

Argentina's Partido Obrero suppresses questions on alliance with Russian Stalinist with ties to neo-fascism

By Bill Van Auken
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It is now over two months since the Partido Obrero (Workers Party) of Argentina hosted a conference of the Committee to Refound the Fourth International (CRFI) in Buenos Aires in which one of the honored guests was a representative of the United Communist Party of Russia (OKP), Darya Mitina.

The *World Socialist Web Site* published an exposure of the politics of this “reconstruction” and the history of both Mitina—a rabid Stalinist with intimate ties to the Russian state—and the middleman in arranging her presence in Buenos Aires, Savas Michael-Matsas, head of the Greek EEK (Workers Revolutionary Party).

The Partido Obrero has issued no reply to this exposure and has rapidly deleted postings of the article and questions about its contents from the party's Facebook page. There have been no follow-up articles posted on the PO's website dealing with the CRFI or any of the groups or individuals who attended it.

It is evident that the leadership of the Partido Obrero around Jorge Altamira fears any discussion of the issues raised in the analysis by the WSWs and wants to conceal from the party's membership what they are up to.

Altamira and the central leadership have carried out a major political initiative and know exactly what they are doing. The turn to elements like Mitina and Russian Stalinists is part of a broader turn toward developing an alliance with right-wing forces.

Anyone who thinks that Mitina is being won to the perspective of Trotskyism through her association with the CRFI and the Partido Obrero is woefully ignorant and naive.

As the OKP's secretary of international affairs, Mitina is in the business of forging connections on behalf of the Russian state not just with self-proclaimed socialists and leftists but, with far greater frequency and attention, to far-right and even neo-fascist forces.

A case in point is her role in organizing and speaking at a conference convened in the Crimean city of Yalta in August

2014 titled “Russia, Novorossiia, Ukraine: Global Problems and Challenges.”

It was organized by right-wing Russian nationalists, in particular the Izborsky Club, a far-right “think tank” in which Russian fascists like Alexander Prokhanov and Aleksandr Dugin participate, along with Mitina.

Assembled at the Yalta conference was a collection of individuals, enthusiastically described by Mitina in an article lauding the conference:

“The forum brought together over 200 guests. Politicians, leaders of the resistance in the regions of former Ukraine, field commanders of the army of Novorossiia, representatives of the militia, members of the parliament of Novorossiia, intellectuals and social activists from Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Great Britain, France, Serbia, Belgium, Latvia, Estonia and international journalists took part in its work.”

Who were these “intellectuals and social activists”? A partial list includes:

* Frank Creyelman, a former member of the extreme-right Belgian group Vlaams Blok and current member of the extreme-right Vlaams Belang.

* Luc Michel, a member of the Belgian neo-Nazi Parti Communautaire National-Européen.

* Márton Gyöngyösi of the fascist Jobbik party in Hungary.

* Roberto Fiore, leader of the fascist Forza Nuova Italy, who was convicted on conspiracy charges in relation to the 1980 terrorist bombing of the Bologna train station that killed 85 people.

* Bartosz Bekier, leader of the fascist Falanga group in Poland.

* Nick Griffin, leader of the fascist British National Party (BNP).

Also present were members of the far-right Samooborona party in Poland and the far-right Ataka party in Bulgaria. The French National Front was also invited to attend.

In her article on this gathering of neo-Nazis, anti-Semites, xenophobes, racists and extreme right-wing nationalists, Mitina wrote that “all this could have been an excellent advertisement for the Crimean authorities, if they took a more clear position. Still, it is not every day in the republic that there is such a unique composition of guests.”

This is the same individual with whom Altamira proposes to “refound the Fourth International.” As we pointed out in our previous analysis, Mitina boasted of laying flowers at the foot of Stalin’s grave twice a year. It is also apparent that she enjoys intimate political ties with fascists throughout Europe.

Introducing her to the PO membership last April, Altamira described her as “a comrade who speaks in the name of the tradition of communism in Russia, which for her would be Stalinism,” presenting the attempt to unite with such elements as a far superior method than the “sectarian” conception of a “do it yourself” international,” i.e., the struggle to build a genuine international party by forging a principled unity based upon a common world program and perspective.

The connections between Russian Stalinism and fascism have deep roots.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in his monumental analysis of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union, *The Revolution Betrayed*: “[T]he crushing of Soviet democracy by an all-powerful bureaucracy and the extermination of bourgeois democracy by fascism were produced by one and the same cause: the dilatoriness of the world proletariat in solving the problems set for it by history. Stalinism and fascism, in spite of a deep difference in social foundations, are symmetrical phenomena. In many of their features they show a deadly similarity.”

Stripped of the social foundations of the nationalized property relations established by the October 1917 revolution and liquidated by the Stalinist bureaucracy with the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, this “deadly similarity” between Russian Stalinism and fascism has become all the more open and direct.

Stalinist agents of the Putin regime like Mitina can tailor their politics to suit different audiences, providing slightly more “left” verbiage in speaking to the PO membership than she would use in addressing a gathering of neo-fascists like the one in Yalta.

The essentials, however, are the same: Russian chauvinism, populist denunciations of “neo-liberalism” and hostility to US hegemony. Such politics have nothing remotely in common with socialism and are far closer to those of fascism and the nationalist extreme right.

That the Altamira leadership is making an alliance with elements like Mitina is a warning. The international politics

of an organization like the PO are an extension of its national politics. If such relations can be established internationally, they can and will be made in Argentina itself, aligning the PO with thoroughly right-wing forces.

Those members of the PO who joined this organization out of a desire to fight for socialism had better start asking some questions:

Why was Daria Mitina, a Stalinist and ally of European fascists, invited to a conference to “refound the Fourth International” and paraded as a “comrade” before the PO membership?

What discussions were held with her?

What are the implications of the embrace of Russian Stalinism for the national politics and practice of the PO in Argentina?

What role in making this reactionary political alliance was played by the thoroughly dubious leader of the Greek EEK (Workers Revolutionary Party), Savas Michael-Matsas, who hosted Mitina at conferences in Athens in between her meetings with neo-fascists elsewhere in Europe?

As we stated in our previous analysis of the Buenos Aires conference, “The pretense of ‘refounding’ the Fourth International in alliance with Stalinism must be taken as a warning to the working class. It represents a bid to forge new political instruments to subordinate the working class to the bourgeoisie precisely at a point where a resurgence of the class struggle is emerging on every continent.”

The more information that emerges about the PO’s Russian “comrade” and “refounding” partner, the clearer it becomes how right-wing these political instruments will be.

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