

The Crisis of Social Movements and Their Ability to Multiply Crises and Create A New Model of Governmentality in Latin America: Example of Argentina

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ABSTRACT: Although the definition of new social movements in the social sciences of Europe and America was more functional than substantive, these movements had the aura of a positive innovation of political and social progress. In comparison with the old social movements, such as the workers' and peasants' movement, which were considered progressive and the former as the survivor, there was a real euphoria among activists of the new political protests, social scientists and the media. It was believed that the negative developments in the workers' and peasants' movements and the revolutions of the 20th century and in the socialist states that emerged from them could be overcome through a new category – that of new social movements. In my contribution I would like to analyze the crisis of the current new social movements as part of a crisis of society as a whole and their change to multiply the social and political crisis through new models of government of the extreme Right using the example of Argentina. I show the alternation between neoliberal and centre-left governments with their different political approaches in Argentina, which repeatedly resulted in social emergencies and crises, each time triggering social protest movements against the governments in power. The movements were repeatedly the birthplace of new governments that implemented counter-recipes: neoliberal governments that promoted their own oligarchy and foreign capital and carried out social cuts on the one hand, and centre-left approaches that promoted a broader social redistribution and at the same time on the contrary, a capitalist economy protected from foreign tutelage should be protected. The systemic question in the sense of anti-capitalism was not the focus of attention of either the centre-left parties or the social protest movements, although some social movements raised this question. This general failure led to a crisis in the political system and a crisis in social movements, which ultimately resulted in the far-right ultra-neoliberal government of Javier Milei. He is in the line of Trump, Meloni, Le Pen, Bolsonaro, Kast and Bukele. This form of politics is characterized by limited parliamentarism, extreme social cuts and privatization of social areas, political repression, politicization and militarization of politics, a kind of caste politics, mass manipulation, environmental and gender nihilism, and racism. In Latin American countries, there is also close cooperation of this type of government with Western states, transnational capital, and Western-dominated financial and economic institutions, such as the IMF and the OECD. Even in international conflicts and wars, such as in Ukraine and Gaza, these countries always support the Western side. These governments represent a step backwards for the autonomy once obtained in global politics.

KEYWORDS: Argentine, crisis, dismultiplication, gobermentalidad, Latin America, Social movements

I. Introduction

Although the definition of new social movements in the social sciences of Europe and America was more functional than substantive, these movements had the aura of a positive innovation of political and social progress. In comparison with the old social movements, such as the workers' and peasants' movement, which were considered progressive and the former as the survivor, there was a real euphoria among activists of the new political protests, social scientists and the media. It was believed that the negative developments in the workers' and peasants' movements and the revolutions of the 20th century and in the socialist states that emerged from them could be overcome through a new category – that of new social movements. In my contribution I would like to analyze the crisis of the current new social movements as part of a crisis of society as a whole and their change to multiply the social and political crisis through new models of government of the extreme Right using the example of Argentina.

II. Theoretical Starting Point

In Dieter Rucht we can read that social movements “are long-term attempts by groups and organizations connected in a network to bring about, prevent or reverse social change through protest.” [1] Here we have the “network of groups and organizations” instead of classes, “social change through bringing about, preventing or reversing” instead of revolution and protest instead of class struggle. Here the Marxist category of class struggle is said goodbye.

Rucht's definition, which has been adopted by several Western theories of social movements, refers primarily to the so-called “new social movements,” which are distinguished from the old social movements that have existed since the 19th century, such as the trade union, worker and peasant movements. Both types of movements differ particularly in terms of the goal of general social change, which is not sought by the new social movements, the class struggle, which plays no role in the “new” ones, and the political vanguard, which the old movements have in the form of political leadership parties and are rejected by the “new” ones.

El término “nuevos movimientos sociales” surgió con los movimientos estudiantiles, contra la guerra, de mujeres, medioambientales, del tercer mundo y de derechos civiles de los años sesenta. Según Jürgen Habermas, los nuevos movimientos se diferencian de los antiguos en que no tienen estructuras organizativas jerárquicas, sino sólo estructuras de red flexibles. No quieren ganar poder en el Estado, quieren mantenerse alejados tanto de la influencia del Estado como de los vínculos partidistas y actuar predominantemente de forma no violenta. La violencia debe ser reemplazada por la contrapublicidad y la desobediencia civil. Los grupos que protestan no quieren involucrarse directamente en política, sino sólo influir en la política. La desobediencia civil aparece predominantemente como un “acto de violación simbólica y no violenta de las reglas”. En “Facticidad y Validez”[2], Habermas atribuye autolimitación a los nuevos movimientos sociales, basándose en la teoría de sistemas de Luhmann, es decir, que los movimientos sólo se relacionan con sus propios objetivos como grupo social y no con otros subsistemas de la sociedad, como la política y la economía.

