

Cristina in Paraguay: Vultures Are the World's Problem

Aug. 15—"The fight against speculative capital, the vulture funds, is not only Argentina's problem. It is the world's problem," Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner reminded a group of young Paraguayans who greeted her as she arrived for a state visit to that neighboring country on Aug. 13. Fernández gave them a lesson in real patriotism, and a message of hope:

The attempt today by the vulture funds to crush Argentina "has happened to African countries; it happened to Peru. It is happening also to a lot of countries in Europe. We just learned not long ago that France, also, a developed nation, just fined these vulture funds for having speculated on stock sales. France, no less. . . .

"As we see, the world is beginning to wake up, and it will wake up, because there is no other solution. Either we wake up, arouse ourselves, open our eyes and basically exercise our rights—we are not discussing empty flag-waving, but a nation with rights, because we have the right to grow; we have the right for our people to live well; we have to have the right for young people to study. We have to have the right for our workers to earn good salaries, to have health care, housing, so that they do not have to emigrate to another country because their country leaves them no opportunities. . . .

"We want to exercise the rights we have as the sovereign nation which we are, while some are trying still

to return us to the Argentina, or the Latin America, of the colonies back in the 19th Century." She urged the young people "to ensure that the future, your present, and the future of your children, is not the same as the past which we have all had to live through."

Accompanying Fernández to Paraguay were her foreign, economic, and planning ministers, the head of Argentina's National Atomic Energy Commission, and six provincial governors. Bilateral economic and other matters were on the agenda, but Fernández singled out an "act of historical recognition" as central to her visit: the repatriation of belongings of Paraguay's great national leader, Francisco Solano López, which had been seized as war booty during the 19th-Century British-directed, genocidal war known as the "Triple Alliance."

Argentina, under the control of authorities "manipulated from abroad," participated with Brazil and Uruguay in that war, in which three-quarters of Paraguay's male population were killed, and the nation reduced to ruins from which it is still recovering today.

Fernández made the point in her speeches that the deindustrialization and destruction wreaked upon Paraguay by the colonial powers who orchestrated brother countries to crush it was *intentional*, just as it is the *intention* of speculative capital's assault today. "No one made a mistake when they came here to destroy Paraguay," she said. "They wanted that industrial Paraguay—which produced locomotives, rail lines, and had iron foundries—to become merely a producer of raw materials, with a slave- and cheap-labor force. This is what they always wanted for our countries," she stated during the accord signing ceremony with Paraguay's President Horacio Cartes.

"There were no mistakes here, but clear and deliberate policies that we do not share and we come here to amend."