THE BREAKDOWN OF DEMOCRATIC REGIMES: ARGENTINA, 1973-1976

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the restoration, crisis, and breakdown of the 1973-76 democratic regime in Argentina. It describes the political events, analyzes the causes of failure, and makes conclusions, relevant for other democratic breakdowns. The analytical framework used is based on one developed by Juan J. Linz, which is summarized and critiqued here.

Democracy could have succeeded if Juan and Isabel Perón had acted legally when facing the unsolvable problem of left-wing terrorism; if Isabel had controlled the economic crisis; if leftists had utilized peaceful means; if the military were not a permanent disloyal opposition; if Argentines resolved their differences via consensus and compromise, not violence and illegality...

Crucial decisions in crisis situations, antidemocratic habits and ideologies, disloyal oppositions, government ineffectiveness, the impact of and response to political violence, violations of human rights, are elements of breakdown.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse porte sur la restauration, la crise et l'effondrement du régime démocratique argentin (1973-76). Elle comprend: une description des évenements, une analyse des raisons de l'échec et des conclusions pertinentes pour d'autres effondrements démocratiques. Le cadre analytique est basé sur celui développé par Juan Linz, qui est résumé et critiqué.

La démocratie aurait pu survivre si Juan et Isabel Perón avaient agi légalement vis-à-vis le problème insoluble du terrorisme gauchiste; si Isabel avait su contrôler la crise économique; si les gauchistes avaient utilisé des moyens pacifiques; si l'armée n'avait pas été une opposition déloyale permanente; si les Argentins avaient résolu leurs problèmes par l'accord et le compromis, non par la violence et l'illégalité.

Voici ce qui entraîne l'effondrement démocratique: des décisions cruciales dans les crises, des habitudes et idéologies antidémocratiques, des oppositions déloyales, l'inefficacité gouvernementale, la violence politique et la réaction gouvernementale, la violation des droits de l'homme.

* In memory of my sister, Mónica, and of the late Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of politics in Argentina during the 1973-76 period is not only fascinating - it is tragic. A country which had been governed by democratic rules of the game from 1853 to 1930, but which had seen too many democratic restoration attempts abort, seemed, now, ready for democracy. With the election of a mass political movement whose leader promised not to rule dictatorially as in the past, and with the apparently truthful promise of the military never again to intervene, the stage seemed to be set for a successful restoration. This country, furthermore, should, according to most socioeconomic indicators, be a working democracy (according to some authors).[1]

What went wrong? Why did the restoration flounder? What were the causes of the breakdown of the democratic regime? What can political scientists learn from this case that will help them to more generally describe and analyze, to understand, the process of breakdown of democratic regimes?

In order to answer these questions, I have chosen the historical, "dynamics of political change" approach developed by Juan J. Linz in The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration, which is the first of four

volumes in which the collapses or near-collapses of twelve European and Latin American democratic regimes are systematically reviewed (including Argentina twice: 1916-30 and 1955-66) by several authors. I will summarize, modify and attempt to point out the contributions and limitations of this approach which will be at the core of my analysis.

Linz' approach, based on learned scholarship and careful study of historical cases, advances novel concepts which help to explain the process of breakdown. It also stresses political causes and decisions of leading actors, both underestimated if not forgotten by those who over-emphasize the socio-economic context leading to breakdown. It incorporates valid theories. It is not vitiated by unattainable goals of establishing deterministic frameworks of breakdown, as are, to a certain extent, dependency theories and (perhaps less) the bureaucratic-authoritarian approach. With respect to the latter, even though Robert Kaufman and others are quick to deny any simplistic causal link between economic factors and political outcomes, this contention seems to contradict the basic assumption underlying their whole theoretical approach: that a general argument <u>may</u> be found which would connect economics and politics.[2]

Explanations of political change which emphasize economic aspects are often a <u>context</u> to be taken into account when analyzing political causes. This is how I view bureaucratic-authoritarian and some dependency approaches.

In any case, I am not downgrading their contributions - I am simply recognizing that there exist time and space limitations, and a specific approach has to be chosen.[3] It should be further added that much more general literature has been read, before choosing Linz: developmental, historical, structural and cultural corporatist, military, constitutional, ideological, etc. This will, I hope, become apparent throughout the text, as will, I hope, the merits of the Linz framework.

Was Argentina in 1973 a democracy which falls under the purview of Linz' approach? It satisfied all the requirements of his definition of a democratic regime (see Chapter II), except perhaps that of having "periodic validation of (the leaders') claim to rule": after 1928 no democratically elected president has succeeded another elected president. Linz includes Argentina twice in the book edited by him and Alfred Stepan. In spite of deviations from the ideal represented by authoritarian periods, Argentina was "strongly committed ideologically to liberal democracy, and no other legitimacy formula had wide appeal".[4] Military rulers had again and again sought to give power back to civilians (except Ongania), but were thwarted, in part, by Peron himself, who sought to undermine any regime which did not count with him. Surely in 1973, with Peron and his movement promising to abide by the constitutional rules of the game, the country was ready to live as a democracy.

There are, however, some caveats to this assertion. They will be analyzed especially in the third Chapter, which will also serve as a historical introduction, analyzing the roots of Argentine democracy, its traits and its genetic defects.

In Chapter II, the political science approach which is the backbone of this thesis will be critically presented.

Chapter IV describes the political events which took place between 1973 and 1976, starting with Lanusse's apertura and finishing with an epilogue on Videla. It was not easy to piece together the history of Argentina during that period: the paint is still fresh on the scenario and the present regime makes research difficult. On the other hand, I have had the advantage of having lived through the period as an active participant and an interested observer. I went to the mass rallies (e.g. June 20, 1973 at Ezeiza, where we had to duck the bullets); I was close to some political actors (especially my father, Emilio F. Mignone, and through him other politicians), and very close to the youth movements (both left and right-wing Peronist Youth). I have used, furthermore, primary material, such as press accounts, speeches, and testimonies of witnesses.

In Chapter V I analyze the main elements and causes of the crisis, which are summarized in the Conclusion.

Notes to I. INTRODUCTION

[1]See, for a review of these authors, O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism, Chap. 1.

[2]Robert Kaufman, "Mexico and Latin American Authoritarianism" in Reyna and Weinert, eds., Authoritarianism in Mexico, 194; and "Industrial Change and Authoritarian Rule", D. Collier, ed., The New Authoritarianism in Latin America 247. G. O'Donnell talks about an "elective affinity" between economic and political factors in Modernization and Bureaucratic - Authoritarianism.

[3]For a critique of Marxist theories, on which dependency theories are based, see Ibánez Langlois, El marxismo, and A. Piettre, Marx et marxisme.

[4]Linz, J.J. The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, v. I, 9.

CHAPTER II

THE LINZ APPROACH: SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE

1. Definition of Terms

Which regimes does Linz consider in his analysis as being democratic? What do concepts such as "breakdown", "legitimacy", "disloyal opposition" mean for Linz? These preliminary yet all-important questions will be considered here.

> Democratic regime: one in which there is "legal freedom to formulate and advocate political alternatives with the concomitant rights to free association, free speech, and other basic freedoms of person; free and nonviolent competition among leaders with periodic validation of their claim to rule; inclusion of all effective political offices in the democratic process; and provision for the participation of all members of the political community, whatever their political preferences."[1] A competitive democracy.[2]

For the purposes of their analysis, Linz and his associates do not include nation-states that had achieved independence or political autonomy a short time before the crisis of the regime (many African and Asian states). Countries where democratic regimes have recently been established are included, however - because the Latin American nations, for example, "in spite of deviations from the (democratic) ideal . . . were strongly committed ideologically to liberal democracy."[3]

In these cases, nevertheless, the restored democratic regimes might be born with "genetic defects" which make their survival problematic; they are what Linz calls "embattled" new democracies.[4]

Crisis: a decisive, crucial, dangerous moment or stage in the life of a polity (from the Greek, "a separating, putting apart, a decision").

Breakdown: a collapse, failure, stoppage of the workings of the mechanisms of democratic government which leads to a transfer of power to another type of regime or, in some cases, to reequilibration.

Breakdown is to be differentiated from revolution (radical change of the social structure): most breakdowns are "military coups-d'etat or semi-or pseudo-legal transfers of power rather than violent takeovers".[5]

Neither should breakdown be confused with the right to disobey or even rebel in defense of democracy, when the democratic rulers have modified (abused of) democratic institutions. The test (Linz admits its's an a posteriori solution) of whether a rebellion causes a breakdown is whether or not it reestablishes democracy in the short run.[6]

Reequilibration: "a political process that, after a crisis that has seriously threatened the continuity and stability of the basic democratic political mechanisms, results

in their continued existence at the same or higher levels of democratic legitimacy, efficacy, and effectiveness. It assumes a severe jolting of those institutions, a loss of either effectiveness or efficacy, and probably legitimacy, that produces a temporary breakdown of the authority of the regime. Reequilibration is compatible with changes of regime within the genus democratic (broadly defined): that is, it includes changes like those from the Fourth to the Fifth French Republic, or from a régime censitaire to modern mass democracy or from majority-rule to consociational democracy.[7]

Reequilibration is not to be confused with restoration or with reinstauration (of democratic regimes). Restoration is the "founding of a new democracy and consolidating it after a relatively short period of nondemocratic rule, with many leaders of the earlier democratic regime playing major roles".[8] Reinstauration, on the other hand, is the founding and consolidating of a new democracy after a long period of nondemocratic rule, with few democratic leaders returning to political life.[9]

Legitimacy: the support or trust given to a particular regime by a substantial number of citizens, including members of key institutions or groups (e.g. the military), based on the belief that that regime is the least evil of all forms of government. That is a minimal definition. In most democracies, most people place their trust in that particular regime because they believe it is a good one. "Legitimacy is

granted or withdrawn by each member of the society day in and day out. It does not exist outside the actions and attitudes of individuals."[10]

The legitimacy of a regime may be lost, thus causing instability. Two factors among others greatly contribute to loss of legitimacy: inefficacy and ineffectiveness of a regime.

Efficacy: the capacity a regime has of finding solutions to basic problems which face any regime and that regime in particular at a given moment; solutions which are perceived as being satisfactory by aware citizens (or at least more satisfactory than unsatisfactory).

The efficacy of a regime is judged not by the performance of a particular government over a short span of time, but by the performance of a government as compared to that of previous governments of the same regime over a long period of time.[11]

The newness of the regime, the efficacy or inefficacy of the previous nondemocratic regime, the initial agenda of the new democratic regime coupled with the existence to a greater or lesser degree of a "revolution of rising expectations" - all these are elements which influence the efficacy of a regime (i.e., whether it is perceived as being able to solve problems).

Effectiveness: Webster's Dictionary says that "effective emphasizes the actual production of an effect when in use or in force", while "efficacious implies possession of a

special quality or virtue giving effective power"[12] According to Linz, "effectiveness is the capacity actually to implement the policies formulated, with the desired results."[13] Typical examples of ineffectiveness of regimes are unenforceability of laws, and the inability to impose order against those turning to private violence for political ends.

Loyal opposition: sector, group, or party which supports the regime, but not the government. The loyal opposition contributes, through high support and high compliance, to the full legitimacy of the authority of the regime.[14]

Ideally, loyal oppositions would be characterized by:

1) Unambiguous public commitment to achieve power only by electoral means, and to surrender it unconditionally if they lose elections.

2) Rejection of use of violent means to achieve or maintain power, except constitutional measures to combat illegal attempts to take power.

3) Similarly, rejection of any nonconstitutional appeal to the armed forces to gain or retain power.

4) Unambiguous rejection of rhetoric of violence, even against antidemocratic opponents.

5) Other more stringent requirements, such as not withdrawing from the electoral process, assuming the responsibility of governing, rejecting secret contacts with the disloyal opposition, etc.

Semiloyal opposition: sector, group, or party ambiguous

about supporting the regime. The semiloyal opposition has a relatively high, or at least mixed, degree of compliance with the legitimate authority. It is characterized by:

1) The intermittent, attenuated, or ambivalent presence of some of the traits of a disloyal opposition (see below).

2) Willingness to secretly negotiate with disloyal oppositions.

3) Willingness to encourage, tolerate, excuse, or justify undemocratic forces (e.g. granting of amnesty to terrorists).

"Ultimately, semiloyalty can be identified by a basically system-oriented party's greater affinity for extremists on its side of the political spectrum than for system parties closer to the opposite side."[15]

Disloyal opposition: sector, group or party which seeks to overthrow the regime. The disloyal opposition generally varies its degree of compliance, resulting in partially legitimate, divided, or disrupted regimes. Some examples are anarchists (who reject outright any state or central coercive authority); secessionist or irredentist nationalist movements, Marxists, etc.

Some indicators of disloyalty are:

1) Use of violent means to achieve or maintain power.

2) Nonconstitutional appeals to the armed forces to gain or retain power.

3) Denial of legitimacy as participants in the political

process to parties that claim to be loyal participants.

4) The use of mass pressure by trade unions, taxpayers, or citizens in the forms of strikes or mass protests disrupting the operation of government.

5) The curtailment of civil liberties of opponents, blanket attacks on the political system itself, constant obstruction of the parliamentary process, support for or joint action with disloyal parties, etc.

All of these actions could also presumably be taken by defenders of the democratic order against a dictatorial-type "democratic" government; that is why Linz says they are simply "indicators" of disloyalty. In any case, since perceptions are almost as important as realities in crises, a political force with some of these characteristics can reasonably be perceived by some of the participants as disloyal and by many more as semiloyal.

2. Process of Breakdown

a) Conditioning factors: The party system is one of several conditioning factors mentioned by Linz in the course of his explanation. He suggests that moderate multiparty systems, as opposed to extreme multiparty systems, are associated with stability of democracy. Two-party systems, which are not very common, are generally stable, but when the system is subject to maximal ideological distance and centrifugal competition (polarization), there is a great danger

of breakdown and even of civil war.[16]

The circumstances of instauration of a regime influence its future stability. In the case of "restoration", there are both negative factors, such as tension between the parties that contributed to the breakdown, suspicion of past semiloyal actions, and reaffirmations of ideological positions; and positive factors, such as the learning experience which breakdown has meant, and the unpopularity of the authoritarian forces. In the case of "reinstauration", the nature of the previous nondemocratic regime will influence future stability, among other things, because its failure or coercive policies might have united the democratic leaders. Certainly the agenda adopted by the new democratic government - whether it is pragmatic or unrealistic, attacking all unsolved problems simultaneously or not - has a lot to do with later possible disenchantment. And <u>ressentiment</u> politics, when practiced by new democratic regimes, pave the way for a reaction of the nondemocratic forces. Other considerations are the new electoral laws and constitution, which may or may not facilitate democratic stability.

Linz suggests that presidential systems may be more conducive to instability than parliamentary systems, for the same reason as they <u>seem</u> to be more stable - their periodically fixed elections, their lack of a neutral head of state, make solutions in periods of crises, short of impeachment of the president, mostly illegal, at least in polities which, like

Argentina, have a very low "patience" threshold.

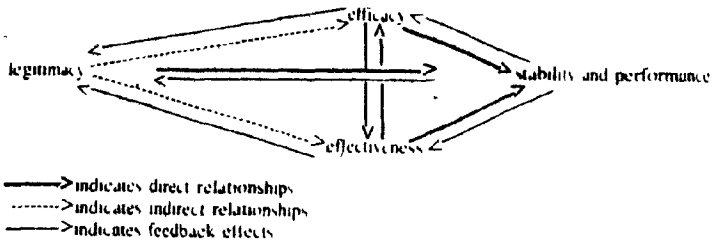
b) Crisis: I will now attempt a scheme of the process of crisis, breakdown and possibilities of reequilibration, in a roughly chronological order. The main focus of Linz' analysis, it should be stressed, is on the incumbent democratic leaders and their actions and decisions, as well as on the opposition leaders and their actions and decisions.

The formulation of the agenda when the democratic party takes power is of fundamental importance. This is so mainly because the efficacy and effectiveness of the regime will be measured by the policy output of the new government. If the new authorities promise immediate solutions to all pressing problems, if they do not make an adequate cost analysis of the means and the ends, they will find that the generally large amount of trust placed upon them by the populace begins to erode rapidly, to the extent that the promises are not fulfilled. In this respect, furthermore, democratic regimes are at a certain disadvantage, in that, because of freedom of expression, the implications of their policies are visible to everyone. The new leaders may obtain immediate achievements in some sectors which may give hope to other sectors of seeing their demands met.

The perception of the regime being efficacious and effective will contribute to its legitimacy, and thus to its stability. The previous legitimacy will also contribute to efficacy and effectiveness, inasmuch as there is a previous

trust of the citizenry in that regime. That is why Linz graphically represents this relationship as being mutual:

Figure 1 (Breakdown, v. I, 19)



Do the new authorities seek to incorporate those outside the regime founding coalition, which are potentially loyal (or disloyal) forces?. This is important. They might seek to do it by not over-emphasizing the substantive content of the regime, and by not practicing ressentiment politics: "statesmanship, flexibility, and timing are badly needed at this stage, because the process of incorporation, which does not always represent a gain in efficacy, can be very important in the process of legitimation of an open, competitive democratic system."[18]

What are the foreign policy liabilities? If the new authorities can favorably hurdle any problems in this area,

they will be more solidly entrenched.

In Linz' view stabilization also requires the maximum continuity in the symbols of the state and the nation (flags, anthems, constitutions, etc.) as a basis of consensus between supporters of the new regime and those they intend to incorporate into it.

The influence of intellectuals is crucial, for they are great legitimizers or delegitimizers of regimes. When there are serious injustices or great cultural cleavages in a society, the weight of the intelligentzia's arguments may tend to fall against a liberal democratic structure.

Besides those structural problems, which belong more to the socioeconomic, cultural or international spheres than to our present sphere of analysis, there may appear "unsolvable problems" in the society. These problems (it is only a slight exaggeration to label them "unsolvable"), are often caused by the democratic leaders themselves, who set goals for which they are unable to provide the necessary means, and which afterwards they are unwilling to renounce even when it becomes apparent that the means cannot be provided.

There can be many reasons why a government does not control problems, which sooner (if there is an economic depression, a war, a natural disaster, etc.) or later are perceived to be unsolvable: internal party constraints, lack of intelligence, foresight, political abilities, etc.

It is the unsolvable problem (or problems) that which ultimately triggers the process of breakdown, because it puts a strain on the system. The most serious crises are generally those in which the maintenance of public order becomes impossible (what the constitutional tradition calls "states of emergency"). But it is not the technical characteristics of the problem, the problem itself, that which will bring about breakdown. It is, rather, the political context in which it is placed, the constraining conditions of the regime, and, above all, the alternatives offered by one or more disloyal oppositions.

The influence and impact of political violence cannot be underestimated, in this context. When such violence takes place, it is not only important to study its causes - it is also crucial to analyze the response to it on behalf of the authorities, and how this response is exploited by one or another of the disloyal oppositions.

The loss of monopoly on organized force on the part of the government may ensue, in which case its days are numbered. The creation of paramilitary forces, or the unauthorized action of government agents, etc., leads to a spiral of violence, to the strengthening of disloyal oppositions, to a military coup . . . The response to violence by the institutions that must sanction it (parliament, the media, the courts, etc.) and their effectiveness are at this stage quite significant. "Reequilibration of democratic regimes

probably requires intelligent responses to such challenges (of violence), including in some cases a redefinition of the tolerable limits of civil liberties."[19]

When the crisis ensues, there is growing government instability which may be reflected in many different ways, depending on the party system, etc. In parliamentary systems, there is growing difficulty in forming coalitions. There is, in general, fractionalization, fragmentation, or factionalism within parties and public opinion. There is polarization: shifts in the electorate towards the extremes. Of course, there always exists the possibility, in parliamentary democracies at least, of new elections and a realignment of forces to solve the problems. But there also exists the risk of new elections and continuation of the status quo, which creates the perception of greater instability, all of which does nothing but fuel the fire of crisis.

Frequently, at this stage of the process towards breakdown, the democratic leaders succumb to the temptation of partially transferring their responsibility to "neutral" powers in the society: the courts, the armed forces, technocrats, the head of state (a figure-head president, or a king), etc. This is a denaturation and loss of substance of the democratic process, because it represents a shift of power away from the democratically accountable leadership, which has generally taken this step in the hope of gaining time - instead of confronting the problems head on. This "abdication of democratic authenticity" is often a question of failure of leadership.

The transfer of power is ultimately due to "the government's incapacity to solve problems for which disloyal oppositions offer themselves as a solution",[20] offering the populace a different set of political institutions, a transfer of legitimacy. It is Linz' contention, however, "that the conditions leading to semiloyalty, or even suspicion of semiloyalty, by leading participants in the political game, opposition and government parties alike, account for the breakdown process almost as much as the role of the disloyal oppositions".[21] How has the change from loyal to semiloyal, or from semiloyal to disloyal, opposition, taken place? There is no one single pattern, as there is no one single indicator of loyalty, semiloyalty, or disloyalty. Linz mentions several different cases, and, as always, he stresses the role of the decision-makers in contributing to the resolution or denouement of the crisis.