The crucial difference that was made in the social sciences between the new and the old social movements was that the “old” movements aimed at, but did not aim at, a change in society as a whole and the “new” movements only at changes in sub-areas within the existing society. As Habermas explained, the new movements are not able and not willing to speak on behalf of society as a whole. This view reflected the views of the activists of the new social movements. In this sense, the broader goal or outcome of social protests was a change of government, but not social upheaval. The movements focused on a change of presidents or parties in parliament, i.e. a political project, but not fundamentally of the whole society. However, most often they only want to improve an unsatisfactory situation in their own group situation. The understanding of social movements with the adjective “new” in their scientific definition and practice in the 20th and 21st centuries only remained on the surface of the change in society, which focused on the political and less on the socio-economic. Only rarely did it reach the depths of social systems, as was the case with the old movements of workers, peasants and trade unions.

However, the expectations of the actors of the new social movements differ considerably from this handle. They expect major changes in parts of society or in society as a whole, but are often disappointed when purely political change occurs without social change. Solutions to the unsatisfactory social situation of protesting

groups cannot be sustained in the long term by new presidents, new governments or new political regimes without a fundamental change in society. The new governments are overwhelmed by social pressures and, against their will, acquire a bad political image, which further angers the protesters for their dashed hopes and desperate victims. The activists felt betrayed.

And the cause of the crisis of social movements lies in this strategic vision, which prefers the tactical to the systemic in particular. The predominance of the political over the socio-economic and the insignificance of social change is the fundamental cause of the crisis of the new social movements. The crisis is expressed above all in the fact that progressive movements that defend true democracy in the sense of political participation of all, but also of social ownership, repeatedly fail and end in political and idealistic exhaustion. An empty space is then created that can be taken over by other forces, mainly representatives of right-wing anti-democratic groups. The crisis of social movements at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries consists of the contradictions between the expectations and the results of these movements, between the intentions for social change and the impossibility of lasting change due to an unrecognized and unimplemented social revolution.

The disappointment with the positive effects of the new social movements in permanently improving the living conditions of various social groups and organizations caused a crisis in today's capitalist society, which triggered a multi-system crisis throughout society and led to attempts by the right to stabilize the system. Right-wing restorative forces are filling the vacuum that has emerged in the new social movements, which have been more left-wing since the 1960s. They use the practices of the new social movements to harness them for their own purposes and initiate restorative development. A right-wing political shift in most countries of the world after World War II is not possible only through political leaders or parties after the spread of international democratic and legal values and institutions. A right-wing turn that aims to counteract the destabilization of society as a whole and the multiple crises of the beginning of the century needs the social mass as a basis for restructuring. The logic of substantial deficits and destructive political and social consequences of the new social movements made some of the activists of left-wing social movements switch to right-wing social movements. Since many of them are only concerned with forms of protest and expression of their dissatisfaction and less with social connections and changing society, they often do not even notice the difference between perspectives. The use of the same verbal slogans such as "defense of democratic values", "defense of freedom", which are used within right-wing movements, also contributes to the change of sides of many activists.

Esta es la razón principal del repentino surgimiento de movimientos sociales que ya no apoyan a los políticos de izquierda como antes, sino principalmente a políticos y partidos conservadores, neoliberales y de extrema derecha. Sólo quiero dar dos ejemplos: el movimiento que se formó en torno al derechista ex y posiblemente nuevo presidente estadounidense Donald Trump y el movimiento en torno al partido derechista alemán "Alternativa para Alemania" (AfD). La razón principal de esta dirección del desarrollo no son las falsificaciones y los algoritmos de los nuevos medios sociales en la revolución mediática, como afirman muchos científicos, sino más bien la pérdida de conocimientos y prácticas sobre el cambio social real, sobre la naturaleza del capitalismo, la necesidad de algo más profundo cambiar las relaciones de propiedad y alterar los mecanismos de maximización de beneficios como requisito previo para un cambio real y duradero. Es una nueva manera de establecer y gestionar la crisis múltiple, que incluye la crisis de los nuevos movimientos sociales, lo que significa "remultiplicar la crisis".

I would now like to analyse what I have said here in general about the contradictions between demands, expectations and reality of the "new social movements" as the basis of their crisis using the example of Latin America and Argentina in particular.

