

THE JEWS AND PERÓN: COMMUNAL POLITICS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN  
PERONIST ARGENTINA, 1946-1955

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History  
of The Ohio State University

by

Lawrence D. Bell, M.A.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Ohio State University

2002

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Kenneth J. Andrien, Adviser

Professor Donna J. Guy

Professor Matt Goldish

Approved by:

---

Adviser

Department of History

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the question of Jewish ethnic politics in Argentina under the Peronist regime from 1946-1955. Despite the claims of Perón's detractors in the United States and elsewhere that he was anti-Semitic and in sympathy with European fascism, Perón in fact demonstrated a considerable amount of pragmatism in his dealings with Argentina's 250,000 strong Jewish population. Like other Latin American populists, Perón combined a corporatist conception of the state with ideals of popular democracy and widespread social mobilization throughout most of his first two terms as President of Argentina. As such, his regime attempted to integrate a number of traditionally excluded groups, including Jews, into its socially and politically inclusive national vision. In February 1947, Perón officially endorsed the creation of a "Jewish wing" of the Peronist Party, the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA), in effort to court Jewish voters and promote Peronist ideology within the country's Jewish community. In doing so, he also granted the OIA considerable powers as the final intermediary between the Jewish community and the state. Yet, unlike many other communities, the Jews of Argentina generally resisted the encroachments of Peronism and the OIA, and instead struggled to forge a compromise relationship with the state. Led by a federation of Jewish institutions, known as the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA), the Jewish community offered

various shows of loyalty and public support for the regime, while at the same time retaining its political autonomy and independence.

The key to the DAIA's success against the OIA and other competing Jewish organizations, I argue, lay in its unique ability to reconcile the external world of Argentine national politics with the internal organization of the Jewish community, centered on a European-Jewish political system very different from that of the surrounding host society. Despite of the fact that the vast majority of Argentine Jews opposed Perón's election in 1946, the leadership of the DAIA, and especially its president, went to great lengths to demonstrate their usefulness to the state, at one point even offering to propagandize for Perón among Jews in the United States in 1948 in an effort to improve foreign relations between the two countries. At the same time, however, the DAIA managed to retain the loyalty of the country's Jewish population in the realm of communal politics due to its unwavering support for the Zionist movement and the newly created state of Israel after 1948. Standing at the nexus of an intricate diplomatic triangle between Argentina, Israel, and the United States, the DAIA was able to use Perón's benevolent statements and gestures towards the state of Israel as means of vanquishing its various internal rivals within the community and establishing an increasingly cordial relationship with the Peronist government by 1955. Ironically, pressures from the state and from the OIA actually served to consolidate the power of the DAIA within the Argentine-Jewish community rather than weaken it, expanding the role of institution into that of Argentine Jewry's preeminent political representation, which it remains to the present day.

Utilizing sources such as Argentine census data, voting returns, institutional records, community newspapers, and archival documents from both Argentina and the

United States, this dissertation expands our understanding of ethnic politics in Latin America beyond the traditional focus on immigration, to consider the ways in which these new immigrant communities adapted to the turbulent political realities of their host societies in the years after 1930. It also advances the study of Peronism and populist regimes in general beyond the traditional focus on organized labor to consider the ways in which immigrant and ethnic communities responded to unique challenges posed by populist leaders. Lastly, it integrates new sources, especially Yiddish language documents, drawn from institutional records and the Jewish press, to build upon a small but growing historiography on the subject of the Argentine-Jewish community under Perón.

To my grandfather

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge some of the many people who have helped make this work possible. First and foremost, I wish to thank the members of my dissertation committee for their vital efforts on my behalf and their careful reading of various drafts of this project. I would also like to acknowledge the generous support I have received from the Melton Center for Jewish Studies at the Ohio State University, as well as the assistance provided by Jewish Studies librarian, Yossi Galron, here at Ohio State.

In Argentina, I would like to give my warmest thanks to the helpful staff and volunteers of the IWO – Instituto Judío de Investigaciones and the Idisher Cultur Farband (ICUF), as well as the Centro Marc Turkow, the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina, the Congregación Israelita de la República Argentina, and the Asociación Filantrópica Israelita for all of their assistance, advice, and receptiveness to my project. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the editors and staff of *Mundo Israelita*, *La Luz*, and *Nuevo Sión* for allowing me to access archived copies of their various publications. In the United States, special mention goes to the dedicated archivists of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the YIVO - Institute for Jewish Research in New York City. Finally, I would like to extend my personal thanks to Ezequiel Zobotinsky, Ignacio Klich, Haim Avni, Raanan Rein, Anita

Weinstein, Yaacov Rubel, Jacobo Kovodloff, Efraim Zadoff, and Thomas Klubock, all of whom contributed in various ways to the making of this project.

Finally, I owe my greatest debt of gratitude to my family, and especially my wife, Tracey. Without their love, encouragement, and support, none of this would have been possible.

VITA

August 3, 1970.....Born – Phoenix, Arizona  
1992.....B.A. History, Arizona State University  
1996.....M.A. History, The Ohio State University  
1995 – present.....Graduate Research and Teaching Associate,  
The Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Dedication .....	v
Acknowledgments .....	vi
Vita .....	viii
Chapters:	
Introduction: Argentine Jewry and the Historiography of Peronism .....	1
1. Prelude to Perón: Argentine Jewry Before 1946 .....	34
2. A Question of Ethnicity: Argentine Jewry and the Elections of February 1946 .....	74
3. Confronting the “New Argentina:” The Jewish Community, the DAIA, and the Peronist Regime, 1946-1948 .....	110
4. In Name of the Community: The OIA, the IJA, the DAIA, and the Struggle to Represent Argentine Jewry, 1948-1951 .....	160
5. From Unity to Division: Zionists Against Progressives on the Jewish Street ...	202
6. A Community Compromised? Argentine Jewry and the Peronist State, 1952- 1955 .....	251
7. Conclusion: Communal Politics and National Identity .....	300
Bibliography .....	310

## INTRODUCTION

### ARGENTINE JEWRY AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF PERONISM

*When I realized that Perón, contrary to previous governments, gave Jewish citizens access to public office, I began to change my way of thinking about Argentine politics... – Ezequiel Zabolinsky (President of the Jewish-Peronist Organización Israelita Argentina, 1952-1955)*

Of all the great figures of twentieth century Argentine history, few have inspired more passion and more controversy than Juan Domingo Perón. For decades, scholars have attempted to explain the way in which a relatively unknown army colonel could defy the traditional political system that had dominated Argentina since the 1890's, mobilize millions of voters to his cause, and forever change the balance of Argentine social and political life in the process. Many contemporaries, especially among the opposition, initially attempted to explain away Peronism as a breed of European fascism imported to the Americas in the wake of the Second World War and destined to disappear with the return to true democracy.<sup>1</sup> Yet, with the persistence of the Peronist movement even after the fall of Perón in 1955, such theories lost much of their validity as a new generation of academics took up the challenge of analyzing its distinctive appeal. In doing so, they posited the idea that Perón was able to mobilize the masses through his charismatic populist appeal, in the process integrating a number of social groups who had previously been excluded from the older liberal-based political system of the early

twentieth century. In particular, scholars have concentrated much of their efforts on the subject of Perón's relations with industrial workers and the labor movement, which comprised the bulk his political support base in 1946.<sup>2</sup> Until more recently, however, less attention was paid to the ways in which Perón attempted to appeal to other traditional "outsiders," including youth, the poor, women, and Argentina's numerous immigrant and ethnic communities.

Indeed, the subject of Perón's relations with Argentina's large and relatively cohesive Jewish community offers significant insights into not only the nature of Peronist politics, but also the ways in which one particular ethnic community interpreted and responded to Peronist efforts to forge political consensus based upon its own unique political traditions and shared sense of historical identity. Despite a sizable population numbering some 250,000 by 1946, the Jews of Argentina had traditionally remained on the margins of Argentine social and political life. For the most part, this was due to their distinctiveness as immigrants and as Jews in an overwhelmingly Catholic country as well as the assimilationist politics of the country's prevailing liberal establishment.<sup>3</sup> Although individual Jews had previously served as influential politicians in Argentina's Radical, Socialist, and Communist parties, the Jewish community as a whole had generally refrained from partisan political activity. In fact, the stated principle of the community's umbrella organization, the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA), created in 1935, was one of non-identification with any national political party. Instead, Argentine-Jewish politics largely took place within the community itself and its institutions, relying on a European-Jewish political model very different from that of the surrounding host society. The rise of Perón profoundly challenged this ideal. Both as a

means of attracting internal support for his “New Argentina,” as well as to dispel his image as a Nazi-style fascist within the international community, Perón eagerly and enthusiastically sought to recruit the participation of the Jewish community as a community, and not merely as Jewish individuals, to the cause of the Peronist movement. In the words of Isaias Lerner, the son of a prominent communal leader during the Peronist era, “The triumph of Perón...meant a greater participation of the community in the political arena. For the first time in Argentina’s political history, a political party courted our community.”<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, Perón was keenly aware of the potential of ethnicity and of ethnic communities as a means of attracting support for his new government. In particular, his corporatist political philosophy enabled him to conceive of ethnic groups as independent social actors when his liberal predecessors had neglected to do so.<sup>5</sup> In the case of Argentine Jewry, Perón attempted to utilize the community’s highly centralized institutional infrastructure as a means of generating support within a community that had strongly opposed him in the elections of 1946. By that time, Jewish politics in Argentina was dominated by two towering institutions: the DAIA, mentioned above, which consisted of a federation of Jewish institutions in the country aspiring to represent the political interests of the community both before the national state and the larger international community; and the AMIA (Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina), which with over 40,000 members represented the social and charitable nucleus of the country’s Ashkenazi community. From the beginning, Perón established close personal contacts with top Jewish communal leaders, particularly within the DAIA, and sought to use their leadership to bring the community as a whole into the fold of Peronism. In addition, he

also endorsed the creation of an openly Peronist Jewish political entity, the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA), in 1947. Initially founded to challenge the power of existing Jewish institutions, and especially the DAIA, as well as to generate electoral support for Peronism within the community, the OIA provided Perón with a useful intermediary between himself and the Jewish masses, a connection that meshed well with his overall personalistic and charismatic political style. While the OIA largely failed to generate active support among the Jewish masses for Perón, its political pressure, along with significant concessions to cooperative Jewish leaders in the DAIA, did succeed in gaining public expressions of support for the regime from within the community and its principal institutions.

The primary focus of this project, however, is not on the actions of the Peronist state, but rather on the ways in which this vibrant, rapidly acculturating, second-generation immigrant community responded to, resisted, and internalized the enormous pressures for political conformity applied by the Peronist regime. In reality, the Jewish community was deeply divided over the question of how to respond to Peronism and its encroachments. These divisions derived from Old World Jewish political debates and reflected fundamental differences within the community over such issues as assimilation, political participation, and Jewish national identity. Above all else, I argue that it was precisely this interaction between external politics at the national level and the internal dynamics of Jewish communal politics that best determined the larger Jewish response to Perón. In particular, the DAIA ultimately succeeded in its effort to resist the pressures of the OIA other competing organizations because it was best able to reconcile this all-important distinction. Far from undermining the pre-existing structure of Jewish

communal politics, Perón and the actions of the Peronist state actually served to reinforce and centralize it, leaving the DAIA as the unquestioned political representative of the larger Jewish community by 1955, a position it had only begun to establish when Perón first assumed office in 1946.

## PERÓN, POPULISM, AND THE JEWS

In particular, the study of the Jews under Perón adds to our understanding of populism more generally by illustrating the ways in which a traditionally marginalized and subaltern community responded to the inclusive message of populist leaders. It also addresses an important gap in the historiography of Peronism specifically by examining the relationship between Perón's populist political culture and ethnic identity in Argentina. Populism in Latin America first emerged in the 1930's as a political solution to the social and economic crisis created by the Great Depression, as well as a reaction against the elitism and exclusivity practiced by the previous liberal regimes which had dominated much of Latin America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to Michael Conniff, populist leaders generally united an urban-based, multi-class coalition under a corporatist, redistributionist, yet non-revolutionary political ideology.<sup>6</sup> Although populism appeared relatively late in Argentina, owing to a military coup in 1930 which temporarily returned the landed classes to power in the country, by the middle of 1940's the climate was ripe for the emergence of a populist leader in the person of Juan Perón.<sup>7</sup> Like his counterparts elsewhere, Perón relied upon a diverse coalition of organized labor, the military, industrialists, and the Catholic Church to win power in a free election, and thereafter embarked upon an ambitious program of

state-sponsored industrialization, economic redistribution, and the integration of millions of new social actors into the country's political system.

Considering his immense importance to Latin American and Argentine history, surprisingly little has been written about the life of Perón himself, and his experiences both before and after establishing himself as Argentina's pre-eminent political figure. In Joseph Page's biography of Perón, an image of the man emerges as a strong, authoritarian, yet flexible leader.<sup>8</sup> Page describes Perón as having, "marked Argentina as no one else has, forcing his fellow citizens to define themselves according to their attitudes towards him while remaining ever enigmatic and constantly defying convention."<sup>9</sup> Born in 1895, in the town of Lobos, in Buenos Aires province, Perón pursued an otherwise unspectacular military career until being thrust to the forefront of Argentine politics as a result of the coup of June 1943. As a participant in the coup, Perón was among the first military leaders to recognize the enormous potential of organized labor as a political force, and succeeded in having himself appointed as Secretary of Labor under the new military government. In this new capacity, he soon became a master at sensing the will of the masses and adjusting his own ideology to suit their needs. According to Page, Perón succeeded in winning the elections of February 1946 precisely because, "the issues he stressed touched the concerns of most Argentines."<sup>10</sup> From then on, until his overthrow in 1955, he ruled the country in an increasingly authoritarian manner, through a mixture of concession and repression, all the while maintaining a popular base of support among the working classes from which he derived much of his political legitimacy.

Yet Perón did not rule solely through the strength of his own charisma. Equally important was his second wife and greatest political partner, Evita. In *Eva Perón*, Nicholas Fraser and Marysa Navarro have explored the life of this controversial figure.<sup>11</sup> Born in 1919, most likely as the illegitimate child of single mother, Evita began her career as a small-time actress and radio soap-opera star in Buenos Aires during the early 1940's. In 1944, however, her life changed decisively when she met her future husband at a fund-raising benefit organized by Perón for the victims of an earthquake in the province of San Juan. After residing with him as his mistress for a short while, the two were married in late 1945, as Perón contemplated his upcoming presidential campaign. Although Fraser and Navarro discount Evita's role in the legendary events of October 17, 1945, when hundreds of thousands of workers took to the streets in support of Perón's liberation from unsympathetic military leaders, it is very clear that she soon became the new president's most important link to the working class and the masses in general. Among other things she served as the human face of Perón's "New Argentina," standing as a kind of glamorous incarnation of his *descamisado*<sup>12</sup> followers, and personally dispensing gifts to the poor through her Eva Perón Foundation, created in 1948. Upon her death on July 26, 1952, virtually the entire nation entered a period of mourning as thousands of people flocked to see her body as it lie in state. Deprived thereafter of her tremendous popularity and imposing presence, the regime was increasingly forced to resort to repressive measures to compensate for the lost magnetism and popular support that Evita generated.

Like other populist leaders in Latin America, Perón embraced a highly pragmatic and eclectic political style. According to political scientist Walter Little, Peronism was

shaped primarily by a loose coalition of forces, including the labor unions, nationalists, and political “opportunists,” consisting primarily of dissident elements of middle class Unión Cívica Radical who splintered off in 1946 to form the UCR-Junta Renovadora.<sup>13</sup> Above all else, this fragile coalition was held together primarily by Perón’s own personal charisma which in turn precluded the establishment of an effective party apparatus. Partly as a means of countering the preponderant influence of the labor unions within his movement, Perón sought to impede the growth of an independent Laborista Party within his coalition after the elections of 1946, and instead mandated the creation of a single unified political apparatus to represent the movement as a whole. In January 1947, this culminated in the formal sanctioning of the Partido Peronista, a non-sectarian, polyclassist, and personalist party intended to serve as a mediator between various competing social interests within the movement. Yet, the Partido Peronista largely failed in its efforts to establish any true form of political unity through the doctrine of *justicialismo*, or social justice, precisely because of its contradictory nature. “Thus,” Little claims, “discipline was consolidated and unity enforced, but the Party was never able to radically transform popular attitudes in the manner described by Justicialist theory.”<sup>14</sup>

At the center of this coalition was the organized labor movement. Over the past four decades, a number of prominent scholars have attempted to explain how Perón was able to gain the loyalty of organized labor in Argentina and mold it into an effective political force. In one of the first serious works appear on Peronism in 1962, *Política y sociedad en una época de transición*, Gino Germani argued that Perón’s overwhelming support among the Argentine labor movement was largely a function of a skewed process

of modernization in Argentina after 1930, which had precipitated a transition in the labor movement from an older European-born immigrant working class to that of a more recent rural-urban migrant composition.<sup>15</sup> According to Germani, Perón relied primarily on the support of these newer, previously unorganized urban workers, rather than the older, immigrant-based unions to create his power base within the labor movement and to secure victory in the elections of 1946. More recently, however, many labor historians have seriously questioned Germani's "old" versus "new" worker thesis, pointing out among other things that many "new" workers had previously been mobilized by the Communist Party during the 1930's, and furthermore that it was actually the European-born leadership of Argentina's old-guard labor unions which provided the initial and most substantial support for Perón. Instead, they have argued that Perón was able to win over organized labor by taking advantage of pre-existing union structures in his capacity as Secretary of Labor after 1943, delivering workers the kinds of bread and butter gains, such as better wages and working conditions, that the more traditional Socialist and Communist parties of the left had failed to gain during the previous half-century.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, scholars such as Louise Doyon, have written on Perón's relationship with the organized labor movement following his ascent to power. According to Doyon, the number of union affiliated workers increased dramatically under Perón, from some 877,000 in 1946 to over 2.2 million by 1954.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, Peronist corporatism encouraged the centralization of Argentina's large unions and the increasing predominance of its central labor confederation, the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT). Specifically, the CGT emerged as the leading intermediary between organized labor and the state, serving both as a point of contact with the labor movement as well as

a mechanism for enforcing political conformity among its member sections. This increasingly close relationship with the state also affected the electoral process within labor unions and the CGT, with political support from the state coming to replace popularity or predominance within established unions as the essential credentials.<sup>18</sup> Yet, at the same time, organized labor was far from passive under the Perón. Analyzing the noteworthy increase in strike activity between 1946 and 1955, Doyon has argued that such strikes were evidence of labor's ongoing vitality under Perón, and furthermore functioned as part of larger process of consensus building in Peronist Argentina by providing "an instrument to resolve existing disagreements in the realm of labor relations."<sup>19</sup> Not surprisingly, those unions which were affiliated with the Peronist labor movement were best able to extract favorable concessions from the state, while those which were not were frequently intervened and subjected to violent repression.

Many recent studies have also devoted an increasing amount of attention to Perón's relations with other important social groups, including the army, the Catholic Church, women, the poor, and students.<sup>20</sup> According to Mariano Plotkin, the extreme divisiveness of Perón's election campaign in 1946 necessitated an effort on the part of the new regime to create at least an outward image of political consensus in order to reinforce its own questionable legitimacy among a broad segment of the population. Among other things, the new government worked hard to promote Peronist political culture through its extensive appropriation of public space for state-sponsored ritual celebrations and its use of Argentina's educational system as a means of "political socialization" for the masses.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the state relied heavily upon the charitable work of the quasi-independent Eva Perón Foundation in implementing much of its

redistributionist social and economic policy, introducing women and children into Peronist politics through the provisioning of social welfare as well as through numerous youth activities and sporting tournaments. Ironically, however, this campaign to “Peronize” much of Argentina’s social and political life also served to alienate many of the regime’s most important early supporters, especially within the military and the Catholic Church, who increasingly resented the intrusion of Peronist ideology into their respective institutions. Not surprisingly, this very tension between the military, the Church, and the state eventually helped precipitate the crisis which led to the regime’s overthrow in September 1955.

Yet, despite the ongoing proliferation of new studies on Peronism, comparatively little research has been done to analyze interaction between Peronist populism and Argentina’s many immigrant and ethnic minorities. That Perón attempted to mobilize the country’s ethnic communities in support of his political aspirations is beyond a doubt. On numerous occasions, for example, Perón attempted to utilize the framework of Jewish communal institutions as a means of generating political consensus within a community largely opposed to him. Nor were Jews the only community he appealed to in such a way. Throughout his first two terms as President, Perón met regularly with leaders of Argentina’s German, Spanish, Italian, and Middle Eastern communities as a means of rallying political support for the “New Argentina.” In at least one instance, prior to the presidential campaign of 1951, the Yiddish language daily, *Di Idische Tsaytung*, even reported on Perón’s meeting with an extraordinary congress of Argentine-Italian associations, noting among other things that Perón appealed to dynamic nature of Italian immigration in Argentina and the “cordiality” of Argentine-Italian relations during his

administration as a means of wooing his all-important listeners. “You know,” he declared,

...that in the Argentine republic, an Italian never has been nor ever will be a foreigner. A collective so numerous and so useful, for which we are thankful, has created a link among all the inhabitants of this land in which an Italian arrived from the farthest region of Italy, with his intelligence, with his effort, and with his honorable labor, is for us a man commonly known, almost a compatriot, we say, in the immense inheritance which Italy has formed throughout the entire world.<sup>22</sup>

Such flattering words were clearly meant to appeal to prospective supporters of the regime on the basis of their ethnic and national origin, and as such, call attention to the need for more studies on the relationship between ethnicity in Argentina and Perón’s populist political culture.

In this regard, a small but growing body of work on the subject of Perón’s relations with the country’s Jewish community has begun to pioneer this effort. While early studies on Perón and the Jews focused primarily on the issue of Argentina’s discriminatory immigration policy and its implications for the development of the Argentine-Jewish community, more recent scholarship has examined the relationship of Argentine Jewry to Perón’s foreign policy concerns as well as his attempts to recruit Jewish political support for his regime.<sup>23</sup> In particular, Ignacio Klich and Raanan Rein have written on the triangular diplomatic relationship that emerged between Peronist Argentina, the United States, and the state of Israel, which was established during Perón’s administration in May 1948.<sup>24</sup> According to Klich, much of Perón’s foreign policy with regard to the Middle East in general, and the state of Israel in particular, was linked to a larger desire to improve Argentine relations with the United States during this time. Quoting the words of Israel’s first ambassador to Argentina, Klich argues that “Perón

wished to use relations with a Israel as a way of conquering Jewish goodwill,” and of recruiting Jewish political support within the United States.<sup>25</sup> Although Argentina officially abstained from the U.N. vote to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states in November 1947, Perón later supported Israel’s admission into the United Nations in 1948, and established full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state in February 1949. He even appointed a Jew to head Argentina’s first diplomatic legation to Israel, then OIA secretary Pablo Manguel, over the protest of his own Foreign Ministry. Furthermore, from 1949 until his overthrow in September 1955, Perón maintained extremely good political and economic relations with the state of Israel, a situation which he ultimately used to great advantage in gaining the cooperation of Argentine-Jewish leaders.

In his recent work, *Argentina, Israel y los judíos*, Raanan Rein also illustrates the ways in which diplomatic relations between Argentina and Israel influenced Perón’s dealings with the local Jewish community. Relying on an impressive array of archival documents, Rein argues that despite public misconceptions of Perón as pro-fascist and anti-Semitic, the populist leader in reality adopted a highly pragmatic stance in his dealings with the Argentine-Jewish community, one which frequently worked to the benefit of local Jewish interests. Among other things, Rein demonstrates that Perón was well aware of the immense importance of Zionism to Jews during this time, and that he “understood very well that his intentions of attracting the support of the Jewish community required him to cultivate [close] ties with the state of Israel.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, although Perón legalized earlier military decrees mandating the teaching of Catholic religion in state schools as part of his effort to win support from the Catholic Church

(non-Catholics were allowed to attend separate classes on “morality”), he also consistently preached an ideology of inclusion and anti-discrimination, and “while he remained in power...converted the fight against anti-Semitism into an inseparable part of his politics.”<sup>27</sup> In 1949, he even approved a revised version of the Argentine Constitution that included a specific clause, Article 28, condemning all forms of racial and religious discrimination, and in part due to the authoritarian and repressive powers of the Peronist state, Argentina experienced a substantial decrease in the number of anti-Semitic incidents and provocations between 1946 and 1955.

At the center of Perón’s relationship with Jewish community was the Organización Israelita Argentina, the Jewish Peronist body organized in 1947 to attract Jewish support for the Peronist cause. Here, there has been some debate as to whether the OIA represented a genuine effort on the part of the regime to co-opt the Jewish community into its service or whether it was merely intended to serve as a kind of intermediary between Perón and prominent communal leaders. Although many early studies often portrayed the OIA as part of a totalitarian effort to gain the compliance of the local Jewish community, more recent scholarship has extensively revised this view.<sup>28</sup> According to Raanan Rein, while the OIA certainly eroded the status and prestige of established Jewish institutions, it never seriously threatened to overcome the principal representation of the community through the DAIA. Moreover, in his own groundbreaking article on the subject, “El peronismo visto desde la legación israelí en Buenos Aires,” Leonardo Senkman has argued that in spite of the considerable attention it received, “the OIA did not play a central role in the Peronization of the Jewish community.”<sup>29</sup> Quite simply, the Argentine President neither mandated the creation of

the OIA nor coerced Jews into becoming members. Instead, Senkman and Rein generally concur that the OIA served the state primarily by providing Perón with a loyal Jewish forum to air his sympathetic views on such issues as the Argentine-Israeli relations, anti-Semitism, and the granting of amnesty to illegal immigrants from the Second World War, rather than as part of a larger effort to effect a kind of *gleichschaltung* with the Jewish community or its leaders.

In addition, Jeffrey Marder has further suggested in “The Organización Israelita Argentina: Between Perón and the Jews,” that Perón did not need to co-opt Argentine Jewry through the OIA because the DAIA itself willingly provided him with its own cooperation, even against the wishes of many in community.<sup>30</sup> Thus, even while the OIA, “worked to win Jewish electoral, financial, and public support for Perón, it functioned more as a lobbying effort than as an agent of control.”<sup>31</sup> Instead, according to Marder, “the DAIA’s most energetic defense of its authority was provoked not by the Peronist OIA, but by the U.S. based American Jewish Committee,” which in 1948 sponsored the creation of another rival organization, the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información (IJA), as a rejection of the DAIA’s willingness to cooperate with government officials. Replicating many of the same functions of the DAIA, such as fighting against anti-Semitism and promoting support for a Jewish state, the IJA, unlike the DAIA, also echoed many of the widespread anti-Peronist sentiments within the community as well.

In fact, as Marder’s findings illustrate, the Jews of Argentina were responding to a number of competing influences on their political behavior, of which the OIA and the state were simply one component. In addition to the Peronist regime, the United States,

and the state of Israel, two internationally based Jewish organizations, the World Jewish Congress (WJC) and the American Jewish Committee (AJC), battled intensely for political influence within the Argentine-Jewish community as part of their larger struggle to influence the political orientation of Latin American Jewry and to control the collection charitable relief funds for the beleaguered Jews of Europe and Palestine. Founded in 1936, the World Jewish Congress was an international Zionist body, whose stated purpose was to promote the worldwide unity of the Jewish people and support the creation of a Jewish national state. By contrast, its North American rival, the American Jewish Committee, was a thoroughly American-Jewish organization, founded in 1906 to facilitate the smooth integration of recent Jewish immigrants into the mainstream of American social and political life and to defend the Jewish community against acts of anti-Semitism.<sup>32</sup> While the former organization provided one of the principal bulwarks of support for the DAIA, the latter attempted to exert its influence through the creation of the Instituto Judío Argentino, which like both the OIA and the DAIA, aspired to establish itself as a legitimate representative of the larger Jewish community. In particular, this competition between the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee in Argentina has frequently been overlooked by previous historians, yet its impact clearly constituted an extremely important element in Argentine Jewry's relations with both the surrounding society and the international Jewish community. The present study, then, builds upon on the work of previous scholars by expanding the focus of its analysis beyond the state and its relations with the local Jewish community to consider the wider dynamic of Jewish political culture under Perón.

## ARGENTINE JEWRY AND PERÓN: RECONCILING COMMUNAL POLITICS WITH NATIONAL IDENTITY

In general, my project confirms the basic findings of earlier studies regarding the pragmatic nature of Perón's attitude towards the local Jewish community as well as his efforts to combat open and potentially divisive manifestations of anti-Semitism in the country. Yet, at the same time, it also reveals that the community's relationship with the Peronist state was substantially more complex than many have assumed. Specifically, I have undertaken to link the study of Jewish political activity on the national level with the work of other scholars, such as Haim Avni, Sylvia Schenkolewski and Efraim Zadoff, who have extensively analyzed Argentine-Jewish politics at the communal level, to explore the means by which the Jewish response to Perón both influenced and was influenced by the concomitant development of Jewish political culture as practiced within the community's principal social, cultural, and charitable institutions.<sup>33</sup> In doing so, it becomes apparent that the Jewish political behavior during the Peronist era was a highly divisive enterprise, involving numerous actors and ideologies, of which Peronism was but one of many different competing elements. Thus, while previous studies of the Jews and Perón have gone far in expanding our understanding of the OIA and its reception within the Jewish community, they have also tended to overlook other major sites of contestation within the community, especially within the DAIA and the AMIA. By shifting the locus of attention away from state, away from the OIA, and onto the DAIA and AMIA in particular, the present study helps to reveal the means by which communal leaders struggled hard to retain their autonomy and independence from an increasingly demanding Peronist state, as well as the ways in which they often attempted to utilize

their relationship with that very same state to enhance their own position within the world of Jewish communal politics.

Broadly conceived, the Jewish community on the eve of Perón's rise to power in 1946 was divided into three larger political camps, which reflected prevailing ideas within the community about such issues as assimilation, Jewish nationalism, and political participation in Argentine national politics.<sup>34</sup> In the majority were the Zionists, and especially those factions organized around the socialist labor-based party, Poale Zion. Zionism, and especially labor Zionism, had a long history of popularity in Argentina, owing to the secular nature of Argentine-Jewish identity, the working class profile of much of the community prior to 1946, and the unique position of Argentina as one of the great regions of Jewish agricultural settlement in the modern era. In addition, the Zionist movement gained further influence within the community in the period after 1930, which witnessed the rise of Nazi Germany in Europe and the increase of nationalist anti-Semitism at home in Argentina. Above all else, the Zionist parties were influential in the establishment of the DAIA as a response to rising anti-Semitism in 1935, and in the wider politicization of Jewish institutional life. Politically, this Zionist majority was divided between the left-wing socialists of Poale Zion, their centrist counterparts, the General Zionists, and a more militant right-wing movement, known as the Revisionists.<sup>35</sup> Yet, despite their substantial philosophical differences, all the major Zionist parties advocated the national and spiritual unity of the Jewish people, the active participation of Argentine Jews in the creation of a Jewish state, the importance of Hebrew as a national language, and the separation of Jewish institutional life from the larger world of Argentine politics. Their political base of power within the community was the DAIA, which they

increasingly used during the early 1940's to advance their influence over the political representation of the Jewish community as a whole.

In contrast to the Zionists, a substantial minority of the community was affiliated with the non-Zionist parties of the Jewish left. In the realm of communal politics, these parties included the Jewish Workers Bund and the Jewish Communists, also known in Argentina as "Progressives." The former was a Diaspora oriented, nationalist, non-Zionist, working class party which aspired to present itself as a "Jewish" wing of the larger socialist movement worldwide. Organized in Argentina mainly around a system of schools, known as the Guezelschaft, the Bundists encouraged the secularization of Jewish communal institutions, the defense of Yiddish language and culture as essential ingredients of Jewish identity in the Diaspora, and the participation of Jews in Argentine political life through the auspices of the Socialist Party.<sup>36</sup> For their part, the Jewish Communists were clustered around a federation of cultural institutions, known as the Idisher Cultur Farband, or ICUF. Like their Bundist counterparts, the Jews of the ICUF favored the expansion of secular Yiddish culture and the integration of the Jewish community into the surrounding Argentine political environment. However, unlike the Bund, the Jewish Communists were also very closely tied to the political life of the Soviet Union and its government, which after 1949 assumed a decidedly anti-Zionist position in its foreign policy. Because of this, the Jewish Communists increasingly found themselves isolated within the larger community during the Peronist era, standing in staunch opposition to the prevailing Zionist majority. During the early 1940's both the Bundists and the Communists officially joined the DAIA as part of a larger effort to create a unified Jewish front in response to the crisis created by the Second World War.

Also during the early 1940's a third political grouping emerged within the Jewish community. Originally part of the Zionist sector which had sponsored the creation of the DAIA in 1935, these individuals and the institutions they adhered to represented a more "liberal" view of Zionism than their more nationalistic colleagues.<sup>37</sup> After 1942, they became increasingly disaffected with the affiliation of the DAIA to the World Jewish Congress and its use of communal fundraising to support Jewish reconstruction in Palestine at the expense of Jewish institutions in Argentina itself. Centered around the country's oldest and most prestigious religious congregation, the Congregación Israelita de la República Argentina, as well as the Buenos Aires chapter of the American-Jewish B'nai B'rith society (known in Spanish as Bené Berith), these Jews fell loosely within what Ezra Mendelsohn has termed the "integrationist" camp of modern Jewish politics.<sup>38</sup> Favoring a kind of "passive" support for Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish state, these liberal Jews also advocated a high degree of Jewish linguistic and cultural acculturation in Argentina, and were strongly supportive of the nation's various liberal political parties. Deeply disturbed by the willingness of many Zionist leaders within the DAIA to cooperate with the Peronist regime after 1946 in exchange for favorable concessions towards Zionism and the state of Israel, the members of this camp ultimately spearheaded the creation of the Instituto Judío Argentino (IJA) in 1948, based on the model of the American Jewish Committee in the United States, as a challenge to the DAIA and a rejection of what they deemed to be its accommodationist tactics.

Finally, the election of Perón in 1946 added a fourth political camp within the Jewish community. This group consisted of a small number of openly Peronist Jews who were responsible for the creation of the OIA in February 1947. Few in number, these

Peronist Jews were extremely influential within communal politics due to the open political support they received from the Peronist state, both through the OIA and through the appointment of individual Jews to administrative positions within the government. Favoring the wholesale integration of the Jewish community as a community within the larger Peronist movement, most Peronist Jews were also loosely supportive of Zionism in a manner similar to that of their liberal counterparts. In contrast to previous studies, I argue that the leadership of the OIA did indeed provide a serious challenge to the position of the DAIA as the official representative of the Jewish community between 1947 and 1951. Yet, owing to their lack of a mass following, the leaders of the OIA never truly eroded the popularity and legitimacy of the DAIA in the world of communal politics, and in 1952 the former organization was officially reorganized. Under the leadership of its new president, Ezequiel Zabolinsky, the OIA adopted a more cooperative, less competitive posture towards the DAIA, leading to a more harmonious relationship between the community and the state in general.

Throughout this time, the issue of Zionism remained at the forefront of nearly every major political conflict and debate within the Jewish community. In particular, it had a tremendous influence on the manner in which the community responded to the encroachments of Perón and his corporatist state. Between 1946 and 1951, Zionism was used by the DAIA as a means of rallying popular support within the Jewish community at a time when its influence with the Peronist government reached its nadir. Following the reorganization of the OIA in 1952, however, Zionism became an increasingly positive variable within the vastly improved relationship between the DAIA and the regime. Partially as a result of this shift, brewing tensions between Zionists and Communists

within communal institutions quickly rose to the fore that year, ultimately resulting in the permanent expulsion of the latter from the DAIA in December 1952. As a consequence of this action, Communist Jewish institutions were left exposed to increasing harassment and repression at the hands of government officials when Perón began his own crackdown on political dissidents in late 1953, only further enabling the Zionist factions within the community to consolidate their hold over the DAIA and communal politics more generally. In fact, one of the central arguments of this dissertation is that despite a general lack of support for Perón within the Jewish community at large, by 1955 an increasingly cooperative and harmonious relationship developed between the DAIA and the Peronist state based upon the mutual benefits of Perón's positive stance towards the Zionist movement and the state of Israel.

In particular, the importance of Zionism in this equation speaks to the larger issue of Jewish identity in Argentina and its relationship to the world of Argentine national politics. Clearly, Argentine-Jewish politics during this time operated on a variety of levels, involving the actions of individuals, communal institutions, and national political parties. Yet within this myriad of dimensions, I argue that a fundamental distinction can be made between political behavior at the national level and political behavior within the Jewish community. Such a distinction somewhat parallels Partha Chatterjee's observations about subaltern behavior in India more generally, where traditionally marginalized national communities frequently conceived of their identities in dichotomous terms in order to offset perceived notions of western political power and technological superiority.<sup>39</sup> In the case of Argentine-Jewry, this distinction between the "internal" and "external" realms in Jewish political culture stemmed less from a need to

compensate for perceived inferiority than from a long-standing tradition of Jewish communal organization and political identity.

As both a corporate and organically defined entity in Europe, the Jewish community, or *kehilla*, had traditionally exercised a significant amount of political autonomy over its own affairs, often acting as a kind of “state within a state.”<sup>40</sup> In Argentina, this impulse was replicated in the country’s vibrant institutional life, and above all else in the realm of intra-communal politics. While the Jewish community in Argentina differed substantially from its European predecessors in that it was constituted on a voluntary basis, the leaders of the community still possessed enormous powers over its members, including the ability to regulate the most fundamental aspects of Jewish life, such as religious services, education, and most importantly burial in a consecrated cemetery. Thus, Jewish communal politics as practiced within the community’s major social, political, and cultural institutions was not merely a response to frustrated efforts at Jewish acculturation into the surrounding Argentine political system, but in fact arose out of a distinct, long-standing political tradition entirely independent of that of the surrounding non-Jewish society.<sup>41</sup> Only an organization that could bridge the gap between these two political arenas could succeed in attracting the support of the country’s Jewish population, and establishing itself as the legitimate representation of the larger Jewish community.

The DAIA succeeded in its efforts to retain its position during the Peronist era precisely because of all the Jewish institutions in the country, it best managed to navigate this distinction. Indeed, the larger part of this dissertation focuses specifically on the range of strategies pursued by the DAIA in responding to the Peronist state, varying from

subtle forms of resistance to outright accommodation of governmental authorities. Yet, in considering these approaches, it becomes clear that traditional conceptions of resistance and accommodation, which interpret accommodation as a self-effacing and submissive act, are not necessarily valid in the case of Argentina's Jewish community.<sup>42</sup> In particular, through a wily combination of personal compromises and public demonstrations of political support, the president of the DAIA from 1947 to 1954, Dr. Ricardo Dubrovsky, was able to preserve the autonomy of the institution by maintaining open channels of communication with the regime. These ongoing links to the state, and to Perón personally, helped Dubrovsky to thwart the best efforts of the OIA to replace the DAIA in the external, or public, political realm. At the same time, as an organization committed to the Zionist aspirations of the majority of Argentina's Jews, the DAIA was able to maintain its popularity within the internal realm of communal politics and keep its legitimacy in the eyes of the international Jewish community. In Peronist Argentina, therefore, accommodation was sometimes the best form of resistance.

The current project is organized into six chapters. In Chapter One, I offer a brief sketch of the history of the Jewish community in Argentina from its inception through the rise of Perón in 1946. Among other things, I highlight the frustration of early Jewish efforts at integration based on a liberal conception of Argentine society and the variety of responses that emerged to the rise of exclusivist nationalism after 1930. In Chapter Two, I examine the response of the Jewish community to Perón and his electoral campaign in late 1945 and early 1946. Combining an analysis of electoral data with evidence taken from personal interviews and the Jewish press, I argue that Jews represented at least one "old" migrant community of European origin that rejected Perón and remained loyal to

the traditional liberal political parties. Yet, they did so largely out of their own particular ethnic concerns in addition to any pre-existing attachments to Radical, Socialist, or Communist ideology. In Chapter Three, I explore the initial response of the Jewish community to the newly elected regime after 1946 and the complex and intertwined relationship that ultimately emerged between them. In spite of the fact that the vast majority of Jewish voters had opposed Perón's election, the community, organized around its central representative institution, the DAIA, soon found itself forced to negotiate with the new government on such matters as the entry of Jewish immigrants to Argentina in the wake of the Second World War, a reduction of anti-Semitism in the country, and Argentine recognition and support for the new Jewish state of Israel after 1948. This willingness of DAIA leaders to cooperate with the Peronist state in exchange for concessions to the Jewish community produced a backlash, however, which led to open schism in 1948 with the creation of the Instituto Judío Argentino by members of Argentina's liberal Jewish sector. In the fourth chapter of my dissertation, I analyze the three-way struggle for power which resulted between the DAIA, the OIA, and the IJA for the right represent the larger Jewish community before both the state and Argentine society in general. In particular, I argue that the DAIA emerged victorious in this struggle because it was best able to reconcile the disparate realms of national and communal politics.

In Chapter Five, I trace a different, yet related struggle between Zionists and Jewish Communists for influence and control within the country's major social and cultural institutions. Using the elections to the country's largest and ostensibly most democratic Jewish institution, the AMIA, as a barometer of general public opinion, I note

that the balance of power throughout the Peronist era remained solidly with the Zionist parties. Among other things, the predominance of Zionism within the community provided the basis for both the DAIA's resistance to early Peronist efforts at cooptation through the OIA as well as its increasingly cordial relationship with the state after 1952. Frustrated with the ineffectualness of the OIA in generating Jewish support during the presidential elections of November 1951, Perón replaced the leadership of the organization in early 1952, appointing a respected Zionist, Ezequiel Zabolinsky, as its new president. Under Zabolinsky, the OIA pursued a cooperative relationship with the DAIA, accepting the latter's legitimacy as the political representation of the larger Jewish community, and instead limiting its function to that of an intermediary between the DAIA and the state. In the final chapter of this dissertation project, I examine the vastly improved relationship that ensued between the DAIA, the OIA, and the state during Perón's second term as President as a result of this shift, noting among other things the way in which Perón succeeded in gaining the acquiescence of DAIA leaders by tapping into the Zionist undercurrents of Argentine-Jewish political culture. Finally, I conclude by considering the tremendous legacy of Argentine-Jewish politics under Perón, first by establishing the DAIA as the unquestioned political representative of the larger Jewish community, and second by fixing a pattern of accommodationist behavior in the face of future authoritarian regimes. In many respects, the increased centralization of political power in the hands of the DAIA paralleled a similar centripetal impulse within the organized labor movement and other social groups that maintained close contact with Perón's corporatist state.

The sources for this project include archival documents from both Argentina and the United States, minute books and other records from Argentine-Jewish institutions, community newspapers and periodicals, census data, voting returns, and personal interviews. In particular, the correspondence of the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee, contained in the collections of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati and the YIVO archives in New York City, includes a substantial amount of previously overlooked and undocumented material. In addition, this study represents the first of its kind to integrate the rich and dynamic Yiddish language press of Argentina in considering the Jewish response to Perón. Despite fears of government censorship and repression, the two Yiddish dailies, *Di Idische Tsaytung* and *Di Presse* provided a wealth of data about Jewish institutional life as well as many of the larger political concerns of the Jewish community in general. Lastly, the bi-lingual (Yiddish-Spanish) Communist Jewish periodical *Tribuna*, gives voice to a sector of the community long since isolated and marginalized, yet which prior to the 1950's represented one of its most popular and vital elements.

Finally, I should add that this study contains several important limitations in its overall scope. First, it examines only the Jewish community of Buenos Aires and its environs and does not consider the equally complex and intriguing response of Jewish urban and agricultural communities in the interior of the country to Perón and Peronism. Second, it focuses primarily on the Ashkenazi community of Buenos Aires, with less attention to the many important Sephardic Jewish institutions throughout the capital. Even more so than the Ashkenazi community, the Sephardic Jews in Argentina were deeply divided on the basis of ethnic and national origins, with significant elements

originating from Morocco, Turkey, Greece, and Syria.<sup>43</sup> Yet, aside from their participation in the DAIA, Sephardic Jewish institutions in general remained much less politicized than their Ashkenazi counterparts, and more isolated from the main centers of political contestation, particularly within the AMIA. Third, this dissertation focuses primarily on the political dimensions of the Jewish relationship with Perón, and does not extensively consider the equally important economic consequences of Peronism for the community. Owing to the nature of available sources, it also focuses primarily on the world of formal Jewish politics as practiced within the community's principal institutions, providing less specific attention to women who often lacked suffrage rights within the Jewish community, and to unaffiliated Jews who had no official political representation. Clearly, then, a good deal of research remains to be done before we shall fully understand the totality of the Jewish experience under Perón.

## ENDNOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

---

<sup>1</sup> For an example of this, see Ray Josephs' *Argentine Diary: The Inside Story of the Coming of Fascism* (New York: Random House, 1944). See also Robert Alexander's, *The Perón Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951). One early work which presented a more balanced assessment of the regime is George Blankenstein, *Perón's Argentina* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

<sup>2</sup> For examples of such labor based studies, see among others, Gino Germani, *Política y sociedad en una época de transición*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós, 1971); Miguel Murmis and Juan Carlos Portantiero, *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo* (Buenos Aires: XXI Siglo Argentina Editores, 1971); David Tamarin, *The Argentine Labor Movement, 1930-1945: A Study in the Origins of Peronism* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985); Joel Horowitz, *Argentine Unions, the State, & Perón* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1990); Juan Carlos Torre, *La vieja guardia sindical y Perón* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1990); and Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). See also Walter Little, "The Popular Origins of Peronism," in David Rock ed, *Argentina in the Twentieth Century* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1975).

<sup>3</sup> For more on the early history of the Argentine-Jewish community, refer to Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*, Trans. Gila Brand (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991); Judith Elkin, *The Jews of the Latin America* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1998); Victor Mirelman, *Jewish Buenos Aires, 1890-1930: In Search of an Identity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990); Eugene Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982); and Bernard Ansel's unpublished dissertation, *The Beginnings of the Modern Jewish Community in Argentina* (PhD. Dissertation. University of Kansas, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> See the words of Isaias Lerner, son of former AMIA president Simon Lerner, in Isaias Lerner, "A Half Century Ago: The Jewish Experience in Argentina," in Leon Klenicki, ed. *Identity in Dispersion: Selected Memoirs from Latin American Jews* (Supplement to *American Jewish Archives*), 65.

<sup>5</sup> By corporatism, I am referring to a political model which organizes society according to a series of competing interest groups, rather than individuals, which in turn are mediated by the power of a central state. Historically, corporatism was most associated with European fascism in the 1930's, though in Latin America it frequently informed populist political thinking as well. For a general comparative analysis of corporatism as a political philosophy, see Howard Wiarda, *Corporatism and Comparative Politics: The Other Great "Ism"* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> See Michael Conniff, ed. *Latin American Populism in Comparative Perspective* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that Perón was by no means the first populist-style figure to emerge in Argentina. In fact, according to David Tamarin, the Unión Cívica Radical, under the leadership Hipólito Yrigoyen, constituted a kind of early phase of populist government in Argentina. However, unlike Peronism, Yrigoyen's Radicalism focused primarily on middle-class interests and represented more of a reformist populist movement rather than the later national-developmental populism of Perón. Refer to his discussion of "Yrigoyen and Perón" in Conniff, *Latin American Populism*, Chapter 2.

<sup>8</sup> See Joseph Page, *Perón: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

---

<sup>11</sup> See Nicholas Fraser and Marysa Navarro, *Eva Perón* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> The term *descamisado* literally means “shirtless ones.” It was used by Perón to describe his largely poor and working class followers.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Little, “Party and State in Peronist Argentina, 1945-1955,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 53 (1973): 644.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 657.

<sup>15</sup> See Gino Germani, *Política y sociedad*. For a more in depth presentation of this theme in English, see his, “Mass Immigration and Modernization in Argentina,” in Irving Louis Horowitz, ed. *The Masses in Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). See also Germani’s comparative discussion of national populism in *Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Inc., 1978).

<sup>16</sup> In particular, see David Tamarin, *The Argentine Labor Movement*; Joel Horowitz, *Argentine Unions, the State, & Perón*; and Juan Carlos Torre, *La vieja guardia sindical y Perón*.

<sup>17</sup> Doyon attributes this increase both to favorable state policies as well as the efforts of prominent labor leaders themselves. See Louise Doyon, “El crecimiento sindical bajo el peronismo,” *Desarrollo Económico* 57 (1975): 151-161.

<sup>18</sup> Louise Doyon, “La organización del movimiento sindical peronista, 1946-1955,” *Desarrollo Económico* 94 (1984): 203-234.

<sup>19</sup> See Louise Doyon, “Conflictos obreros durante el régimen peronista (1946-1955),” *Desarrollo Económico* 67 (1977): 437.

<sup>20</sup> See Robert A. Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969); and *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). See also Lila Caimari, *Perón y la Iglesia Católica: Religión, Estado, y sociedad en la Argentina (1943-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia, 1995); Susana Bianchi, *Catolicismo y peronismo: religión y política en la Argentina 1943-1955* (Buenos Aires: IHES, 2001); Susana Bianchi and Norma Sanchis, *El partido peronista femenino* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1988); Javier Auyero, *Poor People’s Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); and Roberto Almaraz, Manuel Corchon, and Rómulo Zemborain, *¡Aquí FUBA! Las luchas estudiantiles en tiempos de Perón (1943-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Planeta, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> For more on the subject of Perón and Argentina’s public education system, see Monica Rein, *Politics and Education in Argentina, 1946-1962*, Trans. Martha Grenzeback (Armonk, NY: M. E. Shapre, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> See *Di Idishe Tsaytung*, referred to as IT, 30 Oct. 1951, 1. Later, in 1954, Perón even addressed the leading federation of Italian-Argentine institutions, FEDITALIA, in Italian. See Arnd Schneider, *Futures Lost: Nostalgia and Identity Among Italian Immigrants in Argentina* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), 298.

<sup>23</sup> For examples of studies on Jewish immigration in the wartime and post-war era, see Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*; Leonardo Senkman, *Argentina, la segunda guerra mundial, y los refugiados indeseables*, (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991); “Argentina’s Immigration Policy during the Holocaust,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 21 (1991): 151-188; Elvira Rissech, “Entre la aceptación y el rechazo: refugiados europeos en el Puerto de Buenos Aires, 1938-1941,” *Rumbos* (1986); Ronald Newton, “Indifferent Sanctuary: German Speaking Refugees and Exiles in Argentina, 1933-1945,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies* 24 (1982): 395-420; and Daniel Feierstein and Miguel Galante, “Argentina and the

---

Holocaust: The Conceptions and Policies of Argentine Diplomacy, 1933-1945.” Trans. Graciela Berger. *Yad Vashem Studies* 28 (1999): 157-201. For more on Jewish immigration during the first years of the Perón administration specifically, see Leonardo Senkman, “Política internacional e inmigración europea en la Argentina de post guerra (1945-1948): El caso de los refugiados.” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 1 (1985): 107-125; “Las relaciones EEUU-Argentina y la cuestión de los refugiados de la post-guerra: 1945-1948,” *Judaica Latinoamerica* I (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988); and Miguel Galante and Adrián Jmelnitsky, “El primer peronismo y los migrantes de posguerra vinculados a la Shoá, 1946-1950,” *Indice* 20 (2000): 51-92. For more on Peronist immigration policy from a historical perspective of Argentine immigration more generally, see Monica Quijada, “De Perón a Alberdi: Selectividad étnica y construcción nacional en la política inmigratoria argentina,” *Revista de Indias* 52 (1992): 867-888; and Arnd Schneider, “The Two Faces of Modernity: Concepts of the Melting Pot in Argentina,” *Critique of Anthropology* 16 (1996):173-198.

<sup>24</sup> Refer to Ignacio Klich, “A Background to Perón’s Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations.” *Judaica Latinoamericana* I (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988); “The First Argentine-Israeli Trade Accord: Political and Economic Considerations,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 177-205; and “Failure in Argentina: The Jewish Agency’s Search for Congressional Backing for Zionist Aims in Palestine.” *Judaica Latinoamericana* II. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992. In addition, see Raanan Rein, “Las imágenes conflictivas del peronismo en Israel (1946-1955).” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 153-176; and *Argentina, Israel y los judíos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> See Klich, “The First Argentine-Israeli Trade Accord,” 181.

<sup>26</sup> Rein, 102.

<sup>27</sup> Rein, 284. In this respect, Rein’s work largely supports the conclusions of Leonardo Senkman in his important revisionist piece, “The Response of the First Peronist Government to Anti-Semitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment.” *Judaica Latinoamericana* III. (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998).

<sup>28</sup> For an example of an early depiction of the OIA, see Saul Sokal’s analysis in *Argentina: The Recent Upheaval and its Jewish Aspects* (New York: World Jewish Congress, 1957). In addition, see Haim Avni’s characterization of the Peronist state and the OIA in *Argentina and the Jews*, originally published in 1973. According to the noted Argentine-Jewish scholar Boleslao Lewin, the OIA had as its goal, “to become the leading organization of the Jewish community.” See Boleslao Lewin, *La colectividad judía en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Alzamor Editores, 1974) 198.

<sup>29</sup> See Leonardo Senkman, “El peronismo visto desde la legación israelí de Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949-1954),” *Judaica Latinoamericana* II. (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992).

<sup>30</sup> Jeffrey Marder, “The Organización Israelita Argentina: Between Perón and the Jews,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 125-152.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the history of the American Jewish Committee, see Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972).

<sup>33</sup> For example, see Haim Avni, “Argentine Jewry: Its Social Position and Organization,” Part II, *Dispersion and Unity* 13/14 (1971): 164-165. See also the work of Silvia Schenkolewski in, “La conquista de las comunidades: el movimiento sionista y la comunidad Ashkenazi de Buenos Aires (1935-1949),” *Judaica Latinoamericana* II (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992); “Zionist Political Parties in Argentina from the Revolution of 1943 to the Establishment of the State of Israel,” in David Shenin and Lois Baer Barr eds.

---

*The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1996); “Las relaciones entre el Movimiento Sionista y la sociedad mayoritaria en Argentina, 1935-1943.” *Indice* (n.d.): 47-82; and *The Zionist Movement and the Zionist Parties in Argentina, 1935-1948* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press and Hassifriya Haziyonit, 1996). Finally, refer to Efraim Zadoff, *Historia de la educación judía en Buenos Aires (1935-1957)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Milá, 1994), which considers the relationship between communal politics and Jewish education.

<sup>34</sup> These camps broadly reflect the larger political constellation of European Jewry with one significant exception – Orthodox Jewry did not constitute a major political forces in Argentina. For a good overview of European Jewish politics during the interwar period, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); For a specific analysis of urban Jewish politics in Vienna, see Harriet Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics in Vienna, 1918-1938* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). Freidenreich, in particular, divides Viennese Jewry into Liberal, Zionist, Socialist, and Orthodox camps. In post-war Argentina, a similar situation prevailed with Peronist Jews coming to replace the Orthodox in a general four-way scheme.

<sup>35</sup> For an excellent study of complex distinctions between various Zionist factions in interwar Poland, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). In addition to the parties mentioned above, the left-wing socialist, pioneering youth movement, Hashomer Hatzair, was also extremely popular and influential among Jews in Argentina. For a general history of Zionism, see Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976). See also David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>36</sup> For more on Jewish socialism, see Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). On the Bund in particular, see Israel Laubstein, cited above, and Bernard Johnpoll, *The Politics of Futility: The General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967). For more on the Guezeltschaft schools in Argentina, see Efraim Zadoff, *Historia de la educación judía*.

<sup>37</sup> By “liberal,” I am referring here to the traditional sense of the word, meaning a political philosophy based upon a belief in human progress, the autonomy of the individual from the state, and the protection of political and civil liberties.

<sup>38</sup> See Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 48-49; 82-86. According to Mendelsohn, this grouping within modern Jewish politics was most prevalent in the United States and other Western countries where the prospects for Jewish emancipation and civil liberties were greatest.

<sup>39</sup> See Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>40</sup> Refer to David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986); as well as Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). For an example of Jewish self-government in early modern Venice in particular, see David Joshua Malkiel, *A Separate Republic: The Mechanics and Dynamics of Venetian Jewish Self-Government, 1607-1624* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1991).

<sup>41</sup> According to Daniel Elazar, Jewish political activity has always operated within three separate yet concurrent arenas. The first is the *edah*, or Jewish polity as a whole. The second is the *medina*, or state. Finally, at the local level, Jewish politics operates within the *kehilla*, or community. See his introductory comments in Daniel Elazar, ed. *Authority, Power, and Leadership in the Jewish Polity* (New York: University Press of America, 1991), 5. See also his earlier edited volume, *Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America,

---

1983). The current study focuses primarily upon the latter two categories, while at the same time considering the impact of international Jewish politics upon the development of intra-communal politics and their relationship to the Argentine national state.

<sup>42</sup> For example, see Raul Hilberg's three volume study of the Holocaust, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967). In particular, refer to his discussion and typology of Jewish responses to the Holocaust, pp 14-17.

<sup>43</sup> For more specifically on Sephardic Jews in Argentina, see Victor Mirelman, *The Jews of Buenos Aires*. See also Victor Mirelman, "Sephardic Immigration to Argentina Prior to the Nazi Period," in Gilbert Merkx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987); and "Early Zionist Activities Among Sephardim in Argentina," *American Jewish Archives* 34 (1982): 190-205.

## CHAPTER 1

### PRELUDE TO PERÓN: ARGENTINE JEWRY BEFORE 1946

*“You’ll see! You’ll see!” he said, “All of you! [Argentina] is a country where everyone works the land and where the Christians will not hate us, because there the sky is bright and clear, and under its light only mercy and justice can thrive.” – Alberto Gerchunoff, *Los gauchos judíos*, 1910.*

On the eve of Juan Perón rise to power in 1946, the Jewish community of Argentina was just over eighty years old. Originating among waves of European migration that had brought over six million immigrants to Argentina’s shores, Jews had reached Argentina relatively late and struggled to define their place in a society that was increasingly divided and very much in flux. In the early years of the twentieth century, the immigrant generation had focused primarily upon building the foundations for a lasting Jewish communal life. Like other immigrant groups, they had often adapted their Old World experiences to New World realities in creating an impressive array of social, cultural, and charitable institutions. Yet, in their quest to gain acceptance as Jews in Argentine society, they largely failed in their efforts to overcome the demands of the liberals who dominated the country for social and cultural assimilation. Perhaps as a result of this, the Jews of Argentina remained much more closely tied to European Jewish life than did their North American counterparts.

The new generation of Argentine Jews that emerged after the end of mass immigration in 1930 encountered an even greater set of challenges. With the onset of the

Great Depression and the rise of fascism in Europe, the older liberal vision of Argentina was seriously challenged by a more xenophobic, Catholic, and nationalist conception of Argentine society that rejected the place of Jews outright. Faced with an unstable political climate and open hostility among many nationalists, Argentine Jewish leaders were hard pressed to defend a vision of Argentine-Jewish integration that more resembled North American ideas of pluralism than the all-or-nothing realities of Argentina. They soon found themselves increasingly on the defensive, focusing much of their energy in fighting against anti-Semitism rather than in promoting a more positive ideal of Argentine-Jewish ethnicity. The rise of Hitler and the onset of the Second World War only exacerbated this trend, further threatening to erase the very foundations of the community's ethnic identity and inspiration. As the old centers of European Jewish life were ruthlessly destroyed by the Nazi war machine, the Jews of Argentina found themselves in a crisis. Along with lobbying unsuccessfully for a change in Argentina's closed-door policy towards immigration after 1930, they joined with other Jewish communities worldwide to raise millions of pesos to save their beleaguered cousins. All of this gave the Second World War a special poignancy within the Jewish community not shared by other Argentines who were also passionate about the war, and most certainly contributed to Jewish impressions of Juan Perón as the war finally drew to a close.

In many ways then, the struggles of the 1930's and early 1940's against anti-Semitism and for wartime relief ultimately came to define the community that confronted Perón in 1946. As consequence of the campaign against anti-Semitism, 33 Jewish organizations banded together in 1935 to form the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, or DAIA, hoping to present a united front against anti-Semitic attacks. The

DAIA soon took on an even greater role, however, eventually coming to represent the community as a whole before the national authorities by the end of 1945. As for war relief, this issue, along with the fight against anti-Semitism, revealed the many fault lines and fissures within the community, pitting non-Zionists against Zionists over the use of communal funds to support Jewish Palestine, and liberal Zionists against their more nationalistic counterparts over the means by which those funds were distributed. Such tensions would ultimately come to divide the community into three general camps: liberal-Zionists, national-Zionists, and non-Zionists on the eve of Juan Perón's ascent to power in late 1945. In the following chapter then, I will expand further on the history of Argentina's Jewish community in years leading up to 1945 before examining the decisive encounter with Perón himself in Chapter Two. I shall begin by briefly addressing the historical evolution of Argentine-Jewish settlement, and then turn to a more detailed analysis of the community's responses to the challenges posed after 1930.

#### CREATING A COMMUNITY: ARGENTINE JEWRY THROUGH 1930.

The origins of the Jewish community in Argentina date well back into the nineteenth century. After rebelling against Spain in 1810 and officially declaring its independence in 1816, Argentina was beset by nearly half a century of civil war and internal strife that precluded the development of widespread immigration in the country. This struggle emerged out of an ongoing battle between two competing national visions, or as Nicholas Shumway has called them, "guiding fictions," which articulated vastly different ideas about the nation's future, and which were largely incompatible.<sup>1</sup> On the one side was the capital city of Buenos Aires, the center of the revolution, with its liberal

ideals and cosmopolitan Europeanized culture. On the other was the interior of the country with its more traditional, Hispanic orientation. In the words of James Scobie, the nation was split between,

...the *porteño*<sup>2</sup> and the provincial; the free trade interests of an agricultural economy versus the protection sought by home industries; the immigrant saturated coast versus a Hispanic interior; the bustling activity of the ports versus the placid routine in the provincial capitals; the liberal's rejection of Church temporal powers versus the conservative's acceptance of Church authority over all aspects of life; the search for new cultural and spiritual values abroad versus a reaffirmation of creole, or native values.<sup>3</sup>

Only after decades of war, dictatorship, and civil strife did the liberals of Buenos Aires finally gain the upper hand, and following the defeat of the tyrannical *caudillo*<sup>4</sup> Juan Manuel de Rosas by a rival *caudillo* in 1852, they gradually began to impose their agenda on the rest of the country. At the root of their philosophy, Argentina's liberal leaders hoped to encourage the growth of a vital export economy organized around beef and wheat production. To do this, they advocated mass immigration from Europe as a means of providing a labor force for that economy and also as a civilizing influence on the sparsely populated and more traditional interior. As one of their greatest figures, Juan Bautista Alberdi, so ardently proclaimed, "To govern is to populate!" In the Constitution of 1853, members of Argentina's liberal elite openly called upon the national government to encourage European immigration, and in keeping with this mandate, they passed the Immigration and Colonization Law in 1876. Under the provisions of this law, new immigrants to Argentina were granted five days residence at an immigrant hostel upon arriving in Buenos Aires, assistance in finding work, and free transportation to any location in the interior of the country. Furthermore, in an effort to attract Northern Europeans to the country and away from the United States, the liberal authors of the

Constitution of 1853 also officially proclaimed the principle of religious toleration for all non-Catholics in Argentina, a move which had the unintended consequence of opening the door for Jewish immigration in the country as well.

Largely as a result of this measure, a tiny Jewish community began to form around the city of Buenos Aires by the early 1860's. In 1860, the first Jewish wedding was recorded in the country, and in 1862 the nascent Jewish community of the capital organized its first religious congregation, the *Congregación de Buenos Aires*, later renamed the *Congregación Israelita de la República Argentina* (CIRA).<sup>5</sup> This early community hailed largely from Western Europe and was highly acculturated to porteño society and culture. For the most part, religious observance was limited to the High Holy Days<sup>6</sup>, dress and comportment followed Argentine patterns in general, and few if any in the community spoke Yiddish. As one observer wrote to the London *Jewish Chronicle* in 1887, "We have a synagogue here which unfortunately we can only find use for on the High Holy festivals, when it is crowded."<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the total number of Jews in Argentina remained small in the first few decades of the community's existence, estimated at just over 1,500 in 1888.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps all of this led yet another correspondent to the *Jewish Chronicle* to conclude in 1889 that, "The Jewish community of Buenos Ayres does not appear to be in a flourishing condition. There is no regular synagogue and no minister... The communal funds are very small, and many Jews hold aloof from the community, perhaps being unaware of its existence."<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, it was in that very same year that more substantial numbers of Jews began to arrive in Argentina, rapidly transforming the country into one of the world's major areas of Jewish settlement. On August 14, 1889, a group of 820 East European

Jews, fleeing persecution and poverty in Czarist Russia, arrived in Buenos Aires on board the steamship *Wesser*.<sup>10</sup> Having purchased land in Europe from a fraudulent Argentine immigration agent, they arrived in the country destitute and bewildered. In fact, they were even denied permission to disembark from the ship due to their poor condition and alien appearance in the eyes of the Argentine immigration authorities. Following the intervention of the local Jewish community of Buenos Aires, they were finally permitted to enter the country, and arrangements were made for them to found a colony in the interior province of Santa Fé. Yet, this venture too soon went awry when the owner of the land apparently refused to supply the immigrants with adequate provisions.<sup>11</sup> As Henry Josephs, the Rabbi of the *Congregación Israelita* in Buenos Aires, wrote to the *Jewish Chronicle* in London, "...there was not shelter for half their number, they had to lie out in open camp, food was not forthcoming, sickness set in and some 60 to 80 died off, and distress arose in every form."<sup>12</sup> The fate of the starving colonists ultimately attracted the attention of the wealthy Jewish philanthropist, Maurice de Hirsch, and his newly created Jewish Colonization Association (JCA). Hirsch had been searching for a solution to the so-called "Jewish Problem" in Czarist Russia in which he hoped to rehabilitate the Jewish condition by settling Jews onto the land in large, planned agricultural settlements.<sup>13</sup> Eschewing the Zionist dream of rebuilding Jewish Palestine, he seized upon the prospect of Argentina, with its vast Pampa and few inhabitants, its open immigration policy and bright economic future, as the ideal setting for his grand experiment.<sup>14</sup> After brief negotiations with the Argentine government, Hirsch quickly began purchasing vast tracks of land and formally promoting Jewish immigration to Argentina.

Encouraged by the activities of the JCA, Jewish immigration in Argentina soon acquired a momentum of its own. According to the national census of 1895, Argentina's Jewish population numbered some 6,085, "almost all of whom are Russians who began to arrive in the country after 1891 to populate the colonies founded under the protection of Baron Hirsch."<sup>15</sup> By 1914, their numbers had grown to over 110,000, with Russians continuing to predominate.<sup>16</sup> After a brief interruption during the First World War, Argentina's Jewish population continued to grow steadily during the 1920's as well. Spurred by the virtual closing of the United States to Jewish immigration after 1924, as many as 75,000 Jews entered Argentina between 1920-1930, mostly from Poland.<sup>17</sup> Even in the wake of severe immigration restrictions after 1930 and the often discriminatory practices of Argentine immigration authorities, Jewish immigration continued throughout the Second World War as well, much of it clandestine, and when the next national census was taken in 1947, it revealed a total Jewish population of some 249,330.<sup>18</sup>

Although the initial impulse for Jewish settlement in the country came from the JCA and its agricultural colonies, the nexus of Argentine Jewish life swiftly came to reside in the major cities and in the capital in particular. In 1895, over two-thirds of Argentina's Jews lived in the provinces outside the Federal Capital.<sup>19</sup> By 1947, that statistic was reversed, and the vast majority of those in the provinces lived in the large urban centers there. While, the reasons for this phenomenon have been debated by various historians, according to Judith Elkin, the decline of the JCA colonies was due more to "the context of a massive urbanizing movement that caught up the majority of immigrants and transformed Argentina from a rural to an urban nation," than to "a

stereotypical inability of Jews to relate to agricultural labor.”<sup>20</sup> In addition, low crop prices, isolation, the lack of good rural schools, and serious misunderstandings between JCA administrators and the colonists themselves all contributed to the shift away from the colonies after the first generation. By 1960, less than 2% of Argentina’s Jews declared themselves to be farmers.<sup>21</sup> According to one popular Argentine-Jewish saying, “We planted wheat and grew doctors.”

It was in the cities, then, and especially in the capital of Buenos Aires, that the Jews of Argentina established the vast majority of their communal institutions and cultural life. In his work, *Jewish Buenos Aires*, Victor Mirelman examines the rich panorama of urban Jewish life as it took shape in Buenos Aires during the first decades of the twentieth century. “The young Jewish community in Buenos Aires,” he writes, “most of which was composed of immigrants, had attained fundamental and lasting achievements by 1930. It had busied itself mainly in providing for the essential and most immediate necessities of the Jewish population.”<sup>22</sup> In particular, the members of this immigrant community succeeded in creating a vast array of institutions, which included a burial society, or Cheva Kadisha, founded in 1894, several charitable societies, a Jewish hospital, an orphans and old age home, a society against tuberculosis, a society for the protection of women, a popular soup kitchen, an immigrant protection society (known by its acronym SOPROTOMIS), a vast network of Jewish schools, and dozens of synagogues and residents associations.