Even though every democratic regime has a disloyal opposition, it is generally a minority group, without strength, and only in crisis situations does it grow. Also, the existing regime tends to have the benefit of the doubt, or, at least, the neutrality of large sectors of society. However, also because the democratic leaders generally strive to incorporate outsiders into the system as a participating loyal opposition, the borderline between loyalty and semiloyalty is difficult to define at times. On other occasions, small extremist parties may convey equivocal messages in order to

maintain their radical opposition to the system while claiming to aim at a legal access to power. As has been seen, some indicators of lack of loyalty to a democratic regime can be the use of force, "knocking at the barracks", denial of legitimacy to loyal participants, etc., but what often marks the distinction between loyal and disloyal oppositions are the style, intensity, and fairness in political discussions and battles.

In any case, it is often difficult for the historian and even more for contemporaries to know whether a certain opposition group is loyal or not. On top of that, it is precisely the perceived loyalty or disloyalty that counts.

Another key indicator of the turning to semiloyal behavior is rejecting means used (such as violence) but excusing them and not denouncing them publicly because of agreement with the goals so pursued. Another frequent pattern "is the radicalization of the youth and student organizations of parties that the mature leadership cannot disown without losing some of its most active and enthusiastic followers".[22]

One characteristic of the final stage of the breakdown process is that the parties whose main aim should be to defend the constitutional, democratic process engage in actions (such as apparent justification of extremist violence) that justify other participants' perception of them as semiloyal.

The crisis situation, provoked by unsolvable problems and by the presence of a disloyal opposition, promising here

and now a solution to everything, creates the conditions for the emergence of semiloyal political forces.

Loyal system parties tend to deviate from the ideal when they encounter hostility among extremists on either side of the spectrum. The constraints of the crisis situation push everyone toward some form of semiloyalty, and leave any remaining loyalists increasingly isolated.

Summarizing, then, the process of crisis which leads to breakdown, Linz has emphasized: the actions of the incumbents, their formulation of the agenda for the regime, their way of defining problems and their capacity to solve them, the ability of the pro-regime forces to maintain sufficient cohesion to govern, the willingness of the democratic leaders to assume the responsibilities of power, the rejection of the temptation to turn to ademocratic political mechanisms to avoid making political decisions, the readiness to turn to neutral powers as sources of legitimacy, the willingness to work together with the disloyal opposition, the narrowing of the political arena, and inadequate responses to the crisis.

c) Breakdown: the elements mentioned in the previous paragraph, and, especially, the loss of efficacy, effectiveness, and ultimately of legitimacy, lead to an atmosphere where breakdown is probable. Security and/or economic crises are likely to worsen at this stage.

In this atmosphere the leading actors may decide not to confront the basic problems of government but to try to

overcome the political crisis, by, for instance, granting emergency powers, interfering with regional governments, etc. If such measures were combined with a clear assumption of responsibility by the regime-supporting leaders, rejecting any collaboration with disloyal oppositions, seeking to save the democratic framework, they might lead to a reequilibration process.

A second alternative would be an attempt to expand the bases of the regime by incorporating at least part of the disloyal opposition, or some of its leaders into a new coalition. This leads to a transformation or a transfer of power: the latter is more probable, and is equivalent to a breakdown-with-transfer.

A third alternative would be to allow the process of polarization to continue and ignore the pre-civil war situation until one of the disloyal forces attempts to assume power. The democratic leadership then has only two options: to withdraw, turning over its power to the armed forces or another moderating power, hoping that it will not introduce a regime change but will only suspend normal democratic processes temporarily; or to appeal to the nation and to mobilize organized forces, such as the trade unions, in an effort to broaden its authority. In a highly polarized society this second option means civil war.

When the democratic leadership has experienced loss of power, if the army is not willing to assume a moderating role

and the disloyal oppositions are willing to participate in a solution while retaining the capacity to present a revolutionary threat, transfer of power is likely. If this transfer is given a stamp of legitimacy by the neutral powers, we are in the presence of a "legal or semilegal revolution" (e.g. 1933 Germany).

Linz sees several main patterns of how the end of a democracy comes about (military intervention to restore democracy; transition to monarchical or traditional regimes; authoritarianism; totalitarianism; civil war).

d) Reequilibration takes place when the following conditions are met: 1) the availability of untarnished democratic leaders; 2) that leadership must gain acceptance from loyalists and disloyalists; 3) the old, challenged democratic leaders must accept the transfer; 4) the former leaders must be willing to save democracy above all other considerations; 5) indifference and passivity in the bulk of the population; 6) the semiloyal opposition must be capable of neutralizing the disloyal opposition.

3. A CRITIQUE

In the previous pages, I highlighted some aspects of Linz' introductory essay and eliminated others, less useful for our case. Following are other commentaries.

a) Juan J. Linz seeks to make "an initial social scientific effort at middle-level generalizations about complex historical reality" which builds upon "fundamental historical studies of individual cases;" he thus hopes to draw "the attention of historians to more generalized propositions."[23]

I partially agree with this goal. There are no hard and fast rules for the establishment, survival and breakdown of authoritarian or democratic regimes, much less working models susceptible to computer simulations and applicable to all past and any future cases. Historical research is unavoidable in order to understand complex political reality. It is, ultimately, human freedom what precludes a stricto sensu "scientific method" approach to the study of politics, and, in general, of society and culture.[24]

In the modern sense of the word "science" (the discipline which studies physical or natural phenomena), the study of politics is not a science. What has been stated of history can be applied to our discipline:

> ...History, whose object is not the study of nature, cannot be included among the sciences: it does not have a group of axioms or general principles, nor phenomena which can be reproduced experimentally; it lacks laws which can be verified at all times and places; it cannot forsee events, nor infer them from other events known, because there are no necessary laws, nor can it, through abstraction, reach that

> point.. The characteristic proper to the field of history is that regularity does not exist where man, endowed with freedom, is the cause of the phenomena or events which are studied.[25]

To the extent, then, that Linz places heavy stress, "contrary to the predominant strains in the contemporary analysis of Latin America, on the role of leadership and political choice in accounting for political outcomes"[26], he is helping to better understand the political process. The value of his study is rooted in the fact that it does not wish to set up a deterministic framework, while at the same time seeking to -quite validly-discover generalizations and concepts which better describe and analyze democracy breakdowns.

Analysis of the conditions of democracy, states a review of The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, have stressed different factors: levels of education and of economic development (Cnudde and Neubauer, Empirical Democratic Theory), political culture (Almond and Verba, The Civic Culture), aspects of historical development (Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy "), etc. Other related approaches emphasize class and dependency analysis, or bureaucratic -authoritarianism, or explanations ranging from the racial and cultural to various social, economic, and historical circumstances.[27]

In Breakdown, the authors take democracy in Latin America more seriously than in other approaches, although they avoid seeking to reinstate democracy as either the inevitable or dominant trend of Latin America's future.[28] I will argue in this thesis along the same lines, namely, that democracy is not impossible nor irrelevant in Argentina, but that it

is more dependent than in the more stable democracies on the exercise of leadership and on the political imagination, because of structural and historical reasons.[29]

Breakdown, adds Dix, performs another service: it implicitly warns us against an over-hasty acceptance of yet another paradigm for Latin American politics (corporatist or bureacratic authoritarian).[30]

b) The value of Linz' and his associates' work lies in attempting the "dynamic" systematic comparison of political processes, somewhat along the lines of Crane Brinton's Anatomy of Revolution , and of studying the conditions of democracy, à la Aristotle (Politics). Herewith some limitations of the approach.

The more historical definition of democracy given by Messner (see my Conclusion, pp.136-7) is to be preferred to that of Linz, which is too formalistic (see p. 6 in this Chapter).

Similarly, Linz' Weberian notion of legitimacy (p.8) does not take the juridical aspect of this concept into account. A government or regime is legitimate, says Linz, because of a trust placed in it, based on its effectiveness and efficacy, by the citizenry and especially by key members thereof, such as the military, a trust which can be granted or withdrawn by each member of the society day in and day out, and which does not exist outside the actions of individuals. I disagree: legitimacy is based on law: "the

necessary juridical title for the exercise of state power in the modern constitutional state is the formation of a government according to the constitutional procedures" which have been established by a constitution generally created by representatives of the people and historically accepted by that people.[31] In Argentina this would mean a government elected according to the 1853 Constitution, in principle.

Linz' concepts of loyal, semiloyal and disloyal oppositions are not extremely useful in this thesis. For one thing, Linz' "indicators" of lack of loyalty are so stringent and so many that they cannot be taken literally, as he himself recognizes. Also, the armed forces really acted in Argentina more as a disloyal opposition than as a so-called neutral power. Nor do the process and conditions of reequilibration aid very much in understanding what happened, perhaps because reequilibration did not take place.

More useful, as shall be seen, is the study of political leadership, conditioning factors, the initial agenda and its repercussion, resentment politics, unsolvable problems, the importance of political violence and government response to it, the role of the armed forces and of Marxist groups as permanent disloyal oppositions, effectiveness and efficacy, influence of the intelligentzia, etc.

And, of course, an analysis based on the Linz approach needs to use other tools as well, something which I will attempt to do.

Notes to CHAPTER II

[1]Linz, Breakdown, I, 5.

[2]Cf. S. Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems" in Huntington and C. Moore, eds., Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society.

[3]Nor do they study in-depth democratic crises in multinational states, caused by secessionist or irredentist movements. The references to these problems are thus omitted in my summary.

[4]Linz, Breakdown, I, 9.

[5]Ibid, 14.

[6]Ibid, 93. Another test is the willingness or unwillingness of rebel groups "to enter into coalition with political groups that were disloyal to a democratic regime even before it allegedly violated the democratic trust." (ibid).

[7]Ibid, 87.

[8]Ibid, 91.

[9]Cf. ibid.

[10]Ibid, 17.

[11]This is why new regimes facing serious problems during their consolidation period have a special disadvantage, since they cannot point to past achievements as proof of the regime's efficacy. For Linz' discussion of legitimacy, efficacy and effectiveness, cf. ibid. 16-23.

[12]Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, Toronto, 1963, p. 264.

[13]Breakdown, I, 22.

[14]For Linz' discussion of disloyal, semiloyal and loyal oppositions, cf. Breakdown, I, 27-38.

[15]Ibid, 33.

[16]Ibid, 24-27.

[17]Ibid, 19.

[18]Ibid, 45.

[19]Ibid, 61.

[20]Ibid, 50.

[21]Ibid, 38.

[22]Ibid, 33.

[23]Ibid, ix.

[24]See, for an enlightening study of the crisis of the philosophy of science, and of the limitations of positivism, J.J. Sanguineti, La filosofia de la ciencia según Santo Tomás. For a philosophical critique of behavioralism, cf. J. Gunnell, Philosophy, science, and political inquiry.

[25]F. Suarez, Reflexiones sobre la Historia, 15 - 16. He cites approvingly, on this point, Ludwig von Mises (Theory and History) and Karl R. Popper (The Misery of Historicism).

[26]R.H. Dix, "Democracy in Latin America," Latin American Research Review, no. 3, 1980, p. 240.

[27]Ibid. Cf. A.N. Christensen, The Evolution of Latin American Government, Chaps. 7, 12, 17, 18.

[28]R.H. Dix,"Democracy in Latin America," 240.

[29]Ibid., 242. See the Conclusion of this thesis.

[30]Ibid, 244.

[31]J. Messner, Das Naturrecht, 894. Messner goes on to discuss the question of when a revolutionary or usurpating regime's rule becomes legitimate, which is related to the acceptance of it by the populace during a long period of time, and to the fact that the new regime's power of command becomes a constitutive element of the common good existing in reality: ibid., Chap.131.

CHAPTER III

DEMOCRACY IN ARGENTINA: AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

What follow are elements needed for a basic comprehension of politics during the 1973-76 period: historical, sociological and constitutional characteristics of Argentine democracy; and the ideology and praxis of Peronism before 1973.

1. Traits of Argentine Democracy

The sources, origins and evolution of democratic institutions in Argentina have shaped them in a specific way. I will here attempt to abstract from the actual workings of democratic institutions and from the ideas that held sway in Argentine society the more important characteristics of democracy as it is understood and practiced in that country.

There has always been a strong national executive power. Starting with the federal dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas and continuing with the presidentialist constitution of 1853, which was interpreted by presidents as giving them wide powers, the tradition of a strong executive carried over into the presidencies of J. Roca; and of Yrigoyen (1916-22; 1928-30), who ran the country, as he ran his party, as a "personalist." Peron's style of rule (1945-55; 1973-74) was also dictatorial, among other things because of his huge electoral mandates. Military rule enhanced the tradition of ill-curtailed executive powers, exemplified in congresses which have rarely initiated and approved legislation over strong presidential opposition.[1]

Despite the fact that the federalists won militarily in 1852 over those who sought a unitarian or centralized state, and even though a federation was set up by the 1853 Constitution, yet, by the end of the nineteenth century Argentina had become a centralized country and those who ruled in Buenos Aires ruled also in the provinces.[2] The trend toward centralization which economically came to signify the ascendancy of the center (Buenos Aires and its province) over the interior, was continued by President Yrigoyen, who intervened in several provinces when he took office, replacing Conservative governors with fellow Radicals; by the Conservatives in the period 1932-43; by the Peronists in 1946-55 and 1973-76, who also "intervened" provinces and in general had "puppet" governors; by Frondizi (1958-62), who intervened in several provinces after election results showed the Peronists had won. No party whose base was not Buenos Aires, which has, between city and province, almost half the population, has ever won the national elections. The central government has almost complete control, today, of the financial and economic powers. Naturally, the centralist trend was encouraged by military administrations and by the concentration of economic power in Buenos Aires and its province.

Argentina has had its fair share of charismatic leaders - perhaps another characteristic of its democracy. Juan Manuel de Rosas and the many provincial candillos of the 1800's would be described today as populist, conservative leaders, in whom

their followers placed great trust. They were the predecessors of Yrigoyen and Perón, the two great mass leaders of this century. Yrigoyen had the unconditional following of the popular sectors, and even though he was not a good public speaker, he was a great organizer and revolutionary idealist. Peron's portrait is well-known: the flattering orator, the rhetorical nationalist, the vague ideologist, the intuitive demagogue; he skillfully used his positions in the 1943-46 military regime, Evita's popularity, sponsorship of labor and welfare legislation, distribution policies, nationalist and (in the 1970's) socialist slogans, reaction against repression of Peronism, etc., to win and conserve the loyal backing of the popular sectors. Thus, charismatic leaders, when they appear, seem to be fixtures in Argentine politics.[4]

The 1853 liberal-democratic Constitution is the parameter and the source of institutions and ideas of Argentine democracy. It was deeply influenced by the United States Constitution and by the writings of Juan Bautista Alberdi. It provided for a federal system of representative government; it established a six-year, non-renewable term for the president, who would be named by an electoral college whose members were chosen by popular vote; it provided for a Chamber of Deputies, elected by direct vote and a Senate, elected by provincial legislatures; and it set up an independent judiciary (the Supreme Court was empowered to declare legislation unconstitutional). The 1853 Constitution solemnly

proposed a Bill of Rights to be safeguarded by the new republican institutions. The Constitution was amended several times after 1853. Ultimately, the relevance of the 1853 document is shown by the tradition it has created (republicanism, separation of powers, etc.), and the lip-service which it receives from civilian governments which flouted some of its main principles (e.g. federalism), and even from military regimes.

Up until the Sáenz Peña reform of 1912, the Argentine electoral system was one of the means that the aristocracy wielded to confine decision-making to its own exclusive circles. But because of the opposition of the Radicals, President Roque Sáenz Peña promoted an electoral reform which called for universal male suffrage, the secret ballot (it had been public), and compulsory voting. The results were felt immediately, and later governments chosen in free elections could claim true democratic legitimacy. As shown in Table I, however, four out of eleven presidential elections after 1912 were vitiated because of electoral fraud (during the era of the Concordancia: 1932-1943) or of prohibition of Peronist candidates (during the anti-Peronist era, 1955-73). The mechanics of the electoral system used to severely circumscribe the range of actual representation in the national Congress, according to Peter Smith.[5] The "incomplete list" system which prevailed from 1912 through 1949 gave the leading candidates two-thirds of the seats, the second-place candidates

Table I: Presidential Elections 1916-1973

Free	Government Manipulation	Peronist Candidates Prohibited
1916		
1922		
1928		
	1932	
	1938	
1946		
1951*		
		1958
		1963
1973,March**		
1973,Sept.		

* The election was technically free, but the government greatly restricted the possiblities of the opposition parties to campaign freely.

** Juan Perón's candidacy was prohibited, when he did not comply with Lanusse's electoral regulation by which all presidential candidates had to be Argentine residents.

one-third, and the others, none at all. "In practice the incomplete list usually meant that less than two-thirds of Argentina's voters, and sometimes little more than one-half, had spokesmen of their own within the Chamber."[6] After 1955, proportional representation has been used in some elections, and in the two 1973 elections the president was chosen via direct vote and ballottage (two rounds if no candidate obtains 50% of the vote), and senators by direct vote. If one were to look at the mechanics of the electoral system, then, Argentina has evolved into a modern democracy; if one looks at the two main obstacles to free elections, fraud and prohibition of candidates, Argentina has regressed; this last point is even clearer if one realizes that the military have overturned all but three freely elected presidents since 1912 (Yrigoyen in 1916, Alvear in 1922, and Perón in 1946).

Political parties in the modern sense did not, of course, exist in Argentina during the nineteenth century, but it is safe to trace party democracy to the second half of that century. Following Peter Snow, we can give a good summary description of party politics in this period.[7]

The Partido Autonomista Nacional (PAN) and especially the strong protest movement against the land-owning aristocracy which jelled into the Radical Civic Union (UCR) are the main parties of the era. The PAN was succeeded by the Conservative Party in representing the aristocracy; the UCR was the first mass party, and it gained power in 1916. In 1946 was born the Laborist Party, later to be called Justicialist Party or Peronist Party, whose supporting coalition endured three decades despite

being practically outlawed between 1955 and 1972. Many other parties have appeared, one (the "Intransigent" UCR) raising President Frondizi to the presidency in 1958. To summarize, it can be said that political parties in the modern sense of the word - as permanent political groups organized to promote and support their principles and candidates for public office - are traditional in Argentine democracy; that they incorporated the masses since the beginning of this century; and, that Argentine politics - despite the survival of numerous minor parties - has tended towards a two-party or three-party system, largely due to the electoral system and to partisan polarization.

These parties are not noted for having internal democratic methods, to choose candidates, party leaders, or platforms. Quite on the contrary, large sectors of the Justicialist Party prided themselves on being "verticalist" and loyal to Juan Peron, the M.I.D. (Movimiento de Integracion y Desarrollo is a party organized to support one candidate - Frondizi - and so was, in 1973, the Alianza Popular Federalista (Francisco Manrique). The UCR has had the same leader, Ricardo Balbín, for over 20 years. And, as a historic example, Yrigoyen had virtually absolute control of the UCR between 1900 and 1922.[8]

Another trait, especially true of Radicalism between 1955 and 1966, has been the numerous party splits and dismemberments due to personality conflicts and personal ambitions.[9]

Intransigence among parties in and out of Congress has also been a hallmark of Argentine democracy. Ricardo Balbín

was expelled from Congress and imprisoned in 1951 for his harsh criticism of President Peron. In his detailed study of conflict within the Chamber of Deputies, Peter Smith discovered that "the most prevalent and powerful determinant of roll-call alignments, throughout the entire period from 1904 to 1954, was Party."[10] An important transition was operated in the Chamber of Deputies - and, presumably, among politicians in general - after the 1912 electoral reform. Whereas previously contending groups in the Chamber confronted each other on selective matters, creating ad hoc alliances for each issue, they eventually came to challenge each other on broad fronts. By 1950 the patterns of cleavage had become thoroughly uniform and the lines of conflict fixed.[11]

This tendency towards intransigence has, if anything, been accentuated when the main political conflict has been one of Peronism versus the military, or another political party versus the military. There has been, in Argentina in the twentieth century, a primacy of ideology and rhetoric over compromise and reason. There has been what Juan J. Linz calls politics of <u>ressentiment</u> when one or another faction got to power. Peter Smith comments ironically on "the beguiling logic" of post-1955 anti-Peronist leadership which sought "to extirpate Peronism from the national life".[12] The intransigence of the anti-Peronist military officers was, in turn, a reflection of previous Peronist partisanship and persecution. By the 1970's, ideological intransigence had shifted to left/right conflicts.