III. Argentina as an Example to Multiply the Crisis

Since December 2023, Argentina has had an ultra-right government under President Javier Milei, who pursues an unprecedented policy of social degradation, political repression and rapprochement with the West. In his far-right socio-economic and political agenda, he partially surpasses the neoliberal socio-economic model of the Argentine dictatorship between 1976 and 1983. At that time, the Milton Friedman-style neoliberal system, starting with Pinochet in Chile, could only be established with the help of military dictatorships, as was also the

case in Argentina. Today, this is what an elected government does, and he even won the presidency with a comfortable majority. This was in contrast to centre-left governments such as Chile, Colombia and Brazil, which only had a very narrow majority. Milei was also able to take advantage of a broad social following and social protests against his previous governments. He made a direct turnaround compared to the previous governments of Ernesto Kirchner, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Alberto Fernández. One interruption was Mauricio Macri (2017-2019), who implemented neoliberal policies such as economic adjustment programs, exploitation agreements with the International Monetary Fund, social cuts and a foreign policy rapprochement with the United States.

Like the progressive governments, Macri and Milei also came to power with the help of social movements. The “street” always had a voice for political change and a vote in elections. It was a barometer of the mood, as well as a mood generator for the electorate and for disputes in parliament. Why were social movements always the decisive starting point for a change of governments, which were so different and often pursued opposing political concepts?

At the beginning of the 20th century, Argentina was one of the Latin American countries with the largest social movements that developed great transformative power, which was linked to very wide-ranging demands for new social paths in a leftist direction. The trigger was the financial and economic crisis between 2001 and 2002, during which the Argentine political and economic system collapsed. The economic crisis was the result of two terms in office under President Carlos Menem (1989-1999), who pursued a strictly neoliberal policy and, following the advice of the IMF, borrowed for large projects financed from abroad, the interest on which the country could not pay. Argentina's debts soared, even though Menem drastically reduced social spending and used the country's last reserves to pay off the debts. When the central bank's reserves dwindled to such an extent that it could no longer repay loans to other banks, a unique banking crisis arose in which banks closed. Companies could no longer pay wages and bank customers could no longer withdraw money overnight. Big business fled the country. Argentina reached 21 percent unemployment, half of the population was below the poverty line and GDP fell by 20 percent. In this situation, social movements arising out of existential necessity were the only lifeline for the population.

Social movements sprang up like mushrooms, such as the Piqueteros (Unemployment Movement), the “Cartoneros” who lived off of collecting paper and waste, the small-time savers movement, the exchange movement and exchange exchanges, the student, union and women’s movements and the Fábricas Recuperadas. They joined the “Mothers of Plaza de Mayo” and the movements that demanded the punishment of human rights violations and perpetrators during the military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983. During this period, social movements replaced the political parties that were unable to manage the political crisis. And although the social movements were very diverse and pursued very different objectives, they agreed on one slogan: “Let them all go!” and on one conviction: the previous neoliberal governments were no longer capable of leading the country. A new government was needed with a policy completely different from neoliberalism. Thus, after several short-term changes of unstable governments, social movements finally brought to power a series of progressive, centre-left governments that pursued a social democratic program and aimed at greater independence from the United States and Western financial institutions. A rapprochement was established with other states on the continent with centre-left governments such as Brazil under Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva, Uruguay with the Frente Amplio, Ecuador with Rafael Correa, Bolivia with Evo Morales and Venezuela with Hugo Chavez in the first “Pink Wave”.

For now, Néstor Kirchner has managed to save a bankrupt economy from further collapse by rejecting the IMF's orders. He is pursuing an economic policy that has allowed Argentina to achieve an average growth of 8 percent per year and to lift 11 million people out of poverty. Cristina Kirchner continued her husband's policies in her first term (2007-2011) [3]. The human rights policy, which further promoted reconciliation with the crimes of the military dictatorship, supported the National Reorganization Process. During the course of her government, especially during the second stage (2011-2015), attacks on Cristina Kirchner increased as she encountered resistance from the agrarian oligarchy and transnational corporations against drastic measures such as tax increases, exchange controls and nationalizations of large companies (e.g. the Spanish-owned oil

company YPF). The lack of alternatives meant that the Kirchner had no opportunity to dissolve the large agricultural associations, prevent predatory foreign investments, fundamentally change the right-wing media landscape or permanently refuse to accept Western financial (IMF) and trade (OECD) institutions. Thus they were unable to overcome the financial and economic disaster that had its roots in capitalism, dependence on the West and, ultimately, Menem's neoliberal policies. The artificial shortage of supplies for the population by international financial institutions and transnational and national entrepreneurship, in particular the rejection of agricultural associations, created an economic and social emergency for the population. In addition, there was ideological influence from the anti-government media group Clarín, which blamed the left-wing president for the crisis. This is exactly where the masses' disappointment with the unfulfilled promises of the Kirchner left-wing governments, which was discussed in the first chapter, materialized.