As with other immigrant groups, in their, social, cultural, and political affairs, the Jews of Argentina attempted to preserve their Old World traditions while adapting to the demands of Argentine society. One example of this was in religious practice. Although

traditional Orthodoxy remained the norm among Argentine Jews, only a tiny minority actually observed on a regular basis, leading one observer to conclude as early as 1898 that “Tephillin are at a discount in Buenos Aires.”<sup>23</sup> In contrast, the community supported a vibrant secular Jewish culture in both Yiddish and Spanish. Among the immigrants themselves, the principal language of the “Jewish street” was Yiddish, and by 1930 Buenos Aires had emerged as one of the world’s greatest centers of Yiddish culture.<sup>24</sup> The community supported two regular Yiddish daily papers along with dozens of smaller ones, a Yiddish theater, a growing Yiddish book publishing industry, and later a branch of the Vilna based YIVO institute itself.<sup>25</sup> In addition, Spanish had made considerable inroads as well, mostly among the children of the immigrants. By the 1920’s, the community maintained a regular weekly newspaper in Spanish, *Mundo Israelita*, as well as a Spanish language cultural association, the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina (SHA). Moreover, an impressive number of Jewish writers and playwrights were composing in Spanish, including the likes of Alberto Gerchunoff, Israel Zeitlin (César Tiempo), and Samuel Eichelbaum.<sup>26</sup>

In its occupational and residential profile, the community also reflected a mixture of Old and New World traits. “If necessity was the mother of invention for Jews in Argentina,” claims Eugene Sofer in *From Pale to Pampa*, “then tradition was the father.”<sup>27</sup> Much as they had done in elsewhere in Europe and the Americas, the Jews of Argentina tended to work in areas such as commerce and peddling. In addition, large numbers of Jews were involved in artisanry, carpentry, and most importantly, textile production. Yet, unlike in the United States and Western Europe, Jews in Argentina did not generally experience significant upward mobility prior to 1945. In fact,

“occupational patterns of Jews were generally characterized by seasonal unemployment, declining rates of upward mobility, occupational inconsistency and underemployment.”<sup>28</sup> This was due in large measure to the unique features of Argentina’s export economy, which tended to revolve around boom-and-bust cycles and precluded widespread commercial and industrial development outside the immediate export sector.<sup>29</sup> Residentially, the community remained heavily concentrated within several important city districts, much as the Jews of Europe had often been.<sup>30</sup> During the 1890’s they lived near the center of the city, largely around the Plaza Lavalle. By the 1920’s and 1930’s the locus of the community shifted westward to the Once barrio, a virtual Jewish “ghetto” which “owed its existence to affordable rents, cultural affinity, and the proximity of labor to potential employment.”<sup>31</sup> By 1945, it moved yet again, this time away from Once and again westwards towards Villa Crespo. Even as late as 1947, Jews still remained six-times as segregated as other immigrant communities in Buenos Aires.<sup>32</sup>

In its emerging political culture, however, the community more closely resembled its European origins rather than the surrounding host society. Despite the presence of prominent individual Jews among the leaders of Argentina’s Radical and Socialist parties, Jewish communal politics in Argentina remained nearly synonymous with that of the Old World. Political conflicts often centered around frequent elections to each of the community’s smaller institutions, though community-wide politics generally focused upon the Chevra Kadisha, legally incorporated as the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina in 1941, which contained the largest membership by far as well as the greatest financial resources. Arrayed on the left were the various groups of Anarchists, Communists, Bundists, and Socialist-Zionists. On the right were the General Zionists,

Revisionists, and Orthodox groups such as Mizrachi and Agudas Yisroel.<sup>33</sup> Owing to their recent arrival, the strong links they still retained with Europe, and the fact that few immigrants to Argentina ever became naturalized, the larger Argentine political scene had little resonance within the community during its first generation.

Only among the Jewish left was there any deliberate effort to establish distinctly Jewish connections to the larger Argentine political parties. Immigrant Jews, for example, played a prominent role among the early Anarchist labor movement in Argentina.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the Socialist oriented Jewish Workers Bund attempted to cast itself as a Jewish wing of the larger Argentine Socialist party. A number of Jews were also very influential among the founders of the Argentine Communist party, with Jewish institutions comprising a powerful segment of Argentine Communism by the 1940's.<sup>35</sup> Among Zionists, the labor-based socialists Poale Zion made an effort to integrate themselves within the larger Socialist party, following the pattern of Poale-Zion in Poland, but their efforts were largely frustrated by the assimilationist philosophy of Argentine Socialism.<sup>36</sup> For the most part, the community failed to recreate the kind of ethnic politics on a national level in Argentina that Jews had practiced in Eastern Europe, instead limiting Jewish politics strictly to the communal realm. This situation, then, helped to contribute to the fundamental division within Argentine-Jewish political culture, between politics on the national level on the one hand and the internal politics of the Jewish community on the other, which ultimately came to characterize the community's political behavior during the Peronist era as well.

CONFRONTING THE RISE OF ARGENTINE NATIONALISM: ARGENTINE  
JEWRY, 1930-1945.

The decade and a half following 1930 brought with it enormous changes which challenged the very foundations of the young immigrant community and eventually resulted in the rapid ascent of Juan Domingo Perón to power. On September 6, 1930, the Argentine military staged a revolutionary coup, which ended over forty years of uninterrupted democracy and carried a militant nationalist general José F. Uriburu to power.<sup>37</sup> Angered over the populist policies of his Radical predecessor, President Hipólito Yrigoyen, and fearful of the mounting world economic crisis, Uriburu and his followers were decidedly opposed to such liberal ideas as free trade, mass immigration, anticlericalism, and constitutional republicanism that had dominated Argentina's political landscape for over half a century. Representing what Cristián Buchruker has termed the "restorationist" wing of Argentine nationalism, Uriburu was influenced heavily by European fascism, coupling a harsh critique of liberalism and the European Enlightenment with an organic conception of a corporatist society guided by Catholic principles.<sup>38</sup> Such principles were also anathema to meaningful Jewish participation in Argentine national life, and radical Argentine nationalists often incorporated a number of anti-Semitic stereotypes within their ideology, portraying Jews as a conspiratorial enemy of Christian civilization in league with Communism and freemasonry. As one nationalist propagandist explained, "Communism is an arm of Judaism...[and] since Judaism came before Communism, and the latter was created, executed, and directed by Jews, it is logical to conclude that Communism is a weapon of Judaism devised in order to advance its plan for world domination by means of destroying Christianity."<sup>39</sup> With the rise of

Nazi Germany after 1933, such ideas also came to embrace important elements of Nazi racial ideology as well, and several of Argentina's most extreme nationalist publications were financed directly by German embassy in Buenos Aires.<sup>40</sup>

Uriburu's faction within the revolutionary government was not in the majority, however, and after a disastrous plebiscite election in 1931, he was swept aside by a more moderate conservative faction led by Agustín P. Justo. Justo's presidency, which lasted from 1932-1938, witnessed the institutionalization of a political alliance between old-line Argentine conservatives and dissident elements of the Radical and Socialist parties known as the Concordancia that marked the beginning of Argentina's "infamous decade." For his part, Justo, and the generals who backed him, rejected most of Uriburu's extreme nationalist ideology, and instead preferred to restore the hegemony of Argentina's old landed elite who had lost much of their political influence under the Radical governments of Yrigoyen and his protégé and rival Marcelo T. Alvear. Unlike Uriburu, who favored a radical response to the world economic depression, they envisioned an Argentina governed by an alliance of elite landowners and businessmen, with an economy based upon the traditional exports of beef and wheat as represented in the controversial Roca-Runciman pact signed with Great Britain in 1933. But, as the Great Depression worsened worldwide and demand for Argentine exports diminished along with the availability of manufactured imports, the conservatives were forced to compromise with Argentine industry. In the Pinedo Plan of 1938, the conservative government embarked upon an important, if limited, program of state supported Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) by which the government agreed to lower taxes on domestic industrial production and enact protectionist legislation for fledgling consumer industries.<sup>41</sup>

This program of state sponsored industrial growth, as well as the general economic crisis created by the Great Depression, also engendered a series of social changes within Argentina that soon had sweeping ramifications. The increasing failure of the old rural economy plus the emergence of new industries in the country's urban centers touched off a massive wave of rural-urban migration that threatened to upset the very social fabric of the nation. These new migrants, many of whom had previously remained isolated from the larger social and political climate, now began to clamor for greater inclusion in Argentine political life and militate for the improvement of the economic conditions among the working classes. At least through 1943, the conservative rulers of Argentina's Concordancia were able to neutralize such rising discontent through a series of repressive measures against labor and more importantly through electoral fraud. Such measures only proved temporary though, and they aroused a lasting sense of bitterness among persons of virtually all political and social backgrounds. In those few cases when relatively fair elections were held, such as in the Federal Capital in 1936, opposition victories generally represented "a dramatic rejection of the concordancia's management of the country."<sup>42</sup> Finally, in December 1941, then President Ramón Castillo imposed a state of siege on the country, outlawing all political parties and suspending indefinitely the Argentine Congress.

It was against this backdrop of brewing social discontent that a second military coup took place on June 4, 1943. While the specific reasons for the revolution involved a struggle over the political succession to the troubled presidency of Ramón Castillo, much of the Argentine citizenry viewed the coup as a liberation from the corruption and bad government of the Concordancia, and responded with little if any opposition. The coup

was orchestrated by a mysterious group of army officers known as the GOU (Grupo de Oficiales Unidos) that included an aspiring but relatively unknown colonel named Juan Perón. Although there still exists heated debate about the GOU and its supposed pro-Axis orientation, the fact remains that these officers had clearly tired of the democratic process as practiced during the “*década infame*” and sought to impose their own, more authoritarian vision upon the country.

Among their first acts was the appointment of Pedro Pablo Ramírez as President on June 6, 1943.<sup>43</sup> His appointment marked the second time that an openly right-wing, or “restorationist,” nationalist would assume power in Argentina and carried with it significant ramifications for the country’s Jewish community. In his foreign policy, Ramírez, an avowed Axis sympathizer, carefully cultivated Argentina’s political neutrality towards the Second World War at a time when nearly every other Latin American nation had closed ranks with the United States and the allied powers.<sup>44</sup> On the economic front, Ramírez and his nationalist successors expanded upon earlier state efforts at industrialization by raising tariffs, imposing quotas on competing imports, and increasing government subsidies for industries supposedly vital to “national security.” At the same time, he unleashed a series of repressive domestic policies which, “consisted mostly of an intense dose of long-established, familiar measures: the provinces succumbed to a wave of federal interventions; political parties were banned by decree; restrictions on the press increased; and opponents of the regime were threatened and harassed.”<sup>45</sup> Finally, in an effort to shore up popular support for the regime, Ramírez permitted his newly appointed Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare, Juan Perón, to assume an activist role in mediating between labor and business. In the years that

followed, Perón used his position to create real social and economic improvements for Argentine workers, earning in return their increasing loyalty to both the regime and himself personally.

The Ramírez regime also implemented several measures that directly affected Jewish communal life in the country and evidenced tinges of anti-Semitism. One of his first acts as President was to appoint Gustavo Martínez Zuviría as Secretary of Education. An extreme nationalist, Zuviría, writing under the pseudonym Hugo Wast, had previously composed numerous antisemitic novels during the 1930's which had been widely popular in Argentina and other Spanish speaking countries.<sup>46</sup> Together, he and Ramírez soon made Catholic education compulsory in Argentine public schools for the first time since the 1880's, forcing Jewish and other non-Catholic students to attend special "moral instruction" classes in place of the religious curriculum of their young Catholic counterparts.<sup>47</sup> In the province of Entre Ríos, government officials also closed down several Jewish schools and dismissed Jewish teachers from their posts in public state-run institutions.<sup>48</sup> In addition, intermittent bans were placed on the practice of Jewish ritual slaughtering in Entre Ríos and in the province of Buenos Aires.<sup>49</sup> In perhaps his most extreme move, Ramírez even shut down the three principal Yiddish language dailies in the country in October 1943 and forbade the use of Yiddish in public gatherings supposedly in an effort to limit dangerous foreign influences in the country. Citing a 1939 law banning the use of foreign languages in public acts, the Ramírez regime appears to have singled out Yiddish for particular disapprobation in enforcing the decree, claiming that government censors could not read or interpret the language.<sup>50</sup> Although the press was allowed to reopen a day later as a result of mounting criticism, the ban on

public Yiddish speech remained.<sup>51</sup> While the ouster of Ramírez in February 1944 and the ascent of Edelmiro Farrell to the Presidency greatly diminished the worst of these anti-Semitic excesses, they did not disappear entirely. In April 1944, for example, the Federal Commissioner in Entre Ríos imposed a fine on the Jewish Colonization Association of some 18,000,000 Argentine Pesos for failure to pay taxes from which the JCA claimed it was exempt as a charitable organization.<sup>52</sup> Thus, while the actual physical impact of these measures likely did not impede the daily lives of individual Jews to any great degree, according to one observer who visited Argentina in late 1944, they did serve to create “a general feeling of anxiety and uneasiness” among the community in general.<sup>53</sup>

It is little wonder then that the Jews of Argentina felt increasingly embattled after 1930. They responded to the new challenges posed by Argentine nationalism in several interesting ways. At least initially, many within the community, particularly among the community’s Spanish-speaking second generation, attempted to counteract the rising tide of nationalist anti-Semitism by articulating a more positive vision of Argentine-Jewish ethnic integration. In this regard, the monthly Spanish language literary journal *Judaica*, founded in 1933 by Salomón Resnik, stood out in the words of Daniel Fainstein, as “a true project of socio-cultural integration into Argentine society.”<sup>54</sup> “The appearance of *Judaica*,” proclaimed the editors in its very first issue, “symbolizes our adhesion as Jews to the patria... The Argentine of ten generations is no more Argentine than us, neither before the law...nor before the events which never have contradicted nor will contradict our patriotism...”<sup>55</sup> In addition to publishing various literary and scholarly articles of interest, the editors of *Judaica* also sought to advance an ideal of Jewish integration, defending the community from anti-Semitic allegations while at the same time

advocating a liberal, pluralistic, view of Argentina as a haven of democracy in stark contrast to the waves of fascism advancing across Europe.

Among its most significant early efforts in this regard was an article by the noted Argentine-Jewish scholar A. L. Schusheim in defense of the community against allegations of Jewish exclusivity made by Father Gustavo Franceschi in the Catholic journal *Criterio*. Commenting that, “Here we find ourselves once again with the reproaches... that the Jews do not identify with the people in whose midst they reside; they conserve their particular racial mentality; they form their own societies; they found their own schools; their own periodicals, and in a word constitute a collective apart,” Schusheim proceeded to put forth a very different ideal of Argentine-Jewish identity than that of its Catholic detractor.<sup>56</sup> In his vision, the Jews of Argentina were no different than other immigrant communities in attempting to preserve distinctive features of their Old World culture and should not be singled out for doing so. Moreover, he even suggested that Jews were in fact *more* loyal to Argentina than other immigrants precisely because of their Diasporic tradition. As a persecuted minority in their lands of origin, they were not divided by sentiments of dual loyalty which other immigrants manifested towards their national homelands and which might preclude their assimilation. “No one who wishes to see things as they truly are,” he claimed,

could pretend that the Jewish population is less established in the country, less linked to the collective life, than any other collectivity. On the contrary, the other collectivities, which still have not achieved the step of dissolution within the Argentine population, gravitate always towards their own homelands. The Jews only maintain familial links with their countries of origin but not political ones. In fact, the identification with the idea and sentiment of the Argentine state, the consciousness of being Argentine, is much more vigorous among the Jews than among the other collectivities.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, the existence of a Jewish ethnic enclave in Argentina, such as was found in the Once neighborhood, did not hinder the integration of Jews into the larger society, but in reality served to advance it. Finally, he insisted that the Jews be granted the same respect as other immigrant minorities in Argentina, arguing that “the Jews have supported the development of agriculture, commerce, and industry.” “The grandson of a Jew,” wrote Schusheim, “is effectively a Jew, but at the same time is as good an Argentine as the grandson of an Italian.”<sup>58</sup>

Yet, such lofty words, in many ways reminiscent of the pluralistic ideal of the United States, found less room to maneuver in an Argentina torn between liberal demands for assimilation and growing outright nationalist rejection of Jews. Unlike Italians, who were seen as fellow Catholics and Latins, Jews were increasingly labeled as undesirable elements within Argentine society, owing to their alien religion and foreign cultural ways. In addition, few non-Jewish Argentines, if any, seemed interested in the problems facing Argentine Jewry at a time when the entire country was gripped by a kind of social malaise and identity crisis as a result of the Great Depression. Indeed, following a wave of anti-Semitic attacks against various synagogues in Buenos Aires, another author in *Judaica* lamented, “My words will most assuredly not reach the general realm of sane public opinion. Unfortunately, our Argentine-Jewish periodicals never leave our strictly narrow circuit.”<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, as the “*década infame*” wore on, such positive ideas of Jewish integration also found themselves increasingly tied to a liberal democratic vision that itself was increasingly under attack.

In succeeding issues, the editors of *Judaica* also relied upon this rather utopian vision of Argentina in appealing for the entry of Jewish immigrants into the country after the rise of Nazi Germany in 1933. In the wake of Evian Conference of 1938 and the growing Jewish refugee crisis in Europe, they issued a bold appeal, attempting to couple American (both North and South) ideals of freedom with the potential benefits of Jewish immigration.. In “America, Salvation of the World,” the editors of *Judaica* ardently proclaimed,

If Europe disgraces itself and falls into chaos, there will always be a place on the globe, free and great, where chaos does not exist, where there is no place for racist delirium. This privileged place, which will be the cradle for future civilization, the salvation of injured humanity, is America... And in these most free lands, which no passing and exotic dankness will be able to taint without twisting its natural rhythm, the Jews will find a dignified refuge; a refuge they will know to extol with their hard work, with their intelligence, with their energy, with their love, and with their gratitude.<sup>60</sup>

Such pleas, however, had little effect as the national mood turned against immigration in response to the Depression and rising nationalist xenophobia. In the same year as this editorial appeared, the Argentine government further tightened its already numerous restrictions on immigration. In an effort to deflect Jewish refugees in particular, it also decreed that all entry permits would have to be reviewed personally on a case by case basis by a special committee that would give priority to those immigrants “with the greatest capacity for assimilation in order to meet our social cultural and economic needs.”<sup>61</sup> In the parlance of conservative and nationalist Argentina, this clearly did not include Jews.

Faced with this kind of rejection, many within the Jewish community instead retreated into the narrower realm of communal politics. In doing so, they concentrated

their attentions around two larger issues. The first was the fight against anti-Semitism, which had gained a sense of immediacy following the rise of Nazi Germany in 1933 and the propaganda campaign emanating out of its Argentine embassy. The second was the problem of war relief for Jewish Europe and the distribution of funds collected, given the apparent impossibility of facilitating legal Jewish immigration in Argentina itself. In many ways, it was these two issues that ultimately came to define the trajectory of Jewish ethnic politics in Argentina during the “*década infame*,” organized heavily around Old World ideological conflicts, pitting Zionists against non-Zionists, and liberal Zionists against their more nationalistic counterparts.

As early as 1933, many within the community realized the need to organize a more activist defense against a rising tide of anti-Semitism both at home and abroad. “It is time,” wrote the editors of the Spanish weekly *Mundo Israelita* in December 1933, “that this physical epidemic which is extending itself without ceasing is stopped.”<sup>62</sup> Therefore, in 1935, virtually the entire community, including both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews, united together to form the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, or DAIA. Emerging out of an earlier “Comité Contra el Racismo y Antisemitismo,” the DAIA initially held as its objectives to represent as broad a segment as possible of the Jewish community, to strengthen ties between Jews and non-Jews in Argentina, and most importantly, to fight against anti-Semitism.<sup>63</sup> To this end, the DAIA embarked upon an ambitious program in its very first year, which included the transmission of news items involving world Jewish affairs, the publication of a refutation of the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which had recently sprung up in various Buenos Aires booksellers, and the commencement of regular radio broadcasts to the

nation.<sup>64</sup> Regarding the DAIA, a correspondent of the London *Jewish Chronicle* reported, “It has been found possible for the first time in the history of Argentine Jewry to set up a committee representing practically ninety-percent of local Jewry.”<sup>65</sup> However, the DAIA itself did not directly represent the general population of the Jewish community. Instead, its general assembly was composed of two representatives from each of the community’s affiliated institutions. Initially, these included various religious and social organizations, the community’s charitable institutions, and the Zionist political parties. Conspicuously absent, though, were members of the Jewish left. In particular, the Jewish Communists supported their own organization to fight anti-Semitism, the “Comité Popular Contra el Fascismo y Antisemitismo,” which embraced both Jews and non-Jews among the Argentine political left.

Despite its early focus in combating anti-Semitism, the DAIA quickly came to embody something larger, owing to the fact that it was the only institution in the country to unite so many Jews of diverse cultural and political backgrounds. “What can we say,” wrote the editors of its first monthly bulletin, “we who aspire to represent and speak for *all* of the Jews of the country?”<sup>66</sup> Evidence of the DAIA’s new and even greater functions became apparent in its very first year, when it sent an official statement in the name of Argentine Jewry to the League of Nations protesting the persecutions in Nazi Germany.<sup>67</sup> Shortly thereafter, in 1936 the DAIA assumed the responsibility of selecting and dispatching Argentina’s official delegates to the very first session of the World Jewish Congress, marking the beginning of a long association between the two institutions. According to the DAIA, “The election was realized by intermediary of the Jewish institutions of the country,” because there was insufficient time to organize a more

general election within the community.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the DAIA increasingly came to represent the Jewish community before the national authorities as well. In 1939, it appealed to the Chamber of Deputies of the Argentine Congress for a more liberal immigration policy, and in 1942, it spearheaded an effort by local Jewish organizations to petition the Castillo regime to allow the entry of 1,000 Jewish refugee children from Vichy France.<sup>69</sup> In fact, by March of that year, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* claimed with some assurance that, “The DAIA is day by day becoming the most qualified organ to act in the name of our collective before the outside world, and its counsel is treated with equal observance and respect in its attempts to orient our collective before determined problems that affect us as a group.”<sup>70</sup>

Thus, by the time the military assumed power yet again in June 1943, it was the DAIA, under the leadership of its new President, Dr. Moisés Goldman, which officially undertook to represent the interests of the distressed community before the state. In early July of that year, a DAIA delegation, led by Goldman, met publicly with the country’s new Interior Minister, Colonel Alberto Gilbert, to express the “greetings of the Jewish collective,” and, “the certainty with which all its members and institutions are disposed to collaborate with all their energy in the program of action outlined by the government...”<sup>71</sup> Following the subsequent ban on Jewish ritual slaughtering at several Buenos Aires slaughtering houses, DAIA leaders again met with Gilbert, soliciting the derogation of the decrees, or that notwithstanding, the designation of an “alternate location” for kosher slaughtering to legally take place.<sup>72</sup> In October, DAIA leaders protested against the closure of the Yiddish press, and later that month, a DAIA delegation in conjunction with Rabbi Guillermo Schlesinger of the Congregación

Israelita, met formally with government interventors in Entre Ríos to solicit the reopening of several Jewish schools and the lifting of recent prohibitions against Jewish ritual slaughtering in the province.<sup>73</sup>

In the course of its actions, the DAIA also established a pattern of low-profile intervention with the authorities, attempting to downplay open acts of anti-Semitism in the hopes of precluding further reactionary measures against the community. Following the closure and subsequent reopening of the Yiddish press in October 1943, DAIA president, Moisés Goldman expressed his “satisfaction” in a letter to the Minister of the Interior, “that the profound anxiety of the Jews occasioned by a measure such as that which motivates this declaration...has been replaced by a completely different spiritual state thanks to the rapid restoration of things to their normal state.” Furthermore, he added, “This confirms the Jews in their ongoing certainty that in Argentina there has never been nor is there now discrimination of a racial, religious, or national order.”<sup>74</sup> In December 1943, Goldman publicly declared that, “We trust in the enforcement of the public powers to create legal responsibility for those who injure or collectively slander [the Jewish community,]” adding that, “In Argentina, there is no place for racial or religious discrimination.”<sup>75</sup> In addition, Goldman maintained quiet but open channels of communication with both the British and American embassies in Buenos Aires.<sup>76</sup> While these contacts primarily involved Argentine-Jewish relief efforts in Europe and Palestine, their significance surely failed to escape the notice of government officials eager to avoid direct confrontation with the allied powers.<sup>77</sup> As a result of such actions, an uneasy compromise was reached between the community and the state. Despite the persistence of anti-Semitism among lower level officials as well as continuing acts of violence

against Jews in the country, the national government at least publicly disavowed anti-Semitism as a political strategy. Goldman's numerous interventions also greatly increased the DAIA's prestige within the Jewish community. Hence, by the time the Perón assumed power in June 1946, the DAIA had risen to become the foremost Jewish institution in the country and its generally accepted representative before the state.

In addition to fighting anti-Semitism, the community also faced the challenge of responding effectively to the European Jewish catastrophe as it unfolded after 1933. Following the rise of Hitler to power in Germany, Argentine-Jewish leaders organized a mass demonstration against the Nazi regime in accord with worldwide Jewish protests. On March 27, 1933, a public fast was decreed, synagogues were packed with worshippers, and Jewish businesses closed early. Later that evening over 30,000 people attended a mass rally in support of German Jewry at the Luna Park stadium.<sup>78</sup> In addition, the community implemented an unofficial boycott of German-made goods.<sup>79</sup> However, tensions soon began to arise over the question of fundraising to assist German Jewry. As early as 1933, the "Comité Contra las Persecuciones Antisemitas en Alemania" inaugurated a massive fundraising campaign on behalf of Germany's Jews with the goal of "freeing German Jews from the Nazi inferno, providing them with immediate aid, and constructing a Jewish homeland where the homeless and persecuted Jews of Germany can secure their future."<sup>80</sup> Yet, this final objective, with its thinly veiled reference to the Zionist cause, aroused animosity on the part of non-Zionist Jews and in many ways foreshadowed over a decade of intense intra-communal strife over the question of aid.<sup>81</sup>

This tension, over the uses of communal relief funds to support Zionist activities, ultimately led to the existence of two separate aid campaigns by 1940. In December 1939, the DAIA organized a congress which initiated a massive effort to collect 5,000,000 pesos “for the victims of the war and the reconstruction of Eretz Yisrael.”<sup>82</sup> This campaign had the support of the majority of community’s institutions and was affiliated with the pro-Zionist World Jewish Congress (WJC).<sup>83</sup> In protest to this, however, members of community’s non-Zionist, left-wing parties and institutions organized a rival campaign, claiming they had been inadequately represented at the Zionist controlled DAIA conference. Affiliating their campaign with the non-Zionist American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), they argued that aid to Jewish war victims in Europe “should be immediate and direct,” and steadfastly opposed the use of campaign funds to assist the Zionist enterprise in Palestine.<sup>84</sup> Tensions continued to rise, and the DAIA group soon issued a warning against, “the pernicious action of a group of extreme leftists, who pursue partisan objectives without really preoccupying themselves with Jewish interests, which they betrayed shamefully after the well known ‘pact’ that determined the destruction of Polish Jewry.”<sup>85</sup> In fact, hostilities between the two sides only abated after the entry of the Soviet Union into the war in June 1941 and the call for a united front against Nazi-fascism. Following this, members of the non-Zionist left reconciled themselves to the campaign sponsored by the WJC, and affiliated their institutions with the DAIA.<sup>86</sup> Yet, the battle lines for future conflict within the community had been drawn. The issue of Zionism would remain a contentious one throughout the Peronist era, serving as the flashpoint of nearly all the major intra-communal conflicts over the next decade and a half.

Even within the Zionist camp itself, significant rifts emerged over the appropriation of wartime aid. Following the cessation of left-wing opposition to the DAIA campaign, members of Argentina's Spanish-speaking liberal elite also expressed their misgivings over the campaign's affiliation to the World Jewish Congress. In February 1942, their leading spokesman, Simon Mirelman, published a lengthy article in *Mundo Israelita*, in which he criticized the DAIA's handling of previous campaigns and called for a more balanced distribution of the funds collected. In particular, he complained of the "arbitrary decisions" of "some members of the committee," who had affiliated the campaign solely with the World Jewish Congress, when the Joint Distribution Committee would be better suited to the task of relief due to its "apolitical" ideology, and strict dedication to philanthropic work. In addition, he called for more money to be spent on local organizations, such as SOPROTOMIS and the German-Jewish Asociación Filantrópica Israelita, which assisted refugees in Argentina itself.<sup>87</sup> "It is contrary to all logic," Mirelman asserted, "to send aid to distant regions while denying it to those who need it in our own country."<sup>88</sup>

In response, WJC supporters within the DAIA published their own commentaries in the Jewish press, deriding Mirelman and his followers as a "small group" of elite Jews who sought to impose their will on the larger desires of the pro-DAIA majority.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, they warned against affiliating the Argentine-Jewish community with an American-Jewish organization, such as the JDC, "which is disposed only to receive funds from communities in other countries without giving them any participation in its decision making process."<sup>90</sup> The matter remained unresolved throughout 1943, with both sides publishing numerous declarations in the Jewish press.<sup>91</sup> Finally, in November 1943, the

Mirelman group officially proclaimed its own relief campaign, the “Junta de Ayuda a las Víctimas de la Guerra,” in direct opposition to that of the DAIA.<sup>92</sup> The DAIA responded sharply with an ad in *Mundo Israelita*, calling the Junta supporters, “a group of persons, without authorization, who represent no one.” “These persons,” the ad continued,

in the blind obstinacy and in the obfuscated belief that they know and understand matters better than the immense majority of the collective, do not hold back from the dangerous step of sabotaging the authority and prestige of the DAIA, the only recognized Jewish representative, at a time when it has particularly stood out in its dignified defense of Jewish interests in the country.<sup>93</sup>

Members of the Junta were undaunted by the attack and continued with their separate campaign throughout 1944 and 1945. In early 1945, they even succeeded in winning the public support of the German-Jewish Asociación Filantrópica Israelita (AFI), one of the two large immigrant aid societies then active in the community.<sup>94</sup>

The conflict between the Junta and DAIA leaders over the question of aid also underscored a deeper tension within the community. In particular, members of the Junta were frustrated over the rigid control of the DAIA by supporters of Poale Zion, and their representative, president Moisés Goldman. “Sadly,” they claimed in a 1945 statement published in *Mundo Israelita*,

we have observed that the directive council of the DAIA has for some time become a closed circle which responds exclusively to a group of persons who for many years have acted in certain political and commercial sectors of our community. This predominance has constantly isolated a great number of responsible people and prompted the retirement from the DAIA of those who have [previously] contributed to it...<sup>95</sup>

Yet, unlike their counterparts on the Jewish left, members of the Junta were not anti-Zionist. In their campaign advertisements, they even highlighted their work in transferring of Polish-Jewish refugees to Eretz Yisrael.<sup>96</sup> Instead, they represented a

liberal-Zionist grouping within the community, in contrast to the more militant Zionism of Poale Zion and DAIA leaders. Most members were Spanish speaking, highly acculturated, supportive of Jewish integration into the surrounding society, and often belonged to such notable Jewish institutions as the Congregación Israelita and the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina. In effect, members of the Junta and their sympathizers ultimately came to comprise a third political camp within Argentina's Jewish community by the end of 1945, standing in opposition to both the more nationalistic Zionist mainstream within the DAIA and the non-Zionist Jewish left.

#### CONCLUSION: ARGENTINE JEWRY ON THE EVE OF PERONISM

This, then, was the state of affairs within the Jewish community when that little known colonel, Juan Perón, initiated his meteoric rise to power. In its roughly eighty years of existence, the Jewish community of Argentina had grown from a miniscule minority to Argentina's third largest immigrant community.<sup>97</sup> After an initial period of agricultural settlement, Jewish life had shifted overwhelmingly to the cities in the early twentieth century, where the Jews had established an impressive array of institutions and a vibrant cultural and political life. However, much of this life still remained heavily influenced by Old World ideas and events, and efforts at integration were frequently frustrated by liberal demands for ethnic assimilation and by the rise of nationalist exclusivism after 1930. This left the community isolated and apprehensive during the "década infame" as a number of sweeping changes rolled across the country. In addition, it also contributed to an enormous concern over the war and its outcome for the Jews of Europe.

Faced with its inability to alter Argentina's strict immigration laws, the community as a whole had instead focused the bulk of its attentions during the "década infame" around two larger issues. The first was the fight against anti-Semitism. Fearing a perceived rise in anti-Semitism, both in Europe and at home, a number of institutions banded together to form the DAIA in 1935. In addition to battling anti-Semitism, the DAIA soon came to represent the community before world Jewry and more importantly before the national authorities. Yet, while the DAIA united many elements of the Jewish community, it never provided a truly popular representation of that community. Instead, it was composed of member institutions whose governing boards appointed representatives to the DAIA's general assembly. Furthermore, important sectors of the community, notably the Jewish left, initially held aloof from the DAIA, organizing their own "Popular" campaign against anti-Semitism. The second major issue for the Jewish community involved its response to the mounting crisis of Jewish Europe. Here too, the community was divided, between the Zionist mainstream which supported the relief efforts of the DAIA, a non-Zionist minority which instead favored "direct aid" to European Jewry, and a liberal-Zionist sector which resented the monopolistic disbursement of DAIA fundraising solely through the WJC.

In the larger national setting, the community had meticulously tried to avoid taking sides among the various factions that contended for power. Only when matters directly threatened the community's existence or operation, did its representatives dare to intervene with the government. Yet, this stance would be sorely tested as the war came to an end and the military regime called for new elections to be held in February 1946. Isolated and riven by ideological divisions, the community could no longer hide from the

larger national political debate swirling around it. Faced with Argentina's first democratic elections since 1941, the community would soon be swept into what Argentine historian Felix Luna has described as the "hurricane of history."

## ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

---

<sup>1</sup> See Nicholas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> This word is commonly used to refer to a resident of Buenos Aires, i.e. “the port,” as opposed to an Argentine from the interior. The italics are mine.

<sup>3</sup> James Scobie, *Argentina: A City and a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 136-137.

<sup>4</sup> This is a Spanish term, denoting a kind of regional warlord drawn from the land owning class who used his vast resources and manpower reserves to raise armies that rivaled, if not overpowered, those of the state itself. All throughout Spanish America, various caudillos vied for power with newly emergent national governments and with each other during the first half of the nineteenth century, often resulting in conditions of virtual political anarchy. For more on this phenomenon, see John Lynch, *The Caudillos in Spanish America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). See also his biography on Rosas in particular, *Argentine Dictator: Juan Manuel de Rosas, 1829-1852* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> The wedding of 1860 was achieved only after protracted negotiations with government officials who feared it would undermine the religious authority of the Catholic Church. The event was recorded in 1868 by Miguel Navarro Viola, the attorney who interceded with the government on behalf of the Jews. See “El primer matrimonio judío en Buenos Aires,” *La revista de Buenos Aires XVIII* (Nov. 1868), 463-68. Regarding the date for the founding of the CIRA, it remains somewhat disputed. Although the majority of evidence points to its creation in 1862, the 1918 *Memoria* of the congregation gives 1868 as the year of its creation. For more on this and the early Jewish community of Argentina in general, see Bernard Ansel, *The Beginnings of the Modern Jewish Community in Argentina, 1852-1891* (Diss. University of Kansas, 1970. Publ. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1972), especially Chapter 3. See also Victor Mirelman, “Jewish Life in Buenos Aires Before the East European Immigration (1860-1890),” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly LXVII* (1978), 195-207.

<sup>6</sup> These refer to the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).

<sup>7</sup> See the London *Jewish Chronicle*, hereafter referred to as JC, 5 Aug. 1887, 14.

<sup>8</sup> Ansel gives a figure of 1,650 for 1889. This includes the Jews of the *Wesser*. Ansel, 159.

<sup>9</sup> JC, 2 Aug. 1889, 6. It should also be noted here that community included a small but very significant group of Russian Jews who trafficked in prostitution. While their numbers were few in 1889, they would soon be swelled by the flow of incoming immigrants. In fact, the city of Buenos Aires soon acquired a reputation in the Jewish world as a dangerous place for unattended young women. Expelled from the mainstream Jewish community, these prostitutes and their pimps quickly founded their own “community,” known as the Tzwi Migdal, complete with a house of worship and even a cemetery. They frequently attracted the attention of Argentine police officials and politicians and were a source of shame and anxiety to the larger Jewish population until they were finally expelled from the country after the nationalist coup of 1930. For more on the Tzwi Migdal and its history, see Ansel 155-158; Victor Mirelman, *Jewish Buenos Aires: In Search of an Identity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 197-220; Edward Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); and Donna Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), an excellent work which provides a history of prostitution in Buenos Aires more generally.

<sup>10</sup> This figure is taken from Ansel, who reviewed the passenger lists. Haim Avni, in *Argentina and the Jews* also utilizes this figure. See Ansel 260. See also Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*, Trans. Gila Brand, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 27.

---

<sup>11</sup> For more on the arrival of the *Wesser* and the foundation of the colony of Moisesville, see Ansel, *Beginnings*, Chapter 6. Refer also to his article "Discord Among Eastern and Western Jews in Argentina," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60 (1970), 151-158. In addition, see Avni's *Argentina and the Jews* 27-32; Victor Mirelman, "A Note on Jewish Settlement in Argentina (1881-1892)," *Jewish Social Studies* 33 (1971), 3-12.

<sup>12</sup> JC 20 Dec. 1889, 6.

<sup>13</sup> "What I desire to accomplish," he wrote in 1891, "what, after many failures, has come to be the object of my life, and that for which I am ready to stake my wealth and my intellectual powers, is to give a portion of my companions in faith the possibility of finding a new existence, primarily as farmers, and also as handicraftsmen, in those lands where the laws and religious tolerance permit them to carry on the struggle for existence as noble and responsible subjects of a humane government." *North American Review* CCCCXVI. (Jul. 1891), 2.

<sup>14</sup> In fact, Zionism's founder, Theodor Herzl, met personally with Hirsch in 1895 to persuade him to support the Zionist project in Palestine but was rejected. For more on their encounter and the early relationship between Latin America and Zionism, see Haim Avni, "The Origins of Zionism in Latin America," in Gilbert W. Merkx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds., *The Jewish Presence in Latin America* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> Argentina, Directive Commission of the Census, *Segundo censo de la República Argentina*. (Buenos Aires: 1898), 122. There is some dispute over this figure. Ansel, who meticulously researched his own count of Argentina's Jews for the year 1889, says that it is clearly too low and reflects the counting procedures used by the census takers who did not ask the religion of respondents except in obvious cases where they were not Catholic. See appendix 5 of his dissertation, "Reflections on the censuses of 1887 and 1895." Therefore, I have chosen to use the census figure in comparison with other census figures only as a means of illustrating the growth of the community and not to represent an exact total of the Jewish population.

<sup>16</sup> See the national census of 1914. Argentina, *Tercer censo nacional, 1914* (Buenos Aires, 1916).

<sup>17</sup> Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 122.

<sup>18</sup> See Argentina, Dirección Nacional del Servicio Estadístico, *IV Censo general de la nación*, Tomo I: Censo de población (Buenos Aires: 1947).

<sup>19</sup> According to the 1895 census, 2/3 lived in the province of Entre Ríos alone, "where the principal colonies of Russian Jews exist." Argentina, Directive Commission of the Census, *Segundo censo de la República Argentina*. (Buenos Aires: 1898), 122. The 1947 census revealed 66.65% of the nation's Jews to be in the Federal Capital, with another 13.13% in the province of Buenos Aires. By contrast, a mere 11,876 Jews resided in Entre Ríos, comprising just 4.76% of the country's total Jewish population. See the 1947 census, cited above.

<sup>20</sup> Judith Elkin, *The Jews of Latin America* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1998), 119. In addition, see the comments of Haim Avni in *Argentina and the Jews*; "La agricultura judía en la Argentina: ¿Éxito o fracaso?" *Desarrollo económico* 22 (1983): 535-548; and *Argentina, The Promised Land: Baron Hirsch's Colonization Project in the Argentine Republic*, [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1973). See also the critique of Avni offered in Judith Elkin's "Go odnight Sweet Gaucho: A Revisionist View of the Jewish Agricultural Experiment in Argentina." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* LXVII (1978): 208-223.

---

<sup>21</sup> Elkin, 118. This figure is based upon a demographic analysis of the 1960 Argentine national census undertaken by U. O Schmeltz and Sergio Della Pergolla in 1974. See *The Demography of Jews in Argentina and Other Countries in Latin America*, [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1974).

<sup>22</sup> Mirelman, *The Jews of Buenos Aires*, 232.

<sup>23</sup> JC 28 Oct. 1898. Tephillin are the traditional phylacteries worn by Orthodox Jews during prayer. It should be noted as well, that religious observance was much higher among Sephardic Jews than among the Ashkenazi majority. Each of the various national-ethnic groupings of Sephardic Jews in the city: the North African, the Balkan, the Aleppan, and the Damascene remained highly traditional and clung tightly to its own religious, cultural, and institutional autonomy. These Sephardic Jews were also recent arrivals to Argentina and not descendants of earlier crypto-Jewish families from the colonial period. For a discussion of these earlier converso Jews in Latin America, see Elkin, *The Jews of Latin America*, 3-22.

<sup>24</sup> In *The Jews of Latin America*, Judith Elkin defines the term “Jewish street” as, “that agglomeration of clubs, newspapers, shops, schools, and theatres that came to make up the Jewish lifestyle on the continent.” Elkin, *The Jews of Latin America*, 160. For the sake of clarity, I should add, that in this dissertation, I use the term primarily in a political context, though the idea of the “Jewish street” clearly has considerable social, cultural, and economic dimensions as well.

<sup>25</sup> Founded in 1925, this institute was dedicated to the scientific study of East European Jewry as well as Yiddish language and culture.

<sup>26</sup> For more on the Spanish language Argentine-Jewish literary tradition, see Leonardo Senkman, *La identidad judía en la literatura argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Pardes, 1983); and Naomi Lindstrom, *Jewish Issues in Argentine Literature* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> Eugene Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>29</sup> In particular, this export economy centered around beef, wheat, and wool. For more on Argentina’s economic development prior to 1930, see among others, Carlos Díaz Alejandro, *Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic* (New haven: Yale University Press, 1970); Peter Smith, *Politics and Beef in Argentina: Patterns of Conflict and Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969); Carl Solberg, *The Prairies and the Pampas: Agrarian Policy in Canada and Argentina, 1880-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); and David Rock, *Argentina, 1519-1987* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> For examples of Jewish residential concentration within the city of Vienna, particularly among east European Jews, see Marsha Rosenblit, *The Jews of Vienna: Assimilation and Identity*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); and Harriet Friedenreich, *Jewish Politics in Vienna, 1918-1938*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

<sup>31</sup> Sofer, 72.

<sup>32</sup> See Sofer’s discussion of Jewish residential patterns in *From Pale to Pampa*, chapter 4. Sofer’s data is drawn largely from a combination of census information and the membership records of the Chevra Kadisha which have since been lost in the wake of the 1994 bombing of the AMIA.

<sup>33</sup> For more on Jewish politics in Europe, and particularly in eastern Europe, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New

---

York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). See also Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Jonathan Frankel *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>34</sup> Mirelman 139-140. The Anarchist weekly, *La Protesta* even published a page in Yiddish. Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention that it was a Jewish Anarchist who assassinated the Buenos Aires Chief of Police Ramon Falcón in 1909, touching off a wave of rioting and violence in the city. See Mirelman 54-55; Avni 90.

<sup>35</sup> For example, refer to Silvia Schenkolewski's unpublished paper presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> International Research Conference of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association, "Los judíos comunistas de Argentina de la emigración a Birobidjan a la creación del estado de Israel."

<sup>36</sup> For more on this, see Silvia Schenkolewski, "Las relaciones entre el Movimiento Sionista y la sociedad mayoritaria en Argentina, 1935-1943." *Indice* (n.d.): 47-82. In this article Schenkolewski notes the failure of Argentine Zionism to influence Argentine attitudes towards the movement or to counteract the rising antisemitism within the country during the 1930's. The General Zionists, under the rubric of the Federación Sionista eschewed all Jewish based political action in the country, and while Poale Zion did participate in several larger national efforts to combat antisemitism, it limited its participation due to the presence of anti-Zionist Communists within such organizations as the Comité Contra el Racismo y Antisemitismo and the Comité Popular Contra Antisemitismo.

<sup>37</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the coup, see Robert Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

<sup>38</sup> See Cristián Buchruker, *Nacionalismo y peronismo: La Argentina en la crisis ideológica mundial (1927-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1987).

<sup>39</sup> See *Argentinos y judíos al servicio de comunismo* (Buenos Aires: n.d.), 2. This document is believed to have been composed during the 1930's. The connection between Judaism and Communism was further reinforced in the minds of many by the Russian origins of most of Argentina's Jewish population. Indeed, during the violent labor confrontations of January of 1919, known as the "Semana Trágica," mobs of angry anticommunist reactionaries swept through the Jewish quarter of Buenos Aires, looting, rampaging, and killing as many as 800 people, mostly Jews. For more on this refer to Victor Mirelman, "The *Semana Trágica* of 1919 and the Jews of Argentina," *Jewish Social Studies* 37 (1975): 61-73; and *Jewish Buenos Aires*, 61-67. See also Sofer, 42-48; and Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Counterrevolution in Argentina, 1900-1932: The Argentine Patriotic League* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 73-78.

<sup>40</sup> Chief among them were *la Clarinada* and *el Pampero*. See Ronald Newton, *The Nazi Menace in Argentina, 1933-1947* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 122-124. See also his chapter entitled "German Nazism and the Origins of Argentine Anti-Semitism" in David Shenin and Lois Bear Barr eds. *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1996). A number of scholars have disputed the role of Nazi propaganda in the formation of Argentine anti-Semitism during this period. Among them is David Rock in his *Authoritarian Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), who argues that anti-Semitism in general never formed a core element of Argentine nationalism. For his part, Buchruker argues that while anti-Semitism was indeed an important ideological component of "restorationist" Argentine nationalism, it was not widespread among Argentines in general and failed to be an effective tool for mobilizing mass support. He too downplays Nazi influences, though does admit their presence within the movement. See *Nacionalismo y peronismo*. Sandra McGee Deutsch, in her recent work, *Las Derechas*, accords a greater place to both fascist influences as well as anti-Semitism within the scope of Argentine nationalism, arguing that in many cases the latter substituted for an effective critique of the prevailing class system among the far right. Moreover, she notes that unlike in other countries,

---

nationalists in Argentina at times, “took out their rage on flesh-and-blood Jewish prey.” See Sandra Mcgee Deutsch, *Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, 1890-1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 229. For more on nationalist anti-Semitism, see also Daniel Lvovich, *Nacionalismo y antisemitismo en la Argentina, 1919-1945: representaciones, discursos y practicas* (Unpublished doctoral thesis: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2001).

<sup>41</sup> For more on the tensions between industrialists and landowners during the *década infame* and the creation of the Pinedo Plan, see Miguel Murmis and Juan Carlos Portantiero. *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo*, Vol. 1. (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Argentina Editores S.A., 1971).

<sup>42</sup> Richard J. Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Buenos Aires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 189.

<sup>43</sup> The initial President after the coup had been General Arturo Rawson who had led the military forces on June 4. However, Rawson quickly lost the confidence of the GOU officers after declaring his intentions of breaking relations with Nazi Germany and its Axis partners. Therefore, after refusing to withdraw his support for several unpopular cabinet ministers, he was immediately deposed. For more this and the military intrigues against Rawson, see Potash 205-207.

<sup>44</sup> At one point he even attempted to secure arms from Nazi Germany in response to a feared American sponsored arms build-up in rival Brazil. However, the Argentine representative sent to negotiate with the Germans was captured en route by British intelligence agents, who also transmitted word of the negotiations to the United States. Potash, 220-224. For an interesting analysis of various historiographical interpretations of Argentina’s wartime neutrality, see Mario Rapoport, “Argentina in Turmoil: The Politics of the Second World War,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 31 (Jul. 1997): 35-50. See also Raanan Rein’s discussion of this theme and its implications for Argentina’s foreign policy in the Middle East in *Argentina, Israel y los judíos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere, 2001), 33-41.

<sup>45</sup> David Rock, *Argentina, 1519-1987* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 250.

<sup>46</sup> The most well known of these were *El Kahal* and *El Oro*, which formed part of a larger series based on the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

<sup>47</sup> For more on the influence of Catholic nationalism on the military regime and the Jewish response to it, see Graciela Ben Dror’s, “La revolución militar, la Argentina católica y los judíos (1943-1945),” in *Judaica Latinoamericana III* (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998).

<sup>48</sup> See Leonardo Senkman, “The Response of the First Peronist Government to Anti-Semitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A necessary reassessment,” in *Judaica Latinoamericana III* (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998), 178. See also the telegram from Armour to the U.S. State Department, dated 9 Nov. 1943, which refers to the lifting of some of these measures. United States National Archives (NA), College Park, MD, Record Group (RG) 59, 835.00/2129. According to the doctoral thesis of Daniel Lvovich, the actions of nationalist officials in Entre Ríos constituted an especially harsh case, owing to both their personal and familial relations with Ramírez himself. See Lvovich, 435-440. Nonetheless, he argues, the national government carefully avoided any direct reference to anti-Semitic beliefs in its public discourse as a result of the delicate international climate, and instead preferred to characterize its actions as part of a larger crusade against both liberalism and communism.

<sup>49</sup> For example, see Leonardo Senkman, “El 4 de junio 1943 y los judíos,” *Todo es historia* 193 (Jun. 1983): 67-78. See also the discussion of this in Ben Dror, 236-238

<sup>50</sup> Several Slavic language papers were also included in the ban. See the telegram from Reed to the U.S. Department of State, 12 Oct. 1943, NA, RG 59, 835.918/85.

---

<sup>51</sup> In the context of World War Two, this prohibition against Yiddish in Argentina was considered so severe that it even attracted a rare personal rebuke U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In a public press release he warned, "I cannot forbear to give expression to my own feeling of apprehension at the taking in the hemisphere of action obviously anti-Semitic in nature, and of a character so closely identified with the most repugnant features of Nazi doctrine." See his statement from 15 Oct. 1943, NA, RG 59, 835.918/96. The text of his message appears also in the London *Jewish Chronicle* 22 Oct. 1943, 6. In addition, the U.S. State department instructed its ambassador in Argentina to make such sentiments known directly to the Ramírez government. See the telegrams sent 13 Oct. 1943, NA, RG 59, 835.918/85, as well as 15 Oct. 1943, NA, RG 59, 835.918/87. While Roosevelt's criticism and the actions of the U.S. government did not have a direct bearing on the reopening of the press, which occurred prior to his statement of October 15, they did likely have some influence in mitigating subsequent anti-Semitic actions on the part of the Ramírez regime. See NA, RG 59, 835.918/100.

<sup>52</sup> Refer to the telegram from Armour to the U.S. Secretary of State, 18 Apr. 1944, NA, RG 59, 835.512/128. According to the dispatch, the JCA had appealed the ruling. See also JC 21 Apr. 1944, 9.

<sup>53</sup> See the "Report on Argentinian Jewry," by Dr. Michael Traub, April 1945, in the files of the World Jewish Congress, American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio, MS COL 361, Box H23, Folder 8. See also the comments of Raanan Rein, in *Argentina, Israel, y los judíos*, who argues that in spite of the presence of anti-Semitism among some government officials, "The daily life of the great part of the Jews in Argentina generally passed without any interference." Rein, 61.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Fainstein, "¡Al gran pueblo argentino, Shalom!: El proyecto integracionista de judaica frente al nacionalismo argentino, 1933-1943," (Buenos Aires: n.d), 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Judaica* 1 (1933), 44-45.

<sup>56</sup> See A.L. Schusheim, "¿Hace falta un problema judío en la Argentina?" *Judaica* 6 (1933), 253.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>59</sup> Marcos Rosovsky, "Los atentados contra las sinagogas," *Judaica* 16 (1934), 173.

<sup>60</sup> See the editorial in *Judaica* 62 (1938), 2.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted from Avni, 144. For more on Argentina's discriminatory wartime immigration policy, see Leonardo Senkman, "Argentina's Immigration Policy During the Holocaust (1938-1945)," *Yad Vashem Studies* XXI (1991): 155-188; and *Argentina, la segunda guerra mundial, y los refugiados indeseables* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991). See also, Daniel Feierstein and Miguel Galante, "Argentina and the Holocaust: The Conceptions and Policies of Argentine Diplomacy, 1933-1945," *Yad Vashem Studies* XXVII (1999): 157-201; as well as Elvira Rissech, "Inmigración judía a la Argentina, 1938-1942: Entre la aceptación y el rechazo," *Rumbos* 15 (1986): 91-113.

<sup>62</sup> *Mundo Israelita*, hereafter referred to as MI. 9 Dec. 1933, 1.

<sup>63</sup> See Haim Avni, "Argentine Jewry: Its Social Position and Organization," Part II *Dispersion and Unity* 13/14 (1971), 163.

<sup>64</sup> See the DAIA's own monthly bulletin of activities. *Boletín informativo* 1 (17 Oct. 1935).

---

<sup>65</sup> JC Jan. 1935.

<sup>66</sup> DAIA, *Boletín informativo* 1 (17 Oct. 1935), 1. I have added the italics for emphasis.

<sup>67</sup> This act was important in establishing the DAIA as an international representation of Argentine Jewry. However, in the text of the message, the DAIA does not yet claim to represent the community as a whole. See MI 26 Oct. 1935, 2.

<sup>68</sup> DAIA, *Boletín informativo* 13 (1 Aug. 1936), 1.

<sup>69</sup> MI 22 Jul. 1939, 12. For more on the case of the refugee children, see Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 159-164. The effort was ultimately unsuccessful.

<sup>70</sup> MI 25 Apr. 1942, 3.

<sup>71</sup> MI 17 Jul. 1943, 1. For more on this, see also Jeffrey Marder, "Towards a Convivencia: Juan Perón and the Jews of Argentina," (M.A. Thesis. Simon Fraser University, 1996).

<sup>72</sup> MI 18 Sep. 1943, 7.

<sup>73</sup> MI 6 Nov. 1943, 12. The effort was initially spearheaded by Rabbi Schlesinger, who as senior rabbi of the CIRA was responsible for the maintenance of Jewish education in the interior of the country. See MI 23 Oct. 1943, 4. See also the minutes of the CIRA, 28 Oct 1943, which describe Schlesinger's meetings with the local Minister of Finance, the head of the General Education Council, and the state Inspector General of Schools. According to the minutes, these officials informed Rabbi Schlesinger that they had no intention of "impeding the ability of Jews to provide their children with religious education," and that one of the schools in question had already been reopened.

<sup>74</sup> See the text of his letter in MI 23 Oct. 1943, 4. Goldman's statement was actually made after a lengthy visit with the Interior Minister, in which the latter offered a written apology for the closure of the Yiddish press. See the correspondence of Jacob Hellman (the official representative of the World Jewish Congress in Buenos Aires) regarding the matter in the files of the WJC, American Jewish Archives, MS COL 361, Box H27, Folder 8. According to Hellman, Goldman later met privately for two hours with President Ramírez, who assured him that "no steps will be taken against the Jews and that local decrees affecting kosher slaughter and educational problems will soon be revoked." See Hellman's letter to Arieh Tartekower in New York, 29 Nov. 1943.

<sup>75</sup> MI 4 Dec. 1943, 5.

<sup>76</sup> See MI 25 Dec. 1943, 12, which reports his meetings with both embassies.

<sup>77</sup> In fact, following the reopening of the Yiddish press in October 1943, Goldman even called upon the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires personally to express his appreciation for American actions on behalf of the Jewish community. See NA, RG 59, 835.918/100.

<sup>78</sup> See MI 25 Mar. 1933, 2; 1 Apr. 1933, 1. See also the *New York Jewish Daily Bulletin*, which reported the event on 30 Mar. 1933.

<sup>79</sup> This boycott was first announced in *Mundo Israelita* on 21 Sep. 1933, 1.

<sup>80</sup> See its statement in MI 1 Jul. 1933, 4. The Comité was also a precursor to the DAIA.

---

<sup>81</sup> Other efforts were less subtle. One appeal which appeared in *Judaica* in 1939 read as follows, “Jews of Argentina: In this hour of necessity and disgrace for the Jews, hear the cries of your brothers!... Contribute all you can to this campaign for 1,000,000 pesos... The present hour demands not charity but a fulfillment of your sacred obligation. Help the Jewish people. Help your brothers that suffer. Help the work of reconstruction in Palestine.” *Judaica* 57 (1938).

<sup>82</sup> See the announcement for this campaign in MI 30 Dec. 1939, 10.

<sup>83</sup> For a list of member institutions, refer to the ad posted in *Mundo Israelita* 17 Feb. 1940, 5.

<sup>84</sup> For a presentation of their viewpoint, see *Nuestra ayuda: solidaridad con las víctimas judías de la guerra* (Buenos Aires: El Organismo de Ayuda Directa a las Víctimas Judías de la Guerra, 1940).

<sup>85</sup> MI 24 Feb. 1940, 5. The reference here is to the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in September 1939 that had divided Poland between Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union.

<sup>86</sup> Ironically, by 1945, the Jewish Communists were actually some of the most vociferous supporters of the WJC campaign. See the confidential “Report by Dr. Arieh Tartekower on his Trip to Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay,” from December 1945, AJA, MS COL 361, H26/7. This position was largely an outgrowth of the diminished Soviet hostility towards Zionism at the end of the Second World War. Among other things, the Soviets saw Zionism and a Jewish state in Palestine as a means of reducing British imperial influence in the Middle East. See Peter Brod, “Soviet-Israeli Relations 1948-1956: from Courtship to Crisis,” in Robert S. Wistrich, ed. *The Left Against Zion* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1979).

<sup>87</sup> This latter association was also known by its German name, the Hilfsverein der Deutschsprechender Juden. It had been founded in April of 1933 to assist German-speaking refugees entering Argentina. See Alberto Kleiner, ed. *Informe 1943 de la Asociación Filantrópica Israelita sobre la inmigración de judíos alemanes en la Argentina durante la segunda guerra mundial* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Hebreo de Ciencias, 1985). For more on German-Jewish refugees and their communal life in Argentina, see José Alfredo Schwartz, *Y a pesar de todo: los judíos de habla alemana en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991).

<sup>88</sup> See “Colectas y campañas,” by Simon Mirelman, MI 28 Feb. 1942, 6-7.

<sup>89</sup> See “Breves comentarios sobre ‘colectas y campañas,’” by Moisés Goldman, MI 7 Mar. 1942, 6.

<sup>90</sup> See “De la falsa y de la verdadera unidad,” by A. L. Schusheim, MI 14 Mar. 1942, 6.

<sup>91</sup> For an example of this, see the “manifesto” of the Junta in MI 18 Jul. 1942, 7; and the DAIA’s response, MI 25 Jul. 1942, 5, 9.

<sup>92</sup> MI 27 Nov. 1943, 12.

<sup>93</sup> See “A la colectividad,” MI 11 Dec. 1943, 5.

<sup>94</sup> See the AFI’s advertisement, “Porqué estamos con la Junta,” in MI 10 Feb. 1945, 7. See also the confidential report by Dr. Arieh Tartekower from December 1945, which stresses “the rather prominent role played by the German Jews in Argentina and Brazil in the campaign against the World Jewish Congress.” AJA, MS COL 361, H26/7.

<sup>95</sup> MI 1 Sep. 1945, 4.

<sup>96</sup> For an example, see MI 2 Dec. 1944, 9.

---

<sup>97</sup> Albeit a very distant third. According to Magnus Morner, Italians accounted for nearly 48% of the nearly 5.5 million immigrant arrivals in Argentina between 1856 and 1924, and Spaniards another 33%. The remainder consisted of French, English, German, Welsh, and Jewish immigrants of various nationalities. See Magnus Morner, *Adventurers and Proletarians* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press/UNESCO, 1985), 56. In *Argentina and the Jews*, Haim Avni, estimates the total number of Jewish immigrants entering Argentina between 1853 and 1950 at 217,500. See Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 421 n.1. See also Sofer, 4.

## CHAPTER 2

### A QUESTION OF ETHNICITY: ARGENTINE JEWRY AND THE ELECTIONS OF FEBRUARY 1946.

*Tell me, my general, if you had been walking down a street in Buenos Aires... and you heard a disorderly mob of people shouting "Down with the Jews! Long Live Perón!" would you have voted for Perón? – Moisés Goldman, President of the DAIA, to Juan Perón, 1946.*

Of all the elections which have taken place in Argentina in its nearly two centuries as an independent nation, probably none was more important than that of February 24, 1946. On that day over three and one half million voters took to the polls for the first time since the military coup of June 4, 1943 to select a President and Vice President, national Senators and Deputies, as well as Governors and legislatures in all of the country's fourteen provinces. The election, which pitted the nearly all of traditional political parties against a new and upstart candidate, Juan Domingo Perón, mobilized practically the entire population on one side or the other and resulted in one of the most free and democratic election days in Argentine history. As the votes were counted over the course of the next month, Perón quickly emerged as the victor with over 52% of the popular vote against some 42% for his rival candidate, Dr. José P. Tamborini. Moreover, Perón's followers held a clear majority in both houses of the national Congress, and were

swept into thirteen of the fourteen governorships. Clearly, Perón's platform of economic redistribution, political inclusion, and social justice had triumphed over his counterpart's emphasis on democracy, freedom, and civil liberties.

For their part, the Jews of Argentina confronted the 1946 elections with the same intense interest and passion which characterized the population as a whole. Yet, for Jews, the elections also carried an additional sense of urgency, occurring as they did in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust in Europe and military dictatorship at home. In particular, the Jewish community had suffered from various discriminatory measures on the part of the previous military regime and was fearful that Juan Perón, who had served that regime first as Secretary of Labor and later as Secretary of War and Vice President, might extend such measures in his own government. Indeed, among Perón's most vociferous supporters was the virulently nationalist Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (ALN), whose members frequently marched through the streets of the capital chanting "Death to the Jews! Long live Perón!" Although Perón himself publicly disavowed the anti-Semitic actions of his followers, it is clear that Jews of virtually all national, religious, and economic backgrounds remained deeply suspicious of him and the movement he represented.

Previous studies which have attempted to account for the Jewish response to the elections of February 1946 have characterized it largely as an outgrowth of the larger middle class rejection of Perón's candidacy.<sup>1</sup> Although Perón attracted some support from the middle class, among dissent elements of the Radical Party, the UCR - Junta Renovadora, as well as from industrial capitalists, the vast majority of his followers were found among the lower classes and within the labor movement in particular.<sup>2</sup> According

to historian Peter Smith, who has extensively analyzed the electoral returns of 1946, immigrant and ethnic identity likely played a very small role in the election as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Yet, while such findings may have been true for Argentina's numerous immigrant communities in general, the Jewish response to Perón appears to have been considerably more complex. Through an analysis of electoral data, the Jewish press, and the comments of individual community members, it is apparent that the Jewish rejection of Perón was not merely a function of class but also stemmed from important ethnic considerations as well, including a fear of possible anti-Semitism on the part of the new government and an endemic mistrust for Perón's own nationalist and authoritarian leanings. In particular, the available evidence points to an overwhelming rejection of Perón throughout the community and suggests that Jewish opposition to Perón was actually strongest among the Jewish working classes, in distinct contrast to the larger national pattern as a whole.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF 1946

Perón's election in 1946 emerged out of a long series of events that began the previous year, when the leaders of Argentina's military government realized that their authoritarian regime was no longer tenable in the aftermath of World War II and the defeat of fascism in Europe. On August 5, 1945, they formally lifted the state of siege that had existed in the country ever since President Ramón Castillo's declaration of martial law in December 1941 and hinted at the possibility of holding new elections sometime in 1946. The announcement of August touched off a flurry of activity among opposition leaders. For the first time in nearly five years, political activity had been

legalized and the major political parties swiftly reconstituted themselves. On August 9, 1945 thousands of people took to the streets in marches and protests against the regime and in favor of a swift return to democracy. On August 28, the leaders of the country's leading opposition party, the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), approved the creation of a united political front against the regime that included Socialists, Progressive Democrats, and later even Communists, known as the "Unión Democrática," or Democratic Union. Momentum grew rapidly, and on September 19, the opposition forces staged a huge rally in Buenos Aires's Plaza del Congreso, "The March of the Constitution and Liberty," which drew as many as 200,000 people. Following the march, it seemed only a matter of time until the elections were held and the opposition was swept into power.

Events, however, soon took a bizarre turn, one that demoralized the opposition forces and gave new momentum to their chief antagonist, Colonel Juan Domingo Perón. Ever since the ascent of his political ally and chief supporter, General Edelmiro Farrell, to the Presidency in 1944, Perón had been one of the principal power brokers behind the regime, serving both as Vice President and Minister of War in addition to Secretary of Labor. Many in the military had long resented his undue influence, as well as his relationship with his mistress Eva Duarte, and had sought a way of displacing the colonel from the corridors of power. The opportunity finally presented itself in October 8, 1945, when Perón appointed a personal friend of Evita as Director of Mail and Telecommunications against the wishes of the army. That same day, military leaders met and conspired against the colonel, forcing him to resign all of his government positions on October 9. On October 12, Perón was arrested by a group of officers who sought to form a new government. Unbeknownst to the conspirators, though, Perón's arrest

awakened a wave of popular resentment among the workers he had championed as Secretary of Labor. On October 17, hundreds of thousands of them took to the streets, gathering at the Plaza de Mayo that evening to demand Perón's return. The conspirators quickly capitulated, and in the months that followed his release, Perón organized a dynamic political campaign that united organized labor with disaffected elements of the middle class as well as various nationalist groups, and enjoyed the backing of both the army and Church. Promising to tear down the old "oligarchy" he offered a message of political inclusion and social justice, mobilizing the sentiments of Argentine workers as well as other groups who had felt isolated or alienated by the older politics of the UCR and the liberal-conservative Concordancia of the "década infame."

Moreover, Perón's campaign gained an added boost just weeks before the election when the former U.S. ambassador in Argentina, Spruille Braden, issued a scathing condemnation of Perón and his colleagues in the military for their pro-axis sympathies during the Second World War. Among other things, Braden's "Blue Book," as it came to be called, accused the military government of defending German interests in Argentina and aspiring to implement a Nazi-style fascist regime in the country. Instead of refuting the charges, Perón masterfully construed his campaign as one of resistance to North American political meddling. Riding on the slogan of "Braden or Perón!" his alliance between the Laborista (Labor) party, dissident elements of the Radical Party organized as the UCR – Junta Renovadora, and various nationalistic parties including ALN, swept to victory on February 24, 1946. On June 4, 1946, Perón formally assumed the office of President.<sup>4</sup>

## THE “JEWISH VOTE” IN THE ELECTIONS OF FEBRUARY 1946

Despite Perón’s convincing victory in the election campaign, data drawn from the election returns in February and March of 1946 strongly suggest that the country’s Jewish population remained overwhelmingly loyal to the traditional political parties of the opposition. Because the electoral districts in 1946 corresponded to those used in the national census of 1947, it is possible to compare the election returns with census figures which specify the religion of the respondents in order to isolate those areas which contained the high percentages of Jews within the Federal Capital.<sup>5</sup> Such an analysis reveals that Perón fared poorly in those electoral districts and precincts with the largest concentrations of Jews.

It should be noted, however, this method is by no means conclusive, and in the case of Jews is fraught with several methodological difficulties. First of all, the number of Jews provided in the census was likely under-reported, owing to fears of anti-Semitic persecution as well as to the existence of other possible answers on the questionnaire such as “without religion” or “no response.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the census did not specify whether the respondents were naturalized Argentine citizens, and if so, whether or not they were registered to vote.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the presence of Jews in a certain area did not necessarily denote voting strength. Nor was the published census data sufficiently detailed to provide information on each individual precinct with the larger electoral districts. Thus, for more specific information on Jewish concentration within various census/electoral districts one must rely upon the demographic work of scholars, such as Eugene Sofer, who have attempted to analyze the spatial profile of the Jewish community during this time.<sup>8</sup> Finally, my own analysis of the information is limited only to the 20

districts of the Federal Capital, where Jewish demographic concentration was substantial enough to reach over 10% of the total population in some areas. Still, despite these problems, some interesting conclusions can be derived from comparing census data with the election returns of February 1946.

According to the 1947 census, Jews constituted over 5.5% of the total population of the Federal Capital as a whole, and over 10% of the population in three particular districts. These included the 9<sup>th</sup>, the 11<sup>th</sup>, and the 15<sup>th</sup> districts. In the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> districts, which constituted the traditional Jewish barrio of Once, Jews comprised some 14.5% and some 24.5% of the total population respectively. In the 15<sup>th</sup>, which contained the newer Jewish barrio of Villa Crespo, Jews numbered some 10.3%. However, when one looks at the real absolute population figures, the 15<sup>th</sup> district emerges as much more significant. Containing some 51,279 Jews according to the census figures, the 15<sup>th</sup> district included nearly one-third of the total Jewish population of the city, or 30.9%. The 11<sup>th</sup>, with 15,484 Jews, had the second highest total, constituting approximately 9.3% of the city's Jewish population, and the 9<sup>th</sup>, with some 14,065 Jews, accounted for roughly 8.5%. All together, these three districts contained nearly half of the city's Jewish population, as well as the core foundations of the community's institutional and commercial life. For the most part, the Jews who lived in these areas were those who were the most attached to the community as a whole and to its social, political, and cultural affairs.

