

Milei in Brazil: Argentina's fascist president campaigns for Flávio Bolsonaro on behalf of US imperialism

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On Saturday, July 25, Argentina's President Javier Milei gave the main speech at the National Convention of the Liberal Party (PL), in São Paulo that officially launched the presidential candidacy of Senator Flávio Bolsonaro. Breaking every diplomatic protocol, the foreign head of state intervened directly in the Brazilian election campaign on behalf of the son of the former president, convicted and imprisoned for a coup d'état attempted in the last presidential elections of 2022.

The agenda of the trip was arranged as a series of provocations. Milei landed on Friday, July 24, and was received at the Bandeirantes Palace by the governor of São Paulo, Tarcísio de Freitas (Republicanos), a former minister under Jair Bolsonaro and a leading fascist figure in the country. Tarcísio awarded him the Order of Ipiranga, the state's highest honor. The ceremony was held on a blue carpet—meant to symbolize the growing domination of Latin America by far-right governments aligned with Washington, hailed triumphantly by their promoters as the “Blue Tide.”

Milei had announced since July 10 that his tour—scheduled without any arrangement with the Brazilian government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Workers Party, PT)—would include a visit to Brasília to greet Jair Bolsonaro, under house arrest. Supreme Federal Court (STF) Justice Alexandre de Moraes then suspended all social visits to the former president for 30 days, including those of foreign heads of state.

The trip is not the personal initiative of an eccentric head of state. It forms part of Washington's escalating offensive against Brazil ahead of October's election. The previous week, the Trump administration imposed an additional 25 percent tariff on Brazilian products, in effect since July 22, on top of the 50 percent tariffs imposed a year earlier to force the reversal of the case against Bolsonaro. In June, following Flávio Bolsonaro's meeting with Trump in the Oval Office, the US government designated Brazilian criminal gangs as “foreign terrorist organizations.” The WSWWS has characterized both measures as open imperialist interventions in the Brazilian election, aimed at installing in Brasília a government aligned with the plans to convert Latin America into a US neocolonial protectorate.

The Milei government is itself a direct product of this type of intervention. In September 2025, with the Argentine president's popular support collapsing ahead of legislative elections, the US Treasury announced a \$20 billion currency swap, followed by purchases of Argentine sovereign bonds and new packages from the World Bank, the IDB and the IMF. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent publicly presented the operation as an “endorsement” of Milei.

Backed by Washington, Milei has ceded control of the South Atlantic to the Pentagon, rammed through a labor “reform” aimed at erasing more than a century of Argentine workers' gains, and promoted the rehabilitation of the 1976–83 military dictatorship.

At the launching of Flávio Bolsonaro's campaign, Milei gave a 27-minute-long fascist rant that proclaimed an anti-communist crusade across Latin America and encouraged a violent takeover of power by the far-right in Brazil.

Milei declared that “an entire nation is caught between liberation or the continuation of its submission to the left,” denounced “the infamous São Paulo Forum, founded by Lula da Silva and Fidel Castro,” as “a transnational network fundamental to the spread of communism on the continent.” He concluded: “We trust you, Flávio, to stop the socialist trash.”

The “blue wave” celebrated at the Bandeirantes Palace was set out by Milei as a sequence to be completed in October: “today Latin American socialism is being defeated election after election: Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, and, we hope, in October, a liberal Brazil too.”

As the WSWWS wrote, the recent election results are not the expression of a rightward turn by the Latin American population. The victories of Abelardo de la Espriella in Colombia and Keiko Fujimori in Peru, both by razor-thin margins and clouded by allegations of vote fraud, were produced by direct intervention from Washington and by the bankruptcy of the “pink tide” governments, which came to power promising reform and delivered austerity.

Milei reserved his most violent blows to attack the very idea of social equality. “Much like the Greek myth of the bed of Procrustes, the left seeks to impose extreme conformity on an anti-human system, which demands, as a rule, an absolute and illusory equality,” he declared, casting egalitarian aspirations as a crime against “the self-evident truths of human nature.”

He continued, employing the rhetoric of the Christian right:

A corruption that has existed since man has been man, since Cain killed his brother Abel. It is envy and resentment turned into philosophy, masked under the banners of equality and solidarity.

The programmatic conclusion that followed combines the metaphysical defense of private property with the budgetary chainsaw

demanded by the IMF:

[D]on't be surprised to see socialists always standing alongside thieves, because socialists are thieves. ... It's time to sharpen the scissors. Sharpen the scissors to cut the theft carried out by all the socialist delinquents.