The so-called Kirchnerism no longer had the support of the majority of the population. The streets were once again filled with people speaking out against Cristina Kirchner, with unproven accusations of corruption and involvement in an anti-Jewish attack against the president becoming the point of reference for the neoliberal and pro-Western candidate Mauricio Macri. The weakened so-called Kirchnerism and the political groups that were to the left of Cristina Kirchner and ran as candidates for the elections, such as the piqueteros or the unemployed associations, were too different, pursued their own interests and could not form a political alternative for the whole society. Thousands of people protested in Buenos Aires and other provincial capitals against Cristina Kirchner's policies, against corruption, a precarious security situation and for more freedom, especially regarding exchange controls and the nationalization of companies. These protests played a decisive role in the arrival of the conservative neoliberal candidate Mauricio Macri to the government. In terms of content, the social movements now represented opposite goals to those of the time of the great crisis of 2001/2002, when they rose up against neoliberalism and demanded more social justice and popular participation. Although there were also supporters and followers of the left-wing president Cristina Kirchner, they were crushed by the overwhelming power of the counter-movement. This was the first phase of the crisis of the social movements, which academics called "new social movements" and which until then had mainly had a participatory and emancipatory character – participatory in the sense of greater participation and consideration of the lower and underrepresented classes and emancipatory in the sense of releasing social constraints for social justice and even anti-capitalism.

Mauricio Macri's neoliberal policies served mainly Argentina's agrarian oligarchy and transnational business. Macri lifted restrictions on currency trading and negotiated austerity agreements with the IMF, which agreed to new social and debt austerity measures. The debt Macri took on was equivalent to 127 times the country's borrowing capacity. This led to a devaluation of the Argentine peso by around 35 percent. Macri's Minister of Security, Patricia Bullrich, facilitated the widespread use of firearms by police forces. Among other things, firearms were allowed to be used during demonstrations. During the first three years of Macri's presidency, 1,206 people were killed by police forces, the highest number since the military dictatorship [4]. Macri's policies did not meet the wishes of pro-Macri social movements and did not provide them with freedom from corruption, more liberty, and more security. Economic data deteriorated many times and led again to social impoverishment. Gross domestic product was negative in three of his four years in office, most recently by 2.2 percent. Inflation also reached 53.8 percent in 2019, the highest level since 1991 [5]. During his term, the percentage of people living below the poverty line rose to 35 percent. The national debt increased from \$157 billion to \$277 billion. He is the president who has put the country most in debt in the last 50 years [6]. A new economic crisis emerged. He negotiated austerity agreements with the IMF, which accepted new social and debt austerity measures.

Ahora surgieron enormes movimientos contra Macri, en los que los movimientos sindicales y obreros, que son más bien viejos movimientos sociales, desempeñaron un papel particularmente importante. Entendieron parcialmente las políticas clasistas de Macri y exigieron un cambio social y política con diferentes redistribuciones, nacionalizaciones de la infraestructura crítica y resistencia a las instituciones financieras y económicas internacionales como el FMI y la OCDE. Cuando estos movimientos se combinaron con los movimientos de mujeres, docentes y de derechos humanos, lograron que el izquierdista 2019 llegara Alberto

Fernández al gobierno y nombrara Cristina Fernández de Kirchner como su vicepresidenta, quien era más acorde con las demandas del sindicatos y movimientos obreros que Fernández, quien representaba un programa más socialdemócrata. Al principio, al igual que Néstor Kirchner, Fernández intentó defenderse de las estrictas exigencias del FMI de pagar las deudas asumidas por Macri y combinarlas con las condiciones sociales habituales. Cuando Estados Unidos presionó a Argentina y amenazó con negarle préstamos, Alberto Fernández cedió e implementó un programa de austeridad para el gasto social. Pese a las esperanzas de la población, el dilema de los gobiernos kirchneristas se repitió bajo el gobierno de Alberto Fernández, solo que ahora sumado a la devastadora pandemia de Covid-19 y a una relación rota con su viceministra, Cristina Kirchner. El ministro de Economía, Sergio Massa, incorporado al gabinete por Fernández para resolver sus diferencias con Cristina Kirchner, recortó los programas sociales y de pensiones, la ayuda alimentaria, la ayuda a la formación y los subsidios a los precios de la electricidad, y aumentó el gasto en intereses de la deuda. A pesar de otorgar nuevos préstamos y ahorros sociales, Fernández no pudo frenar la inflación que alcanzó un máximo del 149 por ciento en 2023. La desproporción entre las pérdidas financieras provocadas por el ultraendeudamiento desencadenado por Macri, la caída de la producción, el comportamiento de bloqueo de la oligarquía rural, las consecuencias negativas del coronavirus, el deterioro de las condiciones de negociación debido a la guerra en Ucrania, por un lado, y la poca cantidad de dinero nuevo procedente de ahorros sociales y nuevos préstamos, por otro, provocó que la inflación volviera a aumentar rápidamente y provocó agitación social. El FMI y Estados Unidos eran muy conscientes de la inutilidad y el impacto negativo del programa de austeridad forzoso y Fernández se vio obligado a hacerlo de todos modos. Ese fue también el punto principal de la ruptura entre el presidente y Cristina Kirchner, que quería seguir defendiéndose de las exigencias sociales ante el FMI. Pero tuvo muy poco apoyo en el gobierno y el parlamento y se vio frustrado por acusaciones de corrupción y otras acusaciones. Aunque la mayoría de los sindicatos y trabajadores y varios intelectuales progresistas lo apoyaron, perdió el favor de una gran parte de la población y fue objeto de una contracampaña por parte de los medios oficiales y sociales burgueses.