Of the three districts, the 11<sup>th</sup> contained the highest proportion of Jews among the general population, to such an extent that the Yiddish dailies even provided specific information about where its Jewish residents should vote. Quite interestingly, despite

Perón's victory in the city overall, Perón and his allies fared poorly in the 11<sup>th</sup> district, losing in every single precinct.<sup>9</sup> When added together, the initial tallies for the 11<sup>th</sup> district resulted in a landslide victory for Tamborini who gained some 6,625 votes against a mere 4,179 for Perón, a margin of roughly 61% to 39%.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the Peronists also fared badly in the race for senators and deputies in every one of the six precincts. In the race for the senate, the Peronist alliance of the Laborista Party and the UCR – Junta Renovadora gained some 3,731 votes in addition to the 419 votes cast for the nationalist ALN, giving the pro-Peronist forces at best a total of 4,150 votes. Against this, the united parties of the Unión Democrática (UD) gained some 7,217 votes for senator (63.4%). In the race for congressional deputies, the Peronists received some 3,595 votes along with 362 for their nationalist allies.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, the parties of the UD received a total of 8,249 votes, over 67% of those cast. In addition, both the Socialist Party and Communist-Progressive Democratic Party (known as Unidad y Resistencia – UR) did extremely well in the 11<sup>th</sup> district, accounting for some 21% and 19.5% of the total votes cast for senator, and nearly 25% and 18% of the total votes cast for deputies respectively. While Jews, comprising only a quarter of the district's total population, could not possibly have accounted solely for the tremendous victory of the UD in the 11<sup>th</sup> district as well as the strong showing of the Socialist and UR parties, they quite likely provided a strong swing vote in a highly divisive electoral race.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> district, where the proportion of Jews among the general population was substantially lower, but still well over 10%, the UD was victorious by a much smaller margin. Here initial results showed Perón victorious in six of the district's ten electoral precincts, but with a virtual tie in the total number of votes received. According to the

tallies printed in *La Prensa* over the course of March 1946, Tamborini led Perón in the 9<sup>th</sup> district by only two votes, 9,278 to 9,276.<sup>12</sup> In the race for the senate the Peronists and the ALN received some 8,646 votes against some 9,393 for the UD, a margin of only 48% to 52%. In the race for Congressional deputies the totals were similar. Here the Peronist and nationalist parties won 9,842 votes as opposed to 10,402 for the UD (49% to 51%). However, when only the results in the six precincts north of Avenida Rivadavia are considered, where the majority of the district's Jewish population resided, one sees a more substantial difference. In the race for President Perón received a tally of 4,534 votes against 5,066 for Tamborini, a margin of approximately 47% to 53%, with Tamborini winning in four of the six areas. In the race for senate, Perón and the ALN gained 4,295 votes versus 5,142 for the UD (46% to 54%), and in the race for deputies the totals were 4,294 and 5,667 (43% to 57%). Moreover, the tallies for the Socialist and UR were strong throughout the entire district. Again there appears to have been at least some correlation between a district's Jewish population and electoral support for the Unión Democrática.

However, it is in the 15<sup>th</sup> district where the apparent impact of a "Jewish vote" was most pronounced. With a total population of 497,913 in 1947, the 15<sup>th</sup> district was the city's largest. In addition, it contained over 30% of the capital's Jewish population as well. What is interesting is that the majority of the district's 51,279 Jews in 1947 resided overwhelmingly in its southern and easternmost sections, in the barrio of Villa Crespo, where they most assuredly offered a greater concentration than the 10% given for the entire district.<sup>13</sup> This discrepancy is reflected in the electoral results. In the 15<sup>th</sup> district as a whole, Perón won substantially over his rival in the race for President with a total of

some 48,086 votes against 39,864, a margin of 55% to 45%, even more than the national average. In the race for senate, the Peronists and the ALN won with 44,134 votes against 36,714 (again 55% to 45%). A similar result obtained in the congressional race where the Peronist and nationalist parties gained 45,107 votes versus 39,022 for their UD counterparts (54% to 46%). However, when the two precincts in the heart of the Villa Crespo are isolated, namely #147 and #148, a strikingly different picture emerges. In those two areas, Perón lost decisively. In the election for President, he was defeated 4,094 to 5,410 (43% to 57%). In the senate race his supporters lost 3,331 to 5,569 (a resounding 37% to 63%), and in the congressional race they were defeated 3,809 to 6,029 (39% to 61%). Moreover, both the Socialist party and the UR scored especially strong in the returns from precincts 147 and 148. With 1,703 and 2,286 votes in the senate race, they accounted for 19% and 26% respectively of the total votes cast in those two areas. In the election for congressional deputies they earned 2,053 and 2,233 votes respectively, totaling some 21% and 23% of the total votes, and far outpacing even the UCR which gained only 1,743 votes for deputy in precincts 147 and 148.

When this is compared against the national average in which Perón won some 52% of the popular votes for President, and the city-wide averages in which he won over 53% of the Presidential votes and the Peronist and nationalist parties gained some 52% of the votes for deputy, it seems plausible that the Jews constituted at least a significant electoral force against Perón. Moreover, according to the national averages, the Socialist and UR parties had only a minimal impact on the elections as a whole. Even in the city of Buenos Aires, which constituted the heart of its electoral strength, the UR party only drew a mere 12.5% of the total votes for deputy.<sup>14</sup> Compared to the relative strength of

the UR in areas of heavy Jewish concentration, it also appears that unlike their non-Jewish counterparts, working class Jews in Buenos Aires remained strongly loyal to the traditional leftist parties of the working class. While such data is certainly far from conclusive, when taken together with other evidence, such as the Jewish community's response to the anti-Semitic violence that accompanied Perón's campaign, the political opinions offered in various sectors of the Jewish press, and the personal recollections of individual Jews, it does provide an important piece of evidence to suggest a widespread Jewish rejection of Perón in the elections of 1946.

#### ANTISEMITISM AND THE CAMPAIGN OF 1946

One very significant factor influencing Jewish public opinion was most certainly the spate of violent incidents which accompanied Perón's electoral campaign. On the night of October 17-18 itself, as the Peronist masses gathered in what was largely a peaceful demonstration, nationalistic and anti-Semitic gangs mainly associated with the ALN attacked Jewish businesses and paraded through the streets shouting "Death to the Jews! Long live Perón!"<sup>15</sup> Throughout the months of November and December such incidents continued with attacks taking place against Jewish storefronts, synagogues, and even against individuals themselves. The police of the Federal Capital, directed by Chief Filomeno Velazco, often turned a blind eye to these attacks and even arrested the Jewish victims at times if they attempted to resist. Occurring as they did on the heels of the Second World War, these events attracted a great deal of international attention and contributed heavily to the image of Perón as a Nazi-style fascist that predominated in North American circles.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, they were utilized by the opposition parties in

Argentina as well as proof of Perón's supposed anti-democratic tendencies. Thus, although Perón himself took great pains to disassociate his political views from the misguided actions of some of his followers, the Jewish community in Argentina clearly had cause to view him with great suspicion on the eve of the elections of 1946.

The mainstream leadership of the Jewish community responded to the escalating violence by sending high-ranking delegates to meet with government authorities and encourage them to take measures to prevent further attacks. Following the vandalous outbreaks during the night of October 17-18, the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, or DAIA, to which the majority of the community's institutions were affiliated and which had increasingly come to represent the community before the national authorities, sent its president, Dr. Moisés Goldman, to meet with the Minister of War, General José Humberto Sosa Molina. Sosa Molina, a close friend of Perón, who earlier as Governor of Entre Ríos had taken measures against anti-Semitism, "repudiated the excesses against the Hebrews" and assured Dr. Goldman that such racist activities had no place in Argentina.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Goldman sent a letter to the President of Argentina himself, General Edelmiro Farrell, outlining the attacks and expressing his hope that in the future "they will be avoided with the rightful energy that comes from a sane preoccupation for the future of the nation."<sup>18</sup> On December 1, Goldman again met with the authorities, this time with Interior Minister Filipe Urdapilleta, who assured him that "[the attacks] were carried out by small groups of individuals," and that he had "given the necessary instructions to avoid such events," which in the case of occurring would be repressed "with all energy."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, in November the DAIA sent an official memorandum to all of the major political parties which warned against the division of

“the Argentine family” and suggested that “the fight against racism and anti-Semitism be included in their electoral platforms.”<sup>20</sup>

On a more popular level, however, the violent campaign appears to have been internalized by the Jewish community, in turn leading to a small but significant backlash of resistance on the part of Jewish youth. On the night of November 23, a group of twelve Jewish young people were arrested by the police after attempting to defend physically Jewish businesses and residences from anti-Semitic attacks. The incident, in which the nationalist attackers were not arrested, produced a negative reaction within the Jewish community and after the president of the DAIA personally intervened with Police Chief Velazco the twelve were released from jail without charges.<sup>21</sup> In another, more tragic incident, which occurred in late December 1945, a 17 year old Jewish boy opened fire on a group of armed nationalists who had been harassing his family. In the course of the exchange, one of the nationalists was killed, and the boy was arrested by the police. While he too was later released by a judge who ruled he had acted in self-defense, actions such as this indicate that the anti-Semitic campaign had aroused passionate sentiments among the city’s Jews.<sup>22</sup> One visitor, in a letter to Dr. M. Perlzweig of the World Jewish Congress even commented that “One of the reasons why the [anti-Semitic] attacks diminished is that the hooligans know very well that they will be well beaten up by the Jewish youth. In this respect the history Germany and Poland will not be repeated.”<sup>23</sup>

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AGAINST PERÓN: THE JEWISH PRESS AND THE CAMPAIGN OF 1946

As the elections drew nearer and the campaigns gained momentum, it is evident that apprehension over the growing number of anti-Semitic incidents resonated strongly with the anti-fascist message of the Unión Democrática to create a broad base of political support for the opposition parties within the Jewish community. This was especially reflected in the Jewish press, which voiced its approval in various degrees to the campaign of the UD. What is interesting, however, is the degree to which the rejection of Peronism and endorsement of the UD was expressed publicly. In examining three publications of different political orientations, namely the Spanish language weekly *Mundo Israelita*, which represented the mainstream leadership of the community and maintained a strongly Zionist political position, the Yiddish language daily *Di Presse* which represented the voice of the Jewish left in general, and *Undzer Gedank* which served as the mouthpiece for the Jewish Workers Bund in Argentina, it would appear that open support for the Unión Democrática and disapproval of the Peronist parties was strongest in the organs of the Jewish left, which represented the Jewish working classes and the organized Jewish labor movement in Argentina.

Of the three papers reviewed in this research, *Mundo Israelita* was by far the most cautious in openly presenting its editorial views with regard to national politics. Although the paper clearly did not support Perón, its opposition to the Peronists was extremely subtle, perhaps fearing censorship or repression from government officials in the event of a Peronist victory. For the most part, the editors of the paper chose to concentrate rather narrowly on the problem of anti-Semitism in the country, leaving it to

their readers to make the implicit connections with Peronism and the surrounding electoral campaign. In one editorial entitled “The Anti-Semitic Campaign and its True Significance,” the editors spoke of the actions of anti-Semites who “take advantage of the agitation among citizenry in order to incite the masses against the Jewish population. In meetings of a determined tendency and in street marches, the exultation of a certain candidate is associated with the shout of ‘Death to the Jews!’”<sup>24</sup> In another editorial piece they warned that, “Many democrats do not see racial hatred as incompatible with political liberalism. This myopia has been taken advantage of by Nazi-fascists who infiltrate themselves among the masses with workers’ clothing and destroy from within the ideological harmony of the popular political parties.”<sup>25</sup> In still other articles, they cautioned that anti-Semitism posed one of the greatest threats to the existence of democracy worldwide, and represented “nothing more than an aspect of the totalitarian crusade, its point of departure.”<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, in an editorial that appeared on January 19, 1946, the editors of the paper clearly and unambiguously put forth their opposition to the idea of collective Jewish participation in national politics. “Owing to the fact that certain sectors or groups within the community, feeling that such intervention is advisable, have promoted a movement in favor of Jewish participation in the political struggles of the nation,” the editors of *Mundo Israelita* felt compelled to reiterate their stance that Jewish community should remain “totally outside the civic struggles of the country.”<sup>27</sup> Only in those cases where “the specific interests” of the community were at stake did the editors feel that the Jewish community mobilize itself as such to action, but in doing so it should not act “in favor or against one party of a particular tendency, but rather before the authorities of the

Nation and through the corresponding channels.” Their reasoning was that “national collectives which find themselves in such a situation would not be able to continue acting before the national authorities as apolitical entities, but rather as militant forces without the advantages of the organized political parties who can eventually come to power.” Further, they charged that the supporters of such partisan Jewish political participation were “very little preoccupied with the true interests of our community, and in every case place them behind their own political alliances....”<sup>28</sup> In this, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* approximated the official position of the DAIA itself, which argued that Jewish political activity on the national level should be restricted to the realm of individual participation.<sup>29</sup> Subsequently, during the entire month of February as the election campaign dominated Argentina’s public consciousness, virtually nothing was printed in *Mundo Israelita* about either anti-Semitism in the country or the coming elections.<sup>30</sup>

Like their counterparts at *Mundo Israelita*, the editors of the Yiddish-language daily *Di Presse* were also subtle in the ways they expressed their views about the campaign. Strong fears remained that as a Yiddish-language publication, *Di Presse* might again be subjected to censorship or even outright closure that had occurred under the military regime in October 1943. Yet, unlike the middle class and staunchly Zionist weekly *Mundo Israelita*, *Di Presse* represented the voice of the Jewish working classes and Jewish left which had always been more supportive of Jewish integration and participation in national politics. Therefore, its editors could not totally overlook the heated political debate swirling around them. As the election drew ever closer, they came out increasingly in favor of the campaign of the UD. Although never officially endorsing its candidates explicitly, the editors of *Di Presse* consistently featured positive news

reports about UD activities, coupled with details of Peronist violence. In addition, they often reported the time and place of various Radical, Socialist, and Communist-Progressive Democratic party meetings and rallies. Finally, in the week immediately prior to the election, *Di Presse* ran a series of articles and editorial pieces which openly promoted the UD campaign against its Peronist opposition. On the day of the election itself, the front page of *Di Presse* even carried the photographs of Tamborini and his running mate, Enrique Mosca, under the headline, “Today Elections Are Held Throughout the Entire Country.”<sup>31</sup> Quite conspicuously, there were no corresponding photos of Perón and his Vice Presidential candidate, Hortensio Quijano.

As early as January, the editors of *Di Presse* printed an article by Carlos Sibelina, complaining about the preferential treatment shown by the military authorities to the Peronist campaign, and their failure to counteract the use of violence on the part of Perón’s followers. “It should be perhaps enough to say,” wrote Sibelina, “in order to indicate the different conditions in which both campaigns are being carried out, that the one of Colonel Perón has not come across any difficulties and has been received with open sympathy in official circles. The second, that of the Unión Democrática, has been met with verbal and physical abuse; [abuse] which has been received by the police, with few exceptions, with great passivity if not open satisfaction.”<sup>32</sup> “Everywhere,” he continued, “the followers of Perón’s candidacy have entered in the [Unión Democrática] meetings in order to disrupt them and create a terror atmosphere,” while Perón’s campaign itself faced no similar attacks or disturbances. After describing a series of recent incidents in the province of Jujuy and offering his hope that the military would take a more pro-active role in protecting the opposition campaign, the author concluded

that although Perón believed his victory “will be a definitive one. No less is the belief in victory on the part of Drs. Tamborini and Mosca.”<sup>33</sup>

Although the paper regularly highlighted the activities, rallies, and speeches of the Unión Democrática and its candidates throughout the campaign, the editors of *Di Presse* stepped up their support for the opposition in the days immediately prior to February 24.<sup>34</sup> They reported heavily on Peronist violence and on the opposition’s stand against the proliferation of “Nazi-fascism” in the country. On February 21, *Di Presse* dedicated a number of stories to the funeral of Isaac Sulkin, a 22 year old Jewish student who had been killed during a Peronist attack on a Communist rally just two days before, noting that Peronist elements attempted to disrupt the occasion with shouts of “Death to the Jews! Long live Perón!”<sup>35</sup> On February 22, they carried an advertisement for the Socialist Party, which stated its program as “the defense of human rights and resistance to all dictatorship.”<sup>36</sup> On February 23, they coupled lengthy coverage of the final Socialist and UR pre-election rallies with yet another incident of Peronist violence in which a Jewish woman ended up in the hospital after being accosted by Peronist thugs and forced to drink ink.<sup>37</sup> In reporting on the UR rally, they noted the speech given by Communist leader Julio A. Noble, who “sharply condemned the dictatorship, the Laborista candidate, and called upon the people to vote for the candidate of democracy.”<sup>38</sup> As for the Socialist rally, the author highlighted the words of Dr. Alfredo Palacios in which he condemned the anti-Semitic conditions of the current campaign, adding that “the same tragic adventure which we are reproducing here among ourselves today has already cost the world some 20 million dead.”<sup>39</sup>

On February 23, the editors came even closer to openly expressing their anti-Peronist sympathies, publishing an article entitled “Everyone Already Knows Today.”<sup>40</sup> In it, an anonymous author claimed that “Everybody already knows today for whom and for what they shall vote... So certain is it, that...the political parties have packed up their street propaganda and rely now on the voter’s decision.” Careful not to mention Perón or the Laborista party by name, the author characterized the coming election by personifying two very different kinds of voters who would decide its outcome. On the one hand, were the followers of a “strange new party,” about whom the author condescendingly remarked that, “A specifically Argentine type of voter always stands beside the one who is in power. He has a compromise with him and owes him a favor, expecting one in return... He is a man who believes not in his own strength, nor in his rights, and cannot protect himself. He is therefore in need of a powerful protector...” While in the past, this protector had once been the figure of the caudillo, “Today his powerful protector is power alone.” Namely, the power wielded by the military regime, and its supposed official candidate, Juan Perón.<sup>41</sup>

In opposition to this, the author portrayed a very different kind of individual.

“We have in mind,” he wrote,

...the one who was raised politically: the traditional Radical, who traces his pedigree from Aristobulo de Valle and Alem, from Yrigoyen and Alvear, and who remembers the role of his party in the democratization of the nation; we have in mind the Socialist Party, that in the last fifty years has helped to raise the civic consciousness of the urban citizenry; and we have in mind the Communist Party, that participates now in the state elections in alliance with the party of Alejandro de la Torre and with the unaligned democratic intelligentsia.

Claiming that, “The Argentine people have never loved democracy more than after the past three years when it was officially stolen from them,” the author continued to state that,

Every attempt to sever this nation from the democratic world and harness it to the imperialist orbit of Nazism, every expression of Nazi practice, from race politics to religious intolerance, every manifested tendency towards the restoration of the Rosas age, towards the cult of the “Mazorca” and today’s “Falange,” every attempt to bring back the ideals of...Hispanicism, has added to the political upbringing of every Argentine citizen all new motives to protest, and to rise again in struggle.<sup>42</sup>

Referring to the proud legacy of Argentine democracy, the author was clearly enmeshed in the historical traditions of Argentina. Yet, at the same time, his message drew upon the image of fascism and Nazi persecution as well in defining Peronism. While the rhetoric of “democracy” and “fascism” was certainly one of the principal themes used by the opposition parties themselves during the campaign, it is not surprising that it would find such resonance among Argentina’s Jewish population, given the tragic memory of the European Holocaust which had ended only less than a year before, and which continued to dominate the headlines of Jewish newspapers such as *Di Presse*.

On the day of the election itself, *Di Presse* offered no official endorsements for either side, instead publishing an editorial entitled “Towards a Government of the People’s Representatives.”<sup>43</sup> In this short piece, the editors again focused upon the juxtaposition between democracy and fascism to transmit their underlying sentiments about the campaign. They did so by outlining the triumph of “Democratic Argentina” against “individuals impregnated by the ideas and practices of German Nazism, Italian fascism, and the Hispanic Falangism,” of the Revolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, “which came

to the country with the discredited government of Sr. Castillo.” “Many of these [ideological] experiments,” they continued, “have been neutralized by the struggle for democracy which at the same time has won a victory in securing the elections which today are a fact.” Finally, they concluded that “The great majority of the Argentine people goes today to the polls, conscious that with its suffrage, it takes a most important step towards the reestablishment of the constitutional order of the country and towards a government of the people’s representatives.”<sup>44</sup> Once more, the editors presented the essential message of the Unión Democrática in terms reminiscent of the Second World War, a war which although ended, remained sharply etched in historical awareness of Jews the world over.

If the UD’s platform of civil liberties, freedom, and democracy appeared frequently in the language used by *Di Presse*, it was explicitly endorsed in *Undzer Gedank*, the principal organ of the Jewish Workers Bund in Argentina. Founded in Europe in 1897, the Jewish Workers Bund represented a non-Zionist, nationalist Jewish grouping within the larger Socialist movement worldwide, much as independent nation-states such as Germany, France, even Argentina, maintained their own autonomous Socialist parties.<sup>45</sup> Brought to Argentina’s shores with the waves of Jewish immigrants who arrived there in the first decades of the twentieth century, the Bund constituted one of the most substantial elements within the early Jewish labor movement in the country. Although its popularity had declined considerably by 1946, owing to the mobility of many Jewish workers after 1930 as a result of Import Substitution Industrialization as well as the tragic destruction of its European motherland, it still remained an important political force within Argentina’s Jewish community.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the pages of *Undzer*

*Gedank* provide valuable insight into the attitudes and motivations of a significant part of the Jewish working classes in Argentina, who were still very much a presence within the community in 1946.

In January 1946, a feature article by Jewish labor leader Pinne Wald clearly put forth the Bund's evaluation of the coming electoral contest. Not mincing words, in "The June Revolution for the February Elections," Wald asserted that the Peronist election campaign represented nothing less than a continuation of the June 4, 1943 revolution in Argentina, a revolution which had implanted the seeds of Nazi-fascism in the country.<sup>47</sup> Although the military conspirators had initially promised to restore freedom to the nation in response to the tyrannical regime of Ramón Castillo, they instead "only introduced that which the overthrown regime had not had the strength to carry out," including the dissolution of the national Congress, federal intervention of the provincial governments, the suppression of the political parties, the repression of student organizations, and finally the censorship of the press. As the former Secretary of Labor, Minister of War, and later Vice President of that same regime, Perón could not be isolated from such treachery against Argentina's democratic ideals and institutions. According to Wald, his apparent economic and social reforms as Secretary of Labor were a nothing but a "hoax," in which Perón merely "seduced or bought off" the support of working class in order to secure the victory of fascism in the country. Moreover, he wrote, "The [promise] of unity for the workers who will be led by the regime is [also] a hoax, very organized, and very electioneering, which has collaboration as its goal." In the aftermath of the Second World War and the victory of the United Nations against fascism, the forces of the June Revolution, as embodied in Perón's candidacy, now sought to resort to "democratic

recipes” in order to gain power. “Did Hitler not make an election?” asked Wald, “And was it not pure Nazi?” Even the shouts of “Viva Perón!” for Wald suggested vivid images of “Heil Hitler!” Thus, despite the guise of democratic legitimacy, Perón in reality ran as “the candidate of Nazi-fascism for President,” and was an aspiring “Argentine dictator,” who could only be defeated if the politically conscious and freedom-loving citizens of Argentina realized just what was at stake.<sup>48</sup> Here was one labor leader who was clearly not wooed by Perón’s lure of “social justice,” nor dismayed by the very real threat of political retaliation.

If the January edition made ever so clear *Undzer Gedank*’s opposition to Perón’s political candidacy, the February issue constituted an official endorsement for the Socialist Party in the forthcoming elections. The header and footer of each page carried the call for mobilization with slogans such as, “Vote for the Socialist candidates for Senate and Parliament!,” “The Socialist Party defends the interests of the working masses!,” or “Against anti-Semitism and racism – Vote for the Socialist list!” On the last page, in Spanish, *Undzer Genank* even included an article by Socialist leader and candidate for deputy, Americo Ghioldi. In “The Flag of Liberty,” Ghioldi highlighted the past accomplishments of the Socialist Party as a champion for the working classes in Argentina, stressing that, “Improvements in salary or in the hours of the workday are transitory and are superceded in no time by the progress of the industrial process. What is fundamental is the consciousness of the working class, of its rights, and of its social force.”<sup>49</sup> Promising to continue serving the working class as the voice of reform, he closed by adding, “We have endured all adversity, overcome all adversaries, advanced in spite of persecution, imprisonment, and exile, and we present ourselves to the elections of

February 24, with the satisfaction of knowing that the people of the Federal Capital will once again ratify their faith in Socialism.”

Even more interesting than the official rhetoric of the party leadership, however, were the opinions offered by the Jews themselves who edited and composed the journal's Yiddish-language pages. In “Jews, Freedom, Socialism and the Elections,” an unknown author argued against the isolationist view of ethnic political participation that had been advanced by the DAIA and defended in *Mundo Israelita* earlier in January.<sup>50</sup> “It is true that we Jews in Argentina do not lead any of our own great political movements. However, that does not mean that we do not have any weight to throw out on the political scales of the country in a decided moment.” Contending that “when there comes a dark time we are tormented on the one hand for not mixing and on the other for mixing ourselves in politics,” the author reasoned, “that our collectivity will not be any better off for concealing itself.” Moreover, given the all-important struggle between Nazi-fascism and democracy taking place in the country in the wake of the Holocaust, Jews could not afford to remain silent. Instead, they should remember, “that it was for us Jews that the Nazis, the fascists, erected the gas-chambers and the crematoria; millions of our fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and children were thrown alive into the ‘kilns.’” Lamenting that, “When the Jewish youth hear in the streets of Buenos Aires or in the streets of other cities in the country shouts against the Jews, or see that men have painted over a Jewish store or restaurant, they feel that their very fatherland is overcome with a murderous, bloody affliction,” the author noted that historically it was the Socialist Party which had led the crusade against racism and anti-Semitism in Argentina. Unfortunately, though, such “public appearances of the Socialist deputies did not win any intervention from the

‘sheyne yidn [pretty Jews]’ who repel the entreaties of these influential politicians in order to obtain by pleading a mere pledge of a good word.” According to the author, the elections of February 24 gave, “the best opportunity for the Jewish masses to demonstrate with their votes that they value the heroic and honest struggle of the Socialist movement and its leaders.”<sup>51</sup> Aside from its open partisanship, what was interesting about this article was its nearly complete lack of reference to kinds of issues mentioned by Ghioldi in his more official piece. Instead, the author here appealed to Jews as Jews – and not as workers – to organize, militate, and intervene politically in support of the party and to prevent the possible repetition of the European catastrophe in Argentina. Furthermore the author openly challenged the timid political position of the community’s Zionist leaders, instead arguing for the merits of a Jewish ethnic political bloc.

In a short piece entitled, “On Shoes, Shirts, and Books,” author M. Helfer offered another rather subtle yet powerful critique of Perón for his pronounced anti-intellectual stance.<sup>52</sup> Helfer proposed that the campaign was quite simply divided between those who were “blinded by the demagogic speech regarding the ‘accomplishments’ of the Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare,” and the Argentine “folk,” “united under the name Democratic Unity...which is for complete freedom of speech and of the press, for freedom of unions and of students, social justice and a fixed, defined international politics...in collaboration with all democratic states, in this continent and in the entire world.” Furthermore, he wrote, “We will but ascertain what the so-called Peronists mean, when they show themselves on the streets with their cries of ‘Long live Perón!’ as well as the already well known slogans ‘Down with democracy! Kill the Jews!’ to which is now added a new slogan; that only the shoes should live.”<sup>53</sup> Here, in addition to the

usual references to democracy, fascism, and Peronist anti-Semitism, Helfer added an additional reference to Perón's famous campaign slogan, "¡Alpargatas sí! ¡Libros no!" which can be loosely translated as "Shoes Yes! Books No!" As a community which traditionally placed great value on education and learning, it is not surprising that Argentina's Jews would have rejected a slogan such as this, a slogan that helped Perón to mobilize hundreds of thousands of working class Argentines in support of his candidacy.

From these pieces, it is clear that the editors of *Undzer Gedank*, as well as the Jewish Workers Bund which they represented, were adamantly opposed to Perón. Moreover, they were much more vociferous in their opposition than the community at large. Yet they were not alone among the Jewish working classes. Additional evidence in *Di Presse* indicates that members of the community's labor-Zionist parties also attempted to recruit Jewish support for the Socialist Party prior to the elections of 1946.<sup>54</sup> All of this suggests that despite the presence of individual Jewish workers in pro-Peronist unions, the organized Jewish labor movement as such not only remained loyal to the older, European based, leftist political parties, but also was at the forefront of Jewish opposition to Perón. The focus of this opposition and the language used to articulate it, also suggests that the Jews were considerably motivated in their opposition by the memory of Nazi persecutions in Europe and fear of fascism's revival in Argentina. This emphasis on fascism and anti-Semitism corresponded well with the larger electoral plank of the opposition forces in the country, who had supposedly joined together to restore democratic rule and civil liberties that had suffered after three long years of military rule. Even the less committal views of the Zionist mainstream, led by the DAIA and

represented largely by *Mundo Israelita*, were able to locate a common point of reference with the Unión Democrática on the issue of anti-Semitism.

#### JEWISH OPPOSITION TO PERÓN: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

In addition, the comments of individual Jews taken from various personal interviews further shed light on the various ways in which Jews viewed and interpreted Perón and his movement. When asked about their opinions of Perón, both then and now, most of those interviewed voiced their opposition to his campaign, touching upon Perón's supposedly pro-Nazi and pro-fascist past, culled from his military experience and his assignment as a military attaché in Mussolini's Italy from 1938-1940, as well as his populist style as a political leader. While the vast majority of Argentine Jews today concur that Perón himself passed no anti-Semitic legislation, either as a minister in the military government or later as President, and that he even spoke out publicly against anti-Semitism on numerous occasions, there was too much in his political behavior, and in that of the Peronist movement, which reminded Jews of the all too recent experience of fascism in Europe.

Regarding Perón's supposedly fascist background, Samuel Posklinski, a former worker and activist in the Jewish labor movement at the time of Perón's rise to power, commented that, "Everyone knew that Perón went to a Nazi-German school. He spoke perfect German. He belonged to a German military school. That is why the Jews could not accept him." When questioned about the reaction of the Jewish working class in particular, he replied that although Perón had granted numerous concessions to the syndicates after being appointed as Secretary of Labor in 1943, Jewish workers in general

remained opposed to him. “The Jewish workers in many places were recognized as workers, but they felt themselves as Jews in every way... I worked in a Jewish factory, where the owners were Jews and where non-Jews also worked. And these same non-Jews, [who supported Perón,] hated the Jews, from whom they earned their money, they hated Jews.”<sup>55</sup> Still another former labor activist, David Rosenfarb, in an interview done by the Centro Marc Turkow in Argentina, reflected on the importance of the military regime’s discriminatory actions against the use of Yiddish as a likely factor in arousing Jewish opposition to Perón, who was widely perceived as the regime’s chosen candidate. “In the time of Perón, we used to do all the work, all the propaganda, in Yiddish. Everything. The union, the assemblies, the personal remarks. But one day the Chief of Police called me while I was Secretary [of the union,] and said to me: From now on you are not going to be able to speak in your language, Yiddish. Only in Spanish.” Because a number of the union’s most influential members were unable to express themselves fully in Spanish, the union was forced to wait for moments when the police investigator would leave the room in order for such members to speak, or to hold clandestine meetings “in particular workshops, such as in big sheds... and we took all of the activists there.”<sup>56</sup>

When asked if he had been a supporter or opponent of Peronist politics in his youth, one of the current editors for *Mundo Israelita*, Ariel Plotschuk, replied, “At the time I was completely, 100% anti-Peronist. Now I can see things from a more objective perspective. But at the time I was totally opposed.”<sup>57</sup> The reasons for his sentiments included Perón’s pro-axis military background and sympathies, the presence of anti-Semitic slogans in his campaign, and his dictatorial appearance. José Smilg, a former

immigrant from Germany, highlighted Perón's military background, saying "the whole Peronist movement had its origin in the army." Further, he remarked, "When the Peronist movement began we were scared. It reminded us of what had happened in Germany. He had no anti-Semitic slogans, that is true, but the whole manner of getting to power, of the instigation of the masses, of the form of speaking, all reminded us of Nazi Germany... It was as though we had to go away a second time... Many people speculated about emigration."<sup>58</sup>

In regard to Perón's fascist countenance, Dr. Asher Grinsky, medical student who later became chief of surgery in a leading Buenos Aires hospital, noted Perón's strong predilection for speaking from balconies. "No Jewish leader ever spoke from a balcony!" he exclaimed, "Balconies were for fascist leaders, Nazi leaders... Mussolini spoke from a balcony, Hitler spoke from a balcony, and Perón spoke from a balcony... For example in the United States, a President never speaks from a balcony when he has to speak. They speak from where they are..."<sup>59</sup> Tobias Kamenstein, a former Zionist leader and AMIA president during the 1960's, commented, "The great majority of Jews were against Perón, because Perón had a smell of fascism. Because Perón, when he was a lieutenant colonel, was a military attaché to the Mussolini's regime. That's a very good teacher, is it not?... He never spoke out against the Jews, never, but he spoke of things that the Jews felt were not very democratic."<sup>60</sup>

Again, from this small sample of interviews, it appears that ethnic considerations played a predominant role in these individuals' rejection of Perón. Among other things, their concerns included a fear of fascism and totalitarian rule in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, the anti-Semitic actions of many of Perón's supporters, and in the case

of one Jewish worker, the 1939 ban on Yiddish public speech upheld by the military junta of June 4, 1943. When added to the evidence already presented from the Jewish press as well as the election returns themselves, the comments of these individual Jews further lend credence to the importance of ethnicity as a crucial factor in determining the Jewish response to Perón in February 1946.

#### CONCLUSION: THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY IN THE JEWISH RESPONSE TO PERÓN

Indeed, what emerges is a profile of a community that was overwhelmingly opposed to Perón's candidacy in 1946. Regarding this point, there has never been a great deal of contention. However, previous scholars who have attempted to explain Jewish opposition towards Perón's candidacy have often characterized it as a reflection of larger middle class patterns. While class was most certainly a factor, a close examination of the response of the community to elections also reveals the existence of important ethnic considerations as well. In fact, based on the limited evidence available regarding the political behavior of immigrant communities in general, it appears that this response to Perón may have been exceptional in uniting virtually all sectors and classes of the Jewish community in their rejection of Perón.

Among the Jewish middle class majority, there appears to have been a major preoccupation with the threat of anti-Semitism and the inclusion of anti-Semitic groups within Perón's electoral coalition. Occurring as it did in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, this concern is completely understandable. The very same pages of the Jewish press that discussed and considered Argentine-Jewish politics were also filled

with stories documenting the full horror and extent of Nazi genocide, in addition to debates on how to resolve the problem of Jewish refugees. Among the Jewish working-class, the opposition to Perón appears to have been even more intense and vocal. Unlike the majority of its non-Jewish counterparts, the Jewish labor movement in Argentina seems to have remained loyal to the ideals of the older established working-class parties. Above all, this is reflected in the high proportion of electoral support for the Socialist and Unidad y Resistencia parties in electoral districts with large numbers of Jews, and in the opinions offered in the working class Jewish press.

For the most part, it would appear then that the vast majority of Argentina's Jews did not see in Peronism, at least initially, a productive avenue for their own larger aspirations towards social and political integration in the country. Among Zionists, such ideals were increasingly subordinated to the struggle over a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, while among the Jewish left, which had always been more concerned with advocating participation in the surrounding national political life, the idea of integration remained tied to the context of an older political system which was badly weakened after 1946. All of this then, raises a number of difficult questions regarding the rather intertwined relations that would later evolve between the principal institutions of the Jewish community and the Peronist regime in the years that followed. Faced with the solid defeat of the traditional democratic parties in February 1946, the Jewish community, led by the DAIA, now braced itself for the rise of a "New Argentina."

## ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, see Juan José Sebreli, *La cuestión judía en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968), 252.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Laborista Party itself accounted for over 70% of the votes cast for Perón in those districts where it was counted separately from that of the UCR – Junta Renovadora. Juan Carlos Torre, *La vieja guardia sindical y Perón* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1990), 195.

<sup>3</sup> See Peter H. Smith, "The Social Base of Peronism," *HAHR* 52 (1972), 55-73. In this piece, Smith correlates the election returns from 1946 with data from the 1947 census to gain a perspective on what characteristics might have been influential in those districts which voted for Perón. Among his findings is the fact that Peronism appeared to represent a kind of protest against modernization, both in the countryside and in the cities. Nevertheless, Perón tended to fare best in urban areas, and specifically those areas with a high concentration of industrialization. Moreover, within those areas he appeared "to have obtained his most crucial electoral support from the 'old' working class, not from the recent countryside-to-city migrants." Beyond these working-class industrialized districts, the presence of European immigrants seems to have been much less significant. While such conclusions are clearly important within the larger historiography on Peronism, they also suggest that the electoral behavior of Argentine Jews may have differed substantially from that of other ethnic communities.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed presentation of the sequence of events during this period, refer to Felix Luna, *El '45: Cronica de un año decisivo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Jorge Alvarez SA, 1969). In addition, see Joseph Page, *Perón: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1984); Robert Alexander, *Juan Domingo Perón: A History* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979); and Robert Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). See also U.S. Department of State, *Blue Book on Argentina: Consultation among the American Republics with Respect to the Argentine Situation*, (New York: Greenberg Publisher, 1946); and Gary Frank, *Juan Perón vs. Spruille Braden: The Story Behind the Blue Book* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> See the census of 1947. Argentina. Dirección Nacional del Servicio Estadístico, *IV Censo general de la nación*. Tomo I: Censo de población (Buenos Aires: 1947).

<sup>6</sup> Although few scholars have studied the 1947 census specifically, those working from the census of 1960 have generally projected a Jewish population for 1947 that is significantly higher than the 249,330 listed in the census. For example, see Sergio DellaPergolla, "Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry," in Gilbert Merx and Judith Laikin Elkin, eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987). See also Ira Rosenswike, "The Jewish Population of Argentina," *Jewish Social Studies* 22 (1960): 195-214.

<sup>7</sup> Information regarding naturalization is available, however, in the 1936 municipal census for the Federal District of Buenos Aires. According to the published documents of the 1936 census, the Federal Capital contained some 44,816 males of Jewish religion, of whom 12,183 (or 27.1%) were naturalized citizens. Among foreign-born Jews only, the percentage of naturalized citizens was just 9.4%. Among the population in general, some 59.9% of all males and some 13.8% of foreign-born males were naturalized. Therefore, these statistics appear to show that the percentage of naturalized Jewish males in comparison to the general population was somewhat lower than average. It should be emphasized that these statistics are for comparative purposes only and are not necessarily reflective of the percentage of naturalized Jews among the general population over a decade later. Given the end of mass immigration in 1930, one might expect those figures to be noticeably higher. For more on the Jewish population of Buenos Aires in 1936, see the Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, *Cuarto censo general 1936: Población*, Tomo III (Buenos Aires: 1939).

---

<sup>8</sup> See Eugene Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires*, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> See *Di Presse*, hereafter referred to as DP 24 Feb. 1946, 1. Unfortunately, issues of the other main Yiddish daily, *Di Idishe Tsaytung*, from January and February of 1946 were unavailable to me at the time of this research.

<sup>10</sup> I have drawn this data largely from the major Argentine daily, *La Prensa*, admittedly an opponent of the Peronist candidacy, but which provided a detailed breakdown of electoral tallies within each voting district. For other sources of election return data, refer to the daily *La Nación*, as well as Darío Canton, *Materiales para el estudio de la sociología política en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales Instituto Torcuato di Tella, 1968). See also the military's own account of the election in Argentina, Ministerio del Interior, *Las fuerzas armadas restituyen el imperio de la soberanía popular* (Buenos Aires: 1946).

<sup>11</sup> In the Congressional elections the nationalist camp also included the patriotic Partido 4 de Junio in addition to the ALN.

<sup>12</sup> See the returns as they appeared daily in *La Prensa* throughout March 1946. According to the tally printed in *La Nación* on March 16, 1946, Tamborini led Perón by just 11 votes. See *La Nación*, 16 Mar. 1946, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Refer to Sofer's outline of the Jewish community, Sofer, 84.

<sup>14</sup> For a general listing of the nationwide election results in 1946, see Canton, 129-134.

<sup>15</sup> The events of October 17-18 served to inspire a short story by the widely known and anti-Peronist writer Jorge Luís Borges along with Adolfo Bioy Casares, entitled *La fiesta del monstruo*, in which a band of Peronist thugs stones a young Jewish student to death before attending a Peronist rally. See Jorge Luís Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, "La fiesta del monstruo," in *Nuevos Cuentos de Bustos Domecq*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Librería La Ciudad, 1977), 85-103.

<sup>16</sup> For an example of this, see the *New York Times* 26 Nov. 1945; and 28 Nov. 1945. See also the entry for Argentina in the *American Jewish Yearbook* 48 (1946-7). In addition, see the letter from Joseph Proskauer of the American Jewish Committee to the Spruille Braden, 28 Nov. 1945, expressing concern over acts of "Nazi anti-Semitism in Argentina." National Archives (NA), College Park, RG 59, 835.4016/11-2845.

<sup>17</sup> See *Mundo Israelita*, hereafter referred to as MI 27 Oct. 1945, 2.

<sup>18</sup> See the text of his letter to President Farrell. *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> See MI 8 Dec. 1945, 7.

<sup>20</sup> MI 17 Nov. 1945, 2.

<sup>21</sup> MI 1 Dec. 1945, 8.

<sup>22</sup> See the editorial in MI "Trágica derivación de la campaña antisemita," which argues for the boy's release. MI 5 Jan. 1946, 3. For details of the incident, see DP 28 Dec. 1945, 4. See also the telegram from Cabot to the U.S. State Department which reports on the incident and its coverage in the local non-Jewish press, 28 Dec. 1945, NA, RG 59, 835.4016/12-2845.

- 
- <sup>23</sup> See the letter from I. Jeffroykin to M. Perlzweig of the World Jewish Congress, sent from Montevideo and dated 4 Jan. 1946. American Jewish Archives: Files of the World Jewish Congress (MS COL #361), Box H23, Folder 8.
- <sup>24</sup> MI 24 Nov. 1945, 3.
- <sup>25</sup> MI 17 Nov. 1945, 3.
- <sup>26</sup> See “Antisemitismo larvado en las democracias.” MI 15 Dec. 1945, 3. See also MI 1 Dec. 1945, 3.
- <sup>27</sup> See “¿Deben los judíos actuar como grupo diferenciado en la política general?” MI 19 Jan. 1946, 3.
- <sup>28</sup> MI 19 Jan. 1946.
- <sup>29</sup> See the DAIA’s formal declaration to this effect in MI 15 Sep. 1945, 11.
- <sup>30</sup> It is very interesting here to take note of the dramatic difference in the paper’s editorial line of 1945 from that of 1940. On the eve of national elections in 1940, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* championed the forces of liberal democracy, arguing that “If, as Argentines, we are vitally interested in national independence and in individual liberty, it is our obligation not to forget that such precious goods can only be conserved for ourselves and our descendents if liberty and democracy are supported and perpetuated in the world...” further urging “the Jewish voter, native or naturalized,...to fulfil his civic obligation in view of the high ideals of nationality and citizenship.” See “Nuestro deber ante la jornada cívica de mañana,” MI 30 Mar. 1940, 3.
- <sup>31</sup> DP 24 Feb. 1946, 1. On page three the paper also featured photos of each of the two leading Radical, Socialist, and Communist-Democratic Progressive candidates for Senator without any similar mention of the Peronist candidates.
- <sup>32</sup> DP 31 Jan. 1946, 4.
- <sup>33</sup> DP 31 Jan. 1946, 4.
- <sup>34</sup> For an example of pro-UD coverage in *Di Presse*, refer to the reporting on the two competing campaign tours in January 1946. See among others, DP 20 Jan. 1946, 6; 22 Jan. 1946, 4; 23 Jan. 1946, 4; 26 Jan. 1946, 6; 27 Jan. 1946, 6; 28 Jan. 1946, 4; 29 Jan. 1946, 4; 30 Jan. 1946, 4. In the vast majority of these cases, *Di Presse* featured large headlines and photos of Tamborini and the UD and only minor coverage of the Peronist campaign.
- <sup>35</sup> DP 21 Feb. 1946, 4.
- <sup>36</sup> DP 22 Feb. 1946, 5.
- <sup>37</sup> See DP 23 Feb. 1946, 3.
- <sup>38</sup> DP 23 Feb. 1946, 6.
- <sup>39</sup> DP 23 Feb. 1946, 6.
- <sup>40</sup> See this article, which in Yiddish reads, “Yeder eyner veyst shoyn haynt...” DP 23 Feb. 1946, 6.
- <sup>41</sup> DP “Yeder eyner,” 23 Feb. 1946.

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>43</sup> See the editorial entitled in Yiddish, “Tsu a regirung fun folks fartreter,” DP 24 Feb. 1946, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>45</sup> For more on the origins and history of the Jewish Workers Bund, see Bernard Johnpoll, *The Politics of Futility: The General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967); Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); and *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). See also Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For more on the Bund in Argentina, see Israel Laubstein, *Bund: Historia del movimiento obrero judío* (Buenos Aires: Acervo Cultural Editores, 1997), Part Three, and Victor Mirelman, *Jewish Buenos Aires* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), Chapter 2.

<sup>46</sup> As recently as December 1945, the Bund had united with left-wing Zionists and Jewish Communists in a secular, working class alliance to gain control over the administration of the community’s largest institution, the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA). Among others, see the advertisements for the “White List” in DP 21 Dec. 1945, 3; and 22 Dec. 1945, 5. For the 1945 election results, see DP 24 Dec. 1945, 4. Furthermore, a similar alliance between just Bundists and Communists prevailed again in the AMIA elections in 1946 as well. See the results of the 1946 elections in MI 4 Jan. 1947, 7. For more on AMIA politics, see also Chapter Five of this dissertation.

<sup>47</sup> See P. Wald, “Di yuni-revolutsie far di februar valn,” *Undzer Gedank*, hereafter referred to as UG, Jan 1946.

<sup>48</sup> UG Jan. 1946.

<sup>49</sup> See Americo Ghioldi, “La bandera de la libertad,” UG Feb. 1946.

<sup>50</sup> See “Yidn, freyhayt, sotsializm, un valn,” UG Feb. 1946.

<sup>51</sup> “Yidn, freyhayt...” UG Feb 1946.

<sup>52</sup> See M. Helfer, “Alpargatas, hemder, un bikher,” UG Feb 1946.

<sup>53</sup> Helfer, UG Feb. 1946.

<sup>54</sup> See the community news bulletin in DP 22 Feb. 1946, 3; which announces various labor-Zionist activities on behalf on the Socialists.

<sup>55</sup> Samuel Posklinski. Interview by author, tape recording, Buenos Aires, Argentina: 11 Nov. 1999.

<sup>56</sup> See the interview with David Rosenfarb, Buenos Aires, Centro Marc Turkow, Archivo de la Palabra, Transcript #59. It should be noted, however, that Perón personally was in no way responsible for such measures.

<sup>57</sup> Ariel Plotschuk. Conversation with author, Buenos Aires, Argentina: 6 Oct. 1999.

<sup>58</sup> José Smilg. Interview by author, tape recording, Buenos Aires, Argentina: 20 Oct. 1999.

---

<sup>59</sup> Asher Grinsky. Interview by author, tape recording, Buenos Aires, Argentina: 11 Nov. 1999.

<sup>60</sup> Tobias Kamenstein. Interview by author, tape recording, Buenos Aires, Argentina: 8 Oct. 1999.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONFRONTING THE NEW ARGENTINA: THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, THE DAIA, AND THE PERONIST REGIME, 1946-1948.

*The Argentine nation has always expressed its respect for all creeds and ideologies because this respect constitutes the basis of its Constitution and the norm of its conduct as a cultured people. For this reason, as President of all the Argentines, I am neither able nor do I wish to establish distinctions of this kind. For me, there exist only citizens, whose goodness or badness is measured not by their thoughts but rather by their conduct. – Juan Perón, September 1946.*

The period from 1946 to 1948 proved to be one of the most dynamic in Argentina's history. With a convincing electoral mandate and a solid political majority in both houses of the Parliament, Juan Domingo Perón ambitiously embarked on his project to transform the country into a "New Argentina." In the economic sphere, he launched a massive program of state-sponsored industrialization, diverting Argentina's huge foreign reserves accumulated from agricultural exports to Europe in the wake of the Second World War into a growing urban industrial sector. In addition, he expropriated through purchases many foreign owned service enterprises, such as the British owned railroads, in an effort to attain "economic independence." In the political realm, Perón consolidated and centralized the power of the national state, eliminating his political rivals in the Supreme Court and reorganizing the various branches of the executive power

under his new Five Year Plan. In social matters, Perón and his ideology of *justicialismo* raised the social status and living standards of the working class, augmenting real wages by some 20% between 1945 and 1948.<sup>1</sup> With the encouragement of his wife, Evita, he also supported the passage of female suffrage in 1947. Finally, in his foreign policy, Perón strove to improve diplomatic relations with the United States which had soured under the previous military regime, further hoping to shed his own fascist image which had impeded good relations during the Braden years.

Despite their opposition to Perón and his candidacy in February 1946, the Jews of Argentina did not remain passive in the face of the country's changing political landscape. Rather, they expressed their responses, opinions, and desires, however cautiously, in the Jewish press and through their interactions with the regime itself. In particular, the Jewish community was quite outspoken on matters of direct relevance to its own political concerns. These included the problem of anti-Semitism in the country, the prospects for Jewish immigration, and Argentina's relation to the Palestine question and the nascent Jewish state. Yet, rather than attempting to influence state policy on such issues through open mobilization and political activity, the community preferred a more restrained approach of high-level personal contacts with Perón and his ministers. Never envisioning itself as an integral part of the "New Argentina," the Jewish community, led by the *Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas* (DAIA), struggled to preserve its political, social, and cultural independence as a distinct collectivity while at the same time lobbying the state for effective measures on its behalf. Concessions from the regime, however, rarely came without a price. Desperate to retain its autonomy from the government as well as its legitimacy within the community, the leadership of the DAIA

soon found itself at the center of a complicated power struggle in which it would become increasingly politicized at the hands of the Peronist state. Quite ironically, the very impulse to avoid co-optation would force the leadership of the DAIA into ever increasing acts of cooperation with the regime.

#### A PRAGMATIC RELATIONSHIP: THE PERONIST GOVERNMENT AND THE JEWS OF ARGENTINA, 1946-1948

Over the past few decades, a growing amount of research has been conducted on the relationship of Perón's first government and the Jews of Argentina. In place of early liberal assumptions of Peronist anti-Semitism or often equally distorted Peronist assertions of undue benevolence towards the Jews, a more nuanced view of Perón has emerged as a leader who, as in virtually all other aspects of his political career, displayed a striking degree of pragmatism in his actions towards the country's Jewish population. In reality, the range of Perón's interaction with the Jewish community was quite extensive, involving matters of immigration, foreign policy, and the problem of discrimination in Argentine society.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this relationship occurred in the realm of immigration. One of the pillars of Perón's plan for revitalizing the Argentine economy around industrial production was the active promotion of mass immigration, which had remained dormant since the 1930's. In particular, he hoped to utilize the vast reserves of displaced persons in Europe after the war as a potential labor force for the country's newly constructed factories. To this end, Perón signed agreements with both Spain and Italy to encourage immigration from those countries and set up a special commission to

facilitate their entry into Argentina. Over the next half decade, this arrangement brought some 373,000 Italians and some 140,000 Spaniards to Argentina as new immigrants.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Peronist regime also opened its doors to many thousands of Eastern European immigrants as well. At the direct request of Great Britain and the United States, Argentina agreed among other things to admit tens of thousands of former combat veterans from Yugoslavia and Poland who had become displaced persons following the advance of Communist forces in their mother countries.

Given the vast numbers of Jews displaced by the war and their desperate need for refuge, one might think that Argentina would have been eager to make use of their comparatively high level of education and commercial expertise in fostering the country's industrial growth. Yet, this was largely not the case. In 1947, when some 116,000 immigrants arrived on Argentina's shores from across Europe, a mere 600 Jews were recorded as having entered the country. In 1948, as the total number of immigrants doubled to some 219,000, the number of Jewish immigrants increased to just 680.<sup>3</sup> This anomaly was due at least in part to the actions of Argentina's highly anti-Semitic Director of Immigration, Santiago M. Peralta who had been appointed to the position under the military government which preceded Perón. Claiming that Jews exerted undue influence over virtually every sector of Argentina's economic life, Peralta sent strict orders to Argentine consuls across Europe not to issue visas to Jews under any circumstances, even in cases where they were officially sanctioned to enter the country without restriction as direct relatives of Argentine citizens. Yet, even after Peralta's removal in July 1947, following the protest of Argentine Jews and pressure from the United States, the prospects for Jewish immigration improved little. Each group of potential Jewish

immigrants, however small, required special government dispensation to enter the country. This also affected immigrants in transit to other countries.

According to Monica Quejada, this discrimination stemmed not from any personal animus against Jews on the part of Perón but rather from long-standing Argentine notions about various immigrant groups and their desirability. While Spanish and Italian immigrants had always been seen as desirable on account of their shared Latin cultural heritage with Argentina, Jews, Slavs, and Middle Easterners were often viewed with suspicion and even outright hostility by immigration authorities. “What the Peronist government did,” she claims, “is to convert into state policy along normative lines, an accumulation of experiences and proposals which until then had only been expressed in an extra-legislative manner.”<sup>4</sup> If Perón did make some concessions in permitting the entry of various Slavic immigrants from Eastern Europe, he did so out of political pragmatism in the face of international pressure, as well as in the belief that Orthodox Christian and Catholic Slavs would be easier to assimilate in Argentine society than Jews. With some 13 million displaced persons created in the aftermath of the Second World War, the United States and its European allies were extremely eager for traditional centers of mass immigration, such as Argentina, to play a substantial role in resolving the refugee crisis. Perón understood this, and used Argentina’s immigration policy as a way of effecting better relations with the U.S. in the wake of Spruille Braden’s tenure as American ambassador. At times, this pressure extended to Jewish immigration as well, as demonstrated by Peralta’s dismissal in July 1947. Yet, U.S. officials were often reluctant to push Perón on the issue, given that the total number of Jewish DP’s was relatively small in comparison to other groups.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, with the gradual emergence

of the Cold War after 1947, the United States found itself less concerned over Perón's supposed fascist sympathies and instead saw him as a potentially important hemispheric ally against Communism. On account of this, the U.S. was also largely willing to overlook the entry of hundreds if not thousands of former Nazi and axis war criminals to the country.<sup>6</sup>

Pressure from the United States extended far beyond Argentina's immigration policy, however. It also served to influence Perón's actions regarding Jewish affairs more generally. At the center of his efforts to cultivate better diplomatic relations with the United States, Perón sought to revise his regime's image as fascist and anti-Semitic. He did this largely through his relations with Argentina's Jewish community and through his stance on the Palestine question. According to Ignacio Klich, "Argentina's Palestine policy needs to be seen as part and parcel of the Perón government's efforts to reach an accommodation with the United States."<sup>7</sup> In the aftermath of the Second World War and the chilling murder of some six million defenseless European Jews by the Nazi Germany, Zionist appeals for an independent Jewish state in Palestine were received with a renewed sense of urgency in Europe and the Americas. Throughout 1946 and 1947 the newly created United Nations convened numerous times to consider the issue, and on November 29, 1947, the body voted formally to recommend the partitioning of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. Although Argentina officially abstained from the 1947 partition vote, in part to placate Great Britain and her Arab allies, the subsequent desire for improvement in relations with the United States after 1947 corresponded to a subtle shift away from such absolute neutrality and instead towards a policy of "equidistance" towards Israel and her Arab neighbors.<sup>8</sup> As a result this change, Argentina supported

Israel's admission to the United Nations in late 1948, officially recognized the Jewish state in February 1949, and exchanged diplomats with Israel in May 1949, establishing the first Latin American legation there. Argentina also signed a substantial bilateral trade agreement with Israel in May 1950. In responding favorably to Israel, Perón sought to curry the sympathies of Argentina's Jewish community, in the hopes of further divesting himself of his Nazi-fascist image in the eyes of US officials. He also, "wished to use relations with Israel as a way of conquering Jewish goodwill" more generally, which rightly or wrongly he believed exerted a powerful influence on U.S. foreign policy.<sup>9</sup>

This kind of pragmatism that characterized Perón's foreign policy also extended to the contentious issue of Argentine anti-Semitism, where Perón sought to balance his desire for improved relations with Argentina's Jewish community with his need to cultivate support from Argentina's nationalist and often anti-Semitic political parties. Thus, while Perón openly declared himself to be opposed to all forms of racial and religious discrimination and even replaced several notoriously anti-Semitic officials within his administration, including Santiago Peralta and the Federal Capital's Chief of Police Filomeno Velazco, he also tolerated the presence of the highly anti-Semitic Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (Nationalist Liberation Alliance - ALN) within his ruling coalition, and continued with such discriminatory practices as compulsory Catholic education in public schools and the ongoing prohibition against the use of Yiddish in public acts.<sup>10</sup> According to Leonardo Senkman, this apparent contradiction in reality stemmed from the very nature of the inclusive ideology that the regime embraced.<sup>11</sup> Under this logic, Perón was able to conceive of Jews as a potentially integral and productive element in Argentine society while at the same time relying heavily upon

nationalist ideology as one of the bases for the country's new Peronist national identity. In addition, the political power of the regime was still not sufficiently consolidated before 1948 to enable the President to act more decisively against anti-Semitism as he would do in later years. For Jews, however, this seeming ambivalence during the first three years of Perón's administration created a sense of insecurity, further binding them to the personal goodwill of Perón himself and contributing to the paternalistic style of protection which ultimately emerged between the President and the community.

#### ARGENTINE JEWRY RESPONDS TO PERÓN: THE JEWISH PRESS

Yet, far from merely being acted upon by the state, the Jewish community played an active role in determining the outcome of political issues which affected its own well being. One source of evidence for this is found in the Jewish press, which frequently expressed its opinions on matters pertaining to the Jewish community, attempting to defend Jewish interests while at the same time fostering reconciliation with the regime. The articles and editorials within its pages not only reported on the events which took place, but as Benedict Anderson has suggested for the press and national identity more generally, they also served to create a common frame of reference among Argentine Jews in explaining the world around them.<sup>12</sup> Given the lacunae of written documentation within the Jewish community during this time, the Jewish press thus offers one of the best preserved records of the Jewish dialogue with Perón. Moreover, the fact that much of it, with some gaps, is still available for entire period from 1945-1955 enables historians to better trace patterns of change or consistency over a long time span within a single source. For the period from 1946-1948, four separate publications are available, which

together represented a wide range of political, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds within the community. These include the staunchly Zionist Spanish language weekly *Mundo Israelita*, the mainstream Yiddish language daily *Di Idishe Tsaytung*, the popular left-wing Yiddish daily *Di Presse*, and lastly, the pro-Zionist Sephardic Spanish bi-monthly journal *La Luz*.<sup>13</sup>

Of the four, *Mundo Israelita* contains the best preserved and most complete collection of its editions for this period. It also most consistently represented the viewpoints of the DAIA and the community's Zionist oriented establishment. As they had stated during the 1946 election campaigns, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* were largely opposed to any form of collective Jewish political action. Instead, they believed that Jews should participate in Argentine national politics as individuals, and not as a national or ethnic bloc. It is not surprising then that in reporting on the major political events of the early Peronist period in Argentina, the editors of the paper chose to shy away from national politics in general, preferring instead to focus only more specifically on matters of particular Jewish concern. The most significant of these included the problem of anti-Semitism in Argentina, the prospects for Jewish immigration, and the finally, Argentina's relation to the Palestine question and the Zionist movement.

Although they frequently avoided commenting on larger national political issues, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* were not shy in voicing their concern over overt acts of anti-Semitism which took place in Argentina and in calling upon the authorities to resolve the problem. While the vast number of attacks that had preceded the February elections were greatly diminished under the new regime, important pockets of anti-Semitism remained throughout the country, and anti-Semitic prejudice and incidents

persisted. One such case, which drew considerable attention during this time, was the ongoing discrimination against Jewish medical students in local hospitals. Following an attack against a young Jewish student in the Hospital de Clínicas by a group of anti-Semitic students on July 23, 1946, the editors became irate. “The university,” the wrote, “should be immunized against racist venom.”<sup>14</sup> Moreover, when the hospital authorities failed to locate his attackers, let alone punish them, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* called for the community to take action, arguing that, “The Jewish community should raise its voice, serenely but energetically, before the corresponding authorities in defense of its injured rights and offended dignity.”<sup>15</sup> Later, when not one Jewish student was among some 70 interns admitted to positions into municipal hospitals in October of 1946 the paper complained that, “There are many reasons to think that in the said competition titles and competence were not the only requisites involved. It seems that it was [also] indispensable to have an Aryan grandmother.”<sup>16</sup>

In addition, the editors vehemently protested against continuing attacks on Jewish institutions. On the night of October 17-18, 1946, when a band of nationalist hooligans vandalized the exterior of the Congregación Israelita on Calle Libertad, *Mundo Israelita* was quick to report the denunciation of the attack by congregation leaders and the DAIA to the police.<sup>17</sup> Later, after a spate of violent incidents against Jewish institutions in 1947, some of which involved bombs, the editors decried the fact “that there are still people who practice the infamous teachings of racial hatred that such misfortune and death has scattered in the world.” “The authorities,” they claimed, “should put an end to the excesses of Nazism transplanted to this land before it is too late.”<sup>18</sup> In nearly every case, however, the editors were also careful to avoid directly criticizing the regime itself.

In the last example, they were quick to add that, “Our collective receives with satisfaction the assurances given by [Police Chief] General Bertolio and trusts in the success of his efforts.”<sup>19</sup> In June 1947, Perón had appointed General Arturo Betolio as Chief of Police, replacing the previous Chief, Filomeno Velazco, who was notorious for his anti-Semitic inclinations.

If the problem of anti-Semitism remained a concern for the editors of *Mundo Israelita*, this was even more so in the case of Jewish immigration. In his last speech prior to taking office in June of 1946, Perón had offered an enthusiastic call for the nation to open its doors once again to mass immigration, doors which had remained largely shut since 1930. The Jewish community was ecstatic. After years of frustration during the war, they hoped that at last some of the countless thousands of Jewish refugees throughout Europe might finally be able to reach Argentina’s shores. On June 8, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* devoted an editorial column to the subject. “General Perón,” they wrote, “has spoken with the vision of a statesman, and as a man whom destiny has placed in the highest level of responsibility in a historic moment for humanity, and one decisive for the future of the nation.” Moreover, they expressed their faith that Perón would overturn the hated policy of racial selection which had prevailed under the previous administration. “This hackneyed theory,” they went on, “permits the exclusion of capable and useful men, under the pretext that they are not agricultural workers or will not adapt to the regions in which they want to establish themselves. Such selection or directed immigration serves no one, but creates many family tragedies by preventing immediate relatives from being reunited with their families.”<sup>20</sup>

When the policy of racial selection was not abandoned under the new regime, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* immediately singled out the Director of Immigration, Santiago M. Peralta, as the primary culprit. As mentioned earlier, a known anti-Semite, Peralta had been appointed to the post by the prior military regime but was left there as part of Perón's compromise with his nationalist allies. The editors of the paper now began a systematic campaign to discredit him and gain his removal. Arguing that Perón had made his ideas about unrestricted immigration very clear and that the nation as a whole supported them, they noted on June 15 that, "Among the important exceptions is Dr. Santiago M. Peralta, who accidentally finds himself at the head of the Department of Migration... In his department he proceeds as a true dictator, rarely allowing that Jewish immigrant should filter through even in cases where he is an immediate relative of someone who has solicited his entry."<sup>21</sup> As proof of his racist ideology, they cited excerpts from his 1943 book, *La acción del pueblo judío en la Argentina*, in which Peralta warned of excessive Jewish influence in the government and economy of the nation and called upon nationalist Argentines to block the further entry of Jews. On June 29, the editors continued their assault under the headline, "Distortions of the Postulates of Alberdi by a Follower of Goebbels."<sup>22</sup> On July 27, after Peralta himself had attempted to deny the charges, they claimed "The Director of Migration denies being a racist but the facts confirm it." Reprinting still more excerpts for his 1943 book, the editors asked, "Are we to admit that Argentina's industrial development, of which we are all conscious, is a trick, an incantation of Merlin, and that neither capital, nor labor, nor technicians, nor men of science are needed here?"<sup>23</sup>

Such a direct campaign against a high government official can only be seen as a bold gesture by a periodical opposed to collective Jewish political action, one which spoke to the importance of immigration for the larger Jewish community. Yet, despite this, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* were careful always to maintain a complimentary stance towards Perón himself. Even after the persistence of immigration restrictions against Jews following Peralta's removal from office in July 1947, the editors continued to claim, "We are sure that if General Perón was made aware of the racist handiwork of some of his subordinates that he would immediately put an end to it."<sup>24</sup>

This mixture of caution and optimism toward the regime also manifested itself in discussions of the other great theme which dominated the headlines of *Mundo Israelita*, namely that of Zionism. As early as 1946, the editors of the paper reported on the official positions of the various Argentine national political parties with regard to the Palestine question.<sup>25</sup> They also reported on the opening of a congressional debate over the question at the end of August 1946.<sup>26</sup> In March 1947, they highlighted a great public show of support for the *yishuv*<sup>27</sup> on the part of the community.<sup>28</sup> In October, as the vote over partition neared in the United Nations, they expressed their hope that Argentina would look beyond the "mere juridical question" involved to vote in favor of the "miracle" of a Jewish state.<sup>29</sup> When Argentina abstained from the partition vote on November 29, however, the editors offered no criticism of the regime and instead began to push for Argentine recognition of Israel. On May 22, 1948, they noted that the national Congress had passed a resolution for immediate recognition by a margin of some 75-37 votes.<sup>30</sup> In September, the editors reported on the visit of Moisés A. Toff, the Jewish state's first official representative in Latin America, who had arrived in hopes of

gaining official recognition from the regime.<sup>31</sup> Regarding this event they pointed out in an editorial piece that “Among those states which have still not [recognized the state of Israel] figures Argentina, and in order to obtain its recognition the government of Tel Aviv has commissioned a vice-chancellor of Israel on a special mission before us.” They further commented that his mission “was one of peace and fraternity, so dear to Jewish and Argentine ideals,” noting that “his petition is being followed with the fervent longing for success by all of the collective...”<sup>32</sup> When Toff’s mission did not immediately obtain the desired results, the editors continued in their efforts. After the Perón government officially supported the entry of Israel into the United Nations in December 1948, they responded by stating that “In expression of our gratitude to the national government for its endorsement of the Israeli petition in the UN the Jews of Argentina confidently hope that this first step will be followed by recognition of the new [Jewish] state.”<sup>33</sup> Finally, when full recognition was accorded to Israel on February 14, 1949, the editors rejoiced, proclaiming that “As Argentines and as Jews we congratulate the kind and comprehensive gesture of our government towards the brand new State of Israel.”<sup>34</sup>

Not surprisingly, many of the same concerns over anti-Semitism, immigration, and the Zionist cause appeared in the capital’s two major Yiddish dailies as well. Like their counterparts at *Mundo Israelita*, the editors of the mainstream *Di Idische Tsaytung* regularly reported on acts of anti-Semitism in the capital and its environs.<sup>35</sup> In addition, they also expressed uneasiness over the persistence of Catholic education in state-run schools.<sup>36</sup> On the matter of immigration, they noted in December 1946 with some disdain that although the regime had agreed to accept as many as 50,000 immigrants per year in accordance with its new Five Year Plan, “They will be divided among the

provinces in agricultural labor, irrigation work, and state projects...and that it is understood that Spaniards and Italians will be given preference.”<sup>37</sup> In January 1947, at the same time that potential Jewish immigrants faced rejection as undesirables at every turn, *Di Idische Tsaytung* carried a curious article which described how President Perón had personally intervened in the case of five “stray” Italian immigrants, treating them to coffee, cigarettes, and some fifty pesos each, and encouraging them to find work soon in the city.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps as a cynical critique on this, the author added that, “It has been made known that with the ship ‘Argentina’ that will dock in the local port tomorrow, there will arrive 21 ‘stray passengers,’ all from Spain.” Moreover, one can only guess at the feelings of the paper’s editors as they reported on the tens of thousands of new immigrants who had entered the country by 1948, knowing that so few of them were Jews.<sup>39</sup>

Yet, despite this frustration, the editors of *Di Idische Tsaytung* also tried to find some common ground with the regime over economic issues. For the most part this took place in their reporting over the President’s proposed Five Year Plan. The paper carefully followed the development of the Five Year Plan and publicized its contents in a variety of articles.<sup>40</sup> After some initial misgivings over the government’s intervention in the national universities, the editors of *Di Idische Tsaytung* appeared to reconcile themselves to the Plan’s economic activities. They even went so far as to print an editorial trumpeting the regime’s purchase of Argentina’s British owned railways in February of 1947. “Never in one moment,” they asserted, “has there been realized in our country an economic operation of a magnitude equal to the purchase of the British railroads by the government of the nation... At the very least one can not help but

recognize through the operation consecrated last Thursday the vigorousness and economic vitality of the country.”<sup>41</sup>

With regard to Zionism, *Di Idishe Tsaytung* reported as early as July 1946 on a mass rally in the Plaza Retiro in which some 30,000-40,000 local Jews assembled to protest British brutality in Palestine.<sup>42</sup> On May 14, 1948, the paper announced with anticipation the forthcoming declaration of Israeli independence, and on May 15, the entire front page headline was devoted to the creation of the new Jewish state with the letters I-S-R-A-E-L in bold relief across the top.<sup>43</sup> In commenting on the momentous occasion, the editorial column highlighted the difficulties to be faced by the new Jewish state, adding that,

We trust also that the Christian world, which bears much guilt towards the Jews, will understand that the time has come to compensate the Jewish people for their long years of suffering by supporting the newly reborn state. The Jews of Argentina share in this hope. Whether having been born in the country, citizens of it, or simply its residents, we are filled today with great pleasure, and we are certain in interpreting the unanimous sentiments of greetings to the Argentine people, the Argentine fatherland, and to its hospitality.<sup>44</sup>

On May 17, the front page featured news of a great rally held by the community in Plaza Retiro at the base of the statue of Argentina’s own icon of independence, General José de San Martín, where some 50,000 people had gathered. Describing how the crowd laid a wreath of flowers alongside the monument, the article explained that, “Identifying with the Argentine Republic, the fatherland of many of them, the hospitable home for others, they rendered their tribute of loyalty to the country in this hour with the homage to the great hero of its history.”<sup>45</sup> Finally, on May 18, the editors called upon all nations of the Americas to recognize the new Jewish state. “It goes without saying,” they added, “given

the prestige of Argentina both within and outside of the Americas, that if our government were to be among the first to recognize the new country its action would be received with particular gratitude by Jews throughout the world...<sup>46</sup>

For their part, the editors of left-wing daily *Di Presse* also attempted to find points of agreement with the policies of the newly elected regime. Despite their opposition to Perón's candidacy earlier in February, the editors of *Di Presse* expressed optimism on the eve of his transition to power on June 4, 1946, stating that, "The nation today enters into a new period of constitutional rule and expectations of well being that should be obtained by the free development of its economic, political, and spiritual forces."<sup>47</sup> Just four days later, the editors exhibited their "satisfaction" over the reestablishment of political relations between Argentina and the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup> They also took consolation in some of the more socialistic aspects of Perón's planned economy. On June 21, 1946, they argued in favor of Argentina's proposed purchase of its British owned railways, declaring that, "The national interest of Argentina has for many years made necessary the nationalization of the railroads."<sup>49</sup> Exactly one year after the actual purchase of the railways in 1947, the editors further commented that, "The heart of the entire Argentine people is filled with jubilation at the sight of the Argentine flags that fly above the nation, linked now by the nationalized Argentine railroads..."<sup>50</sup> Finally, on June 28, 1946, the editors also reveled in the confidence of Perón's State of the Nation address before the national parliament. "We desire only to highlight," they offered in their editorial comments, "the optimism which prevails through every part of this document. The messages of a government in general are never pessimistic. But the country has never heard a message so optimistic as this one."<sup>51</sup>

As with the other periodicals reviewed, *Di Presse* also featured editorials on such Jewish related themes as the anti-Semitic practices in local hospitals, violent attacks against Jewish institutions, as well as the ongoing prohibition against the use of Yiddish in public gatherings by the government.<sup>52</sup> In addition, in a series of editorials during 1946, the paper took a clear stand on the issue of Jewish immigration. Even before the elections of February 1946, the editors proclaimed that, “During the war, certain restrictions on immigration were justified... However, with the cessation of hostilities there are no valid reasons to maintain the proscriptive emergency restrictions. Immigrants will be a useful element for the economies of American nations, who at the same time will fulfil their humanitarian obligations...”<sup>53</sup> In April 1946, they further complained against racially discriminatory immigration policies in the country.<sup>54</sup> In May, the editors urged Jews to become naturalized as citizens so that they might establish more influence over the state’s immigration policy.<sup>55</sup> Following Perón’s favorable address on the matter of immigration just prior to taking office in June, the editors noted that “Jewish immigrants hailing from Europe after the First World War, who were already then considered as undesirables, are those who have played a great part in the development of the local textile industry, as well and other industries, and have helped contribute to the well being and sovereignty of the country.”<sup>56</sup> In conjunction with this, they ran a series of articles throughout July detailing the historical role of Jews within Argentina’s furniture making industry.<sup>57</sup> By August, as it became clear that Argentina would favor only agricultural immigrants and menial laborers, few of whom would be Jews, the editors argued that such a decision ran contrary to the interests of economic independence. “One must note especially,” they claimed, “that a nation with a strictly

agricultural economy or a unilateral economy in general can never be as politically independent as a nation with a more versatile economy. In light of this, it is even more incomprehensible that the enthusiasts of an exclusively agricultural immigration are the same people who are staunch defenders of national independence.”<sup>58</sup> In February 1947, the paper carried editorials criticizing the government for its ethnically selective immigration policies.<sup>59</sup> Finally, following the resignation of Peralta as Director of Immigration in June 1947, the editors expressed renewed hope for a revival of Jewish immigration.<sup>60</sup> As for the issue of Zionism, as early as September 1946, while the Argentine congress was debating a resolution in favor of the Jewish state, the editors of *Di Presse* expressed their hope that “the longings of the Jews and their cultural expressions will find a more favorable reception in a free country which respects its own freedom and its own culture.”<sup>61</sup>

Even the normally less political Sephardic Jewish journal *La Luz* did not refrain from expressing its interest in certain matters of Jewish interest in Argentina, among them anti-Semitism, immigration, and Zionism. With regard to anti-Semitism, the editors of *La Luz* closely followed the activities of the DAIA in representing such cases as the Hospital de Clínicas incident as well as others before the government.<sup>62</sup> In August of 1947, they expressed their outrage over a bomb attack against the Congregación Israelita. Recalling the words of a local legal authority, they exclaimed that, “Acts of this nature, fruits of fanaticism and intolerance, are crimes which greatly disturb the social peace and repel the ideas and sentiments of the Argentine people.”<sup>63</sup> Later that same year, following the distribution of literature in the province of Santa Fé which called for violence against Jews, the editors lamented, “The anti-Semitic virus so lavishly diffused

by the insidious Hitlerist propaganda has still not been neutralized in its quality as a political weapon.”<sup>64</sup> In discussing immigration, the editors on several occasions pointed out the discrepancy between Argentina’s supposedly non-discriminatory immigration law and its real-time application. In commenting on a speech given in January 1947 by an Argentine immigration delegate in Rome, in which he declared that “The commission does not take into account the religion or political past of any applicant who wishes to emigrate to Argentina,” the editors added that “It is time that the national authorities interpret the matter according to the letter and spirit of the precepts of the National Constitution.”<sup>65</sup> Still later, in April 1947, they asserted the advantages of a multi-ethnic society, recording that “The population of our country is integrated by ethnically diverse elements, who constitute in practice a true mosaic of nationalities. This in no way hinders that they find their amalgamation in daily life, forming the total harmony that permits the forging of national greatness.”<sup>66</sup> Finally, with regard to the Zionist cause in Argentina, the paper reprinted the texts of several telegrams sent to the President by local Zionist organizations in 1947, and reported on the great celebrations in honor of Israel’s independence in May 1948.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, it is clear from the Jewish press, that the larger Jewish community was anything but silent when faced with the changes sweeping Argentina during the first three years of the Peronist regime. Jews of a variety of ethnic, class, and political backgrounds all strove to find points of common ground with the government and to influence its policy on matters of specific Jewish concern. Among these, the persistence of anti-Semitism in the country, the problem of Jewish immigration, and Argentina’s relation to the Palestine question were the most pervasive and significant. Although the press for

the most part attempted to project an attitude of optimism and goodwill towards the new regime, it is also evident that it was not afraid to offer its criticism when faced with matters that it regarded as significant for the well being of the Jewish community. At no time, however, did the press dare to present a negative commentary on the President himself. To do so would have been impossible, and in any event, would have been contrary to the community's apparent desire to reach some form of reconciliation with the regime and its policies.