Milei then presented the second credential of the candidacy he had come to consecrate, declaring that only Flávio Bolsonaro has “enough strength to confront the criminal organizations and drug cartels.” “We have already tried patience and mercy toward those who commit crimes. And all these socialist strategies failed,” he proclaimed.

This is the language of the “Shield of the Americas,” the summit convened by Trump in March at his golf club in Florida, which Milei attended, and which established a hemispheric “military coalition” under the pretext of combating “narcoterrorism”—the same pretext used to justify the mass murder of fishermen in the Caribbean and the Eastern Pacific, and the kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. The WWS characterized the Shield of the Americas as directly reminiscent of the 1970s’ Operation Condor, the promotion of fascist terror and dictatorship across Latin America with the backing of US imperialism.

The choice of Milei as the main speaker at the launch of Flávio Bolsonaro’s candidacy is revealing of the character of the PL’s electoral campaign itself. By associating it with the most reactionary figure in Latin America, directly subordinated to Washington, it has publicly announced the content of its political strategy.

That strategy is the direct continuation of the conspiracy carried out by Jair Bolsonaro and the military high command in the 2022 election, which culminated in the fascist attack in Brasília on January 8, 2023. Milei’s speech left no room for doubt:

You’ve already seen this four years ago, in the last presidential election, and you will see it again. Get ready. Because the left has no problem playing dirty. Get ready for a great battle.

This advance denunciation of fraud was accompanied by an inversion of the very definition of coup. Milei accused Argentina’s parliamentary opposition of having tried, in last year’s legislative election, to “provoke a coup d’état, generating panic in the markets and a run on the dollar.”

Arousing the far-right crowd gathered at Pacaembu, Milei told them that “when unfounded criticism rains down on you, accusing you of the worst crimes and the greatest perversities, do not be afraid.” Supplying divine sanction for a new violent coup attempt, he concluded the speech: “victory in a battle does not depend on the number of soldiers, but on the forces that come from heaven.”

Milei’s attack on the judge overseeing the case against Bolsonaro forms part of the same operation. Before the convention, in Spanish, the Argentine president declared: “That ‘bald trash’ didn’t allow me to visit my unjustly imprisoned friend, when I know Lula grew tired of receiving foreign leaders when he was imprisoned.” That provocation was directly answered by the Brazilian Supreme Court President Luiz Edson Fachin, who issued a statement deploring the

“disrespectful reference” to a justice of the country’s highest court as “incompatible with the civility” that should characterize relations between states.

The gap between the gravity of the threat and the mildness of the Brazilian government’s response exposes the limits of the Workers Party’s (PT) political perspective.

On Sunday, July 26, after Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira consulted President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Itamaraty recalled its ambassador in Buenos Aires, Julio Bitelli, for consultations—a gesture of diplomatic protest that contrasts with the government’s general posture. According to Mônica Bergamo’s column in *Folha de S. Paulo*, Lula decided not to respond to the attacks by name under the claim that Milei is seen by the government as a “candidate for Trump’s manager in Latin America,” someone not worth engaging in a public shouting match.

The PT convention that launched the candidacy of Fernando Haddad for São Paulo’s government was held in Campinas that same Saturday. President Lula spoke there, warning that “whoever from outside wants to meddle in the Brazilian election” will “get quite a beating,” that “this country is ours and nobody sticks their nose in.” As usual, he toned down his conclusion: “Brazil wants peace, Brazil does not want hatred, Brazil wants love.”

Milei’s intervention in Brazilian politics was more directly answered by PT party president Edinho Silva, who declared that Milei “is not up to the office he holds” and suggested he would have made better use of his time and Argentine public funds “had he stayed in his own country to deal with its internal problems.”

Faced with a coup conspiracy announced in public, backed by Washington’s financial and military support, the PT offers diplomatic protest and an appeal to nationalism. Edinho Silva’s formula is the most finished expression of this bankruptcy: at the very moment Argentinian workers struggle against brutal economic attacks and police repression by the same government that spoke in São Paulo, the PT sends them back to their “internal problems” and claims Brazil’s “internal problems” as its own. This division of the working class along national lines is the reactionary tool to subordinate workers to their “own” national bourgeoisie and to its demands for austerity and repression.

Milei’s trip to Brazil confirms that the preparation of a dictatorship in Brazil is not a Brazilian affair alone, and that the defense against it cannot be delegated to the Lula government, the state apparatus, or any faction of the Brazilian bourgeoisie. The offensive running through Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela and Cuba is the same one Trump is conducting within the United States itself. It can be confronted only through the independent political mobilization of the working class, unifying Brazilian, Argentinian and American workers on a common socialist program. This is the task posed in the building of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Brazil and throughout Latin America.



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