In 2023, nationwide protests took on enormous dimensions, demanding the withdrawal of IMF agreements and social cuts. An example of this is the Marcha Federal Piquetera, which marched as a star march from all over the country to the Ministry of Development in Buenos Aires and camped in Plaza de Mayo. In May 2023, 350,000 people protested against the rapid increase in hunger and poverty in Argentina [7]. The protests were now directed not only against the precarious social situation, but also against the government. Unlike previous protests under the Fernández government, not only opposition social movements participated. Grassroots organizations such as the Association of Informal Economy Workers (UTEP), close to the ruling coalition Alianza de Frente de Todos, FdT, also participated with a critical stance towards the government [8]. The union of several social movements of different political tendencies, which were directed against the austerity policies of Alberto Fernández and Sergio Massa and their disastrous social consequences, gave rise to hope among many that this united wave of social protest would lead to a left turn in Argentina. Only political representatives were missing. The candidacy of the left-wing Peronist vice president Cristina Kirchner was prevented by a corruption trial and no other influential candidate was available.

IV. The Crisis of Social Movements. Their Capacity to Multiply the Crisis and the Rise of Javier Milei

The socio-economic and political crisis created an empty field for left-wing alternatives in which right-wing and far-right forces could advance. Since the population's memory of the failed neoliberal policy of Meném and Macri was certainly present and was also rejected by left-wing social movements, and there was no left-wing candidate available, neither the right-wing Peronist candidate Sergio Massa with the alliance “La Libertad Avanza” nor Patricia Bullrich from Macri's party with the alliance “Juntos por el Cambio” achieved a secure majority. Disappointed by both neoliberal policies and the centre-left governments of the past 20 years, the largely unknown but eccentric candidate Javier Milei, who wanted to use a chainsaw against “the establishment” and destroy the state and promised to “make Argentina strong again”, now presents himself as a real alternative for the desperate population. They felt betrayed and abandoned by everything that had to do with

the state and “the establishment”. It did not matter that Javier Milei wanted to destroy the central bank and make the dollar the Argentine currency. He received much encouragement from the crowds on the street who cheered him on. In the first electoral cycle on 22 October 2023, Milei came in second with 30 percent and the neoliberal candidate Patricia Bullrich came in third. The acting Peronist Minister of Economy, Sergio Massa, came in first with 36 percent. The neoliberal opposition around the oligarchy around Macri recognized their opportunity in Milei and supported his candidacy. Before the second round of elections, which took place between Massa and Milei, Patricia Bullrich withdrew her candidacy. Since Milei was applauded by many social movements and, more than Patricia Bullrich, struck a chord with the disappointed masses, this was a move by the oligarchy to regain political power. The neoliberal electoral alliance around Macri and that of Javier Milei united to prevent Massa from winning. The calculation worked: on November 19, 2023, Milei was elected president with a comfortable majority of 55.69 percent (Massa received only 44.3 percent), and assumed his presidency on December 10, 2023. In his post-election speech, Milei said to thunderous applause: “We will be a limited government that strictly complies with its commitments it has made regarding private property and free trade. The model of decadence has come to an end. (...) From being the richest country in the world, half of Argentines are poor and 10 percent are destitute. Enough of the caste model! (...) I want to tell you that Argentina has a future, but that future exists if that future is liberal.” He ended his speech: “Long live freedom, damn it!” and with the slogan of the social movements of 2001/02 that brought the left-wing Peronist government of Néstor Kirchner to power: “Let them all go, let not a single one remain!”[9].

