

= Fernando de la Rúa =

Fernando de la Rúa (born September 15 , 1937) is an Argentine retired politician of the Radical Civic Union (UCR) who served as President of Argentina from December 10 , 1999 , to December 21 , 2001 . De la Rúa was born in Córdoba ; he entered politics after graduating with a degree in law . He was elected senator in 1973 and unsuccessfully ran for the office of Vice President as Ricardo Balbín 's running mate the same year . In 1993 , he was re @-@ elected senator in 1983 and 1993 , and as deputy in 1991 . He unsuccessfully opposed the pact of Olivos between President Carlos Menem and party leader Raúl Alfonsín , which enabled the 1994 amendment of the Argentine Constitution and the re @-@ election of Menem in 1995 .

De la Rúa was the first chief of government of Buenos Aires to be elected by popular vote , a change introduced by the amendment of the Constitution . He expanded the Buenos Aires Underground , adding new stations to Line D , starting the expansion of Line B , and establishing Line H. He established Roberto Goyeneche Avenue and the city 's first bicycle path .

In 1999 , De la Rúa was elected President after running on the Alliance ticket , a political coalition of the UCR and the Frepaso . He was opposed by the Peronist unions and his Vice President Carlos Álvarez resigned after denouncing bribes in the Senate . The economic crisis that began during Menem 's administration worsened and by the end of 2001 led to a banking panic . The government established the Corralito to limit bank withdrawals . De la Rúa called a state of emergency during the December 2001 riots . He resigned on December 20 , and the Congress appointed a new President . As of April 2016 , he is retired from politics and facing legal proceedings .

= = Early life = =

Fernando de la Rúa is the son of Eleonora Bruno and Antonio De la Rúa ; he was born in the city of Córdoba and attended the local Military Lyceum before entering the National University of Córdoba , from which he graduated with a law degree at the age of 21 . He married a Buenos Aires socialite , Inés Pertiné , in 1970 ; they had three children , including Antonio de la Rúa . De la Rúa became involved in politics at a young age ; he entered public service in 1963 as an advisor to President Arturo Illia 's minister Juan Palmero .

He was elected senator in the March 1973 general elections , defeating the Peronist Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo . He was the only politician from the Radical Civic Union (UCR) who could defeat the Peronist candidate in his administrative division . The elected president Héctor José Cámpora and his vice president resigned a few months later , leading to the call to new elections . Ricardo Balbín ran for president in the September general elections , with De la Rúa as his running mate for the post of vice president . The UCR was defeated by Juan Perón by a landslide . De la Rúa was removed from the Congress during the 1976 Argentine coup d'état . He left politics and worked as a lawyer for the firm Bunge y Born .

The National Reorganization Process ended in 1983 . De la Rúa intended to run for president but lost in the primary elections of the UCR to Raúl Alfonsín , who was elected in the general election . De la Rúa ran for the post of senator instead , defeating the Peronist Carlos Ruckauf . He ran for re @-@ election as senator in 1989 but , despite of his electoral victory , the electoral college voted for the Peronist Eduardo Vaca . De la Rúa was elected deputy in 1991 and returned to the senate in 1993 . President Carlos Menem , elected in 1989 , wanted to amend the constitution to allow him to run for re @-@ election in 1995 , which was opposed by the UCR . Alfonsín signed the Pact of Olivos with Menem , negotiating terms to support the proposal . De la Rúa led the opposition to the pact within the UCR , but Alfonsín prevailed in the internal dispute . This damaged the relationship between both leaders , but helped the party to retain a number of radicals who were against the pact . De la Rúa could not prevent the 1994 amendment of the Argentine Constitution . As a result , Menem was re @-@ elected in 1995 . The UCR finished third in the elections for the first time , being surpassed by the Frepaso , a new party composed by former Peronists .

= = Mayor of Buenos Aires = =

The constitutional amendment gave autonomy to the city of Buenos Aires , allowing it to sanction local laws and elect its own mayor , who was previously appointed by the president of the nation . De la Rúa was the first mayor elected in this manner , defeating the previous mayor Jorge Domínguez . During his term of office he created or reformulated several institutions to fit the new status of the city , as required by the national constitution and the recently approved Constitution of Buenos Aires .