#### RECONCILIATION AND THE POLITICS OF PRAGMATISM: THE DAIA AND PERÓN, 1946-1948

At the same time, this pattern of reconciliation extended well beyond the commentaries of the Jewish press. It also translated itself into the actions of community leaders in representing their collective before the state on such issues. During the span of this three-year period, the leaders of the Argentine Jewry maintained numerous contacts with the regime, its officials, and even with the President himself. These contacts took place largely through the intermediary of the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, also known as the DAIA. As explained in previous chapters, ever since the military coup of June 4, 1943, the leaders of Argentina's Jewish community had chosen to represent their interests before the state through the DAIA, which itself represented an umbrella organization of Argentine Jewish institutions. In the course of various meetings with government officials, the leaders of the DAIA often obtained important concessions from the regime on matters such as anti-Semitism, Jewish immigration, and the Zionist cause. However, these concessions also carried with them the price of increasing loyalty

to the government and its policies. As time went on, it became clear that the leaders of the DAIA faced a difficult struggle to maintain their own autonomy before ever growing encroachment of the Peronist state. Although initially, earlier strategies of low-profile personal contact between DAIA leaders and government officials appeared to function well, by 1947, the terms of this relationship were about to change. In February of that year, Perón gave his nod to the establishment of an openly Peronist Jewish organization, the Organización Israelita Argentina, or OIA, which actively aspired to replace the DAIA as the intercessor between the community and the regime. Faced with this new challenger, DAIA president Moisés Goldman and his successor, Ricardo Dubrovsky, would be forced to offer greater compromises towards the regime in exchange for political concessions. In the process, their actions would lead to new divisions within the community, threatening to politicize it as never before.

In all of this, it is crucial to remember that the DAIA itself was far from united on the eve of Perón's ascent to power. Ironically, the first serious challenge to the political authority of the DAIA came not from the Peronist regime but from within the community itself, when long standing differences over the question of wartime aid finally came to the fore in late 1945 as the Second World War at last drew to a close. As early as 1943, a group of influential Jewish leaders had decided to form an alternate aid campaign to the one sponsored by the DAIA under the auspices of the Zionist oriented World Jewish Congress (WJC). Calling itself the Junta de Ayuda a las Víctimas de la Guerra, this new campaign was led by the powerful Jewish silk manufacturer Simon Mirelman, and attracted a following among many of the community's liberal Spanish-speaking economic and cultural elite. In particular, it drew much of its support from the

membership of the Congregación Israelita, the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina (SHA), and the capital's local chapter of B'nai B'rith. Opposing the WJC's virtually unlimited control of Argentine-Jewish fundraising and the use of such funds to help finance Zionist organizations, this group instead favored channeling at least some of the community's relief efforts through the American-based Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) which favored direct aid to refugees in Europe and throughout the Diaspora. Given the tremendous need for unity in the face of the Second World War and following the rise of the military government in Argentina in 1943, the Mirelman group had initially not sought to press its case within the DAIA itself. However, by late 1945, conditions had eased considerably in both respects and the group felt ready to make its push.

After meeting unsuccessfully with the president of the DAIA, Dr. Moisés Goldman, to resolve their differences, on November 14, 1945 the group issued its call to action in a bold declaration to the Jewish press. It appeared both in *Di Presse* and *Di Idische Tsaytung* on November 15, and in *Mundo Israelita* on November 17.<sup>68</sup> Claiming that, "for over four years [the DAIA] has not complied with the goals of its constitution," the Mirelman group called for an extensive overhaul of the institution in order to democratize it and make it more responsive to the will of community members. "Its authorities are not the result of the wishes of the collective, but rather of a pressure group appropriated from the institution and impossible to overcome with the current statutory organization." "We aspire," they insisted, "for a better selection of authorities from Jewish institutions, giving the positions on its directive commissions to those most capable." Above all, the group cited "the personal intransigence of Dr. Goldman," as the principal cause of the rupture. Goldman, they claimed, as President had run the DAIA

according to his own personal whims, and had refused to listen to their requests for reform, replying that “now is not the moment for planting divisions or suicidal ruptures [within the community.]” Therefore, “conscious of the gravity of the hour,” the group felt it had little choice but to establish a parallel organization to DAIA, the Organización Judía Argentina (OJA), which would serve in representing its own, more liberal interests before the community and world Jewry as a whole.<sup>69</sup>

The declaration touched off a firestorm of debate within the Jewish community. Many within the community had long felt that the DAIA’s system of representation based upon the assignment of two delegates from each member institution to its governing board was not representative of the popular will of the community at large and was in need of reform. Calls now began to appear from throughout the community in favor of democratization of its institutional life and an overhaul of the DAIA. Even within the DAIA’s own General Assembly confrontation raged. During the assembly meeting of May 5, 1946, one critic stressed that, “The assembly of delegates does not reflect everything that goes on in the Jewish street; it does not reflect the interests, nor the opinions of the Jewish masses...” “Why?” he went on to ask, “Because of the structure of the DAIA according to representatives of institutions... While this was fine for the league against Anti-Semitism it is not sufficient for a representation of Judaism in general.”<sup>70</sup> Many in the community favored the creation of an Argentine-Jewish Congress to replace the DAIA, based on a system of direct proportional representation.<sup>71</sup> Others, such as the editors of *Mundo Israelita* argued that such a congress would involve too many logistical difficulties. Instead, they asserted that, “the most authentic representation of our opinion resides in the communities themselves,” suggesting that the

individual local communities, or kehillas, organized around traditional Jewish burial societies, should form the basis for the community's political representation.<sup>72</sup> Still other voices called for an extensive reform of DAIA from within, and a complete rewriting of its governing statutes.

The details of each of these reform projects, however, are less important here than the manner in which they were dealt with by the DAIA leadership. From the very beginning, Goldman and his supporters considered the actions of the OJA group and the demands of the reformers as a serious threat to communal unity. According to Jacob Hellman, the official delegate of the World Jewish Congress in Argentina and a close ally of Goldman, Mirelman was a "brutal intrigant and an enemy of the DAIA and the Congress."<sup>73</sup> Goldman's first step in suppressing the dissent was to change the order of the day for the DAIA's General Assembly of December 13, 1945 without notifying the delegates from the OJA camp. After referring to the vast challenges which faced the Argentine Jewry both in the wider world of Jewish politics as well as at home, Goldman announced that instead of hearing the usual order of business the assembly would undertake an immediate vote of confidence on his presidency. He argued that it was impossible for him to consider the project of reform without first having secured the stability of his own office. When several members of the OJA coalition protested that they had not been informed of the changes, Goldman's supporters countered that they had been decided upon by the Directive Commission and that the original project of reform would be considered once the vote was decided. Their logic managed to convince all but the most severe detractors of Goldman, and when the vote was later tallied Goldman counted some 77 votes in support of his presidency and only two abstentions.<sup>74</sup>

Having thus (re)established his effective control over the organization, Goldman proceeded to commission several communal institutions and political parties to devise reasonable reform projects for the DAIA. Among others, the Congregación Israelita, the Poale-Zion political party, the Asociación Cultural Sionista, and the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina all presented proposals to the meeting of the General Assembly on May 5, 1946 and at subsequent meetings.<sup>75</sup> The projects were never seriously considered, however. Following the Peronist victory of February 1946, Goldman had resigned as president of the DAIA, precipitating a crisis of great magnitude within the community.<sup>76</sup> Officially, he claimed the reason for his resignation was the inadequate funding of the DAIA by its affiliated institutions. Yet, the vice president in office of the DAIA, Dr. Ricardo Dubrovsky, hinted at more substantial causes. During the DAIA's assembly of July 13, he alluded to the "disunion that existed in the bosom of the Argentine-Jewish community...which debilitated all efforts that it could make in its own defense." "In order for Doctor Goldman to return to occupy the presidency," Dubrovsky continued, "it was necessary that such causes should disappear."<sup>77</sup> The delegates of the DAIA clearly understood his message, and by a vote of 57 to 3, with 6 abstentions, they decided to reject the resignation of Dr. Goldman and ask him to resume his position as the community's highest representative.

When the body next met on August 7, 1946 to elect half of its administrative officers, including a new vice president, Goldman received the applause of those in attendance and again called for unity in the face of the enormous challenges confronting the community. Yet, despite considerable efforts to create a united list between Goldman's supporters and followers of the OJA, thereby avoiding a potentially divisive

struggle, the assembly turned raucous when a group of Sephardic delegates protested against the use of Yiddish at the meeting and threatened to involve the local police. Faced with the prospect of police intervention, all efforts at consensus were abandoned and the election was immediately passed to a vote. Goldman's supporters, led by Ricardo Dubrovsky as candidate for vice president, won a resounding victory, gaining some 68 votes as opposed to some 34 votes for the candidate of the OJA group.<sup>78</sup> Goldman and the DAIA had survived their first major test. The proposed reform measures would remain on the backburners of the DAIA's agenda throughout the Perón era, while the OJA group would continue in its quiet schism with the DAIA leadership, ultimately joining forces with the American Jewish Committee in 1948 to create a new organization, the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información (IJA). Ironically, as some of the founding members of the DAIA in 1935, the institutions which supported the OJA could not be separated from the former organization and would continue to exert a subtle and ongoing influence on the DAIA well beyond the events of early 1946.

Even as early as 1946, then, it is important to stress the enormous pressure which the Peronist state was exerting upon the Jewish community. While it often remained beneath the surface of open debate and confrontation, one of the major forces impelling the DAIA to reject the OJA reformers and others was the need to present a unified front before the new regime. The Jews of Argentina had clearly not supported the election of Perón in February 1946, and as demonstrated by the Jewish press, were eager to establish the best relations possible with the government given the course of events. To do this, they felt that they had to maximize their political influence by joining together with one voice. Even traditionally dissident groups such as the Jewish Communists and Bundists

maintained their affiliation with the Zionist dominated DAIA during this difficult period.<sup>79</sup> In fact, one wonders what the results of this internal communal struggle might have been had the Unión Democrática won the 1946 elections instead of the Juan Perón and his allies. Would the community have felt secure enough to carry out such a thoroughgoing and sweeping reform of its most important political institution? Or would it have simply tabled the measures as it did? As it was, the rise of Perón put an effective end to the question of internal reform and democratization for the time being, and confirmed the DAIA in its role as the principal political representation of the community.

Having thwarted their would-be challengers, Goldman and the DAIA leadership could now turn their attentions towards negotiating with the government over matters of interest to the Jewish community. It did not take long before such concerns rose to the forefront. Shortly after the regime came to power, on June 22, 1946, Perón issued a decree establishing an official National Registry of Religions, which mandated the creation of a national directory of all non-Catholic religious institutions.<sup>80</sup> The DAIA wasted no time in sending a letter to Hortensio Quijano, Perón's running mate and President of the Senate, asking that he not approve such a discriminatory measure.<sup>81</sup> In July, following the anti-Semitic attack in the Hospital de Clínicas, the DAIA sent a letter of protest to the national interventor of the University of Buenos Aires.<sup>82</sup> In September, when a local periodical of "determined political orientation" printed an anti-Semitic editorial, Goldman, along with the vice president and secretary of the DAIA quietly visited the Presidential Palace, the Ministry of the Interior, and the offices of the paper itself in an effort to rectify the situation. In addition, they also solicited the Minister of Justice and Education "as in years before" that Jewish students be excused from classes

without penalty during the upcoming High Holy Days.<sup>83</sup> These entreaties were largely met with favorable responses. Moreover, the Ministries of War and the Navy also granted leaves of absences to their Jewish servicemen at the request of Goldman and the DAIA.<sup>84</sup> Finally, in late September 1946, the community as a whole took great pride in the New Year's greetings sent by Perón through the intermediary of the DAIA, the first such greetings ever by an Argentine President. In his message, Perón expressed his goodwill towards the Jews of Argentina and declared himself to be against all forms of racial and religious discrimination.<sup>85</sup>

Throughout this early period of relations between the Jewish community and the government, the leadership of the DAIA basically relied upon a traditional Jewish political strategy of intercession, or *shadlanut*, in representing itself before the state.<sup>86</sup> Regarding *shtadlanut*, David Biale has written that owing to the considerable self-autonomy that Jews enjoyed as a corporate group in medieval and early modern Europe, “many Jewish communities had a *shtadlan*, or intercessor, who acted as the recognized Jewish ambassador to the gentile government.”<sup>87</sup> At times these intercessors were simply wealthy members of the community who acted with little or no accountability, but frequently they were appointed by the local *kehillot*, or communities, to act as their official representatives. Generally in exchange for securing the cooperation of the Jewish community with the regime and its policies they were able to protect the larger autonomy of the community and obtain important concessions on matters of specific Jewish importance.

During the course of 1946, the leadership of the DAIA generally followed this overall pattern. As they done previously following the military coup of 1943, DAIA

leaders, and the president in particular, often met quietly with government officials on various matters of Jewish concern, agreeing not to publicize their complaints in exchange for government action to resolve their grievances. In the case of Perón, the regime was extremely eager to avoid any appearance of anti-Semitic behavior on its part which might jeopardize its international image. Therefore, in return for not publicizing such cases, the DAIA usually gained positive results on its petitions before the authorities, and at the very least, was allowed liberal access to important ministers and at times even the President himself. Moreover, by presenting the community's concerns privately and in person, the DAIA discouraged and even curtailed mass political action or mobilization in opposition to the regime on the part of the larger community. All of this meshed well with Perón's personalistic style of government and proved to be highly successful through the end of 1946.

On November 5, 1946, Dr. Goldman, accompanied by a large delegation of local Jewish functionaries, met publicly for the first time with the President and his Foreign Minister, Dr. Juan A. Bramuglia. In the one-and-a-half hour long meeting, Goldman expressed the community's concern over a variety of political issues, including the ongoing discrimination against Jewish immigrants in the Department of Migration, the reactivation of an earlier scheme to rescue some 1,000 Jewish refugee children from war ravaged Europe, and the Argentine government's forthcoming stance on the matter of a Jewish national home in Palestine. According to the report in *Di Idishe Tsaytung*, Perón listened intently to the problems raised by the delegation and requested to see documentation of the cases involving discrimination against Jewish immigrants, "promising to take the necessary measures so that the proper statutes should be fulfilled

without any such discrimination.”<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the article continued, “A friendly atmosphere predominated during the course of the interview and each one of the visitors had the opportunity to express his opinions about the problems being dealt with.” Later that year, the Perón government also intervened favorably in several cases involving the use of Yiddish in public gatherings in addition to arranging for the act of *shechita*, or Jewish ritual slaughtering, to take place in municipal slaughtering houses.<sup>89</sup>

By early 1947, however, conditions were changing. With the slow but subtle warming of diplomatic relations between the United States and Argentina and the first stirrings of the Cold War in Europe, the Peronist government was no longer so preoccupied with eschewing its anti-Semitic reputation. For the DAIA, this posed an important new challenge. No longer would the regime merely be content with the DAIA’s time-honored policy of public silence and private intercession regarding acts of anti-Semitism and discrimination. Now, it would require an increasing level of open cooperation from the DAIA in exchange for its concessions to the community.

A foreshadowing of things to come occurred on February 14, 1947, when a small but influential group of Jewish Peronist supporters, led by Samuel Rosenstein, Luis Elías Sojit, and Pablo Manguel, met publicly with the President and his Interior Minister, Ángel Borlenghi, to express their personal loyalty to the regime and their unconditional support for the Five Year Plan.<sup>90</sup> In response to their visit, Perón stressed his goodwill and tolerance towards Argentines of all faiths and national origins, further adding, “If certain measures have been taken against some people from the [Jewish] collective, they have been justified many times over, not because they were Jews but rather because they were contrary to the movement...” He then used the opportunity to demonstrate the

benefits of such loyalty by highlighting his latest act of benevolence towards the Jewish community, namely the admission of some 47 Jewish refugees from the steamship “Campana,” who had arrived in Argentina without papers after being rejected from Brazil. “Naturally,” he asserted, “this is not the procedure that should have been adopted in the matter, since the immigrants arrived without documentation.” By admitting these immigrants, however, Perón intended to demonstrate his desire to “avoid the anti-Semitic fever that has conquered Europe with such power and that has influenced other countries who need immigrants.”<sup>91</sup>

In one swift stroke, he seemed to indicate the trend for future relations between the community and the regime. Although the DAIA had initially petitioned the President on behalf of the displaced immigrants, official credit for the measure now fell upon the new Jewish Peronist delegation.<sup>92</sup> When the leaders of this delegation formally declared the creation of the openly Peronist Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA) on February 27, they listed among their reasons for supporting Perón the fact that, “The most excellent President of the Nation has in every opportunity declared that he is opposed to racial discrimination and instead expressed his wish that the 47 Jewish refugee immigrants from the ‘Campana’ who were not allowed to disembark in other supposedly democratic countries be permitted to enter and reside permanently in our land.”<sup>93</sup>

Faced with such generosity, the Jewish community could not help but lavish praise upon President. “The declarations formulated last Friday,” wrote the editors of *Mundo Israelita*, “by the President and the Minister of the Interior in front of a group of citizens of Jewish origin have produced profound satisfaction within the bosom of the collective.” They further recognized the great debt of loyalty owed to Perón on the part

of the community. However, they went on to insist that this loyalty and “the disposition to collaborate with the government of the nation” should rightfully be expressed by the DAIA, “the authentic representation of our collective,” and not a group of Perón’s personal Jewish supporters. Moreover, they added, while “we have the greatest respect for the citizens of our origin who militate in the Peronist camp...we persist in our belief that the community as such should be apolitical.”<sup>94</sup> For their part, the editors of *Di Presse* thanked Perón for his “humanitarian action,” which “put an end to the useless and unjustified sufferings of fifty human beings who have passed through a most horrible hell.”<sup>95</sup> In addition, they highlighted the role of the DAIA president in securing the admission of the refugees. As for *Di Idische Tsaytung*, its editors chose to ignore the role of Perón’s Jewish supporters entirely. “Thanks to the intervention of the president of the DAIA, Dr. Moisés Goldman,” they reported, “the President of the Republic, General Perón, signed a decree to permit the homeless people to land in Argentina.”<sup>96</sup>

Faced with this new challenge in the form of the OIA, the DAIA could do little. Therefore, it initially persisted in its previous pattern of quietly presenting the concerns of the community before the appropriate government authorities. Following a series of attacks on Jewish institutions in April 1947 by members of the ALN, the DAIA directed a letter of protest to the municipal Chief of Police, Filomeno Velazco.<sup>97</sup> After a bomb attack against the Congregación Israelita in July, the leadership of the DAIA personally visited Velazco’s replacement, General Arturo Bertollo, as well as Interior Minister Angel Borlenghi.<sup>98</sup> In addition, when a group of 14 Jewish passengers en-route to Paraguay and in possession of Paraguayan visas were detained by the Director of Migrations in April of 1947, Dr. Goldman arranged for a delegation of the American

based Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) to visit Peralta.<sup>99</sup> According to a confidential report of the encounter by HIAS authorities, Peralta responded to their international pressure and “signed [the] prepared statement with the names of the detainees, releasing them under our responsibility, that they would not escape from the immigrants hotel,” further promising to cooperate in the future with HIAS on matters of Jewish immigration.<sup>100</sup> As the details of the incident became public, however, he denied his collaboration, promising to return to his old policy of unrelenting discrimination. When the delegates learned of Peralta’s sudden change of heart, they met with the U.S. Ambassador to Argentina who advised them to take their case before Foreign Minister Bramuglia. “After consulting with the president of the DAIA, Dr. Moisés Goldman, about the situation,” the report continues, “we decided to approach Bramuglia immediately.” Led by Goldman, they presented Bramuglia not only with the details of the case but also with irrefutable evidence of Peralta’s anti-Semitism, including one case where he allegedly told a Jewish petitioner seeking a visa for his brother that the Jews of Argentina should “pack their valises and get out of the country while they still have time.” Bramuglia was incensed and promised to raise the matter with Perón on the next possible occasion. Goldman then asked that the delegates not make a public statement about the affair. “Four weeks later,” the report went on, “the new immigration law which is really favorable for relatives was issued, and three days ago we received a cable from Argentina that the Jew baiter Peralta was dismissed.”<sup>101</sup> The intervention of HIAS and Peralta’s subsequent dismissal clearly made a strong impression on the leaders of the Argentine-Jewish community. Above all, it seemed to vindicate the DAIA’s time-honored strategy of private intercession with the authorities and a low key public stance.

Yet, the terms of the relationship between the community and the state were indeed changing. Even as early as February of 1947, the American Jewish Committee's (AJC) representative in Buenos Aires, Máximo Yagupsky, noted how in exchange for Perón's attentions, "he has bound Dr. Goldman to him psychologically and morally."<sup>102</sup> Perhaps on account of this, Goldman again resigned as president of the DAIA in October 1947, this time permanently, precipitating yet another crisis as the organization struggled to find a suitable replacement.<sup>103</sup> According to a report in *Mundo Israelita*, the decision "owed itself in great measure to the crisis that has affected the DAIA in the past few months and that had a laborious solution with the naming of Dr. Ricardo Dubrovsky to succeed him."<sup>104</sup> Unlike Goldman, who had maintained a long and distinguished record in communal politics, Dubrovsky was a relative newcomer to the scene. A gynecologist in his early forties from the province of Buenos Aires, Dubrovsky lacked much of the experience and political fortitude of his predecessor. He had risen through the ranks of the DAIA after 1943 first as Goldman's vice-president, then as president-in-office following Goldman's prior resignation. About Dubrovsky, Maximo Yagupsky wrote that, "He is an emotional Jew, with good intentions," if somewhat inexperienced and naïve politically.<sup>105</sup> The leaders of the united Poale-Zion and Zeire-Zion political parties who supported his candidacy remarked on his "devotion and loyalty" to the community.<sup>106</sup> Ariel Plotschuk, one of the current editors for *Mundo Israelita*, stated simply that he was "more permeable" towards the regime than Goldman.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, it is clear that under the leadership of Dubrovsky, the DAIA would undertake a radical new direction in its interaction with the regime.

By the beginning of 1948, the DAIA faced an increasingly difficult situation. Ever since the creation of the OIA, Perón had refused to meet personally with DAIA delegations.<sup>108</sup> He felt that the interests of the state would better be served by transacting such visits through the auspices of the more politicized OIA. For months, the Jewish press contained few accounts of DAIA visits before any of the national authorities.<sup>109</sup> In February 1948, the DAIA was forced to send a telegram to the President on behalf of some nine Jewish immigrants who had been detained by the authorities and who were to be returned to Europe. The dispatch pleaded for Perón's "noble intervention" in the matter, addressing itself in respectful tones to his "well known patriotic desire to offer hospitality to those persons of good will who wish to contribute to the struggle for the greatness of our nation."<sup>110</sup> Virtually the only official interaction described in the pages of *Mundo Israelita* during the first half of 1948 involved the DAIA's notification to the President of a visit by a prominent Jewish scientist, Professor Leon Picard, in May.<sup>111</sup> Following the triumphant rebirth of the State of Israel on May 14, there was no news of official greetings or congratulations to the DAIA. Then, on June 26, *Mundo Israelita* reported that Ricardo Dubrovsky in the company of an OIA delegation visited Perón to request his intercession on behalf of a group of Jewish immigrants who had been detained by the authorities.<sup>112</sup> According to Máximo Yagupsky, this was "the first time in many months that President Perón had received the president of the DAIA in his office."<sup>113</sup> Yet, although Dubrovsky was included among the delegation from the OIA, Perón specifically stated that it was the OIA representatives who should "carry on with the appropriate measures" to resolve the matter.<sup>114</sup> Following the success of the petition, the

delegation of the OIA met further with Perón to explain their recent activities and to thank the general for his gracious act.<sup>115</sup>

On August 14, *Mundo Israelita* announced that the President would shortly attend the inauguration of the new headquarters of the Peronist Jewish organization.<sup>116</sup> The Jewish press soon carried advertisements from the OIA soliciting the attendance of the whole community in a great show of patriotic loyalty.<sup>117</sup> “Jews of Argentina!” read one announcement, “Now is the moment to testify to the head of state and others in attendance that the Jewish collective recognizes in general Perón a man who makes no distinction of race nor creed.”<sup>118</sup> Another claimed it was a “duty of honor” to attend. “General Perón awaits us and we shall not disappoint him.”<sup>119</sup> Even the DAIA was forced to concede the magnitude of the act and encourage the community to attend in a full-page declaration appearing in *Mundo Israelita*. Signed by Dubrovsky and DAIA secretary Benjamin Rinsky, the document expressed among other things that “the act of inauguration for the headquarters of the OIA provides a propitious opportunity for the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas to offer its warm greeting in the name of the institutions it represents.”<sup>120</sup> This was very weak language for an institution which had previously claimed to speak in name of the entire community and not merely its affiliated institutions. During the event itself, Dubrovsky was even prevented from speaking by the directors of the OIA despite the fact he appeared on the agenda. It seemed the DAIA was being displaced. All eyes had shifted to the OIA, which was now poised to take its place as the community’s official representation before the regime.

Faced with the extent of this calamity, the president of the DAIA realized that important concessions would have to be made if the DAIA hoped to retain its authority

within the community. During the summer of 1948, Dubrovsky began establishing connections with various Peronist supporters, including Evita herself, and even went so far as to join the Peronist Party. Sometime thereafter, he apparently consented to an ambitious scheme hatched by Perón in which he would travel to the United States in an effort to improve public relations with the American Jewish community in exchange for Perón's pledge to facilitate Jewish immigration and to recognize the new State of Israel. According to a secret dispatch sent to the American Jewish Committee by Máximo Yagupsky,

Dubrovsky is to endeavor to get help from Jewish leaders and Jewish organizations in the United States to bring about a change in American public opinion regarding Perón's government, that it is a democratic government where Jews enjoy the same freedom as in the United States. [He] is to prove with facts and statements that Argentina is a much better country for Jews than it was under the former President. In this manner, Dr. Dubrovsky is to help bring about a change in the political line that America is lately pursuing against Argentina.<sup>121</sup>

In particular, the dispatch continued, Dubrovsky's mission was also related to Argentina's efforts to secure an all important loan from the United States in an effort to shore up its sagging economy.

Reportedly backed by his allies in the World Jewish Congress, who hoped that his mission might bring about Argentine recognition of Israel, Dubrovsky next approached the American Jewish Committee through Yagupsky himself. "Dr. Dubrovsky then spoke to me very confidentially," recorded Yagupsky in a subsequent letter,

[He said] there are great possibilities that President Perón is interested that the Jews propagandize for him in the United States. President Perón is also interested in giving the impression in America that he is not an anti-Semite... Dr. Dubrovsky [then] asked me whether or not I felt he should undertake such a mission. I told him that such a mission was a serious one and quite risky and that I could give him no immediate answer... Dr.

Dubrovsky's answer was that he wait until the matter becomes more concrete. He was probably afraid that the DAIA would find out that he is taking up the problem with me.<sup>122</sup>

The American Jewish Committee transmitted the news of Dubrovsky's mission to U.S. Ambassador James Bruce during a visit of his to New York City in September of 1948. Bruce responded that while he could understand Perón's intentions for improving relations with North American Jewry, he did not believe that the Argentine President had any desire of effecting a loan from the United States through such measures. He further counseled the AJC to learn more about the project before assuming any direct course of action should Dubrovsky make the trip.<sup>123</sup>

As fate would have it, the contentious voyage was never carried out and the plan was allowed to lapse into obscurity. Whether this was due a change of heart on the part of Dubrovsky or Perón is still unclear. However, DAIA president's central goal had been achieved. He had demonstrated his willingness to go beyond the requirements of his office in showing loyalty to the regime. As a result of his compromise, Dubrovsky was even awarded with a professorship in medicine at the University of Buenos Aires in September. Writing from Bolivia, Yagupsky contended that, "No one could misunderstand that there is a relationship between this appointment to a university chair and the latest occurrences within the community."<sup>124</sup> Even the DAIA's allies in the World Jewish Congress remarked on Dubrovsky's "indebtedness" to Perón following the appointment.<sup>125</sup>

With Dr. Dubrovsky's compromise, the DAIA had at least for now succeeded in overcoming its first great challenge from the regime, and retained its authority within the

Jewish community. But it had done so at a great price. In addition to politicizing the organization, Dubrovsky had inexorably linked the fortune of the DAIA to the ongoing goodwill of the state, a move which could only lead to future instability and which generated considerable tension in a community still very uneasy with the Peronist regime. Moreover, he had also personally identified himself with the Peronist state, seriously threatening to discredit the Jewish community in the eyes of many national opposition leaders.<sup>126</sup>

#### CONCLUSION: WALKING A FINE LINE

On the whole, it would seem then that a rather complicated relationship had taken root between the Jewish community and the Peronist regime by the end of 1948. For its part, the Jewish press had set the stage for that encounter by attempting to establish points of agreement with the government and outlining the issues of greatest interest within the community. Invariably, these interests included the problem of anti-Semitism, discrimination against Jewish immigration, and Argentina's position with regard to the Palestine question. In presenting these interests before the regime, the community's leaders through the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas at least initially tried to rely upon a traditional Jewish political strategy of intercession, promising to remain quiet about their concerns in exchange for government action on their behalf. In the first year of Perón's Presidency the tactic worked well, owing to the regime's desire to avoid any insinuations of anti-Semitism on its part. This enabled the DAIA, under Moisés Goldman, to retain its autonomy with little sacrifice in return and to also neutralize a small but growing opposition within the DAIA in the form of the OJA.

As international pressure on the regime weakened, however, Perón began to demand greater collaboration from communal leaders in return for concessions. Faced with the possibility of compromising himself before the government in such a way, Goldman resigned. His successor, Dr. Ricardo Dubrovsky opted for a different strategy. Confronted by the increasing ineffectualness of the of the DAIA in the face of the newly established and openly Peronist Organización Israelita Argentina, Dubrovsky felt he had little choice but to cooperate with Perón in defense of the community's very autonomy from the regime in the in form of the DAIA. To this end, he agreed to undertake a dubious mission by which as president of the DAIA he would act as the political representative of the Argentine state before North American and Jewish world authorities. Although the mission was never actually carried out, Dubrovsky's compromise signaled the beginning of a new kind of relationship between the community and the regime, one which threatened to brand the community more and more as a public collaborator with the Peronist regime in the opinion of the nation's opposition political parties.

Thus, under Dubrovsky, the DAIA had at least temporarily staved off its demise by demonstrating its usefulness to the state as a potential propaganda tool. Yet, this respite would prove to be very short-lived. Throughout the remainder of 1948, the OIA continued to battle the DAIA aggressively for the loyalties of the state and the country's Jewish population. Then, in July 1948, the DAIA received yet another blow. In that month, the supporters of the OJA group, led by Simon Mirelman, formally announced the creation of a new organization, the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información (IJA), operating under the auspices of the American Jewish Committee, and committed to

representing the voice of the Jewish community of Argentina outside of the DAIA. In particular, IJA supporters were highly critical of the DAIA and Dubrovsky's apparent willingness to cooperate with the Peronist regime in order to secure political favors. The old lingering schism between the DAIA and the OJA had now exploded. The DAIA was confronted on both sides. As Jacob Hellman would later write to his superiors at the World Jewish Congress offices in New York in October, "We now have three organizations here which aspire to represent the local Jewish community."<sup>127</sup>

## ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

---

<sup>1</sup> David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 284.

<sup>2</sup> See Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*, Trans: Gila Brand. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 185. This work originally appeared in Hebrew in 1973.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>4</sup> See Monica Quijada, "De Perón a Alberdi: Selectividad étnica y construcción nacional en la política inmigratoria argentina," *Revista de Indias* 52 (1992), 867-888.

<sup>5</sup> For more on U.S. immigration policy in the aftermath of World War Two, see Leonard Dinnerstein, *American and the Survivors of the Holocaust*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). For more on the impact of US policy on Argentina, see Leonardo Senkman, "Las relaciones EEUU-Argentina y la cuestión de los refugiados de la post-guerra: 1945-1948." *Judaica Latinoamerica* I, (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988). See also "Política internacional e inmigración europea en la Argentina de post guerra (1945-1948): El caso de los refugiados." *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 1 (1985): 107-125.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the immigration of Nazi war criminals in Argentina, see Ronald Newton, *The Nazi Menace in Argentina, 1931-1947*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Uki Goñi, *Perón y los alemanes: el verdad sobre el espionaje nazi y los refugiados del Reich*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1998); and Ignacio Klich, "The Role of the United States in Securing Latin American Sanctuary for Alleged War Criminals: The Case of Walter Schreiber," *Patterns of Prejudice* 31 (1997). See also, Ignacio Klich's well documented study of German-speaking Jews in Argentina's postwar scientific program, "Richard Gans, Guido Beck, and the Role of German Speaking Jewish Immigrants in the Early Days of Argentina's Nuclear Project," *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* 21 (1995): 127-167, which also contains information on the importance of German scientists more generally in Argentina's early nuclear program.

<sup>7</sup> See Ignacio Klich, "A Background to Perón's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," *Judaica Latinoamericana* I (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988), 192.

<sup>8</sup> See Ignacio Klich, "Equidistance and Gradualism in Argentine Foreign Policy Towards Israel and the Arab World, 1949-1955," in David Shenin and Lois Baer Barr eds. *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America*, (New York: Garland Publishers, 1996). For more on the reasons behind Argentina's abstention, see Ignacio Klich, "Failure in Argentina: The Jewish Agency's Search for Congressional Backing for Zionist Aims in Palestine, 1946," in *Judaica Latinoamericana* II (Jerusalem: AMILAT: 1992). See also Raanan Rein's discussion of this in *Argentina, Israel y los judíos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere, 2001). Among other things, Rein attributes Argentina's abstention to an internal dispute between the head of Argentina's legation at the UN, José Arce, who opposed Jewish statehood, and Perón's Foreign Minister, Juan Bramuglia, who was more favorable. For more on this, see also Emilio Corbiere, "Perón y los judíos," *Todo es historia* 252 (1988): 6-35.

<sup>9</sup> For more on this accord, see Klich, "The First Argentine-Israeli Trade Accord: Political and Economic Considerations." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 177-205. The quotation is from page 181.

<sup>10</sup> For more on Perón's alliance with the Church and the implementation of Catholic education in state schools, see Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel y los judíos*, 70-78. See also, Lila Caimari, *Perón y la Iglesia Católica: Religión, Estado, y sociedad en la Argentina (1943-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia, 1995); and Susana Bianchi, *Catolicismo y peronismo: Religión y política en la Argentina, 1943-1955* (Buenos Aires: IHES, 2001). Bianchi in particular argues that Perón's acquiescence towards the Church on matter

---

of religious education was largely a pragmatic decision rather than a reflection of genuinely warm relations between the Church and the Peronist state.

<sup>11</sup> See Leonardo Senkman, "The Response of the first Peronist Government to Anti-Semitic Discourse, 1946-1954, A Necessary Reassessment," *Judaica Latinoamericana* III (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998), 175.

<sup>12</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> The reasoning for selecting these four publications was based primarily on their availability. Unfortunately, I was unable to locate more than a trivial number of issues from the Labor Zionist *Undzer Velt* as well as from the Progressive dailies *Der Idische Folks-Shtime* and *Haint*. In addition, I have no copies of the Bundist *Undzer Gedank*, which I cited extensively in Chapter Two, from this period.

<sup>14</sup> See *Mundo Israelita*, hereafter referred to as MI, 3 Aug. 1946, 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. The Hospital de Clínicas incident was further discussed in MI 10 Aug. 1946, 3.

<sup>16</sup> MI 11 Jan. 1947, 3.

<sup>17</sup> See MI 9 Nov. 1946, 10. See also MI 28 Dec. 1946, 6.

<sup>18</sup> MI 18 Apr. 1947, 3.

<sup>19</sup> MI 21 Jun. 1947, 3.

<sup>20</sup> See the editorial, "Conceptos del Presidente de la Nación que desvirtúan la actual política inmigratoria," MI 8 Jun. 1946, 2.

<sup>21</sup> See the article, "Lo que piensa de los judíos el hombre que debe autorizar su ingreso al país." MI 15 Jun. 1946, 2.

<sup>22</sup> See the said article in MI 29 Jun. 1946, 2. The article further attacks Peralta and prints excerpts from his book.

<sup>23</sup> See MI 27 Jun. 1946, 2.

<sup>24</sup> MI 26 Jun. 1948, 3

<sup>25</sup> For examples of this, see MI 6 Jun. 1946, 3 and 20 Jul. 1946, 3, which attacked the Socialist party for its failure to support unconditionally a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. In contrast they praised the Radical Party's pro-Zionist resolution in August of 1946, claiming that the UCR "has demonstrated that in its bosom there prevails a humanistic current which today is difficult to find in the so-called parties of the left." See MI 10 Aug. 1946, 2 and 3. See also MI 6 Dec. 1947, 5.

<sup>26</sup> See MI 31 Aug. 1946, 1 and 3. That a favorable measure was not passed was due to sustained opposition from both Radicals and Peronists. For more on the reasons for this, see Ignacio Klich, "Failure in Argentina." See also Peronistas y Radicales ante las aspiraciones sionistas en Palestina." *Desarrollo Economico* 34, 113 (1994): 85-91.

<sup>27</sup> The word *yishuv* is a Hebrew word used to denote a Jewish community. In this context, it refers to the Jewish community of pre-state Israel.

- 
- <sup>28</sup> See MI 8 Mar. 1947, 4.
- <sup>29</sup> See “Lo que el judaismo argentino espera de su gobierno,” MI 25 Oct. 1947, 3.
- <sup>30</sup> See MI 22 May 1948, 12.
- <sup>31</sup> For more on Toff’s visit, see MI 28 Aug. 1948, 3; 28 Aug. 1948, 4; 11 Sep. 1948, 3; 18 Sep. 1948, 1; and 25 Sep. 1948, 1.
- <sup>32</sup> Refer in particular to the editorial piece, “El reconocimiento de Israel por la Argentina,” in MI 11 Sep. 1948, 3.
- <sup>33</sup> MI 11 Dec. 1948, 3.
- <sup>34</sup> MI 5 Mar. 1949, 1.
- <sup>35</sup> For examples of this, see *Di Idische Tsaytung*, hereafter referred to as IT, 20 Oct. 1946, 1; and the editorial of 21 Mar. 1947. I should note here that in the wake of the 1994 bombing on the headquarters of the AMIA in Buenos Aires, a complete copy of *Di Idische Tsaytung* for these years was not available to me at the time of this research. The editions of the paper which I reviewed, both in Argentina and on microfilm from the New York Public Library, often contained substantial gaps between various issues and at times even within particular ones.
- <sup>36</sup> For example, see IT 12 Mar. 1947, 4.
- <sup>37</sup> IT 18 Dec. 1946, 1.
- <sup>38</sup> IT 29 Jan. 1947, 4.
- <sup>39</sup> IT 4 May. 1948, 4.
- <sup>40</sup> For various references to the Five Year Plan within *Di Idshe Tsaytung*, see among others 4 Oct. 1946, 8; 18 Oct. 1946, 3; 21 Oct. 1946, 4; 22 Oct. 1946, 4; 24 Oct. 1946, 4; and 27 Oct. 1946, 8.
- <sup>41</sup> See the editorial in IT 18 Feb. 1947. For reservations regarding the universities, see among others IT 28 Oct. 1946, 4; 10 Nov. 1946, 8; and 20 Nov. 1946, 4.
- <sup>42</sup> IT 7 Jul. 1946, 11.
- <sup>43</sup> See IT 14 May 1948, 1; and 15 May 1948, 1.
- <sup>44</sup> IT 15 May 1948, 6.
- <sup>45</sup> See IT 17 May 1948, 1.
- <sup>46</sup> See “Di Amerikaner lender un di medina fun Yisroel,” IT 18 May 1948, 4.
- <sup>47</sup> See “Di devaylter president nemt haynt iber di regirung,” DP 4 Jun. 1946, 4.
- <sup>48</sup> See DP 8 Jun. 1946, 8.
- <sup>49</sup> See “Di ayzenbanen farn land un nisht dem land far di ayzenbanen,” DP 21 Jun. 1946, 6.

---

<sup>50</sup> DP 1 Mar. 1948, 1.

<sup>51</sup> DP 28 Jun. 1946, 6.

<sup>52</sup> See among others, the editorials in DP 22 Feb. 1946; 10 Jul. 1946; 16 Jul. 1946; and 27 Jul. 1947. See also the articles in 16 Jan. 1947, 4; and 28 Jul. 1947, 4.

<sup>53</sup> DP 13 Jan. 1946, 1. This translation is taken from the Spanish editorial page which presents a more concise version of the Yiddish commentary on p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> See the editorial in DP 21 Apr. 1946.

<sup>55</sup> DP 27 May 1946, 4.

<sup>56</sup> DP 2 Jul. 1946, 4.

<sup>57</sup> For an example of these, see DP 9 Jul. 1946, 3.

<sup>58</sup> See “Arum dem inen aynvanderung,” DP 25 Aug. 1946, 8.

<sup>59</sup> See the editorials in DP 2 Feb. 1947; 3 Feb. 1947; and 19 Feb. 1947.

<sup>60</sup> DP 3 Jul. 1947.

<sup>61</sup> DP 1 Sep. 1946, 8.

<sup>62</sup> See *La Luz* 26 Apr. 1946, 219-220; 19 Jul. 1946, 388; and 4 Apr. 1947, 173.

<sup>63</sup> *La Luz* 8 Aug. 1947, 346.

<sup>64</sup> *La Luz*, 31 Oct. 1947, 489.

<sup>65</sup> See the commentary in *La Luz* 24 Jan. 1947, 25.

<sup>66</sup> *La Luz* 25 Apr. 1947, 178.

<sup>67</sup> Refer to *La Luz* 23 May 1947, 245; and 21 May 1948, 210-212.

<sup>68</sup> See the “Deklarung fun der Yidish-Argentiner Organizatsie,” in DP 15 Nov. 1945, 5; and IT 15 Nov. 1945, 6. See also “Di fiktsie fun a fareynikte komitet,” regarding the aid question in DP 15 Nov. 1945, 4; and IT 15 Nov. 1945, 9. See also the “Declaración de la Organización Judía Argentina,” MI 17 Nov. 1945, 9; as well as “La ficción de un comité unido,” MI 17 Nov. 1945, 7.

<sup>69</sup> MI 17 Nov. 1945, 9.

<sup>70</sup> See the comments of Isaac Arnavi in the DAIA’s *Actas Asambleas* 5 May 1946.

<sup>71</sup> For an example of this, see among others J. Glassman, *La Organización del judaismo argentino*. (Buenos Aires: 1946). See also the comments of Arnavi in the DAIA assembly. *Actas Asambleas*, 5 May 1946.

<sup>72</sup> See the editorials in MI 20 Oct. 1945, 3; 23 Mar. 1946, 3; and 11 May 1946, 3.

---

<sup>73</sup> See the telegram from Hellman to the World Jewish Congress offices in New York City. American Jewish Archives: Files of the World Jewish Congress, MS COL #361, Box H22. Folder 11.

<sup>74</sup> For more on this meeting, see the DAIA, *Actas Asambleas*, 13 Dec. 1945. That the order of the day was changed is also confirmed by the minutes of the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina, which report on the DAIA assembly of December 13. Refer to the SHA, *Libro de Actas* from 21 Dec. 1945.

<sup>75</sup> For more on these, see the DAIA *Actas Asambleas* 5 May 1946. The proposal of the Sociedad Hebraica also appears in the minutes of the SHA, 1 Jul. 1946.

<sup>76</sup> His resignation also prompted the DAIA's allies in the World Jewish Congress, including Rabbi Steven Wise to ask for his return. See the letter from Wise to Goldman in the Files of the World Jewish Congress, American Jewish Archives, MS COL #361, Box H22/11.

<sup>77</sup> See the report of the assembly in MI 20 Jul. 1946, 7.

<sup>78</sup> For more on this stormy session, see DP 9 Aug. 1946, 6.

<sup>79</sup> See "The Report by Arieh Tartakower on his Trip to Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay (October 25 - December 16, 1945)," in the Files of the World Jewish Congress, American Jewish Archives: MS COL #361, H22/7.

<sup>80</sup> The decree 15.829/946 was one of three decrees governing religious bodies in Argentina originally issued in May 1946, shortly before Perón assumed office. For a copy of the text of these decrees, see the correspondence of Major John Peyton, Assistant U.S. Military Attaché in Buenos Aires, to Brig. General C. H. Caldwell, dated 10 Jun. 1946 and 1 Jul. 1946 in the U.S. Embassy Post Records from Buenos Aires. National Archives (NA), College Park, RG 84, 840.4.

<sup>81</sup> See MI 3 Aug. 1946, 4. See also *La Luz* 19 Jul. 1946, 388.

<sup>82</sup> *La Luz* 19 Jul. 1946, 388.

<sup>83</sup> MI 21 Sep. 1946, 2.

<sup>84</sup> MI 3 Oct. 1946, 7.

<sup>85</sup> A facsimile of his letter was reprinted in nearly all the major Jewish papers. See MI 3 Oct. 1946, 1; IT 1 Oct. 1946, 1; DP 1 Oct. 1946, 4; and *La Luz* 11 Oct. 1946, 503. See the text of the DAIA's letter in response to Perón in DP 8 Oct. 1946, 3.

<sup>86</sup> The term *shtadlanut* itself is actually used to describe the DAIA's activities in IT 21 Nov. 1946, 7.

<sup>87</sup> See David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 71.

<sup>88</sup> See the article entitled, "Prezident fun der repubik nemt oyf idishe delegatsie," in IT 8 Nov. 1946, 6. The meeting is also described in the files of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) which maintained extensive contact with the local Jewish immigrant protection society, known as SOPROTOMIS. See the Files of HIAS, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 120, 15.39-XIII-Arg-18. See also the minutes of the Congregación Israelita, 11 Dec. 1946. It should be noted that this was not Goldman's first encounter with Perón. He had previously maintained dealings with him while the latter served as Vice President under the previous military government. In fact, the Jewish Agency's Latin American representative, Moshe (Moisés) A. Toff, even described Goldman in his memoirs as "a great friend of Perón." See Moshe Toff, *El murmullo de Israel* (Jerusalem: La Semana Publicaciones, 1983), 77. See also the comments of Benno

---

Weiser Varon in *Professions of a Lucky Jew* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1992), 132. Later in January 1947, Goldman again met with Bramuglia regarding the 1,000 Jewish children. See DP 16 Jan. 1947, 6.

<sup>89</sup> See IT 10 Oct. 1946, 7; 21 Nov. 1946, 7; 12 Dec. 1946, 9. See also DP 10 Dec. 1946, 6; and 12 Dec. 1946, 4. Regarding the matter of kosher meat, the government had earlier stipulated that all animals to be slaughtered for consumption in Great Buenos Aires had to be taken to an officially recognized municipal slaughterhouse. However, such facilities were not equipped for Jewish ritual slaughtering, precipitating a crisis among the local Jewish community which would not have had access to kosher meat. To resolve this problem, the Ministry of Public Health finally decreed that Jewish ritual slaughterers be allowed to practice in a special partition of the government sponsored slaughtering houses.

<sup>90</sup> Also present was Borlenghi's Sub-Secretary of the Interior, Abraham Krislavin, who is generally credited with the inspiration for creating the OIA. For a description of the meeting, see *La Luz* 28 Feb. 1947, 101. See also MI 22 Feb. 1947, 2; DP 16 Feb. 1947, 6; and *La Prensa* 15 Feb. 1947.. The visit is also reported in the correspondence from the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires which includes the original press release. See the dispatch from Scherer to the Secretary of State, 14 Mar. 1947, NA, RG 59, 835.4016/3-1447, and RG 84, 840.1/850.

<sup>91</sup> Regarding the arrival of the "Campana," see DP 13 Feb. 1947, 4. The text of Perón's speech is provided in MI 22 Feb. 1947, 1; and in Yiddish in DP 16 Feb. 1947, 6.

<sup>92</sup> See MI 15 Feb. 1947, 7; and 22 Feb 1947, 7, which mentions the petitions made by Goldman and the DAIA. For OIA efforts to claim credit for the measure, refer to the press release of the ONIA (Organización Nacional Israelita Argentina), an immediate precursor to the OIA, in DP 18 Feb. 1947, 3.

<sup>93</sup> See the Manifesto of the OIA entitled "Farvos zaynen mir mit der regirung?" in DP 27 Feb. 1947, 5; and IT 27 Feb. 1947, 5. For more on the immigrants' reception by the Jewish community, see DP 20 Feb. 1947, 6.

<sup>94</sup> See the articles in MI 22 Feb. 1947, 1 and 3.

<sup>95</sup> DP 15 Feb. 1947, 1.

<sup>96</sup> IT 20 Feb. 1947, 5.

<sup>97</sup> MI 19 Apr. 1947, 7. For the text of this letter in Yiddish, see DP 20 Apr. 1947, 3.

<sup>98</sup> *La Luz* 8 Aug. 1947, 363. Regarding the visit to Borlenghi, see DP 30 Jul. 1947, 4. See also minutes of the CIRA itself from 27 Jul. 1947, which discuss the attack and the response of the DAIA. According to the minutes, no one was physically harmed in the attack, but much damage was done to the building facility. In addition, see Ray to State Department, 29 Jul. 1947, NA, RG 59, 835.00/7-2847.

<sup>99</sup> For more on the arrival of these immigrants, see DP 11 Apr. 1947, 6.

<sup>100</sup> See the "Reports on Interventions of the HIAS Delegation to Latin America with Representatives of the Governments There About Matters Concerning Jewish Immigration," dated 29 Jun. 1947 in the files of the HIAS, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 120, XIII-SAM-34.

<sup>101</sup> See the report cited above. The events are also described in less detail in a "Report on Visit to Argentina," sent from Barranquilla, and dated 5 May 1947. Files of the HIAS, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 120, 15.39, XIII-Arg-17. Representatives of HIAS had earlier met with Peralta in 1945, obtaining his assurances to improve the status of would-be Jewish immigrants. See the "Report on my Trip to South

---

America from August to December 1945,” by Dr. Henry Shoskes, Files of the HIAS, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 120, XIII-SAM-29.

<sup>102</sup> See the letter from Mr. Yagupsky to Mr. Rothschild, dated February 27, 1947, in the Files of the American Jewish Committee, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, “South America-Argentina.”

<sup>103</sup> Regarding Goldman’s resignation and these deliberations, see DP 9 Oct. 1947, 3; 11 Oct. 1947, 6; 21 Oct. 1947, 6; and 29 Oct. 1947, 6.

<sup>104</sup> MI 1 Nov. 1947, 3. See also MI 8 Nov. 1947, 2. The transmission of posts is also reported in *La Luz* 14 Nov. 1947, 531-2; DP 4 Nov. 1947, 6; and briefly in DP 24 Nov. 1947, 8.

<sup>105</sup> See Yagupsky’s letter to Mr. Hevesi of the AJC, dated 22 Sep. 1948 and sent from Bogatá, Colombia. AJC Files, YIVO Archives, New York: RG347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky

<sup>106</sup> See their statement regarding the deliberations in DP 29 Oct. 1947, 6.

<sup>107</sup> Ariel Plotschuk, interview by author, tape recording, Buenos Aires, 20 Jul. 2000.

<sup>108</sup> See Yagupsky’s letter to Dr. Slawson of the AJC, dated 17 Mar. 1948. AJC Files, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

<sup>109</sup> Virtually the only incidents mentioned in *Di Presse* involved a petition to the Interior Minister on behalf of a large number of German Jews whose legal residency in the country had expired on December 31, 1947, and a visit by the DAIA leadership to Foreign Minister Bramuglia regarding Argentina’s position on the Palestine question. See DP 13 Jan. 1948, 6; 25 Feb. 1948, 4. Neither of these appeals carried immediately positive results.

<sup>110</sup> DP 14 Feb. 1948, 5.

<sup>111</sup> MI 1 May 1948, 2.

<sup>112</sup> See MI 26 Jun. 1948, 9. The meeting was also reported in *La Luz* 25 Jun. 1948, 264.

<sup>113</sup> See Yagupsky’s letter to Mr. Halperin, dated 23 Jun. 1948, in the files of the AJC, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

<sup>114</sup> See the article entitled “OIA delegatsie baem melukhe president general Perón.” DP 25 Jun 1948, 4.

<sup>115</sup> See “Una delegación de la OIA agradece al General Perón,” MI 26 Jun 1948. 9.

<sup>116</sup> MI 14 Aug. 1948, 3.

<sup>117</sup> With regard to these announcements refer to IT 16 Aug. 1948. See also the collection pertaining to the OIA in the YIVO Archives, Buenos Aires: Series 1045.

<sup>118</sup> Series 1045 in the YIVO Archives, Buenos Aires.

<sup>119</sup> IT 16 Aug. 1948. See also series 1045, YIVO, Buenos Aires.

<sup>120</sup> See the full page ad of the DAIA in MI 21 Aug. 1948, 5.

---

<sup>121</sup> See Yagupsky's letter, sent from Montevideo and dated 10 Jul. 1948, in the files of the AJC, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Box 2, "Jewish Agencies-DAIA."

<sup>122</sup> See Yagupsky's letter to the AJC, 25 Jun. 1948, in the files of the AJC, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Box 3, "OJA." The DAIA had long been opposed to the activities of the AJC in Argentina, which among other things had supported the OJA.

<sup>123</sup> See the confidential report sent from Jacob Blaustein to Dr. John Slawson of the AJC, dated 8 Sep. 1948. AJC Files, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, "South America, Argentina."

<sup>124</sup> Refer to his letter to Mr. Hevesi on 22 Sep. 1948, cited above.

<sup>125</sup> See the confidential letter from Dr. I Schwarzbart, dated 8 Jul. 1949, which makes reference to the Dubrovsky mission. According to the version of the WJC, Perón approached Dubrovsky with the possibility of visiting the U.S. but the president of the DAIA ultimately refused to go. Whether Perón simply dropped the idea or Dubrovsky later had a change of heart is unclear. Considering the WJC's likely involvement in the affair, it seems plausible that they would attempt to downplay the complicity of the DAIA president in the events. See the Files of the WJC, American Jewish Archives: MS COL #361, Box H25/15.

<sup>126</sup> See Yagupsky's letter to Mr. Hevesi, cited above. See also his letter to Mr. Slawson, 31 Aug. 1948. AJC Files, YIVO Archives, New York: RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

<sup>127</sup> See his letter to Schwatzbart, 26 Oct. 1948, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/14.

## CHAPTER 4

### IN NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: THE OIA, THE IJA, THE DAIA, AND THE STRUGGLE TO REPRESENT ARGENTINE JEWRY, 1948-1952

*We are with the regime because we are first of all Argentines, and because the most excellent president of the nation has declared on many occasions that he is against racial discrimination and has shown this through his good gestures....* – Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA)

*We keep a clear rule of loyalty: To the Jewish and to the Argentine. Not half Argentines and half Jews, but rather simultaneously Jews and Argentines. We feel identified with all that is Argentine, within the centenary tradition consecrated in the National Constitution; we feel solidarity with the Jewish, loyal to the millennial tradition that lives in the Torah.* – Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información (IJA)

*As Argentines, as citizens, and as free men, Jews profess the total gamut of opinions and exercise all range of activities that are common with the totality of our people. Other entities group them or represent them according to each class of militancy or activity. The DAIA no. The DAIA represents them integrally, as Argentine Jews. It is as its name states, a delegation of all other institutions: the representation of the entire community.* – Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA)

The period from 1948 to 1952 marked the apogee of Peronist power and popularity in Argentina. Despite a decline in economic activity from the levels of the previous three years, the country remained prosperous, and Perón sought to expand his popular base beyond the labor movement, the Church, and the army, to include new

social actors, such as women, the poor, and the country's numerous ethnic communities. In addition, he consolidated his political power, first with the passage of a new national Constitution in March 1949, and later through the introduction of Peronist reforms in education and social welfare. The new Constitution of 1949 formally proclaimed the tenets of *justicialist* theory and vastly strengthened the authority of the national government over matters pertaining to private property, the economy, and federal-state relations. It also allowed for the reelection of a sitting President, something forbidden under the previous liberal Constitution of 1853. As a result of this, on November 11, 1951, despite being forced eschew his wife Evita as running mate in favor of his original partner Hortensio Quijano, Perón was reelected with a resounding 64% of the popular vote in the first presidential election in which women voted. The period also witnessed an increased pressure for political conformity. The remaining autonomous labor unions within the CGT were Peronized, and the press was increasingly censored through a state monopoly on the distribution of newsprint. In April 1951, the brutal repercussions of state censorship were fully revealed when the regime officially expropriated the opposition newspaper La Prensa and granted control over its daily operations to leaders of the CGT.

The period from 1948 to 1952 also marked a time of intense struggle within the Jewish community over its proper relationship to the emerging populist state. Although the leadership of the DAIA had initially attempted to accommodate the demands of the new regime without expressing the loyalty of the collective as a whole to Peronism, by the beginning of 1948 it had become increasingly clear that this policy was no longer tenable. As the state began to demand more and more from Jewish leaders, in the form of

outright expressions of support and cooperation, pressure on the DAIA mounted to become a willing ally of the President or face being replaced in official circles by the newly created Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA). As a result of this situation, the leadership of the DAIA faced a rising crisis within the community. On the one hand, the OIA and its supporters continued to militate in favor of open Jewish support for Perón and for the integration of the Jewish community into the larger Peronist movement. On the other, a substantial part of the community's liberal sector began to criticize the DAIA for going too far in establishing good relations with Perón. Adhering first to the Organización Judía Argentina, these elements joined forces with the American Jewish Committee in July 1948 to form the Instituto Judío Argentina de Cultura e Información (IJA). They worried that through its compromises with the regime, the DAIA had branded the entire community as overtly pro-Peronist in the eyes of the nation's opposition parties whom they hoped would someday regain power. Thus, by 1948, the DAIA had been outflanked on both the Peronist and anti-Peronist fronts. It now found itself immersed in an intense three-way struggle for power with both the Peronist OIA and the anti-Peronist IJA.

It is precisely the contested relationship between these three institutions for predominance and influence within the Jewish community that is the focus of the current chapter. In particular, each of these institutions presented an alternative vision for Jewish political and communal identity in Argentina as well as Jewish integration into the larger surrounding society. Yet, in aspiring to represent the entirety of the Jewish community before the state, they were also forced to reconcile their national visions with the internal politics of the local Jewish community, based as it was upon a European Jewish political

model radically different than that of the surrounding Argentine political system. Precisely at the same time when the question of Peronism remained paramount in the Argentine national political arena, a very different national ideology, that of Zionism, dominated the internal politics of the community and its institutions. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and the tragedy of the Holocaust, virtually all sectors of the Jewish community, including the non-Zionist left, were temporarily united in their support of the desperate struggle for Jewish liberation in Palestine.<sup>1</sup> Only an organization that represented this dynamic Zionist enthusiasm in the realm of communal politics could succeed in generating the popular support of the Jewish masses necessary to establish its legitimacy on the national level. This, then, was the challenge which faced the three would-be representatives of Argentine Jewry after 1948. They needed to develop a formula for political behavior in the “public” political arena that could be reconciled with the Zionist aspirations of the majority of Argentina’s Jews in the “private” realm of Jewish communal politics. Ultimately, despite serious setbacks, the DAIA was able to resist the challenges posed by the OIA and the IJA and emerge as the community’s hegemonic institution by 1952 precisely because it was best able to negotiate this distinction.

#### THE PROJECT OF THE OIA: INTEGRATION THROUGH PERONIZATION

Among other things, Peronist populism highlighted a long-standing ambivalence within the Jewish community towards its proper place within Argentine national politics. Although several prominent Jews had become influential leaders within the Socialist and Radical parties before 1946, the larger community and its institutions had traditionally

advocated a policy of neutrality with regard to national political questions. According to the argument, while individual Jews were free to vote their conscience, the community as a whole should avoid being drawn into larger political debates except when the interests of the community itself were at stake. While this policy had worked well under the liberal regimes prior to 1943, it now faced a severe test from Perón and his corporatist and collectivist vision of the state and society. Unlike his liberal predecessors, Perón appealed to the Jews as a collective rather than as individuals. As a result, the community was increasingly pressured to respond as a collective, and in the process to define its stance on the national political level.