The far-right Milei won, although never before had so many parties, unions, churches, associations and social movements such as feminist, indigenous, human rights, student and environmental movements spoken out so unanimously against a candidate. The fact that he still won so far is an indicator of a deep crisis, not only of the Peronist political system and the division of Argentine society but also in the social movements. On the one hand the cause was the difficult poker game of the landed oligarchy, the right-wing media, the military rights and transnational corporations with the support of the United States and the International Monetary Fund, but on the other hand there is the crisis of the social movements that are splitting up. Many participants in the neighbourhood movements, small savings groups and young people supported Javier Milei and followed his argument that he had found the best recipe apart from previous governments to give them a perspective. They no longer saw perspectives for themselves either under a centre-left government or under a neoliberal government. The Argentine anthropologist Rita Segado made the comparison for this situation: “Milei is the sandbox at the end of a slide of disappointments.”[10]

But it was more than just a disappointment. The cohesion of society, which was so fundamental in the crisis years of 2001/2002, was lost. Argentine society was subject, in the wake of the failed concepts of neoliberalism and anti-neoliberalism, to a deep division and atomization of its members, which also led to a division of social movements into left and right with completely opposite goals. The weakness of social movements was deeply driven by existential fear. An important indicator is the change in the social structure in Argentina, in particular the growth of the informal sector of the working class, which was forgotten by left forces and center-left governments, did not receive social benefits and did not enjoy security. For example, young people from the informal economy who call themselves “entrepreneurs” support Milei. They reject social programs in general because they have never had access to them and see them as undeserved privileges of others. Many men in this group also rejected the strong feminist movement in Argentina, confusing their social existential fear with feelings of sexual displacement. They supported Milei in her anti-feminist discourse. In the absence of a leftist perspective, a paralyzing existential fear spread among the population, mainly among large sections of young people without prospects or in the self-employed sector, which was further aggravated by the horrors experienced during the Corona crisis. Milei knew how to channel fear with her hypnotic speech that promised healing.

V. La presidencia de Javier Milei como un nuevo modelo de Gobernalidad de la Derecha Global

Milei pudo crear una base segura entre la población argentina para su política ultraconservadora gracias al amplio seguimiento de votantes decepcionados y asustados de las clases media y baja, especialmente los trabajadores informales, los ultraconservadores y los partidarios de la dictadura militar, y el apoyo del campo neoliberal en torno a Mácri, los Estados Unidos y del Fondo Monetario Mundial. La crisis de los movimientos sociales jugaba un rol grabante en eso. Esta base social segura compensó la marginación política que lo acompañó en el parlamento y es una expresión de cuán profundas son las estructuras sociales y las relaciones de poder. Algunos científicos como Thierry Meyssan también lo denominan "estado profundo". En tal situación, los movimientos sociales leales a menudo reemplazan a los partidos políticos y apuntan a modelos políticos predemocráticos. Los seguidores sociales lograron que el Parlamento aceptara las propuestas legislativas de Milei a pesar del poder minoritario del presidente en el Parlamento y del rechazo generalizado. Milei hizo posible que la campaña amenazante extorsiva y ofrecimientos de cargos hiciera cumplir su objetivo en el parlamento, él redujo o abolió beneficios sociales y protección laboral para la mayoría de la población argentina y desreguló la política ambiental bajo el pretexto de la estabilización macroeconómica. Todas estas medidas son parte de "un programa de choque con" el que la extrema derecha apunta a un cambio radical en el modelo social argentino.

Desde el inicio de su mandato, el gobierno de Milei lanzó un ataque contra las condiciones de vida y las estructuras sociales en Argentina. El Decreto de Urgencia N° 70/23 (Decreto de Necesidad y Urgencia - DNU) fue una de las primeras medidas del gobierno en la que quedaron claras las principales características de este cambio de rumbo. Otras áreas afectadas incluyen la vivienda con la abolición de las protecciones a los inquilinos, las relaciones laborales a través de un mercado laboral más flexible, las restricciones al derecho de huelga, así como la protección ambiental y los derechos territoriales de las comunidades indígenas [11]. En los primeros meses del año, Milei intentó lograr la aprobación de la "Ley de Bases y Puntos de Partida para la Libertad de los Argentinos", llamada la "Ley Ómnibus" en el Parlamento. El proyecto de ley inicialmente fracasó en la cámara alta. Luego de ser revisada y recortada de está y otra ley de reforma tributaria fueron aprobadas en el Senado en junio de 2024. Las dos leyes se complementan. La reforma fiscal reduce los impuestos sobre la riqueza para el 10 por ciento más rico de la población y facilita el lavado de dinero. Al mismo tiempo, se reintroducirá el impuesto sobre la renta para la clase media, que ya se ve afectada por una reducción de los salarios reales, así como por aumentos en los precios de los alimentos y los seguros médicos. La ley también permite la subcontratación no regulada de puestos de trabajo y elimina el quórum de pensiones. Las actividades económicas en las industrias primaria y extractiva están respaldadas por una variedad de desgravaciones aduaneras, fiscales, cambiarias y regulatorias.

