
Milei vs Popular Sovereignty

By: Arnaldo Musa / Cubasí
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The now president of Argentina Javier Milei, holds a chainsaw during an electoral campaign event in La Plata, Argentina, on Tuesday, September 12, 2023.

Javier Milei, a neoliberal to the extreme, represents the worst that Argentine governance can have today, especially when his authoritarianism is a constant threat to popular sovereignty.

It's not the first time, nor will it be the only one, that one wonders why almost half of Argentines still support or see hope in the "miracle" Milei can bring them, while more than half are already below the poverty line, and thousands suffer from hunger and hardships in a nation that produces so much food, that does not suffer from any blockade and only favors and waste from those who encourage all the evils that afflict this world.

Thus, 52% of citizens are already poor and many are forced to live on the streets, while unemployment grows, soup kitchens and free medicines for retirees are eliminated, whose lives are of no interest to the aforementioned.

In short, he exhibits capitalist measures that increase social collapse and put the sovereignty of the nation at stake, by authorizing the sale of more than 400 public properties.

He has dwarfed the Macri experience by going beyond the extreme right, by proposing a different model of government, without consensus, without negotiations, by imposing rupture measures from his first day in the Casa Rosada. Milei and his cadres are called to make a "revolution" (really counterrevolution) in social, political, and cultural relations.

His government is an unprecedented experiment of the international extreme right, standing out for its contempt for anything that smells of national sovereignty. Internationally, the absolute center is located in the United States, with whose relations are marked by the mandate of being "more papal than the Pope."

During his short mandate - which for many is already extraordinarily long - he only cares about lowering inflation

and other expensive items for private investors and corporations at the cost of sacrificing social services, which is why the purchasing power of salaries and pensions plummeted at a record pace.

COMPARISON

In an interview conducted by Jacobin Magazine with Jorge Orovitz Sanmartino, the sociologist and researcher at the Institute of Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Buenos Aires states that we are in the presence of an authoritarian neoliberal government, which must be distinguished from the one headed by Mauricio Macri between 2015-2019.

“Macri's government was a reformist neoliberal attempt, whose objective was to impose a privatization agenda, destroy labor protection and deregulate economy. But, following the advice of the World Bank in the 1990s, Macri always kept a social containment network, negotiated social programs with territorial popular movements, negotiated transfers with the provinces beyond co-participation, and had a certain cultural tolerance for gender diversity, environmentalism or human rights. No spaces were closed nor were typical defenders of repression empowered.

“What we are seeing today with Milei's government is radically different. We've gone from a culturally tolerant neoliberalism to a clearly authoritarian one, which is expressed from measures such as the anti-picket protocol to the prohibition of inclusive language in public administration; from decree 70, modifying or eliminating more than 70 laws, to the closure of INADI, the cancellation of CONICET scholarships or the closure of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo program on Public TV.

“This distinction, of course, is not to sweeten Macri's government: let's remember the systematic espionage, the repression in the march against the pension reform or, in economy, the fierce indebtedness in the face of the difficulties in stabilizing the currency,” said Sanmartino, who recalled that he replaced Cristina's government, which represented a force and a developmental model with social inclusion, federalism, industrialism, income redistribution...

“It has enough strength to veto and prevent the Macri offensive to dismantle previous achievements, but it cannot recover majority consensus to reissue a new developmental cycle. This was demonstrated by Macri's electoral campaign, which promised not to touch what was good and had popular support, such as the Universal Child Allowance and other social programs.

“In this mutual blockage, an economic and social crisis was deepened, expressed by persistent inflation and increasing levels of poverty, which was aggravated by the pandemic situation, the war in Ukraine and the drought. The government of Alberto Fernández is a symptom of that impotence,” he said.

THE ARRIVAL OF MILEI

In this context, Milei arrived with her Libertad Avanza, a party that brought together all the extravagant, Twitter users, influencers, haters and resentful people, who blamed Macrism for weakness and called for a crusade against the political system under the banners of war against the State, unions and social justice, which he considers a privilege at the expense of the “good capitalists” who produce wealth.

Let's remember that, under the slogan of defeating the caste, he obtained 30% of the votes, and with the support of Macrism he won 56% in the ballots.

Despite having a legislative minority, he managed to convince deputies, as well as several governors who opposed him, so as not to find obstacles to his decree 70 and the omnibus law that destroy the legal order that protected labor, environmental, social relations and the minimum wage.

He dismantled the science and technology system, initially ordered the privatization of more than 50 public companies, freed prices and closed the fair prices program and any price control; in fact, he prohibited them by law.

Among many other unpopular measures, he increased fuel and transportation prices by more than 150%, closed the Ministry of Women and Diversity, the Ministry of Science, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Labor.

He devalued the Argentine peso by more than 120%, generating a transfer of wealth from wage earners to the most concentrated exporting and dollarized sectors of economy and, in his last chapter, he cut off national financing to the provinces, breaking with the tradition of renegotiating provincial debts or, directly, cutting off the transfers stipulated by law.

In short, Milei has continued down that path that represents the ruling class impatient to sweep away all previous conquests.

This has been demonstrated from the beginning with decrees and laws drafted in the law firms of large companies.

His main objective is the capture of the State by large concentrated groups, the destruction of institutions of commitment, the expulsion of subaltern classes from any corner that they still have in the State apparatus, the destruction of institutions of protection. This practice continues, despite any kind of opposition.

Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff
