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Argentina

Argentina: 'Anti-fascist and anti-racist pride' against Milei

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP601- February 2025 -

Publication date: Wednesday 19 February 2025

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On Saturday 1 February, huge demonstrations took place across Argentina in response to President Javier Milei's speech at the Davos forum the previous week. In a half-hour speech to the cream of the capitalist world, Milei, in a significant mimicry of Trump, unrolled the catalogue of his hatreds: feminists, 'wokism', gay couples (whom he accused of paedophilia), progressivism, the left and 'leftists' (who must be 'driven out'). Hundreds of thousands of people across the country rose up not only against Milei and his ideology, but to assert their determination to fight for all democratic and social rights and to stop the wave of fascism sweeping the world.

Feminist and LGBT groups

Hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in Buenos Aires under the banner of 'Anti-fascist and anti-racist pride', convened during the week by university assemblies (the one in Buenos Aires was attended by 5,000 people), initially at the initiative of feminist and LGBT groups, then at the call of a large number of social, cultural and political groups and organisations. The event was repeated in more than 120 towns and cities across Argentina.

Milei, who is still able to take advantage of political and macro-economic stabilisation that is generally favourable to him, has rekindled the fire that has been smouldering in all sections of the population since he came to power.

The vast majority of the population is suffering from a serious deterioration in their living conditions: inflation, which is still high, even if it is falling; redundancies; and a deterioration in public services. But apart from two days of trade union mobilisation in January 2024 and May Day, and numerous local struggles, the economic dimension has not been the dominant one in popular reactions to Milei's policies. The biggest demonstrations over the past year have focused on social issues, the memory of the dictatorship and the defence of the university.

A groundswell of support for democracy

This time it was clear that there was a massive outpouring of head-on opposition to far-right ideology. All sections of the population (albeit predominantly the middle class), all types of opposition and all types of struggle against Milei were present. Young people, women and LGBT communities in particular. But all united by a common political will to defend democracy in all its aspects.

Faced with this groundswell of support, Milei backed down for the first time. Affirming that his words had been misrepresented, he declared that he 'respects homosexuals' and hinted that, contrary to the statements made by his Minister of Justice, he would not repeal a law that severely punishes femicide.

The future of the movement will depend on its ability to sustain itself. In the absence of a political representative to embody it, it can count on the repetition of local and university assemblies and the preparation of the next street mobilisation dates, on 8 March for International Women's Rights Day and on 23 March, the day of remembrance against the dictatorship.

[L'Anticapitaliste](#) 13 February 2025

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