With this in mind, a small group of Jews had banded together in February of 1947 to form the Organización Israelita Argentina, an openly Peronist political entity which aspired to militate for Perón among the Jews of Argentina and represent the community as a whole before the state. Although its exact origins are unclear, it seems the idea was first hatched by Abraham Krislavin, a Jewish Peronist supporter, who served as Undersecretary of the Interior during Perón's first two administrations. According to a secret memorandum of the World Jewish Congress, there had been some "first cautious moves to create a Jewish Peronist organization in the middle of 1945," but these had failed due to lack of support within the community.<sup>2</sup> Now, with Perón comfortably in power, this second effort was launched with the goal of "demonstrating to Perón that there were Jews who supported him."<sup>3</sup> Although there is no available record of its membership, an early press release in *Di Presse*, appearing on February 18, 1947, listed Salvador Woscoff as president of the new organization, and Sujer Matrajt, Mauricio Nikiprovesky, Julio Jorge Schneider, Luís Elias Sojit, J. Krasbutch, Samuel Burdman,

Carlos Lokman, Pablo Manguel, Samuel Rosenstein, Jaime Weitzman, Gregorio Perlmutter, Manuel Grinstein, José Kafia, and Jaime Rozovsky as members of its directive council.<sup>4</sup> According to one of the OIA's later presidents, Ezequiel Zobotinsky, the majority of these early members were middle class businessmen and professionals, with few previous bonds between them other than that all were Peronists.<sup>5</sup>

The message of the OIA was clear. Jews of all cultural and religious backgrounds should unite around Perón and express their loyalty to “el líder” as a collective, much as other social groups had done. In return, they would reap the benefits of full citizenship in the “New Argentina,” in addition to winning important favors from the regime. In short, they claimed that Peronism offered Jews nothing less than a pathway to complete and harmonious integration in Argentine society. In a manifesto to the Jewish community, published on February 27, 1947 in the Yiddish press, they declared that,

We are with the regime...because the Jews have helped to build the greatness of Argentina with their knowledge, art, industry, and trade, and because no government until now has recognized our contribution. Therefore, we support the work of the current Argentine government and work with it so that our fatherland shall be able to accomplish the maximum on behalf of the entire people of the republic, AND WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR CONTRIBUTION.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, they highlighted a goodwill gesture on the part on Perón in which he granted permanent residence to a group of 47 illegal Jewish refugees who had arrived in Argentina after being rejected in Brazil. Finally, the leaders of the new organization called upon “all Jews” to join with the OIA which, “looks out for the interests of Argentine Jews, intervening with the national authorities as a representative of the same...”<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, such words closely resembled Perón's own appeals to the Jewish community on numerous occasions. In particular, he utilized a series of events and meetings held under the auspices of the OIA after 1947 to voice his belief that racism had no place in Argentina and that in light of this Jews should participate publicly as such in politics. In August 1948, he declared before a crowd which had gathered to witness the inauguration of the OIA's new headquarters, "In Argentina, there should only be one class of men: those who work for the good of the nation, without distinctions." Furthermore, he went on, "It is necessary that the Jewish collectivity knows that in this land it has the same rights as all other Argentine citizens. Consequently, it must participate freely in the economic realm, in the political realm, and in the social realm, with the same rights and the same obligations as all other citizens."<sup>8</sup> In March 1950, he expressed his astonishment, "that the Jewish collective, so large, distinguished, and productive, participates alone in the political life," calling for a Jewish representation in the national parliament under the banner of the Peronist Party.<sup>9</sup> In a speech to a group of communal leaders soliciting his reelection in 1951, Perón further declared, "I believe that nobody is better able to judge us in our desires for justice than those men who during the millennia have suffered injustice... We seek, we appreciate, and we wish for the Hebrew community to join within our political action. I believe that one of the fundamental things that the Hebrew collective must confront is coming to participate in Argentine politics."<sup>10</sup>

That Perón intended to effect this participation through the medium of the OIA was also made clear on numerous occasions. He deliberately showed favor for the organization, choosing to announce his acts of benevolence towards the community in the

presence of OIA delegations, such as when he allowed a group of illegal Jewish immigrants who faced deportation to remain in the country in June 1948.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Perón bluntly stated during a March 1949 event in celebration of Argentina's recognition of the new state of Israel that it was the personal intervention of the OIA which was responsible for the inclusion of an article in the new Peronist Constitution that condemned racial discrimination. "It was mentioned a few moments ago," he began, "the inclusion in our reformed Constitution of a clause...that establishes that in this land racial divisions are not admitted. But, dear Sirs, I want to give justice to the truth. The inclusion of this clause owes itself to the initiative of the OIA, who, through the intermediary of its president, our friend, Sujer Matrajt, brought the fortunate initiative to our attention..."<sup>12</sup> The President could be more subtle as well. Knowing that legitimacy and prestige within the community often rested on seemingly small gestures, in 1948 and again in 1950, Perón and Evita sent their official New Years greetings to the Jewish community "by intermediary of the Organización Israelita Argentina," rather than through the DAIA as the President had in 1946. The significance of such deliberate acts was not lost on their recipients.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, Perón granted the OIA certain privileges which he hoped would enable it to win popularity within the community. In particular, the OIA was given special authority over the entry of Jewish immigrants into the country. In the wake of the Holocaust and with thousands of displaced Jews across Europe, the Jews of Argentina had lobbied hard for the Peronist regime to admit some of these refugees. In 1949, one of their most important goals was realized when Perón issued a decree of amnesty for all illegal immigrants who had entered the country during and after the war without

documentation.<sup>14</sup> In implementing this resolution, however, he indicated that all applications for amnesty must bear the approval of the OIA before they would be accepted. This meant that other Jewish institutions, such as the immigrant protection society, SOPROTOMIS, were now beholden to the whims of OIA leaders in order to operate effectively.<sup>15</sup> In addition, it provided the OIA with an opportunity to expound on the benefits of unwavering loyalty to the regime. In their propaganda to the Jewish press the leaders of the OIA claimed that the amnesty decree was “another of the great triumphs of the OIA,” adding that, “The Organización Israelita Argentina once again solves, with the clear vision of its directors, one of the most serious problems which affected the collective.”<sup>16</sup> In July 1949, the government further boosted the prestige of the OIA, when the National Director of Immigration conceded a special quota of 250 entry permits per year for “Jews protected by the Organización Israelita Argentina.”<sup>17</sup> A subsequent resolution additionally allowed for the omission of requisite consular references with regard to the selection of these immigrants.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the OIA was given a virtual free reign over which immigrants could make up this number.

The OIA, for its part, strove hard to persuade Jewish voters to support the Peronist cause. On the eve of nationwide congressional elections in March 1948, the OIA called upon Jews to “vote for the candidates of the Peronist Party, in order to reinforce the progress of the Republic...and in order to guarantee to the Jews the respect and tranquility they deserve...”<sup>19</sup> Prior to the plebiscite for the new national Constitution in December 1948, the OIA urged Jews to “support the reform of the Constitution,” highlighting its provisions against racial discrimination in particular.<sup>20</sup> Its president at the time, Sujer Matrajt, even delivered a radio address to the Jewish community on

November 26, 1948 in favor of the measure. Referring to the massive project of constitutional reform, he asked his listeners, “How could the Jewish community...which has identified itself plainly with the people of the Republic, in order to melt itself...into one aspiration of patria, remain indifferent before problems of such magnitude?”<sup>21</sup>

Yet, even as OIA leaders invited the Jewish community to gather in the Plaza del Congreso “to testify its adherence to the great Argentine President” in March of 1949, it was clear that their efforts to win Jewish electoral support had been largely unsuccessful.<sup>22</sup> According to one report, “The directors of the OIA had a hard time of it with the president...when somebody pointed out to him at the conclusion of the elections, that those districts in which he had been defeated were those densely populated by Jews.”<sup>23</sup> Despite the setbacks, OIA leaders continued in their work throughout 1950 and 1951, visiting several Jewish communities in the interior to propagandize in electoral campaigns there.<sup>24</sup> In the nationwide elections of November 1951, the Peronist party even nominated the OIA’s secretary, Ezequiel Zabolinsky, as its congressional candidate in the 23<sup>rd</sup> district of Buenos Aires, which corresponded to the Jewish barrio of Once.<sup>25</sup> However, when the results of the election were finally tabulated, it appears that the majority of Jews still remained unconvinced. Zabolinsky lost to his Radical opponent in the congressional race, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> was the only district in the entire federal capital in which Perón was defeated.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps even more important, however, was the work of the OIA within the Jewish community itself. Here OIA leaders sought to win the support of the masses by whatever means they could and emerge as the predominant representation of the community. From its inception, the leaders of the OIA struggled to gain influence within Jewish communal

institutions and to erode the legitimacy of the DAIA. One means of doing this was by hosting elaborate banquets for the entire Jewish community in honor of Perón. Perhaps the most notable of these was held on March 12, 1949 at the elegant Buenos Aires salon of Les Ambassadeurs, in celebration of Argentina's recognition of the state of Israel. The reception drew the attendance of nearly of all the major Jewish leaders of the capital, including the president of the DAIA, and even the Chief Rabbi of the prestigious Congregación Israelita, who presented Perón and his wife with a symbolic miniature Torah, in appreciation for their act on behalf of the Jewish community.<sup>27</sup> About the event, the editors of the Yiddish daily, *Di Presse*, commented, "The demonstration that the Argentine Jewry offers today to the President of the Nation, general Juan D. Perón and his wife María Eva Duarte de Perón, organized by the OIA in the great banquet hall of Les Ambassadeurs...is an event of extraordinary importance for the Jewish collective of Argentina and in reality for all the Jews of South America."<sup>28</sup>

Another tactic employed by the OIA was to deny DAIA leaders access to the President. Given that this was one of the primary functions of the DAIA, OIA leaders hoped that if they could separate the DAIA from Perón, it would lose its principal reason for existence. Following Perón's admission of the forty-seven Jewish immigrants aboard the "Campana" in February 1947, a delegation of the DAIA directive council went personally to thank Perón for his goodwill. They were told, however, that the President was busy preparing for other matters and were finally referred to the Interior Minister after being kept waiting for several hours.<sup>29</sup> In March 1948, the American Jewish Committee's representative in Buenos Aires, Máximo Yagupsky, reported to his superiors that DAIA delegations were no longer "received officially in any of the

governmental spheres.”<sup>30</sup> In addition, the OIA applied what one observer deemed a “terror campaign” against the DAIA. According to Jacob Hellman of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), the OIA even went so far as to spread a rumor of an impending wave of anti-Semitism in October 1948 in order to “force the DAIA to unite with them.”<sup>31</sup>

The OIA also began soliciting political contributions from members of the community, creating “a state of nerves...since the OIA has the power to send campaign investigators to seek out the funds and advise the imposition of fines in reprisal.”<sup>32</sup> In one of their bolder moves, the directors of the OIA announced their intention in September 1949 to raise some 3,000,000 pesos for the construction of a new hospital in the province of Entre Ríos under the auspices of the Eva Perón Foundation. On September 15, they called a meeting of the directors of all major Jewish institutions in the capital to secure donations and select a coordinating committee for the building campaign. According to the editors of *Di Idische Tsaytung*, the initiative of the OIA, “encountered a sympathetic echo among all circles of Argentine Jewry.”<sup>33</sup> The editors of *Di Presse* claimed, “There is not the slightest doubt that the Jewish collective will respond with all its heart to the call of the OIA to join in the work of social welfare,” adding that, “This very same hospital will further unite the Jews with Argentina and will once again show that between the Jewish and the Argentine there is the deepest, most heartfelt, and most organic unity.”<sup>34</sup> A press release in *Mundo Israelita* reported that the donations were to be collected on a voluntary basis.<sup>35</sup> However, Jacob Hellman of the WJC wrote privately in his correspondence to New York that the entire episode was little more than a “thieving demand of the OIA to defraud [the community of] three million to construct a hospital with the name of the First Lady.”<sup>36</sup>

All of this served to demoralize the leadership of the DAIA and precipitate a crisis within the organization. At one point in 1948, the president of the DAIA, Dr. Ricardo Dubrovsky even offered to resign his position but was dissuaded from doing so in part by the intervention of Hellman and the WJC.<sup>37</sup> “Thus, men live here as marranos, under a ghastly coercion” wrote Hellman to his superiors in 1949, “and outwardly it will be said that the Jews of Argentina are free and do not experience any anti-Semitism.”<sup>38</sup>

Although it appears that pressure from the OIA eased somewhat after 1949 following a reshuffling of its leadership, this situation would prove only temporary.<sup>39</sup> By 1951, the OIA had again become a force within the community and again challenged the DAIA for political supremacy. However, this time instead of trying to influence the Jewish opinion by attacking the DAIA, the OIA simply circumvented it, going directly to the community itself. In May 1951, the OIA organized another huge reception for Perón and Evita at Les Amabssadeurs, this time attracting as many as 3,000 people. But, instead of including Dubrovky and the DAIA on the speaking agenda as it had on past occasions, the OIA asked the president of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), Moisés Slinin to participate. With over 40,000 members, the AMIA, also known as the Ashkenazi kehilla of Buenos Aires, represented the social and charitable nucleus of the Jewish community and its largest institution by far.<sup>40</sup> By attracting the support of the AMIA to its cause, the OIA thus dealt a severe blow to the DAIA, which according to Máximo Yagupsky, felt, “sadly enough, like the proverbial fifth wheel on the cart.”<sup>41</sup> Shortly thereafter, on July 5, 1951, the OIA together with Slinin again contrived to organize a public audience with Perón, this time to solicit his reelection as President.<sup>42</sup> The event was carefully orchestrated with each the participants receiving

invitations and telegrams in advance of the date. Yet, according to a dispatch by Saul Sokal of the WJC, “Gossip has it that Dr. Dubrovsky was deliberately not invited to the meeting and that eventually, he himself, contrived to get an invitation...”<sup>43</sup> After a prolonged debate within the DAIA’s directive council, it was finally decided that he should attend the event anyway, but the damage had already been done. “After the 5<sup>th</sup> of July,” wrote Sokol with some degree of exaggeration, “it was heard - sporadically – that the DAIA was finished.”<sup>44</sup>

In addition, the OIA also sought to capitalize on Perón’s friendly relations with the state of Israel to improve its position within the community. As stated earlier, Jewish communal identity during this time was closely tied to the national project in Palestine and the OIA was not unaware of this fact. As early as 1948, propaganda literature expressed the OIA’s “fervent desire that the partition of Palestine be possible, in order to create the Jewish Nation.”<sup>45</sup> In addition, when Perón announced his plans to offer official recognition to the new Jewish state on February 5, 1949, he took care to do so in the presence of an OIA delegation.<sup>46</sup> The first emissary sent by Perón to the new nation was none other than Sujer Matrajt, who bore a handwritten message of greetings from the Argentine President to his Israeli counterpart.<sup>47</sup> With the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1949, Perón selected Pablo Manguel, then secretary of the OIA, to be Argentina’s first official plenipotentiary minister.<sup>48</sup> According to Jacob Tsur, Israel’s first official diplomatic representative in Argentina, he did so even over the protest of his own foreign ministry which would have preferred a Catholic candidate, in keeping with a request from the Vatican.<sup>49</sup> “From this,” wrote Tsur, “Manguel deduced that his naming should be considered as an index of the relationship of appreciation and sympathy that

the President had towards the Jewish people.”<sup>50</sup> The naming also served a practical function as well. With the appointment of Manguel, the OIA might thus serve as the nexus between the Peronist regime and the state of Israel, in addition to serving as the point of contact with the local Jewish community. On June 22, 1949, the OIA used Manguel’s selection as yet another opportunity to host an elaborate banquet, in which Perón declared his “great respect” for the state of Israel to a gathering of representatives from “a great part of the Jewish community.”<sup>51</sup> In June 1951, and again in November, Manguel returned to Argentina for extended periods to lobby for the Peronist Party in the upcoming elections.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, it was Pablo Manguel who helped organize the reception of July 5, 1951 in which the DAIA and Dubrovsky were so conspicuously overlooked.

Yet, despite all of these attempts, the OIA still remained largely unpopular within the Jewish community by the beginning of 1952. Even the terrible blow to the DAIA’s prestige in 1951 did not appear to translate into corresponding gains for the OIA. According to Máximo Yagupsky, the majority of those who attended the May reception did so out of fear for their personal well being or that of the United Campaign for Israel.<sup>53</sup> Still another observer reported, “The organization that wanted to replace the DAIA has not gained in prestige; Jews do its bidding as they are told to do...”<sup>54</sup> Even Slinin, who offered laudatory praise for Perón at the July reception, did not do so in his official capacity as kehilla president, but instead spoke only as an individual. It would appear then, that fear and manipulation from the OIA and the state were not enough to overcome the endemic mistrust of the Jewish masses for Perón. For their part, the majority of Jews

in Argentina simply preferred to retreat from organized politics altogether rather than tie themselves to the Peronist regime.

According to Ezequiel Zabolinsky, this rejection was due in part because of the “mistrust that all Jewish communities have towards charismatic leaders.”<sup>55</sup> In addition, the quality of the OIA’s leadership also played a role. While some officials such as Sujer Matrajt and Pablo Manguel appear to have been genuinely interested in advancing the cause of Peronism within the community, most were regarded as little better than common criminals and swindlers.<sup>56</sup> In a confidential letter regarding the local Jewish community from May 1947, U.S. Ambassador George Messersmith unceremoniously observed that, “those who have associated themselves with the ‘Organización Israelita Argentina’ are not representative of the best there is in the Jewish community...”<sup>57</sup> In fact, many OIA leaders appear to have used their political connections to do little more than enrich themselves at the expense of the fellow community members.<sup>58</sup> Yet, in the final analysis, it seems that the Jewish community also rejected Perón’s overall message of collective political participation, preferring instead to retain the distinction between the internal and external political domains which had prevailed under the previous liberal regimes. With this in mind, Perón decided to change the direction of the OIA in July of 1952, replacing its leadership, and appointing Ezequiel Zabolinsky as its new president.<sup>59</sup> Under Zabolinsky, the OIA would retreat from its former efforts to compete against the DAIA and instead serve merely as a nexus between Perón the community without attempting to speak in its name.<sup>60</sup> Interestingly enough, this change would mark the first step in a significant warming of relations between Perón and the Jews during his second term as President.

## THE PROJECT OF THE IJA: INTEGRATION THROUGH DEMOCRATIZATION

The OIA, however, was not the only challenger to the leadership of the DAIA during this time. In July 1948, Máximo Yagupsky announced to his superiors in the American Jewish Committee the creation of a new entity, the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura é Información (IJA), under the auspices of the AJC. He described the organization as “an autonomous entity,” that “will receive the technical cooperation of the AJC.” “Its program,” he wrote, “is copied from the program of the AJC.”<sup>61</sup> Initially, even its name was to be “The Argentine Jewish Committee,” but this was changed since the word comité in Spanish was used to denote national political bodies.<sup>62</sup> According to a letter sent from the IJA to the president of the AJC, its stated purpose was to “develop a permanent action in favor of equality for all inhabitants of the country,” “to foment good relations and mutual cooperation between the Jewish community and that of other religions,” and, “to lend assistance in cases of proven discrimination against Jews.” In addition, the IJA sought to raise public awareness of the principles of fundamental liberties, to encourage Jewish integration into the surrounding society, and to strengthen and consolidate the new state of Israel.<sup>63</sup> To this end, the IJA published various informative materials about topics of Jewish interest, maintained a weekly one-half hour radio program on well known station, protested against anti-Semitic films and publications in the capital, and dispatched bulletins regarding Jewish holidays and weekly religious services to the general Argentine press.<sup>64</sup>

This new organization had its roots in the earlier schism within the DAIA in which a small but influential minority, led by Simon Mirelman, had protested the DAIA’s

affiliation with the World Jewish Congress, and especially its appropriation of wartime aid for Zionist activities in Palestine. Claiming that that DAIA, did not “represent in their due proportion all the sectors of the community,” the group had officially established a parallel institution, the Organización Judía Argentina (OJA) in November of 1945.<sup>65</sup> Primarily concerned with the question of aid for Jewish refugees, the OJA never aspired to replace the DAIA as a representative of the larger community, but merely to effect a more balanced distribution of the charitable funds collected from the community. This was achieved in March 1947, and the OJA soon faded from the political spotlight.

Yet, the tensions which had propelled the earlier division remained, and by early 1948 the members of the OJA group had decided to found the IJA as a direct challenge to the conduct of the DAIA. Drawing its principal support from the Argentine branch of B’nai B’rith, the Congregación Israelita, as well as the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina, the IJA represented a particular group of Spanish speaking Jews who constituted the community’s social and cultural elite. About this group, one observer reported, “They do not differ from the majority of Jews in being pro-Israel. However, they still form a social group, which though hard to define and classify, is recognized and identified as an entity.”<sup>66</sup> Another, less flattering description, dubbed them as “aristocrats,” further adding, “the IJA comprises that group of Jews that correspond to the Yahudim in the U.S., it being understood that the term Yahudim does not fit exactly.”<sup>67</sup> In addition to Simon Mirelman, its most important founding members included Mario Scheingart, a Russian-born doctor of endocrinology, who had previously served as the president of Argentina’s B’nai B’rith, and Alberto Klein, an engineer and former president of the OJA. Also prominent were Enrique Schuster, an industrialist and ex-professor of

economics, who once described himself as a “free Argentine” in an anonymous letter to *La Prensa*, Jacobo Wainer, an ex-accountant for the Argentine government and professor in economics, and Elias Teubal, a wealthy industrialist and ex-president of various Sephardic Jewish organizations.<sup>68</sup>

Above all else, the leaders of the IJA advocated a policy of Jewish integration in Argentina very much in accord with the prevailing liberal views of the anti-Peronist establishment. Jews in Argentina should not only participate in politics as individuals, but the community itself should also contribute to the creation of a free and democratic climate in the country that would make such integration possible. In accord with this, the IJA sought to locate the Jewish community’s public political position among the traditional liberal-democratic parties opposed to Perón. In this respect, it was critical of the DAIA, and especially of Dubrovsky, for their apparent willingness to compromise the interests of the larger community to win favor from the regime. According to Máximo Yagupsky, there was concern among many in the community that the opposition parties might come to see the Jews as Peronist sympathizers.<sup>69</sup> To this end, the IJA endorsed a policy of aloofness towards the Peronist regime, arguing against establishing any contact with the government beyond that which was absolutely necessary.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the leaders of the IJA hoped to cultivate close relations with the U.S. embassy in Argentina through the AJC as a means of protecting the community and resisting pressure from the regime.

As early as May 1947, Simon Mirelman had been in contact with U.S. Ambassador Messersmith, expressing his concerns to the ambassador regarding discrimination against Jewish medical students and immigrants.<sup>71</sup> These contacts were further stepped up later

in 1947, with the designation of James Bruce as ambassador, owing to Bruce's personal friendship with Jacob Blaustein, the executive chairman of the AJC. In August 1947, Máximo Yagupsky and Judge Phillip Forman of the AJC met personally with Bruce in New York prior to his departure for Argentina. According to Yagupsky's notes from the interview, "Judge Forman attempted to explain to the new Ambassador that in his task there is a subject of common interest between the United States and the Committee." "The Jewish community," he then noted, "is democratic minded and is doing business with the United States on an increasing scale."<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, in a memorandum sent to Bruce, he added that, "The Jews of Argentina are a strongly pro-democratic and pro-American group," and that "unofficial evidences of goodwill and friendship for the Jews of Argentina by the American ambassador would effect, over and above, an increase in pro-American sentiment within the Jewish community itself."<sup>73</sup> The motives for such contact were made explicit in a letter from Yagupsky to Forman. "Mr. Bruce can be helpful to us and to the Argentine Jewish community," he wrote, "by making it constantly clear to the Perón government that the American government and American public opinion strongly disapprove of any acts of discrimination or violence against Jews."<sup>74</sup> The effort appears to have been at least somewhat successful. On October 2, 1947, Bruce wrote to Forman, informing him that he had met with Mirelman and Klein to discuss the situation of the Jewish community, with the latter having made a very favorable impression.<sup>75</sup> On November 6, he notified Forman that he had invited "leading people of the Jewish community," to attend a reception for Aaron Copland.<sup>76</sup>

As might be expected, the action of the AJC and the IJA in this regard had the net effect creating an image of the IJA as an organization opposed to Perón. In a letter dated

January 21, 1950, Yagupsky wrote that, “Our prestige has grown as a result of our connections with writers, clerics, and democratic ‘politicians.’ In the light of Buenos Aires public opinion (non-Jewish opinion), the Instituto has become one of the most interesting bulwarks of democratic ideals.”<sup>77</sup> However, such attention also carried with it substantial dangers. In another letter from January 1950 he noted how agents of the Federal Police had been monitoring the IJA, and had even summoned the secretary of the organization for questioning, asking him “for a list of the membership and their documents.”<sup>78</sup> Yagupsky himself was also harassed, and shortly thereafter he was forced to close the offices of the AJC in Buenos Aires and flee to Chile with his wife out of fear for their personal safety. In a subsequent letter, sent from Uruguay, he explained that after gaining a special interview with Federal Police officials, members of the IJA, “found out that the government had no concrete evidence or charges against us, but that the Special Investigating Committee...did not particularly like our bulletin ‘IPA’...”<sup>79</sup> The events mortified IJA leaders, who temporarily suspended their operations and ceased publication of the newsletter. While no other action appears to have been taken on the part of the authorities, the episode clearly revealed the dangers involved in the IJA’s efforts to align the community with the parties of the anti-Peronist opposition.<sup>80</sup>

Right from the beginning, the DAIA viewed the IJA as an unwelcome competitor in the realm of communal politics and as a substantial threat to its dominant position. Moreover, unlike the OIA, which enjoyed protection from official circles, the IJA was fully exposed to the wrath of the DAIA. With the founding of the IJA in July 1948, the DAIA was thrown into a state of action. After a “stormy” meeting of DAIA assembly in October it was finally decided to issue a harsh critique of the IJA in the Jewish press.

Appearing in *Mundo Israelita* on October 16, 1948, the communiqué argued that “the dispersion of efforts for identical aims is not constructive” for the life of the community.<sup>81</sup> It claimed that the community already possessed “a common organ” for collective action, the DAIA, which served as “the integral representation of the collective.” The IJA, the statement continued, constituted a “very clear danger” for the community because of its efforts to deflect energies from “a labor which by definition should be in common solidarity.” Finally, the piece concluded, “We must express our conviction that the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información not only has failed in being useful towards the noble ends in which it was created, but rather is actually counterproductive.” In a subsequent dispatch to the paper on October 30, the leaders of the DAIA asserted, “The goals for which this entity has been proposed...coincide with those which were entrusted to the DAIA, as the representative entity of the collective.”<sup>82</sup> Throughout this campaign, the DAIA was also bolstered by the World Jewish Congress, which viewed with “serious concern” the actions of its North American rival in Argentina.<sup>83</sup>

While IJA leaders had previously expected some opposition from the DAIA, they were not prepared for the icy reception that they received in reality. As early as August 1948, Yagupsky and Mario Schteingart, the vice president of the IJA, had entered into negotiations with the DAIA in an effort to reach a kind of “armed peace.”<sup>84</sup> In response to the DAIA’s first attack, Schteingart privately sent a conciliatory letter to the president of the DAIA, lamenting that “so much energy has been wasted on polemic,” and adding that, “We are certain that the Instituto Judío Argentino, far from being a factor of disunion, will contribute new forces to the collective.”<sup>85</sup> However, following the

subsequent publication on October 30, the IJA realized it must mobilize in self-defense. On November 6, 1948, the leaders of the institution published a public response to the DAIA in the pages of *Mundo Israelita*, outlining their stated objectives and claiming that “The Instituto never claimed nor aspired to be the representation of the collective. Neither does it desire to replace any institution, nor does it propose to intervene in the life of any of them.”<sup>86</sup>

This final statement was not entirely correct, however. Owing to composition of the DAIA as an association of institutions, the odd situation arose in which institutions that supported the IJA, such B’nai B’rith and the Congregación Israelita, also maintained their membership in the DAIA. Furthermore, because these institutions had been among the charter members of the DAIA, they could not be expelled from the organization. Hence, the IJA posed not only an external threat to the DAIA, but an internal one as well. This was quickly borne out in December 1948 when supporters of the IJA actually presented their own list of candidates in the DAIA elections, and were defeated by a margin of just nine votes.<sup>87</sup> Although the IJA’s electoral strength was due mainly to the fact that the General Zionist Party had defected to their camp and not to its own popularity as such, the election results of 1948 clearly represented a triumph for the IJA and established it as a legitimate player in the eyes of the community.<sup>88</sup> “Now war has been opened on the DAIA,” claimed a report written for the World Jewish Congress, “and the American Jewish Committee people are going full speed ahead against the Congress and the DAIA.”<sup>89</sup>

Tensions remained high throughout 1949, with the IJA continuing to hold considerable sway within the DAIA assembly due to the support it received from the

General Zionist party. Then, on the eve of the DAIA's elections in October 1949, matters finally came to a head. It appears that the general assembly had reached an impasse during its initial meeting on October 27 to elect a new president, with one faction supporting the candidacy of IJA vice-president Mario Schteingart, and the other remaining loyal to Dubrovsky. It was therefore decided to postpone the elections for at least one month in an effort to find some common ground and thus avoid an open and possibly devastating confrontation. During the interim, however, Dubrovsky decided to solicit an audience with none other than Evita Perón in effort to intimidate the DAIA into supporting him.<sup>90</sup> Faced with severe challenges from both the OIA and the IJA it seems that Dubrovsky was not adverse to playing one against the other in order to preserve the integrity of the DAIA. The measure worked, and in the assembly of December 9, a compromise was reached between Dubrovsky and the IJA supporters by which the former would remain as president of the DAIA, while two members of the IJA would be appointed to its executive board.<sup>91</sup> Dubrovsky had thus saved the DAIA from an internal conquest by the IJA, while for Yagupsky, the compromise represented a great victory for the latter. Writing to the AJC in New York, he explained, "we have now managed to get two of our men into the directive body of the DAIA, and in this manner we exercise some control over what is done there."<sup>92</sup>

Yet, in spite of its political success, the IJA itself was never terribly popular among the community at large. Like the OIA, it remained largely an "upper crust" organization. According to its own annual report from early 1950, the IJA consisted of just forty-six actual members.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, it remained dependent on the American Jewish Committee for much of its financial support. When the AJC attempted to scale down its

contributions to the IJA after 1949, its executive board wrote to New York, asking the AJC maintain its current budget, and reminding the AJC officials that, “you have the same obligation to us as that of an older brother.”<sup>94</sup> Fear of intimidation by the authorities likely played a role in contributing to its small size. After the scare caused by the police surveillance in 1950, the IJA was forced to reduce its public activities in order to maintain a low profile. However, its ties to the AJC, a non-Zionist organization which espoused an integrationist model of Jewish communal identity, also had a negative influence on public opinion. According to Ariel Plotschuk, who later worked for the IJA in 1958, it was seen by most Argentine Jews as little more than “a direct extension of the American Jewish Committee.”<sup>95</sup> With this in mind, an observer from the WJC was able to report by 1951 that, “The Jewish public in general is not influenced by the IJA, and little is known of their activities except for their radio program.” Moreover, even with regard its radio show, he continued, “no one could tell me for sure whether the broadcasting comes weekly, fortnightly, or monthly.”<sup>96</sup> From this, it would appear that the real strength of the IJA lay not in its own activities as such, but in the political influence it wielded within the DAIA.

It would seem, then, that the IJA never seriously threatened to replace the DAIA, but rather exerted its influence from within the latter, effecting a kind of compromise with the DAIA whereby both organizations could peacefully coexist. In addition, the founders of the IJA hoped that through their actions they might steer the DAIA away from what they considered to be its accommodationist relationship to the Peronist state. “It is worth noting,” said Yagupsky on one occasion, “that the anti-Peronist parties will never forget such behavior and that the community accustoms itself to not defending its

own rights, but begs the ruler as they did in medieval times.”<sup>97</sup> Like the OIA, the IJA aspired towards the goal of Jewish integration into Argentine social and political life. However, for the IJA, this integration should not take place under duress of an authoritarian regime but rather in a free and democratic climate, similar to that which prevailed in the United States. Unfortunately for its leaders, the hard political realities of Peronist Argentina precluded the vast majority of Jews within the community itself from embracing this idea in any substantial way.

#### THE DAIA AND THE JEWISH NATIONAL PROJECT

Therefore, in spite of everything, the DAIA continued to enjoy the loyalty of the masses within the Jewish community. It remained as the community’s hegemonic institution. When Arie Tartekower of the World Jewish Congress visited Argentina in July of 1952, he was able to report that, “There hardly exists any Jewish group or organization in this country which does not recognize the DAIA as the central Jewish body.”<sup>98</sup> The reason for this was that among the OIA, the IJA, and the DAIA, only the latter succeeded in representing the true nationalist sentiment within the community, the Jewish nationalist sentiment, and avoided tying itself too much to the larger non-Jewish political arena. Only the DAIA was able to maintain the delicate balance between public and private domains which allowed the community to exist as an autonomous entity within the larger Argentine society while at the same time retaining its distinctly Argentine identity.

Despite competition from the OIA and the IJA, the DAIA continued in its work of defending communal interests before the powers that be. In January 1949, the DAIA

elevated a lengthy petition to Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion requesting the derogation of a decree which mandated the registration of all non-Catholic religious institutions.<sup>99</sup> In June 1950, the DAIA protested to the Municipal Intendant of Buenos Aires against the dissemination of anti-Semitic literature.<sup>100</sup> When this failed to rectify the problem, the DAIA further sent a report of the episode to Perón himself.<sup>101</sup> Following a spate of anti-Semitic incidents in 1951, the DAIA solicited an audience with the Interior Minister and later directed a petition describing the attacks to the President.<sup>102</sup> In June 1951, the DAIA sent a message to the national Congress, asking it to fully implement Article 28 of the new Peronist Constitution, which stated that, “The Argentine nation does not tolerate racial differences.”<sup>103</sup> In August, the DAIA reiterated its request, noting that all of the major Jewish institutions in the country had expressed their solidarity with the DAIA in supporting the measure.<sup>104</sup> Although the OIA would later claim that the involvement of the DAIA, “signified an unnecessary interference,” in its own efforts to add a specific clause to the nation’s penal code in conjunction with Article 28, it was clear to all that the DAIA had brought the matter to national attention.<sup>105</sup> Thus, even though it remained considerably restrained in the face of its Peronist rival, the DAIA continued to militate in the “public” sphere on behalf of Jewish interests whenever it could.

That it was able to do so owed itself to the willingness of its directors, led by Dubrovsky, to accommodate themselves to the government and avoid the kind of antagonism that would eventually plague the IJA. As noted in the previous chapter, at some point during the summer of 1948, Dubrovsky began establishing connections with various Peronist supporters, including several OIA members, and even went so far as to

join the Peronist party. Sometime thereafter, he apparently consented to an ambitious scheme hatched by Perón in which he would travel to the United States in an effort to improve public relations with the American Jewish community as well as with the US government. Although the voyage was never actually undertaken, Dubrovsky managed to demonstrate his usefulness to the regime by illustrating that the DAIA could be utilized to improve Argentina's international image. As a result of this, he would continue to enjoy the attentions of the President, even as the latter promoted the OIA as his official intermediary with the community. In March 1950, this relationship was again underscored, when Dubrovsky personally informed Perón about his efforts to, "clarify certain mistaken notions that predominated among Jews abroad with regard to the current Argentine government," during a meeting of the World Jewish Congress in Paris.<sup>106</sup>

Nevertheless, it was within the "private" sphere of Jewish politics, that the DAIA truly reigned supreme. Much of this stemmed from the fact that the DAIA remained at its most fundamental level an organization committed to the rebuilding of a Jewish state in Palestine. That Zionism represented a potent force in Argentine-Jewish politics is overwhelming clear. "The Zionist parties," wrote one observer, "are incomparably more vigorous and influential in the Jewish life in Argentina than Zionist organizations in North America or England."<sup>107</sup> As early as December 1947 thousands of Jews had gathered in Buenos Aires's Luna Park stadium to demonstrate their support for a Jewish state. Following the proclamation of Israel's independence on May 14, 1948, a crowd of some 50,000 people gathered in the Plaza Retiro to celebrate and rally in defense of the new nation.<sup>108</sup> On August 1, 1949, another 20,000 lined the streets of Buenos Aires and filled the Plaza de Mayo to witness Jacob Tsur, Israel's first official diplomatic

representative to Argentina, present his credentials to Perón.<sup>109</sup> Riding in a horse and carriage, as was customary for such an event, the Israeli diplomat was measurably impressed by fact that, “crowds of Jews had gathered all along the route with flags and cheers.”<sup>110</sup> According to Tsur, “in the eyes of a great part of these Jews, Israel appeared to be surrounded by a halo of political sovereignty and high position before the world.”<sup>111</sup> In addition, the fierce nationalism displayed by the majority of Argentine Jews also reflected in part the distinct nature of ethnicity in Argentina itself, where immigrant groups were commonly organized as national collectives represented by legations from the mother country.

The DAIA played an active role in cultivating this nationalist spirit, serving as both an intermediary between Argentine Jewry and its counterparts in other countries and as an organizer of rallies and speeches in favor of the Jewish state. Even as the OIA displaced many of the political functions of the DAIA in early 1948, the DAIA busied itself with sponsoring a petition calling upon the Argentine delegation at Security Council of the United Nations to vote in favor of implementing the Palestine partition.<sup>112</sup> Following the establishment of the state, it was the DAIA that greeted its new Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, “in name of all the Jews in Argentina.”<sup>113</sup> Speaking at the great gathering in the Plaza Retiro, it was DAIA President Ricardo Dubrovsky, who, “expressed in the name of Argentine Jewry...the aspiration that the Argentine Republic will be the first Latin American nation to recognize the new Jewish state.”<sup>114</sup> On the eve of Tsur’s presentation of credentials, the DAIA communicated its heartfelt emotions, “in the name of the Argentine-Jewish yishuv,” and encouraged Jews to line the streets of the procession.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, throughout this time, the DAIA worked tirelessly to promote

communal fundraising efforts on behalf of the state of Israel. Clearly then, the DAIA was not passive in the face of OIA or even IJA pressure. Instead, it carved out new spaces for its legitimization as the community's official representative, extending its hegemony in the "private" domain of Jewish politics, where the OIA due to its direct association with government, and the IJA, due to its affiliation with the American Jewish Committee, could not enter.

In this respect, it is instructive to note that throughout this entire period the vast majority of the Jewish press stood by the DAIA as the legitimate representative of the community. In particular, *Mundo Israelita* was among its most vociferous supporters. Although the paper on numerous occasions called for democratizing reforms within the DAIA, its editors also advocated its primacy in regard to other institutions. On November 6, 1948, as the DAIA struggled to retain its standing against both the OIA and the IJA, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* stated that, "We are in complete agreement with those who maintain the need for a unique representative organ for the collective, and we concur with those who affirm that the most authorized organization to exercise this function is the DAIA."<sup>116</sup> "Those organizations that aspire [to replace it]," the article continued, "are no better constituted and lack the popular support of the DAIA. Some, because they encompass no more than small sectors, and others because they militate in politics." The article then commented on the behavior of the OIA specifically. "Those who aspire to involve the community in the civic disputes of the country," they argued, "commit a grave error. Even if all the Jews in every city were in favor of only one party, the collective as such cannot be annexed by that party. Those who shout in its name, as a section of a movement, do a great danger to it in that they jeopardize its neutrality in the

political struggles, and position it as an adversary of other political groups. This is neither prudent nor necessary.” Later, in an editorial in August 1950, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* thoroughly attacked the advocates of the IJA as well. Specifically, they criticized the leaders of Argentina’s B’nai B’rith for their “anti-popular” position, saying that they “refuse to yield to the will of the majority,” and instead “prefer the path of schism.” “For this reason,” the editors continued, “they support marginal institutions, such as the so called Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información, that interfere with the DAIA.”<sup>117</sup>

The editors of other Jewish periodicals were more tentative in vocalizing their support for the DAIA. However, on a number of occasions they used expressions or references to the DAIA which hinted at their underlying sympathies. On May 13, 1949, the editors of the Yiddish daily *Di Presse* referred to the DAIA as “the representation of Argentine Jewry” in an article describing the DAIA’s telegram to Perón following his recognition of Israel.<sup>118</sup> On August 16, 1949, they reported that, “Last Thursday, Dr. Jacob Tsur received the directive council of the DAIA – the representation of the entire Argentine Yishuv – with Professor Dubrovsky at its head.”<sup>119</sup> This tendency also exhibited itself in the bi-monthly Sephardic Jewish journal *La Luz*. In publishing the New Years greetings from Israeli minister Jacob Tsur in September of 1950, the editors noted that, “The Argentine Jewish collective, fraternally linked by strong spiritual bonds to the young state of Israel, will receive with singular sympathy the greetings that its diplomatic representative has sent through the intermediary of the DAIA, the representation of our community.”<sup>120</sup> In article from July of 1951, they wrote, “The DAIA, in its character as the representative institution of the Argentine-Jewish collective,

has recently directed itself to the Minister of Education in the province of Buenos Aires...in order to denounce the anti-Semitic orientation of an officially approved textbook...”<sup>121</sup> Still another example occurred in September 1951, when the paper reported that, “Great interest and unconditional support has been found in the bosom of the Argentine-Jewish collective for the initiative of the DAIA – its representative entity – for the full implementation of Article 28 of the National Constitution...”<sup>122</sup> Such passing references to the DAIA as the representative institution of the community seem almost commonplace rather than intentional. Yet, in the climate of censorship which pervaded Peronist Argentina during this time, they might also be regarded subtle acts of defiance. In either event, they do suggest to some degree that the DAIA had retained its position in the eyes of the wider Jewish community.

#### CONCLUSION: THE VICTORY OF THE DAIA ON THE “JEWISH STREET”

Thus, it appears that the DAIA had been able to retain its position as the legitimate representative of the Argentine-Jewish community by 1952 in spite of attacks from both the Peronist and anti-Peronist fronts. It had done so by negotiating the delicate balance between public and private domains which had characterized Argentine-Jewish political and communal identity. On the one hand, the DAIA had remained active in the public sphere, despite the best efforts of the OIA to the contrary, by demonstrating its willingness to accommodate the regime and its continued usefulness to the Peronist state. At the same time, the DAIA had remained engaged in the Zionist sentiments which shaped and informed the political aspirations of the majority of Argentina’s Jews within the private realm of intra-communal politics. While the IJA might have presented a

credible institutional challenge to the DAIA due to its hard-line anti-Peronist stance, repression and intimidation on the part of the authorities severely curtailed its ability to operate within the public sphere, while many remained deeply mistrustful of its overall intentions in the private sphere due to its affiliation with the American Jewish Committee. As for the OIA, despite the influential backing that it received from the Argentine government, it was never able to gain widespread popularity because the majority of Argentine Jews simply rejected its message of wholesale political integration under the Peronist party, preferring instead to maintain the internal political life of the Jewish community as distinct from larger politics of the non-Jewish Peronist movement.

All of this contributed to the emergence of the DAIA as Argentine-Jewry's hegemonic institution by 1952. Ultimately, pressures from the state as well as from the American Jewish Committee were not able to overcome the will of the masses themselves within the community. As one observer in 1954 would astutely note, "The DAIA had no other weapon or asset but the loyalty of the Jews, but this loyalty made the DAIA invincible."<sup>123</sup> Although the both OIA and the IJA were able to attract some of the most important leaders within the community to their causes, this in and of itself was not enough to bestow legitimacy upon them without obtaining the sanction of the "Jewish street" as well. This sanction would remain with the DAIA, and by 1952, the OIA would concede its defeat, undergoing a thorough reform and shifting its posture from one of competition with the DAIA to one of cooperation. As for the IJA, while its leaders would continue to exert a significant influence as a minority within the DAIA, the Instituto itself would have only a minimal impact on the community as a whole, and would eventually flounder on the rock of obscurity. The DAIA, however, would endure. In fact, it is

ironic that the very challenge from both the OIA and the IJA would actually serve to strengthen rather than weaken the DAIA's role as the political representation of the larger Jewish community, enabling it to survive perhaps its greatest political challenge, not in the external public arena, but within the internal realm of communal politics itself.

## ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

---

<sup>1</sup> After months of intense lobbying on both sides, in November 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. With the final withdrawal of British mandatory forces on May 14, 1948, the Jews of Palestine, led by David Ben Gurion, officially declared their independence and the creation of the new state of Israel. On that same day, five Arab armies from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq invaded the new republic. The fighting which followed ended only in the spring of 1949 with the establishment of a series of armistices between Israel and its Arab neighbors. For a narrative account of these events, see Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> See the memorandum entitled, "What is the OIA?" in the Files of the World Jewish Congress, American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio, MS COL 361, Box H26/ Folder 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ezequiel Zabolinsky, Interview by author, Buenos Aires, Argentina: 10 July 2000.

<sup>4</sup> See the press release of the Organización Nacional Israelita Argentina (ONIA) in *Di Presse*, hereafter referred to as DP, 18 Feb. 1947, 3. The spelling of the names here appears as in the Yiddish text. In *Como fue la inmigración judía a la Argentina*, Boleslao Lewin lists Natalio Cortés as the founder of the OIA. See Lewin, *Como fue la inmigración judía a la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1983), 272-3. Raanan Rein and Jeffrey Marder also follow Lewin in listing Cortés as the OIA's first president. See Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, y los judíos*, (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere, 2001), 88; and Jeffrey Marder, "Towards a Convivencia: Juan Perón and the Jews of Argentina," (M.A. Thesis. Simon Fraser University, 1996), 53. Although Cortés, whose original surname was Schejtman, clearly served in the organization, I have uncovered no other indication that he was responsible for its founding.

<sup>5</sup> Zabolinsky, 10 July 2000. See also "What is the OIA?"

<sup>6</sup> Refer to the manifesto in Yiddish, entitled "Farvos zaynen mir mit der regirung?" DP 27 Feb. 1947, 5; and *Di Idische Tsaytung* (IT), 27 Feb. 1947, 5. The capitalization is from the original.

<sup>7</sup> See "Farvos zaynen mir mit der regirung?" cited above.

<sup>8</sup> See *La Luz* 3 Sep. 1948, 361.

<sup>9</sup> DP 11 Mar. 1950, 4.

<sup>10</sup> See the full text of his speech in *Mundo Israelita* (MI) 7 Jul. 1951, 5,7.

<sup>11</sup> For more on this incident, see MI 26 Jun. 1948, 2,3 9. See also DP 23 Jun. 1948, 6; and 25 Jun. 1948, 4; and *La Luz* 25 Jun. 1948, 264.

<sup>12</sup> See MI 19 Mar. 1949, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Refer to the letter from Robert Marcus to Stephen S. Wise, 29 Nov. 1948. Files of the World Jewish Congress, AJA, MS COL 361 H25/6. For the text of the 1950 greeting, see MI 16 Sep. 1950, 1; DP 10 Sep. 1950, 1.

<sup>14</sup> For a copy of this decree, which was later extended, see Executive decrees 15972 and 24666 in the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Buenos Aires, Asuntos Technicos, Series 547.

<sup>15</sup> See the advertisement from SOPROTOMIS in DP 10 Jan. 1949, 3. See also the article in DP 13 Jul. 1949, 4.

- 
- <sup>16</sup> See the ad, which appears in Yiddish and Spanish in IT 27 Oct. 1948, 5. See also the Archives of the YIVO, Buenos Aires, Series 1045.
- <sup>17</sup> See Resolution 304, signed by Enrique P. Gonzalez, AGN, Buenos Aires, Asuntos Technicos, Series 549.
- <sup>18</sup> See Resolution 430 of the National Director of Migration, AGN, Asuntos Technicos, Series 549.
- <sup>19</sup> See its “Mensaje Político a los Israelitas de la Argentina,” DP 5 Mar. 1948, 5.
- <sup>20</sup> See the ad in the YIVO Archives, Buenos Aires, Series 1045.
- <sup>21</sup> See the text of his speech in *La Luz* 3 Dec. 1948, 524. See also the ad for his speech in IT 26 Nov. 1948, 3 and 6; and 26 Nov. 1948, 4.
- <sup>22</sup> DP 16 Mar 1949, 6.
- <sup>23</sup> Refer to, “What is the OIA?” AJA, MS COL 361, H26/2.
- <sup>24</sup> For examples, see DP 16 Feb. 1950, 4; 19 Feb. 1950, 2; and MI 21 Jan. 1950, 2; 14 Jul. 1951, 4, 7; 21 Jul. 1951, 7; 3 Nov. 1951, 4. See also *La Luz* 9 Jun. 1950, 276-7.
- <sup>25</sup> See the article in *Di Presse* announcing his candidacy on 7 Oct. 1951, 4. See the ads for Zabotinsky in DP 19 Oct. 1951, 5; MI 10 Nov. 1951, 6.
- <sup>26</sup> Refer to the returns from the 1951 elections in *La Nación*, Nov. 1951. It should be noted that the boundaries for the capital’s various electoral districts had been redrawn after 1946. For a map of the 1951 electoral districts, see *La Nación* 6 Nov. 1951, 4.
- <sup>27</sup> For more on the act, see MI 19 Mar. 1949, 2, 9; and *La Luz* 25 Mar. 1949, 92-3. See also DP 13 Mar. 1949, 6; 15 Mar. 1949, 1; and IT 14 Mar. 1949, 1. For a list of the institutions in attendance, see DP 12 Mar. 1949, 3. See also the minutes of the Congregación Israelita, 15 Mar. 1949, which describe Chief Rabbi Schlesinger’s participation in the event.
- <sup>28</sup> DP 12 Mar. 1949, 4.
- <sup>29</sup> DP 2 Mar. 1947, 6.
- <sup>30</sup> See Yagupsky’s Letter to Dr. Slawson, 17 Mar. 1948 in the files of the AJC, YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.
- <sup>31</sup> See Hellman’s letter to R. Marcus of the WJC in New York, 26 Oct. 1948. AJA, MS COL 361, H25/14.
- <sup>32</sup> “What is the OIA?”
- <sup>33</sup> See the editorial entitled, “Di initsiativ fun der ‘OIA’ letoyves der sotsialer hilf María Eva Duarte de Perón,” IT 18 Sep. 1949, 6. The minutes of both the Congregación Israelita de la República Argentina and the German-Jewish Asociación Filantrópica Israelita also record the event. See the minutes of the CIRA, 15 Sep. 1949, and the AFI, 6 Oct. 1949.
- <sup>34</sup> See DP 17 Sep. 1949, 6.

---

<sup>35</sup> MI 1 Oct. 1949, 2. An article from DP 12 Oct. 1949, reports briefly on the creation of a special committee to oversee donations for the project. However, it is unclear how the donations were to be solicited. See DP 12 Oct. 1949, 3.

<sup>36</sup> See his letter, in Yiddish, to Dr. I. Shwartzbart in New York, 11 Oct. 1949. AJA, MS Col 361, H25/16. According to correspondence from the American Jewish Committee, the OIA hospital project was finally abandoned at the end of 1949 due to “silent community opposition.” See the report entitled, “The Current Situation in Argentina,” from December 1949. AJC Files, YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky. Later, on December 20, 1951, *Mundo Israelita* reported on the donation of a check for 40,000 pesos to the Eva Perón Foundation from OIA leaders in Córdoba. MI 20 Jan. 1951, 1. All of this speaks to the issue of coercion on the part of the Peronist government, particularly in regard to social welfare and the work of the Eva Perón Foundation. In *Mañana es San Perón*, Mariano Plotkin attempts to downplay anti-Peronist accusations of direct solicitation by the Eva Perón Foundation. According to Plotkin, it was more likely that the Foundation exercised its coercive powers in an “informal” manner, “in which some businessmen would have been afraid of not making voluntary donations.” Mariano Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón* (Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia Argentina, 1993), 231. According to Nicholas Fraser and Marysa Navarro, “It is said that the Foundation’s practice was to order its food, clothing, or building materials and not pay for them, leaving businessmen with the recourse of giving by default or running the risk of asking for their money.” Nicholas Fraser and Marysa Navarro, *Eva Perón* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1980), 119. One of the most famous cases of supposed coercion involved a Jewish family by the name of Groisman who owned the Mu-Mu candy factory. According to the account of Robert Weisbrot, the factory was closed down for health violations involving rats after the Groisman family billed the Foundation for an order of some \$10,000 worth of candies. See Robert Weisbrot, *The Jews of Argentina* (Philadelphia: the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 233-236. The matter was also reported in Jacob Hellman’s letter to Dr. Shwartzbart 11 Oct. 1949, who clearly viewed it as a coercive act. See also his letter to Marcus, 4 Oct. 1949, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/16. With regard to the OIA campaign in 1949, the German-Jewish Asociación Filantrópica Israelita (AFI) pledged to “support the collection of the necessary funds among its members,” even as it rejected DAIA requests at the same time to increase its annual dues, claiming to lack the necessary funds. See the entry from 6 Oct. 1949, in the minutes of the AFI. In addition, the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina regularly hosted sporting tournaments for the Foundation in its recently constructed gymnasium. See the minutes of the Hebraica from 25 Sept. 1951, 16 Oct. 1951, 25 Nov. 1952, and 15 Dec. 1953. According to the minutes, the tournament of October 12, 1951 was even attended by Perón and Evita. See the entry for 16 Oct. 1951. It is not clear whether the society was coerced by the Foundation, but an entry from 30 Aug. 1954, indicates that OIA intervention with the Minister of the Interior was likely instrumental in gaining a special construction exemption for the society.

<sup>37</sup> See the letter from Jacob Hellman to Dr. Schwartzbart, 18 Apr. 1949, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/16.

<sup>38</sup> See his letter to Dr. Schwatrzbart, 14 Jun. 1949. AJA, MS COL 361, H25/16.

<sup>39</sup> According to a report for the World Jewish Congress, the change of leadership may have been due to a corruption scandal in which the OIA’s president, Sujer Matrajt, vice president, Eduardo Cortés, and secretary, Pablo Manguel were accused of “illegal dealings with immigrants, yarn allotments, and import and export licenses.” See “What is the OIA?” It is clear that sometime in the spring of 1949, Sujer Matrajt was replaced as President of the OIA by Manuel Sheinson. On March 24, 1949, *Di Presse* reported that Matrajt, as president of the OIA, was being sent to Israel on a special diplomatic mission. By the time of his return in August 1949, he had already been replaced. See DP 28 Aug. 1949, 6. In addition, Jacob Hellman of the WJC noted the discord among the OIA in his correspondence to New York. See his letters of 14 Jun. 1949, 4 Jul. 1949, and 11 Oct. 1949, in the files of the WJC, AJA MS COL 361, H25/16.

---

<sup>40</sup> The AMIA, or the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina, had its origins in 1894 as the Ashkenazi burial society (Chevra Kadisha) of Buenos Aires. In 1941, it was officially incorporated as a mutual association, and in 1949 was formally designated as the capital's official Ashkenazi kehilla.

<sup>41</sup> See his letter to Dr. Simon Segal, 28 Mar. 1951, in the files of the AJC, YIVO, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

<sup>42</sup> For more on the event, see IT 5 Jul. 1951, 4; 6 Jul. 1951, 1. The text of Perón's speech to the assembled leaders appears in Spanish in IT 6 Jul. 1951, 6.

<sup>43</sup> See the cable sent from Sokal to Dr. M. L. Perlzweig in New York, AJA, MS COL 361, H26/20.

<sup>44</sup> See Sokal, cited above. The OIA also scored another important propaganda victory in August 1951 when it secured the entry of 33 prominent Yiddish writers and their families who had remained as refugees in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe. See IT 15 Aug. 1951, 4; 5 Sep. 1951, 4; DP 15 Aug. 1951, 4; 5 Sep. 1951, 4; and MI 18 Aug. 1951, 4.

<sup>45</sup> See its "Mensaje Político," DP 5 Mar. 1948, 3.

<sup>46</sup> See IT 6 Feb. 1949, which features a photo of Perón with an OIA delegation. See also *La Luz* 11 Mar. 1949, 62. The actual decree was finally issued on February 14. See Decree #3668 of the National Executive, in the Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto (AMREC), Buenos Aires, Caja 58, Exp. 8.

<sup>47</sup> DP 24 Mar. 1949, 4. Matrajt's return is reported in DP 28 Aug. 1949, 6.

<sup>48</sup> For Manguel's formal appointment, see Decree #14751-m.584 of the National Executive, dated June 24, 1949 in his personal file, AMREC, Legajo 62. The particular designation of plenipotentiary minister was at Israel's request. See the telegram from Moshe Sharett to Dr. Juan Bramuglia requesting the status of a legation rather than a formal ambassadorship. AMREC, Caja 53, Exp 8. According to Jacob Tsur, the Jewish state did not maintain formal ambassadorships at that time. See Jacob Tsur, *Cartas credenciales # 4* (Buenos Aires: la Semana Publicaciones, 1983), 53.

<sup>49</sup> Tsur, 53-54. The Vatican at this time did not recognize the state of Israel and also favored the internationalization of Jerusalem. Full diplomatic relations between the two parties were only achieved in 1993. For more on the Vatican's Middle Eastern policy, see Andrej Kreutz, *Vatican Policy on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (Greenwood Press: New York, 1990).

<sup>50</sup> See Tsur, 54.

<sup>51</sup> IT 23 Jun 1949, 1; DP 23 Jun. 1949, 4. For the text of Perón's speech in Spanish, see MI 23 Jun. 1949, 2. Apparently, the DAIA had originally attempted to host the banquet, but was prevented from doing so by the OIA. See Jacob Hellman's letter to I. Schwartzbart, 14 Jun. 1949. WJC Files, AJA MS COL 361, H25/16.

<sup>52</sup> See MI 16 Jun. 1951, 5. See also MI 14 Jul. 1951, 4; and 3 Nov. 1951, 4.

<sup>53</sup> See the letter to Segal, March 28, 1951, in the files of the AJC, YIVO, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

<sup>54</sup> See the untitled report, dated 12 Jun. 1951, in the Files of the WJC, AJA, MS COL 361, H26/20.

<sup>55</sup> Zabolinsky. 10 Jul. 2000.

---

<sup>56</sup> See the confidential letter from Dr. I Schwartzbart of the WJC, 8 Jul. 1949. AJA, MS COL 361 H25/15.

<sup>57</sup> See Messersmith's letter to Jacob Billikopf of the Labor Standards Association, 21 May 1947. National Archives (NA), RG 59, 835.00/5-2147.

<sup>58</sup> See the report, "What is the OIA?" Zabolinsky himself also attested to this during an interview with the author. 12 Jul. 2000.

<sup>59</sup> See the announcement in IT 29 Jun. 1952, 1, accompanied by a photo of the new OIA president with Perón. See also DP 28 Jun. 1952, 4.

<sup>60</sup> Zabolinsky, 10 Jul. 2000.

<sup>61</sup> See his letter to Dr. Slawson, 4 Jul. 1948. AJC Files, YIVO NY, Yagupsky.

<sup>62</sup> See the letter from Yagupsky to Slawson, 31 Aug. 1948. AJC Files, YIVO NY, Yagupsky.

<sup>63</sup> See the letter from 31 Aug. 1948, in the AJC files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Instituto Judío Argentina.

<sup>64</sup> See its Report and Statement from 30 May 1949. This date is likely a misprint. It should read 1950, as the report covers activities through December 31, 1949. AJC files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Instituto Judío Argentino.

<sup>65</sup> See the "Excerpts from the annual report of the Argentine Jewish Organization," sent from Yagupsky to Slawson. AJC Files, YIVO New York, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Box 2, Agencies.

<sup>66</sup> See the untitled report on the DAIA during 1953-4 in the files of the WJC, AJA, MS COL 361, H28/7.

<sup>67</sup> See the report entitled, "Regarding the Instituto Judío Argentino. IJA. And 'Cultural Activities,'" 30 May 1951, WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H26/20.

<sup>68</sup> See their personal files in the files of the AJC, YIVO NY, RG 247.7.1, FAD-1, Jewish Leaders. For more on Klein, see the letter from Phillip Forman to Ambassador James Bruce, dated August 12, 1947. AJC Files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Box 3, US Embassy.

<sup>69</sup> See his letter to Slawson, 31 Aug. 1948. AJC Files, YIVO, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

<sup>70</sup> In spite of this, the president of the IJA, Simon Mirelman, was among those who attended the 1949 banquet for Perón hosted by the OIA. See the list of adhering institutions published by the OIA in DP 12 Mar. 1949, 3.

<sup>71</sup> See Mirelman's report of the meeting to Yagupsky, 22 May 1947. AJC Files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Jewish Leaders, Simon Mirelman. See also Messersmith's letter to Billikopf, 21 May 1947, NA, RG 59, 835.00/5-2147. According to Messersmith's letter, the Ambassador had agreed to raise the matter in his regular meetings with Argentine government officials.

<sup>72</sup> See the notes of this interview in his letter to Dr. Segal, dated 3 Sep. 1947, AJC Files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Box 3, US Embassy.

<sup>73</sup> See the "Memorandum for Ambassador Bruce," AJC Files, YIVO NY, US Embassy.

- 
- <sup>74</sup> See the letter from Yagupsky to Forman, 31 Jul. 1947. AJC Files, YIVO NY, US Embassy.
- <sup>75</sup> See the letter from Bruce to Forman, sent from Buenos Aires, 2 Oct. 1947. Interestingly enough, Bruce was first approached by a delegation from the DAIA, led by Moisés Goldman. In a letter to Forman, he reported the meeting, further noting that, “none of them was the one mentioned in your letter.” See his letter to Forman, 12 Sep. 1947. In reply to Bruce, Forman wrote that, “Although this group represents a large segment of Argentine Jewry, the people I mentioned to you in my letter are also representative of Jewish public opinion in their community...” See Forman’s letter to Bruce, 30 Sep. 1947. AJC Files, YIVO NY, US Embassy.
- <sup>76</sup> See Bruce’s letter to Forman. AJC Files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, South America, Argentina. The relationship between the AJC and the U.S. ambassador was not always so close. In early 1950 the AJC rejected the idea of approaching ambassador Stanton Griffiths in an effort to subdue the OIA because he “might not prove to be in sympathy with us.” See the minutes of the Latin American Affairs Committee, 29 Mar. 1950, in the files of the AJC, YIVO NY, 347.7.2, Latin America, Committee on Latin American Affairs.
- <sup>77</sup> See his letter to Dr. Segal, sent from Santiago, Chile, 21 Jan. 1950. AJC Files, YIVO, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.
- <sup>78</sup> Letter from Yagupsky to Segal, 6 Jan. 1950. AJC Files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Box 2, agencies, Instituto Judío.
- <sup>79</sup> See his letter to Segal, from 20 Feb. 1950. AJC Files, YIVO NY, Yagupsky.
- <sup>80</sup> Furthermore, in July 1953, the president of the IJA, Simon Mirelman, was even arrested as a result of his indirect involvement in a fraudulent bank scheme with Evita’s brother, Juan Duarte. It is not clear whether the arrest also had any political motivation as well. According to Máximo Yagupsky, this was likely the case, since when a judge ordered Mirelman’s release a week later, he was instead transferred by the authorities to another prison, one in which political prisoners were frequently held. Mirelman was only released after lengthy intervention from Jacob Tsur, the AJC, and even Ezequiel Zabolitsky. See Yagupsky’s letter to Segal, July 27, 1953. AJC Files, Yagupsky. See also Mirelman’s own personal file. AJC files, YIVO NY, RG 247.7.1, FAD-1, Jewish Leaders, Simon Mirelman. Finally, Ezequiel Zabolitsky recalled the case in an interview with the author, 10 Jul. 2000, claiming that his personal intervention with security officials was helpful in gaining Mirelman’s release.
- <sup>81</sup> See MI 16 Oct. 1949, 5.
- <sup>82</sup> MI 30 Oct. 1948, 2.
- <sup>83</sup> See the letter from Robert Marcus to Stephen S. Wise, 29 Nov. 1948. WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/6.
- <sup>84</sup> See Yagupsky’s letter to Slawson, 31 Aug. 1948. AJC Files, Yagupsky.
- <sup>85</sup> See the letter from the IJA to Dubrovsky, 26 Oct. 1948. YIVO BA, series 1045.
- <sup>86</sup> See the ad in MI 6 Nov. 1948, 6.
- <sup>87</sup> See DP 17 Dec. 1948, 3.
- <sup>88</sup> See Jacob Hellman’s letter to R. Marcus and I. Schwartzbart of the WJC, 6 Dec. 1948. WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/16. See also Yagupsky’s letter to Dr. Segal, 14 Jan. 1949. AJC Files, Yagupsky.

---

<sup>89</sup> See, "A Few Remarks on the Situation in Buenos Aires," WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/6. By Congress he is referring to the World Jewish Congress, which was bitterly opposed to the AJC.

<sup>90</sup> See Yagupsky's letter to Segal, 30 Dec. 1949. AJC Files, YIVO NY, Yagupsky. See also IT 18 Nov. 1948, which featured a photo of Dubrovsky with Evita and Luis Elías Sojit, a former member of the OIA. Yagupsky states that Dubrovsky told him personally of the meeting, further adding that the DAIA president had established a bond with the First Lady on account of their common interest in spiritualism. Dubrovsky's interest in spiritualism was also confirmed by Ezequiel Zabolinsky, who mentioned that he had the ability to read palms and see the future. According to Zabolinsky, Dubrovsky even foretold of his own untimely death in 1954. Ezequiel Zabolinsky, interview by author, Buenos Aires, 12 Jul. 2000.

<sup>91</sup> See Hellman's letter to Schwartzbart, 9 Dec. 1949, which also makes offhand reference to Dubrovsky's involvement with Eva Perón. WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/16.

<sup>92</sup> See his letter to Segal, 19 Dec. 1949. AJC Files, Yagupsky.

<sup>93</sup> See its Report and Statement from 30 May 1949. By 1958, this number had grown to 300. See the "Outline of the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información" (in Spanish). AJC Files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Instituto Judío Argentino.

<sup>94</sup> See the letter from 10 Apr. 1950, in the AJC files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Box 2, Agencies, Instituto Judío.

<sup>95</sup> Ariel Plotschuk, interview by author, tape recording, Buenos Aires, 20 Jul. 2000.

<sup>96</sup> See "Regarding the Instituto Judío Argentino. IJA. And 'Cultural Activities,'" 30 May 1951, WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H26/20.

<sup>97</sup> See the minutes of Latin American Affairs Committee meeting from 25 Feb. 1953. AJC Files, YIVO NY, 347.7.2, Latin America, Committee on Latin American Affairs.

<sup>98</sup> See the letter from Tartekower to the WJC in New York, 3 Jul. 1952, WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H27/12.

<sup>99</sup> MI 16 Apr. 1949, 8. See the text of the DAIA petition to Foreign Minister Bramuglia, 24 Jan. 1949, and the reply from Sub-secretary of the Interior, Pascual la Rosa, 14 Mar. 1949. WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/14. See also the editorial in IT 13 Apr. 1949, 4. In June of 1951, the DAIA also helped to secure an exemption for kosher meat sellers from government mandated price controls which threatened to drive them out of business. *La Luz* 22 Jun. 1951, 294-5.

<sup>100</sup> MI 10 Jun. 1950, 8.

<sup>101</sup> See the text of the report and Perón's reply, MI 9 Sep. 1950, 17; 16 Sep. 1950, 1. See also *La Luz* 8 Sep. 1951, 449.

<sup>102</sup> See MI 28 Apr. 1951, 2; MI 8 Dec. 1951, 5. See also *La Luz* 11 May 1951, 220-1.

<sup>103</sup> MI 14 Jul. 1951, 4.

<sup>104</sup> MI 25 Aug. 1951, 2. See also *La Luz* 24 Aug. 1951, 488-9, and 7 Sep. 1951, 506-7; DP 31 Aug 1951, 4; 5 Sep. 1951, 4; and IT 16 Aug. 1951, 4; 29 Aug. 1951, 4; 31 Aug. 1951, 4; 2 Sep. 1951, 4.

- 
- <sup>105</sup> MI 8 Sep. 1951, 4. See also the editorial in IT 2 Sep. 1951, 6, which credits the DAIA with the measure.
- <sup>106</sup> DP 11 Mar. 1950, 4.
- <sup>107</sup> Untitled report on the DAIA during 1953-4 in the files of the WJC, AJA, MS COL 361, H28/7
- <sup>108</sup> See IT 17 May 1948, 1. See also DP 17 May 1948, 4; *La Luz* 21 May 1948, 210-212.
- <sup>109</sup> MI 6 Aug. 1949, 1; IT 2 Aug. 1949, 1; DP 2 Aug. 1949, 1. See also *La Luz* 5 Aug. 1949, cover, and 328.
- <sup>110</sup> Tsur 56.
- <sup>111</sup> Tsur 172.
- <sup>112</sup> An ad for this petition appears in DP 23 Feb. 1948, 5. The petition was subsequently handed over to the foreign ministry a day later. See DP 25 Feb. 1948, 4.
- <sup>113</sup> See the telegrams sent to Ben Gurion and Moshe Toff, the director of the Latin American department of the Jewish Agency in DP 16 May 1948, 6.
- <sup>114</sup> *La Luz* 21 May 1948, 211.
- <sup>115</sup> See DP 31 Jul. 1949, 6. IT 31 Jul. 1949, 7. Significantly, a similar message from the OIA was addressed “To the Jewish collective.” (my emphasis). See IT 31 Jul. 1949, 6.
- <sup>116</sup> See, “La DAIA como órgano representivo de la colectividad,” MI 6 Nov. 1948, 6.
- <sup>117</sup> See the editorial entitled, “Posición antipopular de la Bené Berith,” MI 12 Aug. 1950, 3.
- <sup>118</sup> DP 13 May 1949, 4.
- <sup>119</sup> DP 16 Aug. 1949, 3
- <sup>120</sup> *La Luz* 29 Sep. 1950, 470.
- <sup>121</sup> *La Luz* 20 Jul. 1951, 341.
- <sup>122</sup> *La Luz* 7 Sep. 1951, 506.
- <sup>123</sup> Untitled report on the DAIA during 1953-4 in the files of the WJC, AJA, MS COL 361, H28/7.

CHAPTER 5  
FROM UNITY TO DIVISION: ZIONISTS AGAINST PROGRESSIVES ON  
THE JEWISH STREET, 1946-1955.

*I believe I speak to your minds, honored delegates, if I place as one of our next goals the conquest of the communities.* – Theodore Herzl to the Second Zionist Congress, 1898.

The battle to win the popular mandate of the Jewish community in Argentina was not simply a struggle among national umbrella organizations, such as the DAIA, the OIA, and the IJA. In addition, the world of Jewish politics was experienced within the community's major political, philanthropic, and social institutions themselves, constituting a parallel but equally important arena of contestation to that of the larger national scene, and one which served to influence political behavior at the national level. It also involved different sets of actors and ideologies, organized largely around Old World divisions and debates rather than those of the surrounding political environment. In particular, the struggle for power and influence within the community's principal institutions was not waged between Zionists and Peronists, but rather between Zionists and the Jewish Communists, who unlike the Peronists, maintained a mass following within the community. In the following chapter then, I will trace how this bitter rivalry between the various Zionist political parties and organizations and those of the anti-Zionist Jewish left emerged in Argentina as a result of the monumental changes taking

place in the wider Jewish world, and how this struggle ultimately intersected with Jewish politics at the national level.

