

The reactionary role of national opportunist politics in Latin America

WSWS rejects invitation to conference of political bankrupts in Buenos Aires

By Bill Van Auken
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The following is a response to an invitation sent to the World Socialist Web Site on behalf of the Razón y Revolución group in Argentina to attend a conference it and the Brazilian group Transição Socialista have called in Buenos Aires for April 12-14.

We received your inquiry on behalf of the Razón y Revolución group in Argentina as to whether the Socialist Equality Party and the International Committee of the Fourth International are interested in participating in its “International Congress of the Socialist and Revolutionary Left” this month in Buenos Aires. Not only are we not interested, we are completely hostile to this conference and will actively warn workers, students and youth against the kind of squalid national opportunist politics spelled out in the statement convening this gathering of political bankrupts and anti-Trotskyists.

Why would anyone who is genuinely seeking to build a revolutionary international socialist leadership want to rub shoulders with those who actively attack the historical legacy of Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International, while extolling the “revolutionary” role of Stalin, as in the case with Razón y Revolución?

Or for that matter, who would want to discuss revolutionary program at a conference that is co-sponsored by members of an organization that is an out-and-out collaborator with US imperialism in its regime change operation in Venezuela, as is the case with this event’s co-sponsor, Transição Socialista?

The statement upon which this “international congress” is based is striking in its exclusive focus on the political conjuncture in Latin America, an expression of the petty-bourgeois nationalist outlook that characterizes its sponsors. The growth of the class struggle in the United States, Europe and Asia is ignored, as are the fundamental features of the global crisis of capitalism and the immense threats posed to the working class by the growth of inter-imperialist conflicts and the preparations for world war and the promotion by sections of the ruling class and the state of fascist forces on a world scale.

As for Latin America, the statement is a one-sided presentation of what is described as an “unmatched opportunity” to take advantage of the shipwreck of the so-called “Pink Tide” under the impact of the global capitalist crisis.

The most important passage in the statement reads as follows: “We invite all the organizations and socialist activists who seriously and consistently face Chavism, the PT, Kirchnerism, Massism in Bolivia and all expression of reformism and nationalism, to an international congress to found a new left, with no strings attached and no

constraints of any ‘holy scriptures,’ and to coordinate a common action in Buenos Aires, from April 12th to April 14th.”

This assurance of “no strings attached” and rejection of the “constraints of any ‘holy scriptures’” is an explicit repudiation of any Marxist principles that would impede the national opportunist practices of any organizations participating in this gathering, or any future alliances with any and all anti-Trotskyist tendencies on the Latin American “left,” from Stalinists to Maoists and left Peronists, as well as the pseudo-left variants of Morenoism and Altamirism.

As for “seriously” and “consistently” confronting *chavismo*, Razón y Revolución’s partner in convening the Buenos Aires conference, the Brazilian group Transição Socialista, provides an illustrative example of the hideous depths to which national opportunist politics can sink.

Under the presidency of Hugo Chávez in 2009, Transição Socialista’s predecessor organization, Movimento Negação da Negação (MNN), denounced the “so-called Bolivarian revolution” as “a farce, a true Bonapartist and authoritarian state that is taking large steps toward a fascist regime.”

Barely four years later, following the death of Chávez and the narrow victory of his successor Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela’s 2013 election, the MNN carried out a radical about-face. It dismissed the sharp fall in the *chavista* vote, the product of growing working class anger over falling living standards, rising social inequality and the corrupt self-enrichment of the so-called *boliburguesia* of financial speculators, government contractors and senior military commanders and state officials, describing it instead as the result of a “dirty and systematic game played by imperialism to destabilize the government and influence the outcome of the election.”

It praised Maduro’s ban on demonstrations in Caracas on the grounds that “possible new conflicts would have opened up a spiral of instability with incalculable results.” In other words, it placed full confidence in the repressive forces of the bourgeois state headed by Maduro, not in the independent strength of the working class.

Most astounding of all, for a party claiming to be fighting for socialism in Brazil, it justified “a policy of tactical unity with the Maduro government” on the grounds that “Maduro himself comes from the working class and the trade union movement” and “for the first time in the history of *chavismo*, a worker is taking control of the armed forces, marking a new stage.” This, after the eight years of rule on behalf of the Brazilian capitalist ruling class and countless attacks

upon the Brazilian working class by the “worker president” Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva!

