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Argentina

# The Argentine government loses its majority and the far left improves its position

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**As the results of the PASO primaries on 12 September 2002 predicted, [1]** the centre-left Peronist government was unable, despite a few social measures granted in extremis, to regain credit with its popular social base and recover. It must be said that in October, inflation stood at 41.8 per cent and the poverty index affected 40.6 per cent of the population, according to the latest data from the Argentine statistical institute, with a pandemic that is barely receding with the return of the southern summer.

Half of the deputies, 1/3 of the senators and several regional chambers were renewed. The party "Frente de Todos" ("Front of All") of the centre-left Peronist president Alberto Fernandez (34 per cent of the vote) is largely outnumbered by the 42 per cent of the right-wing opposition ("Juntos por el Cambio") in the majority of provinces and loses its absolute majority in the Senate and relative majority in Parliament. The world's media only picked up on this fact. A real analysis shows something else, which worries the power circles of imperialism.

## Historic breakthrough for the far left

The central fact of this election, in a country where voting is compulsory, is the abstention. The Fernandez government lost 3 million votes due to the disappointment and abstention of the working classes. The right-wing opposition winners also lose 500,000 votes from the 2019 elections to the libertarian with "bolsonist" tendencies Javier Milei. Milei's supporters are almost wiped off the electoral map outside the capital. Despite this good news, no one on the left in Argentina, a country where one of the most bloodthirsty military dictatorships reigned, underestimates or should underestimate the breakthrough of this "fascist" in the heart of the "portena" petty-bourgeoisie (inhabitants of the capital Buenos Aires), especially when the far left only recovers a third of the missing votes from the centre-left.

However, the breakthrough of the extreme left is historic as it affects all the provinces of the country with a national average of more than 6% of the vote and scores of up to 25% in the poorest territories. The FIT-U (Front of the Left and Workers' Unity) became by far the third largest electoral force in the country.

With more than 6% and 1.4 million votes, this vote took on an unprecedented qualitative importance thanks to the entry of far-left elected representatives in all the bastions of Peronism in urban areas. The dikes of the old Argentine populist movement that had framed the working class for decades have finally begun to break. Hundreds of thousands of young people, of workers who can no longer stand the conditions of hunger and misery that the Peronist government of the All Front has imposed on the country, have broken free. They no longer want to pay the fraudulent foreign debt (most of which was inherited from Macri's previous right-wing government, ) and to fatten the profits of the big businessmen and extractivist firms that pollute the "Pacha Mama" (the earth).

## A vote of resistance that affected the most exploited: the Amerindians!

Far from the epinal images of travel agencies that present a white country, Argentina has thirty nations of first peoples on its territory, and the "negros" of the "villas" (shanty towns), victims of the racism of the white aristocracy, are rarely black Africans but mainly Indians or mestizos. Throughout history, they have been massacred, culturally

humiliated, stripped of their property and land, but they still exist and, like their Chilean neighbours, they have been resisting for years. Whether it is the Mapuche, to recover their ancestral lands privatized for the sole benefit of the big Western corporations such as Benetton and Lewis, or the Kollas, Quechua and other Toba who are resisting against the Canadian or Chinese extractivist firms that are polluting the land, the water and the cultural sites. In 2017, Macri's gendarmerie and prefectural forces murdered Santiago Maldonado and Rafael Nahuel, launching a racist campaign to demonize the first peoples. They went so far as to invent terrorist groups to legitimize the repression that Fernandez continued.

This is why the heavily populated Mapuche areas in the provinces of Neuquen or Chubut voted more than 15% for the FIT-U and the Andean people of Jujuy more than 25%. When the most disadvantaged people take over politics, as Lenin and the Argentine Che said, the situation can change very quickly.

## Simple electoral agreement or mass democratic movement?

To consolidate these electoral results and move towards eco-socialist solutions, would take much more than a simple electoral agreement (which is better than nothing, let's admit it). It would require a broad, unified and democratic movement of all the forces of the far left that addresses much larger fringes of the working population and the youth and that brings together many independents and referents of the class struggle. We are far from this and each of the components of the FIT-U is organizing its own assemblies and victory demonstrations.

However, in order to massively reject the new agreement in gestation with the IMF, to progress in the organisation of working class neighbourhoods and youth and to energize the workers', environmental and gender oppression struggles, the construction of a large unitary movement is essential.

*25 November 2021*

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[1] See Eduardo Lucita "[Argentina: 2021 primary elections. Government punished, many questions](#)".