucracy, but to build standing bodies in which Peronists, the politically unaffiliated and revolutionary-minded fight “together,” on the premise that programmatic clarification can wait indefinitely. Both positions converge in their opposition to tackling the same essential task—the building of an independent revolutionary party fighting for the political independence of the working class.

This convergence is not accidental. It has a definite class content. As the WSWs has explained, the pseudo-left is not a wing of the socialist movement that has made mistaken tactical choices. It is the political expression of a privileged, upper-middle-class layer—hostile to Marxism and to the independent revolutionary movement of the working class. Its material position is bound up with the parliamentary apparatus, the trade union bureaucracy, the universities and certain professions. Its historic function is to corral movements of social protest back within the safe confines of the institutions of bourgeois rule, dressed variously in the language of identity politics, national reformism or “left” electoralism.

Mosquera, a philosophy lecturer at the University of Buenos Aires, other *Jacobin* writers and the PTS’s leadership are drawn overwhelmingly from the same academic and professional milieu, occupying adjacent positions within that same social layer. The affinity is not merely social: as the WSWs has documented, *Jacobin América Latina*’s own editorial board includes sitting and former Latin American government officials, giving Mosquera’s proposed “broader progressive bloc” a concrete, existing address.

The disputes between such forces are a family quarrel over how best to manage, not overturn, the crisis of Argentine capitalism to secure their social privileges—whether through an open electoral bloc with Peronism or through a “united front” to police the Peronist union bureaucracy’s authority over workers.

What is missing is the revolutionary party Trotsky spent his life building against exactly this kind of “left” cover for capitalist rule. Obstructing the construction of that party is the real function shared by *Jacobin*’s open support for Peronism and PTS’s centrism. The International Committee of the Fourth International alone is fighting to build it in Argentina and internationally.



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