Inflexibility breeds "pendulum politics." Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been an alternation in power of opposing tendencies which, with a broad historical perspective, could be loosely termed conservative and populist (up to 1916: conservative/1916-30: populist/ 1930-1943: conservative /1943-1955: populist/ 1955-1973: mixed and ambiguous/1973-76: populist/1976-80: conservative). Within these periods, especially in the last 25 years, there have been shorter cycles (1955-58: military/ 1958-62: civilian/ 1962-63; military/1963-66: civilian/1966-73: military/1973-76: civilian/1976-80: military).

So habitual has been the intervention of the armed forces that it has become almost commonplace to state that democratic governments need, in Argentina since 1930, the support of the military to succeed. Some authors describe this historical fact in the following terms: the armed forces possess a certain residual, guardian power which they make use of when there is a crisis which the civilian government is not capable of solving; this is called by Bidart Campos "military power," which is, in democracies like that of Argentina, "a factor which reinforces and gives life to the political power."[13]

Disenchantment with liberal democracy, due to corporatist-type political thinking and to the actual failure of democratic governments in Argentina, has led to the divorce in people's minds of "true" or "societal" democracy from liberal democracy. This dychotomy, which of course is not new in the history of

political thought, leads many an Argentine to think "a dictatorship is much more democratic, if it has consensus, than a democracy which builds its infrastructure merely taking formalities into account, and disregarding (consensus)".[14]

These are, in sum, some of the historical traits of Argentine democracy which should be taken into account. Because of all this, and despite the caveats mentioned in this paper, it can be said that Argentina is a country with a "rockbed" tradition of democracy, which, nevertheless, because of a series of circumstances and events, including the undeniable weakening of its republican institutions due to the praetorianism of the last half century, has succumbed to recurring military government. The fact that those military regimes have always returned power to a constitutional government and have not, as a rule, spent prolonged periods of time in power, would seem to prove that they have tended to act as "guardians of the constitutional order", in Samuel Huntington's terminology (Ongania and Videla being, perhaps, the exceptions).[15]

What Argentine democrats - a vast majority of Argentines - do not seem to have realized is a basic tenet underlying working democracies: that it is necessary to distinguish between democratic institutions and substantive politics, that in a democracy people are agreed not on policy but on institutions. The lack of understanding of this premise is

not only shown when opposition parties go "knocking on the doors of the barracks", or when extremist groups turn to violence. It is also shown when a government which is democratically installed in power identifies the democratic regime with a specific political content, or refuses to share power or discuss policy with opposition parties. Most Argentines are democrats, in that they would claim the rights democracy brings with it: many Argentines do not understand or do not accept the duties democracy entails.[16]

2. Juan Perón: Ideas, First Government and Exile

The restoration of democracy in 1973 meant also the restoration of Peronism, with the consequence that those Argentines who had suffered or been persecuted because of their political beliefs in the previous Peronist era (1945-55) might still be "suspicious of past semiloyal actions."[17] In fact, Peronism in the 1970's had mellowed, in its relations with opposition political parties, especially the Radicals, mostly because Peron himself had since 1970 actively sought a national coalition of political parties in order to oppose the military. The previous Peronist record cannot be over-looked, nevertheless, in explaining the failure of the second Peronism, because it helps to explain some non-democratic traits of the movement and its leader.

Was Peron a democrat? He was formally a democratic political leader, in that he had attained office in 1946 via free elections, in that he had the support of a political party which had a large popular following, and in that he paid

lip-service to constitutionalism. He had, however, risen to prominence via a military regime (1943-46) which he had supported from its inception, and whose original aim was ambiguous. His background was that of a soldier, not a politician or congressman. His ideas show a corporatist tendency: an organized community comprised of one centralized labor union federation, a representative business association, a representative professionals' organization, and the armed forces.[18] His ideas also show a disdain for basic democratic principles: "No longer would it be conceivable in the Peronist Argentina placed under our custody and our government, that anyone, absolutely anyone, can rise up against the majority will of the nation. Whoever does this will suffer the consequences of his action."[19]

Peron's political ideas were ambiguous, fairly vague, and much is to be learned from his actual policies, more than from his rhetorical statements. The statements were to the effect that he was seeking a national revolution whose aims were national sovereignty, economic independence and social justice. By national sovereignty he meant, among other things, an independent position vis-à-vis the two super-powers, what he called the Third Position. He also favored Latin American unity. By economic independence, he meant state owned or state controlled enterprises in key sectors of the economy, protectionism and a guided economy. He was more practical than dogmatic: in 1973 - 74 he sought European foreign investment instead of American - but it was foreign capital after all. By social justice he meant favoring the urban working class and the most needy.

Precisely his actions in government and in exile can be taken as a test of Peron's democratic spirit. Peron used the large, even overwhelming majorities obtained by the Peronist parties that supported him (Laborista Party in 1946, Justicialist Party thereafter) to rule in an authoritarian manner. Technically, he was elected democratically in 1946, 1951 and 1973, in that his party received a majority of the votes. But the 1948 congressional elections, the 1948 constituent assembly elections, the 1951 presidential election, and the 1954 congressional and vice-presidential elections were held under increasingly non-democratic conditions. Already by 1948 Peron was insisting on converting Argentine democracy into a one-party system: the Supreme Court had been impeached, opposition newspapers had been silenced, and outspoken critics, whether Radical Pary deputies or one-time Peron supportes, imprisoned or harshly treated, flouting constitutional procedures and guarantees.[20] One of the main aims of the constitutional reform of 1949 was to allow Peron to be President for a second consecutive term, which was forbidden by the 1853 Constitution.

There are many examples of the lack of "legal freedom to formulate and advocate political alternatives with the concomitant rights to free association, free speech, and other basic freedoms of the person,"[21] such as the jailing of former Peron-supporter Cipriano Reyes from 1948 to 1955 on unfounded charges, and the forced inactivity or exile of other Laboristas.[22] The gradual move towards authoritarian democracy became specially perceptible after the enactment of the 1949 constitutional reform: "Peron and his supporters," states an authoritative

historian, "took the view that Peronist doctrine, . . . had ceased to be a partisan manner. It was now national doctrine, and so was the movement that supported it. Those who disagreed with Peronism . . . were, therefore, either consciously serving antinational interests or were the victims of ignorance and in need of reeducation. Although the President insisted that his goal was national union, not a single party, he made plain his view that the existing parties did not merit the term and were simply political gangs."[23]

In accordance with such premises, the already restricted opportunities for political opposition and independent criticism were narrowed: legislation forbade the formation of electoral coalitions and obstructed the creation of new parties (1949); penal code amendments established heavy penalties for offending the dignity of public officials (1949); two Radical Party deputies were expelled from Congress and went into exile to avoid arrest (1949); Ricardo Balbin, parliamentary leader of the Radical minority, was imprisoned for ten months (1950); the independent and influential newspaper La Prensa was seized (1951).

The unsuccessful military coup against Peron in 1951 brought on greater political persecution. A "state of internal warfare" was declared; similar to a state of siege but without being specified in the Constitution, it would allow the Executive Power to suspend constitutional guarantees and to detain many individuals without trial until Peron's fall in 1955. During the 1951 electoral campaign anti-Peronist parties were denied all access to radio broadcasting, they could hold outdoor rallies only with police permission, and many of the Socialist Party's candidates

(including the presidential nominee) were either detained or hiding from the police. The daily press was, by now, overwhelmingly sympathetic to the Peronist candidates. A new internal security body, the Consejo Federal de Seguridad, was created to complement the already extensive vigilance of police and intelligence services.[24]

An incipent military rebellion in which Peron was to be murdered was discovered in early 1952. The reaction of Peron to that was irresponsible and drastic. Through secret directives it was established that any future attempts on the life of the President would be responded to with personal attacks, bombings, and arson perpetrated by groups made up of members of the Justicialist Party and the CGT.[25]

Actions similar to those proposed in the directives were perpetrated in April 1953, when in response to anti-Peronist bombings which caused several deaths bands of Peronist youths set fire to opposition party and other buildings. Domestic tensions were high, as the country was highly polarized, and there were many political detentions. But Peron, in the midst of a serious economic crisis, took a conciliatory attitude as of mid-1953, which lasted until October 1954. A limited amnesty of political prisoners was granted in December 1953.

April 1954 vice-presidential and congressional elections were "an example of the arbitrary power that the Peron administration, under the existing constitution, was able to exercise":[26] the vice-president had been dead for two years, and congressional seats for which deputies and senators were elected would not become vacant for another year (the country had, in the interim, two sets of congressmen, the incumbents and the designates).

What finally caused Peron's fall was not the bad economic conditions, nor the resentment of anti-Peronists at his authoritarian rule. A more direct cause of his fall was his promotion of a campaign against the Catholic Church, from November 1954 on: inflammatory speeches, arrests of priests, the closing of a Catholic newspaper, the surreptitious legalizing of divorce, the expulsion from the country of two bishops, climaxed by the burning of several churches. A bloody June 16 golpe failed, but not a September coup, after Peron had abandoned a conciliatory approach and lashed out at his enemies, proclaiming that any violence on their part would be met by greater violence from his supporters. The September 1955 revolution itself was not a protracted conflict, due in large part to Peron's decision to flee in order to avoid further bloodshed and loss of his freedom.

From exile, in various Latin American countries first, in Madrid after the late 1950s, Peron maneuvered to retain the loyalty of his movement and to obtain his political rehabilitation. He supported the candidacy of Arturo Frondizi, who was elected President in 1958, but soon revoked his support. In 1962, Frondizi was ousted after provincial elections in which Peronists took a majority of the governorships. The election results were annulled by the military.

During the 1963 electoral campaign, a tentative political plan envisioning the formation of a national front that would include Peronists but not Peron collapsed, in part because

the caudillo himself refused to give up the leadership of his party to an heir who would be acceptable to the armed forces. Shortly thereafter, Peron fought off the challenge of a powerful union leader, Augusto T. Vandor, who wanted to take over the political inheritance of the exiled caudillo whom he considered an obstacle, "dead weight".[27]

During the 1966-73 military regime, Peron accepted the support of terrorists groups such as Montoneros and the "Peronist Armed Forces" (FAP), in order to bring down the government. At the same time, he started negotiating with his old enemies, the other political parties, in order to form an electoral front which would wrest power from the military. The latter were experiencing problems in running the country, especially after the Cordobazo, an uprising of workers and students in May 1969, and rising terrorism.

It has been necessary to trace the above historical sketch in order to show how Peron helped create the extreme polarization which plagued Argentine society and the military for almost thirty years. The already exaggerated antagonistic tendencies of Argentine politicians were exacerbated by Peron's dictatorial style, by the persecution of his adversaries, by the personality cults (that he encouraged) of himself and Evita.

Once overthrown, Peron did not relent. He insisted on retaining power of his movement: he never consented to handing over nor even delegating his role to a lieutenant or

successor, who would be more acceptable to anti-Peronists and the military, who had ousted him. If he was truthfully seeking national union and reconciliation, as he maintained on many occasions, his resignation from the leadership of his party, or the naming of a competent successor would have seemed appropriate.

This constant in Peron's life of never choosing a capable successor, of not preparing the way for the institutionalization of his movement that he talked so much about, is as much a trait of his character as it is shrewd but irresponsible politics. In the late 1940s he rewrote the Constitution to be re-elected; from exile he broke with Vandor and Paladino because they betrayed "him"; he chose Campora and Solano Lima mainly because of their loyalty to him; he surrounded himself with people whose main quality was being subservient, not intelligent or experienced (eg, Lopez Rega). But the choice of Isabel as his running-mate highlights Peron's paranoid obsession. It was one of the most fateful decisions made in Argentine history, because a capable helmsman might have been able to guide the ship of state through the storm. Peron, says Wynia, refused to institutionalize a line of succession within the Peronist movement

> because the choice of successors might have limited his ability to hold the movement together by continually shifting his favor among competing factions. When he selected his wife Isabel . . ., he gave up his last chance to settle the issue, but by his actions he only postponed the inevitable power struggle until after his death.[28]

The choices of incapable or unscrupulous men (not all of them, by all means, were like that) also meant a propensity towards corruption in both Peronist administrations (the judicial charges against Isabel are of fraud and corruption), a destabilizing factor in a democratic regime where praetorianism replaces normal legal or impeachment procedures.

Peron's choice of Gelbard, as well as other capable ministers, show that, as might be expected, not all his decisions were detrimental to Argentine society. If I chose to highlight in this review the negative aspects of his career, it is because it is unfortunate that the manner in which he chose to change Argentina in the end undid the undeniable validity of his message and of his movement. By undermining or ignoring democratic rules of the game and civil liberties, he weakened considerably the democratic institutions.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1]See P. Smith, Argentina and the Failure of Democracy, p. xviii. There are exceptions, e.g. the Illia administration (1963-66).

[2]See P. Smith, Argentina, 2-3.

[3]His style was that of a local politician: individual meetings, local organization, etc., in which he was very succesful.

[4]Other historical figures could be classified as civilian charismatic leaders (Leandro Além), military-civilian charismatic leaders (Urquiza, Roca) and even leaders who held sway over the military and some civilian following (Onganía).

[5]Argentina, 11-12.

[6]Ibid., 12.

[7]P. Snow, Argentine Radicalism, chap. 1.

[8]P. Snow, Argentine Radicalism, 77.

[9]See ibid, p. 71ff.

[10]P. Smith, Argentina, 70.

[11]P. Smith, Argentina, 56.

[12]Argentina, 107-108.

[13]Bidart Campos, Historia politica y constitucional argentina, v. 3, 115.

[14]A. Jauretche, Mano a mano entre nosotros, 35.

[15]Political Order in Changing Societies.

[16]Linz makes a similar point about pre-1936 Spain: "many Republicans were not really democrats, but Republicans first of all." "The Breakdown of Democracy in Spain", 181.

[17]See p.13 above.

[18]If [a unique and centralized labor union federation] does not represent a power group . . . the organized community ceases to be a reality. . . . An organized community is represented, precisely, by those power groups which form an equilibrium, so that nobody can declare himself a dictator or want to govern by himself. These power groups are the ones with weight; and when they act, they combine among themselves the defense of their respective interests. . . . There are other power groups besides the political [parties], and which should influence decisively the life of the community." Speech, April 4, in Juan Peron, 1973-1974, v. 2, p. 146.

[19]Juan Peron, Speech, 1950, quoted in R. Potash, The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962, 106.

[20]Potash, The Army and Politics, 88.

[21]Part of Linz definition of democratic regime, p.6 above.

[22]Potash, The Army and Politics, 90-91.

[23]Ibid., 102-103

[24]Ibid., 133, 136-138

[25]Ibid, 142

[26]Ibid, 157

[27]A. Rouquié, Pouvoir militaire et societé politique en Republique Argentine, 555.

[28]G. Wynia, Argentina in the Postwar Era, 223.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESTORATION, CRISIS AND BREAKDOWN OF THE DEMOCRATIC REGIME

1. The Lanusse "Apertura"

The military regime established by Gen. Juan Carlos Ongania in 1966 was a major attempt by the military to end the stalemate and instability of Argentina caused by Peron and anti-Peronists. With a coup that was later to be regretted, even by the military, but which at the time counted with the approval of a majority of the population, Ongania sought to bring about law and order and economic development. What political system was Ongania going to install? That was a question which the silent dictator refused to answer for several years, busy as he was with "administering" the country. But when he made clear to the army generals on May 27, 1970, that he sought a corporatist system, Gen. Lanusse thought it was the last straw, and plotted to oust him.[1]

At the core of the nationalist political philosophy which influenced Ongania was a belief that a different form of participation in national life could heal deep antagonisms, and that the loss of political democracy was not too high a price to pay for what he called "social democracy." Early in the Ongania administration, the absorption of Peronism was unsuccesfully advocated, along these lines.

General Ongania's grand design for reordering Argentinian economic, social, and political reality (in that order), did not work out. His government did bring order to a divided society and execute harsh economic measures, but these "achievements" were transitory. Accelerated growth and reduced inflation contributed much less than had been hoped to created a durable new political system. In fact, the methods used to obtain those goals increased popular resistance.

The erosion of public confidence in his administration, the labor and ideologically inspired May, 1969 disturbances (in Cordoba, Rosario, and elsewhere, in which more than 20 people died), persistent labor unrest and rising inflation, made Ongania's position weak by early 1970. Ongania's ouster was sparked by his inept handling of the terrorist challenge implied in the kidnapping and murder of ex-president Pedro E. Aramburu. Among the motives given by the junta of the three commanders in chief which forced Ongania's resignation on June 8, 1970, were the lack of preparations for and interest in restoring representative government. Instead, his first priorities seemed to be to forge a united labor front and to complete the economic and social reordering of Argentina.

The coup had undoubtedly been engineered by Army General Alejandro Lanusse, but lack of full support from his subordinates probably led him and the other members of the junta to name a relatively unknown general as president, Roberto Levingston.

Levingston's central aim seemed to be a planned approach to the restoration of democracy. He announced that during the next five years there would be a "progressive normalization of institutions"; together with economic development goals, social and educational reforms, the government planned to reform the constitution, create "three or four" political parties replacing the traditional ones, and finally call elections, in which would be reflected "all currents of popular opinion in a politically tolerant climate".[2] The government's dilemma was implied in its ambiguous plan: how to allow electoral participation of Peronism?

The Peronists certainly did not receive the plan very well, and neither did most of the traditional parties, the CGT, (General Labor Confederation), nor some terrorist groups, the authors of bomb outrages in several cities. In August of 1971 Jose Alonso, an influential union leader, was murdered.

After only nine months in office, President Levingston was ousted by the military chiefs who had appointed him, and General Alejandro Lanusse was named president (March 26, 1971). The reasons for Levingston's fall were the antipathy which had developed between him and Lanusse, and the

deteriorating economic situation: in 1971, inflation was of around 50%, there was a large treasury deficit and exports were down.

The uncertainty and violence grew in 1972, even as President Lanusse continued to put into practice his electoral plan. General strikes in February and June; the assassination of a Fiat executive and the commander of the II Army Corps in April; the killing of 16 guerrilla prisoners in Trelew (in the south) in August, reportedly while trying to escape: all this bode ill, while fluid political events were taking place.

Lanusse's timetable foresaw elections in March 1973. In a series of maneuvers which were probably destined to hold free elections without Peron being the candidate, and perhaps even have a pro-military candidate win - which, it soon became clear, was a wild dream - Lanusse started negotiating secretly with Peron, living in Madrid. A series of concessions were made by the government: criminal charges against Peron were withdrawn and his expulsion from the army was cancelled. Evita Peron's burial place was disclosed; and, more importantly, it was announced that Peron was free to return to Argentina, and the Justicialist Party (the Peronist party), was legalized.

In a ploy to either force Peron to come to the country (and thus perhaps "de-mythify" the myth) or to proscribe him, Lanusse decreed that every presidential candidate had to be a resident of Argentina by August 24, 1972. Peron did not meet the deadline, but did come back three months later.

Before his return, he sent to the military government a "Program of National Reconstruction" which included "ten minimum points" for an entente: among others, the adoption by Lanusse of the economic program sponsored by the CGT and CGE and the lifting of the state of siege and liberation of all political prisoners. No Lanusse-Peron agreement ever took place.

Peron was in the country between November 17 and December 13, giving his numerous and adulating followers the chance to cheer him; the trade union and Peronist leaders the chance to wait upon him; and the most prominent non-Peronist politicians - most notably Ricardo Balbin, leader of the UCR - the opportunity to confer with him. As a consequence of this visit, the other democratic leaders seemed to be convinced of Peron's desire to come back to power in a new spirit of national reconciliation. Perón, in turn, attempted not only to show a spirit of understanding, but to form a grand coalition together with other political parties, especially the UCR. Immediately after leaving Argentina Peron announced that the newly formed Peronist electoral front would carry as its presidential candidate Hector Campora.

His candidacy was totally unexpected, and hard to swallow for some. Cámpora (1909-1980) was a dentist, a Conservative in his youth, president of the Chamber of Deputies during the first Peronist era. During Peron's ten years in power, he sponsored more than 100 Congressional

tributes to him and Evita. After 1955 he was jailed for a year. Afterwards he returned to his hometwon and worked there until he was named pesonal delegate to Perón in 1971, after Perón's previous delegate had disobeyed the caudillo.

The Peronist coalition formed comprised the Justicialist Party, ex-President Frondizi's MID (Movement for Integration and Development), and splinters of the Conservative, and Christian Democratic Parties. The coalition was called FREJULI (Justicialist Liberation Front), and the vice-presidential candidate nominated was a Conservative, and old antagonist-become-friend of Peron, Vicente Solano Lima. The Peronists were without doubt the main political force within the FREJULI.