De la Rúa worked on the expansion of the Buenos Aires Underground . The first stations of the extended Line D , Olleros and José Hernández , were opened in 1997 , Juramento was opened in 1999 , and Congreso de Tucumán in 2000 . He also started the works to extend the Line B. Carlos Menem started to transfer the control and financing of the underground system to the city , but the 2001 economic crisis halted the process .

The former mayor Domínguez intended to expand the Pan @-@ American Highway into Saavedra , but the project met widespread opposition . De la Rúa reformulated the project and built an avenue instead of a highway , which was accepted . The avenue was named Roberto Goyeneche . He also restarted a project to build the Cámpora Highway linking Dellepiane Avenue with the Riachuelo , and established the first non @-@ recreational bikeway in Buenos Aires at Avenida del Libertador .

= = Presidential elections = =

The Pact of Olivos diminished the electoral strength of the UCR , leading to the rise of the Frepaso . Both parties united in a political coalition , the Alliance , which defeated the PJ in the 1997 midterm elections . It was the PJ 's first national defeat since 1985 . The parties held open primary elections for the 1999 presidential elections . De la Rúa stood for the UCR ; the whole party , including Alfonsín , supported him . The Frepaso candidate was Graciela Fernández Meijide , who had defeated Peronism in the populous Buenos Aires province . De la Rúa won the primary elections by a wide margin . In the primaries , De la Rúa was voted for by more people than those who voted for the UCR in 1995 . Despite his victory , Alfonsín was still the president of the UCR . They disagreed on the vice president for De la Rúa 's ticket ; he thought that it should be Meijide because she took part in the primary elections and came from a different district than him . Alfonsín preferred the popular Carlos Álvarez , leader of the Frepaso , saying he could attract more voters and had more political expertise . It was also a result of the internal politics of the Alliance : except for Meijide , the Frepaso did not have a political figure who may run with good chances for governor of the Buenos Aires province . Had she run for vicepresident , Frepaso would have had to resign that candidacy to a radical candidate .

Carlos Menem dismissed De la Rúa as a " boring " candidate . De la Rúa exploited that description in television advertisements , embracing it and setting a comparison with the glitzy style of Menem and the perceived political corruption of his administration . He also compared himself with the Peronist candidate Eduardo Duhalde . He promised to solve the economic crisis with fiscal austerity and higher tax controls , hoping it would lower interest rates , bring more foreign investments , and reduce unemployment . He also promised to keep the Convertibility plan established by Menem that pegged the Argentine Peso one @-@ to @-@ one with the United States dollar .

The 1999 presidential election was held on October 24 . De la Rúa defeated Duhalde by 48 @.@ 4 % to 38 @.@ 3 % , well ahead of the threshold to avoid a ballottage election . Domingo Cavallo , Menem 's former minister of economy , finished the race in third place . De la Rúa was inaugurated President of Argentina on December 10 , 1999 . He took office with a favorability rating of 75 % . Unlike Menem , whose initial cabinet was composed by trusted friends , De la Rúa 's cabinet included five people with international degrees , and four economists .

= = Presidency = =

= = = Domestic policy = = =

In the first days of his presidency , De la Rúa sent a bill to the Congress to request a federal intervention in Corrientes Province . The province had a high level of debt , and organizations of piqueteros blocked roads to make demonstrations . There were two interim governors disputing power . The bill was immediately approved . The intervenor selected for the work was Ramón Mestre .

