

# Argentina Revisited - One Month on. Towards a Neoliberal “Democratic Dictatorship”

By [Peter Koenig](#)

Global Research, January 21, 2016

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)  
Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

*Argentina - a new dictator is born. Actually no, he has just been elected. - Or, was he? - It appears like the newly elected Mauricio Macri is the most fascist and dictatorial President since the Videla military era. Unlike Videla, Macri hasn't murdered people (yet); not by traditional weapons, but may do so by economic strangulation - the weapon of choice of neoliberalism.*

At a young age, Macri, now a multi-billionaire has had dealings with Donald Trump, the Republican frontrunner for the US Presidency. That, of course, doesn't make him a 'bad guy'. But it does characterize him as someone who would rather turn favours to the rich than to the needy. That should rather be telling for the Argentinians, who elected him - or did they?

Since day one, Mauricio Macri has started repressive socio-economic measures - when he let the peso float on the day of his inauguration on 10 December 2015. It devalued by about 50%, then recovered somewhat. The bottom line is, though, the people at large will suffer purchasing power losses, so that dollar investments may flood the country - as he says and hopes - to privatize once more Argentina's economy to foreign investors. It's all so reminiscent of the Menem years. - And the Argentinians elected him - did they really?

At least 12,000 state employees in Buenos Aires were dismissed, starting the New Year with unemployment - no individual warnings; the contracts of another 62,000 government employees country-wide are being examined - and most likely terminated. Many of them may have voted for him — really?

Millions of people took to the streets throughout the plazas of the major cities in Argentina during the past weekend, demanding social justice, like freedom of expression and the right of work - and for most the respect for human rights - and defending democracy over the dictatorial rule of a right wing demagogue.

What justice? - Macri by decree decided that Supreme Court judges he appointed did not need the Senate's approval, as the country's Constitution prescribes. Within the first 72 hours of Macri's ascent to power, he issued 29 Presidential Decrees, so as to impose his program without parliamentary approval. And that's the way he will rule, at least the first 100 days; a neo-fascist dictator par excellence.

Macri's latest upsetting controversy is - attempting to remove the Presidential painting of President Kirchner from the walls of the *Casa Rosada*, the Presidential Mansion.

And why are Argentinians so upset and even outraged? - After all Macri told them in

advance what he would do when becoming President, things so outrageous, nobody probably believed him. Not unlike most Presidents who forget their campaign promises once elected – Macri actually carries them through – and he has just started. There is a long list of measures he intends to take – all of them against the well-being of the majority of the people, but in favour of Big Business, in favour of his northern allies in Washington, those who helped him to power.

The measures Macri ‘promised’ he would carry out include:

- Negotiate with the Vulture Funds, as well as renegotiate Argentina’s debt with the IMF. This is reopening a bloody scar, as the Kirchner Governments had successfully negotiated and agreed with 97% of the creditors to debt payments on average of about 25 cents to the dollar. Payments are being made on schedule.

Among the 3% who didn’t agree were the Vulture Funds, managed by the vulture fund billionaire Paul Singer. Singer wants it all. Having bought Argentina’s debt on the cheap – very cheap – he followed Argentina’s last fifteen years of recovery and accumulation of reserves and ‘bought’ a New York judge to intervene in Argentina’s sovereign affairs, ordering the South American country to pay Mr. vulture Singer in full.

This aberration was overruled by last year’s UN General Assembly adopting overwhelmingly a new global framework for sovereign debt restructuring, in favour of nations’ rights to seek protection from minority creditors, such as the US Singer hedge funds, which refuse to go along with the majority in mutually agreed debt restructurings. Despite this ruling, Macri intends to renegotiate and possibly give away some of the people’s hard-earned reserves to greedy US Zionist-run vulture funds. – Bravo! – And Argentinians elected him – hard to believe; did they really?

- Substantially increasing gas and electricity tariffs – already started.
- Repeal the Memorandum of Agreement with Iran regarding the investigation and the Truth Commission in the case of AMIA; the car bomb attack on the *Asociacion Mutual Israelita Argentina* which caused the death of 85 people in July 1994. Judge Nisman, in charge of the investigation appeared dead in his apartment a few hours before he was to disclose his findings in an Argentine Court. According to Wikileaks the investigation was directed by Washington.
- Closing down Public TV Stations 6, 7 and 8 which had the tendency to be critical of Government politics.
- Removing the Attorney General, whose function according to the Constitution is sustained as long as it is carried out according to the norms of the law – which according to all records it is. Macri wants to replace her by one of his cronies.
- Restructuring the Central Bank – replacing the current President, whom Macri reproaches of being a *Kirchnerite* – and replacing him with one of his buddies; and this despite the fact that the Charter of the Central Bank allows removal of its President only for serious professional or ethical infractions – none of which is the case with the current President of the Central Bank.
- Increasing taxes for the lowest income earners ‘in the name of justice’.

These are just a few of the measures he announced – and people either didn’t listen, or didn’t believe him. Argentinians voted for Mauricio Macri – or did they? – With a slim margin

of about 3% over his center-left opponent, Daniel Scioli; a slim margin but enough not to justify a recount. Why would the majority of people vote for a candidate who told them in so many words that he would undo what the previous Kirchner Governments have done for them?

Then there are the so-called progressive Argentinian economists who argue about an ardent class struggle between the entrepreneurs who have been short-changed during the Kirchner years and the average working citizen. What a baloney! – What class struggle – when 80% of the people benefitted from the Kirchners’ social programs and highly distributive GDP growth? – Would they vote as masochists for the neoliberal, neo-colonial multi-billionaire Mauricio Macri – who said he would undo many of these social gains?

This would indeed be strange. Just open your eyes and the crimes of Washington’s secret hand will be revealed; the ‘invisible’ hand which once again – and again – has carried out what Argentina journalist Estela Calloni calls an ‘election coup’, not unlike the one that took place almost simultaneously in Venezuela’s parliamentary elections.

Not to forget the ones in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, called ‘Color Revolutions’, of which the most notorious one, the fascist coup in Ukraine, has already left tens of thousands dead and denigrated millions into homelessness and hapless refugees – or in the Middle East and North Africa – the infamous ‘Arab Springs’ – not to forget, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Yemen – all of them causing millions of deaths and social victims of wars of injustice, so-called ‘refugees’; many of the conflicts turning into endless wars against western-invented and western fabricated and spread ‘terror’.

Only time will tell what’s in store for Argentina and the rest of what we proudly called the ‘free’ Latin America – now gradually turning into what it was for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – Washington’s Backyard.

*Peter Koenig is an economist and geopolitical analyst. He is also a former World Bank staff and worked extensively around the world in the fields of environment and water resources. He writes regularly for Global Research, ICH, RT, Sputnik, PressTV, CounterPunch, TeleSur, The Vineyard of The Saker Blog, and other internet sites. He is the author of [Implosion – An Economic Thriller about War, Environmental Destruction and Corporate Greed](#) – fiction based on facts and on 30 years of World Bank experience around the globe. He is also a co-author of [The World Order and Revolution! – Essays from the Resistance](#).*

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