The other eight presidential candidates included Ricardo Balbin (UCR) who had rejected Peron's overtures to join the FREJULI; the federalist, right-of-center Francisco Manrique (Popular Federal Alliance) and several left-wing and right-wing candidates.

The electoral law decreed by Lanusse provided for a ballottage system, whereby, in order to win, a candidate would have to obtain 50% plus one vote; if this did not occur, there would be a run-off between the two most popular candidates. The idea behind the electoral system was that Peronism be defeated by an anti-Peronist or non-Peronist coalition - hence Peron's maneuvers to placate his former civilian opponents fear, and to form his own anti-military coalition.

1973 dawned with violence: the Navy Intelligence chief

was slain on December 29, 1972, and on January 1 there was an attack on a Buenos Aires police station. President Lanusse indefinitely extended the state of siege as a result.

In early February the military regime banned the return of Peron until after the elected government took power. The reasons were Peron's violent attacks against the "dictatorship that has ruined the country" and that was serving interests which went against the people and its liberation (3), and the FREJULI's campaign slogan, "Campora in government, Peron in power", expressing the Justicialist leader's aim in naming his personal delegate as presidential candidate, and which showed that Lanusse was being out-maneuvered in his plan to keep Peronism and Peron out of power, democratically.

During the electoral campaign, Campora made this point clear: "The fundamental rift which divides the Argentine community is no longer based on the dichotomy Peronism anti-Peronism - which has already been overcome -, but rather in revolution and counter-revolution, in social change and status quo, liberation or dependency" (4). The FREJULI's message was that to vote for another party meant to waste the ballot, to choose the status quo, dependency. Two days before the election, Campora warned the people: "The theorists of continuism believe that in a second round, the FREJULI will have less possibilities than other forces to win new votes. This is the essence of the snare . . . [which we will overcome] by the avalanche of our votes. We will win in the first round.

And we will win in such a way that, in order to proscribe us, the regime will have to oppose the people in its entirety" (5).

The FREJULI'S platform called for the re-establishment of interior peace; the abolishment of emergency laws and anti-terrorist tribunals and the decreeing of an amnesty for political prisoners (thus, "the violence from above will disappear, and dissent will be able to be expressed democratically" (6)); the re-directing of foreign policy towards a "third position", on the basis of mutual respect and equity with the superpowers, and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba; North Vietnam, and North Korea; the reform of the ALALC and the search for new ways of achieving Latin American integration; the decentralization of the educational system and its improvement (eliminating illiteracy, building schools, creating kindergardens in underprivileged areas, etc.) (7).

Its economic platform had been in the main mapped out by the CGE during the previous two years (8). According to Wynia, the unresolved, key issues in the economy were: income redistribution (caused in part by the lack of re-distribution through income taxes), inflation, foreign penetration in industry, industrial concentration, and improvement of agricultural production (9). The platform called for, especially, price stability, progressive-income redistribution, and national economic independence through the following instruments (10): a) public sector austerity, redistribution of public expenditures in favor of social

services, progressive income and land tax reform, consolidation of public enterprises (fiscal policies);

b) slow growth rate of monetary supply, channel credit to domestic enterprises, state control of bank credit (money and credit policies);

c) avoid devaluations;

d) reduce and control consumer good prices, "voluntary" 2-year wage freeze, selective import controls (controls policies);

e) gradual improvement in real working class income (from a 40% to a 50% share of national income by 1977), shift from foreign to domestic investors (income redistribution policies).

A key assumption of this plan was that a "Social Contract" among industry (CGE and allies), labor (CGT), rural groups, and government (through economics minister Gelbard and Peronist control of Congress) would be accepted and enforced.

Other platform promises were: agrarian reform; nationalization of energy sources; development of technological research; encouragement of retailing cooperatives; re-establishment of collective wage-fixing conventions between unions and employers; enactment of a worker-oriented law on employment contracts; favoring European investments to U.S. investments.

The Argentine people went to the polls for the first time in 10 years on March 11, 1973. The result was an

impressive Peronist victory. The FREJULI won with 49.5% of the vote, and obtained majorities in the provincial governorships (20 out of 22), in the Senate (43 out of 69 seats) and in the Chamber of Deputies (145 out of 243 seats). Lanusse immediately declared Campora "the virtual winner", and Balbin waived his right to a run-off. Balbin's nationalist, left of center Radical Party polled a disappointing 21.3% of the vote; he had been too close ideologically and politically to Peron to receive the anti-Peronist ballots, which went to third place Francisco Manrique (15%). Oscar Alende's center-left Popular Revolutionary Alliance, more leftist than Campora and Balbin, received 8% of the vote. Two right-wing parties associated with big business or with the government received 6%, and two Trotskyist parties 1%.

Despite the Peronists' triumph, terrorism continued. The ERP shot an industrialist on March 17, attacked a police post on March 19, and a thermonuclear power plant on March 25. . . . An official Peronist organ, Mayoria, warned against the attitude of certain radical groups of Peronists "whose violence, lack of judgment and of history can lead to no good" (11). And after the assassination of an army intelligence officer whom the Montoneros said was "directly responsible" for the repression of guerrillas in Cordoba, President-elect Campora called for a truce. The Montoneros (who, unlike the ERP, were Peronists) said in the statement in which they took responsibility for the murder that "with

the same fervor with which we worked to win the government through elections, we continue maintaining our ideas, our organization and our arms, in thepersecution of the enemy . . . to destroy him". (12)

While other kidnappings were taking place, the leader of the Peronist Youth Movement, Rodolfo Galimberti, called for the creation of "popular militias" that would assure that elected Peronists would not "betray" the party. The army responded by announcing that it would not tolerate the existence of other armed organizations within the nation, and Peron gave Galimberti a dressing down in Madrid.

But the violence continued. In ongoing reprisals to the killing of 16 guerrillas in Trelew in 1972, retired Rear Adm. Francisco Aleman had been abducted by the ERP on April 1, and retired Adm. Hermes Quijada was assassinated on April 30 by two leftists terrorists. On May 3 Campora met with the military rulers headed by Lanusse, and told them that under his government "the armed forces will have to be subordinated to the national authorities." After the important meeting Campora expressed hopes "that the nation may overcome violence by means of the installment of the constitutional powers". (13) A proposal of the military government asking for participation of the armed forces in security decisions of the democratic administration was not mentioned in Campora's official statement. It had been implicitly rejected on March 22 (14).

On May 24, the eve of the transfer of power, Lanusse made a televised speech in which he acknowledged that the military were not without responsibility in "the errors that two generations of Argentines have made", but that from that moment on they would return to their bases and barracks to continue serving the institutions of the country.

2. The Campora Presidency (May 25 to July 13, 1973)

The Campora inauguration ceremony was in itself a noteworthy political event. Not only was he the first freely elected president since 1952, but the first Peronist candidate to hold the highest office, since Perón's violent ouster 18 years before. And the Peronists made the most of the occasion. On hand were the following foreign dignitaries: Presidents Salvador Allende of Chile and Osvaldo Dorticos of Cuba, who were invited to sign the document transmitting power to Campora, and representatives of 82 governments, including U.S. Secretary of State William P. Rogers. (Three days later Argentina resumed diplomatic relations with Cuba, after an 11-year break.) Millions of people took to the streets to celebrate, just as they had done on March 11. A military parade was cancelled when the car carrying the commanders of the navy and air force were attacked by youths.

Campora's inauguration speech was long, rhetorical, and resentful. He charged the military, the anti-Peronists, and all who had preceded him since 1955 with having caused the

ruin of the economy and society; only thanks to the wisdom and courage of Peron, his movement, and the Argentinian people - especially the "marvellous youth which knew how to respond to violence with violence" (15) - had the dictatorship been forced to surrender its power to the forces of liberation, which were initiating the "Program of National Reconstruction." He stressed Latin American unity and solidarity with Third World nations, especially those fighting for liberation, such as Vietnam; he repeated many points of his platform, among which a Social Contract between labor and industry; he promised to respect the Constitution and minorities' rights. As commander-in-chief of the armed forces he demanded obedience of all military personnel, and announced that he would act to restore Peron's rank as lieutenant general revoked in 1955. The new president showed that he was in command of the country and its armed forces. By announcing the appointment of the lowest ranking army division commander, Gen. Jorge Carcagno, as army service chief, Campora forced into retirement eight higher-ranking generals, many of them known as anti-Peronists. Lanusse had previously announced his retirement.

His cabinet appointments were either moderates or unknown: Antonio Benitez, Angel Robledo, Jorge Taiana; it would have been difficult to foresee from the backgrounds of Interior Minister Esteban Righi and of Foreign Affairs Minister Juan Carlos Puig that they were soon to be branded leftists; Labor Minister Ricardo Otero was a union leader; Social Welfare

Minister José Lopez Rega was a former policeman with no previous political experience who had been serving as Peron's personal secretary; and Economics Minister José Gelbard was the CGE leader, a successful entrepreneur.

Two key issues touched upon in the inauguration speech were Juan Peron's role in the new government and the treatment to be allotted the extremist guerrillas. Claiming that this was "the hour of Peron" because after 17 years of unjust repression his ideas and his movement had once again triumphed against the reactionary forces which had toppled the Peronist revolutionary regime, Campora emphasized his continuous loyalty to Peron whose doctrine was the inspiration of all his policies: Campora al gobierno, Peron al poder. The former president, meanwhile, had announced his second return for June. From Campora's speech it seemed clear that he expected to stay the full term in office.

With respect to terrorism - in the first five months of 1973 there had been more than 25 abductions, for which at least US $5 million had been paid in ransom, 6 major assassinations, and at least 8 significant attacks, assaults or bombings (16) - Campora acted swiftly. Keeping his campaign promise and Peron's previous commitment (17), a few hours after his inauguration he decreed by Executive Order (without waiting for a law of Congress) a pardon for all prisoners whose crimes were considered politically motivated: more than 500 were pardoned, including many guerrillas convicted of subversion or terrorism. Nevertheless,

the ERP issued a statement on May 26 in which it criticized the moderate labor leaders backing Campora and his economic policy of a"social truce" as amounting to a "national unity between the army oppressors and the oppressed, between exploitative businessmen and the exploited workers." (18) It called on Campora to "arm the people" and vowed to continue its attacks against businesses. Two hostages were released by the ERP in the following days, but on June 6 a businessman was kidnapped. Meanwhile, the new president submitted legislation which was passed by Congress abolishing a special anti-subversive court created by the previous regime.

Campora named new judges to the Supreme Court, and intervened the country's 19 state universities. At the head of the 85,000-strong National University of Buenos Aires, he placed Rodolfo Puiggros, a Communist leader of the 1940's who had subsequently supported Peron and who was a well-known Marxist nationalist intellectual.

In economic matters, the Campora administration went ahead with the policies proposed by the CGE. On June 8 a "Social Pact" was signed by the CGE and the CGT, labor accepting a two-year wage freeze after a 25% across-the-board salary increase had been decreed by the government. In late August, all rural groups except one would opt in, signing an agreement whereby the government promised an increase in minimum commodity prices, more credit, and new tax incentives.

The atmosphere before and after Campora's inauguration

was heady, revolutionary. Since March widespread acts of lawlessness had taken place. Schools and public buildings had been occupied by leftists, violence had continued. It seemed in those uncertain days as if a leftist administration, albeit with a moderate, nationalistic economic policy, had taken over, with the permission of the all-powerful populist leader. But that was not to be the case. The Peronist coalition was already cracking, polarized into right and left wings, with the rightists being the more numerous: in labor, in the Justicialist Party, and among business leaders who supported the government - but not within the Peronist Youth movement. What was decisive, however, was that the leftist tendency was not popular with Juan Peron.

The Leader decided to return. On June 20 two million followers turned out to receive him near Ezeiza Airport. But before Peron had arrived, shooting broke out between rightist, labor-union youth and young leftists in which around 200 people died. Peron's plane was diverted to an air force base. The next day, on TV, he called on all Argentines to unite behind the Justicialist movement in a spirit of reconciliation, to bring about the pacification and reconstruction of the country, and warned those that wanted to deviate from his doctrine, "as far apart from one as from the other of the dominating imperialisms", that he would not tolerate this nor their "ignominious designs." (19)

Three weeks later President Campora and Vice President Solano Lima caught Argentina by surprise when they resigned, creating a constitutional crisis under which a new election had to be called. Campora stated that what the previous regime had impeded by means of an unjust proscription was now possible, and that, he said, was what the Argentine people wanted: Peron as president. Peron, in turn, immediately praised Campora's gesture as that of "an extraordinary citizen", and indicated that he would run for the presidency though it constituted a "tremendous sacrifice" (20).

Raul Lastiri, Lopez Rega's son-in-law and President of the Chamber of Deputies, became acting President when the actual constitutional successor, Senate Chairman Alejandro Diaz Bialet, was hastily sent out of the country on a foreign mission. In an editorial published July 16 the newspaper La Prensa expressed surprise at the political maneuvering the result of which "has been the arrival to the presidency of a man without public antecedents, unknown to the country, and without experience." The military commanders, who had been forewarned, gave tacit support to the move, which had been forced by the anti-Marxist leader of the CGT, José Rucci.

Why did Peron return on June 20? Because there was no longer any reason for him to be in exile, and there were many motives for his presence in Argentina.

Why did Perón retire Cámpora?

The motive stated by both politicians was that the previous election had been fraudulent inasmuch as Peron's candidacy had been prohibited. But this was surely not the real motive, according to observers and historians.[21] I believe, after a careful reading of Campora's inauguration speeches and other addresses while in office, that he had thought he would govern for a full period.

The alternative explanations are two: a) Peron had planned this constitutional chess-like coup months before, but had not communicated it to anyone, not even Campora. b) Peron, on seeing the direction Campora's government was taking, upon witnessing the disorder and political violence of Argentina, and pushed on by conservative Peronists such as Rucci and by his own desire of historical rehabilitation and ambition, came to the conclusion that he alone had the sufficient authority to keep his movement united and to pacify the country. In my opinion, a combination of a) and b), or b) alone, explain the move.

3. The Lastiri Interregnum (July 13-October 12, 1973)

Even before announcing the date of the new elections Lastiri moved to eliminate the two cabinet members perceived as left-leaning: Esteban Righi, Minister of the Interior, and Juan Carlos Puig, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Righi had made the political mistake of warning Federal police officers, who were faced with a terrorist onslaught, that no abuse, harassment or torture of prisoners or suspects would hencemore

be allowed, and that no Argentine would be imprisoned for political reasons.

The Lastiri caretaker period was marked by these issues, always against the backdrop of ongoing violence: the growing split between Peronist labor and Peronist youth, the key question of who would be Peron's running-mate, and the electoral campaign.

The right-left split continued to grow within the Peronist movement and burst into armed confrontation. Left-wingers criticized the "sorcerer" Lopez Rega (who published in 1962 Esoteric Astrology and who was said to exercise considerable influence over Isabel Peron and who lived with the Perons) and CGT head Rucci for having engineered the "right-wing coup" which "ousted" Campora, and for attempting to block his nomination as vice-presidential candidate. A raid on leftist union headquarters in Cordoba in mid-July exposed serious fissures between Left and Right in a province which is an industrial and university center and which had seen the triumph within the Movement and the subsequent election of a leftist Peronist governor and vice-governor, and where Marxist Labor leader Agustin Tosco continued to defy Rucci. Supporters of the Right assassinated at least one young leftist and committed other violent attacks against the Left during July. Meanwhile, the Peronist Youth were mobilizing thousands of young people.

In early August a Justicialist Party convention unanimously sanctioned the formula Juan Peron-Isabel Peron for the upcoming elections. No other nominees were offered. Why was Isabel chosen? Right-wing Peronists apparently advocated her, in order to block any possibility of Campora, the Youth Movement's choice,

being selected. And the Leader himself, after unsuccessfully seeking to woo Ricardo Balbin of the UCR into a national unification formula, chose Isabel as probably the only candidate who would not provoke a split in the Movement - or so he thought. Balbin finally ran on his own ticket with 34-year-old Fernando de la Rua.

Linked to the question of the vice-presidential candidacy and future succession was that of Peron's health. Time magazine stated August 20, 1973 that Peron's doctors were indicating that the efforts of the presidential office would sharply reduce his possiblities of finishing the four-year period. In his acceptance speech of August 18, Peron read a medical report which stated that he had recovered from an illness diagnosed on July 16, and that his future activities should be adjusted to his age and state of health (22). To the radicalized youth, to journalists and to his followers he insisted that the future of the Peronist Movement lay in its "institutionalization".

What was Peron's platform? It was not clearly spelled out. Peron ran on the basis of his personal appeal, of his past record and the present government's record, on the need to pacify the country, presenting himself as the only leader capable of doing that, and on ambiguous appeals to national reconstruction and liberation, to an anti-imperialistic and nationalistic position, to economic redistribution, etc. He oversaw a short campaign (23 days long and in which he attended very few mass rallies). He did not underscore the resentment politics which Campora had emphasized and to which he himself had contributed so much in his previous government and in exile. In

the final speech of the campaign, on TV, he stated, "We too have learnt from an experience which has cost us dearly, and today we firmly have in mind not a destructive spirit of revenge that we have seen with sadness, but rather the need to overcome unhealthy passions for the common good of the Fatherland" (23).

He energetically condemned terrorist violence, because, he explained during the campaign, the causes for it have disappeared: "It is necessary that the youth be convinced that the active struggle has finished and that now begins another struggle which is no less important: that for the Reconstruction and Liberation of the Fatherland" (24). In a talk with Peronist Youth on September 8 he was very clear as to where he stood: "In Peronism there's people who think one way or another; of this branch, or the other. Ah, but they're Peronists, watch out! That's what matters. . . . Of this I know a lot not only because I've acted [politically] here, but also abroad, where many forces are active which act here also. . . . Yes, I saw them there [outside Argentina], and I was with them there, and I talked with them. At that time I was also conspiring. . . they thought I was one of them, but I was not one of them, I was one of us. Not of them. And I still have connections with people that have an international activity, because they are not only active here, but in the whole continent. And we can't be with them. Why not? --Because if we are not with the Yankees, we can't be with the Marxists either." (25) And, "it is not conceivable nor acceptable as something natural that there exist organized

forces that seek to impose designs of foreign sectors through violent means, while the rest of the unarmed citizenry has to witness defenselessly assaults and crimes, . . . Such organizations should place themselves as soon as possible within the law or they will be subjected to it if need be by force, as an unavoidable duty of government." (26). In that same speech of September 21 Peron asked the populace to make their just claims through the regular channels, and not by "crying tumultuously in the street", making reference to actions such as taking by force schools or public buildings, etc.

Peron's electoral approach was to seek the support of a broad coalition of voters, from all tendencies, besides maintaining the usual adherence of organized labor. He did not go into specifics about his future plan of government. Nevertheless, the decisions being made under Lastiri bore out Peron's nationalistic policies. A foreign investment bill was before Congress which limited and taxed outbound profit remittances on foreign enterprises, and all bank deposits as well as seven foreign-owned banks were nationalized in August.

On September 23 Peron won the special election to fill Campora's vacancy with 61.8% of the vote, Balbin receiving 24.3%; the only conservative, Francisco Manrique, 12.1%; and the only Marxist, Juan Carlos Coral, 1.6%. But his victory was marred by the assassination of CGT leader José Rucci,

two days after the election, presumably by the ERP, who had been outlawed by Lastiri the day before. Three other labor leaders were killed during the next two and a half weeks, as right-wing reprisals took place.

With the election of Campora, the Montoneros and other terrorist groups professing loyalty to Peron had announced that they were ending their guerrilla activities. But after some internal discussion the non-Peronist ERP had announced the continuation of their activities. Their operations were somewhat curtailed during July and August; during the period from July 13 to September 23 at least 4 significant political killings took place (27). On August 23 anti-riot police were called on for the first time in the democratic regime to curb street violence, at a pro-Montonero demonstration in which 8,000 marched. The leftist Peronist Youth mobilized many thousands of youths during the electoral campaign. The day Peron took office, the Monteneros and the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) announced they were uniting, "to help in the democratization of the Peronist Movement. . . in order to build national socialism."

The government's swing to the right continued right up until October 12: Marxist Rodolfo Puiggros was forced to resign as University of Buenos Aires Rector, and a leftist newspaper and a TV station which had carried an ERP communique were closed for a few days.

4. Juan Peron, President (October 12, 1973 to July 1, 1974)

Peron's inauguration marked a sharp contrast to Campora's. Security was tight, the leftist revolutionary fervor gone (Allende, who had been present on May 25, was now dead), few foreign dignitaries came to see the third Argentine transfer of power in five months. Peron did not spell out his legislative intentions, but rather made a short speech to the 100,000 supporters who crowded Plaza de Mayo in which he exhorted them to work hard and to cooperate with the government.