The undemocratic character of the law lies primarily in the fact that in the event of a "public emergency in administrative, economic, financial and energy matters" it provides that the government may assume legislative tasks for a period of one year and may exclude parliament [12]. It is very reminiscent of the "Enabling Act" of National Socialist Germany.

The social consequences of the legal restructuring of the economy soon became apparent. Inflation rose to 290 percent. According to estimates by the Social Debt Observatory of the Catholic University of Argentina, in the first quarter of 2024, around 55.5 percent of the population was in poverty and 17.5 percent in absolute poverty. This means that around 25 million Argentines are poor and around 8 million live in extreme poverty [13]. The basic law also represents a huge setback for environmental protection, in violation of the Escazú Agreement ratified by Argentina in 2020, the first continental environmental agreement in Latin America. Millions of people in Argentina suffer from hunger. Hunger and poverty certainly existed before Milei, but the proportions are currently enormous. Faced with this situation, the government closed many soup kitchens. Milei also made a complete turnaround in the memory policy regarding the military dictatorship of 1976 to 1983 by reaching an agreement with it. Argentina under progressive governments in particular was an example of a fair reappraisal of this historical chapter.

The increasing decline in the standard of living of large sections of the population quickly sparked a wave of protests. Social movements, parties and organizations that were against Milei's election from the beginning now joined with a number of deluded Milei supporters in huge protest demonstrations. This became particularly visible during the marches and demonstrations against the adoption of the general law. Social resistance again took to the streets against the right, but it was too late - the right was in government. The government and parliament responded with repression. Parliament adopted a protocol of the Ministry of Security for police operations, which allows security forces to disperse public demonstrations if protesters obstruct traffic. The police will also be allowed to carry firearms. In addition, Milei systematically tries to destroy left-wing social movements and organizations by defunding them, intimidating them, persecuting them and discrediting them in the media.

Milei's foreign policy follows the same ultra-right and ultra-neoliberal course as his domestic policy. Strategically, Milei made a 180-degree turn from previous center-left governments. While Alberto Kirchner (2003-2007), Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Alberto Fernández distanced themselves from the International Monetary Fund, the United States and large foreign transnational corporations and followed a policy based on autonomy, Javier Milei focused on getting along with the United States, the IMF and foreign companies. He named the United States and Israel as his most important strategic partners and wants to be seen as his outpost in Latin America, particularly as a member of Global NATO and through the establishment of a US military base in the northern city of Ushuaya. Shortly after Milei's election, senior US officials in Argentina took the step. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Brian Nichols, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, offered Milei the status of a privileged partner and close cooperation in the raw materials sector, especially hydrogen and lithium, and the renegotiation of Argentina's debt. CIA chief William Burns and Supreme Commander of US Southern Forces General Laura Richardson visited Argentina and negotiated stronger cooperation in the field of security and defense. These included a cyber security agreement on "the exchange of information on threats to national security," on drug trafficking, the influence of China, Russia and Iran, and other agreements dealing with the training of Argentine soldiers in the US, the construction of a joint naval base with the US in Ushuaya in Tierra del Fuego, and the management of Argentina's largest waterway by the US military. Regarding the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, Milei takes a completely different position from his predecessors Fernández and Kirchner. Along with the United States and the EU, he is one of the staunchest supporters of Vladimir Zelensky in Ukraine and Netanyahu in Israel. Milei wants to supply weapons to Ukraine and justifies the genocide in Gaza.

Milei also attaches great importance to extensive cooperation with radical right-wing networks around the world, as was made clear when the right-wing member of the "Alternative für Deutschland" von Storch awarded him the Hayek Prize for his ultra-liberal politics in Germany in June 2024. Milei is narcissistically obsessed with his mission as a proclaimer of pure neoliberalism and the fight against "socialism" and "communism", which is why he does not shy away from attacks on social democratic heads of government in Europe. Milei is an extreme manifestation of the global right. He is in the orbit of right-wing political leaders such as Trump, Meloni, Le Pen, Bolsonaro, Kast and Bukele. He gives the impression that he even wants to surpass them. This circle represents a new model of government. While the neoliberal policies of the 1970s could only be implemented with the help of military dictatorships in Latin America and Asia, today this policy does not require dictatorships and follows parliamentary paths with elections, parties and laws. Democratic norms are respected, but the disenfranchisement and extreme exploitation of workers has increased. Repression against resistance is also democratically legitimized, as can be seen in the police report of the Argentine parliament. The gateway that justifies it is often drug trafficking, illegal migration and arms trafficking, and Milei especially uses the argument of "terrorism". This does not mean that the forms of repression are not similar to those of the dictatorships of the 1970s. An example is the concentration camps that Bukele had built in El Salvador against the Maras Salvadruchas. It is considered a model to follow by right-wing politicians in Latin America, including Milei.