It is quite significant that the presidency of Juan Perón corresponded with a number of international events that fundamentally altered the balance of Jewish communal politics in Argentina. On the one hand, the end of the Holocaust in 1945 left a terrible social, cultural, and political void in the Jewish world, with the mass murder of some six million European Jews and the permanent destruction of Europe's most vital Yiddish speaking Jewish communities. On the other hand, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, served to fill that void, providing a new source of hope for Argentine Jewry and a new locus for Jewish identity, one based on Zionism and the Hebrew language. In addition, the increasing turn by the Soviet Union against Zionism and the state of Israel after 1948 contributed to the deepening of previously existing political tensions within the community, ultimately leading to open confrontation between Zionists and anti-Zionists within the community's most important institutions.

In his work, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, Ezra Mendelsohn has characterized the course of Jewish politics since 1945 as, "the Jewish version of a familiar twentieth century story, namely the triumph of nationalism," and specifically of the Zionist movement.<sup>1</sup> This was certainly true in the case in Argentina, where Zionism and Zionist parties increasingly came to dominate communal politics by 1955. Yet, while this phenomenon in many ways paralleled larger trends in the international Jewish world, conditions unique to Argentina's political setting profoundly influenced the way in which it took place in this far-flung corner of the Diaspora. In particular, the conflict was especially intense and bitter in Argentina, owing to the centralization of the community

within the DAIA, the AMIA, and other institutions, the pressures exacted on the community by an intrusive and sometimes menacing Peronist state, and the ongoing vitality of the Yiddish language in the country which helped contribute to the surprising strength of the non-Zionist Jewish left long after its demise in other western communities. It was this sector, organized around a model of Jewish identity based on secular Yiddish culture, and the fear that it might gain control over the community's largest institution, the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), that presented the most significant challenge to Zionist hegemony in Argentina not from outside the community but from within it.

Of all the Jewish institutions in the country, the AMIA, officially renamed as the Ashkenazi kehilla of Buenos Aires in 1949, served as the greatest hotbed of political struggle on what Jewish historians have often termed as the "Jewish street." With over 40,000 members, the AMIA represented the country's largest Jewish institution by far, as well as its most democratic, serving as the social and charitable nexus of the Ashkenazi community of Buenos Aires. Among other things, the AMIA was responsible for providing Jewish burials for its members, overseeing the disbursement of charitable funds to various communal institutions, and subsidizing the Jewish schools system of the capital through its education council, known as the Va'ad Hajinuj. Within the AMIA, an array of political parties competed each year to win seats on its directive council under a rotating system by which half of the offices were replaced every year. Each male head of household in good standing with the institution was entitled to vote, and election campaigns during the Peronist era generally drew over 10,000 total votes. Old World politics formed the basis of the AMIA's political party system, rather than those of the

host society. On the right were various Zionist parties, ranging from the Revisionists to the Orthodox-Zionist Mizrahi party, while towards the center were the General Zionists, organized under the rubric of the Argentine Zionist Federation. The left of the political spectrum included the socialist-Zionists of Poale Zion, the pioneering socialist-Zionist youth movement Hashomer Hatzair, the non-Zionist, nationalist, and socialist Jewish Workers Bund, and the anti-nationalist Jewish Communists, also known as Progressives.

Because the AMIA operated under a winner-take-all system, elections were based on coalition politics, a system which forced the various competing parties to unite into larger alliances around common interests and concerns with other parties. Candidates were organized according to lists, with each slate generally including at least one candidate from each of its supporting political factions. Between 1945 and 1948, the fact that nearly all sectors of the Ashkenazi community supported Zionism and the creation of the state of Israel served to mute the brewing tensions between Zionists and Communists. During this time AMIA politics generally resembled a more traditional pattern of left versus right, pitting left-wing Zionists and their non-Zionist counterparts against center-right Zionist coalitions. For the most part, the issue of Zionism itself remained secondary to other concerns. The one exception to this was in 1946, when a coalition of Bundists, Communists, and non-aligned community members defeated a slate of left and center Zionist parties. After 1948, the tenor of Jewish politics changed decisively. With the turn of the Soviet Union and its Jewish Communist supporters against the state of Israel and the Zionist movement, politics within the AMIA and the larger community increasingly revolved around disputes over Zionism. Beginning in 1949, Zionists of all ideological tendencies joined ranks within the AMIA to create a united electoral block

against non-Zionists and especially against the Jewish Communists. This trend towards Zionist unity persisted in every single election thereafter, until 1957, when following the overthrow of the Peronist regime, the institution passed democratizing reforms that called for elections under a new system of proportional representation, which allowed each party to field its own slate of candidates.

Yet, the AMIA was not the only site of political conflict in the Jewish community. Because of its role as the community's larger political representation, both before the state and before the international world, the DAIA also served as a nexus of intense political struggle and debate on issues involving Jewish communal matters. Among other things, the DAIA controlled the collection and distribution of community fundraising campaigns for the state of Israel, which generated millions of pesos during this time. However, unlike the AMIA, the DAIA did not provide truly democratic representation of the community. Instead, as an association of institutions, the DAIA's general assembly was composed of two representatives from each of its member organizations, which included the AMIA among them. Because the vast majority of the country's Jewish institutions were controlled by Zionist parties or those in sympathy with Zionism, the DAIA's assembly had always remained a stronghold of Zionist factions in even greater proportion than their strength on the Jewish street in general. As a result of this, it was in the DAIA, rather than the AMIA, that much of the increasing polarity and hostility between Zionists and non-Zionists found its fullest expression, ultimately resulting in discriminatory measures against non-Zionists after 1949, and the expulsion of all

Progressive Jewish institutions from the DAIA, and from the larger framework of organized Jewish life, following the infamous anti-Semitic Slansky Trials in Prague in late 1952.

Other Jewish institutions emerged as important centers of political dispute as well. Among them was the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina (SHA), a Spanish language cultural and sportive society with over 15,000 members, making it the country's second largest Jewish institution. The Hebraica had traditionally been a great stronghold of the country's "integrationist" Jews as well as many of the IJA's biggest supporters. Yet, as a cultural institution, it also had a significant representation of Progressives as well, and as tensions between Zionists and non-Zionists began to mount after 1949, the Hebraica became an intriguing site of struggle between the Progressive community and the more "passive" Zionist views of the IJA camp. In two hotly contested election campaigns in 1949 and 1953 the members of the Progressive sector vied with these so-called "passive" Zionists for control over the directive body of the SHA. In both cases, the Zionist factions won, maintaining control over the administration of the institution.

In many ways, the "conquest of the communities" by the Zionist parties mandated by Theodore Herztl over half a century before was only fully completed in Argentina during the Peronist era. This conquest had a number of important implications for Jewish political behavior in general. For one, the increasing emphasis on Zionist unity within the community provided a locus of resistance against the encroachments of the Peronist state through the OIA. In addition, it contributed to the increasing politicization of the community, with electoral participation within the AMIA alone rising from some 4,481 voters in 1945 to well over 16,000 in 1955. This politicization of communal

institutional life provided a significant outlet for Jewish political behavior at a time when the militancy on the national level was seen as dangerous and threatening. It also provided a common point of contact between the community and the Peronist state over the issue of Argentine-Israeli relations, which were consistently positive under Perón. Yet, at the same time, the Zionist conquest of the kehilla had its down side as well. It ultimately contributed to a decreasing tolerance for political dissent within the Jewish community and a diminished diversity of the Jewish political landscape. Furthermore, over time, communal politics became increasingly intertwined with Peronist state policy. Among other things, the expulsion of the Jewish Communists from the DAIA in December 1952 carried with it important ramifications when Perón began his own crackdown against the Argentine Communist Party less than a year later. In the case of Argentine Jewry, then, increased politicization did not always translate into increased democratization.

#### UNITY IN THE FACE OF WORLD EVENTS: COMMUNAL POLITICS 1945-1948.

In December 1945, as the national political campaign between Perón and his opponents in the Unión Democrática reached a fervent pitch, the Jewish community prepared for its own political campaign surrounding the annual elections to the AMIA. Ever since 1942, the politics of the AMIA had increasingly been dominated by Zionist parties led by Poale Zion and the General Zionists, who were organized under the Argentine Zionist Federation. In 1944, the two parties united to defeat their non-political predecessors in office, and began a systematic campaign to transform the AMIA from a mutual aid and burial society into a true Jewish kehilla by expanding its role in the field

of education and by supporting a national-religious conception of Jewish communal life in general.<sup>2</sup> As the elections of 1945 approached, this Zionist camp split into two factions over the question of aid for the victims of the Holocaust. For its part, Poale Zion favored a continuation of the community's current aid campaign through the auspices of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), while the Zionist Federation supported a division of funds between the WJC and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). As a consequence of this division, the leaders of Poale Zion decided to forge an alliance with the non-Zionist left, and succeeded in winning the elections by a margin of 833 votes, with 2,655 votes for their list against 1,826 in favor of that led by the Zionist Federation and various Orthodox Zionist groups and schools. The election marked the first significant foray of the non-Zionist left into AMIA coalition politics. Yet, despite their participation, Zionism itself was not a major issue, with both sides pledging to support the ongoing campaign to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the presence of non-Zionists among the directive commission of the AMIA was not sufficient enough to substantially alter its national-religious orientation.

The elections of 1946, however, provided a sharp distinction from those of the previous year. With the aid controversy largely resolved, the two leading Zionist factions once again united to compete for the presidency of the institution. Their candidates' list counted with the support of all the Zionist parties and schools except for the Revisionists who ran their own slate. Yet, unlike in 1944, this time the non-Zionist parties of the Jewish left organized themselves in opposition. In particular, Bundists and Communists sponsored a "Non-partisan People's Democratic Committee," which also enjoyed support from non-aligned members of the community and included known Zionists such as

Simon Lerner as its candidate for president and Nicolas Rapoport for vice-president. Although the platforms of the two lists were quite similar, with both pledging to support the Zionist enterprise in Palestine, to subsidize Jewish education, and to reform the electoral system of the AMIA, the manner in which they conceived of the Jewish community as such differed considerably. The Zionists favored a national-religious conception of the Jewish community, promising to “support all religious institutions and accommodate the religious needs of its members.”<sup>4</sup> Their opponents, on the other hand, maintained a more secular notion, undertaking to “support all cultural forms,” including the construction of a popular Jewish theater as well the expansion of Yiddish cultural institutions such as the YIVO.<sup>5</sup> Although the Zionist parties were confident of their victory, they were shocked when the results were finally tabulated a day later. The non-Zionist list had triumphed over the Zionist coalition by over 400 votes.<sup>6</sup> For the first time in the history of the institution, the parties of the non-Zionist Jewish left had gained effective control over the administration of the AMIA.

Staunch Zionist supporters, such as editors of the Spanish language weekly *Mundo Israelita* were quick to warn against the entry of “negative elements in the government of our institutions.”<sup>7</sup> Above all else, the editors of the paper charged that the secularists in the new administration were, “none other than the enemies of Jewish tradition,” and that they were, “developing an active campaign to gain control of collective institutions.” The danger in this, they argued, stemmed from the fact that, “they threaten to divert the action and resources of the collective toward objectives that are outside of and at time opposed to our genuine interests.”<sup>8</sup> In particular, the editors berated the presence of Jewish Communists in the new administration. “Those so-called

‘progressives,.’” they alleged, “constitute a Jewish faction in the service of Communism, not an ideological grouping in the service of Judaism. Because of this, their pretension of intervening in the matters of the community is intolerable and must be rejected.”<sup>9</sup> “Ever since its historical beginnings,” claimed another editorial, “the Jewish nation was totally identified with its religion... The community is the successor of the patria, and religious tradition is the cornerstone, the spiritual inheritance, that justifies its reason for being.”<sup>10</sup>

It did not take long for such views to be put to the test. In September 1947, the AMIA general assembly met to consider a proposal to reform the institution along secular lines as a mutual-aid society and not a national-religious institution. Among other things, the leadership of the organization proposed reinforcing the social welfare aspects of the AMIA and changing the cemetery regulations to allow non-religious burials in the consecrated Jewish cemeteries of the capital.<sup>11</sup> The measure aroused passionate debate within the assembly and sparked an intense reaction among Zionist members. “If you don’t want the Chevra Kadisha and our schools to become extinct,” claimed one commentator in the left-wing Yiddish daily *Di Presse*, “vote against the statute project.”<sup>12</sup> Another observer in *Mundo Israelita* argued that, “A Jewish cemetery should be subject to the prescriptions [of religion] or it should cease being a Jewish cemetery.”<sup>13</sup> Largely due to the overwhelming unpopularity of the reforms among Zionist and religious members of the institution, the measure was defeated in the assembly of September 9, and the AMIA was left to persist in its previous capacity.

Although the debate over reforming the statutes of the AMIA ignited some intense disagreements between Zionists and non-Zionists, these divisions were subsequently put aside in the interest of unity as the community confronted the monumental events taking

place at home and abroad. As the elections of December 1947 approached, all factions within the community united together around a common candidates list which included both Zionist and non-Zionist delegates. The list was spearheaded by Poale Zion and the Zionist left, which argued for unity in the face of local and world events, claiming that the community must mobilize all of its, “national, creative, and democratic strength for a popular life in Argentina, and for a unity of our forces in order to construct our state in Eretz Yisroel...”<sup>14</sup> When various Zionist groups, led by the Zionist Federation began to form a separate list to the elections in order to, “defend the national and traditional content of the Chevra Kadisha,” Poale Zion accused its opponents of engaging in a “brother-fight” and urged them not to undertake such a potentially divisive electoral campaign at a time when world Jewry was united more than ever around the life and death struggle for national liberation in Palestine.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, their opponents conceded and the two sides agreed to put forth one list to the elections of December 28. In commenting on the affair, the editors of *Di Presse* expressed that, “the unity with which our community in Buenos Aires carries itself to the elections of its common institution is a great triumph for Jewish democracy and at the same time for the Jewish national problems of our times.”<sup>16</sup>

This spirit of unity persisted throughout much of 1948 as the entire Jewish community preoccupied itself in the efforts of its brethren in Palestine to gain their independence and establish a sovereign Jewish state. With the official support of both the Soviet Union and the United States still firmly behind the Zionist cause, nearly all sectors of the Jewish community, Zionist and non-Zionist, worked together to promote the survival and well-being of the new state. Among other things, the community created

for the first time a united “Campaign for the Consolidation and Defense of the Jewish State,” administered by the World Jewish Congress.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, both Bundists and Communists continued to support the DAIA during its mounting crisis with the OIA and the IJA. In fact, the greatest threat to communal unity during 1948 came not from tensions between Zionists and non-Zionists, but from conflicts within the Zionist movement. In October 1948, leaders of the General Zionists broke ranks with other Zionist parties to declare their support for the newly created IJA, which aspired to gain influence within the community by running a slate of candidates in the DAIA elections.<sup>18</sup> Although the IJA was defeated, the move once again placed the two main Zionist factions in opposition to one another, with Poale Zion and members of the non-Zionist left remaining loyal to the existing DAIA leadership. As the AMIA elections approached in December 1948, this issue remained foremost in the campaign, and the two camps now prepared for a massive confrontation.

As in the previous year, the AMIA elections of 1948 pitted a coalition of Zionist and non-Zionist leftists led by Poale Zion against a center-right coalition led by the Zionist Federation. However, unlike in 1947, the centripetal pressures for unity in the face of world events were not enough to reconcile the General Zionists with their socialist-Zionist counterparts. Instead, a rather heated electoral campaign for the presidency of the AMIA emerged between the two lists, with both aspiring to represent the Zionist sentiments of the community as a whole. For their part, advocates of Poale-Zion’s left-wing “Blue List,” warned against the threat posed to the community by IJA supporters within the Zionist Federation. “The Blue List,” they stated, “cannot allow the Chevra Kadisha to fall into the unwanted hands of those who united in order to dictate

assimilation, [those] who would have broken up the DAIA, and now wish to break up our central institution – the Chevra Kadisha – by imposing themselves as the singular rulers of our kehilla.”<sup>19</sup> In response the “White-Blue List” of the “National Religious Block” called the leaders of the Blue List “caudillos and yehudim,” alleging that they threatened the true Zionist character of the community. In their election propaganda, they argued that, “The Blue list is composed of so called ‘progressives’ and ‘seculars’ who have imposed themselves upon the national-religious Chevra Kadisha and wish to rebuild it in accordance with their own secular laws.”<sup>20</sup> “It is not true that the Blue List represents the national forces of our community,” stated another advertisement, “But it is true that the leftist elements lead the Blue list under all [forms of] deception... that they have honored the ghosts of the Jewish cemetery according to their secular laws and against the will of the whole Jewish community and Jewish law.”<sup>21</sup> In their own analysis of the upcoming contest, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* summarized the principal divisions that lay behind the intense polarization as a contest between secular and national-religious Jews over the very nature of the community they wished to govern. “The community,” they observed, “is not a militant organization, but it is the reflection of the ideology of those who have conquered its domain. It can be secular or traditional, Zionist or an instrument of assimilation, a proponent of Yiddish or of Hebrew, or still yet against them both, according to that which the faction at the head of its government holds in esteem.”<sup>22</sup> In the end, the contest was decided by a mere 18 votes, out of a total of 6,533 votes cast, in favor of the Blue List headed by Poale Zion and its non-Zionist allies.<sup>23</sup>

## A SHIFTING DYNAMIC: ZIONISTS AGAINST THE PROGRESSIVES, 1949-1952

Little did the new directors of the AMIA realize when they assumed their posts in January 1949 that it would be the last time that Zionists and non-Zionists would stand united in the leadership of the community's largest institution. World events over the course of the coming years would dramatically shift the balance of forces within the Jewish community away from previous disputes between left and right, instead creating a new political dynamic that divided Zionists of all ideological persuasions from their non-Zionist counterparts. In part, this development was guided by the decline of traditional European-Jewish politics in the aftermath of the Second World War and the emergence of a vibrant Israeli-based political system in its wake. More importantly, though, the origins of this shift can be traced to the decisive turn of the Soviet Union against Zionism and the state of Israel as a result of Stalin's paranoid anti-Semitism and the nationalist sympathies aroused among Soviet Jews following the establishment of the Jewish state in May 1948.

As early as September 1948, the Soviet Union published a front-page article in *Pravda* rejecting Zionism and attacking Jews who supported the state of Israel. In November 1948, Stalin began a crackdown against the last vestiges of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Russia, which had been formed during the Second World War to enlist Jewish support in the struggle against Germany, and the Soviet government initiated the arrest, deportation, and murder of hundreds of prominent Jewish intellectual figures, including the noted Yiddish playwright and actor Solomon Mikhoels. By the beginning of 1949, virtually all autonomous expressions of Jewish life and culture were being suppressed throughout the Soviet Union and its east European satellites.<sup>24</sup> It did

not take long for this change to be felt within the wider Jewish world. As early as April 1949, the Yiddish daily, *Di Idishe Tsaytung* carried reports that Jewish wing of the Communist Party, also known as Yevsektzia, in the United States had, “officially adopted an anti-Zionist program, and have returned to the stand that they held prior to when the Soviet Union began to participate in the creation of a Jewish state.”<sup>25</sup> In June, the paper reported on Jewish Communist demands in Poland for an energetic effort to cleanse the country of all Zionist activity as well as an end to Jewish emigration to Israel.<sup>26</sup> According to the editors of *Mundo Israelita*, “The Zionist fervor of the ‘progressives’ did not last very long...The old assimilationist ideology has reappeared under the same worn out red clothes.”<sup>27</sup>

In Argentina, this new tension began to manifest itself at the beginning of 1949 through a debate unleashed by Progressive Jews over the distribution of funds to the United Campaign for Israel. Although the Communists claimed that they still wished to participate in the effort as they had in 1948, they now demanded a more accurate accounting for how the money was spent. In particular, they objected to its disbursement through Zionist organizations such as the World Jewish Congress and the Jewish Agency for Israel, claiming that while they supported the state of Israel in theory, they now rejected its government and repudiated the Zionist movement in general. According to the delegate of the World Jewish Congress in Buenos Aires, Jacob Hellman, the Progressives also insisted that the campaign not include references to aliyah or Jewish religion as a condition for their continued participation.<sup>28</sup> As the campaign’s national conference approached in May 1949, a group of Progressives published a declaration in *Di Presse*, arguing for an increased “popular” representation in the executive committee

of the campaign, and outlining a “concrete plan that should guarantee the practical exchange of the money collected in an exclusively constructive and direct way.”<sup>29</sup> When these demands were not met to their satisfaction, the Progressives withdrew from the community-wide effort and founded their own rival “Popular Campaign” for Israel, promising only direct assistance to popular sectors in Israel and not to its Zionist controlled government.

The reaction within the community was swift and fierce. The left leaning daily *Di Presse* strongly condemned the Progressives, claiming that, “One cannot place conditions when giving aid,” and that such assistance is, “a debt for all the Jewish people and those who have not paid that debt should not place conditions on how to pay it.”<sup>30</sup> According to *Mundo Isarelita*, support for Israel was, “incompatible with opposition to its government.”<sup>31</sup> In a subsequent commentary on the Progressives, the editors accused them of “carrying out a severe campaign against Zionism and against the government in Israel, sponsoring in the name of the ‘great popular masses,’ a collection supposedly in favor of Israel.” “Apparently contradictory,” they argued, “this double action pursues a concurrent objective, through the defamation of the ideal that inspires the state and solidifies it. Moreover, it tries to play upon sympathies for Israel which are translated into contributions for their own ends.”<sup>32</sup> Even the left-wing Zionists of the Hashomer Hatzair youth movement faulted their non-Zionist counterparts for precipitating the breach within the community. “One cannot demand conditions in order to achieve unity,” argued their leaders in *Nueva Sión*, “through oppositional politics that ask people to retreat from their basic ideological principles.”<sup>33</sup>

This outrage against the Progressives in the Jewish press was soon translated into action in the assembly of the DAIA. In June 1949, the DAIA published a declaration in favor of the United Campaign, affirming it as “the expression of the will of the entire community, which absolutely manifests in a democratic way, the national sentiments, aspirations, and the consciousness of all Jews.”<sup>34</sup> In its general assembly of October 27, the DAIA went even further, approving a resolution that called upon all Jews to support the United Campaign, declaring that, “only those persons who have complied with their national obligations towards the United Campaign for Israel shall be able to hold directive positions in the [Jewish] organizations and institutions of the country.”<sup>35</sup> At the time, the DAIA was under intense pressure to defend itself in the face of fierce competition from the OIA and the IJA. The resolution regarding the United Campaign, it seems, was part of a larger decision on the part of DAIA leaders to make their peace with the General Zionists who supported the IJA, and to unite the divergent sectors of the Zionist movement together in opposition to the anti-Zionist Progressives. In his dispatch of December 30, 1949, the Argentine representative of the American Jewish Committee, Máximo Yagupsky reported to his superiors in New York that, “There is a movement to drive the Communists out of Jewish organizations... Zionists have become more moderate in their Zionism and more militant in their struggle against the Communists.”<sup>36</sup>

The DAIA’s resolutions produced a heated debate within most of the community’s institutions, and especially those that contained large numbers of Progressive members. This was the clearly the case in the Hebraica, where Progressive leftists had long shared control with “integrationist” Jews over the direction of the organization. Following the July declaration, the leadership of the Hebraica had become

deeply divided over the question of whether or not to declare their support for the United Campaign or remain neutral in the emerging conflict. The debate quickly drew a rift between Zionists and non-Zionists in what had formerly been an apolitical association. In the Plenary Session of September 1, 1949, the directors of the SHA passed a resolution adhering the institution to the United Campaign only after an acrimonious debate. Among other things, non-Zionists accused Zionists of inciting friction between the two campaigns, contending that, “it should be left for each to decide” which campaign he wished to support, and alleging that Zionists in various parts of the country were discriminating against supporters of the Popular Campaign by denying them access to necessary religious rites.<sup>37</sup> As expected, the argument left a bitter taste in the mouths of Progressives and their supporters, and in the elections for the society’s executive council in November 1949, they mounted a fierce campaign against the Zionists. Both sides published incendiary propaganda, claiming to represent the true spirit of the institution. In the end, the Zionists, led by Simon Mirelman, prevailed over their Progressive rivals, receiving some 1,417 votes against 1,087.<sup>38</sup> According to the minutes of the Hebraica, when the members of the new administration formally received their offices a few days later, several older supporters of the opposition apparently, “felt obliged to direct comments to them that merited general approbation.”<sup>39</sup>

This, then, was the general state of affairs when the AMIA convened to hold its general elections in December 1949. Even more so than in previous years, the elections were seen as a kind of plebiscite over the recent events affecting the community. Earlier in 1949, the Zionist parties within the AMIA had succeeded in uniting around a common effort to change its official status from that of a burial society to a “kehilla,” or

community, organized around national-religious principles.<sup>40</sup> Now, they rallied together in defense of the United Campaign and against the Progressives, forming a “National Democratic Block” in the elections that won the endorsement of all Zionist parties from Poale Zion to the Revisionists. In their campaign platform, they called for an expansion of role of the kehilla in the daily life of the community and for an active participation in the United Campaign. “The kehilla,” they argued, “should broadly and unconditionally support the construction, consolidation, and development of the state of Israel through its legal world organ by contributing in full measure to the United Campaign and for all the needs of the country.”<sup>41</sup> Increasingly isolated from the rest of the community, the Progressives formed their own list, calling for a secular-cultural conception of the AMIA as well as solidarity with Israel, but without mentioning either the United Campaign or its popular rival. In addition, they argued for an increased militancy in the surrounding national life, promising to support, “any communal institutions that have joined in the fight against racism and anti-Semitism.”<sup>42</sup> Finally, a third group of non-aligned traditional community activists put forth their own list, also promising to support the United Campaign, but decrying the increased politicization of the AMIA “in which the good Jews are not permitted to hold the directive offices of our greatest institution because these same people do not have a party ticket.”<sup>43</sup>

As the elections neared it soon became clear that the Progressives were completely without allies on the Jewish street. Virtually all of the major newspapers came out openly against them. The editors of *Mundo Israelita* called for “Jewish unity against Communist infiltration.”<sup>44</sup> A commentator in *Di Idische Tsaytung* asserted that, “the appetites of the Progressive elements are not small... They seek to occupy the

administration of the kehilla through an electoral victory in order to carry out a Progressive agenda in the mode of the Yevsektzia.”<sup>45</sup> Even their erstwhile non-Zionist allies in the Bund decided to endorse the nationalist list. Yet, when the results were tabulated, they came as a surprise to virtually everyone. As expected the “Pink List” led by the National Democratic Block, had triumphed, receiving some 5,085 votes. The non-aligned “White List” had received an additional 1,236. However, the Progressives, who stood alone for the first time in communal elections, received a startling 3,474 votes, nearly 40% of the total votes cast.<sup>46</sup> According to *Di Idische Tsaytung*, this was a completely unforeseen result, one that constituted a “great danger for the kehilla of Buenos Aires,” since less than two thousand votes had prevented the administration of the community’s largest institution from passing into the hands of anti-Zionist elements.<sup>47</sup> The editors of *Mundo Israelita* called upon their readers to, “close the door to the Yevsektzia and awaken the Jewish consciousness of the masses, mobilizing them to action.”<sup>48</sup> Equally surprised, the leftist Zionists of the Hashomer Hatzair saw the election differently, however. Unlike their non-Marxist counterparts, they interpreted it as a sobering condemnation of the divisiveness and exclusion practiced by Zionist leaders. “When 40 percent of the electors vote for a list of a single tendency, a tendency that is anti-Zionist, it is not possible to realize a politics of ostracism, but rather only through an intense and unceasing education regarding the progressive character of Zionism...[will we] win to our cause this 40 percent.”<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, the edict of the DAIA prohibiting those who failed to support the United Campaign from holding directive posts within the community continued to remain in force. In June 1950, the Zionist leaders of the AMIA dealt a further snub to

Progressives, when they refused to send a delegation to attend the inauguration of the “popular” Jewish Folks Theatre (IFT). In fact, fear of Progressive electoral strength likely motivated AMIA leaders to scrap a proposed plan to implement proportional elections later in June, and to postpone the general election of 1950 until October 1951.<sup>50</sup> Although nearly everyone in the community agreed on the need for reform, it seems that Zionist leaders could not conceive of a manner for implementing it that would not allow for increased Progressive representation in the institution. As a result, the only real reform of the AMIA’s electoral system that they enacted was to change the way the lists were identified, from a system of based on colors to one based on numbers. Many Zionists, it appears, had reasoned that at least some of the Progressive votes in 1949 were likely derived from the fact that their list had assumed the color blue, the same color used by the Zionist left previously in 1948.

Perhaps a more substantial reason for the surprising showing of the Progressives in the AMIA elections of 1949 was the persistence and vitality of the Yiddish language in Argentina, which provided non-Zionist Jews with a legitimate expression of Jewish identity in the absence of religious or nationalist beliefs. In fact, in the aftermath of World War Two, Argentina remained as one of the last bastions of Yiddish language and culture in the entire world. As a popular and largely secular Jewish language, it was an essential ingredient for Progressives and their Bundist counterparts in an ideology that preached Jewish liberation through the victory of world socialism. The editors of the Spanish language *Mundo Israelita* were not unaware of this fact, and in their editorial columns initiated a campaign to criticize the language and its supporters. In one piece published in June 1950, they claimed that Yiddish was nothing more than a cover for the

anti-Jewish activities of a Progressive “fifth column.”<sup>51</sup> In another editorial they contended that Yiddish was not even a fundamental component of Jewish society. “To affirm that Yiddish,” the editors wrote, “or Yiddish culture, represents the patrimony, the sum of the values created and maintained by the Jewish people, is a shameless pretension. In the said language we have only created literary works, and these, as great as their merit is, cannot be said to reflect or be representative of an integral culture.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, they argued, the widespread use of Yiddish in Argentina had prevented the establishment of good relations between East European and Sephardic Jews in the country.<sup>53</sup>

The AMIA elections of October 1951 further confirmed the general pattern which had been established in the contest in 1949. As in the previous election, Zionists of all ideological tendencies went to the polls united behind a “National Community Committee.” Topping their agenda was again strong support for the United Campaign and “other actions recognized by world Jewry and the state of Israel,” as well as the organization of Jewish life on “the foundations of true democracy and with the greatest mass of national discipline and responsibility.”<sup>54</sup> As their candidate for president, the Zionists put forth Moisés Goldman, the highly popular ex-president of the DAIA, who had gained a reputation as an unwavering defender of Jewish interests before the Peronist state. In particular, Goldman was chosen to replace the outgoing president, Moisés Slinin, who many viewed as compromised by his participation in the Jewish delegation that had solicited Perón’s re-election in July 1951. Against the Zionists, the Progressives again ran their own slate, promising to “restore tolerance and good relations in our communal life, abolishing every form of ostracism and discrimination, and carrying out proportional elections.”<sup>55</sup> The results were very similar to those of 1949, with both sides

increasing their total voter base. The Zionists won the elections with some 7,851 votes against 4,041 for their Communist rivals. Yet, just as in the previous election, the Progressives constituted substantial minority of almost 35% of the electorate.<sup>56</sup> In the words of *Mundo Israelita*, “Although [the Progressives] did not receive the proportion obtained in the previous elections, they did increase their number of votes. This is very significant. In effect, although it appears that they have receded, in truth they have advanced.”<sup>57</sup>

While the AMIA elections of November 1952 generated considerable amount of campaign propaganda and hype, they appear to have evoked much less interest on the Jewish street than those of previous years. For one, the office of president was not at stake. In addition, the general public appears to have become more complacent in the face of national and world political events. Once again, a Zionist block vied against Progressives for control of the community’s largest institution. However, after a brief postponement in the elections, Goldman and the Zionists were unable to unify all potential nationalist sympathizers and a small block of non-aligned traditionalists presented a third list. The traditionalists accused the Zionists of “perpetually dominating” the kehilla elections, claiming that, “an end will be made to the situation in which a pair of caudillo parties should be the masters of local Jewish life!”<sup>58</sup> The Zionists, for their part, warned against “those who represent no organized forces and long for only the good old times...”<sup>59</sup> They further argued, “the community can only be put in the hands of those who have a full consciousness of the hour in which we live, of those who seek to identify it with the glorious deeds of the state of Israel.”<sup>60</sup> As for the Progressives, they once again called for “unity, tolerance, and democracy within our

Jewish community.”<sup>61</sup> When the results were tabulated, the Zionist block again emerged as victorious, with all factions receiving far fewer votes than in 1951. The Zionist total dropped by over a thousand, something that caused considerable distress for the editors of *Mundo Israelita*.<sup>62</sup> The Progressives fell as well, from some 4,078 in 1951 to 3,878 in 1952. A potentially disruptive factor in the election, the traditionalists received just 1,303 votes. According to the Progressive journal *Tribuna*, “The union of forces so diverse as Poale Zion left and the Revisionists, Mapai and the directors of trade unions, General Zionists, and religious groups could only achieve 53.8% of the votes... There is no doubt that discrimination and the excommunication [against Progressive Jews] have received a blow thanks to the electoral process, developed around the great institution we call the kehilla.”<sup>63</sup>

#### THE DECISIVE BREAK: THE SLANSKY TRAILS AND THE EXPULSION OF THE COMMUNISTS FROM THE DAIA IN DECEMBER 1952

If apathy was the watchword in the AMIA elections of November 16, 1952, events on the world scene would soon energize political forces once again within the Jewish community, reinforcing Zionist sentiments and leading to the increased alienation of Progressives. On November 20, 1952, Communist authorities in Czechoslovakia began arresting fourteen members of the Czech Communist Party who were accused of espionage and as acting as agents for an international world Zionist conspiracy involving the state of Israel, the World Zionist Organization, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.<sup>64</sup> At the center of the plot was the former Secretary General of the Communist party, Rudolph Slansky, who ultimately “confessed” to plotting with

Zionist leaders to overthrow the Communist Czech state. Of the fourteen accused, Slansky and ten others were Jews, and the entire proceedings had an ominous tone of anti-Semitism throughout. On December 4, 1952, eleven of the so-called conspirators, including Slansky, were hanged following a trial which echoed “the spirit of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*,” an infamous anti-Semitic forgery itself compiled by Russian secret police some 100 years before.<sup>65</sup>

The incident produced an outrage throughout the Jewish world. In Argentina, the Jewish press condemned the action, with the editors of *Di Idische Tsaytung* contending that, “The government of Prague through the intermediary of its judges, has shown itself loyal to the anti-Semitic tradition of Hitlerism.”<sup>66</sup> *Di Presse* called the event, “a monstrous calumny against the Jewish people,” and *Mundo Israelita* claimed the accusations against Zionism were “ignominious and capricious.”<sup>67</sup> Only the Progressives, in their weekly *Tribuna*, attempted to defend the actions of the Czech government. In an article that appeared on December 4, they noted how none of the accused had denied the charges against them, with Slansky even offering his wholehearted confession. Furthermore, they asserted that not all of the accused were Jewish, and that, “the accused were not convicted for being Jews, but rather for conspiring in the service of imperialism against the popular regime.” “The smoke screen”, they continued, “the smoke screen of the dollar – raised in turn against the Prague Trials - should not confuse the Zionist masses nor their well inspired leaders.”<sup>68</sup>

On that same day, the DAIA called an extraordinary general assembly to discuss the proper response of the community with regard to the trials. The president of the DAIA, Ricardo Dubrovsky, told those gathered before him that, “Just as we have fought

against the anti-Semitism of the right so must we now fight against the anti-Semitism of the left,” further adding that the community should “fight with dignity, without using it as a political weapon against anyone.”<sup>69</sup> Immediately thereafter, the secretary of the DAIA, Benjamin Rinsky, asked the assembly to approve a resolution prepared earlier by directive council which stated that,

The DAIA, as the representative institution of the Jewish collective of the country...receives with profound consternation the unfounded accusations directed in the Prague Trials against world Jewry, the Zionist movement, the Jewish Agency of Jerusalem, and the state of Israel... The Argentine-Jewish collective, united with world Jewry, and as a integral part of a nation respectful of human rights: the nation of Argentina, rejects with all the force of its spirit the false accusations of Prague, crossed with the mark of anti-Semitism and racist demagoguery, and declares that the intent of establishing an official anti-Jewish politics in Prague does not have to be tolerated by the Jews...<sup>70</sup>

According to the DAIA’s own minutes of the assembly, a heated debate then followed between supporters of the resolution and Progressive delegates, who claimed that such a declaration would not be in agreement with the statutes of the DAIA, adding further that the DAIA, “does not have the right nor the competency to intervene in the internal affairs of other peoples or countries.” Noting the dissent of the Progressives, one of the Zionist delegates, Dr. Leon Lapacó, then suggested a similar resolution which included an additional paragraph deliberately worded against the Progressive opposition “The Extraordinary General Assembly of the DAIA,” it read,

acknowledges with profound consternation that there exist certain Jews who justify the anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish provocations of Prague. The same assembly declares categorically that such action destroys Jewish unity in the benefit of foreign interests. It makes a call to public opinion in order that in the defense of the honor and dignity of our community, such elements be separated [from the DAIA].

Several Zionist delegates then immediately called upon the assembly to approve the Lapacó resolution, with president Dubrovsky declaring, “Either we are Jews or we are not. Either we are with the state of Israel or we are not... This is the crossroads, and those who do not think so will not be able to continue with those who do.”<sup>71</sup> The measure passed by a huge margin, with only five votes against it and six in favor of a less incendiary text.

With the publication of the resolution of December 4, 1952 in the Jewish press, war was unleashed within the community. The editors of *Mundo Israelita* hailed the decision, while a commentator in *Di Idische Tsaytung* remarked, “It is not any wonder that men see them, [the Progressives,] as a great evil, because it is astonishing that in such a moment there should be found Jews who should justify the fairy tales of anti-Semites.”<sup>72</sup> Even the Bund, a non-Zionist party and a former ally of the Progressives on the Jewish street, expressed its enthusiasm over the measure. In describing the stormy assembly of December 4, the editors of its journal, *Undzer Gedank*, noted that, “In relation to the Prague Tribunals, our community has displayed itself to its true form. Its reaction this time was not – as in many other cases – only a strong or weak echo of other communities. This time, its reaction was instinctive, spontaneous and a bold one...” Regarding the Progressives in particular, they observed, “Much anger was directed against Jews who had only loving words for the Stalin-Hitler Pact and now found not one word of protest in relation to the devilishly dramatized trial against the whole Jewish people. There is no place for such people in the Jewish community.”<sup>73</sup>

The Progressives responded to the assembly with an article in *Tribuna* that sharply condemned the DAIA. Arguing that, “This is not the first time that such

extraordinary assemblies such as that of last week, have adopted resolutions repugnant to the spirit of the Jewish collective in Argentina,” author Luis Goldman claimed that, “The DAIA is entering the road of its own decomposition, the anti-patriotic road of servitude to Anglo-Yankee imperialists which is the true road that drives anti-Semitism.” “While the entire Argentine people,” he continued, “finds itself engaged in the struggle national sovereignty, against the threat of Yankee imperialism...it is not possible to conceive that an entity which is supposed to be the expression of the sane, patriotic, and unified sentiments of the Jewish community, is converted into a tribunal of defenders of espionage, of defenders of those who betray their patria...” He then suggested that, “The Jewish masses, be they Zionist, Peronist, or Communist will be compelled to...decree the liquidation of the DAIA as the representative of the Jewish collective in order to allow for the creation of a Federation authentically representative of the national, patriotic, Argentine, anti-imperialist, and pro-peace feelings of our collective.”<sup>74</sup> The Goldman article raised a furor in the DAIA, incensing Jewish leaders for its insinuations of disloyalty, and intensifying already frenzied passions against the Progressives.

In response to these accusations, leaders of the DAIA stepped their campaign against the Progressives. In a special assembly of the directive council on December 15, 1952, they drafted a resolution which stated that, “In light of the anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist derivations of the trials recently carried out in Prague...the general assembly of the DAIA...has resolved that only those institutions that are in solidarity with the spirit of the declaration that in this sense was adopted by the said general assembly shall be able to belong to this delegation.”<sup>75</sup> On December 21, 1952, the general assembly approved the declaration by an overwhelming majority. Almost immediately, hundreds of Jewish

institutions throughout the capital and the interior pledged their support for the resolution, including the AMIA and the Hebraica.<sup>76</sup> However, as loyal Communists, the Progressives were unable to adhere to the document, and in February 1953, four Progressive institutions and one non-Progressive one, which had desisted from supporting the DAIA declaration of December 4, 1952, were formally expelled from the DAIA indefinitely.<sup>77</sup> Among other things, as a result of this excommunication, or *herem* in Hebrew, Progressives were henceforth denied the benefit of protection by the DAIA against anti-Semitic attacks, nor would they be entitled to utilize any of the community's commonly raised funds. Earlier, on January 5, 1953, the executive council of the Va'ad Hajinuj, which disbursed all subsidies from the AMIA to communal schools, formally "separated" five educational institutions associated with the Progressive block from the body of its membership.<sup>78</sup>

Yet, what had started as an internal struggle within the Jewish community, quickly spilled over onto the national political scene as well. Faced with their growing isolation on the Jewish street, the leaders of the Progressives reached out to the Peronist OIA as a potential ally against the Zionists and the exclusionary politics of the DAIA. As early as the AMIA elections of November 1952, the editors of *Tribuna* had claimed to speak in the name of the Peronist OIA when they decried the lack of democratization within the Jewish community.<sup>79</sup> Now, in the aftermath of the Prague Trials they stepped their campaign, accusing the DAIA of behaving in an anti-patriotic manner and against the interests of the Peronist state. Initially, the leaders of the OIA had hoped to avoid taking sides. However, when the Progressives again alleged following the infamous Doctors Trials in Moscow in January 1953 that, "in place of identifying themselves with

the anti-imperialist struggles of the Argentine people, the directors of the DAIA have converted the institution into a tribunal in defense of espionage,” the leadership of the OIA felt obliged to respond.<sup>80</sup> In a declaration to the Jewish press, they expressed their own condemnation of the Prague and Moscow trials, further informing that the OIA, “does not maintain any link with certain sectarian groups who appear to respond to international directives and whose mouthpiece is “Tribuna”... The OIA responds - in an unconditional manner – to the justicialist movement that it recognizes as the only and indisputable chief, general Juan Perón.”<sup>81</sup> The Progressives labeled their action as “lamentable,” adding that, “as Argentines and as Peronists, the directors of the OIA should neither sympathize with Zionism, nor support the servile submission to Yankee espionage and its reactionary current.”<sup>82</sup>

It now appeared that the actions of the Progressives were threatening to undermine the delicate “convivencia” that taken root between the Jewish community and the Peronist state. On January 27, 1953, Perón himself became involved. He called a Jewish delegation, led by AMIA president Moisés Goldman, DAIA vice-president Jacobo Bronfman, and the directors of the OIA, into his office to express his sympathy with the local Jewish community during this difficult moment and to guarantee that no anti-Semitic ramifications of the Prague and Moscow trials would be permitted in Argentina. Moreover, he added,

It is a sad tragedy that certain frictions between the great powers have made a scapegoat out of the Jew. In the face of the threat of new repression, there is only one road to save the threatened Jews: to facilitate their departure to Israel and to the nations of the free world. In this sense, the doors of the Nation are open for whichever person who suffers this repudiable persecution and if it should become necessary, my government will adopt the appropriate measures.<sup>83</sup>

Faced with the virtual meltdown of Jewish politics in Argentina over the question of Zionism and the Slansky Trials, it seems that Perón had decided to make it known to all that he completely and unambiguously supported the Zionist position and would continue to do so in the future.

The announcement stunned the Jewish community, which had not expected such a strongly worded speech, and gained Perón the respect and admiration of Jewish leaders in Argentina and throughout the world. “In this crucial hour for the Jewish community,” wrote the editors of *Mundo Israelita*, “when in its own bosom it has discovered traitors and turncoats, the encouraging words of general Perón fill us with rejoicing and deserve our gratitude.”<sup>84</sup> According to *Di Presse*, Perón’s words had won him broad acclaim in the Jewish world and especially in Israel, where the government “expressed the maximum enthusiasm for the words of our President.”<sup>85</sup> His stand also improved his image among Jews in the United States, and was likely related to a larger effort to effect a rapprochement in U.S.-Argentine relations at the time.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, after conferring with the Argentine ambassador in Washington D.C. in March 1953, Maurice Perlzweig of the WJC reported that this was the Argentine President’s most probable motive.<sup>87</sup> The declaration also appears to have gained Perón important political concessions closer to home from Argentine-Jewish communal leaders. When Perón traveled to Chile in February 1953 to promote closer economic relations between the two countries, he was accompanied by Moisés Goldman, who lobbied Chilean Jewish leaders to support the effort.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, according to Máximo Yagupsky, when Perón subsequently decided to begin a crackdown against the larger Argentine Communist Party, including

its Jewish contingent, less than one year later, he met with leaders of the DAIA and other Jewish organizations to inform them of his intentions, and to ask that they refrain from protesting the measures taken against the Jewish Communists.<sup>89</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF THE COMMUNITY: ARGENTINE-JEWISH POLITICS, 1953-1955.

Thus, by early 1953, previous tensions between Zionists and Progressive Jews over the orientation of Argentine-Jewish communal politics had erupted into open hostility, ultimately producing a schism would continue through the final two years of Perón's administration. Yet, while Progressive organizations and schools remained effectively banned from the mainstream of Jewish life and denied access to communal funding as a result of the DAIA declaration of December 1952, large numbers of Progressives continued to remain as members of various communal institutions, including the AMIA. And, as the elections to the AMIA neared in October 1953, it became apparent that they were digging in for a tough and bitter fight. At stake was the presidency of the institution, and more than that, the Progressives hoped to use the elections as a kind of referendum on the legitimacy of the draconian expulsion measures. In their election propaganda, they stressed the need for unity, harmony, and democracy in the community. "The Popular Democratic Committee," claimed their advertisements, "is for reestablishing the normal harmony of our community and abolishing all forms of discrimination."<sup>90</sup> In addition, the Progressives called for the reintegration of the ir schools within the Va'ad Hajinuj and a renewed access to communal funding. Like the Progressives, the Zionists too spoke of democracy and unity in their advertisements.

According to their official platform, they swore to “assure the democratic character of the institution and its national popular Jewish content.” In addition, they promised to “see to the unity of the community which enables it to fight for the existence, security, and continuation of the Jewish people.”<sup>91</sup> However, not all Zionists were in agreement with the leadership. Both the right-wing Orthodox Mizrahi party and the leftist Hashomer Hatzair broke ranks with the coalition and refused to endorse the national list. In particular, the Hashomer Hatzair was one of the most outspoken critics of the expulsion of the Progressives from the DAIA and had faced discrimination as a result of its position.

Perhaps as a result of this fractious Zionist unity, the Progressives scored a major propaganda victory in the elections of 1953. Although they were still defeated by a margin of 8,576 to 4,970 votes, they increased their total number of votes by more than a thousand from the previous year and their percentage of the electorate from 34% to 37%. According to *Tribuna* the Progressives were “triumphant in defeat,” and a series of cartoons in the paper depicted them as destroying the supposedly unified forces of the Zionist parties with a blow of 5,000 votes.<sup>92</sup> The Zionists were less enthusiastic. The editors of *Mundo Israelita* expressed their shock that those who “have a thousand times betrayed their own people, culminating with their approval of the anti-Semitic trials of Prague,” should be able to win the support of nearly 5,000 members of the community after all that had occurred. Another commentator in *Di Idische Tsaytung* simply asked his readers, “Are you satisfied with the results of the elections in the kehilla?”<sup>93</sup> Yet, perhaps the observations of the Bund following the elections were the most astute in attempting to explain the outcome. “It would be wrong to consider the nearly five thousand votes of

the list # 2,” claimed an editorial in *Undzer Gedank*, “as those of the leftist followers. A great part of the said votes have nothing to do with the “progressives.” [They stem from] the will to express protest against the Zionist majority which has already managed our kehilla for years, and has indirectly pushed many into the ranks of the “progressives.”<sup>94</sup>

Emboldened by their strong showing in the AMIA, the Progressives next challenged the Zionists for control over the Hebraica in its elections for vice-president less than a month later. In particular, they hoped that a victory in the Hebraica would force Zionist leaders to heed their demands to rescind their excommunication. Calling themselves the “Unity Movement,” the Progressives accused the current administrators of Hebraica of discriminating against them by blindly adhering the institution to the DAIA decree of December 4, 1952 without first “sounding out the sentiment of its members.”<sup>95</sup> “A simple and direct analysis,” they claimed, “reveals to us that the Hebraica is dominated by an exclusivist tendency that supports a discriminatory politics, rejecting the participation of other sectors of the membership which are active in the institution.” In place of this behavior, Progressives argued that as a cultural institution, the Hebraica should remain strictly neutral in the ongoing political struggles of the community and the nation. More importantly, the SHA should immediately revoke its tacit support for the discriminatory politics of the DAIA by withdrawing its resolution in favor of the December 4<sup>th</sup> declaration.

As in the last contested election in 1949, the Progressives faced off against a Zionist group comprised mainly of “integrationist” Jews, many of whom were also strong supporters of the IJA. In fact, the Zionists chose as their candidate for vice-president none other than Máximo Yagupsky, the official delegate of the American Jewish

Committee in Buenos Aires, and the man who had spearheaded the formation of the IJA in opposition to the DAIA in June 1948. Since then, however, the political tenor of the Jewish street had changed considerably, and old divisions between the IJA and the DAIA now seemed less significant than the larger rift between the Zionists and Progressives. In fact, Yagupsky only accepted the candidacy under the condition that he receive “the full moral support” of the DAIA and all major Zionist organizations. Even *Mundo Israelita*, the long-time enemy of the IJA and the AJC, called upon its readers to support the “united front against the Communists,” led by Yagupsky.<sup>96</sup> In the end, Yagupsky defeated his Communist rival by a substantial margin. The victory was an important boost to Zionists after their relative setback in the AMIA a month before. In addition, it was a notable accomplishment for the IJA camp in general, dispelling old myths about their questionable Zionist convictions. “Now we can categorically state,” Yagupsky wrote to his superiors in New York, “that we directly control one of the most important [Jewish] institutions in Latin America.”<sup>97</sup>

These events of late 1953 and early 1954 took place against a backdrop of increasing state repression against Communist institutions in the country, including those of the Jewish Communists. Perón’s moves against the Communist Party came as part of a larger crackdown on political opponents in the wake of a bomb explosion during a Peronist rally in April 1953. As early as June 1953, agents of the Federal Police closed the offices of *Tribuna*, and in November, police intervened against a number of Progressive Jewish institutions, including the Jewish Folks Theater (IFT), closing them down indefinitely.<sup>98</sup> Using a 1939 law banning the use of Yiddish in public acts as a pretext, municipal authorities refused to issue the necessary permits which would allow

the organizations to operate. In addition, they arrested several prominent Jewish Communist leaders, including Tobias Herschauge, treasurer of the Idisher Cultur Farband, and Samuel Shmerkin, the legal representative for *Tribuna*.<sup>99</sup> The Progressives appealed to the community for help. However, the DAIA and other Jewish organizations, declined to protest against the actions, claiming that as a result of their rejection of the of December 4, 1952 resolution, the Progressives had been “excluded from the DAIA,” and were no longer members of the Jewish community.<sup>100</sup> In response to such indifference, the editors of *Tribuna* accused community leaders of behaving like a “Judenrat,” and of “encouraging the intervention against Progressive Jewish institutions and the subsequent imprisonment of their most prestigious leaders.”<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, they argued,

Each time the directors of these democratic institutions confront the complicated tangle of regulations required for police authorization of a determined social activity, the functionaries of the state ask the opinion of the DAIA before acceding to them. In consequence, a strong understanding is clearly visible between the supposed representatives of Judaism and the executors of state repression. This had its proper name in the times of the ghetto under Gestapo occupation, and here it continues.<sup>102</sup>

Among other things, they claimed this state sponsored repression worked to the benefit of Zionist leaders within the community by impeding the ability of the Progressives to communicate their ideas openly and effectively within the community. In April 1954, for example, municipal authorities in the Federal Capital prevented Communist Jews from staging an event in commemoration of the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising while a larger DAIA ceremony held at the same time, which included Israeli ambassador Arie Kubovy on the speaking agenda, proceeded without difficulty.<sup>103</sup>

Although DAIA leaders flatly denied any link between their actions and those of the Peronist state, evidence from the archives of the World Jewish Congress suggests that

communal leaders were eager to distance themselves from their Communist counterparts as state repression against them increased, and to diminish the influence of Progressives within communal institutions. In a dispatch dated October 27, 1954, the WJC's Argentine representative, Marc Turkow, commented on the crucial importance of the AMIA elections of 1954. "There is no danger that the Communists list should win," he wrote, "what counts is the number of votes they should receive. The fear is that the national block might win the elections with an absolute number of votes, but that the left with very good organization and active campaigning can get in their votes that would put the community in an uncomfortable place with the regime." Furthermore, he stressed the direct involvement of the DAIA in the election campaign, a first in AMIA politics, and a factor which he deemed of "great importance."<sup>104</sup>

In the face of such explosive charges, Zionist leaders took great care to cultivate positive relations among their various factions and even with the non-Zionist Bund as the elections to AMIA approached in November of 1954. In particular, they hoped to avoid the embarrassing situation which had occurred in the previous year as a result of weak nationalist unity. In their campaign propaganda, they argued that enforcement of the ban against Progressives was the only way to guarantee the safety of the community against those would align it with the Soviet Union and against the Peronist state. According to *Mundo Israelita*, the Progressives were dangerous "red missionaries of assimilation and unconditional agents of Moscow," who hid behind the façade of peace, solidarity, and democratization in communal politics.<sup>105</sup> An ad in *Di Idische Tsaytung* warned against the "conquest of the kehilla by anti-Jewish forces."<sup>106</sup> "Remember," claimed another, "that the elections of the kehilla demonstrate how many Jews are for a healthy national Jewish

life... Do not let our community be identified with the Progressives who hide themselves behind various masks.”<sup>107</sup> For their part, the Progressives railed against the ongoing excommunication against them, calling for reestablishment of harmonious relations within the community, the re-incorporation of Progressive schools into the Va’ad Hajinuj, and the immediate realization of proportional elections in the AMIA which would allow them a substantial representation in the directive council of the institution.<sup>108</sup>

Yet, despite the militancy of the Progressive campaign, the election results showed that the Jewish street was still very much behind the Zionists, who won a total of 8,083 votes against 3,787 for their Progressive rivals.<sup>109</sup> Although both sides had declined from their 1953 showings, the Progressives lost more, dropping by over 1,200 from their 1953 total. Moreover, the Progressives had been defeated in every single barrio of the capital except one.<sup>110</sup> Perhaps more importantly, though, none of the major Zionist parties broke ranks with the leadership as had been the case in the previous election. Following the publication of the numbers in the Jewish press, the Zionists were quick to claim victory. In their analysis of the results, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* argued that, “If the election leaves much to be desired from the point of view of participation, its result is more satisfactory in that it reveals a notable progress of the Jewish consciousness among those who did vote.”<sup>111</sup>

Low turnout was not the case in the AMIA elections of 1955. In October of that year, a record number of AMIA members went to the polls in the first communal election following the overthrow of the Peronist regime in September. In the wake of the “Liberating Revolution” and the end of Peronist repression, both sides argued for a democratization of the AMIA through badly needed electoral reform and the

implementation of proportional elections. However, for the Zionists, “Loyalty to the Jewish people,” “loyalty to the state of Israel,” and the maintenance of the “national discipline of the community,” were leading issues on the agenda.<sup>112</sup> As for the Progressives, popular mobilization against the growing danger of anti-Semitism, against the rearmament of West Germany, and for the establishment of a “friendly coexistence in our community,” constituted the top three items of their program.<sup>113</sup> In addition, a third group of unaligned and traditionalist Jews ran their own slate of candidates with a Zionist platform, but protesting against the continuing domination of directive offices by the various Zionist political parties.<sup>114</sup> The elections were an enormous triumph for the Zionist list. Out of a total of 16,562 votes cast, the Zionists received some 10,172, constituting over 62% of the total electorate. Against them, the Progressives received some 4,638 while the proponents of the third list gained only 1,648.<sup>115</sup> In the wake of the elections, the Progressives attempted to claim victory, asserting the majority of AMIA members who did not vote at all in the elections, “were neither moved nor convinced by the propaganda of the ‘national’ program.”<sup>116</sup> Such efforts at juxtaposition, however, remained feeble in the face of the actual numbers. The conquest of the kehilla by the Zionists was now complete.

This trend was borne out in the subsequent election of 1957. Given a clear mandate by the voters, and in the absence of pressure from above through the OIA and the Peronist state, the Zionist directors of the AMIA finally agreed to reform the statutes of the organization in the general assembly of 1956, officially introducing an electoral system based upon proportional representation. Under the new rules, each individual party was free to offer its own list of candidates and political program and would receive

a number of delegates to the AMIA's new assembly in direct proportion to the number of votes it gained. The first election under the new system was carried out in the fall of 1957 and represented a great victory for Zionists. For one, liberated from the coalition politics of previous years, the political views of the Jewish street were represented by an abundance of parties and agendas which reflected a changing Jewish political landscape, with Israeli politics, and not the Diaspora as its inspiration. No less than eight different Zionist parties went to the polls in 1957, and together received just over 78% of the total votes cast. Mapai alone (previously Poale Zion) accounted for fully one-third of the total. Moreover, given the variety of new options for dissenting votes, a larger number of AMIA members bolted from the Jewish Communists, voting instead for party of their choice. Although the total number of votes cast in 1957 increased by over 1,500, the number received by the Communists fell to just 2,886 (16%). Following the disappointing results of 1957, the Communists refrained from participating at all in subsequent AMIA elections.<sup>117</sup>

#### CONCLUSION: THE INTERNAL DIMENSIONS OF ARGENTINE-JEWISH POLITICS DURING THE PERONIST ERA

Thus, by 1955, the internal politics of the Jewish community had undergone a profound transformation from the earlier European political system of the immigrant generation to one inspired largely by Zionism and Israeli politics. The older non-Zionist parties of the Jewish left either lost support or remained marginal in communal elections thereafter. In their place, a diversity of new Zionist parties appeared, freed from the constraints of nationalist unity after 1955. Yet, although this "conquest of the

community” in many ways paralleled the larger triumph of Zionism in the Jewish world after World War II, the peculiarities of communal politics in Argentina served to delay it for nearly a decade in what became an extremely intense and divisive struggle. Owing to the pressure created by monumental events both at home and abroad, as well as the unusual vitality of the Yiddish-speaking non-Zionist left in Argentina, between 1945 and 1948, left-wing Zionist parties such as Poale Zion actually found themselves in alliance with non-Zionists against their center and right-wing Zionist counterparts. Because the non-Zionist left at this time stood firmly behind the effort to create a Jewish state in Palestine, the issue of Zionism remained secondary to struggles within the Zionist camp itself.

It was only with the turn of the Soviet Union against the state of Israel in 1948, as a result of its growing “Cold War” against the United States, that the defense of Zionism itself became paramount, uniting all the various factions of the Zionist movement in Argentina together against their anti-Zionist Progressive counterparts. Faced with the persistently strong showing of the Progressives in communal elections, Zionist leaders engaged in an increasingly bitter campaign to win the hearts and minds of the Jewish masses. Ultimately, this campaign resulted in a massive schism, when in the aftermath of the Prague Trials of 1952, Progressive institutions were effectively excommunicated from the mainstream Jewish community and denied all access to common communal funds. With the draconian expulsion of the Progressives then, the Zionists made it powerfully clear that in their conception, unity and democratization within Argentine-Jewish communal life only extended to those sectors of the community that supported the fundamental principles of Jewish nationalist identity. For the most part, the Jewish street

supported this position. Although the Progressives made significant inroads against the Zionists in the AMIA elections of 1953 as a result of widespread discontent with the leadership, the elections of 1954 and 1955 provided a much clearer mandate for the Zionists, and signaled their ultimate victory over the anti-Zionist forces of the Jewish left.

Despite the fact that the internal politics of the community and its primary institutions clearly constituted a distinct arena from the external national scene, motivated as it was by issues and events that affected the larger Jewish world, the two domains were also undeniably intertwined. For one, the pressures on the community for unity in the face of an encroaching Peronist state prior to 1952 were a contributing factor in the reconciliation among Zionists following the rift that emerged over the IJA in late 1948 and in their ensuing alliance against the Progressives in 1949. Just three years later, following the shift away from cooptation by Perón and the OIA in early 1952, the state became involved again, this time as an increasing ally of the Zionists in their struggle against the Communists. When Progressives accused the DAIA of acting against the interests of the Argentine people in condemning the anti-Semitic Prague Trials, Perón himself issued a strongly worded speech in favor of the DAIA and the Zionist cause in general. In fact, with his speech to Jewish communal leaders on January 27, 1953, he won the accolades of Jews throughout the world and paved the way for an increasingly harmonious relationship between the local Jewish community and the state. Among other things, this new relationship provided the backdrop for Perón's crackdown against the Argentine Communist Party after 1953. When authorities from the Federal Polices intervened against Progressive Jewish institutions and arrested a number of prominent Jewish Communist leaders, the DAIA and other Jewish organizations remained silent on

the basis that the actions were not motivated by anti-Semitic intent and that they no longer considered Progressive Jews to be a part of the larger Jewish community.

Because of this, politics within the Jewish community remained deeply divided during the second term of Perón's administration from 1952 to 1955. On the one hand, the Zionist majority, led by Moisés Goldman, Ricardo Dubrovksy, and other leaders in the DAIA and the AMIA, would develop an increasingly cordial and cooperative relationship with the Peronist state. On the other hand, members of the Argentina's Progressive Jewish community, now isolated on the Jewish street, would undertake a sustained opposition against both the DAIA and the government as part of the larger struggle between Communists and the Peronist state. The stage had thus been set for the final act in the drama of Jewish politics under Perón.

## ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 145.
- <sup>2</sup> See Sylvia Schenkolewski-Kroll, “La conquista de las comunidades: el movimiento sionista y la comunidad Ashkenazi de Buenos Aires (1935-1949),” *Judaica Latinoamericana*. II (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992), 197.
- <sup>3</sup> See the platforms of both campaigns in *Di Presse* (DP) 22 Dec. 1945.
- <sup>4</sup> See the platform of the “White List,” DP 21 Dec. 1946, 5.
- <sup>5</sup> See the platform of the “Blue List,” DP 21 Dec. 1946, 5; and *Di Idische Tsaytung* (IT) 20 Dec. 1946, 4.
- <sup>6</sup> See the results of the election in *Mundo Israelita* (MI) 4 Jan. 1947, 7.
- <sup>7</sup> MI 4 Jan. 1947, 3.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>9</sup> MI 8 Mar. 1947, 3.
- <sup>10</sup> MI 5 Apr. 1947, 3.
- <sup>11</sup> For more on this, refer to MI 6 Sep. 1947, 7.
- <sup>12</sup> DP 4 Sep. 1947, 6. The term Cheva Kadisha refers to the traditional Jewish burial society from which the AMIA had its origins.
- <sup>13</sup> MI 6 Sep. 1947, 6.
- <sup>14</sup> DP 22 Dec. 1947, 3
- <sup>15</sup> DP 20 Dec. 1947, 5. See also MI 20 Dec. 1947, 6.
- <sup>16</sup> DP 25 Dec. 1947, 4.
- <sup>17</sup> Refer to the ad for the campaign in MI 29 May 1948, 5.
- <sup>18</sup> See Jacob Hellman’s letter to R. Marcus and I. Schwartzbart of the WJC, dated December 6, 1948. WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H25/16. See also Máximo Yagupsky’s letter to Dr. Segal of the American Jewish Committee, dated January 14, 1949, in the files of the AJC, YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.
- <sup>19</sup> See the ad for the “Blue List,” IT 22 Dec. 1948, 3.
- <sup>20</sup> IT 22 Dec. 1948, 6.
- <sup>21</sup> IT 23 Dec. 1948, 5.
- <sup>22</sup> MI 25 Dec. 1948, 3.
- <sup>23</sup> See MI 1 Jan. 1949, 4; IT 27 Dec. 1948, 4; DP 27 Dec. 1948, 3.

- 
- <sup>24</sup> For more on this see, Nicholas Rapoport, *Stalin's War Against the Jews*, (New York: The Free Press, 1990), especially Chapter 7. See also Peter Brod, "Soviet-Israeli Relations 1948-1956: from Courtship to Crisis," in Robert Wistrich, ed. *The Left Against Zion*, (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1979).; and Jonathan Frankel, "The Soviet Regime and Anti-Zionism: An Analysis." In Ezra Mendelsohn, ed. *The Essential Papers on Jews and the Left*, (New York: New York University Press, 1997).
- <sup>25</sup> IT 3 Apr. 1949, 6.
- <sup>26</sup> IT 30 Jun. 1949, 1.
- <sup>27</sup> MI 12 Mar. 1949, 3.
- <sup>28</sup> See Hellman's letter to Dr. Schwartzbart, 4 Jul. 1949, in the Files of the WJC, H25/16.
- <sup>29</sup> See "Undzer vort tzum kumindiken fareynikte kampeyn," DP 6 May 1949, 3.
- <sup>30</sup> DP 11 Jun. 1949, 1.
- <sup>31</sup> MI 23 Jul. 1949, 3.
- <sup>32</sup> MI 17 Sep. 1949, 3.
- <sup>33</sup> See their commentary in *Nueva Sión*, 15 Jul. 1949, 3.
- <sup>34</sup> See the "Declaratsie fun der DAIA in sheyches mitn fareyniktn kampeyn 1949," in IT 4 Jun. 1949, 5.
- <sup>35</sup> The resolution appears in *Mundo Israelita* 26 Nov. 1949, 2.
- <sup>36</sup> See the memorandum from Yagupsky to Dr. Saul Segal of the AJC in the files of the AJC, YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.
- <sup>37</sup> See the minutes of the Plenary Session of 1 Sep. 1949, in the SHA's *Libros de Actas*, 1947-1949.
- <sup>38</sup> For the results, see DP 17 Nov. 1949, 3.
- <sup>39</sup> SHA *Libros de Actas*, 1947-1949, 20 Nov. 1949.
- <sup>40</sup> For more on this, see Schenkolewski, "La conquista de las comunidades." See also the announcement of the formation of the kehilla in MI 16 Apr. 1949, 2.
- <sup>41</sup> See their platform in IT 16 Dec. 1949, 8.
- <sup>42</sup> See the platform of the "Blue List," in DP 17 Dec. 1949, 10.
- <sup>43</sup> See the ad for the "White List," IT 15 Dec. 1949, 8.
- <sup>44</sup> MI 10 Dec. 1949, 3.
- <sup>45</sup> IT 18 Dec. 1949, 8.
- <sup>46</sup> IT 19 Dec. 1949, 4; DP 19 Dec. 1949, 1; MI 24 Dec. 1949, 8.

- 
- <sup>47</sup> IT 20 Dec. 1949, 4.
- <sup>48</sup> MI 24 Dec. 1949, 3.
- <sup>49</sup> *Nueva Sión* 23 Dec. 1949, 3.
- <sup>50</sup> MI 29 Jul. 1950, 7.
- <sup>51</sup> MI 17 Jun. 1950, 3.
- <sup>52</sup> See the editorial, “El idish, efecto y no causa de la supervivencia judía,” MI 5 May 1951, 3.
- <sup>53</sup> See MI 21 may 1949, 3.
- <sup>54</sup> IT 26 Oct. 1951, 7.
- <sup>55</sup> IT 26 Oct. 1951, 8.
- <sup>56</sup> MI 5 Nov. 1951, 5.
- <sup>57</sup> MI 5 Nov. 1951, 3.
- <sup>58</sup> IT 12 Nov. 1952, 3.
- <sup>59</sup> IT 12 Nov. 1952, 6.
- <sup>60</sup> MI 15 Nov. 1952, 9.
- <sup>61</sup> See IT 16 Oct. 1952, 6. See also the Bund’s analysis of the election in *Under Gedank*, Nov. 1952, 1.
- <sup>62</sup> MI 22 Nov. 1952, 3.
- <sup>63</sup> *Tribuna* 20 Nov. 1952, 12.
- <sup>64</sup> For more on their arrest and trial, see Rapoport 140.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid* 143.
- <sup>66</sup> IT 26 Nov. 1952, 4.
- <sup>67</sup> DP 19 Dec. 1952, 4; MI 6 Dec. 1952, 2.
- <sup>68</sup> See the article by Rubén Sinay in *Tribuna*, 4 Dec. 1952, 11.
- <sup>69</sup> See the *Actas Asamblea* of the DAIA, 4 Dec. 1952.
- <sup>70</sup> See the text of the resolution in the minutes of the *Actas Asambleas*, 4 Dec. 1952.
- <sup>71</sup> *Actas Asambleas*, 4 Dec. 1952.
- <sup>72</sup> See “Bildlakh fun der general farzamlung fun der DAIA,” by P. Niemoi, IT 8 Dec. 1952, 5.
- <sup>73</sup> See *Undzer Gedank*, Jan-Feb. 1953.

---

<sup>74</sup> See Luis Goldman, “La DAIA por el camino de su descomposición,” *Tribuna* 11 Dec. 1952, 12.

<sup>75</sup> See the text of the resolution in MI 20 Dec. 1952, 2.

<sup>76</sup> See the minutes of the Hebraica from 23 Dec, 1952, which resolved to support the decree.

<sup>77</sup> IT 12 Feb. 1953, 6. MI 14 Feb. 1953, 5.

<sup>78</sup> MI 10 Jan. 1953, 2. IT 6 Jan. 1953, 2. 35 non-Progressive schools had earlier broken all ties with the Progressives on December 18, 1952. IT 19 Dec. 1952, 4. For more on conflicts over Jewish education during this time, see Efraim Zadoff, *Historia de la educación judía en Buenos Aires (1935-1957)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Milá, 1994).