The assassination of Rucci had signalled a spiral in violence which engendered even more violence in the coming months. From September 25 to December 31 at least 30 significant acts of violence were committed, among which were the abductions of important foreign businessmen. Almost half the incidents were committed by the right, and for 4 left-wing assassinations, there were 3 right-wing murders.

During the next six months, the ERP kept up its offensive, and right-wing retaliations came, but in the political arena more than by criminal means. Of some 65 significant acts of violence, around 30% were committed by the right; of some 40 political killings, approximately 9 were right-wing murders, 13 were left-wing slayings, and the rest occurred in shoot-outs, in clashes, or were ambiguous.

On January 19 a 60 to 70-man ERP force assaulted an army regiment stationed in Azul, B.A., assassinating its commander and his wife, and capturing the second in charge.

Peron reacted strongly, and took advantage of what he called "Fourth International" inspired violence to push the passage of a controversial anti-terrorist bill through Congress. In a meeting with rebel Justicialist congressmen Peron told them to back his program or quit. Eight of the twelve legislators who made up the left-wing block resigned; the law passed, reforming the Penal Code, virtually doubled prison sentences for kidnappers, conspirators and armed extremists, giving more power to the federal police, but also ambiguously defining such crimes as "illicit associations" and "incitement to violence." Peron also forced the left-wing Governor of Buenos Aires to resign.

Another leftist provincial government was changed in a bizarre mutiny staged by the Cordoba police at the end of February. After more than a week of anarchy and violence in which at least 5 people died, Peron got Congress to approve federal intervention - not to replace the governor and punish the rebels, but rather naming a conservative Peronist as intervenor. Meanwhile, as the resilient Peronist Youth was celebrating the first anniversary of the election of Campora, Peron was dispelling all doubts of his shift to the right. Congress passed a law in March giving the president the power to appoint rector-intervenors in all state universities, and on May 1 he lashed out at the Peronist leftists, in his address to 200,000 supporters at the Plaza de Mayo, calling them "beardless youths", "imbeciles" and "infiltrators". Some 60,000 youths promptly walked out of the Plaza.

The parliamentary split and the expulsion of governors were part of a larger process which Peron termed "purification of the Movement." The loyal labor leaders were eliminating Marxist-Peronists from their ranks. Peron was insisting on the study of the Peronist doctrine by his followers, stating with fatuousness that it was the inspiring philosophy of the Third World, not aligned with either dogmatic Marxism nor capitalism; that it was based on social justice and on a corporatist vision of the nation as an "organized community."

On another front, Peron moved to assure support from and control over the armed forces. He retired late in 1973 officers who might not be loyal to him, and in January he replaced Gen. Jorge Carcagno with Gen. Leandro Anaya as army commander-in-chief. Talk of a military coup started surfacing before Peron's death (28).

Peron was also worrying about his succession. Ailing (he suffered a mild heart attack in November) and under great pressure, he must have realized death was close at hand. He insisted to his followers that they must "institutionalize" the movement. In April he bypassed several faithful Peronist legislators, asking that Sen. José A. Allende of the small Popular Christian Party be elevated to President pro tempore of the Senate. Allende thus became second in line of succession.

The Social Contract, meanwhile, with which the Peronists were hoping to solve key economic problems, was making steady

growth, increased price stability and a vastly improved external position possible.

1973 was an especially good year for commodity exports because of high world meat prices and a bumper grain crop. Inflation was held to 17% from June 1973 to May 1974 (in 1972 it had been 61%). As a result of the pay raises and family allowances granted by the government in June 1973, real wages rose by 13.3% during the second half of that year.

Despite these gains, obstacles arose. The OPEC oil price hike not only multiplied the cost of oil imports, but also contributed to internal inflation. When authorities attempted to stem the tide of imported inflation by applying import controls in late 1973, they contributed to raw-product shortages, the slowing of economic growth, and the disaffection of raw-product-consuming industrialists. In Argentina, meanwhile, non-CGT unions were able to secure new wage agreements, in violation of the Social Contract, in early 1974. Some CGT unions followed, especially when the minister of labor refused to intervene. Just before his death, Peron granted double year-end bonuses to all CGT unions, again violating the Contract.

On June 12 the economic situation had reached a critical juncture: scarcity and the black market on the one hand, petitions of wage increases and complaints from business (both sides asking to "break" the Social Contract) on the other, motivated Peron to make a historic gesture, a typical one. He spoke to the nation on TV in the morning, diagnosing

the main political problems; in the afternoon, the factories were closed and the workers bused in to the Plaza de Mayo, to express their support for their leader, who had offered to resign if his pleas were not heard. Among the problems Peron had diagnosed that morning were:

> A few months after having taken up that commitment which is key for the country, there are some who signed the Great Contract who insist on not fulfilling the agreement.
>
> Whenever the economy is growing . . . there is scarcity of products and the black market appears.
>
> The government has fixed prices, but . . . [there are] speculators [who take advantage of that].
>
> Our enemies are worried [because] . . . we have nationalized the basic resources of our economy [in fact, only bank deposits and control on exports and imports].
>
> We could be getting closer to a hard and bloody fight that some fools try to provoke . . . In many places, the men of our own movement, in governmental office, have the great failing of [being involved in] confrontations, caused at times by their spurious personal interests, at other times by sectarisms which are not understandable.
>
> To all this is added the succession fever.
>
> [Legislation governing state universities:] Why do they continue agitating . . . only for non-academic aims?
>
> Without the massive support of those who elected me and the complacency of those who did not, but afterwards manifested great understanding and sense of responsibility, I not only do not desire to continue to rule, but rather I would want that those who can do it better govern. (29)

On July 1 the country was shocked when it learned Peron had died. For many, it meant the loss of a hero, a caudillo. For the opposition, it meant the fulfillment of their fears: especially among the Radicals, and even among the military, the only man who had sufficient authority and support to guide the nation through the deep economic and security crisis looming on the horizon, who had by his actions helped bring about a situation which only he could now control, disappeared. With him disappeared the probability of constitutional stability, unless his successors were able to overcome factionalism in order to defeat terrorism and pull through the economic crisis.

"Peron's brief tenure had meant an about face of the Peronist "revolution": it was going to be, if anything, an anti-Marxist (except in foreign affairs), statist, nationalist administration. Peron was as hard on left-wing terrorists as his military predecessors, and as lenient on para-military actions as they were. He had little respect for legality in some cases. He presided over an economic revival, which was to be short-lived, because he did not set up the mechanisms for its maintenance. His decisions presupposed that he was going to live to back them up and enforce them with his great authority. But he died.

5. Isabel and Lopez Rega (July 1, 1974 - July 11, 1975)

The power vacuum created by Peron's death was immense. Isabel Peron succeeded without apparent challenge, but the long-standing antagonism between her two most powerful ministers (Jose Lopez Rega, Social Welfare, and Jose Gelbard, Economy) broke into the open. In mid-August Isabel accepted the resignations of two cabinet moderates, replacing them with more conservative men, and finally in mid-October Gelbard was forced to resign. Lopez Rega, Isabel's confidant, seemed in control. A right-wing faction had gained control of the CGT in July.

Already one month before Peron's death three militant socialist labor leaders had been shot to death, and now under Isabel the ongoing leftist violence met the response not only of the police and the military, but of a new rightist terror squad, the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (AAA), elements of which had already undoubtedly been acting, on their own. It was suspected that it was linked to certain sectors of the government, (specifically, Lopez Rega), and the military and the police cadres. Its activities allegedly included off-duty policement and military men.

Arturo Mor Roig, former Interior Minister, was murdered shortly after Isabel took office; Deputy Rodolfo Ortega Pena, of the left, was killed soon after. In August, a federal judge ordered the release of 380 persons arrested during Ortega's funeral; the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a government decree closing a leftist newspaper. Mrs. Peron, August 15 decreed the

closing of a right-wing publication, for the first time, and on August 30 a leftist Peronist daily was closed by government ruling for not being "in line with national pacification efforts". Meanwhile, also in August, ERP initiated its first major offensive since January, with concurrent attacks on an army explosives factory near Cordoba and a regiment's headquarters in Catamarca. To avenge the death of guerillas killed in those attacks, (perhaps after having surrendered, as alleged) ERP vowed to murder more than a dozen army officers (four had been killed by October, and a dozen by the end of 1974, when ERP chose other targets).

In September Monotoneros announced they were taking up arms. The Montonero leader told an underground news conference his group wanted the government to restore freedom of speech, to eliminate repression, to curb police excesses, to free political prisoners, and to reinstate suspended leftist labor leaders to their previous posts. (30)

September saw an unprecedented wave of violence take over the country. By the end of the month over 20 political assassinations had shocked the government, half of them committed by the AAA. A sweeping security law quickly voted by both Houses virtually banning press reports of terrorist activities in the hope it would discourage publicity-oriented violence had no result. Isabel ordered a government intervention of Buenos Aires University (BAU) when the student body elected a leftist leadership.

October witnessed an attempt by Mrs. Peron to garner the broadest support in her fight against terrorism. On October 8

she held a meeting with political, labor, business, religious and military leaders, in which all condoned violence. The military continued to declare their allegiance to the constitutional government (31). Balbin, though siding with the President, criticized once more "the fascist right" whose activists were never captured (32). The ERP, perhaps feeling the losses inflicted to it, reportedly offered to end operations in return for freedom for political prisoners, the repeal of "repressive legislation", and legal recognition of the ERP (33).

Violence, however, did not stop, and November opened with the spectacular killing of the Federal Police Chief. "If I were not in this ministerial post I would put on the police uniform again and go into the streets to fight", was the impatient reaction of Lopez Rega (34). Mrs. Peron declared the state of siege on November 6, suspending habeas corpus and the right of assembly.

As a result of Peronist infighting, the President placed Salta Province under Federal intervention. Salta was thus the seventh province in which leftist Peronist governors were ousted by the federal government in 1974. Others included Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Formosa, Santa Cruz, and Mendoza.

By December the spiralling violence increasingly frustrated the President (see Figure 2). She also had problems in the BAU whose Rector she fired because of his right-wing outbursts.

1975 began with Welfare Minister Lopez Rega's elevation to secretary of the presidency. With the violent Peronist left temporarily inactive, differences between Peronist legislators and unionists became increasingly evident.

In Cordoba, ERP took over a TV channel on Jan. 20, and in a typical counter-move, a rightist command blew up the presses

of a leading newspaper which criticized the right-wing federal intervenor. In February the armed forces were allowed to undertake an offensive against rural guerillas in Tucuman, who had "liberated" a part of that province. A U.S. honorary Consul was assassinated by Montoneros. A metal workers' strike was viewed by the government as part of a subversive plot and 50 leaders were arrested during late March. Soon after the FREJULI won a crucial electoral test in the Misiones provincial elections in spite of a challenge by a dissident Peronist leftist faction (the Descamisados), who finished a poor third, behind the moderate UCR (29% of the vote). Lopez Rega thereafter pushed through the expulsion of Campora, now aligned with the progressive sector, from the Justicialist Party.

After mid-March reports of military conspiracies mounted as the nation's level of violence reached unprecedented heights. La Prensa and other journals accused the government of covering up AAA subversion.

By late April 350 guerrillas had been killed in Tucuman since February. Lopez Rega replaced the army commander in chief Leandro Anaya, with a more amenable and aggressive general, Alberto Numa Laplane. Economics Minister Alfredo Gomez Morales was also replaced by a Lopez Rega protégé, Celestino Rodrigo. And the controversial strong man had placed Lastiri, his son-in-law, first in the line of succession to Isabel, bypassing constitutional procedure.

This ongoing struggle for power within Isabel's administration undermined economic policy. Even though Gomez Morales had attempted to continue the Social Contract, by early June Lopez

Rega had managed to alter its purpose: instead of seeking consensus-through-bargaining among government, industry and labor, he wanted to use the Contract to achieve economic and political order, even if it meant using force against Peronist unions (35).

Economic problems were surfacing everywhere. In March the nation's largest association of farmers and cattle ranchers staged a strike to protest low meat and farm products prices. Hoarding was widespread, because of shortages government caused by price-fixing. There was a thriving black market.

During the renegotiation of wage contracts in May and June, union bargained hard with management and many obtained 100% increases. Labor leaders were faced with a deteriorating economy being indirectly managed by Lopez Rega, whose palace intrigues and autocratic ways inspired little confidence in the promise of real wage gains in 1975 and 1976. Rodrigo immediately devalued the peso by 160%, and, on June 29, annulled all labor contracts recently negotiated and decreed only a 50% wage increase. When Lopez Rega and Rodrigo refused to back down, the CGT called for something unheard of in a Peronist administration, a 48-hour general strike By July 8 Isabel was forced to revoke the decree and ratify the original contracts.

On July 11 the military high command and Peronist legislators forced Isabel to fire Lopez Rega. He resigned, and a week later fled the country. Navy Cdr. Adm. Emilio Massera had met with Mrs. Peron and blamed Lopez Rega for the crisis on July 3. The three service chiefs also pressed for an early election of a senate chairman. After Isabel yielded to the CGT strikers, she received a still more

stunning defeat in the Senate, where Italo Luder was chosen 50 to 4 as new Chairman, with the support of Opposition senators.

Lopez Rega had managed to preside over violent right-wing reprisals: the Buenos Aires Herald May 20 said that in the first 5 months of 1975 227 persons had been killed for political reasons: 150 leftists, 38 rightists, and the balance unidentified. In a visit to Montevideo Lopez Rega-protegé, Defense Minister Adolfo Savino had hailed the Uruguayan Army for having wiped out "a Trotzkyite-terrorist conspiracy" (36).

6. Isabel's Final Months (July 11, 1975 - March 24, 1976).

The month of July saw the influence of Lopez Rega almost totally disappear. Even before his resignation Congress had already elected Luder, lawyer for the metalworkers' union, to the vacant senate presidency, thus placing him ahead of Chamber President Lastiri (Lopez Rega's son-in-law) in the line of presidential succession. Soon thereafter Lastiri was ousted from that post and as head of the Justicialist Party. In spite of her defiant rhetoric Isabel gave ground on July 21 when she fired Economics Minister Rodrigo and Lopez Rega's handpicked successor as social welfare minister.

Formation of a new cabinet on August 11 did not resolve the acute political crisis. Despite the incorporation of capable men such as new Economics Minister Antonio Cafiero and new Foreign Minister Angel Robledo, the key appointment

of Interior Minister Colonel Vicente Damasco provoked a military crisis (Damasco had been an aide to Juan Peron).

Involvement of an active officer in the Peronist administration angered many officers and divided the armed forces. Damasco's retirement from active service did not appease them, and the country moved close to a military coup. Isabel Peron accepted the resignation of army commander, Numa Laplane on August 27, naming Gen. Jorge Videla - known for his lack of sympathy towards Peronism - probably in order to avoid a coup. By this time, terrorist violence was on the rise, while the armed forces reported they had killed 800 rural guerrillas since January.

These problems forced the president to take a five-week leave in mid-September, suffering as she was from emotional and physical fatigue. Senate President Luder immediately replaced her, accepting the resignation of Col. Damasco and of the Defense Minister. These developments took place at a time when Luder was not expected to make major changes, an indication that presssures from the military were at work (37). Meanwhile, violence continued. By September 15 there was an estimated toll of 450 urban deaths since January 1. The Army on September 13, in the presence of its commander, Gen. Jorge Videla, reaffirmed its determination to exterminate all Argentine guerrillas. The Army was still engaged in Tucuman Province. Despite more calls for the President's resignation, she returned on October 15 (38). The week before political violence and the Tucuman campaign had taken

110 lives (39).

After more than a week's hospitalization in early November, President Peron agreed to a UCR idea of anticipating the scheduled March 1977 election and holding it in late 1976, in an answer to pressure for her to resign. The parliamentary division among Peronist Congressmen was widening.

In December an Argentine Air Force rebellion was quelled when the nationalistic group of officers surrendered after a five day mutiny. Although Mrs. Peron in an address to the nation vowed to stay in office and warned the people not to "confuse calmness with weakness", it became obvious to observers that the armed forces under the command of army chief Gen. Videla had not pressed for a new government because they had not wanted to, not because they lacked the power. Mrs. Peron had become increasingly more isolated, as she had lost control of her majority in the Chamber of Deputies due to a walkout of 27 Peronist Deputies.

Gen. Orlando Agosti became on December 23 the new Air Force commander, replacing Brig. Fautario, regarded by some as soft on Peronism.

In a large-scale battle following an ERP-Montonero attack on that same day, more than a hundred terrorists and some soldiers were killed at an army arsenal south of Buenos Aires. The toll for political deaths in 1975 was between 1000 and 3000 (40).

Congressional investigations were under way into Isabel's

suspected illicit financial dealings and those of López Rega, whom she was forced by the military to strip of his position as roving ambassador.

In January 1976 Isabel appointed six hard-line Peronists to the cabinet, replacing moderates such as Robledo (by now interior minister) who also resigned as vice president of the Justicialist Party. This move did not strengthen the president's position vis-à-vis the labor unions and moderates. In February there was an upsurge of leftist violence, and of right-wing retaliation. As Isabel unsuccessfully attempted to keep Congress from discussing her possible impeachment, the military quite openly discussed the timing of their coup.

By the end of March inflation was rampaging at an annual rate of 556% (41), a recession was under way, there was scarcity of some essential goods, the balance-of-payments deficit exceeded US $700 million, and the budget deficit reached 78% of total government expenditures, or 13% of the GNP. The mid-year wage increases, higher prices for public services, and raw product imports were factors which contributed to the record inflation. The attempted implementation in late 1975 of a system of price and wage indexing failed, among other things, because of administrative obstacles such as the lack of precise data. Both domestic and foreign investment had stopped after the June shock treatment.

Nor was the rural sector helping the economy. In order to avoid problems with cattlemen and farmers, Isabel had

backed away in October 1974 from a progressive legislative proposal whereby rural land would be taxed according to its production potential. But in 1975 a bad harvest, three years of depressed beef prices, and the closure of the EEC's doors to Argentine beef, coupled with the economic crisis caused by the wage and price spiral brought rural confidence to a new low, despite the raising by the government of support prices for the 1976 crop.

In early March 1976, a desperate Isabel Peron turned to the IMF for stand-by loan assistance, while agreeing to implement a harsh stabilization program; a massive devaluation of the peso to stimulate exports and foreign investment, an end to price controls, and a 12% ceiling on wage increases in 1976. President Peron was advocating a plan which ran counter to Peronist nationalistic, doctrine - she could however but warn her erstwhile labor supporters, that if they did not comply, the only alternative was a military government.

In retrospect, the economic performance of Argentina in the period 1973-76 only took a downturn after 1974. The value of manufacturing exports, for example, increased from US $588 million in 1972 to US $1400 million in 1974, but receded to US $1000 million in 1975 (42). We have seen how the Social Contract had seemed to be initially working.Compared to the Ongania years, however, the Lanusse-Levingston and Peronist administrations were characterized, probably because of political instability and its repercussions on investors'

confidence, by a sharp reduction of foreign investment; and also, by an interruption of the process of "deepening" of the industrial sector.[43]

7. The Epilogue: Videla

On March 24, 1976, the three commanders of the Armed Forces took over the government, in a bloodless, long-awaited, perfectly planned coup. The new Junta issued the Act for the National Reorganization Process, and an Act that established this Process' purpose and objectives. Through these Acts it suspended the political activities of political parties, unions and business and professional associations; and promised: to restore the essential values that are the foundation for state action; to ensure national security by eradicating subversion[44] and the causes for its existence; to promote economic development; to ensure subsequent establishment of a republican, representative and federal democracy; to establish political sovereignty based on revitalized constitutional institutions, the validity of Christian moral values, national tradition and the dignity of the Argentine person; to fully enforce the judicial and social system; etc. The state of siege was retained.

In a series of decrees issued between March 24 and 26, 1976, the Junta assumed the principal executive and legislative powers. Congress was dissolved and the Junta declared itself the supreme organ of the state. As such on March 29 it

appointed Gen. Jorge Videla, the Army service chief, as President. All the Supreme Court judges and many superior provincial court magistrates were replaced. The Junta suspended the "right of option" granted by Article 23 of the Constitution, so that persons arrested by the President could no longer choose to leave the country.[45]

The military commenced (or continued) what they described as a "dirty war" against "subversion". The security forces "used with the terrorists the same drastic [and clandestine] measures that they employed".[46] Thousands of people suspected of having "terrorist" or "subversive" connections were arrested; many thousands more (probably over 10,000) simply "disappeared" after having been kidnapped or detained by persons claiming to be members of the government security forces.[47] In January, 1978, acceding to public calls for information, the Argentine government announced that it was holding 3,472 persons under the disposition of the National Executive Power (PEN detention). To date (May 1981) it has not announced the number of people abducted, tortured and murdered, the desaparecidos. In early 1979, the Buenos Aires-based Permanent Assembly for Human Rights submitted to President Videla a list of 4,881 persons who disappeared between 1975 and October, 1978. In 1981 that list includes almost 6000 names. The Permanent Assembly claims to have sworn statements supporting each disappearance.