VI. Summary

The background to this new model of governance is the limited possibilities of centre-left governments to implement socially just policies within a neoliberal capitalism with pluralist representative democratic political regimes, in which purely corporate interests drive far-right political approaches. For a long time there were hopes that social movements could fill this gap, which often worked in the short term. However, with neoliberal globalization, the scope for action of national governments became noticeably narrower and egalitarian social policies became increasingly restricted, resulting in the devaluation of social movements, above all of the “new social movements”. In terms of their level of globalization, these could no longer keep pace with transnational capital and could no longer compensate for the increasing disenfranchisement and exploitation taking place at the national level. Ultimately, this led to the crisis of social movements, their split into right-wing and emancipation movements, and significantly reduced their scope for fighting for social rights. Now some of them have even become midwives of far-right and ultra-liberal governments like Argentina's. From Menem to Macri it was always the same cycle: neoliberal austerity policies, borrowing that could not be repaid, social cuts, increasing poverty and social unrest. In between, left-wing governments with generous social programs, which, however, they could not pay due to the blocking behavior of the oligarchy and foreign capital and pressure from international financial institutions, prevented a socially just redistribution. The attempts of Néstor Kirchner and Alberto Fernández to oppose the demands of the IMF had to be abandoned due to the lack of monetary policy alternatives. In between, social and protest movements always acted as regulators in both directions. Now the same is happening again with Milei. But the repeated disappointment with left-wing governments and the repeated horror at the unfulfilled hopes of right-wing governments lead, on the one hand, to a resistance that questions the system and, on the other, to a form of far-right and ultra-neoliberal government with dictatorship-like repression and as allies of ever more aggressive Western politics to compensate for their loss of global power.

The article showed the alternation between neoliberal and centre-left governments with their different political approaches in Argentina, which repeatedly resulted in emergencies and social crises, each time triggering social protest movements against the governments in power. The movements were repeatedly the birthplace of new governments that implemented counter-recipes: neoliberal governments that promoted their own oligarchy and foreign capital and carried out social cuts on the one hand, and centre-left approaches that promoted a broader social redistribution and at the same time on the contrary, a capitalist economy protected from foreign tutelage should be. The systemic question in the sense of anti-capitalism was not the focus of attention of either the centre-left parties or the social protest movements, although some social movements raised this question. This general failure led to a crisis in the political system and a crisis in social movements, which ultimately resulted in the far-right ultra-neoliberal government of Javier Milei. He is in the line of Trump, Meloni, Le Pen, Bolsonaro, Kast and Bukele. This form of politics is characterized by limited parliamentarism, extreme social cuts and privatization of social areas, political repression, politicization and militarization of politics, a kind of caste politics, mass manipulation, environmental and gender nihilism, and racism. In Latin American countries there is also close cooperation with Western states, transnational capital, and Western-dominated financial and economic institutions such as the IMF and the OECD. Even in international conflicts and wars, such as in Ukraine and Gaza, these countries always support the Western side. These governments represent a step backwards for the autonomy once obtained in global politics.

The fact that social movements in Argentina regularly contributed to the establishment and then to the devaluation of left-wing governments and to the election of neoliberal governments reflects their situational determined anchoring of social groups and their sensitivity to political manipulation. The political crisis also includes the fact that social movements have a deep distrust of political parties in general, which often makes cooperation with left-wing political parties difficult and, on the contrary, harms the access of left-wing political parties to social movements.

In recent years, various political contradictions have come together to form a tangle that is giving rise to a new era. This tangle consists of growing class contradictions in the context of neoliberal globalization, the North-South conflict with growing international self-confidence and the integration of the global South (BRICS)

and a reorganization of the global system from unilateralism to plurilateralism with a dispersion of power between the US, China and Russia. Within this knot of contradictions new political forms emerge such as new right-wing governments like Milei's, or new formations of social movements such as their division into right and left, or the institutionalization of emancipatory social movements within "alternative autonomous spaces" with a new form of society with collective ownership and grassroots democracy such as the Zapatistas in Mexico, Movimento dos Sem Terra in Brazil, or the Argentine Piqueteros. The latter give hope that multiple crisis management can counter the rising new form of far-right government with an alternative in which justice in both the alternative political system and the anti-capitalist economy come together and freedom and justice converge. What would it be like if social movements were to become themselves again, the development phase of the so-called "new social movements" would overcome and re-establish the system phase, as is already happening in alternative autonomous spaces?

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