

Argentina and France - Opponents of IMF versus Yellow Vests - Where Is the Correlation?

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What do Argentinian protesters have in common with French protesters? - They both strongly dislike their governments, and their leaders (sic).

The protests in Argentina against the upcoming G20 meeting and around the IMF are just a pretext for an overall malaise - which is an understatement - vis-à-vis President Mauricio Macri and his debt-driven austerity program, that has left hundreds of thousands jobless. People who had decent jobs under the Kirchner governments have now joined the ranks of the unemployed and are begging for survival. Macri has driven the poverty rate from about 14%, where it was in November 2015, a months before the Presidential elections, to more than 35% in September 2018 - and all the while increasing tariffs for transportation and basic services such as electricity, gas, water - health care, education - in fact, privatizing such vital public services to the point where only higher middle class and elite can afford them.

That of course, will leave a vast majority of the people uneducated and without basic health care - precisely what neoliberalism wants. Decimating the number of poor people to a minimum needed for useful slavehood and leaving those who vegetate along, struggling for one meal at the time without education, without a job, so they don't have the time, energy and political savvy to protest against the ruling class.



Greece is an outstanding example. Within less than ten years the once cheerful, happy and economically relatively well-off country was destroyed into misery by foreign imposed debt and austerity programs. - By now, almost all public assets were sold or privatized to pay for the horrendous debt service. Public health services are on a drip, there is a lack of special medication, like for cancer - schools are closed or privatized - pensions cut to unlivable levels, unemployment rampant - all leading to extreme poverty and skyrocketing suicide rates, about which nobody dares speaking.

That's the making of the west. In the case of Greece even worse. Their European brother and sister countries went along with the loot. In fact, they pushed Greece into her demise, especially Germany, France, the European Central Bank (ECB), and, of course, the entire European Brussels apparatus, led by the unelected European Commission (EC) and, and eventually with the 'official' outside hammer, the IMF. Greece had to go.

Is Argentina going to become under Macri the Latin American Greece? Could well be. By now the country is encircled by neoliberal and fascist neighbors, Brazil, Chile Paraguay, Uruguay. Bolivia is a laudable exception. All the others will do what Washington mandates; whatever

it takes to support Macri and his IMF-imposed economic killer policies, that – in the end – will sell out the resource-rich country to foreign oligarchs and corporations, to the US and NATO. Yes NATO, unbelievable, but true. NATO is officially in south America, as Colombia by her own choice has become a NATO country.

From Colombia to Argentina and actually to all of Latin America is like a walk in the park, with all the borders of the partly newly installed neoliberal / neofascist governments wide open – for NATO forces, that is. Macri has already invited the US to establish several US military bases. In July 2018 Sputnik reported that President Macri has given green light to establish *“at least three US bases in the provinces of Neuquén, Misiones and Tierra del Fuego. Their creation would be financed by the US Southern Command.”*

And now, in the midst of this man-made – Macri-made – socioeconomic calamity, he invites the G20 (30 November to 1 December 2018) to feast on Argentina’s goodies, to see for themselves what can be made of an otherwise prosperous country – so that prosperity is ‘shared’ and outsourced to foreign oligarchs, banks and corporations. Wonderful. For that G20 event, Macri mobilized some 22,000 military forces to guarantee the security of the chiefs of state.

Surely, after the G20 summit, new austerities will be imposed, because everybody sees there is more to be milked from Argentina. They see what they were able to do to Greece. When common sense would dictate – stop, that’s it, that’s all we can take – there is an opening for even more to be squeezed out of the country. In Argentina there is still a lot of milking to be done. It has just started. If nothing else, the newly Washingtonshoed-in president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, will teach Macri how to do even better for the western money sharks.



Fuel tax protestors in France (Source: WSWS)

In France, the Yellow Vests protests against higher fuel prices and labor reform laws is just a pretext for something much bigger – a growing awakening of the French people, a steadily increasing recognition of how the slippery soft-speaker Emmanuel Macron is stripping France’s populace of most of their civil and social rights, of their labor rights – and ultimately, still to come, of their jobs. A number of ‘false flags’ from Charlie Hebdo to

Bataclan to the Nice's 14th July terror attacks, have helped Macron to put a permanent State of Emergency – basically Martial Law – into the French Constitution. By doing so, he has created a kind of French "Patriot Act", slice by slice reducing long acquired social rights, transforming them into increased profits for foreign and French corporations and banking giants. Big wonder, Macron is a Rothschild child. He has been put into his position to uphold and expand the Rothschild clan's banking empire, expanding it way beyond the French borders.