The other important stated objective, the economic "reorganization", was entrusted to Minister of Economy José A. Martinez de Hoz, who concentrated in his post a crucial

amount of decision-making power. Martinez de Hoz, a conservative entrepreneur, believed that old orthodox economic remedies which had never before been successful should be seen through to their conclusion, backed by the power of the new government: an improvement of the trade balance through the expansion of agricultural exports and the reduction of imports; and a drastic cut in the rate of inflation through the imposition of fiscal austerity and the freezing of wages. The fiscal measures conformed to IMF demands for a reduction of the budget deficit from its 1975 level of 11% to 5% of the GNP, in return for an IMF-backed $1.3 billion loan package to meet foreign debt obligations.[48] His extreme policies among which were the reduction and elimination of protective tariffs for national industries, the outlawing of strikes and the strict control of wages, produced the following results: in 1976 the balance of payments gave a $650 million surplus ($962 million deficit in 1975); inflation was reduced to 150% in 1976 (444% in 1975); the real industrial product dropped by 1.5% in 1977 (8% below the 1974 level); by mid-1977 the real minimum industrial wage had fallen 48% below the wage twenty months before; the workers' share of the national income, (instead of being 50% as Peron had promised) was 31%, at its lowest level since 1935. In March 1981, when Gen. Roberto Viola replaced Videla, Martinez de Hoz also left, amid an unprecedented financial crisis, economic depression and near unanimous criticism.[49]

Notes to CHAPTER III

[1] Alejandro Lanusse, Mi testimonio, 91-98.

[2] Sept. 29, 1970 speech to provincial governors. See Britannica Book of the Year 1971, 104.

[3] "Directivas desde Madrid . . .", Jan. 15, 1973, in Juan D. Perón, 1973-1974: Todes sus discursos, mensajes y conferencias completos, V. I, 35-41.

[4] H. Cámpora, La Revolución peronista, 58.

[5] Ibid, 69-70.

[6] Ibid, 71.

[7] Ibid, 9-72.

[8] The General Economic Confederation was a nationalistic union of entrepreneurs created by Perón in 1952 and which, le d by José Gelbard (who became Cámpora's economics minister), had managed to overcome its traditional rivalry with the more conservative UIA (Argentine Industrial Union). It thus spoke for a representative number of business leaders, though not most nor all of them.

[9] Between 1945-72 agricultural production had increased by 48%, while industry grew by 250% and combined non-agricultural activities by 223%. Cf. G. Wynia, Argentina, ch. 8, on the economic problems inherited by Cámpora and his platform.

[10] Ibid, 215.

[11] Latin American Index, V. 1, no. 6, p. 23 (1973).

[12] Latin American Index, V. 1, no. 8, p. 32 (1973).

[13] Both quotes in Latin American Index, V. 1, no. 9, p. 35 (1973).

[14] H. Cámpora, La Revolución Peronista, 74-75: "Let no one be illusioned with imaginary co-management, or with shared responsibilities [with the military]. Until May 25, the regime. After that date, the people. The borderline is clear".

[15] Ibid, 80.

[16]Cf. Collier's Year Book 1974, 148; & Russell et al, "Urban Guerrillas in Argentina", LARR, pp. 83-85.

[17]Cf. "Bases mínimas para el acuerdo de Reconstrucción Nacional", no. 9, October 5, 1972, in Juan D. Perón, 1973-1974, V. I, 14.

[18]Latin American Index, V. 1, no. 11, p. 42.

[19]Juan D. Perón; 1973-1974, V. I, 49-52.

[20]Ibid, 53-55.

[21]Cf. Latin American Index, V. 1, no. 14, p. 53 (1973)

[22]Juan D. Perón: 1973-1974, V. I, 75.

[23]Ibid, 174.

[24]Ibid, 176.

[25]Ibid, 155.

[26]Ibid, 175. To the youth he also repeated that revolutions are made "with measure and harmony", and not by being hasty. ". . . You want to do the same as Allende in Chile, and look what's happening to Allende . . ." Ibid, 144 (Sept. 8, 1973).

[27]Russell et al, "Urban Guerrillas", 85.

[28]The first time a prominent Argentine politician mentioned coup talk was when Ricardo Balbin said on May 7, 1974, "We are aware of plot talk, but . . . I don't believe a coup can be staged". LAI, V. II, no. 9, p. 36.

[29]Juan D. Perón, 1973-1974, 270-74.

[30]LAI, V. II, no. 17, p. 68.

[31]Nuestro Tiempo, no. 245, Nov. 1974, p. 63.

[32]LAI, V. II, no. 19, p. 76.

[33]Ibid.

[34]LAI, V. II, no. 21, p. 83.

[35]Cf. Wynia, Argentina, 223 ff.

[36]LAI, V. III, no. 9, p. 33.

[37]LAI, V. III, no. 16, p. 62.

[38]I recall that my father (a Peronist and Lujan University Rector) mentioned at the time that many were asking Luder to force Isabel to resign.

[39]LAI, V. III, no. 18, p. 69.

[40]LAI, V. III, no. 23, p. 91 says 1000. A. Tarnowsky, "The Agony of Argentina": 3000.

[41]Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year 1977, p. 143. However, Wynia states that the consumer price undex rose 183% in 1975: Argentina, 225. Cf., for the paragraphs that follow, ibid, 225-227.

[42]Kaufman, "Industrial Change and Anthoritarian Rule", 244.

[43]Ibid, 240-242. Kaufman quotes a British financier who already in 1972 considered Argentina "as an example of a country suffering from economic and political upheavals", and thus not a place for sound investment.

[44]The Junta apparently did not regard the AAA as "subversives." In August, 1976, then Foreign Minister Adm. Cesar Guzzetti stated: "My idea of subversion is that of the left-wing terrorist organizations. Subversion or terrorism of the right is not the same thing. When the social body of the country has been contaminated by a disease that corrodes its entrails, it forms antibodies. . . . As the government controls and destroys the guerrilla, the action of the antibody will disappear." Amnesty International, Report of an Amnesty International Mission to ARgentina, 6-15 November 1976 (London, 1977), at p. 35.

[45]Cf. New York City Bar Association, Report, 4-5.

[46]Minister of Finance José Martinez de Hoz, La Prensa, Buenos Aires, Sept. 21, 1978.

[47]OAS, Report; New York City Bar Association, Report; The New York Times Magazine, Oct. 21, 1979, 45 ff; The Buenos Aires Herald, April 5, 1979.

One of the desaparecidos was my sister Monica, abducted from her home in the presence of my parents, brother and sisters, on May 14, 1976, by security forces. We have never heard from her since, despite all that has been done.

[48]Wynia, Argentina, 228-231.

[49]Clarín, edición internacional, weekly, Jan. - March, 1981 passim.

CHAPTER V AN ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will follow the outline traced in Chapter II.2: "Process of Breakdown", adapting it to the case under study. This analysis will be completed in the Conclusion.

1. Conditioning Factors

The party system and presidential system of Argentina are dealt with elsewhere (in the Introduction and in 2.j.) below). We are left with the question whether the installment of the Peronists in 1973 was a true case of "restoration" of a democratic regime, and with the discussion of its negative and positive factors.

It is submitted that Linz' categories, here and elsewhere, should be utilized with flexibility. It seems to me that the 1973 apertura was a case of restoration of democracy: "the founding of a new democracy and consolidating it after a relatively short period of nondemocratic rule, with many leaders of the earlier democratic regime playing major roles", as opposed to a reinstauration (after a long period of non-democratic rules, with few old democratic leaders returning).[1] This despite the fact that in the case under study democracy was not consolidated: there were, at the time, many objective conditions to think that it would last.

Among these positive factors were: a) the learning experience which breakdown had meant: most notably Peron, but also the

Radicals and other political parties were ready to bury their partisan hatchets in an effort to present a united front against the military (La Hora del Pueblo agreement in the early seventies, the meeting of political leaders at the Nino Restaurant in November 1972, the Justicialist Liberation Front, etc.). Peron not only attempted - with success - to allay the justified fears of the non-Peronist politicians that they would persecuted as in his first period, but also those of the military, some of whom still had a deep-seated distrust for him, largely due to his previous dictatorial governance.

b) The unpopularity of the military regime: which did not leave the armed forces much more choice than to surrender the reins of power, especially once Lanusse had announced the electoral timetable. The unpopularity of the military was due to their lack of efficacy despite their high-sounding agenda (Ongania's 1966 coup had initially enjoyed widespread civilian support because it had promised to end the cycle of instability and ineffectiveness).

c) The time that had gone by, diminishing previous political enmities, especially the Peronism/anti-Peronism division.

There were, nevertheless, negative factors which might destabilize or bring down the new democracy.

a) Suspicion of past dictatorial actions. Peronism had not been able to easily shed its image, based on hard historical facts, of being a movement which did not respect

the freedom of others to dissent. Among military officers there were still many apprehensive men, who as a last resort would accept a Peronist electoral victory, but not "the tyrant" himself as President. (How radically this was to change is proven by the fact that in July, 1973, the commanders-in-chief agreed to the resignation of Campora and the calling of new elections).

b) Political violence. Its existence was not primarily due to protest against relatively mild military rule, as shall be seen later on and as is proven by its continuation and intensification after the installment of a constitutional government.

c) Lack of practical democratic (parliamentary and otherwise) experience, amongst politicians, leaders, and citizens. "The democratic impulses that had underlain the uprising against Peron in 1955 and pressured the successor military regime to surrender power at the earliest opportunity"[2] had fallen into desuetude. The practical skills of compromise, mutual respect, moderation, negotiation, respect for the law, etc., generally associated with democratic systems, had been forgotten by many. The natural recruitment and leadership change in political parties, had been obstructed.

d) Historically, the gravest danger to constitutionalism - some would argue: not to democracy! - seemed to be the ingrained habit of military interventionism and the fact that many Argentines were quite ready to forego their faith in

democratic institutions in the face of grave problems. But this has been touched upon in the Introduction, and will yet be the object of commentary.

2. Crisis and Breakdown

a) Formulation of the initial agenda

As has been seen, the formulation of the initial agenda or platform is crucial. This is so mainly because the efficacy and effectiveness of the regime is measured by the policy output of the new government.

The FREJULI platform (for the March 1973 elections) dealt mainly with these areas: internal security, foreign affairs, the economy, and social issues. The core of the economic platform was immediately put into effect (it shall be analyzed below): it can be criticized on many scores, one of them being that in promising the workers a 50% share of the national income by 1977, it was, at the least, raising expectations unnecessarily too high. On the whole, however, it was a coherent piece of economic planning, where a cost-benefit analysis had been done (Campora's rhetoric of economic independence notwithstanding).

Some foreign policy promises seemed unrealistic (e.g. Latin American unity), but they were not to affect popular support for the government. What hurt more the image of the Peronist administration, especially when compared with the previous military regime, was its inability to legislate many

reforms included in its platform; improvement and decentralization of the educational system, agrarian reform, development of technological research, etc. One issue, however, stood out above all others, which was to prove the undoing of the Peronists, though their leader had said it would disappear once they took office, because its causes would have been eliminated: left-wing subversion.

b) Resentment politics

Left-leaning Hector Campora gave a typical example of what Linz calls resentment politics, in his short period in office. He charged the military, the anti-Peronists, and all who had preceded him since 1955 with having caused the ruin of the economy and society. His Interior Minister admonished the federal police, at the moment faced with a terrorist onslaught, that the administration would no longer imprison people for political reasons.

Even though it is true that there was more bark than bite in Campora's harsh criticisms (his cabinet appointments were considered moderates), and even though he was expressing the pent-up feelings of many Argentines unjustly treated during the 1955-58 period and even afterwards (discrimination against Peronists) by resentful anti-Peronist governments, yet, his inauguration and first actions did not help pacification efforts, and were in line with the left-wing sector of Peronism.

For both these last motives Peron chose to ask for Campora's resignation - after having notified the commanders

in chief.

Peron himself kept up the rhetoric of "liberation or dependence", of "reconstructing" a country which had been "ruined" during the previous 18 years. But he kept his attacks more generic, choosing to deliver verbal blows to the two dominating "world imperialisms"; with other Argentines (except for left-wing terrorists) he was respectful, in line with his national unification approach. Isabel, finally, had other problems to worry about, as we shall see.

c) Foreign policy and foreign influence

To what extent was the crisis and breakdown influenced by foreign countries and foreign interests? There does not seem to have been any significant, direct political interference by the US or any other foreign country. The Juan Peron election, if not the Campora one, was not viewed with antipathy in much of the Western hemisphere (a far cry from world opinion during his first era). And the Peronist administration restored diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba (thus ignoring the OAS blockade of that country); actively sought greater trade with Communist-bloc countries; and attempted to encourage European investment as opposed to US investment. In so doing it continued along an independent foreign policy which had characterized most Argentine governments, military or civilian, and attempted, at first, an attitude <u>à la Mexicana</u>: leftist abroad, anti-leftist at home.

During 1973 outbound profit remittances of foreign enterprises were limited and taxed, and all bank deposits as well as seven foreign-owned banks were nationalized. This nationalistic stance, characteristic of Peronism, very likely did not favorably predispose foreign business interests, which later supported the 1976 Videla coup. But while Juan Peron was alive, they bowed to his policies: despite a US ban, General Motors Argentina was forced to sell automobiles to Cuba in 1973, for example.

Isabel Peron, burdened with other problems, innovated little in foreign policy. Ultimately, the Argentine economy broke down mainly because of internal problems, and, when she was incapable of doing anything else, Isabel accepted an IMF stand-by loan assistance, in exchange for agreeing to implement a harsh stabilization program.

Compared to the Ongania years, the period 1970-76 was characterized, probably due to political instability and its repercussions on investors' confidence, by a sharp reduction of foreign investment: already in 1972 it was considered by a British financier "as an example of a country suffering from economic and political upheavals".[3]

d) Unsolvable problem: the economic crisis

Argentina, a rich nation blessed with natural resources, was in the middle of yet another economic crisis, one of the most serious in its history, when the democratic regime fell

in 1976. Yet, when the Peronists had taken office three years before with a coherent economic plan and popular support, the panorama had been quite promising. What had happened?

An intelligent economic plan succumbed because it was not followed up, and the factors which were needed to support it either disappeared (Peron) or were alienated or neglected by Isabel, mainly because of internal political conflicts. External conditions ultimately helped fuel the crisis - although they had initially augured well. . . .

Campora was doubly blessed with an economic boomlet that began in early 1973, and with the CGE-mapped out plan for a Social Contract to be managed by Jose Gelbard. This program seemed to imply that Argentines and specifically Peronists had learned historical lessons well: the use of the state as an instrument in the hands of partisan sectors who ruled for the benefit of their constituents had bedeviled economic policy making at least since the 1930s. And yet here the Peronists had the good fortune of counting on a grand coalition to bring about the stability and development needed for second-phase redistribution. The CGE program in effect committed the government to redistribute income in favor of salaried workers <u>after</u> a very brief stabilization program. "What they needed to succeed was not only some finely tuned fiscal, monetary, wage, and price measures but also the means for persuading their constituents to postpone their welfare demands until the attack on prices had achieved its objectives. The solution was

found, they believed, in the innovative Social Contract . . . Rejecting the strong-arm tactics of Aramburu and Ongania for obvious political reasons, as well as the unpredictability of collective bargaining, Campora chose instead a formal agreement among labor, industry, and government."[4] In essence he had chosen the opposite set of instruments to accomplish price stability, progressive income redistribution, and national economic independence as Ongania had used to accomplish the same objectives six years before: a voluntary wage freeze on the part of labor, controlled prices by decree, refusal to devalue the peso but imposition of foreign exchange controls, and limitation of the supply of money and credit.

At least three conditions would have to be met for the Social Contract to succeed: a) support from the CGT leadership and its rank and file, b) retention of the CGE economic team and Minister of Economy Gelbard within the administration, for they sustained the confidence of commerce and industry in the Contract, and c) overcoming the hostility of rural producers to price and commodity controls, by, for example, maintaining favorable prices.

In contrast to previous military governments, the Peronists were seeking to reach an agreement on policy objectives that would assure compliance in advance of the policy's execution: bargaining and formal agreement were to replace command. They succeeded in obtaining the ratification of the program by the CGT, the CGE, and also, surprisingly, by conservative groups

such as the Industrial Union and Rural Society, due to the fact that rivalries between conservative and nationalistic groups had been temporarily submerged during the 1960s. In fact, the weakest spots in Peron's grand coalition were probably within the workers' organizations, as there were some unions which were not Peronist or which did not respond to loyal CGT leaders.

The implementation of the Social Contract can be divided into two phases.

The first, from June 1973 to June 1974, successfully attacked such problem as rising prices and payment deficits, only to discover that the former was now threatened by a breakdown in union discipline (non-CGT unions secured new wage agreements) and the latter by the country's continued dependence on the importation of fuels and other raw materials (1973 was the year of the OPEC oil price hike).[5] In the main, the result was positive: inflation was reduced, and foreign exchange holdings increased, as did real wages.

The second phase, from June 1974 to March 1976, saw the collapse of union discipline, the disillusionment of producers, hoarding, a thriving black market of goods, and record-setting inflation. The political and military reasons which provoked Isabel's inattention to maintaining the Social Contract functioning well shall be seen later. But was the chosen economic policy inherently sound? Had the Peronists promised too much? It seems that they were overly confident:

several economic and social reforms were never realized, the artificial price and wage controls only put off pressures, and, most of all, the Peronists had overestimated their own possibility to stay united and to govern effectively.

Juan Peron had before his death realized the straits his economic policy was in: but he didn't have much time left to oversee its application. Isabel did not back José Gelbard for long: by October 1974 she had broken with the CGE and sided with Lopez Rega's conservative faction within the Peronist Movement. This was to cost her dearly because the ministerial change set in motion her confidant's eventually successful campaign to fill the cabinet with his allies, and to deal harshly with the CGT, who by now were almost in the opposition.

The mid-1975 confrontation between labor and government not only cost Lopez Rega his position, but also was the beginning of the end for Isabel: among its consequences were the spiraling inflation, the final shattering of the Social Contract, the unsuccessful shock treatment, and the political erosion of power, especially in favor of the military. Nothing that Isabel and her several successive Ministers of Economy could do seemed able to regain the confidence needed for normal growth, while a recession was underway, as new investment, both domestic and foreign, had come to a halt.

> What the Peronists had learned about mobilizing political support through formal agreements during the design of their policies was not matched by similar insights into the administration and renewal of such agreements. Consequently, the personalistic and capricious rule of Peron himself, as well as the power struggles of his successors, were allowed to undermine the country's most creative postwar experiment in economic policy making.[6]

There had been overconfidence on the part of the designers of the Social Contract: the newly allied producer groups could be relied upon to support the regime only so long as things went well; the CGT could not control all the rank and file, nor were the labor leaders themselves willing to be prudent or tolerant with Lopez Rega. Finally, the Peronists failed to create the kind of quasi-governmental institutions needed to involve all participants (CGT, CGE and government) in policy implementation - in the process of maintaining the consensus. On the personality of Peron, on his juggling abilities, and on the first-phase holding down of inflation rested the initial success of the program. But Peron was not a good manager of shared decision-making, and much less did he have the foresight or the capability to leave behind him institutionalized participation in the Contract's implementation. What is worse, he was not capable of leaving behind competent rulers, who could, among other things salvage whatever public confidence was left, after shortages, a thriving black market and other problems made the downturn apparent.

e) Unsolvable problem: left-wing terrorism

Here we have come to the crux of this thesis. It is this writer's opinion that if there had not been a terrorist onslaught, democracy would have stood much greater chances of survival in Argentina, despite the incompetence of the civilian ruler, and the military. The question is, why did ERP, and also Montoneros, and other groups, launch and maintain such a tragic and protracted attack on life and property? What were they seeking? Why could they not reach those goals via democratic structures?

At the risk of over-simplifying something which for obvious reasons is not easy to explain, I will attempt to dissect this most unsolvable of problems, and the motives behind it. Political violence was not unheard of in Argentina before the 1970s, but it had generally been isolated, or, as during the Peronist era, part of the result of political persecution.[7] No modern civilian group had resorted to the deliberate and continued use of armed force. After the 1969 Cordobazo, a more or less spontaneous revolt of students and workers against Ongania, one of the several Argentine Trostkyite groups, a splinter group of the Revolutionary Workers' Party, decided to form a paramilitary organization, the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP), to carry on sustained armed conflict.[8] Other terrorist groups were also formed at this time: the Montoneros, who professed to be Peronist, and who in mid 1970 kidnapped and executed former

military president Aramburu (who himself had ordered the execution of leaders and participants of a Peronist revolutionary attempt in 1956); the FAR (Revolutionary Armed Forces), the FAL (Armed Forces of Liberation) and the FAP (Peronist Armed Forces), all of which were later more or less absorbed by the Montoneros.