The Peronist unions opposed De la Rúa and held seven general strikes against him . He sent a bill known as the labour flexibility law to deregulate labor conditions , attempting to reduce the political influence of unions , to the Congress . This project was opposed by the PJ and was changed from the original draft . It was finally approved but Álvarez said several legislators were bribed to support the bill . Álvarez asked for the removal of the labor minister Alberto Flamarique , but De la Rúa instead promoted him to be his personal secretary . Álvarez resigned the following day and the political scandal divided the coalition . Several deputies who initially supported De la Rúa switched to the opposition . Alfonsín tried to prevent a breakup of the UCR . Some months later , it was proposed that Álvarez returned as Chief of the Cabinet of Ministers ; he initially supported the idea but De la Rúa opposed it . Cavallo was also proposed for the office before he was appointed Minister of Economy . De la Rúa intended to include the Frepaso in the new cabinet but to exclude Álvarez himself because he still resented the latter 's resignation . The negotiations failed and the new cabinet included no Frepaso politicians , but the Alliance was still working as a coalition in the Congress . It also included several radical politicians from Alfonsín 's internal faction . The new Chief of Cabinet was Chrystian Colombo , who mediated between Alfonsín and the president .

The PJ won the 2001 midterm election by 40 % to 24 % , giving it a majority in both chambers of the Congress . However , the abstention rate and several forms of protest votes combined reached 41 % , the highest in Argentine history , as a consequence of the popular discontent with the two main parties . Even the few candidates of the Alliance who won at their districts , such as the radical Rodolfo Terragno in Buenos Aires , did so with political platforms against De la Rúa 's administration .

= = = Foreign policy = = =

The first year of De la Rúa 's presidency coincided with the last year of Bill Clinton 's presidency of the United States . Ricardo Lopez Murphy , Minister of Defense at the time , met William Cohen , U.S. Secretary of Defense , in a summit of ministers that took place in Brazil in 2000 . Both countries agreed to share classified information and to hold joint operations against terrorism .

George W. Bush took office in January 2001 , and changed the American policy towards countries in financial crises . The Treasury Secretary Paul H. O'Neill , a critic of financial aids , said , " We 're working to find a way to create a sustainable Argentina , not just one that continues to consume the money of the plumbers and carpenters in the United States who make \$ 50 @, @ 000 a year and wonder what in the world we 're doing with their money " . The September 11 attacks occurred a few months later , and the U.S. focused its foreign policy on the War on Terror against countries suspected of harboring terrorist organizations . As a result , the U.S. gave no further financial aid to Argentina . This policy was confirmed after an interview of Bush with the Brazilian president , Fernando Henrique Cardoso , who confirmed Brazil would not be affected by the Argentine crisis .

= = = Economic policy = = =

De la Rúa 's first Minister of Economy was the progressivist José Luis Machinea , who was proposed by Alfonsín and Álvarez . Menem had left a deficit of 5 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) points that Machinea tried to compensate with higher taxes to people with the highest incomes , and a reduction of the highest retirement pensions . The deficit was reduced but the crisis continued . The scandal over the labor law and the resignation of Álvarez increased the country risk , and made Argentina 's access to international credit more difficult . The government negotiated a US \$ 38 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) line of credit to prevent a default and allow the economy

to grow again . Machinea also proposed to appoint the former minister Cavallo as the new president of the Central Bank of Argentina . However , Machinea was unable to achieve the levels of austerity negotiated with the IMF and resigned a few days later . The Minister of Defense Ricardo López Murphy became the new Minister of Economy . During the election campaign , De la Rúa had promised not to appoint him to that ministry , but with the ongoing crisis he did not want to risk problems caused by a temporary lack of minister . López Murphy announced a stricter austerity plan , with reduction to the health and education budgets . His plan was rejected by street demonstrations and the Frepaso , so De la Rúa declined it . Murphy resigned after being minister for 16 days .

De la Rúa appointed Cavallo , who had served under Menem and had established the convertibility plan . He was supported by the PJ , Carlos Álvarez , and the financial groups , but he was rejected by the rest of the UCR . The government announced it would retain the convertibility plan and that there would be no devaluation or sovereign default . Cavallo proposed several bills ; De la Rúa sent them to the Congress and they were approved . The " superpowers law " authorized the chief of government to modify the national budget without the intervention of the Congress . There was a new tax on bank operations and more products attracted value @-@ added tax . The wages of national customs workers were increased and some industries benefited from tax exemptions . The Megacanje was a negotiation to delay the payment of foreign debt in exchange for higher interest rates . However , internal debt was still a problem because the provinces , especially Buenos Aires Province , were nearing default . This led to conflicts between Cavallo and the provincial governors . The Congress approved a bill for a " Zero deficit " policy to prevent further increases of debt and to work only with money from tax revenue . There was a banking panic in November ; the government reacted by introducing the " corralito " , which prevented people from withdrawing cash from banks . It was initially a temporary measure . The IMF refused to send the monthly payment for the line of credit approved at the beginning of the year because the government had not stuck to the " zero deficit " policy .