Now, Transição Socialista has carried out yet another 180-degree turn. In response to the ongoing crisis in Venezuela, it states: “The central issue is to say, clearly, with the mass movement, ‘Out with Maduro.’ Overthrow Maduro and open up the contradictions. It is necessary, however, to make a temporary alliance with the bourgeois sector opposed to Maduro, in order first of all to overthrow him. Strike together and march separately. To participate in the same marches and to dispute the working people within the real movement. But this must be done in such a way that overlaps, in the medium term, the hegemony of the bourgeois sector that opposes Maduro.”

This use of the slogan advanced by Trotsky in the struggle for the tactic of the united front of working class parties against fascism in Germany to justify a “temporary alliance” with the Venezuelan bourgeois opposition led by Juan Guaidó of the fascist Voluntad Popular party and his CIA backers is nothing short of obscene. Given time, Transição Socialista may find itself attempting to “strike together and march separately” with the US Marines.

This approach of seeking to “dispute” the leadership of the “real movement” of the right-wing petty bourgeoisie is not new for the Transição Socialista, which adopted the same attitude toward the mass demonstrations led by the Brazilian right demanding the impeachment of Workers Party President Dilma Rousseff and “military intervention” against her government.

There is nothing remotely “left” or “revolutionary” about such politics. This is the record of political scoundrels.

The only thing “consistent” about the politics of the tendency now going under the name of Transição Socialista is its capitulation to one faction or another of the national bourgeoisie over the course of decades -- from the Workers Party, to *chavismo*, to now the CIA-funded puppets in Venezuela.

We are well aware of the political conceptions underlying your call for unity with “no strings attached” and based on a repudiation of any constraints imposed by “holy scriptures.”

While few have expressed this organizing principle so crudely, it has been a common theme in countless previous attempts—all of them failures, as yours will be—to forge an amalgamation of politically heterogeneous organizations, without any agreement on essential questions of program and strategy. The only absolute precondition is that no organization should be called to account for its political record, and that each and every one of them must be free to pursue whatever national policy that they deem to be in their best immediate interests. This unprincipled approach is diametrically opposed to that of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Your efforts are by no means unique. The Partido de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo (PTS) in Argentina is calling for a unified party of the left, while the Partido Obrero (PO) of Jorge Altamira has called for the “refoundation” of the Fourth International in alliance with Russian Stalinists. All of these political maneuvers are based on a similar platform of rejecting any examination or discussion of the role played by revisionist anti-Trotskyist tendencies in the betrayals of the working class. A general political amnesty is guaranteed to one and all.

Any attempt to cobble together an international tendency based upon the suppression of the historical lessons of the struggle waged by the Fourth International can only contribute to the betrayal of the working class.

You speak of “seriously and consistently” confronting the Workers

Party *chavismo* and other bourgeois tendencies, (PT) but silent on what political forces promoted them, and who fought against them?

The same Pabloite and Morenoite tendencies that promoted Castroism as a new road to socialism—joined by the Lambertist renegades from the Fourth International—played a critical role in the creation of the PT and its promotion as a uniquely Brazilian road to socialism. They helped to build it into a thoroughly corrupt bourgeois party that for a dozen years served as the preferred instrument of rule of the Brazilian bourgeoisie.

The bitter experience with the politics of bourgeois nationalism, and its Pabloite and other pseudo-left props, underscores the necessity of forging a new revolutionary Marxist movement, based upon the independent political mobilization of the working class and the unification of workers in Latin America with workers in the United States and internationally in a common struggle to put an end to capitalism.

This historic task is impossible without learning the lessons of the mistakes and betrayals of the past so that they will not be repeated. This, above all, means the study and assimilation of the long history of the struggle waged by Trotskyism against revisionism and, on this principled foundation, building sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in every country.

Your “Congress for a New International Left” is called on the basis of a perspective that is explicitly hostile to this historically imperative task of building a genuinely revolutionary socialist and internationalist leadership in the working class. We have no intention of lending the prestige of the International Committee of the Fourth International and the World Socialist Web Site to its contemptible proceedings.

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To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>