Who are the Yellow Vests – or '*gilets jaunes*' in French? The name refers to the yellow phosphorescent vests that each and every French driver needs to carry in his vehicle for visibility and protection in case of an incident on the highway. The movement started on 10 October, propagated through facebook against the Macron imposed increase of fuel taxes. It then expanded rapidly into a movement of discontent with the continuous loss of purchasing power of the common people through budget cuts and soft but steadily increasing austerity imposed on the French citizenry. That, plus the decay of public services, especially in urban peripheries, has transformed the Yellow Vests movement into a vivid protest against Macron, an outright call for Macron's resignation.

Hundreds of thousands – cumulatively several millions – of Yellow Vests have demonstrated and blocked at times most of Paris during the past two weeks, to reverse the fuel tax increase and to basically regain their social rights and financial purchasing power, increase salaries to at least keep pace with inflation. Diesel prices have already increased in 2018 alone by 23% and gasoline prices by 15%. These prices should increase further by 2019 according to a Macron imposed law.

Can protests in the street remove a President? – A President, who came to power with less than 27% of the French eligible voters, a President, who built his power on a movement, called "En Marche" (something like 'moving on') which hardly even existed a year before Macron's 'election' in May 2017, an election based on false propaganda, selling heaven to desperate people, who after socialist President François Hollande deceived his country bitterly, leaving his presidency with a popularity rate of less than 10% – these people were ready to accept any 'populist' lie in the hope that life would become better.

Well, as usual, the ruling class – almost always the financial elite – took advantage of the desperate situation – and bingo. Macron is legally in office for 5 years, until 2022. Removing him the 'democratic way', through a Parliamentary vote of confidence, is a slim chance, as he has an absolute majority in Parliament, also called the French National Assembly.

So far Macron has been able to impose his 'austerity' without the open help of the IMF. But, be sure, with Christine Lagarde at the helm of the IMF, a former French Finance Minister, with close ties to Macron, he most certainly get IMF 'advice' on how to continue softly squeezing the juices out of the French people, of their, since the end of WWII, accumulated and hard fought-for social benefits. Maybe also Greek style?

Curiously, the European Commission and the ECB are much more generous with France than with Italy, when it comes to adhering to the arbitrary 3% deficit limit. Italy was scolded, called to order and to submit a revised budget, when deputy PM, Matteo Salvini, presented Italy's 2019 budget with a 2.9% deficit. France, on the other hand, has been running a deficit above 3% for years, but is gently reminded to please look into their finances a bit more carefully. In other words, the EU is treating brothers and sisters with different yard sticks, thus, helping Macron to do whatever he sees fit to push austerity down the French

citizens' throats. And if they protest, well, we see what's happening now. There is the State of Emergency that allows the most brutal police crack-down, if needed. And Macron may well need it, if he wants his presidency to survive.

The French people, are, however, special. They prompted the French Revolution in 1789, the legacy of which still reverberates in legal systems around the world. French students started 40 years ago, the 1968 student and workers revolt. It began on the premises of "equal rights and liberty" between men and women. It led to strengthening workers unions and eventually to many workers rights and benefits, precisely those that already former President Sarkozy attempted to dismantle and for which Macron was installed to finish the job.

There is a direct relation between what happened in 1968 and what is occurring now. Will the people prevail? – Will France set an example for the rest of Europe? – Mind you – Europe is in the plans to be derailed and robbed similarly and through different means, one of which is a massively increasing influx of so-called refugees or migrants from poor countries bordering Europe. Absorbing millions of homeless souls from western destroyed countries, is a challenge, Europe may not survive. Macron may just be a convenient intermediary.

So, what do the people of Argentina and the people of France have in common? – They both want to get rid of a despotic president, implanted by the western financial elite to steal the socioeconomic coffers of their heritage, and which, if not stopped, may continue a movement throughout the Americas and Europe.

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