= = = Riots and resignation = = =

The crisis worsened and by December 19 , 2001 , riots and looting broke out at several points in the country . De la Rúa announced in a cadena nacional (national network broadcast) that he established a state of emergency . The riots continued ; his speech was followed by increased protests , the cacerolazos , which caused 27 deaths and thousands of injuries . Cavallo resigned at midnight the same day , and the rest of the cabinet followed suit .

There was increased looting on December 20 , both in Buenos Aires and the Conurbano . The cacerolazos continued ; large groups of people started demonstrations calling for the government 's resignation . The unions ? first the CTA and then the CGT ? began general strikes against the state of emergency . Most of the UCR withdrew their support to De la Rúa , so he asked the PJ to create a government coalition . The PJ refused , and De la Rúa resigned from government . His last administrative action was to lift the state of emergency . He gave his resignation to the Congress at 19 : 45 local time on December 20 , 2001 , and left the Casa Rosada in a helicopter . He had ruled for two years , half of his term of office .

Because Vice president Carlos Álvarez had already resigned , the Congress convened to appoint a new president . Adolfo Rodríguez Saá , governor of the San Luis Province , was in office for two months while calling for new presidential elections . Renewed demonstrations forced him to resign as well , and Eduardo Duhalde was appointed as the new president . He was able to complete De la Rúa 's term of office .

= = Later life = =

De la Rúa retired from political life after his resignation . The scandal over the labor flexibility law was renewed in 2003 when a former Senate worker , Mario Pontaquarto , claimed to be a witness of the case who delivered \$ 5 @ , @ 000 @ , @ 000 to the legislators . De la Rúa was indicted alongside

seven politicians from both the UCR and the PJ . In 2013 , they were all cleared of charges by a unanimous resolution , and Pontaquarto was removed from the witness protection program .

De la Rúa was also indicted for the police repression that took place during the crisis ; he was tried by judge Caudio Bonadio , who declared him innocent in 2009 . The Supreme Court overturned Bonadio 's ruling and ordered him to further investigate the matter . De la Rúa and Cavallo were indicted for illegally benefiting the banks that took part in the Megacanje . They were declared innocent on October 6 , 2014 .

= = Public image = =

De la Rúa started to work in politics from a very young age . He was nicknamed " Chupete " (Spanish : " Pacifier ") because of this ; the nickname was still used when he grew up . During Carlos Menem 's administration he was perceived as a serious and formal politician , in stark contrast with Menem 's style . De la Rúa took advantage of this perception during the electoral campaign of 1999 . When he became president and the economic crisis worsened , he was perceived as a weak and tired man who was unable to react to the crisis . He was perceived as a man without leadership who could not make use of his presidential authority . De la Rúa considers that the parody of the television comedian Freddy Villarreal helped to establish that image . He sought to change his image by appearing on the television comedy show El show de Videomatch , but it backfired . He confused the names of the show and that of the host Marcelo Tinelli 's wife . After De la Rúa 's participation ended , Tinelli began to close the program ; De la Rúa could be seen seeking an exit from the set in the background . The popular image was further strengthened when he was hospitalized for peripheral artery disease caused by high blood cholesterol . Although it is a standard , simple medical intervention , the medic told the press De la Rúa suffered from arteriosclerosis , which is usually linked with a lack of speed and reflexes .

= = = Honours = = =

Slovakia : Grand Cross (or 1st Class) of the Order of the White Double Cross (2001)

Portugal : Key of Honor to the City of Lisbon on November 15 , 2001