<sup>79</sup> *Tribuna* 27 Nov. 1952, 12.

<sup>80</sup> *Tribuna* 2 Jan. 1953, 2.

<sup>81</sup> MI 24 Jan 1953, 5. This announcement appears in Yiddish in IT 23 Jan. 1953, 4.

<sup>82</sup> *Tribuna* 29 Jan. 1953, 12.

<sup>83</sup> The text of Perón’s speech is contained in *El pensamiento del presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío* (Buenos Aires: DAIA, 1954), 31. See also the correspondence from the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires, which reports on the meeting. Refer to Nufer’s telegram to the Department of State, 28 Jan. 1953, National Archives (NA), College Park, MD, RG 59, 835.413/1-2853. See also the dispatch from Robert Martindale, 29 Jan. 1953, NA, RG 59, 835.413/1-2953, which provides a detailed account of his discussions with Mr. Tuvia Arazi or the Israeli legation in Buenos Aires regarding the meeting and corresponding events in the Jewish community. According to the press release provided in Martindale’s dispatch, the Jewish delegation also included former IJA founder Simon Mirelman. Dubrovsky’s absence as president of the DAIA was due to the fact that he was in London at the time to participate in a meeting of the Jewish Colonization Association. See DP 11 Jan. 1953, 4, which reports his departure. For more on the subject of Argentine-Soviet relations during the Peronist era, see Mario Rapoport, “Argentina and the Soviet Union: History of Political and Commercial Relations (1917-1955),” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 66 (1986): 239-285; and Aldo César Vacs, *Discreet Partners: Argentina and the USSR since 1917*, Trans. Michael Joyce (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984). For more on the history of Communism in Argentina more generally, refer to Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *Breve historia de las izquierdas en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, S.A., 1990).

<sup>84</sup> MI 31 Jan. 1953, 3.

<sup>85</sup> DP 31 Jan. 1953, 4.

<sup>86</sup> According to U.S. Ambassador Albert Nufer, Perón was pleased when Nufer told him of the favorable reaction his statement received in the U.S. See Nufer’s dispatch to the Department of State, 5 Feb. 1953, NA, RG 59, 611.35/2-553.

<sup>87</sup> See Perlzweig’s letter to Dr. Karbach, 17 Mar. 1953. AJA, MS COL 361, H27/13.

<sup>88</sup> See the letter from Máximo Yagupsky to Dr. Segal of the AJC, 3 July 1953. American Jewish Committee Files, YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky. See also MI 28 Feb. 1953, 1, which reports Goldman’s presence in Chile with Perón.

- 
- <sup>89</sup> See Yagupsky's letter to Dr. Segal dated 31 May 1954. AJC Files, Yagupsky. See also the memorandum from Maurice Perlzweig to the Political Department of the World Jewish Congress, 29 Jun. 1955, which mentions the meeting as well. WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H28/8. According to Yagupsky, Perón even asked DAIA leaders to present a list of prominent Jewish Communists to the police, though they apparently refused this request.
- <sup>90</sup> See the leaflet in the files of the YIVO Archives, Buenos Aires, Ser. 2101, "kehila." Spanish spelling.
- <sup>91</sup> See the platform of the United National Committee in IT 22 Oct. 1953, 3.
- <sup>92</sup> *Tribuna* 29 Oct. 1953, 11-12,
- <sup>93</sup> IT 27 Oct. 1953, 5
- <sup>94</sup> *Undzer Gedank* 15 Nov. 1953, 5.
- <sup>95</sup> See "La próxima renovación de autoridades en la Hebraica," *Tribuna* 5 Nov. 1953, 11.
- <sup>96</sup> MI 7 Nov. 1953, 3
- <sup>97</sup> See his letter to Dr. Segal, 17 Nov. 1953. AJC Files, YIVO NY, Yagupsky.
- <sup>98</sup> See *Tribuna* 25 Jun. 1953, 11; 2 Jul. 1953, 12; 7 Jan. 1954, 12; and 14 Jan. 1954, 12.
- <sup>99</sup> See *Tribuna* 29 Jun. 1954, 11; 5 Aug. 1954, 12; and 30 Sep. 1954, 12. Herschauge, in fact, prior to his arrest was listed as one of the Progressive candidates for the AMIA elections in 1953. See *Tribuna* 22 Oct. 1953, 23.
- <sup>100</sup> See the DAIA's response to a petition from the Idisher Cultur Farband in MI 19 Jun. 1954, 4.
- <sup>101</sup> See the editorial, "El Judenrat actua," in *Tribuna* 12 Nov. 1953, 12.
- <sup>102</sup> *Tribuna* 11 Nov. 1954, 11.
- <sup>103</sup> See *Tribuna* 22 Apr. 1954, 12; IT 29 Apr. 1954, 4; and IT 2 May 1954, 4. See also the comments in *Tribuna* 6 May 1954, 10, regarding the DAIA event. The presence of the Israeli ambassador at such an event was not coincidental. According to Raanan Rein, the Israeli embassy was quite active in facilitating the isolation of the Progressives from Jewish communal life in Argentina. See Rein, 192, n.55. See also Joseph (Jorge) Goldstein, *The Influence of the State of Israel and the Jewish Agency on Community Life in Argentina and Uruguay Between 1948-1958* [Hebrew] (Ph.D Dissertation: Hebrew University, 1993).
- <sup>104</sup> See the letter from Marc Turkow to Dr. Shwartzbart of the WJC in New York in Yiddish, 27 Oct. 1954, AJA, MS COL 361, H29/1.
- <sup>105</sup> See the editorials, "Los progresistas y su exclusión de la comunidad," MI 4 Sep. 1954, 3; and "Unidad judía contra las fuerzas negativas," MI 23 Oct. 1953, 3.
- <sup>106</sup> IT 27 Oct. 1954, 3.
- <sup>107</sup> IT 29 Oct. 1954, 3.
- <sup>108</sup> *Tribuna* 21 Oct. 1954, 12.

---

<sup>109</sup> IT 1 Nov. 1954, 1.

<sup>110</sup> The lone exception was Villa Lynch, which was a long-time stronghold of Progressive supporters. See the breakdown of election returns by neighborhood in IT 1 Nov. 1954, 1.

<sup>111</sup> MI 6 Nov. 1954, 3.

<sup>112</sup> See the platform of the National Democratic Block. IT 18 Oct. 1955, 5. MI 15 Oct. 1955, 4.

<sup>113</sup> See *Tribuna* 6 Oct. 1955, 11; and IT 9 Oct. 1955, 6.

<sup>114</sup> Among other things, the non-Zionist Orthodox leaders of the Agudas Yisroel were upset over their lack of input in the managing of the community's cemeteries. See the letter from Marc Turkow to I. Shwartzbart of the WJC regarding the dispute in the files of the WJC, 27 Oct. 1955, AJA MS COL 361, H29/14.

<sup>115</sup> See the results in IT 31 Oct. 1955, 1.

<sup>116</sup> *Tribuna* 3 Nov. 1955, 12.

<sup>117</sup> For more on the results, see Haim Avni, "Argentine Jewry: Its Social Position and Organization," Part II, *Dispersion and Unity* 13/14 (1971): 164-165.

## CHAPTER 6

### A COMMUNITY COMPROMISED? ARGENTINE JEWRY AND THE PERONIST STATE, 1952-1955.

*I must acknowledge one more time the immense kindness with which the Jewish collective of Argentina has overwhelmed me. It is for me, on each one of these occasions, a great bond that I engrave upon my heart... – Juan Perón, November 6, 1953.*

Unlike his first term as President, Perón's second term was distinguished by a mounting political, economic, and social crisis. In particular, the vast success of Argentina's export economy in the wake of the Second World War vanished as Europe recovered from its wartime destruction, depriving the country of badly needed capital for redistribution and industrial development. Inflation rose as result of heavy government spending, and the national economy began to stagnate. In his Second Five Year Plan, Perón reversed a number of his earlier policies, favoring agriculture over the urban sector, courting foreign investment, and enacting strict wage freezes on Argentine workers in an effort to reduce domestic consumption of valuable meat exports. Further exacerbating the crisis, on July 26, 1952, barely two months into Perón's second term, his wife and political partner, Evita, died after a lengthy struggle with ovarian cancer. With her death, the country experienced a profound sense of sadness, and Perón lost his most valuable connection to the working classes who comprised the most important element of his popular support.

Without Evita's charismatic link to the people, the regime became increasingly repressive. Propaganda was stepped up, opposition newspapers were censored or banned, and political enemies were arrested, often on trumped up charges. One of Perón's first moves came against Argentina's Communist Party, which he suspected of infiltrating his base of support within the labor movement. Over the course of 1953, hundreds of Communist leaders were arrested, institutions shut down, and political activities of all kinds suppressed in what one observer described as a "war of nerves."<sup>1</sup> Then, in July 1954, Perón turned against the Catholic Church as well, accusing Church leaders of fomenting popular unrest against him by attempting to form an opposition party. In December 1954, he began a formal effort to separate Church and state in Argentina, denying Church schools access to state funding and legalizing divorce and prostitution. Such measures, however, only produced an even greater reaction among Church leaders and their supporters. On June 11, 1955, over 100,000 people gathered at the national cathedral adjacent to the Plaza de Mayo in celebration of the holiday of Corpus Christi and to show their defiance of the regime. The following day, groups of Peronist supporters rallied outside the cathedral and engaged in street fights against its Catholic defenders. In a radio address on June 13, Perón warned of harsh consequences against the Church if similar disturbances continued. Partially in response this, on June 16, 1955, members of the Argentine Air Force attempted a failed a coup against the President by bombing the government palace. Although the June coup failed, the government was severely destabilized. For the next three months it vacillated between policies of reconciliation and outright suppression of political dissent. Finally, on September 16, a

second coup swept Perón from power, and a military regime assumed control over the country in what it called the “Liberating Revolution.”

All of this had important consequences for the ongoing relationship between the Argentine-Jewish community and the state. For one, it created an atmosphere of increased political tension, in which the state exerted enormous pressures on communal leaders to conform to the politics of repression or risk becoming its next victims. Previous hopes of remaining completely neutral before the national political environment simply proved to be impossible. In addition, the difficult political and economic climate forced Perón to seek new allies abroad. In particular, he moved increasingly close to the United States during his final years in office as a means of securing outside capital to shore up Argentina’s flagging economy. In this respect, the Jewish community became the beneficiary of a complicated triangular relationship between Argentina, Israel, and the United States, in which the President used pro-Israel comments and gestures to generate support among the local Jewish community, which in turn he hoped would improve his image in the eyes of North American political leaders. One of the interesting ironies of this situation was that as Perón’s popularity declined nationwide throughout his second term, his popularity among the Jewish community actually appears to have increased. This is not to say that Jews abandoned their old political ties and decided to become loyal Peronists. Rather, the Jewish community began to show Perón an increasing amount of warmth, appreciation, and reciprocity for his various acts of benevolence.

Four factors in particular, greatly influenced the improvement of relations between the community and the regime. The first was the Peronist regime’s ability to inspire confidence within the community by effectively reducing the amount of anti-

Semitism in the country. The second was Perón's consistent support for the state of Israel and the Zionist movement more generally, which he manifested in a number of speeches and symbolic gestures, often during visits by prominent Israeli officials. Third, in June 1952, Perón consented to a sweeping overhaul of the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA), appointing a known Zionist, Ezequiel Zabolinsky, as its new president, and shifting its posture towards the Jewish community from one of competition to one of cooperation. Under Zabolinsky, the OIA would work closely with Jewish leaders in the DAIA and other institutions on matters pertaining to Jewish immigration, Zionism, and anti-Semitism, leaving behind the climate of intimidation and corruption that had characterized much of the previous six years. Finally, the fourth factor involved the appearance of a bizarre new figure in the form of a rabbi named Amram Blum. In his quest for power and prestige, Blum developed a close public relationship with the President, which he used to gain influence within communal institutions, and his actions exerted additional pressure on communal leaders to conform to Peronist politics or face being replaced in official circles by the rabbi himself.

At the same time, the growing level of cooperation between Jewish leaders and the state also produced a significant backlash among those sectors of the community which were less sympathetic towards the regime and which remained more isolated from the principal centers of power within the DAIA and the AMIA. Among them were members of the country's religious Jewish community, who became increasingly resentful of Rabbi Blum's political maneuverings and chafed at his arbitrary control over religious affairs within the AMIA. In addition, many within the country's liberal Jewish sector feared that the DAIA's pragmatic relationship with the Peronist state might

produce a negative backlash as tensions rose between the regime and the Church. Yet, perhaps the most vocal opposition came from the Jewish Communists, or Progressives, who found themselves directly under attack as a result of Perón's crackdown against the Argentine Communist Party, and who accused Zionist leaders within the DAIA of collaborating with the instruments of state repression in order to diminish Communist influence within the community. Finally, with the overthrow of Perón in September 1955, the DAIA itself was forced to confront the consequences of its stance towards the deposed regime. In October 1955, DAIA leaders decided to initiate a thoroughgoing effort to de-Peronize not only the DAIA, but communal life in general. The results of this effort in many respects revealed the rather uncomfortable level of cooperation that had ensued between communal leaders and the state over the previous ten years. The following chapter, then, traces the development of this vastly improved relationship between the Jewish community and the state during Perón's second term, the rise of dissenting views within the Jewish community, and finally the problems faced by the Argentine Jewry after the downfall of the regime in September 1955.

#### A WARMING RELATIONSHIP: PERÓN AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, 1952-1955.

The period from 1952-1955 witnessed the rise of a vastly improved relationship between the Jewish community and the state. In part, this was due to the fact that Jews became more comfortable with Perón and his administration, and no longer feared the potential for state-sponsored anti-Semitism as they did back in 1946. In fact, the President's ability to control the most violent and dangerous manifestations of anti-

Semitism was one of the ironic advantages of his repressive and authoritarian regime. On numerous occasions, Perón spoke out publicly against anti-Semitism and racial discrimination in general, claiming it had no place in a “New Argentina” built upon the productive labor of all its citizens. In March 1950, for example, he proclaimed to a gathering of Jewish leaders, “The Peronist movement is a movement that seeks harmony and intelligence... In this sense, we are realizing a politics of reconciliation and brotherhood among all Argentines. I do not understand, nor will I ever understand, how there can be men who are less Argentine for the fact of practicing another religion or for having come originally from another part of the world.”<sup>2</sup> In November 1953, he further commented,

We believe that patriotism, the only patriotism that can fill the heart of a man, is the love felt and realized for those who share, think, feel, and suffer with him. This implies that we love the community, and within the community, each one of the beings who comprise it. For this reason, we do not conceive of an exclusivist patriotism, or worse of a patriotism of dissociation, of anarchy, of hatreds, or of rejections of any kind within the community.<sup>3</sup>

As noted previously, the Peronist Constitution of 1949 even contained a specific clause which read that “The Argentine nation admits no racial discrimination...”<sup>4</sup> In addition, after 1948, Perón increasingly used the police powers to the state to repress certain anti-Semitic activities. In late 1949, for example, the government closed the offices of the notoriously anti-Semitic Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista’s (ALN) weekly publication, *Alianza*, and similar pressure from the state was likely one of the primary reasons why the ALN publicly disavowed anti-Semitism as a political strategy in its general assembly of January 1954.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, Perón also succeeded in winning himself a considerable amount of Jewish goodwill by cultivating close and cordial ties to the new state of Israel and Zionist movement more generally. In particular, the President often utilized public encounters with Israeli officials as a platform to proclaim his sympathy towards Jewish state and his respect for the local Jewish community. Following his decisive condemnation of Communist anti-Semitism in January 1953, for example, Perón met with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett in April, expressing, “his satisfaction with the fact that in our country there is a numerous Jewish community that works and constructs, and underlined his certainty that the Jewish sentiments are of love for Argentina and for Israel.”<sup>6</sup> In October, he again uttered substantial remarks when he received the credentials of Israel’s new plenipotentiary minister in Argentina, Dr. Arie Kubovy. According to *Di Idische Tsaytung*, Perón spoke with praise, “for the Jewish cooperation in the country and that the community could expect a great future.”<sup>7</sup> In May 1954, Perón used an audience with Israeli Health Minister Josef Serlin to express his satisfaction that, “in our country anti-Semitism has been pulled out by the roots.”<sup>8</sup> A week later, he expounded to Vera Weizman, the widow of Israel’s first President, Chaim Weizman, on the great aptitude of Jewish farmers both in Israel and Argentina.<sup>9</sup> In September 1954, the provincial government of Buenos Aires named a major thoroughfare in the city of Eva Perón (La Plata) after Zionist leader Theodore Hertzl, and in April 1955, in the presence of Israeli Finance Minister Levi Eshkol, Perón’s government dedicated a special forest near Ezeiza international airport in honor of Chaim Weizman.<sup>10</sup> As a result of such gestures, Israeli diplomat Jacob Tsur noted on one occasion that, “The curious identification of the Jews

with Israel is not only a matter of popular choice...but also that of the official treatment in various respects.”<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Perón maintained excellent political and economic ties with the state of Israel. In 1953, he signed an extensive trade agreement with the Jewish state despite the fact that Israel provided few goods that Argentina specifically required. The agreement was in many ways an extension of an earlier treaty signed in 1950. Under the terms of the accord, Argentina provided Israel with such products as meat, wool, powdered milk, and other foodstuffs in exchange for such items as oranges, textiles, perfumes, and artificial teeth.<sup>12</sup> More importantly, Perón also consented to allow money raised by the United Campaign for Israel to be sent to the Jewish state in the form of Argentine products under the rubric of the Eva Perón Foundation. Despite the fact that Argentina was in desperate need of American dollars for foreign exchange, one report from the World Jewish Congress (WJC) noted that, “the President has repeatedly extended favors by giving permission that export goods, ordinarily to be paid for in dollars, may be acquired with the funds of the Campaña (UJA) and shipped to Israel.”<sup>13</sup> According to Ezequiel Zabolinsky, the Foundation even agreed to waive all export fees and shipping costs, provided the material was sent through its ships.<sup>14</sup> In an official dispatch dated from May 1955, the Argentine Foreign Ministry noted the arrival of no less than four ships during the period from June through October of 1954, carrying a variety of items including clothing, foodstuffs, and leather goods.<sup>15</sup> “For the Jews in Argentina,” claimed the WJC, “this is proof that the President’s friendship is expressed in both words and deeds.”<sup>16</sup>

These significant gestures, both against racial discrimination at home and in favor of the Jewish state abroad, clearly succeeded in inspiring a great amount of reciprocity on the part of the Argentine-Jewish community. Under the direction of Ricardo Dubrovsky, the DAIA worked closely with the state in order to obtain important concessions on matters pertaining to Israel, Zionism, and local Jewish concerns. Among other things, the DAIA assiduously avoided generating undue publicity over various minor acts of anti-Semitism that continued to occur in the country despite the efforts of the regime to suppress them. In addition, it agreed not to respond when the regime began its crackdown against the Argentine Communist Party, which included a sizeable number of Jews.<sup>17</sup> Finally, the DAIA also actively participated in a number of public ceremonies and other acts to honor the President and express the community's satisfaction with his official policies towards the Jewish state and the community more generally.

In September 1953, The Argentine section of the Jewish National Fund formally inscribed Perón into its "Book of Gold."<sup>18</sup> Shortly thereafter, on November 6, 1953, community leaders organized a massive banquet for Perón in the prestigious salon of Les Ambassadeurs to present him with the award. Although the organization of the event was spearheaded by OIA, it had the full cooperation of the DAIA and other major Jewish institutions of the country, and even the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires.<sup>19</sup> Unlike earlier ceremonies, which were marked by tension and uncertainty, the 1953 banquet took place in an atmosphere of genuine goodwill and friendship. According to *Di Presse*, the event had a, "spontaneous character," and was, "an expression of gratitude to the first magistrate of the nation for the friendship he has demonstrated to the Jewish collective since his first days as President, and for the sympathy he has manifested towards the state

of Israel since its creation.”<sup>20</sup> Despite the fact it was held on a Friday night, as many as 5,000 people attended, including representatives from over 120 Jewish institutions.<sup>21</sup> During the course of the ceremony, recent Jewish immigrants and Zionist leaders spoke in praise of the President for his actions on behalf of the Jewish community and the state of Israel. In his own speech, Perón extolled the virtues of the Jewish state as a, “glorious nation, small but dignified, little but great in its significance through the millennia of history.” He also highlighted the persistence of the Jewish people as a nation in exile over 4,000 years, adding, “Our own justicialismo is not merely an improvised thing; it is not something that has forgotten the lessons of history... The Jewish people has its millennial experience and we will do very well in imitating it.”<sup>22</sup>

The event was a resounding success, and Perón’s speech drew accolades from throughout the community and especially from the Jewish press. The editors of *Di Idishe Tsaytung* wrote that, “It is not often that a chief of state should express such ideas in relation to the Jews... That which general Perón said last Friday has thus, aside from its intrinsic value, the singular merit in which declarations of a chief of state in this part of the world are treated.”<sup>23</sup> Their counterparts at *Mundo Israelita* called the act, “unforgettable,” and noted that Perón’s words would have deep repercussions, “because they are the fruit of a mature conviction, and because general Perón has been consistent with them from the high seat of honor over the government which he presides...”<sup>24</sup> The wider international Jewish community was also deeply impressed by the event. On February 18, 1954, Israeli President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi wrote to Perón, thanking him for his, “wise and generous concepts regarding the Jewish people and the state of Israel.”<sup>25</sup>

The reception of November 6, 1953 was not only way in which the Jewish community offered its appreciation for Perón's favorable treatment of the state of Israel and the local Jewish community. In April 1954, the DAIA announced that it intended to plant a forest in Perón's name in the state of Israel. The tradition of planting forests in Israel that carried the names of great leaders was deeply rooted in Israeli culture and tradition. Previously, in 1950, the DAIA had sponsored a forest in the name of General José de San Martín in commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 1850. On August 8, a delegation of community leaders, headed by Argentina's diplomatic representative in Israel, Pablo Manguel, and DAIA president in office, Israel Novick, visited the President to declare their intention and receive his approval. During the interview, Novick read from a pre-prepared declaration which stated,

The Jewry of this noble and beautiful land values and appreciates in all its transcendent importance your clear and firm position of comprehensive friendship towards the Hebrew people and especially towards the state of Israel... The DAIA as the interpreter of an intimate desire of the collective, has resolved to render your Excellency a just homage, consisting of the planting of a forest in Israel that carries your name.<sup>26</sup>

As expected, Perón agreed, and in January 1955, the first seeds were planted in the hills near Jerusalem, adjacent to the existing forest in honor of San Martín.<sup>27</sup>

The Jewish press responded warmly to the measure, voicing its full approval. *Mundo Israelita* noted that the Perón forest would be the first in Israel to, "perpetuate the name of a Latin American statesman. Such an homage is worthy of the man to whom it is given and of the collective that provides it."<sup>28</sup> The editors of *Di Idishe Tsayinug* claimed it was the translation of, "the profound satisfaction with which the Argentine-Jewish community has received the reiterated and categorical declarations of the chief of

state regarding politics against discrimination and every expression of racism.”<sup>29</sup>

According to the editors of *Di Presse*, “By planting a forest in name of general Perón in the state of Israel, the Jewish delegation desires to express its profound gratitude to our first magistrate for his warm action towards the cause and the consolidation of the state of Israel.” Further, they stated, “Under no previous government or president of Argentina has there existed such equality between Jews and non-Jews as currently under the presidency of general Juan Perón!”<sup>30</sup> Perón himself reciprocated such comments in a message read at the inauguration of the forest in Israel in January 1955. “Nothing can better symbolize,” he wrote, “the Argentine-Israeli friendship than the raising in the land of the Bible, in a common effort, of trees destined to enrich and benefit with their generous gifts the social work of the people of the return.”<sup>31</sup> Such then was the “politics of smiles” which characterized Argentine-Jewish politics during the final years of Perón’s presidency.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time the leaders of DAIA announced their plan to plant a forest in Perón’s name, they also received the President’s approval for a project to edit and publish a small booklet of Perón’s most notable statements to the Jewish community in his function as President of Argentina. The volume, completed in November 1954, was presented to Perón with great fanfare and publicity.<sup>33</sup> Accompanied by Ezequiel Zabolisky, the president of the DAIA and other communal leaders delivered the book personally to the President on November 30, 1954. Again reading from a pre-prepared statement, Dr. Novick praised Perón for his goodwill towards the state of Israel and his “comprehension” of problems affecting the Jewish community.<sup>34</sup> For his part, Perón spoke warmly to the delegation regarding his, “sympathy for the Jewish people and his

anti-discrimination politics.”<sup>35</sup> Off the record, the President added that he recently had been approached by Catholic groups who had suggested he enact discriminatory measures against the Jewish community as part of his effort to separate Church and state. He assured that delegation that he would not permit such groups to incite anti-Jewish violence, and that he had given, “categoric orders to end with this state of affairs.”<sup>36</sup>

This increased cordiality on the part of Jewish leaders towards the President was made possible first and foremost by Perón’s revision of the Organización Israelita Argentina in June 1952, and his appointment of Ezequiel Zabolinsky as its new president. Unlike previous directors of the OIA, Zabolinsky was generally respected within the community, as “an honest man...a good Argentine and a loyal Jew.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, he hailed from a well-esteemed family.<sup>38</sup> His father had been president of the AMIA in 1925, his uncle was a noted Revisionist Zionist leader, and as a youth Zabolinsky had been active in Zionist Jewish self-defense groups. As president, Zabolinsky sought to transform the relationship between the OIA and the Jewish community from one of competition to one of mutual cooperation and coexistence. In particular, he believed that rather than attempting to represent the community as a whole as it had in the past, the OIA should merely be content to serve as its intermediary with the regime. As a result of this decision, claimed Zabolinsky, “the OIA began to gain in prestige in spite of its self determination to pass into second place.”<sup>39</sup>

Under Zabolinsky’s direction, the OIA sought to work with the DAIA in promoting the interests of the community and defending it against unwarranted attacks. To this end, Zabolinsky maintained cordial relations with DAIA president Ricardo Dubrovsky as well as former DAIA president Moisés Goldman, who served as president

of AMIA from 1951 to 1953. The benefits of this cooperative relationship were clear. According one account from the World Jewish Congress, when a group of “official spokesmen” called upon members of the Jewish community to make exorbitant contributions for the construction of a Peronist Party building in October of 1953, Dubrovsky together with Zabolinsky went to protest before the government authorities. Noting that both men were members of the Peronist Party and that Zabolinsky was the chief of a recognized Peronist organization, they succeeded in having the measure overturned.<sup>40</sup> In another incident, in February 1955, Zabolinsky succeeded in gaining an audience with the President for DAIA officials to discuss the fate of two young Jews accused of espionage charges and awaiting trial in Egypt.<sup>41</sup>

The OIA also cooperated closely with the DAIA and other institutions in matters pertaining to Jewish immigration. As noted previously, the OIA had been conceded special permission by the regime to authorize the entry of up to 250 Jewish immigrants per year. Yet, whereas earlier leaders of the OIA had often dispensed these permits in an arbitrary manner, frequently issuing them for personal profit, Zabolinsky initiated a policy by which the OIA would authorize only those immigrants who had first obtained signed references from both the DAIA and the AMIA. According to Zabolinsky, “If the OIA accepted someone, the government would accept them without resistance, but I required the others’ approval as well.” Moreover, he claimed, “I did not charge for this.”<sup>42</sup> In January of 1954, Zabolinsky and the OIA worked closely with Jewish officials to secure special permission from Perón for the entry of 100 Jewish families from the displaced persons camp in Ferenwald, Germany. The move was received with great sympathy by the Jewish community, and reported widely in the Jewish press.<sup>43</sup> The

project appears to have been the idea of Dr. Henry Shoskes, Director of the American based Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), who suggested the idea to both Zabolinsky and representatives of Argentine-Jewish immigrant protection society SOPROTOMIS during a visit to Argentina. Soon thereafter, Zabolinsky arranged an interview with Perón, who was receptive to the scheme, likely as a means of generating favorable publicity in the United States. When he arrived in Europe in March, Zabolinsky closely cooperated with HIAS and other Jewish organizations in the selection process. In May, *Mundo Israelita* reported that some 60 families had ultimately been chosen and would soon make their arrival in the country.<sup>44</sup>

In addition, Zabolinsky and the OIA played an important role in facilitating the public renunciation of anti-Semitism on the part of the ALN and its leader Guillermo Kelly in January 1954. According to correspondence from the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires, the ALN published its decision in the February edition of its mouthpiece, *Alianza*, claiming in return that the Jewish community should no longer label the organization as “Nazi-fascist.”<sup>45</sup> In response to their announcement, Zabolinsky sent a conciliatory letter to the ALN on behalf of the OIA in which he complimented the directors of the nationalist organization for their “ideological evolution,” and stressed, “our loyal word of support, with the certainty that the new position which your movement adopts today will be ratified by deeds...”<sup>46</sup> In this respect, the OIA, as a fellow Peronist organization of undeniable conviction, likely provided communal leaders with a convenient channel through which to correspond with Kelly and the ALN, since the community at large still remained highly suspicious of the group owing to its past anti-Semitic abuses and reputation. As a result, the editors of *Di Presse* were able to comment on the affair,

claiming that it “could not be received with less than satisfaction.” “The Justicialist Constitution,” they added, “passed under the current government of General Perón and a work of the same, which not only repudiates but rather considers anti-Semitism to be a punishable offense, represents a death blow for anti-Semites, because the New Argentina does not permit the existence of this sentiment.”<sup>47</sup> Later, in 1955, Israeli ambassador, Arieh Kubovy, even arranged for a special visit by Kelly to New York City, where he met with prominent Jewish Zionist leaders.<sup>48</sup>

In December 1954, Zobotinsky was nominated to serve as Argentina’s new ambassador to Israel. To replace him as head of the OIA, the regime called upon its previous plenipotentiary minister in Israel, Dr. Pablo Manguel. Manguel had earlier returned to Argentina in February 1954 and had been elected as a National Deputy to the Argentine Congress in the elections of April that year.<sup>49</sup> On May 28, the Jewish press reported his new appointment as president of the OIA.<sup>50</sup> Initially, there was considerable trepidation within the community over the move, since Manguel was known to be a close “personal party man of general Perón,” and had previously served as secretary of the OIA during its bitter fight with the DAIA back in 1948 and 1949.<sup>51</sup> However, such fears soon proved unfounded. According to Marc Turkow, Argentina’s representative of the WJC at the time, Manguel had been deeply affected by his experience in Israel and had returned to Argentina much more attuned to the Zionist movement and the problems facing the local Jewish community.<sup>52</sup> On June 1, 1955, *Di Idische Tsaytung* reported that Manguel formally declared during his inauguration ceremony, “that the OIA will continue to remain as the bridge that united the Jewish community with the governmental sphere,” adding that, “it will continue to recognize the DAIA as the mother institution of the

Jewish community.”<sup>53</sup> Remarkably, on June 7, he was even feted by various IJA supporters at the Buenos Aires chapter of B’nai B’rith for his years of service as Argentina’s leading diplomat in Israel.<sup>54</sup>

Manguel’s friendship would actually prove invaluable to community leaders during the turbulent days that followed the unsuccessful coup of June 16, 1955. According to documents from the World Jewish Congress, Manguel served as a crucial intermediary between the community and the regime in the aftermath of the rebellion against Perón, at a time when communal leaders went to great lengths to maintain a low public profile. He met regularly in secret with WJC representative Marc Turkow and DAIA leaders to inform them of his private conversations with the embattled President. Among the matters discussed at such meetings were Perón’s ongoing reassurances of friendship towards the Jewish community, Argentine-Israeli relations, and the fate the OIA and other Jewish Peronists in the event of Perón’s downfall. “We meet very often with Manguel,” Turkow wrote to New York on July 23, “because his reports appear to us (and also to [Israeli ambassador] Kubovy) to be the most important and completely authentic.”<sup>55</sup> In addition Manguel appears to have used his contacts with influential Catholic leaders, established during his diplomatic tenure in Israel, to soothe tensions between the Church and the Jewish community resulting from Perón’s *kulturkampf* with the Church. On at least one occasion, he even offered to arrange a private meeting between DAIA leaders and two prominent ecclesiastics.<sup>56</sup> Such meetings likely played some role in helping to forestall any major anti-Semitic backlash among the country’s Catholic majority throughout 1955.

In addition, the relationship between the Jewish community and the state during Perón's second term was further influenced by the rise of a new and unexpected challenger for political power. On July, 25, 1946, *Di Presse* reported the arrival of a young but prominent rabbi, Amram Blum, who had been sent from Palestine to head Argentina's Orthodox-Zionist Mizrachi political organization.<sup>57</sup> The young newcomer carried with him an impressive pedigree. Born in Hungary, he was the grandson of two of Hungarian Jewry's most prominent Talmudic authorities.<sup>58</sup> As a youth, he attended the esteemed Pressburg Yeshiva and was officially ordained as a rabbi at age 16. At 19 years of age, he authored his first book. By the time he arrived in Argentina, he had also earned a doctorate degree from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and was regarded among religious circles as a foremost expert in Talmudic studies. The new rabbi was a tall man, standing over six feet, impeccably dressed, and by all accounts possessed an overwhelming physical presence. In the words of one of his former parishioners, Dr Asher Grinsky, "Rabbi Blum carried himself with a very high stature. Wherever he went, he dominated."<sup>59</sup>

In a community notorious for its lack of religious functionaries, the arrival of Rabbi Blum created quite a sensation. Initially, he was hired to work in one of the smaller Sephardic Jewish congregations of Buenos Aires. However, in 1950, he received a position at the city's great Paso Street Temple, second only to the Congregación Israelita in prestige and importance.<sup>60</sup> From there, Rabbi Blum began a rapid and tumultuous climb to power. In a community where, "Jews murder each other over a bit of silly prestige," Rabbi Blum quickly emerged as an unrivaled political player.<sup>61</sup> In July 1952, he campaigned unsuccessfully to become the country's official Chief Rabbi.<sup>62</sup>

Undaunted by his defeat, he soon acquired a new and powerful ally in the form of the Juan Perón himself. Although the details of their first meeting remain unclear, Jacob Tsur, in his memoirs attributed their acquaintance to a prayer said by the rabbi over the body of Evita Perón following her death on July 26, 1952. According to Tsur, when Perón witnessed the spectacle, “The President’s eyes welled up with tears. He went over to the Rabbi, embraced him, and said to him, ‘You, with your oration have saved the soul of my dear wife.’ He then said he could come to the Presidential Palace anytime he liked, without prior announcement, and all of his needs would be taken care of.”<sup>63</sup>

In *The Jews of Argentina*, Robert Weisbrot ascribes their encounter to an entirely different cause. Weisbrot’s version, based on interviews he conducted with Blum’s widow and son in the United States in 1975, claimed that the President was impressed by Blum’s courage and audacity when the rabbi petitioned him to reopen a Jewish owned candy factory which had been closed down by the authorities in 1949 on allegations that it was infested with rats.<sup>64</sup> The real reason for the closing, it seems, was that the owners of the factory, a family by the name of Groisman, had insisted on receiving payment for an order of some \$10,000 worth of candy sent to the Eva Perón Foundation over the Christmas holiday of 1948. At the time, the case had caused considerable controversy and anxiety within the Jewish community because of the resemblance of the charges to traditional anti-Semitic libel accusations. Fearing the publicity it might generate, the DAIA had declined to respond to the case and the entire matter had remained a taboo subject within the Jewish community.<sup>65</sup> Yet, despite such fears, it appears that Blum decided to pursue the issue, hosting a party sometime in 1952 at which he arranged a meeting between the Groismans and several important government officials. “Shortly

thereafter,” writes Weisbrot, “the Argentine President agreed to receive the rabbi, and the meeting occurred just after the holy days of the Jewish New Year.”<sup>66</sup>

Regardless of whether Weisbrot’s narration of the story is entirely correct, on November 1, 1952, *Mundo Israelita* carried a photograph of Blum with Perón, announcing that rabbi had been received in a “special audience” with the President.<sup>67</sup> Further, on July 5, 1953, *Di Idische Tsaytung* reported the reopening of the Groisman factory, crediting the momentous occasion to the efforts of, “Rabbi Amram Blum, who offered to intervene before the President of the Republic.” According to the article in *Di Idische Tsaytung*, the rabbi declared that he had, “made General Perón aware of the situation, that the factory had belonged to Jews,” and that the President had “accepted his wish” that the factory be reopened.<sup>68</sup> The resolution of the case was a major accomplishment for Rabbi Blum, and marked his arrival as one of the key players in communal politics. Just one month later, Blum was appointed as chief of the country’s Rabbinical Council (Av Bet Din) by the directors of the AMIA in apparent acknowledgement of his newfound prominence. Among those whose signatures appeared on a letter of congratulations published in *Mundo Israelita* on August 1, 1953 were none other than Dr. Ricardo Dubrovsky of the DAIA, and David Groisman of the candy factory.<sup>69</sup>

In his new capacity as Av Bet Din, Blum soon acquired even greater power. Rumor had it that he had become one of Perón’s closest spiritual advisors and that he held great sway with the President. People flocked to Blum to intercede with Perón on their behalf. A description of the rabbi, published in *Di Idische Tsaytung* remarked that, “The home of the rabbi is always full of Jews who come to ask a favor, consulting him

about an important community matter, asking that he should intercede with the official circles. No one goes away unsatisfied from Rabbi Blum's house, because the Av Bet Din takes [seriously] each and every beautiful face, always has a correct word on his lips, and is always available with his help..."<sup>70</sup> According to Máximo Yagupsky of the American Jewish Committee, by August 1953 Blum had become, "Perón's guiding spirit in Jewish life."<sup>71</sup> During the High Holy Days of that same year, Blum even received Perón's personal New Year's greetings to the community, in addition to Zabotinsky and the OIA.<sup>72</sup>

Blum's arrogance and egotism were legendary. According one anecdote which circulated widely in the community, the President once offered to give Blum a new car as a gift for his loyalty to the regime. When he made his intentions known to the rabbi, Blum replied, "Forgive me Mr. President, but my religion does not allow me to accept such a gift. My religion does not permit it." Upon hearing this, Perón responded, "Then I will sell you the car for fifty centavos... Rabbi Blum then took a peso from his pocket and gave it to Perón. Perón, who never carried any change, said to the rabbi, 'I do not have fifty centavos to give you for your change.' So Rabbi Blum said to him, 'Don't worry Mr. President, keep the fifty centavos and give me two cars.'" <sup>73</sup> According to another story, Blum once stormed out of a major community function when he discovered that the seat assigned to him at the head of the speakers table had been occupied by someone else after he had arrived over 20 minutes late.<sup>74</sup>

In December 1953, it was announced that Blum had been chosen to head a newly created department of Hebrew Studies at the University of Buenos Aires.<sup>75</sup> Such an appointment represented a great accomplishment for the community as well as a clear

indication of the rabbi's favor with the President. In February 1954, he embarked on a lengthy journey to the United States to study similar programs in American universities. During his stay, Blum was treated as a guest of honor by various American-Jewish organizations as well as the World Jewish Congress to whom he remarked upon the "good treatment" which Argentine Jewry enjoyed from Perón's government.<sup>76</sup> In May, he officially inaugurated the new department in the University of Buenos Aires, and in November the community celebrated the occasion with a grand banquet in his honor.<sup>77</sup> Hosted by the AMIA, DAIA, and other prominent Jewish institutions, the banquet drew the attendance of the new Israeli ambassador, Arie Kubovy, and Argentine Vice-President Alberto Teisare. Regarding the latter, *Di Idische Tsaytung* commented, "This is the first time in many years that such a high government personality has attended an honor for a Jewish event... The attendance of the Vice President of the republic at an act of the Jewish community is a great phenomenon which should be recorded in the account of Rabbi Blum."<sup>78</sup>

In December 1954, the Jewish press announced that Rabbi Blum was to make a second trip abroad, ostensibly for the same reason as the first. Overseas for three months, he traveled to Israel and Europe as well as the United States. Again he was treated as a great celebrity. On February 15, 1955, he even unsuccessfully solicited an interview with Albert Einstein.<sup>79</sup> Yet, the voyage had other motives as well. It seems that during his trip, Blum met with various Jewish business leaders and encouraged them to invest in Argentina's increasingly troubled economy. On June 29, 1955, Marc Tukow reported on the disappointing outcome of one of his schemes. One month earlier, he claimed, three Jews had arrived in Buenos Aires from New York, apparently offering to invest over a

quarter-million dollars in the country's fledgling aviation industry. After being feted by both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Aviation it was discovered that they were frauds, and that their real business was in "used automobile tires." "It was meanwhile not known," wrote Turkow, "that Rabbi Blum was more than naively involved in the matter or that he really had a direct relation to its whole creation, or that it should be the outgrowth of his trip to New York and the search for foreign capital in Argentina."<sup>80</sup> Despite such setbacks, Blum remained popular with the President until the very end. On April 30, 1955, Perón publicly received Blum in an audience which generated great attention from the national press.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, on September 15, Blum was the recipient of the President's very last message to the Jewish community, his customary New Year's greeting, written on the eve of the revolution which would overthrow him.<sup>82</sup>

At the same time, however, the vastly improved relationship between the Jewish community and the state was not without its difficulties. In March 1954, one of the men who had helped forge this relationship, DAIA president Ricardo Dubrovsky, died abruptly at the age 49 years old. His death threw the organization into a state of crisis. Because of his willingness to compromise his personal politics to the demands of the Peronist state, Dubrovsky had spared the DAIA in general of much of the responsibility for its concessions to Perón. Faced with the challenge of the OIA back in 1948, Dubrovsky had forged close friendly ties with Perón and Evita and had even joined the Peronist Party. It was his own personal readiness to accommodate the President that had enabled the DAIA to continue operating effectively during the difficult period from 1948-1951. In 1951, Dubrovsky had reportedly even gone so far as to shun Maurice Perlzweig

of the World Jewish Congress for fear of being seen with “someone suspected of liberal leanings and ideas.”<sup>83</sup> Now, with his death, few wished to take on the burden of following in his footsteps. The DAIA’s acting vice-president, Israel Novick, assumed the presidency only reluctantly, and with the understanding that elections would be held as soon as possible to find a suitable replacement for Dubrovsky.

That task would not prove easy. In November 1954, the general assembly of the DAIA convened to consider the matter. After prolonged debate, the delegates were unable to agree upon a suitable candidate and were forced to delay the election until December.<sup>84</sup> According to Marc Turkow of the World Jewish Congress, the situation was “very complicated,” since the DAIA was also under intense pressure from the state at the time to “define its position with regard to national politics.” “The new course of the regime,” he noted, “not only in relation to the opposition but also in relation to the undefined neutral elements is entirely clear... In the government house, come only the officially connected Jews.”<sup>85</sup>

Unfortunately for the DAIA, the assembly of December met with little more success than its predecessor. According to Turkow, who was present at the meetings, the delegates could not agree upon a candidate who maintained widespread support within the community while at the same time possessing the official favor needed to gain access to the President “in a direct way.”<sup>86</sup> In his letter of December 20, 1954, he reported that the DAIA had become irreconcilably divided into two opposing camps.<sup>87</sup> Supporters of Poale Zion and the WJC backed former DAIA and AMIA president Moisés Goldman, who was widely popular within the community and also possessed the all-important credentials with the state. Their opponents, led by the Zionist Federation and the liberal

camp (including B'nai B'rith and the Congregación Israelita) were against Goldman as a “hodgepodge candidate of the WJC,” instead proposing a lesser known nominee by the name of José Matusevich. When the two sides failed to reach a compromise, the elections were again postponed, this time until April of the following year. In particular, DAIA leaders were afraid that a bitter election campaign might weaken the organization and destroy the fragile unity against the Communists which had prevailed since 1952 within the “national” camp. In the meantime, wrote Turkow, “Any dignity that the DAIA had created is now no more.”<sup>88</sup> When the two sides again failed to agree on a candidate in April 1955, the matter could be delayed no longer, and for the first time since 1948, the DAIA was forced to hold a contested election. After a bitter and highly divisive campaign, Goldman triumphed over his General Zionist counterpart by the slim margin of just 95 to 71 votes.<sup>89</sup> Goldman, and his vice-president Jacobo Bronfman, quickly continued in their predecessors’ policy of accommodation towards the national authorities. On August 13, 1955, following the unsuccessful June coup against Perón, the DAIA issued a public statement in the Jewish press, “fixing the Jewish position” in support of the regime and its policy of national pacification then underway.<sup>90</sup>

#### THE EMERGENCE OF DISSENTING VOICES: LIBERAL JEWS, ORTHODOX JEWS, AND THE JEWISH COMMUNISTS

The tensions within the DAIA over the election of a successor to Ricardo Dubrovsky underscored deeper tensions within the community over its increasingly close relationship to the Peronist state. For their part, members of the community’s liberal sector remained highly sensitive to what they saw as the collaborationist policies of the

DAIA vis-à-vis the regime. According to one of their principal leaders, Máximo Yagupsky, the DAIA had allowed itself to become nothing more than a “puppet” of the OIA and the state, and as a result virtually the entire community had become Peronized.<sup>91</sup> At the same time, he contended, the government merely, “gives to the Jews with one hand - and takes away with the other.”<sup>92</sup> Among other things, Yagupsky noted that even as Perón offered such eloquent praise for Israel and Argentina’s Jewish community, he made similar gestures to the country’s Arab population, receiving the President of Lebanon in grand fashion, and “decorating leaders of the Egyptian government.”<sup>93</sup> “German organizations, too,” he added, “are received by the government and treated with a good deal of friendliness and flattery and are told that the world committed a great injustice against them.”<sup>94</sup> In addition, Yagupsky highlighted fears among liberal Jews in his reports that the apparent affection shown by the President to Rabbi Blum might have damaging effects on Jewish-Catholic relations in the country. Many in Argentina’s Catholic sector sought to blame the Jewish community for Perón’s battle against the Church, and Blum’s frequent and well publicized visits with the President did little to quell this discontent. To offset such behavior, Yagupsky along with Rabbi Guillermo Schlesinger of the Congregación Israelita made determined efforts to meet with important Church leaders and, “convince them that the Jewish religious communities empathized with the plight.”<sup>95</sup>

In addition to Yagupsky and the liberal Jews he represented, many of the country’s religious Jews also became increasingly upset with the actions of Rabbi Blum and the sanction he received from communal officials. In particular, they resented his heavy-handed control over the AMIA’s Rabbinical Council and his frequent and

inappropriate meddling in secular politics. Following the November 1954 banquet in honor of Blum's appointment as Chair of Hebrew Studies at the University of Buenos Aires, the Sephardic Jewish journal *La Luz* published a series of scathing critiques against the rabbi and his behavior as the Av Bet Din of the community. In an editorial piece entitled, "Speaking Clearly," its editor David Elnecave argued that the vast attention given to Blum upon his appointment as head of the university department was unwarranted, and created, "the sensation that initiatives are carried out at times within our environment which the great majority of our community members do not share."<sup>96</sup> Reciting a parable about a rabbi who tells his student "not to use the Torah as a crown nor make it into an instrument for personal gain," he asked his readers, "Are those who are invested with the titles of Rabbi and Gaon on this continent complying with their sacred mission in conformance with Talmudic prescriptions?"<sup>97</sup> Further, he asked in a subsequent piece, "Why is it that the rabbi who heads the Bet Din assumes representations or realizes special audiences at times without being authorized to do so, and in those cases that he is, [he does so] without being accompanied by representatives of the institutions of which his is a functionary?"<sup>98</sup> Published openly, at the height of Blum's power and prestige, his comments represented a growing wave of discontent among the country's small but important Orthodox sector, who ever since 1953 had been subjected to Blum's domination over the Rabbinical Council which regulated such things as the price and distribution of kosher meat and wine, the registry of Jewish religious marriages, and the practices of circumcision and religious burials.

At the beginning of 1955, this brewing resentment against Blum and the leaders of the AMIA who supported him finally came to a head. In March of that year, a

delegation of the Orthodox political party, Agudas Yisroel, requested and received a special audience with Perón himself to protest against the actions of the rabbi. In particular, they asked the President to authorize the creation of a legally separate kehilla for their organization, independent from Blum and the religious council of the AMIA. Among their principal complaints to the President was the arbitrary regulation of kosher meat in the city as well as efforts on the part of the AMIA to block the creation of a new religious congregation in the suburb of Quilmes. According to the reports of Marc Turkow, the tensions between Agudas Yisroel and the AMIA were also related to the fact that Agudas Yisroel schools and religious institutions had refused to adopt a pro-Zionist political position and had been denied access to communal funds from the AMIA as a result.<sup>99</sup> When the President promised to give consideration to their requests and even ordered the annulment of existing kosher slaughtering regulations, Blum, the DAIA, and the Zionist leadership of the Jewish community were thrown into a state of alarm.<sup>100</sup> Only after extended negotiations with the secessionist group was the matter finally resolved.

Yet, by far the most scathing critique of communal leaders and their relationship with the Peronist state came from the Jewish Communists, or Progressives, led by a cultural association known as the Idisher Cultur Farband (ICUF). As Jewish Communist institutions began to suffer from the wider state sponsored repression against the Communist Party in the country after 1953, they initiated an ongoing campaign in their weekly *Tribuna* against both the Peronist regime and its would-be allies within the DAIA. As early as April 1953, the editors of the paper protested against the arrest of some 31 left-wing political prisoners under the provisions of Argentina's infamous Ley

4144, also known as the “Law of Residence,” which allowed authorities to arrest immigrants suspected of subversion without recourse to the normal protections of legal due process.<sup>101</sup> As a result their actions, federal authorities intervened in June 1953 to close the offices of *Tribuna*, claiming that the proprietors of the facility had failed to provide adequate ventilation for its restrooms.<sup>102</sup> Forced to publish from an alternate location, the editors of the paper quickly lashed out at the DAIA for failing to take action in their defense. “There is no doubt,” they claimed, “that the Jewish reaction forms part of the forces – the weaknesses, better stated – that impel this wave of persecution.”<sup>103</sup> When the widely acclaimed Jewish Popular Theater (IFT), was subsequently closed in November 1953, the editors of *Tribuna* accused the DAIA of complicity in its silence towards the measure, further adding that, “The reaction strikes each time more strongly precisely there where it meets the least resistance.”<sup>104</sup> In an editorial entitled, “The Conciliation that is Strangling the IFT,” they noted that a high ranking member of the institution had been assured by authorities, “that this latest inconvenience could be easily cleared up if the Directive Council of the IFT agreed to send a letter to the Chief of the Federal Police expressing the adherence of the Theater to the politics of conciliation of the national government.” This, claimed the editors, was impossible. “No conciliation imposed by the stick and not of liberties at the cost of principles,” they exclaimed<sup>105</sup>

The price of such principles, however, was repression. Throughout the course of 1954, the government stepped up its campaign against the Communist Party in Argentina, including its Jewish contingent. As noted previously, the police forbade a Jewish Communist delegation in April 1954 from holding a public memorial in honor of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.<sup>106</sup> In July, one of the chief officers of the ICUF, Tobias

Herschague, was arrested by Federal Police, and detained in a prison for political dissidents.<sup>107</sup> In September, *Tribuna* even reported that its distribution through the national mail service had been prohibited.<sup>108</sup> In addition, Progressive Jewish institutions were frequently intervened by the police or denied operating permits from the authorities. On several occasions during 1954, the ICUF appealed to the DAIA for help in defending the rights of Jewish Communists before the state. On June 24, 1954, they sent a formal letter to the DAIA, asking to meet with its directive council in order to discuss the closing of the IFT as well as other incidents. Published in *Tribuna*, the letter remarked that not all within the community agreed with the DAIA's "politics of silence," and further asked the DAIA to recognize the, "urgent necessity of unifying Jewish forces in a broad popular commission in which all sectors are represented without discrimination."<sup>109</sup> The response, however, was the same as before. Owing to their expulsion from the DAIA in December 1952, the Progressives were no longer considered as part of the Jewish community, and therefore were not entitled to DAIA representation or protection.

In the face of such circumstances, the Jewish Communists adopted an increasingly militant position against the both the regime and the DAIA, accusing the former of anti-Semitism and the latter, along with communal leaders who supported it, of collaboration. In February 1955 the editors of *Tribuna* asserted that,

In hospitals, universities, and schools, discriminations against Jewish doctors, students, and children prosper; Jewish institutions are closed; the Yiddish language has no access to the radio or public acts. At the same time, Nazi organizations and elements receive total official exemption... Nazi publications, which call for war and pogroms – circulate freely by mail and are exhibited openly in kiosks and bookstores.<sup>110</sup>

In April, they attacked the Jewish press, arguing that,

In the Jewish collective...*Tribuna* is the only organ of the press that does not reconcile itself with the repressive politics [of the regime,] nor silence fascist actions. Through ultra-reactionary inspiration in some cases and cowardice in others, the habitual publications of the 'national' Jewish press conceal with their silence the anti-Semitic measures of the government, even in those cases in which its own Zionist requests are persecuted.<sup>111</sup>

They also fiercely lashed out against the DAIA for its refusal to acknowledge their plight.

In July 1955, as state repression reached a fever pitch in the wake of the failed June 16 coup against Perón, the editors of *Tribuna* again called for communal unity, asking,

Does the DAIA really represent our collective? ...Institutional consolidation and cultural development are problems that the DAIA has resolved in its own unique way: dividing the collective, withholding subsidies to Progressive schools, denying to assume the defense of the IFT, and supplying information on certain official requests, liable to work in favor restrictive measures against determined Jewish cultural institutions.<sup>112</sup>

In response to such charges, DAIA vice-president Jacobo Bronfman retorted that they were nothing more than “a piece of handiwork to confuse public opinion with demagoguery and compromise the collective in actions for which they alone are responsible.”<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, the Progressives kept up their assault. Even as late as September 8, the editors of *Tribuna* warned of the potential for great anti-Semitic violence as the regime grew more and more unstable. “Lamentably,” they added, “the anti-Jewish threat finds our community in a state of demobilization and passivity. With the exception of Progressive sectors – who for quite some time have alerted the Jewish masses and exhorted them to unite in defense of the danger – the institutions and organizations that repeatedly insist on their representative character remain silent.”<sup>114</sup> In particular, such harsh words constituted a powerful critique of the politics of the DAIA and the Zionists who controlled it.

## A COMMUNITY COMPROMISED? COMMUNAL POLITICS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE “LIBERATING REVOLUTION.”

Fortunately for the Jewish community, the overthrow of the Perón at the hands of the “Liberating Revolution” did not precipitate a feared wave of anti-Semitic attacks. On September 16, 1955, army garrisons in the cities of Córdoba and Bahía Blanca supported by the Argentine navy, initiated a rebellion against the Peronist regime. Faced with the prospect of impending civil war and violence, Perón fled the country three days later aboard a Paraguayan gunboat and the government passed into the hands of a provisional military junta. Although the new government included many highly nationalistic military officers, its official behavior towards the country’s Jewish community was cordial and correct. Headed by General Eduardo Lonardi, the military regime sought mainly to reconcile the nation following the turbulence of Perón’s final years in office. The Jewish community, for its part, greeted the coup with rejoicing and relief. The editors of *Di Idishe Tsaytung* called it a “new chapter in Argentine history,” adding that, “We are convinced that Argentina today has a serious government, without ostentation and without shows of power that wants and will be able to guide the country from the crossroads from which events and situations of recent times have placed it.”<sup>115</sup> *Mundo Israelita* praised the new government for its lack of discrimination as well as its inclusion of several Jews in various executive posts.<sup>116</sup> Even the Communists expressed their contentment in the overthrow of the old regime along with their desire, “for an authentic democracy that will assure the peace, independence, and progress of the Patria.”<sup>117</sup> On October 1, 1955, the DAIA formally expressed its “profound satisfaction” with the new

regime in the Jewish press, and on October 24, a DAIA delegation, headed by Moisés Goldman, personally greeted the new government's Minister of Foreign Relations and Religion.<sup>118</sup>

Yet, all was not so rosy as it seemed. Even as Jewish synagogues and temples throughout the country offered special prayer services in honor of the new authorities and those who died in the "Liberating Revolution," the DAIA convened a special meeting of its directive council to consider the actions of communal leaders during the previous ten years of Perón's government. Apparently, many within the community felt that the DAIA and other major Jewish institutions had gone too far in their expressing their friendship and adulation for the now deposed President. Moreover, despite the DAIA's efforts to maintain, "a line of independence before the various Argentine political factions," the DAIA's executive was also concerned that a great part of the non-Jewish population had come to see the Jewish community as compromised by the Peronist state. According to a report by Máximo Yagupsky, this latter concern represented a "really serious matter" for Jewish communal leaders, since the DAIA, AMIA, and other Jewish organizations, had been, "compelled to make periodic statements praising Perón, to appear in his office, make speeches, and hold meetings in his honor." "Now the problem," wrote Yagupsky, "is how can this be erased."<sup>119</sup>

Dr. Moisés Goldman opened the DAIA's special session of October 10, 1955, by expressing his hope that the DAIA would continue in its past success of, "smoothing the road, in polishing the rough edges and discrepancies which beyond a doubt will redound in the well being of the collective whose well being we all long for."<sup>120</sup> During the course of the discussions, Dr. Leon Perez attributed the DAIA's uncomfortable proximity

to the regime to pressures applied by the OIA as well as the “extraordinarily praising declarations of the President,” which had managed to win the “good graces” of many within the Jewish community. Dr. Isaac Goldenberg blamed the problem on the actions of a small “traitorous” section of the community, while another delegate, Jacobo Murmis, suggested that the DAIA “passed through two stages,” in its attitude towards the regime, the first being purely opposed to Perón, while the second being “more doubtful.” In defense of the DAIA, Jaime Finkelstein among others argued that, “While the DAIA had been surrounded by people in the service of the regime...one should recognize that the great part of the Jews did not Peronize themselves, and that the DAIA was not converted into an instrument of Peronism.” Although no definitive conclusions were reached, Dr. Goldman closed the session by asking members to continue in their support of the DAIA and calling upon various institutions that had appointed Peronist supporters to important political positions to take measures to remove them from their offices.<sup>121</sup>

Indeed, Goldman’s call for the removal of prominent Peronist leaders from the ranks of communal institutions touched upon an issue of much consternation within the Jewish community. Although top ranking Jewish Peronists, including Pablo Manguel and Ezequiel Zabolinsky, had been arrested and briefly imprisoned by the new authorities, dozens of less influential Peronist supporters still retained positions of power within communal institutions.<sup>122</sup> First and foremost among them was Rabbi Amram Blum, who continued in his capacity as the AMIA’s Av Bet Din even after the overthrow of Perón on September 16, and who subsequently made it clear he would not relinquish his title without a great struggle. On October 3, the DAIA’s executive council was informed that Rabbi Blum had been invited by the AMIA to renounce his post but had

refused, instead offering a compromise in which he promised, “to declare that in his future action he would limit himself to questions of internal religion only.”<sup>123</sup> Rejecting this, on October 4, the AMIA resolved to formally separate Blum from his post as chief of the Rabbinical tribunal but to allow him to remain as a tribunal member.<sup>124</sup> The rabbi countered that such a move was illegal from a juridical standpoint, because only a religious body composed of Orthodox rabbis had the power to undertake such disciplinary action. Moreover, according to one report he then threatened to take “legal measures” against the AMIA if his will was not carried out.<sup>125</sup> Shortly thereafter, Blum solicited an interview with President Leonardi himself, on the basis of his position as “Chief Rabbi” of nation’s Jewish community. When the Director of the non-Catholic Religions Department of the Argentine Foreign Ministry telephoned the DAIA inquiring about Blum’s petition, the DAIA informed him that the rabbi should not be received and that he in fact no longer carried the title of Av Bet Din.<sup>126</sup> The interview was not granted, and on November 24, the DAIA decided to issue a public denunciation of Blum, further demanding that the Paso Street Temple and the AMIA take action to divest him of all rabbinical authority within the community.<sup>127</sup> When leaders of the AMIA and the Temple finally undertook to dismiss him in early December, on the grounds of “non-compliance with his duties,” Blum attempted one last scheme to retain his position.<sup>128</sup> According to a report appearing in the journal *La Luz*, he petitioned the AMIA to be granted one additional month in his post, “under the pretext that he needed to check himself into a hospital.”<sup>129</sup> The following day, however, Blum apparently despaired of this idea, and fled the country for New York City.<sup>130</sup>

In addition to the Blum affair, the removal of one of the OIA's founders and its first president, Salvador Woscoff, from the Jewish Hospital in Buenos Aires produced a considerable amount of turmoil and embarrassment within the community.<sup>131</sup> According to Marc Turkow, although Woscoff had only been president of the OIA for several months in 1947, "during this brief period he had entered into conflicts with the DAIA and threatened intervention with the government in the event the DAIA would not yield to the policy of the Peronist regime."<sup>132</sup> On October 13, 1955, Mosiés Goldman informed the executive council of the DAIA that he had personally asked Dr. Woscoff to resign his position but that the latter had, "reacted very strongly against the request."<sup>133</sup> In particular, Woscoff threatened to make public, "knowledge that would compromise all of the officers of the directive council," if the matter were pursued further. Moreover, he was supported in his actions by powerful members of the hospital's own executive board who resented the intrusion of the DAIA into what they viewed as the private affairs of an institution beyond its jurisdiction. On October 18, a delegation from the hospital met with DAIA leaders to protest against the actions of the DAIA and ask that its request for Woscoff's resignation be dropped. When the DAIA refused to accede to these demands, and published its explanation in the Jewish press, Woscoff responded himself with an incendiary letter in which he claimed that although he had agreed to tender his resignation under pressure from hospital authorities, "The DAIA, presided over by Dr. Moisés Goldman, did not act with the impartiality that the situation warranted, perhaps because Dr. Goldman has on his board persons who should apologize for their direct or indirect collaboration with the Peronist regime."<sup>134</sup> Virtually no one, it seemed, was completely free from the sin of collaboration.

On October 8, 1955, the editors of *Mundo Israelita* published an editorial commentary in which they attempted to explain the drama that had transpired under the Peronist regime and the role of the paper in those events.<sup>135</sup> Entitled, “That Which We Could Not Say During the Dark Years of Dictatorship,” the piece not only defended the actions of *Mundo Israelita* during the previous ten years, but in many ways represented the dilemmas faced by the larger Jewish community as well. Reminding their readers that, “The position of this paper with respect to the participation of the collective as such in the political contests of the citizenry is well known,” the editors explained that,

We have always sustained that it should abstain as an organized group and with a party affiliation in the electoral processes of the country... Such was our attitude when a group of citizens of our origin founded a pro-Irigoyen committee, and we adopted the same position before the attempt of certain coreligionists to enroll the community in the ranks of the Unión Democrática...

Moreover, they noted, “We insisted on this same thesis...on the occasion of constructing a Jewish group in order to support the politics of the fallen President.” Unfortunately, however, once there transpired “the total eclipse of liberty,” this was no longer possible. “Not only could one not criticize any action of the government,” they sustained, “but rather it was obligatory to praise the supreme head of the only party.”

What else could we have done, we and our collective, than to avoid militating in politics and avoid playing the part of the government in that which had no relation with our community? In honor of the truth, we must recognize that during the regime of the deposed President, we have not had to lament visible acts of discrimination against the Jewish community. That which we have the right to reproach it for, is for having aspired to convert this fact into an instrument of its decorated propaganda machine.

“For our part,” claimed the editors, “we have resisted becoming a propaganda organ of the regime, as many times was insinuated to us and even asked directly... That which we

could not avoid, and for understandable reasons, was to make panegyrics for the government in matters which were linked to our collective.” In short, they argued that while a certain amount of collaboration between the newspaper and Peronist authorities certainly transpired, it was more than justified by the need to maintain the paper’s autonomy and ongoing presence in the public sphere. According to the editors of *Mundo Israelita*, the alternative to such action would have been a shadowy clandestine existence, much like that of its Communist counterpart *Tribuna*, or possibly the outright expropriation of the paper altogether.<sup>136</sup>

On November 13, 1955, the provisional government of Eduardo Lonardi was deposed by a more hard-line regime headed by General Pedro E. Aramburu. Unlike, Lonardi, Aramburu was not amenable to reconciliation with former Peronists and began an immediate campaign to destroy the remaining vestiges of the Perón’s old base of political support. The Peronist Party was declared illegal, Peronist labor unions intervened, and the military was purged of former Peronist officers. With the ascension of Aramburu, the question of Peronism began to recede from the forefront of Jewish communal politics. No longer was it advisable to call attention from the public sector towards the ambivalent record of the Jewish community during the prior ten years of Peronist rule. Although a few high profile cases, such as the Blum affair, continued to remain as a source of bitter contention, most communal leaders ultimately agreed upon the need to put the past behind them. The DAIA, for its part, desired peaceful relations with the new military authorities and issued a public declaration in early December in support of the new regime, articulating its trust in the new President to “totally eliminate the various expressions of anti-Semitism from national life.”<sup>137</sup> Shortly thereafter, a

DAIA delegation was cordially received by the new Minister of Justice in the government palace. With this meeting, underlying anxieties of possible anti-Peronist repercussions towards the DAIA were finally put to rest. For, in agreeing to concede the interview, the new government had at least implicitly recognized the DAIA as a legitimate representation of Argentina's Jewish community.<sup>138</sup>

#### CONCLUSION: ACCOMODATION AND ITS CRITICS

That the DAIA had been able to retain its position was due in large measure to its willingness to compromise with the authorities of the deposed Peronist regime. In fact, during the course of Perón's second term in office, the relationship between the Jewish community and the state had become increasingly close and far reaching. Both Perón and Jewish leaders appear to have evidenced a certain pragmatic opportunism in their interaction with one another, a behavior which carried with it substantial benefits for both parties. For his part, Perón gained the willing support of a valuable constituency that had previously eluded him during his first term as President, while the Jewish community gained a growing satisfaction over Argentina's close ties with Israel. Indeed, Perón's ongoing support for the state of Israel stood at the center of this newfound cooperation. Drawing upon the deep Zionist sentiments of Argentina's Jewish community, Perón used his numerous acts of goodwill towards the Jewish state as a means of juxtaposing Argentine-Jewish identity with Zionism, in the process binding Jewish loyalties to the Argentine state through elaborate demonstrations of reciprocity shown on the part of the Jewish community. This reciprocity was itself made possible by the reduction of anti-Semitism in the country and by thorough revision of the Jewish Peronist OIA in mid

1952. Under the leadership of its new president, Ezequiel Zabolinsky, the OIA fundamentally altered the nature of its relationship with the DAIA and other Jewish institutions from one of competition to one of coexistence. By agreeing to “pass into second place,” and limit its function to serving as the intermediary between the community and the state, the OIA allowed for more autonomous expressions of Jewish appreciation and loyalty to Perón, most notably in the form of a huge banquet for Argentine President in November 1953, and the planting of a Israeli forest in his name on the part of the DAIA in November 1954.

In addition, this rapprochement was also influenced by the rise of an important new personality in the form of Rabbi Amram Blum. Arriving in Argentina only in the summer of 1946, in just seven short years he acquired the community’s highest rabbinical post and was honored as the head of a newly created department of Hebrew Studies at the nation’s most prestigious University. That Blum experienced such a meteoric rise to power was in large part due to his close and personal ties with the Argentine President himself. As such, he stood as a shining example that loyalty did indeed carry its rewards.

The case of Rabbi Blum, however, also stood at center of an ongoing debate within the community regarding the sympathetic posture of its leaders towards the increasingly repressive and unpopular regime. In particular, members of Argentina’s Orthodox Jewish community chafed under the rabbi’s autocratic handling of religious matters and resented his involvement in national political affairs. In addition, representatives from the community’s liberal institutions feared that Blum’s high profile and public visibility with the President might jeopardize Jewish-Catholic relations in the wake of Perón’s struggle with the Catholic Church after 1954. Finally, members of

Argentina's Communist Jewish community, expelled from the DAIA following the anti-Semitic Slansky Trials in late 1952, remained highly critical of both the community and the state as Perón stepped up his attacks against Argentina's Communist Party. Denied representation by the DAIA before hostile government officials, the Progressives in their weekly *Tribuna* increasingly accused the DAIA and its leaders of collaboration with the most repressive aspects of the Peronist regime.

With the overthrow of Perón in September 1955, the Jewish community was now faced with the difficult task of confronting its ambivalent past. Initial efforts to remove important Peronist supporters, such as Rabbi Blum and OIA founder Salvador Woscoff, from positions of authority within the Jewish community produced bitter conflicts as well as embarrassing revelations that nearly all communal leaders had in some way been compromised by the recently deposed regime. With the rise of Pedro Aramburu in November 1955 as Argentina's new president, such difficult issues were increasingly set aside in a larger effort to effect good relations with the new anti-Peronist military government. Ultimately, in the end, the Jewish community and its major institutions never seriously faced the daunting question of whether or not they had been guilty of collaboration with a repressive authoritarian regime or whether their actions had been necessary in order to preserve Jewish communal autonomy and integrity. Perhaps as a result, this very question, of collaboration and compromise, would continue to plague Argentine Jewry for years to come, first following the military coup of 1966, and later during the infamous "Dirty War" from 1976-1983.

## ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 6

---

<sup>1</sup> See the comments of Ernest Siracusa, First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, in his dispatch to the Department of State, 8 Nov. 1954. National Archives (NA), Record Group (RG) 59, 735.001/11-854.

<sup>2</sup> See the text of his speech to the Jewish community, March 3, 1950, in *Mundo Israelita* (MI) 11 Mar. 1950, 2.