According to Russell et al.'s "Descriptive Chronology" the following took place:[9]

·1970: 17 "significant terrorist incidents"; at least 6 deaths
·1971: 12 "significant terrorist incidents"; at least 7 deaths
·1972: 15 "significant terrorist incidents"; at least 21 deaths
(Among the 21 deaths were 16 terrorists who had escaped from a penitentiary, were recaptured and allegedly "massacred": the Trelew Massacre was to be a major terrorist battle cry)

These incidents consisted in killing security officers and union leaders, attacking villages, regiments, and police stations, kidnapping for ransom, robberies, etc.

In Table 1 are mentioned some of the terrorist events with greater repercussion which took place between 1973 and 1976. And in Figure 2 a partial account is given of the political deaths in Argentina in 1973 and 1974, as an indicator of the spiraling effect violence was having. For 1975 and 1976 I have been only able to obtain the approximate number of deaths due to terrorism (by now a good percentage of the slayings were perpetrated by the AAA, and the majority of deaths were killings of terrorists by the armed forces).

How many guerillas or terrorists were there, and how many sympathizers? Tarnowski states that guerrillas reached a strength of 10,000 gunmen, perhaps backed by 20,000 to 50,000 part-time or regular supporters.[10] Another journalist states that "the ERP, and the Montoneros, numbered perhaps 8,000 at their peak in 1975, with as many as 50,000 sympathizers".[11] Other reliable sources believe they were much less: 2000 gunmen with another 2000 logistical supporters; among the sympathizers, there would have been many Peronist Youths who did not totally suscribe to terrorist methods.

What strategies did they follow? ERP, the smallest of the two main groups and the bloodiest, never totally laid down arms, even when Campora was elected, although they did act less sporadically for a few months afterwards; since they no longer had the cooperation of Montoneros and other groups, perhaps they needed to extensively reorganize the basis of their activities.[12] They were by far the most active. After several of their members had been massacred in Catamarca in August 1974, they vowed to slay the same number of military officers. By December they had murdered a dozen; they chose other targets then, perhaps because they were feeling the pressure of the brutal reaction of the military (some of whom were probably acting clandestinely): in October 1974 they reportedly offered to end operations (see p. 82 above). ERP obtained millions of dollars in ransoms, and in June 1974 announced that they were sharing the money with other South American guerrilla organizations. At the same time they

opened a rural guerrilla front in Tucuman Province, which took the army more than a year to annihilate (from January to August 1975 some 800 guerrillas were killed in Tucuman, reported the armed forces).

Montoneros did suspend their guerrilla activities, approximately from May 1973 to September 1974. But they did meet with representatives of ERP, and of Brazilian, Bolivian, Chilean, and Uruguayan revolutionary units to plan a coordinated urban terrorist war, in February 1974.[13] There was obviously some dissension among their ranks during 1973 and 1974. Soon after Campora had taken office, for example, the Peronist Youth, of which Montoneros wanted to be "the armed hand", presented the President with a list of "demands." This irritated Peron, who after giving the Youth's leader a dressing down, fired him, an act which was followed by a large number of "self-criticism" sessions by local units, in which the young Peronists admitted their "mistakes" and reaffirmed their loyalty to Peron.[14]

Peron also held at least two important meetings with representatives of the Peronist Left, one in September 1973 (see p. 71 above), another in February 1974, on both occasions, but with even more firmness the second time, emphasizing that his followers should be Peronists, not Marxists, and that even if they wanted to be Marxists, they had to act within the law (see p. 71 - 72 above). That helped consummate the final rupture with the official

Justicialist Party, which was in gestation when the Revolutionary Tendency, 40,000 strong, met in a soccer stadium in May 1974. The break took place, as far as Montoneros is concerned, in September 1974, when they officially announced they were going underground (see p. 81 above). By that time Juan Peron had died, after having harshly denounced the leftist "infiltrators", Lopez Rega and the AAA were gaining ascendancy. Montoneros fought actively from September 1974 on, but not at the same scale as ERP, or even the AAA.

f) The causes of left-wing terrorism

In order to facilitate the analysis, we can look at the causes for this type of violence · from 1969 to May 1973; and from May 1973 to March 1976.

·From 1969 to May 1973, the violent Left was moved by the "liberation theories"; by Marxist ideology; as a reaction to the military regime, and to the political instability and the lack of economic development and social redistribution; and, finally, in order to obtain the freedom of the "political prisoners "

·From May 1973 to March 1976, the violent Left acted because of the "liberation theories", Marxist ideology, as a counter-reaction to the Peronist regime, and for revenge.

"Liberation theories", in vogue in Argentina during the late 60s and early 70s, combined a certain naïve idealism

with socialist, nationalist, and Marxist ideas: social justice, equity, liberation from dependence and poverty, anti-Americanism, private property as the source of evils, they were anti-capitalist, anti-bourgeois, anti-multinationals, anti-military. Violence was justified and even extolled if it went against the unjust and oppresive rulers, as well as their allies (international business, oligarchy, the U.S., CGT "bureaucrats", the forces of repression), if it served to change "the structures", the "system", in favor of a just socialist system.

Because Peron paid lip-service to many of these slogans, because he was not only close at hand but on the brink of regaining power lost against "reactionary" forces, because he had the unconditional backing of the workers (what other clearer sign was needed to recognize his virtues?), and, finally, because he encouraged these young idealistic revolutionaries ("If I were twenty years younger I would be out there in the streets throwing bombs")[15] while never quite committing himself to a Marxist-socialist platform - because of all these reasons young Argentines thought they had found their symbol and source of leadership for the struggle against the status quo and imperialism in the unlikely figure of the aging Juan Peron. "Peron welcomed these new recruits, despite the fact that they presented Peron with problems as well as with opportunities. His new young supporters had nothing but contempt for the well-entrenched trade union bureaucrats who represented the core of Peron's political support. Peron encouraged them to think that he shared their revolutionary

ideas, but at the same time maintained his strong ties with the trade unionists, whose objectives were limited to the possible return of Peron to power and to themselves receiving a share in that power".[16]

With hindsight it is obvious that Peron thought he was "using" the Peronist Youth to help bring down the military regime and to ascend to power, and that the more intelligent leaders of the leftist youth groups thought they were "using" Peron's electoral support to leap into power. Who was right? Peron in the first instance, but he was in command only as long as he lived, and even then the leftist youth gave him his worst headaches - once he left the scene, it was the leftist youth who helped bring down everything that Peronism could have achieved or stood for, including democracy.

But let us return to the causes of leftist terrorism. To what extent where the liberation theories influenced by the so-called liberation theology, and what was this? Liberation theology influenced some youth, and other people, in a predominantly Catholic country: although it is difficult to say to what extent, it is doubtful that there would have been so many sympathizers of leftist violence, and even so many leftist terrorists, had this theory not existed (not a few guerrillas and supporters, including some priests and nuns, came from Catholic groups).

What is liberation theology? It is a series of loosely-tied Marxist and modernist ideas which are presented as being

Christian or Catholic. In Argentina from 1968 on several ideas supposedly based on the conclusions of Medellin[17] circulated widely, as they did in other Latin American countries: a group of less than 100 priests, called "Movement of Priests for the Third World" (tercermundistas), helped spread these ideas.[18] Besides assertions which do not directly interest us here ("there is a Latin American as directly opposed to a universal Church"; "religion should be secularized"; "priests should lead their faithful in political — i.e. revolutionary - involvement"),[19] the Medellin slogans spread were: "to fight for the liberation of the oppresed, in other words, specifically for the liberation of the workers and of the peoples, exploited by international capitalism";[20] and to see Christ as a political revolutionary figure, who brought economic and social liberation.[21]

The hierarchy of the Catholic Church disassociated itself with these movements.[22]

In this respect, it is interesting to quote John Paul II speaking to the Latin American bishops in Puebla in 1979, where he warned them against the danger of substituting Christian religious teachings for narrow economic, social, political or cultural ones, or with ideologies foreign to the Catholic doctrine.[23]

The conclusions of the Conference of the Latin American Episcopate in Medellin contained positive elements, but "incorrect interpretations [were] at times made". The bishops have to be, according to the Pope, 1) teachers of the truth concerning Jesus Christ, concerning the Catholic Church's

mission, and concerning man; 2) signs and builders of unity within the Church; 3) defenders and promoters of human dignity. When they teach the truth concerning Jesus Christ, they have to be watchful of some who "re-read" the Gospel, claiming "to show Jesus as politically committed, as one who fought against Roman oppression and the authorities, and also as one involved in the class struggle." The Pope states that this idea of Christ as a political figure, as a revolutionary, as the subversive man from Nazareth, does not correspond to the Catholic Church's catechesis.[24]

> By confusing the insidious pretexts of Jesus' accusers with the - very different - attitude of Jesus himself, some people adduce as the cause of his death the outcome of a political conflict, and nothing is said of the Lord's will to deliver himself and of his consciousness of his redemptive mission. The Gospels clearly show that for Jesus anything that would alter his mission as the Servant of Yahweh was a temptation (cf. Mt. 4:8; Lk 4:5). He does not accept the position of those who mixed the things of God with merely political attitudes (cf. Mt 22:21; Mk 12:17; Jn 18:36). He unequivocally rejects recourse to violence. He opens his message of conversion to everybody, without excluding the Publicans. The perspective of his mission is much deeper. It consists in complete salvation through a transforming, peace-making, pardoning and reconciling love. There is no doubt, moreover, that all this is very demanding for the attitude of the Christian who wishes truly to serve his least brethren, the poor, the needy, the emarginated: in a word, all those who in their lives reflect the sorrowing face of the Lord (cf. Lumen Gentium, 8).

John Paul II then states in what way the Catholic Church defends and promotes human dignity. "If the Church makes herself present in the defence of, or in the advancement of, man, she does so in line with her mission, which, although it is religious and not social or political, cannot fail to consider man in his entirety." He reflects on the need for Catholics to help the disinherited, to act in favor of brotherhood, justice, and peace. The Catholic Church defends human rights "through a true evangelical commitment", staying free "with regard to the competing systems, in order to opt only for man."[25]

The Marxist ideology notably influenced ERP, a Trostkyite group, and Montoneros and the other leftist-Peronist terrorist groups, as well as their sympathizers, not a few, who served as the "water for the fish." This is not the occasion to summarize either the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, or its role in Latin America and Argentine politics. Suffice it to present some of its characteristics, which help us understand the motives behind the bloodbath set off by the violent Left, in the most developed nation in Latin America.

The following analysis is generally accepted: because Marxist ideology is an all-embracing philosophy, whose aim is to lead humanity towards the final communistic stage, by liberating man from the different alienations (religious, philosophical, political, social, and economic), it respects no ethics in achieving its goal. Marxism represents the most radical attempt (succesful or not, depending on one's point of view) to give

revolution a theoretical justification, and it does so not by placing the basis for it at the beginning of the process, but at its end. Revolution is not based on a previous principle of justice, equality, or the like, but on its "terminus": the unity of mankind, in its process of self-creation. The end (an entirely new super-humanity, implying the critique and abolition of everything old) imposes no norms that have to be respected, except its own achievement.[26]

Marxism is, according to many scholars, one of the important causes of the grave moral, cultural and political crisis of today's world.[27]

The ERP members were Trostkyite Marxists (Trotsky, as is well known, interpreted Marxism emphasizing the universality, geographical and otherwise, that was a trait of the revolutionary class, the proletariat - he was expelled from Russia by Stalin and founded abroad the Fourth International, partisans of "permanent revolution"). Their belligerance and violence can thus be more clearly understood: they were probably numerically inferior to Montoneros et al., who were however strongly influenced by Marxist ideas. Hence, for example: both groups chose violent means which were justified by the end; their religious fervor; their hatred of businessmen, of the security forces (instruments of the oppressors), of reformist politicians and of right-wing unionist "bureaucrats"; their feeling of having been betrayed when Peron did not move in the direction of socialism; their lack of respect for democratic or any other type

of legality; their intransigence. Indeed, the apparently irrational tactic of provoking a military reaction bringing havoc and chaos to a democratic regime has the ring of dialectical logic to it: the Red Brigade syndrome.

Of course, there was an objective basis for revolutionary idealism. Argentine society, though more developed culturally and economically more homogeneous than any other in Latin America, suffered serious social inequalities and stagnation for several decades.

There was also military interventionism: "In the absence of elections in which to direct their political energies, in the face of unpopular economic policies, and in reaction to heavy-handed intervention in the universities, the younger generation of Argentines [became] increasingly radicalized."[28] (See section i)). Among some of the grievances terrorists wanted to set straight was the release of "political prisoners", whose crimes they did not recognize as such, because the motives justified them.

Of course, after 1973 the swing to the right with the apparent betrayal of the Left provoked a violent reaction in those who had seen in Peron the vehicle to obtaining socialism. Furthermore, the terrorist methods of the AAA and the heavy-handed repressions of the government added fuel to the fire, as shall be seen below, and added another motive for violence: revenge.

g) Government response to violence

We shall follow here the framework of Chapter III.

During the Lanusse "apertura" and since 1969, Peron encouraged terrorism done in his name, in order to bring down the military regime, as has been seen, and as Peron himself publicly recognized afterwards.[29] Between March 11 and May 25, 1973, there was a relative intensification of left-wing violence, presumably to force the new administration to adopt socialist policies, and especially the liberation of "political prisoners." Campora's reaction was not as firm as Peron's, who chastised a Peronist youth leader in Madrid.

During the Campora presidency there was a very slight diminishing of ERP terrorism, but no Montonero violence: Campora named leftists to key posts, lifted the state of siege, freed guerrillas, and abolished a federal tribunal which dealt with subversive crimes. His interior minister admonished the police for being too hard on suspects. But after the June 20 Peron homecoming tragedy, the Leader made a stern call for law and order, and for peace, and warned the hidden enemies of the people that he would not allow them to take over the Peronist Movement.[30]

During the Lastiri "interregnum" rightist labor squads counter-attacked: the government did very little to investigate. When ERP struck back in September, Peron, through Lastiri, concentrated on attacking leftist violence, but, once again, right-wing retaliatory murders seemed not to be investigated (not that the police were much more effective with the well organized guerrillas).

During his presidency Juan Peron attempted to overcome leftist terrorism working on several fronts at the same time. On the legal front, he pushed through Congress a Penal Code reform which severely punished terrorist crimes. On the political front, he allowed his labor and conservative supporters to displace left-leaning Peronists from leadership posts in the CGT unions, from the civil service, and, in the most glaring example of covered-up lawlessness, he acquiesced in the removal of the leftist governor of Cordoba by the police. Peron himself indirectly forced the Buenos Aires governor to resign, sponsored a law by which all state university rectors were named by the Executive Power, and publicly insulted Peronist Youth. "Before we were 'the marvelous youth', now we are 'infiltrators'," Galimberti, a Peronist Youth leader reportedly stated. Nevertheless, it is significant that "both the Montoneros and the Juventud Peronista continued to pledge their loyalty to Peron as long as he lived."[31]

The twelve months in which Isabel ruled with the advice of Lopez Rega, she pursued policies similar to those her late husband had followed,[32] but the results, it became increasingly clear, were not less but rather more violence. The reasons for this were that (besides other factors completely out of her control), she did not have the prestige, authority or ability of her husband (on the contrary, Lopez Rega's policies and reputation were a major liability); and the solutions initiated by the deceased caudillo were sowing the seeds of their own destruction. Official neglect for pursuing rightist death squads, which were connnected with sectors of the government and the security forces threw the country into an undeclared mini-civil war. It is significant that Juan Peron had acted in a similar way during his first period in power, when he had encouraged his partisans to take the law into their own hands on many occasions.[33] When Lopez Rega was finally ousted, the security crisis had probably passed the point where a re-equilibration of democracy was feasible.

There was, however, a course of action which Mrs. Peron undertook which her husband would have been careful to avoid. In early 1975 she authorized the armed forces to "clean up" Tucuman Province of rural guerrillas without a strict presidential or parliamentary control. This policy was the beginning of military intervention into policy matters.

During Isabel's final months, "abdication of democratic authenticity" in favor of the military increased, as they forced the firing of Lopez Rega, and took the initiative in the fight against subversion, which by now had few legal constraints or any government control. By August 1975 suspected leftists had begun to disappear (see Figure 3).

It should be noted that not all attempts to finish with left-wing terrorism were clandestine, however. Isabel had legally closed down newspapers since mid-1974, had sponsored a sweeping security law in September, declared the state of siege in November . . . but all that proved ineffective, as the AAA first and then the armed forces took the law into their own hands.[34]

Also, her political attempts to resolve the security crisis showed her good intentions, which unfortunately could not make up for her lack of political experience and skills. She was, for instance, unable to capitalize on the broad consensus and support she garnered in her October 1974 meeting with representatives from political, social, economic and religious groups.

h) The role of the armed forces

In May 1973 the Argentine commanders in chief were hooted when Lanusse transferred power to Campora. In mid-1975, months before the March 1976 coup, a basket of eggs was placed outside an officers' club on a fashionable Buenos Aires shopping mall: the message was clear - they were chicken.

What happened within the armed forces, in their relations with the Peronist administration; and among Argentine citizens, vis-à-vis their perceptions of the role of the armed forces, between these two dates? The internal story of the military establishment during those years will have to be documented some day. What can be done now is to infer from public facts their attitudes and perceptions.

Within the armed forces the predominant feeling must have been one of frustration, disappointment and even humiliation when in 1973 they were forced to hand over power to Hector Campora. Their latest and most ambitious intervention had left the economy more developed (but just as vulnerable as in 1966), and no solid political institutions. It is because of this that this writer believes that the new democratic regime had a greater chance of survival than the two previous democratic restorations, and that a profound crisis would be needed to bring the discredited military out of the barracks again.[35]

Or a Marxist government - and that was the spectre raised by Campora when he took office. His actions immediately

alienated the military - but they remained loyal. When Peron, seizing the opportunity, asked Campora to resign, they were more than happy to acquiesce, because Peron was making clear that he wanted a more conservative administration and more order.

Juan Peron knew well the military mentality. He acted firmly: Campora had already prematurely retired eight generals, and given back to Peron his title as Lieutenant General; the caudillo forced into retirement officers who might not be loyal to him, including the commander-in-chief of the Army. But this policy of showing who was the constitutional boss was probably resented by many officers who had helped overthrow Peron in 1955 and remembered his strategy of making the forces a part of his all-embracing coalition, via anti-Peronist purges and Peronist indoctrination. The hints of coup talk that surfaced even before Peron's death was mostly due, however, to the lawlessness of the period and the government's impossibility of ending violence.

Over Gen. Peron's coffin Army commander-in-chief Leandro Anaya swore to respect the Constitution. But the situation was to change dramatically during Isabel's term in office. The military increasingly began to fight back - not always in self-defense - when attacked, collectively or individually, by guerrillas. In October 1974 the armed forces once more declared their loyalty to the constitutional government.

Towards the end of 1974 the armed forces began to fight subversion in Tucuman Province, to protect military and security establishments and buildings, to reinforce guards.

In February 1975 a major step was taken by the Executive in authorizing the armed forces to initiate an offensive against rural Tucuman guerrillas. From that moment on starts the abdication of democratic authenticity, because it represented a shift of power away from the democratically accountable leadership.

After mid-March reports of military conspiracies mounted.

In July the commanders in chief played a crucial role in taking advantage of the crisis to force the firing of Lopez Rega, and the election of Luder as Senate chairman. In this case, curiously enough, the military sided with the CGT and a majority of Peronist congressmen.

In August, a crude attempt by Isabel to incorporate the military in her administration backfired. The appointment of a Peronist colonel as Interior Minister produced the immediate reaction of the top military. Involvement of an active officer in the Peronist administration angered many. (Isabel backed down to avoid a coup, and accepted the replacement of army chief of staff Numa Laplane by Jorge Videla.) Similarly, in December an air force rebellion failed to ignite the expected coup (during Luder's interval as acting president he had had to make decisions in accordance with the military).

In November 1975 a Council of Internal Security composed of the President and her ministers and the three commanders in chief was set up by decree no. 2770/75. Its aim was "the direction of the national efforts against subversion." The commanders and the Minister of Defense were to advise the President on matters related to the fight against subversion and to plan, coordinate and conduct the actions of all security personnel, the armed forces included. By decree no. 2772/75 it was established that the Armed Forces under the Supreme Command of the President . . . will proceed to execute all the military and security operations deemed necessary to annihilate the activities of the subversive elements in all the nation's territory."