<sup>3</sup> MI 14 Nov. 1953, 2.

<sup>4</sup> See *La Constitución de la Nación Argentina* (UNBA, 1950) Chap. 2, Art 28.

<sup>5</sup> See Leonardo Senkman, "The Response of the First Peronist Government to Anti-Semitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment," *Judaica Latinoamericana* III (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998), 202-204.

<sup>6</sup> See MI 18 Apr. 1953, 2. See also *Di Idische Tsaytung* (IT), 17 Apr. 1953, 1.

<sup>7</sup> IT 21 Oct. 1953, 1.

<sup>8</sup> MI 8 May 1954, 8. An account of the meeting is also contained in IT 5 May 1954, 1, 4.

<sup>9</sup> MI 13 May 1954, 6.

<sup>10</sup> See MI 4 Sep. 1954, 1; and IT 6 Sep. 1954, 1. See also MI 30 Apr. 1955, 7; IT 22 Apr. 1955, 1; and *La Luz* 21 Jan. 1955, 18; 22 Apr. 1955, 103; and 13 May 1955, 1.

<sup>11</sup> See notes from the luncheon discussion between members of the American Jewish Committee and Jacob Tsur, 19 Aug. 1953, in the files of the American Jewish Committee, YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, Box 3, Argentina-Jews.

<sup>12</sup> See the memorandum on the Ministerio del Comercio from May of 1956, regarding "Relaciones comerciales argentino-israelies." Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto (AMREC), Buenos Aires, Expediente 13, "Israel, 1956." For more on the 1950 trade agreement, see Ignacio Klich, "The First Argentine-Israeli Trade Accord: Political and Economic Considerations," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20: 39-40 (1995): 177-205. See also Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel y los judíos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere S.A., 2001), 123-138.

<sup>13</sup> See the report on Argentine Jewry, 1953-4 in the files of the WJC, AJA MS COL 361, H28/7. According to Rein, the 1950 agreement with Israel stipulated that up to 10% of Israel's purchases in Argentina could be transacted in Argentine pesos through the United Campaign. Rein, 128.

<sup>14</sup> Zobotinsky, 10 Jul. 2000.

<sup>15</sup> See the dispatch from 31 May 1955, No. 126 and marked "secret," in the files of the AMREC, Caja 28, Exp. 11A.

<sup>16</sup> See the WJC report on Argentine Jewry, 1953-4, cited above.

<sup>17</sup> See the comments of Moshe Tov (Toff) contained in a secret memorandum from Maurice Perlzweig to the WJC, 29 Jun. 1955. AJA, MS COL 361, H28/8. See also the letter from Máximo Yagupsky to Dr. Saul Segal of the AJC, 31 May 1954. AJC Files, YIVO NY, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

---

<sup>18</sup> MI 19 Sep. 1953; *La Luz* 23 Sep. 1953. The Jewish National Fund, also known as Keren Kayemet LeYisrael (KKL) was responsible for the purchase of lands in pre-state Palestine to facilitate Jewish settlement and later for the development such lands for productive uses following Israeli statehood. Perón's inscription was apparently in commemoration of the establishment of Argentine-Israeli relations in 1949.

<sup>19</sup> Zabotinsky, 10 Jul. 2000. See the advertisement for the banquet in IT 6 Nov. 1953, 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Di Presse* (DP), 6 Nov. 1953, 4.

<sup>21</sup> For an account of the banquet, see MI 14 Nov. 1953, 2; IT 8 Nov. 1953, 1; DP 8 Nov. 1953, 1; and *La Luz* 13 Nov. 1953, 450.

<sup>22</sup> See the publication of Perón's words in, "Palabras del exelentismo señor Presidente de la nación Argentina General Juan Perón dirigidas a la colectividad israelita argentina en el acto realizado el día 6 de noviembre de 1953," published by the OIA and found in the archives of the YIVO, Buenos Aires, Series 1045. See also IT 8 Nov. 1953, 1 and 3, which contains a Yiddish translation of the speech. In addition, the files of the U.S. State Department contain a copy of the speech from the Argentine newspaper *Democracia*, 8 Nov. 1953. See Ernest Siracusa's dispatch to Washington, 10 Nov. 1953, National Archives (NA), College Park, MD, RG 59, 635.84A/11-1053.

<sup>23</sup> IT 9 Nov. 1953, 4.

<sup>24</sup> MI 14 Nov. 1953, 3.

<sup>25</sup> The Spanish translation of his letter is contained in the publication, "Palabras del exelentismo señor President," cited above.

<sup>26</sup> The text of his statement appears in MI 10 Apr. 1954, 2. The DAIA also published an announcement of its intentions in *La Luz* 20 Aug. 1954, 5.

<sup>27</sup> MI 29 Jan. 1955, 1.

<sup>28</sup> MI 17 Apr. 1954, 3.

<sup>29</sup> IT 9 Apr. 1954, 4.

<sup>30</sup> DP 10 Apr. 1954, 1.

<sup>31</sup> The text of his letter is printed in MI 29 Jan. 1955, 1; and *La Luz* 11 Feb. 1955, 47.

<sup>32</sup> This quotation is taken from the comments of Dr. Leon Perez in minutes from the DAIA's directive council meeting of 10 Oct. 1955. See the DAIA's *Actas – Consejo Directivo (17/1/55-7/12/55)*.

<sup>33</sup> Refer to *El pensamiento del presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío* (Buenos Aires: DAIA, 1954). A copy of the booklet was also forwarded by the DAIA to the U.S. embassy in March 1955. See Siracusa to State Department, 9 May 1955, NA, RG 59, 835.41/5-955.

<sup>34</sup> MI 4 Dec. 1954, 5.

<sup>35</sup> IT 1 Dec. 1954, 1.

---

<sup>36</sup> See the letter from Marc Turkow of the WJC, who was present at the meeting, to Dr. Nahum Goldman, 7 Dec. 1954. AJA, MS COL 361, H27/13.

<sup>37</sup> See IT 29 Jun. 1952, 1.

<sup>38</sup> See IT 29 Dec. 1954, 2; as well as *La Luz* 14 Jan. 1955, 15.

<sup>39</sup> Ezequiel Zabolitsky, interview by author, Buenos Aires, 10 Jul. 2000.

<sup>40</sup> See the confidential, "Memo #6" cited above.

<sup>41</sup> IT 2 Feb. 1955, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Ezequiel Zabolitsky, interview by author, Buenos Aires, 12 Jul. 2000.

<sup>43</sup> See MI 23 Jan. 1954, 2; IT 22 Jan 1954, 1; DP 20 Jan 1954, and 22 Jan 1954, 1.

<sup>44</sup> MI 29 May 1954, 5.

<sup>45</sup> See Siracusa to the Department of State, 2 Mar. 1954, NA, RG 59, 735.00/3-254. Earlier, in 1953, the U.S. embassy reported that the ALN had approached U.S. Ambassador Nufer in an effort to shore up its relations with the United States. See Robert Martindale's dispatch to the Department of State, 28 Oct. 1953, and the accompanying materials, NA, RG 59, 611.35/10-2853.

<sup>46</sup> See his response in the 2<sup>nd</sup> February edition of *Alianza*, page 5. Special thanks to Ezequiel Zabolitsky for providing me with this clipping. See also Leonardo Senkman, "The Response of the First Peronist Government to Anti-Semitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment," *Judaica Latinoamericana* III (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998), 204, n. 66.

<sup>47</sup> DP 19 Feb. 1954. The exchange also drew a sharp rebuke from the Progressive sector of the community in its weekly, *Tribuna*, 30 Sep. 1954, 10.

<sup>48</sup> For more on this, see Rein, 97. See also the comments of Benno Weiser Varon, the Jewish Agency's representative in New York at the time, regarding the contents of their meeting. Benno Weiser Varon, *Professions of a Lucky Jew* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1992), 206-8. According to Weiser Varon, Kelly even began to publish some of Weiser's essays in the ALN's *Alianza* publication.

<sup>49</sup> IT 26 Feb. 1954, 4; MI 27 Feb. 1954, 2.

<sup>50</sup> MI 28 May 1955, 4.

<sup>51</sup> See the Yiddish letter from Marc Turkow, Argentine representative of the WJC, to Dr. Yitzhak Schwartzbart, 28 Nov. 1954. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/1.

<sup>52</sup> See Turkow's letter to Dr. Schwartzbart, from 1 Jun. 1955. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/9.

<sup>53</sup> IT 1 Jun. 1955, 3.

<sup>54</sup> See MI 11 Jun. 1955, 3; and IT 8 Jun. 1955, 4.

<sup>55</sup> See his letter to Dr. Abraham Hyman, 23 Jul. 1955, AJA, MS COL 361, H29/7.

<sup>56</sup> See Turkow's letter to Hyman, 7 Jul. 1955. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/12.

---

<sup>57</sup> See DP 25 Jul. 1946, 3.

<sup>58</sup> According to an article in *Di Idische Tsaytung*, Blum was the grandson of the Tzadek and renowned Hungarian religious scholar, Rabbi Amram Blum, as well as Rabbi-Gaon Menachem Greenwald of Eidenburg. See IT 31 Jul. 1953, 4.

<sup>59</sup> Dr. Asher Grinsky, interview by author, tape recording, Buenos Aires, 11 Nov. 1999.

<sup>60</sup> IT 20 Sep. 1950, 6.

<sup>61</sup> This quote is taken from a letter from Máximo Yagupsky to Dr. Segal of the American Jewish Committee in New York, 30 Jul. 1955. YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

<sup>62</sup> See the ads in favor of Blum in IT 31 Jul 1952, 6; and MI 2 Aug. 1952, 2.

<sup>63</sup> See Jacob Tsur, *Cartas credenciales #4* (Buenos Aires: La Semana Publicaciones, 1983), 209.

<sup>64</sup> Refer to Robert Weisbrot, *The Jews of Argentina: From the Inquisition to Perón* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979, 233-237.

<sup>65</sup> For more on the allegations and the DAIA's response, see dispatches from Jacob Hellman of the WJC to his superiors in New York, dated 15 Jul. 1949; 4 Oct. 1949; and 11 Oct. 1949, in the files of the WJC. AJA MS COL 361, H25/16.

<sup>66</sup> Weisbrot, 235.

<sup>67</sup> MI 1 Nov. 1952, 4.

<sup>68</sup> IT 5 Jul. 1953, 3. See also MI 7 Jul 1953, 4.

<sup>69</sup> MI 1 Aug. 1953, 5. See also IT 31 Jul. 1953, 4; and *La Luz* 7 Aug. 1953, 328. According to the minutes of the AMIA, he was to receive a monthly wage of 6,000 pesos. See the AMIA's *Libro de Actos* 21 Sep. 1953.

<sup>70</sup> IT 17 Nov. 1954, 4.

<sup>71</sup> See his letter to Dr. Segal, 30 Aug. 1953, in the files of the AJC. YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, Yagupsky.

<sup>72</sup> MI 12 Sep. 1953, 1; *La Luz* 9 Sep. 1953, 348. The message to Zabolinsky was published in IT 18 Sep. 1953, 1. Conspicuously absent was the DAIA. In response to this apparent shift of official favor, the DAIA sent its own New Year's greetings to Perón and shortly thereafter received a reply in which the President gave his best wishes to all the constituents of the DAIA, "who contribute with their considerable collaboration to the common effort of working to consolidate the basic principles of the New Argentina which we advocate." See *La Luz* 9 Oct. 1953, 418. The Yiddish text of this message appears in IT 23 Sep. 1953, 4.

<sup>73</sup> This anecdote was related to me by Dr. Asher Grinsky in the interview of 11 Nov. 1999.

<sup>74</sup> Asher Grinsky, 11 Nov. 1999. Grinsky was in attendance at the ceremony.

<sup>75</sup> IT 11 Dec. 1953, 4.

---

<sup>76</sup> MI 13 Feb. 1954, 5.

<sup>77</sup> See the announcement for the banquet in *La Luz* 12 Nov. 1954, 134. A brief description appears in *La Luz* 26 Nov. 1954, 165.

<sup>78</sup> IT 17 Nov. 1954, 4.

<sup>79</sup> See his letter to Einstein, dated February 15, 1955, in the files of the WJC. AJA, MS COL 361, H28/1.

<sup>80</sup> See his letter to Dr. Schwartzbart in Yiddish, July 29, 1955. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/9. At the time, Argentina was very active in recruiting American businessmen to invest in its economy. See, for example, the memorandum of the conversation between William Culbertson and Cecil B. Lyon, 12 Jul. 1955, in the files of the U.S. State Department, which discusses a similar effort to arrange for American investors to visit Argentina. NA, RG 59, Lot Files, 57D598, 57D634, 58D691, Box 1.

<sup>81</sup> See MI 30 Apr. 1955, 6. The content of their discussion was not released. See also the press clippings of the audience, contained in the files of the YIVO, Buenos Aires, Series 1045.

<sup>82</sup> See IT 16 Sep. 1955, 1.

<sup>83</sup> See the letter from Perlzweig to Mr. Caplan, on the occasion of Dubrovsky's death, 16 Mar. 1954. AJA, MSO COL 361, H27/13.

<sup>84</sup> In addition, proposals were advanced to reform the statutes of the association along more democratic lines, further exacerbating the mounting leadership crisis. See the "Fundamentos del proyecto que el consejo directivo de la DAIA presenta a consideración de la h. Asamblea de delegados," from October 1954, in the files of the WJC, AJA, MS COL 361, H29/14. In a public press conference, the Secretary of the DAIA, Benjamin Rinsky, explained that the reforms were centered around three principal concerns: relations with the state, relations with the international Jewish world, and finally the internal conduct of community members. This final concern involved, "the moral conduct of Jewish individuals and institutions in order to preserve the good name of the collective." See MI 6 Nov. 1954, 7. See also IT 3 Nov. 1954, 4. While the exact reasons for such a sweeping overhaul of the DAIA remain unclear, the entire project was ultimately sent back to committee in the assembly of November 21, 1954, and was never reconsidered. See MI 27 Nov. 1954, 8.

<sup>85</sup> See his letter to Dr. Schwartzbart, in Yiddish, 15 Nov. 1954. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/1.

<sup>86</sup> Turkow to Schwartzbart, 15 Nov. 1954. See also the series of letters from December 1954 contained in the same file.

<sup>87</sup> "To go on writing about the events of the last 48 hours prior to the assembly," he claimed, "would occupy pages and would sound unbelievable." See his letter to Schwartzbart, 20 Dec. 1954. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/1.

<sup>88</sup> See his letter to Schwatzbart, 20 Dec. 1954, cited above.

<sup>89</sup> The results of the election are reported in MI 2 Apr. 1955, 2; IT 28 Mar. 1955, 2; and *La Luz* 6 Apr. 1955, 94.

<sup>90</sup> MI 13 Aug. 1955, 2; and *La Luz* 12 Aug. 1955, 214. The declaration also condemned the actions of Progressive Jews in opposition to the regime.

---

<sup>91</sup> See his letter to Dr. Segal, sent from Rio de Janeiro, 26 Jul. 1955. YIVO, NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, South America, Argentina.

<sup>92</sup> See the letter from Yagupsky to Dr. Segal, 7 Apr. 1954, AJC files, Yagupsky. See also his letter to Segal, 27 Jul. 1954 in the files of the AJC. YIVO, NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, South America, Argentina.

<sup>93</sup> See his letter to Segal, 27 Jul. 1954, cited above. According to a dispatch from the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires, on at least one occasion Perón publicly compared Argentina's struggle for economic independence with the struggles of Arab peoples against colonial oppression. Siracusa to the Department of State, 21 Apr. 1954, NA, RG 59, 635.80/4-2154. Another dispatch from the embassy even reported that "as an expression of friendship and affection for Egypt," Perón's government had presented Egypt's General Naguib with a replica of General José de San Martín's sword. See Siracusa to State Department, 4 Jun. 1953, NA, RG 59, 635.74/6-453.

<sup>94</sup> Yagupsky to Segal, 2 May 1955. YIVO, NY, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, South America, Argentina.

<sup>95</sup> See his July 26, 1955 letter from Rio de Janeiro, cited above.

<sup>96</sup> *La Luz* 26 Nov. 1954, 156.

<sup>97</sup> *La Luz* 10 Dec. 1954, 170.

<sup>98</sup> *La Luz* 24 Dec. 1954, 192.

<sup>99</sup> According to Turkow, "For the past two years, the Va'ad Hajinuj [educational council] of the local kehilla has discontinued the subsidies to the educational institutions of Agudas Yisroel because they do not sing the Hatikvah and do not celebrate Israel's Independence Day." See Turkow's letter in Yiddish to

<sup>100</sup> For more on their interview with Perón, see the reports of Marc Tukow from March and April of 1955 in the files of the WJC. AJA MS COL 361, H29/9,.

<sup>101</sup> See *Tribuna* 9 Apr. 1953, 4; 23 Apr. 1953, 11; and 30 Apr. 1953, 9-10.

<sup>102</sup> *Tribuna* 25 Jun. 1953, 11.

<sup>103</sup> *Tribuna* 20 Aug. 1953, 12.

<sup>104</sup> *Tribuna* 7 Jan. 1954, 12.

<sup>105</sup> *Tribuna* 14 Jan. 1954, 12.

<sup>106</sup> *Tribuna* 22 Apr. 1954, 12.

<sup>107</sup> *Tribuna* 22 Jul. 1954, 12.

<sup>108</sup> *Tribuna* 2 Sep. 1954, 11.

<sup>109</sup> See the "Respuesta a la DAIA" from 24 Jun. 1954, as published in *Tribuna*.

<sup>110</sup> *Tribuna* 10 Feb. 1955, 12.

<sup>111</sup> *Tribuna* 14 Apr. 1955, 12.

- 
- <sup>112</sup> *Tribuna* 7 Jul. 1955, 12.
- <sup>113</sup> See the minutes from the DAIA's directive council meeting on August 2, 1955. *Actas – Consejo Directivo* (17/1/55-7/12/55).
- <sup>114</sup> *Tribuna* 8 Sep. 1955, 12.
- <sup>115</sup> IT 25 Sep. 1955, 8.
- <sup>116</sup> MI 29 Oct. 1955, 2.
- <sup>117</sup> *Tribuna* 29 sep. 1955, 12.
- <sup>118</sup> MI 29 Oct. 1955, 5; IT 25 Oct. 1955, 4; and *La Luz* 11 Nov. 1955, 311. See also MI 1 Oct. 1955, 2; and *La Luz* 7 Oct. 1955, 273-276. The IJA also issued a similar declaration, appearing in *La Luz* 7 Oct. 1955, 286; and MI 8 Oct. 1955, 8.
- <sup>119</sup> See his letter to Segal, September 28, 1955, cited above.
- <sup>120</sup> See the *Actas* of the DAIA Consejo Directivo, 10 Oct. 1955.
- <sup>121</sup> Much to Goldman's dismay, the contents of the DAIA's closed session were leaked to the Jewish press and appeared in edited form in IT 13 Oct. 1955, 4.
- <sup>122</sup> Regarding the fate of Manguel in particular, see Marc Turkow's report to the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress, September 28, 1955. AJA, MS COL 361, H27/13.
- <sup>123</sup> DAIA, *Actas – Consejo Directivo*, 3 Oct. 1955.
- <sup>124</sup> See *La Luz* 7 Oct. 1955, 276.
- <sup>125</sup> Refer to the letter from Marc Turkow to Dr. Abrhama Hyman of the WJC, November 8, 1955. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/12.
- <sup>126</sup> See his undated, "Report of Activities During September," which bears a stamp with the date of 11 Oct. 1955. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/13. However, according to the minutes of the DAIA executive, this series of events did not take place until November. See the DAIA *Actas – Consejo Directivo*, 22 Nov. 1955.
- <sup>127</sup> See the publication of the DAIA declaration in MI 26 Nov. 1955, 3; *La Luz* 25 Nov. 1955, 327.
- <sup>128</sup> See the report from Marc Turkow to Abraham Hyman of the WJC, December 5, 1955. AJA, MS COL 361, H29/14.
- <sup>129</sup> *La Luz* 16 Dec. 1955, 348.
- <sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 348.
- <sup>131</sup> His name appeared as president on the OIA's February 1947 manifesto to the Jewish community. IT 27 Feb. 1947, 5; DP 27 Feb. 1947, 5.
- <sup>132</sup> See Turkow's letter to Abraham Hyman, 8 Nov. 1955, cited above.
- <sup>133</sup> DAIA, *Actas – Consejo Directivo*, 13 Oct. 1955.

---

<sup>134</sup> See IT 20 Oct. 1955, 4; DP 20 Oct. 1955, 4; MI 22 Oct. 1955; 29 Oct. 1955, 5; and Turkow's letter to Hyman, 8 Nov. 1955. The Woscoff matter appears to have prompted an even greater conflict within the Jewish Hospital in which members of the medical staff, citing the need for democratization, organized in opposition to the directive council which had defended Woscoff and demanded that new elections be held as soon as possible. Amazingly, the entire matter was then referred back to the DAIA for arbitration when the stalemate between the staff members and the directors of the hospital could not be resolved between the parties themselves. Ultimately, the DAIA called upon the directive council to resign and for new elections to be held on December 27. For more on the conflict, see among others, IT 28 Oct. 1955, 7; 30 Oct. 1955, 3; 13 Nov. 1955, 4; 16 Nov. 1955, 3; 20 Nov. 1955, 3; DP 21 Oct. 1955, 4; 29 Oct. 1955, 9; MI 12 Nov. 1955, 6; 19 Nov. 1955, 2, 3, 4; 26 Nov. 1955, 5; 3 Dec. 1955, 4, 9; as well as the DAIA's *Actas – Consejo Directivo (17/1/55-7/12/55)*.

<sup>135</sup> MI 8 Oct. 1955, 2.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>137</sup> See MI 3 Dec. 1955, 3.

<sup>138</sup> MI 31 Dec. 1955, 4. Interestingly enough, the first Jewish delegation to be received by Aramburu himself in January 1956 was not from the DAIA but rather from the IJA. The action caused considerable consternation within the DAIA, which accused the IJA of undermining its authority. It is not certain why the new regime granted the interview to the IJA rather than the DAIA, but it may have derived from the former's more established anti-Peronist position during the prior ten years. For more on this, see DP 20 Jan. 1956, 1; and the "Outline of the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información," AJC Files, RG 347.7.1, FAD-1, "Instituto Judío Argentino." See also Rein, 187, n. 42.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION: COMMUNAL POLITICS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Between 1946 and 1955, a deep and thoroughgoing relationship had taken root between the Jewish community of Argentina and the Peronist state. For his part, Perón actively sought to use ethnic identity and ethnic institutions as a means of mobilizing grassroots support for his populist political coalition. In the case of the Jews, Perón also attempted to woo ethnic support for his “New Argentina” as part of a larger effort to overcome his stigma as a Nazi-style fascist and effect better relations with the United States. To do this, he offered substantial concessions to the Jewish community on matters involving anti-Semitism, Jewish immigration in post-war Argentina, and most importantly Zionism. During the entire period from the creation of Israel in 1948 through the fall of Perón in 1955, Argentina’s relations with the Jewish state were friendly and cordial, and on at least one occasion in January 1953, Perón even publicly defended Israel and Zionism in the face of Communist anti-Semitism. In addition, he authorized the creation of an openly Peronist Jewish political organization, the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA), to garner support for Peronism within the Jewish community and to prod Jewish communal leaders and the institutions they represented into increasing acts of cooperation and consent in favor of the regime. In particular, Perón granted the OIA considerable powers as the official intermediary between the community and the state,

thereby challenging the power of existing Jewish institutions such as the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA), which had functioned in this capacity prior to 1946.

The Jews of Argentina responded to the encroachments of Perón and Peronism in a number of different ways. Despite the fact that the vast majority of Jews had rejected Perón's candidacy in February 1946, communal leaders within the DAIA and other institutions were forced maintain substantial contacts with the new regime in order to secure vital Jewish interests before the state. At least initially, DAIA president Dr. Moisés Goldman attempted to pursue a traditional strategy of intercession with government authorities on behalf of the Jewish community without expressing the overt loyalty of the DAIA or the community at large to Peronism or the state. With the creation of the OIA in 1947, however, this strategy became increasingly untenable as state pressures on the Jewish community for political conformity increased. In response to this, Goldman's successor in office, Dr. Ricardo Dubrovsky, guided the DAIA into a more cooperative stance towards the regime, helping to organize a series of elaborate banquets in honor of the president, and even offering to travel to the United States in 1948 in an effort to propagandize on behalf of Perón. Such compromises on the part of Dubrovsky and other DAIA officials enabled the DAIA to resist the efforts of OIA to displace it in the eyes of the national authorities by demonstrating the usefulness of DAIA to the regime as a potential propaganda tool. After 1952, this pattern of cooperation was greatly accelerated when Perón officially reorganized the OIA and shifted its role from one of competition with the DAIA to one of co-existence.

At the same time, the leadership of the DAIA confronted serious challenges to its position from within the community itself. In particular, these challenges derived from long-standing divisions over issues such as communal fundraising, Zionism, and Jewish participation in the larger world of Argentine national politics. In November 1945, the leaders of the DAIA faced their first severe test when members of Argentina's liberal Jewish sector sponsored an effort to create a rival institution in the form of the Organización Judía Argentina (OJA) in response to differences over the disbursement of communal fundraising through Zionist organizations and the overall lack of democratization within the DAIA itself. Through the deft political maneuvering of its president, Dr. Goldman, the DAIA was able to put down the brief rebellion and forge a compromise on the issue of communal fundraising in 1947. Yet, the basic tensions which motivated the split remained, and in 1948, members of this liberal Jewish camp joined with the American Jewish Committee to create the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información (IJA) which rivaled the DAIA in its pretensions to serve as a legitimate representative of the Argentine-Jewish community before the larger non-Jewish society.

That the DAIA was able to withstand both the challenges of the IJA and the OIA owed itself to its unique ability to reconcile the subtle yet crucial distinctions between the external world of Argentine national politics and the internal dimensions of Jewish communal politics that dominated virtually all aspects of Jewish political behavior during this time. Unlike the IJA, the DAIA was able to operate effectively in the public sphere due to its ability to retain open channels of communication with Perón and Peronist officials. At the same time, the DAIA was able to overcome the OIA due to its ongoing popularity on the Jewish street. As an organization committed to Zionism and the Jewish

national project then underway in Palestine, the DAIA commanded the loyalty of community members not for its position in Argentine national politics but because of its appeal to the basic elements of Jewish national identity which predominated in the world of Argentine-Jewish communal politics.

It was this sense of Jewish identity, reflected in the ideology of Zionism, which remained at the center of Argentine-Jewish politics during the Peronist era. Quite significantly, the Presidency of Juan Perón corresponded to a number of international events that profoundly influenced the nature of Argentine-Jewish political behavior and the relationship between the community and the state. For one, the destruction of the greatest centers of European Jewish life during the Second World War left the community with a terrible sense of loss, urgency, and fear, and likely contributed to the Jewish rejection of Perón at the polls in February 1946. At the same time, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 promoted a sense of unity within the community during the early years of Perón's administration as nearly every Jewish political faction, including the non-Zionist left, mobilized in favor of the creation of a Jewish state. It was precisely this deep Zionist sympathy and sentiment which the DAIA leadership harnessed to resolve its conflicts with the IJA and resist the efforts of OIA leaders to supercede the DAIA in the public sphere. Following the reorganization of the OIA in 1952, however, this Zionist sentiment became an increasingly positive variable in community's relationship with the state. During Perón's second term as President, both the DAIA and the regime benefited from the mutual advantages of Argentina's close relationship with the state of Israel. With the increasing antagonism of the Soviet Union and its Communist allies against Zionism and the Jewish state, the DAIA instead turned

its energies against the Jewish Communists in Argentina, expelling them from the DAIA and from the mainstream of communal life in general in December 1952. As a result of this expulsion, the DAIA also refrained from protesting when Perón began his own crackdown against the Argentine Communist Party and its Jewish elements in 1953.

The years which followed the overthrow of Perón in 1955 witnessed one of the most turbulent periods of modern Argentine history. Between 1955 and 1983 the country experienced no less than four separate military coups and spent a combined total of 16 years under direct military rule. In 1958, the leaders of the “Liberating Revolution” officially handed power over to a civilian regime and between 1958 and 1966 the country was governed by a succession of weak Presidents punctuated by a brief coup in 1962. The military again assumed power between 1966 and 1972 but was unable to restrain a growing wave of violent political unrest as well as a mounting economic crisis. In 1972, the military called for new elections, and for the first time since 1955 authorized the participation of the Peronist Party in electoral politics in an effort to stabilize an increasingly unstable political system. Ultimately, this move culminated in the return of Perón to Argentina from his exile in Spain in 1973. Unfortunately for the nation, however, Perón was over 78 years old at the time, and he died barely a year later in July 1974. With his death, the country again entered a period of turmoil as the presidency passed to his third wife and vice Presidential running mate Isabel Martínez de Perón. Isabel Perón proved unable to handle the task of government, and in 1976, the military staged yet another coup, this time ushering one of the darkest chapters of Argentine history. During the seven years between 1976 and 1983, the country’s military rulers

kidnapped, tortured, and murdered as many as 30,000 Argentine citizens in a war against “subversion” that has become known as Argentina’s “Dirty War.”

This climate of increasing political and economic chaos had enormous repercussions for the country’s Jewish community. In particular, the weak democratic regimes of the 1950’s and 1960’s proved incapable of restraining popular anti-Semitic forces that were unleashed in the country as a result of increasing instability. During 1962 and 1963, a record wave of violent anti-Semitic incidents and attacks swept the nation following the kidnapping of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann by Israeli agents from his home in a Buenos Aires suburb. In the most notorious instance, gangs from the anti-Semitic group Tacuara brutally kidnapped and assaulted a female Jewish university student from Buenos Aires and disfigured her by tattooing a swastika onto her breast.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the leaders of Argentina’s military who governed the country after 1966 and again in 1976 were frequently influenced by a variety of neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic beliefs. In 1966, the military regime of Juan Carlos Onganía appointed several openly anti-Semitic officers to important cabinet posts, and during the “Dirty War” from 1976-1983 Jews figured disproportionately among the victims of military repression and abuse. Among other things, the Argentine-Jewish newspaper editor, Jacobo Timmerman, who was detained by military officials in 1977, recounted how his military captors hung portraits of Adolf Hitler on the walls of rooms in which Jewish prisoners were tortured and interrogated.<sup>2</sup>

In retrospect, then, it appears that the Peronist era was a time of relative stability and growth from the Jews of Argentina compared with the period that followed it. Between the 1947 and 1960, the national census recorded a substantial increase in the

Jewish population of the country from 247,330 to 276,000. Moreover, Argentine-Jewish emigration rates remained low throughout Perón's first two terms as President. During the entire eight-year period from 1948 to 1955, which witnessed the highpoint of Zionist enthusiasm in the country, a mere 1,966 Argentine Jewish immigrants arrived in Israel, and the total number in any given year never exceeded 326 individuals. By comparison, in 1963 alone, at the height of political and economic tensions under the Radical led government of Arturo Illia, some 3,238 Argentine Jews emigrated to Israel.<sup>3</sup> Owing largely to such massive emigration, the Jewish population of Argentina declined dramatically in years following the overthrow of Perón. According to the estimates of Israeli demographer Sergio DellaPergolla, over 30,000 Jews left the country during the fifteen-year span between 1960 and 1975.<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, then, despite their opposition to Perón's candidacy in February 1946, the Jews of Argentina benefited from a number of important aspects of Perón's rule. For one, the authoritarian and often repressive nature of Perón's administration allowed him to effectively suppress the most virulently anti-Semitic elements of Argentine political life. In 1949, the new national Constitution even included a special clause outlawing all forms of racial discrimination in the country. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that Jewish entrepreneurs and industrialists likely profited from Peronist policies of Import Substitution Industrialization.<sup>5</sup> Even more importantly, however, the inclusive nature of Perón's populist coalition enabled him to conceive of Jews as a productive element in Argentina's social and economic life and as potential contributors to his own political movement. In particular, Perón was the first Argentine President to appoint Jews to significant political positions within his government, and his designation of Pablo

Manguel as Argentina's first plenipotentiary minister to Israel in 1949 marked the first time a Jewish Argentine had been chosen to head one of the country's official diplomatic legations.

Given such findings, it is apparent that scholars can no longer afford to neglect the important links between Argentine Jewry and Perón and between ethnicity and populist politics in Latin America more generally. Although questions of ethnicity were not always central to the practice of populist leaders in Latin America, they clearly played an important role in mobilizing mass support and reformulating national identities. In addition, populism had an enormous impact on the development of ethnic communities themselves. According to Leonardo Senkman, the populist goal of "national integration, based on the principles of inclusion, was at the core of the process of construction of collective identity, and also helped ethnic groups to reformulate, not deny, their particular identities within the new national self."<sup>6</sup>

Certainly this was the case with Argentine Jewry, where the Peronist era represented one of the formative periods in the development of Argentine-Jewish political life. As with other social groups, contact with the state reinforced the strong centralizing tendencies within the Jewish community and its institutional life. In the process, it helped to establish the DAIA as the undisputed political representation of Argentine Jewry by 1955, a role which had still remained uncertain when Perón first assumed power in 1946. It also served to cement the increasing domination of Zionism and Zionist political parties within the communal politics. The effects of this domination were most apparent in the elections of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), where coalitions of Zionist parties succeeded in controlling the directive council

of the country's largest and most democratic Jewish institution during every single year of Perón's administration except 1946. Finally, the Peronist era established an important precedent of cooperative behavior towards authoritarian regimes on the part of Jewish communal leaders in Argentina. Between 1946 and 1955, such tactics worked to the advantage of the community and its interests. During the military regimes that followed, however, first in 1966 and later in 1976, such actions produced more questionable results.<sup>7</sup> Clearly then, the impact of Peronism on Argentine-Jewish political life was profound.

## ENDNOTES FOR CONCLUSION:

---

<sup>1</sup> For more on this incident and the spate of anti-Semitic violence in the early 1960's, see Leonardo Senkman, "El antisemitismo bajo dos experiencias democráticas: Argentina 1959-1966 y 1973-1976," in Leonardo Senkman, ed., *El Antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de America Latina, 1989). See also Haim Avni, "Jewish Leadership in Times of Crisis: Argentina during the Eichmann Affair (1960-1962)," In Peter Y. Medding, ed., *Values, Interest and Identity: Jews and Politics in a Changing World. Studies in Contemporary Jewry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> See Jacobo Timmerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, Trans. Tony Talbot (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 140.

<sup>3</sup> For more on Israeli immigration statistics by country of origin, refer to the publication, *Immigration to Israel, 1948-1972*, Part II, "Composition by Period of Immigration," (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> See Sergio DellaPergolla, "Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry," in Gilbert Merx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds., *The Jewish Presence in Latin America* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> See the conclusions of Eugene Sofer in *From Pale to Pampa* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982). Clearly, more work remains to be done on the economic consequences of Peronism for the Jewish community.

<sup>6</sup> Leonardo Senkman, "The Transformation of Collective Identities: Immigrant Communities Under the Populist Regimes of Vargas and Perón," in Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder, eds., *Constructing Collective Identities and Shaping Public Spheres: Latin American Paths* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), 124.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the stinging critique of the DAIA's actions under the military government from 1976-1983 in Ignacio Klich, "Política comunitaria durante las juntas militares argentinas: La DAIA durante el proceso de Reorganización Nacional," in Leonardo Senkman, ed., *El Antisemitismo en la Argentina*.

## BIBLIOGRPAHY:

### INSTITUTIONS AND ARCHIVES:

American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati (AJA)  
Archivo del Ministerio del Relaciones Exteriores y Culto, Buenos Aires (AMREC)  
Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires (AGN)  
Asociación Filantrópica Israelita (AFI)  
Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA)  
Bené Berith, Buenos Aires  
Centro Marc Turkow, Buenos Aires (CMT)  
Congregación Israelita de la República Argentina (CIRA)  
Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA)  
Idisher Cultur Farband, Buenos Aires (ICUF)  
National Archives, Washington, D.C. and College Park, MD (NA)  
Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano, Buenos Aires  
Sociedad Hebraica Argentina (SHA)  
YIVO Archives, Buenos Aires  
YIVO Archives, New York

### PERIODICALS:

*American Jewish Year Book* - Philadelphia  
*Argentiner Yivo-Shriftn* - Buenos Aires  
*Bené Berith* - Buenos Aires  
*DAIA: Boletín informativo* – Buenos Aires  
*Filantropia* - Buenos Aires  
*Di Idishe Tsaytung* – Buenos Aires  
*Jewish Chronicle* - London  
*Jewish Daily Bulletin* – New York  
*Judaica* - Buenos Aires  
*La Luz* - Buenos Aires  
*Mundo Israelita* - Buenos Aires  
*La Nación* – Buenos Aires  
*The New York Times* – New York  
*La Prensa* – Buenos Aires  
*Nueva Sión* – Buenos Aires  
*Di Presse* – Buenos Aires

*Tribuna* – Buenos Aires  
*Undzer Gedank* – Buenos Aires

#### INTERVIEWS:

Tobias Kamenszein. Buenos Aires.  
José and Ilse Smilg. Buenos Aires.  
Peter Wind. Buenos Aires.  
Asher Grinsky. Buenos Aires  
Samuel Posklinski. Buenos Aires.  
Ezequiel Zabolinsky. Buenos Aires.  
Ariel Plotschuk. Buenos Aires  
Efraim Rebij. Buenos Aires  
Jacob Kovadloff, Rio de Janeiro

#### OTHER PUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES:

*Argentina: 50 años de vida judía en el país.* Buenos Aires: Di Presse, 1938.

Argentina. *Tercer censo nacional, 1914.* Buenos Aires: 1916.

Argentina. Dirección Nacional del Servicio Estadístico. *IV Censo general de la nación.*  
Tomo I: Censo de población. Buenos Aires: 1947.

Argentina, Directive Commission of the Census, *Segundo censo de la República*  
*Argentina.* Buenos Aires: 1898.

Argentina. Ministerio del Interior. *Las fuerzas armadas restituyen el imperio de la*  
*soberanía popular.* Buenos Aires: 1946.

*Argentinos y judíos: al servicio del comunismo.* Buenos Aires: Editorial Patria, No Date.

Cohen, J. X. *Jewish Life in South America.* New York: Bloch Publishing Company,  
1941.

Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas. *50 años de colonización judía en la*  
*Argentina.* Buenos Aires: DAIA, 1939.

---. *El pensamiento del presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío.* Buenos Aires: DAIA,  
1954.

Glassman, J. *La Organización del judaísmo argentino.* Buenos Aires: 1946.

Hirsch, Triwaks. ed. *Yovel Bukh: Cincuenta años de vida judía en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Julio Glassman, 1940.

Jewish Colonization Association. *Su obra en la República Argentina 1891-1941*. Buenos Aires: Jewish Colonization Association, 1942.

Kleiner, Alberto. ed. *Informe 1943 de la Asociación Filantrópica Israelita sobre la inmigración de judíos alemanes en la Argentina durante la segunda guerra mundial*. Buenos Aires: Instituto Hebreo de Ciencias, 1985.

Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. *Cuarto censo general, 1936*. Tomo III. Buenos Aires: 1939.

*Perón expone ante las organizaciones israelitas las realidades del justicialismo*. Buenos Aires: 1951.

República Argentina. Dirección Nacional de Estadística y Censos. *Censo nacional de población, 1960*. Buenos Aires: 1960.

Simon, Carla. "Anti-Semitism in the Argentine." *New Currents* (Jan. 1944): 3-5.

Shatzky, Jacob. *Comunidades judías en Latinoamérica*. Buenos Aires: American Jewish Committee, 1952.

Weil, Simon. *Población israelita en la República Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Bene Berith, 1936.

#### SECONDARY SOURCES:

Alexander, Robert. *Juan Domingo Perón: A History*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979.

---. *The Perón Era*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951.

Almaraz, Roberto, Manuel Corchon, and Rómulo Zemborain. *¡Aquí FUBA! Las luchas estudiantiles en tiempos de Perón (1943-1955)*. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Planeta, 2001.

Alsberg, P. A. "The State Archives as a Source for the Research of Latin American Jewry." *Judaica Latinoamericana* I. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised ed. London: Verso, 1991.

- Ansel, Bernard. *The Beginnings of the Modern Jewish Community in Argentina*. Diss. University of Kansas, 1970. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1972.
- . "Discord Among Eastern and Western Jews in Argentina." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60 (1970): 151-158.
- "Argentina." *Encyclopedia Judaica*. Vol. 3. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972.
- Aschheim, Steven. *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.
- Auyero, Javier. *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Avni, Haim. *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*. Trans. Gila Brand. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991.
- . *Argentina, The Promised Land: Baron Hirsch's Colonization Project in the Argentine Republic*. [Hebrew] Jerusalem: 1973.
- . "Argentine Jewry: Its Socio-Political Status and Organizational Patterns." *Dispersion and Unity* 12 (1971): 128-62; 13-14 (1971): 161-208; 15/16 (1972): 158-215.
- . "Jewish Leadership in Times of Crisis: Argentina during the Eichmann Affair (1960-1962)." In Peter Y. Medding, ed., *Values, Interest and Identity: Jews and Politics in a Changing World. Studies in Contemporary Jewry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . "La agricultura judía en la Argentina: ¿Éxito o fracaso?" *Desarrollo Económico* 22 (1983): 535-548.
- . "The Origins of Zionism in Latin America," in Gilbert W. Merkx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds., *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987.
- . "Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Latin America During the Holocaust." in Randolph L. Braham, ed. *Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- . "Religion at Government Schools: A Century of Argentinian Jewry's Experience," *Encyclopedia Judaica Yearbook, 1986-7*. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1988.

- . "The Spanish Speaking World and the Jews: The Last Half Century." In Robert Wistrich, ed. *Terms of Survival: The Jewish World Since 1945*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Baily, Samuel L. "The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914." *The American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 281-305.
- . *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians In Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- . *Labor, Nationalism, and Politics in Argentina*. New Brunswick, N.J.: 1967.
- . "Marriage Patterns and Immigrant Assimilation in Buenos Aires, 1882-1923." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60 (1980): 32-48.
- . "The Role of Two Newspapers in the Assimilation of Italians in Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo, 1893-1913." *International Migration Review* 12 (1978): 321-340.
- Bargman, Daniel. "Acerca de la legitimación de la adscripción étnica: dentro, fuera y en los límites del grupo judío en Buenos Aires." *Judaica Latinoamericana*. III. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998.
- Ben Dror, Graciela. "La revolución militar, la Argentina católica y los judíos, (1943-1945)." *Judaica Latinoamericana*. III. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998.
- Berger, David. ed. *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and its Impact* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983)
- Berghahn, Marion. *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1988.
- Biale, David. *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*. New York: Schocken Books, 1986.
- Bianchi, Susana. *Catolicismo y peronismo: Religión y política en la Argentina, 1943-1955*. Buenos Aires: IHES, 2001.
- Bianchi, Susana, and Norma Sanchis. *El partido peronista femenino*. Buenos Aires; CEAL, 1988.
- Blankenstein, George. *Perón's Argentina*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.
- Bodnar, John. *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

- Borges, Jorge Luís and Adolfo Bioy Casares, "La fiesta del monstruo," in *Nuevos Cuentos de Bustos Domecq*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Librería La Ciudad, 1977.
- Breuer, Mordechai. *Modernity Within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Bristow, Edward. *Prostitution and Prejudice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Brod, Peter. "Soviet-Israeli Relations 1948-1956: from Courtship to Crisis," in Robert Wistrich, ed. *The Left Against Zion*. London: Valentine Mitchell, 1979.
- Buchruker, Cristián. *Nacionalismo y peronismo: La Argentina en la crisis ideológica mundial (1927-1955)*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1987.
- Caimari, Lila. "Peronist Christianity and Non-Catholic Religions: Politics and Ecumenism." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 105-124.
- . *Perón y la Iglesia Católica: Religión, Estado, y sociedad en la Argentina (1943-1955)*. Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia, 1995.
- Canton, Darío. *Elecciones y partidos en la Argentina: Historia interpretación y balance: 1910-1966*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1973.
- Carles, Federico Rivanera. *Los judíos y la trata de blancas en Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Cuestión Judía, 1985.
- Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- . *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Cimet-Singer, Adina. *Ashkenazi Jews in Mexico: Ideologies in the Structuring of a Community*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- . "The Last Battles of Old-World Ideologies in the Race for Identity and Communal Power: Communists vs. Bundists vs. Zionists in Mexico, 1938-1951." *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 5 (1994): 59-84.
- Cohen, Naomi. *Not Free to Desist*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972.

- Conniff, Michael. ed. *Latin American Populism in Comparative Perspective*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982.
- Corbiere, Emilio J. "Perón y los judíos." *Todo es historia* 252 (1988): 6-35.
- Cuperman, Pedro. *Argentina: The Genesis of a Prejudice*. New York: New York University, 1977.
- DellaPergolla, Sergio. "Changing Cores and Peripheries: Fifty Years in Socio-Demographic Perspective." In Robert Wistrich, ed. *Terms of Survival: The Jewish World Since 1945*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- . "Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry," in Gilbert Merkx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987
- . "World Jewish Population, 1992." *American Jewish Yearbook* 94 (1994): 465-489.
- Deutsch, Sandra McGee. "The Argentine Right and the Jews, 1919-1933." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 18 (1987): 113-134.
- . *Counterrevolution in Argentina, 1900-1932: The Argentine Patriotic League*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.
- . *Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- . "Women: The Forgotten Half of Argentine-Jewish History." *Shofar* (1997): 49-65.
- Díaz Alejandro, Carlos. *Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Dinnerstein, Leonard. *American and the Survivors of the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- . *Anti-Semitism in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Di Tella, Torcuato. "Populism and Reform in Latin America." In Claudio Veliz, ed. *Obstacles to Change in Latin America*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Doyon, Louise. "Conflictos obreros durante el régimen peronista (1946-1955)," *Desarrollo Económico* 67 (1977): 437-474.
- . "El crecimiento sindical bajo el peronismo," *Desarrollo Económico* 57 (1975): 151-161.

- . "La organización del movimiento sindical pernosita, 1946-1955," *Desarrollo Económico* 94 (1984): 203-234.
- Drake, Paul. *Socialism and Populism in Chile, 1932-1952*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.
- Eizenberg, Ellen. "Argentine and American Jewry: A Case for Contrasting Immigrant Origins." *American Jewish Archives* XLVII (1995): 1-16.
- Elazar, Daniel J. ed. *Authority, Power, and Leadership in the Jewish Polity*. New York: University Press of America, 1991.
- . *Jewish Communities in Frontier Societies*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1983.
- . "Jewish Frontier Experiences in the Southern Hemisphere: The Cases of Argentina, Australia, and South Africa." *Modern Judaism* 3 (1983): 129-146.
- . *Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1983.
- Elnecavé, Nissim. "Sephardic Jews in Argentina." *Dispersion and Unity* 2 (1960): 56-57.
- Elkin, Judith Laikin. "Anti-Semitism in Argentina: The Jewish Response." in Jehuda Reinharz ed. *Living With Anti-Semitism*. Hannover, MA: Brandeis University Press, 1987.
- . "Goodnight Sweet Gaucho: A Revisionist View of the Jewish Agricultural Experiment in Argentina." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* LXVII (1978): 208-223.
- . *The Jews of the Latin America*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1998.
- Elkin, Judith, and Ana Lya Sater. *Latin American Jewish Studies: An Annotated Guide to the Literature*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.
- Fainstein, Daniel. "¡Al gran pueblo argentino, shalom!:' El proyecto integracionista de *Judaica* frente al nacionalismo argentino, 1933-1943." n.d.
- Falcoff, Mark and Ronald Dolkart eds. *Prologue to Perón*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.
- Feierstein, Daniel, and Miguel Galante. "Argentina and the Holocaust: The Conceptions and Policies of Argentine Diplomacy, 1933-1945." Trans. Graciela Berger. *Yad Vashem Studies* 28 (1999): 157-201.

- Feldman, David. *Englishmen and Jews: Social and Political Culture 1840-1914*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Feingold, Henry L. *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970.
- . *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*. The Jewish People in America. Vol 4. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- Fishman, Joshua. *Turning to Life*. Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 1991.
- Foster, William David. *Cultural Diversity in Latin American Literature*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994.
- Frank, Gary. *Juan Perón vs. Spruille Braden: The Story Behind the Blue Book*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980.
- Frankel, Jonathan. "Modern Jewish Politics: East and West (1840-1939)." in Zvi Gitelman ed. *The Quest for Utopia: Jewish Political Ideas and Institutions through the Ages*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1992.
- . *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- . "The Soviet regime and Anti-Zionism: An Analysis." In Ezra Mendelsohn, ed. *The Essential Papers on Jews and the Left*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.
- Fraser, Nicholas and Marysa Navarro. *Eva Perón*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1980.
- Friedlander, Saul. *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.
- Freidenreich, Harriet. *Jewish Politics in Vienna, 1918-1938*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- French, John. *The Brazilian Workers ABC: Class Conflict and Alliances in Modern Sao Paulo*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- , and Daniel James. eds. *The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Workers*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.

- Galante, Miguel, and Adrián Jmelnitzky. *Políticas migratorias del peronismo con respecto a 'refugiados' de posguerra (1946-1949): Revisando algunas hipótesis*. Buenos Aires: University of Buenos Aires, 1998.
- Gay, Peter. , *Freud, Jews, and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Germani, Gino. *Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism*. New Brunswick: Transaction Inc., 1978.
- . "Mass Immigration and Modernization in Argentina." in Irving Louis Horowitz ed. *The Masses in Latin America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- . *Política y sociedad en un época de transición: De la sociedad tradicional a la sociedad de masas*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós, 1962.
- Gilman, Sander L. *Jewish Self Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- . *The Jew's Body*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Glenn, Susan. *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Goldstein, Joseph (Iosi). *The Influence of the State of Israel and the Jewish Agency on Community Life in Argentina and Uruguay Between 1948-1958* [Hebrew]. Diss. Hebrew University, 1993.
- . "El periodismo judío en castellano en la Argentina, 1948-1956: Sus posturas con respecto al sionismo e Israel." *Judaica Latinoamerica* III. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998.
- Gravil, Roger. "British Reactions to the Blue Book, Perón and the Jews." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20:39-40 (1995): 91-103.
- Guha, Ranajit. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- . "The Small Voice of History." *Subaltern Studies* IX (1996): 1-12.
- Guy, Donna J. *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.
- Handlin, Oscar. *The Uprooted*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1951.

- Heilbut, Anthony. *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America from the 1930's to the Present*. New York: Viking Press, 1983.
- Heinze, Andrew. *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption, and the Search for American Identity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Hertzberg, Arthur. *The Jews in America*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.
- Hilberg, Raul. *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Rev. Edition. 3 Vols. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985.
- Higham, John, ed. *Ethnic Leadership in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979.
- Horowitz, Joel. *Argentine Unions, the State, & the Rise of Perón*. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1990.
- Howe, Irving. *World of Our Fathers*. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.
- Hyman, Paula. *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representations of Women*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995.
- James, Daniel. *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Johnpoll, Bernard. *The Politics of Futility: The General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967.
- Josephs, Ray. *Argentine Diary: The Inside Story of the Coming of Fascism*. New York: Random House, 1944.
- Kaplan, Marion A. *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1979.
- . *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Katz, Jacob. *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1780-1933*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.
- Kessner, Thomas. *The Golden Door: Italian and Jewish Immigrant Mobility in New York City, 1880-1915*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Klein, Herbert S. "The Integration of Italian Immigrants into the United States and Argentina: A Comparative Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 306-329.

- Klich, Ignacio. "A Background to Perón's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations." *Judaica Latinoamericana I*. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988.
- . "Criollos and Arabic Speakers in Argentina: an Uneasy Pas de Deux, 1888-1914." in Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi eds. *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1992.
- . "Equidistance and Gradualism in Argentine Foreign policy Towards Israel and the Arab World, 1949-1955." In David Shenin and Lois Baer Barr eds. *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America*. New York: Garland Publishers, 1996.
- . "The First Argentine-Israeli Trade Accord: Political and Economic Considerations." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20: 39-40 (1995): 177-205.
- . "Failure in Argentina: The Jewish Agency's Search for Congressional Backing for Zionist Aims in Palestine." *Judaica Latinoamericana II*. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992.
- . "Peronistas y Radicales ante las aspiraciones sionistas en Palestina." *Desarrollo Economico* 34, 113 (1994): 85-91.
- . "Política comunitaria durante las juntas militares argentinas: La DAIA durante el proceso de Reorganización Nacional." In Lenoardo Senkman, ed. *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor de America Latina, 1989.
- . "Richard Gans, Guido Beck, and the Role of German Speaking Jewish Immigrants in the Early Days of Argentina's Nuclear Project." *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* 21 (1995): 127-167.
- . "The Role of the United States in Securing Latin American Sanctuary for Alleged War Criminals: The Case of Walter Schreiber." *Patterns of Prejudice* 31 (1997).
- . "Towards an Arab-Latin American Bloc? The Genesis of Argentine-Middle East Relations: Jordan, 1945-54." *Middle Eastern Studies* 31 (1995): 550-572.
- , and Jeffrey Lesser. "Cárdenas, Vargas, Perón and the Jews: A Curtain Raiser." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20: 39-40 (1995): 7-12.
- Knudson, Jerry W. "Anti-Semitism in Latin America: Barometer of Social Change." *Patterns of Prejudice* 6(5) (1972): 1-11, 6(6) (1972): 22-30.

- Kowalska, Marta. "Los judíos y el movimiento migratorio de Polonia a la Argentina en los años 1918-1939." *Judaica Latinoamericana* I. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988.
- Kreutz, Andrej. *Vatican Policy on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: The Struggle for the Holy Land*. Greenwood Press: New York, 1990.
- Laclau, Ernesto. *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, and Populism*. London: Humanities Press, 1977.
- Laqueur, Walter. *A History of Zionism*, New York: Schocken Books, 1976.
- Laubstein, Israel. *Bund: historia del movimiento obrero judío*. Buenos Aires: Acerva Cultural Editores, 1997.
- Lederhendler, Eli. *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Lesser, Jeffrey. *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.
- . *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Levine, Robert. Levine, Robert. "Adaptive Strategies of Jews in Latin America." in Gilbert Merkx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987.
- . *Tropical Diaspora: The Jewish Experience in Cuba*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993.
- Levy, Daniel. "Jewish Education in Latin America." in Gilbert Merkx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987.
- Lestchinsky, Jacob. "Jewish Migrations 1840-1956." in Louis Finkelstein ed. *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion*. 3rd ed. New York: Harper & Bros., 1960.
- Lewin, Boleslao. *Como fue la inmigración judía a la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Plus Ultra, 1971.
- . *La colectividad judía en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Alzamor Editores, 1974.
- Liebermann, Jose. *Los judíos en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Libra, 1966.
- Lindstrom, Naomi. *Jewish Issues in Argentine Literature*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989.

- . "Oral Histories and the Literature of Reminiscence: Writing up the Jewish Argentine Past." In David Shenin and Lois Baer Barr eds. *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America*. New York: Garland Publishers, 1996.
- . "The Role of Jewish Editors in Argentine Publishing, 1920-1940." *Judaica Latinoamericana*. III. Jerusalem: AMILAT: 1998.
- Little, Walter. "Party and State in Peronist Argentina, 1945-1955," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 53 (1973): 643-662.
- . "The Popular Origins of Peronism." In David Rock, ed. *Argentina in the Twentieth Century*. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1975.
- Liwerant, Judit Bokser. "Cárdenas y los judíos: entre el exilio y la inmigración." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 13-37.
- Luna, Felix. *El 45: Cronica de un ano decisivo*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Jorge Alvarez SA, 1969.
- . *Perón y su tiempo*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1984.
- Lynch, John. *Argentine Dictator: Juan Manuel de Rosas, 1829-1852*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981
- . *The Caudillos in Spanish America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Mahler, Raphael. *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment*. Trans. Eugene Orenstein, Aaron Klein, and Jenny Machlowitz Klein. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985.
- Malkiel, David Joshua. *A Separate Republic: The Mechanics and Dynamics of Venetian Jewish Self-Government, 1607-1624*. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1991.
- Mallon, Florencia. *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Maram, Sheldon. "The Immigrant and the Brazilian Labor Movement, 1890-1920." In Warren Dean and Dauril Alden, eds. *Essays Concerning the Socioeconomic History of Brazil and Portuguese India*. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1977.

- Marder, Jeffrey. "The Organización Israelita Argentina: Between Perón and the Jews." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20: 39-40 (1995): 125-152.
- . "Towards a Convivencia: Juan Perón and the Jews of Argentina, 1943-1949." M.A. Thesis. Simon Fraser University, 1996.
- Melzer, Emanuel. *No Way Out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997.
- Mendelsohn, Ezra. *Class Struggle in the Pale*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- . *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.
- . *On Modern Jewish Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- . *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Merkx, Gilbert W. and Judith Laikin Elkin eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987.
- Merkx, Gilbert W. "Jewish Studies as a Subject of Latin American Studies." in Gilbert W. Merkx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987.
- Meyer, Michael. *The Origins of the Modern Jew*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967.
- Mignolo, Walter, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Mirelman, Victor A. "A Note on Jewish Settlement in Argentina (1881-1892)." *Jewish Social Studies* 33 (1971): 3-12.
- . *Jewish Buenos Aires, 1890-1930: In Search of an Identity*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990.
- . "Jewish Life in Buenos Aires Before the East European Immigration (1860-1890)." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* LXVII (1978): 195-207.
- . "The *Semana Tragica* of 1919 and the Jews of Argentina." *Jewish Social Studies* 37 (1975): 61-73.

- Morner, Magnus. *Adventurers and Proletarians: The Story of Migrants in Latin America*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press/UNESCO, 1985.
- Moya, Jose. *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Moynahan, Daniel Patrick and Nathan Glazer. *Beyond the Melting Pot*. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1963.
- Murmis, Miguel and Juan Carlos Portantiero. *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo*. Vol. 1. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Argentina Editores S.A., 1971.
- Newton, Ronald C. *German Buenos Aires, 1900-1933: Social Change and Cultural Crisis*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977.
- . "Indifferent Sanctuary: German Speaking Refugees and Exiles in Argentina, 1933-1945," *Journal of Interamerican Studies* 24 (1982): 395-420.
- . "Latin America's Populist Authoritarian Populist Rulers and the Jews: An Afterword." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 207-214.
- . *The Nazi Menace in Argentina, 1931-1947*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.
- Norman, Theodore. *An Outstretched Arm: A History of the Jewish Colonization Association*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985.
- Page, Joseph. *Perón: A Biography*. New York: Random House, 1984.
- Payne, Stanley. *Fascism: Comparison and Definition*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.
- Plotkin, Mariano. *Mañana es San Perón: Propaganda, rituales políticos, y educación en el régimen peronista (1946-1955)*. Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia Argentina, 1993.
- . "Perón y peronismo: un ensayo bibliográfico." *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 2 (1991).
- Potash, Robert. *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969.
- . *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980.

- Prakash, Gyan. ed. *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*.
- . "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism." *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 1475-90.
- Quijada, Mónica. "De Perón a Alberdi: Selectividad étnica y construcción nacional en la política inmigratoria argentina." *Revista de Indias* 52 (1992): 867-888.
- . "El peronismo y la cuestión judía: una revisión crítica de su historiografía." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 239-269.
- Ramos, Jorge Abelardo. *Breve historia de las izquierdas en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, S.A., 1990.
- Rapoport, Mario. "Argentina and the Soviet Union: History of Political and Commercial Relations (1917-1955)." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 66 (1986): 239-285.
- . "Argentina in Turmoil: The Politics of the Second World War." *Patterns of Prejudice* 31 (1997): 35-50.
- Rein, Monica. *Politics and Education in Argentina, 1946-1962*. Trans. Martha Grenzeback. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998.
- Rein, Raanan. *Argentina, Israel y los judíos: encuentros y desencuentros, mitos y realidades*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere, S.A., 2001.
- . "Las imágenes conflictivas del peronismo en Israel (1946-1955)." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No 39-40 (1995): 153-176.
- . *The Franco-Perón Alliance: Relations Between Spain and Argentina, 1946-1955*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.
- Riegner, Kurt J. "Argentina's Jewry Under Perón." *Wiener Library Bulletin* 5-6 (1955): 51.
- . *Un proyecto migratorio judeo alemana*. Buenos Aires: 1988.
- . "Un proyecto migratorio judeo-aleman cincuenta años despues: El 'Grupo Riegner' en la Argentina." *Coloquio* 19 (1988): 122-173.
- . *Transiciones: Mi biografía hasta 1938*. Buenos Aires: 1991.

- Rischin, Moses. *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.
- Rissech, Elvira. "Entre la aceptación y el rechazo: refugiados europeos en el Puerto de Buenos Aires, 1938-1941," *Rumbos* (1986).
- Rock, David. *Argentina, 1516-1987*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- . *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement and its Impact*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Rosenblit, Marsha. *The Jews of Vienna: Assimilation and Identity*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983.
- Rosenswaike, Ira. "The Jewish Population of Argentina." *Jewish Social Studies* 22 (1960): 195-214.
- Rupp, Leila J. *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Sachar, Howard M. *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.
- Sargent, Charles S. *The Spatial Evolution of Greater Buenos Aires Argentina, 1870-1930*. Tempe: Arizona State University Center for Latin American Studies, 1974.
- Schallman, Lazaro. *Historia de los "Pampistas."* Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Popular Judía, 1971.
- . *Los pioneros de la colonización judía en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Biblioteca popular Judía, 1969.
- Schechner, Tzvi. "Kehile: Un concepto común heredado en Mexico y Argentina." *Judaica Latinoamericana* I. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988.
- Schers, David, and H. Singer. "Las comunidades judías de Latinoamérica: Factores internos y externos en su desarrollo." *Sociologica del Juidismo Latinoamericano*, Ficha #10.
- Schenkolewski, Sylvia. "Cambios en la relación de la Organización Sionista Mundial hacia la comunidad judía y el movimiento sionista en la Argentina, hasta 1948." *Judaica Latinoamericana* I. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988.

- . "La conquista de las comunidades: El movimiento sionista y la comunidad ashkenazí de Buenos Aires (1935-1949)." *Judaica Latinoamericana*. II Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992.
- . "Las relaciones entre el Movimiento Sionista y la sociedad mayoritaria en Argentina, 1935-1943." *Indice* (n.d.): 47-82.
- . "Los judíos comunistas de Argentina de la emigración a Birobidjan a la creación del estado de Israel." Unpublished paper presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> International Research Conference of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association, June 26, 2002.
- . *The Zionist Movement and the Zionist Parties in Argentina, 1935-1948* [Hebrew]. Jerusalem: Magnes Press and Hassifriya Haziyonit, 1996.
- . "Zionist Political Parties in Argentina from the Revolution of 1943 to the Establishment of the State of Israel." In David Shenin and Lois Baer Barr eds. *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America*. New York: Garland Publishers, 1996.
- Schnapper, Dominique, and Sylvie Strudel, "Ethnicity and the Jewish Vote: The French Case." In Robert Wistrich, ed. *Terms of Survival: The Jewish World Since 1945*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Schneider, Arnd. *Futures Lost: Nostalgia and Identity Among Italian Immigrants in Argentina*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000.
- . "The Two Faces of Modernity: Concepts of the Melting-Pot in Argentina." *Critique of Anthropology* 16 (1992): 173-198.
- Schwarcz, Alfredo Jose. *Ya pesar de todo: los judios de habla alemana en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991.
- Scobie, James. *Argentina: A City and a Nation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- . *Buenos Aires, 1870-1910: Plaza to Suburb*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- . *Revolution on the Pampas: A Social History of Argentine Wheat*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964.
- Sebreli, Juan José. *La cuestión judía en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporaneo, 1968.
- Segal, Bernard. "The Jews and the Argentine Center: A Middleman Minority." in Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merkx, eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987.

- Senkman, Leonardo. *Argentina, la segunda guerra mundial, y los refugiados indeseables*. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1991.
- . "Argentina's Immigration Policy during the Holocaust." *Yad Vashem Studies* 21 (1991): 151-188.
- . "Argentine Culture and Jewish Identity." in Gilbert Merx and Judith Laikin Elkin eds. *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987.
- . Ed. *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de America Latina, 1989.
- . "Etnicidad e inmigración durante el primer peronismo." *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 3 (1992): 5-38.
- . "El peronismo visto desde la legacion israelí de Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949-1954)." *Judaica Latinoamericana* II. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992.
- . *La identidad judía en la literature argentina*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Pades, 1983.
- . "La lógica populista de la identidad y alteridad en Vargas y Perón: algunas implicaciones para los inmigrantes." *Cuadernos Americanos*. Nueva Epoca 66 (1997): 130-52.
- . "Las relaciones EEUU-Argentina y la cuestion de los refugiados de la post-guerra: 1945-1948." *Judaica Latinoamerica* I. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988.
- . "Perón y la entrada de técnicos alemanes y colaboracionistas con los nazis, 1947-1949: un caso de cadena migratoria." *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*. 10:31 (1995): 673-704.
- . "Política internacional e inmigración europea en la Argentina de post guerra (1945-1948): El caso de los refugiados." *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 1 (1985): 107-125.
- . "The Response of the First Peronist Government to Anti-Semitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment." *Judaica Latinoamericana* III. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998.
- . "The Transformation of Collective Identities: Immigrant Communities under the Populist Regimes Vargas and Perón." In Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder, eds., *Constructing Collective Identities and Shaping Public Spheres: Latin American Paths*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1998.

- Sheinin, David, and Lois Baer Barr eds. *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America*. New York: Garland Publishers, 1996.
- Shumway, Nicholas. *The Invention of Argentina*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Smith, Peter H. *Argentina and the Failure of Democracy, 1904-1955*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974.
- . *Politics and Beef in Argentina: Patterns of Conflict and Change*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.
- . "The Social Base of Peronism." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 52 (1972): 55-73.
- Sofer, Eugene F. *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982.
- Solberg, Carl. *Immigration and Nationalism*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970.
- . *The Prairies and the Pampas: Agrarian Policy in Canada and Argentina*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.
- Sorin, Gerald. *Tradition Transformed: The Jewish Experience in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Sorkin, David. *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780-1840*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Spectorowski, Alberto. "La imagen del judío en las corrientes integralistas y populistas del nacionalismo argentino." *Judaica Latinaamericana* II. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992.
- Spitzer Leo. *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.
- . *Lives in Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austria, Brazil, and West Africa, 1780-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Strauss, Herbert A. "Jewish Emigration from Germany: Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 25 (1980): 313-361, 26 (1981): 343-410.
- Stepan, Nancy Leys. *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

- Tamarin, David. *The Argentine Labor Movement, 1930-1945: A Study in the Origins of Peronism*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985.
- Timerman, Jacobo. *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. Trans. Tony Talbot. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.
- Tolcachier, Fabiana Sabina. "The Historiography of Jewish Immigration to Argentina: Problems and Perspectives." In Ignacio Klich and Jeffrey Lesser, eds. *Arab and Jewish Immigrants in Latin America: Images and Realities*. London; Frank Cass, 1998.
- Torre, Juan Carlos. *La vieja guardia sindical y Perón: sobre los orígenes del peronismo*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1900.
- Tov, Moshe A. *El murmullo de Israel: Historia diplomático*. Jerusalem: La Semana Publicaciones, 1983.
- Tsur, Jacob. *Cartas Credenciales #4*. Jerusalem: La Semana Publicaciones, 1983.
- Vacs, Aldo César. *Discreet Partners: Argentina and the USSR since 1917*. Trans. Michael Joyce. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984.
- Vaksberg, Arkady. *Stalin Against the Jews*. Trans. Antonia W. Bouis. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.
- Varon, Benno Weiser. *Professions of a Lucky Jew*. New York: Cornwall Books, 1992.
- Vital, David. *The Origins of Zionism*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Walter, Richard J. *Politics and Urban Growth in Buenos Aires, 1910-1942*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- . "The Right and the Peronists, 1943-1955." in Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald Dolkart, eds. *The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins, 1910 to the Present*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1993.
- Weisbrot, Robert. *The Jews of Argentina: From the Inquisition to Perón*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979.
- Weinreich, Max. *A History of the Yiddish Language*. Trans. Shlomo Noble. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- . "The Reality of Jewishness versus the Ghetto Myth: The Sociolinguistic Roots of Yiddish." In *For Roman Jakobson* 3. The Hague: Mouton, 1967.

- Weisser, Michael. *A Brotherhood of Memory*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Wertheimer, Jack. *Unwelcome Strangers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Wiarda, Howard. *Corporatism and Comparative Politics: The Other Great "Ism."* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997.
- Winsberg, Morton D. *Colonia Baron Hirsch: A Jewish Agricultural Colony in Argentina*. University of Florida Monographs: Social Sciences 19. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1963.
- Wischnitzer, Mark. *To Dwell in Safety*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948.
- Wolfe, Joel. *Working Women, Working Men: Sao Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Wyman, David S. *The Abandonment of the Jews*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.
- Yahil, Leni. *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry*. Trans. Ina Friedman and Haya Galai. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Zadoff, Efraim. *Historia de la educación judía en Buenos Aires (1935-1957)*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Milá, 1994.
- . "Los judíos de Buenos Aires y la observancia del sábado en las escuelas." *Judaica Latinoamericana* III. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1998.
- . "Las relaciones entre las escuelas judías de Buenos Aires, el gobierno y el Vaad Hajinuj (1935-43)." *Judaica Latinoamericana* II. Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992.
- Zipperstein, Steven. *The Jews of Odessa*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986.