In February the military quite openly discussed the timing of their coup.

This gradual erosion of democratic accountability, indirectly proportional to the increasing influence of the military in political decisions concerning national security, was the framework for a secret war which began towards mid-1975, and which was continued by the succeeding military regime: the so-called "dirty war." This most tragic phenomenon in modern Argentine history concerns us here only insofar as it touches upon the role of the military in the waning months of the democratic regime. Suffice it to say that the actions performed by the security forces and briefly described in the section on Videla have been universally condemned as a gross violation of basic human rights, by impartial observers.[36]

On the basis of the number of cases known and of all the evidence that human rights groups, journalists and others have been able to compile, the following can be deduced. The armed forces acted upon a previously agreed upon course of action which was to be kept secret, and the investigations as well as the punishments, including torture and execution, were to be clandestine. Perhaps inspired on the French anti-terrorist tactics in Indo-China and Algeria differing greatly from the tactics of the Chilean military (who after 1973 acted in the open and with military tribunals, in the main) and the Brazilian military (who allowed some paramilitary death squads to act, but never directed a coordinated underground effort), the Argentine military apparently chose this strategy for several reasons. First, because it seemed to be the most effective and fast; secondly, in order to avoid the negative effects of national and international public opinion (that Chile suffered); thirdly, in order to protect security agents (but by the same token releasing them of almost all responsibility); and fourthly, so as to sow terror among the enemy and in society. In this "dirty war" few norms were respected (it depended largely on the military jurisdictions and the agents who carried out the actions) and sympathizers, innocent people and "ideologues" were victims, as well as terrorists.

> Some of the military were shocked by what happened: "They had honestly thought it would all be done clearly and decently. They naively believed these commandos would go after the right people and quickly wipe out the guerrillas. You could see by the way they talked: at first they told us things were going well, but mistakes were being made; then they said terrible things were happening and asked us to be patient. Now they prefer not to talk about it. . . ."[37]

What happened within the military and within Argentina between 1973-1976 is thus clearer. The civilian politicians were not able to control the situation, at least once Peron was dead, and the armed forces just bided their time, to make sure that when they entered the picture the coup would be justified. What is relevant to our analysis is that the habit of intervening had by now become a conditioned reflex. This habit, begun in 1930, has "worsened": military interventions, once limited to restoring democracy, have grown longer and longer, and civilian governments' life spans shorter.

The habit of interventionism was not inevitable at the beginning, but once it is there, it is that much harder to develop the habit of obedience to the laws.[38] It is difficult to catalogue the armed forces as a neutral power in Argentina: they are that and a permanent disloyal opposition, always ready as a last resort to control the chaos that the politicians might produce (besides exerting their muscle even before the coup, as they did in 1975).

Peron knew that in order to save democracy he had to create "a political power which is very cohesive, solid."[39] But he was not farsighted enough to plan how this would take place, especially after his death.

And what happened is that the military held back, but if the coup came it was going to be the coup to end all coups:

> "I pray to God that we will not have to intervene; that the problems of the country can be resolved. But if we have to take power I promise we will do away, once and for all, with all the corruption, the hopelessness and the violence. I promise that we will end the chaos for good."[40]

So had said newly appointed commander in chief Videla in 1975. The threshold of intervention had indeed been raised quite high, but the trade-off was a far more comprehensive military intervention.[41] And as always, the military acted with the backing of a very substantial part of public opinion. "The notion that Argentine political parties or other important civilian groups have consistently opposed military takeovers bears little relation to reality."[42] On the eve of the coup UCR's leader Balbin had given up the hopeless task of providing a political alternative to disintegrating Peronism. "I have no solutions to offer," he declared.[43] In Linz' terms, then, no political party has ever been loyal to democracy all the time.

i) Government instability and the constitutional system

The following propositions seem true:

- A parliamentary democracy might have stood a better chance than a presidential one of resolving the crisis, because Isabel, having lost her majority, would have been ousted constitutionally. Thus, to Linz' question, "Does presidentialism have something to do with the political instability of Latin American democracies?" - a question which was triggered by a comparison betwen Italy and Argentina - we would answer affirmatively. The presidential election "game" has a zero-sum character; in the cases of polarization

or crisis, one pressure to limit the consequences of the game may come from a moderating power (which is usually the armed forces, but which in a parliamentary system can be the King or the president!).[44] Furthermore, parliamentarism breeds better legislators.[45]

- Internal party democracy is essential to the survival of a democratic regime. One of the malaises of Argentine democracy is that a leader might become a tyrant within his own party, and if he arrives to power, the way he acts will depend in the main on his own sense of responsibility.

- The behavior of the main democratic oppositions was correct (the Radicals, especially); but did not compensate for the disloyalty of the Peronist Left and the AAA.

- The judicial power, which can play a crucial role in security crises, should not be tampered with, as it was, by the Peronists.[46]

- The ineffectiveness of the police played an important part in the drama, because the frustration of never being able to bring the criminals to book accounted for the illegal repression. The same can be said of the ineffectiveness of emergency laws. Of course, what stung the military was the liberation of the "political prisoners" by Campora, and the dissolution of a special anti-subversive court. Henceforth, they figured, we have to go it alone.

j) Some crucial decisions

In Linz' view, the decisions made by key actors influence and determine the political game. We have gone over decisions made by Juan Peron, actions that conditioned a whole era of Argentine history: see Chapter III a, 1. Here, we will make a roll call of the critical decisions:

- Lanusse, a believer in liberal democracy, was the man who ended Ongania's dream and restored the democratic regime.

- Campora, by leaning left, helped polarize his party and forced Peron's hand.

- Isabel Peron's most important decisions were to support Lopez Rega and his conservative allies; to fire Gelbard; to not investigate AAA killings; to repeatedly give in to the military commanders; to fire Lopez Rega; to not maintain cabinet stability; not to resign.

- Videla: bided his time, while installing the clandestine repressive system analyzed above. He and his fellow officers could have, presumably, forced new elections, or acted firmly but publicly, etc.

- CGT leaders: in general played their habitual role: more interested in concrete short-term goals than in defending democracy, although while Peron was alive, and during the first months of Isabel they abided by the rules of the Social Pact.

- Balbin and other democratic politicians, including Peronist congressmen such as Luder, did their utmost to help resolve the crisis, but failed.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1]Linz, Breakdown, v. I, 91.

[2]R. Potash, The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962, 377.

[3]See chap. III, fn. 43.

[4]G. Wynia, Argentina, 214-215.

[5]Ibid., 222.

[6]Ibid., 233. Emphasis added.

[7]See h) below.

[8]R. Alexander, Juan Domingo Peron, 130.

[9]"Urban Guerrillas in Argentina", 81 ff.

[10]A. Tarnowski, "The Agony of Argentina."

[11]The New York Times Magazine, Oct. 21, 1979, "Missing or Dead in Argentina."

[12]R. Alexander, Juan Domingo Peron, 142.

[13]Russell et al., "Urban Guerrillas", 87.

[14]R. Alexander, Juan Domingo Peron, 141.

[15]Tarnowski, "The agony of Argentina."

[16]R. Alexander, Juan Domingo Peron, 132-133

[17]The Second General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate was held in Medellin, Colombia, from August 26 to September 6, 1968. At the end of 1968 the conclusions were published, of which some parts, especially the first two sections of the first part, were utilized by some "leftist-Catholic" groups to further their aims.

[18]They sent representatives to the April 1972 encounter of Christians for Socialism in Santiago, Chile. Similar groups existed in Chile (group of the 80), Peru (ONIS), Colombia (Golconda group), etc.

[19]Cf. ?Consecuencia cristiana o alienación politica?, Santiago (Chile), 1972: a collection of Chilean priests' documents in favor or against the positions of the Christians for Socialism congress. (Cf., also, F. Monge, "Cristianos para el socialismo: una contradicción" in Cuestiones y respuestas V, 131.)

[20]Ibid., 159 - 160.

[21]Ibid., 186 and 231.

[22]Pope Paul VI condemned Christians for Socialism more than 25 times in public speeches; and by 1972, when 60 Latin American bishops met in Sucre, Bolivia, most bishops had disassociated themselves with the Medellin conclusions as interpreted by the leftist-clerical groups.

[23]John Paul II, Address to the Bishops of Latin America, Jan. 28, 1979, L'Osservatore Romano, English Weekly Edition, Feb. 5, 1979.

[24]Ibid., I. 4. The long quote is also from this source.

[25]Ibid., III. 2 and III 3.

[26]J.M. Ibanez Langlois, El marxismo: vision critica; A. Piettre, Marx et marxisme. I.M. Bochenski, Soviet Russian Dialectical Materialsim; G. Wetter, Soviet Ideology Today; C.J. McFadden, The Philosophy of Communism; E. Gilson, Les Tribulations de Sophie; H. Chambre, From Karl Marx to Mao Tse-Tung; T.J. Blakely and J.G. Colbert, Curso de iniciación al marxismo.

[27]According to F. Ocariz Brana, Introducción al marxismo, 139-146, Marxism is, in the pejorative sense of the word, an ideology: a system of images, myths, ideas which substitutes for and hides the profound irrationality of a certain human course of action. This is especially true in countries such as the USSR, where it is the ideology which covers up a totalitarian State ruled by a violent, technocratic party.

Another derivation of Marxism, especially in the West, is a "political Machiavellism", by which the "philosophy of the

praxis" is practically reduced to a theoretical justification for any concrete political action conducive to taking or exercising power (e.g. A. Gramsci). This, in turn, is made possible by the sad state of affairs of a modern materialistic world: the technological, consumer society, where philosophical relativism reigns and man's sole aim seems to be material goods and pleasure.

There is, finally, a third role for Marxism, that of the "myth", especially in countries and classes where it can still provoke class conflict in its original sense: among economically underdeveloped peoples. But the end result there will probably be one of the two mentioned above: totalitarianism or the moral decomposing of society, in a broader sense. In Argentina in the 70s we would find elements of the last two "roles" or functions of Marxism.

[28]R. Potash, The Army and Politics, 380.

[29]"It is also necessary that youth be convinced that the active struggle has finished and that another struggle has begun which is no less important, for the Reconstruction and Liberation of the Fatherland. . . . ", Sept. 21, 1973, in Juan D. Peron, 1973-1974, v. I, 176.

[30]". . . Nothing can be done in the anarchy provoked by weakness nor in the struggle unleashed by intolerance. . . . " Ibid., 50.

[31]R. Alexander, Juan Domingo Peron, 142.

[32]See pp 80 to 85 above.

[33]As for example, his reaction to the discovery of a plot to take his life in 1952, after which he ordered that any future attempt would be responded to with personal attacks, bombings and arson by Peronists: R. Potash, The Army and Politics, 142.

[34]It is not uncommon that democratic governments faced with internal commotion or external invasion or war establish similar stringent emergency measures. See F. Mignone, "Emergency Powers in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Argentina"; C. Rossiter, Constitutional Dictatorship.

[35]In October 1973 Juan Peron was asked: "Is the return of the military to power possible?" He answered: "I don't believe so. The military already have sufficient experience as to not want to return to the government." Juan D. Peron, 1973-1974, v. 1, 205.

[36]OAS, Report; New York City Bar Association, Report; Amnesty International, Report of a Mission to Argentina, 6-15, November 1976 (London, 1977); countless articles in the Western press.

[37]A. Tarnowski, "The agony of Argentina." He quotes Robert Cox former editor of the Buenos Aires Herald.

[38]Cf. Aristotle, Politics, Book II, Chap. 8.

[39]Juan D. Peron, 1973-1974, v. I, 145.

[40]A. Tarnowski, "The agony of Argentina."

[41]Cf. Guillermo O'Donnell, "Argentina , 1955-66" in Linz and Stepan, Breakdown, v. III, 171.

[42]R. Potash, The Army and Politics, 381.

[43]A. Tarnowski, "The agony of Argentina."

[44]Linz, Breakdown , v. I, 71-74.

[45]As has been mentioned above, perhaps a parliamentary system of government might in future help stabilize Argentine democracy. The possibility of chasing out the prime minister without overthrowing the regime (July 1975); of solving crises with non-confidence votes or national coalition governments instead of "knocking at the barracks"; and, of having a symbol of legitimacy in the head of state who would, like the flag or national sovereignty, be above partisan disputes, might help avoid military interventions to call elections or "restore true democracy." As Linz points out: how many other presidential democracies, besides the United States, have enjoyed marked stability?

[46]F. Mignone, "Emergency Powers"

VI. CONCLUSION

What can we Argentinians learn from this tragic experience we have lived through? In what ways can we make sure that this never happens again? I am referring to the loss of relatives, friends and acquaintances (my own sister and several acquaintances are among the desaparecidos, an euphemism for suspects kidnapped, tortured and often executed by security forces), to the disintegration of Argentine society, to three-digit inflation during seven years, to the collapse of industries, to the halving of the real income of most Argentinians, to the curtailment of basic liberties such as freedom of speech, of association, of political participation. . . .

I think our logical reaction, after a perhaps understandable initial one of outrage and tears, should be precisely that this never happen again. From a political science point of view, what can be done is to analyze what happened and suggest solutions for the future. In the first place, it seems important that "the right to political participation and the right to participate in the free choice of the political system of the people to which one belongs"[1] be respected.

Trite as it may sound, it seems to this writer that the modern democratic form of government is the best way to safeguard human rights and seek social justice: the government of the people, for the people and by the people, who, without acting through corporatist structures, choose their representatives

by general, direct, equal and free vote. Other traits of modern democracy are: the existence of a parliament and of political parties, the rule of law (everybody, even the rulers, are responsible and equal before the law), pluralism (as opposed to "one-party democracies"), control of the way political power is exercised, and separation of powers.[2]

This Conclusion is divided into two parts: 1. A review of the breakdown of Argentine democracy applying concepts summarized in Chapter III; 2. A historical/ideological/sociological explanation of that breakdown.

1. The Breakdown, Following Linz

The democratic regime, one in which there is legal freedom to formulate and advocate political alternatives with its concomitant rights; free and nonviolent competition among leaders with periodic validation of their claim to rule; and political participation of the community, was restored in 1973 with some genetic defects, but under favorable conditioning circumstances. The defects were principally the fact that the armed forces were, because of their previous history of interventionism, almost a permanent disloyal opposition; the apparent incapacity of Argentines to reach a minimal consensus on important political and constitutional issues; the previous undemocratic behavior of the party who won the '73 elections; and the presidential system itself, which did not facilitate the replacement of an unpopular president in times of crisis.

The main favorable factors were the learning experience which the previous breakdowns had meant for politicians, especially Peron; the unpopularity of the military regime; and the time that had gone by, diminishing previous political cleavages.

The democratic regime had a chance to succeed and legitimize itself, if the new democratic leaders acted wisely in the face of two main threats: terrorism and economic problems.

But Argentine democracy was to be severely put to the test from the moment of its restoration by a plague which the party elected to office had previously promoted: left-wing terrorism.

Neither the formulation of the initial agenda, resentment politics (inaugurated by Campora, toned down by Peron, and rejected by Isabel), nor foreign policy and influence had much to do with the aggravation of the crisis.[3] Existing structural socioeconomic problems such as poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, and inflation, though relevant, did not seem to warrant a revolutionary upheaval, although the military had dealt harshly with strikers and protesters between 1966 and 1973. Among other things, these socioeconomic troubles were partially the consequence of political instability indirectly provoked by Peronism.

More influential than those factors were left-wing intellectuals and prophets who led idealistic youth to the precipice of violence, and the lack of previous legitimacy of democratic regimes in general, in the previous 20 years, due to their inefficacy.[4] The Argentine people had a low

threshold of patience for democratic governments (see Figure 1).

I have previously summarized a part of Linz' work as follows:

> There can be many reasons why a government does not control problems, which sooner [in our case, because of terrorism] ... or later are perceived to be unsolvable: internal party constraints, lack of intelligence, foresight, political abilities, etc.
>
> It is the unsolvable problem (or problems) that which ultimately triggers the process of breakdown, because it puts a strain on the system. The most serious crises are generally those in which the maintenance of public order becomes impossible....[5]

These words can be literally applied to the case in question. Internal party constraints were the lack of party democracy and Peron's verticalist, personalistic rule; lack of political intelligence and abilities on the part of Isabel; Juan Peron's lack of foresight. . . .

And I continued:

> The influence and impact of political violence cannot be underestimated, in this context. When such violence takes place, it is not only important to study its causes — it is also crucial to analyze the response to it on behalf of the authorities.[6]

I have sought to pinpoint the causes for left-wing violence in Chapter V, 2 , after having meticulously traced its trajectory. The causes of left-wing terrorism were, in an intellectual plane, liberation theories and Marxist ideology; in a political plane, a reaction to military rule first and Peronist rule after, and to socioeconomic injustice; and at still another

level, as a way of obtaining the liberation of fellow terrorists and of retaliating against repression.

The response of the authorities is perhaps the crux of this thesis. Indeed, it is my contention that a democratic, legal, and moral response should have been adopted. It would have been more effective in the long run, while avoiding the snowball effect of spiralling violence. Several factors conspired against this solution: guerrillas were extremely well organized; the police was extremely ineffective; Peronist gangs had previous experience in violence; the Peronist administration covered up right-wing retaliations, and did not hold the security forces accountable; supporters of Marxist guerrillas had reached prominent positions within government and bureaucracies (the so-called infiltrators). The solution of Juan Peron and his wife to the terrorist unsolvable problem was thus no solution at all: it sowed the seeds of the destruction of the regime.[7]

But in what ways could a legal response have been articulated by the Peronists? By, first of all, not being so naïve so as to believe their own rhetoric to the effect that violence would cease once a popular government got to power. By not liberating criminals via an amnesty, not lifting the state of siege (or re-establishing it sooner than they did), and, in general, by redefining the tolerable limits of civil liberties, but within a democratic framework (when it was done, it was too late, and it was accompanied by illegal repression).

As has been seen Linz' arguments on the transfer of authority to "neutral powers" and on loyal, semiloyal and disloyal oppositions have not proved useful in this paper.[8] The political game in Argentina was such that the armed forces, more than a neutral power were a permanent disloyal opposition, as was the Left. Not so most political parties, though at the end, they all accepted the coup.

The armed forces presenced themselves as the only saviours: the transfer of power is ultimately due to "the government's incapacity to solve problems for which disloyal oppositions offer themselves as a solution", offering the people a transfer of legitimacy.[9]

In Chapter II, 2c three alternatives of denouncement were presented. The clear-assumption-of-responsibility alternative as well as the incorporation (of the armed forces, as a disloyal opposition) alternative were both tried by Isabel, but failed. The third alternative (ignore situation until disloyal opposition attempts to assume power) is obviously no alternative at all when the disloyal opposition in question happens to be the military.

En fin - was reequilibration ever feasible? These hypothetical questions are always difficult to answer. Reequilibration was clearly attempted in July 1975, when Lopez Rega was fired and Isabel forced to accept Luder as Senate Chairman. It is doubtful Luder or anybody else could have saved democracy by then, when the military were already pressuring and the violence spiral

was out of hand: condition no. 6, mentioned by Linz, did not apply (it was impossible by then to neutralize the disloyal opposition).[10]

2. Other Aspects of the Breakdown

I would like to draw some conclusions from historical, ideological, sociological, and constitutional viewpoints.

Democracy broke down in Argentine because of:

a) Peron. He weakened democratic institutions between 1945 and 1955, from exile (1955-73), and in 1973-74, by flaunting constitutional and legal norms, by violating human rights, by polarizing society, by not democratizing his party, and by impeding the orderly working of democracy while his participation was prohibited (because of his previous record). This negative influence was not sufficiently compensated for by the positive effects on Argentine democracy of his passage through politics, namely, the incorporation of the popular sectors to the mainstream of Argentine democratic forces.

He used political violence as a means to retaliate against his enemies or to sow terror when in power (1945-55), and as a means to regain power, when in exile. This was not justified on moral grounds, and as far as the democratic spirit of the nation is concerned, it obviously undermined it. This was one of the reasons why Peron found it difficult to control violence through legal means in 1973-74, and why Isabel and Lopez Rega, who exacerbated this policy, likewise failed on that score.

They did not have the moral authority to condemn terrorism.

b) Antidemocratic ideologies

Among these we can include those which justify revolution or violent rebellion against the legitimate authorities even though the necessary conditions are not present: the common good and its most important elements, such as essential human rights, are exposed to a grave threat on the part of state authorities who abuse their power; all other constitutional and peaceful means of defense (such as passive resistence, e.g. general strikes) do not exist or have been exhausted; the certitude that no evil greater than the despotism which is being eliminated will befall the collectivity.[11] Marxism and Liberation Theology justify violence, the first as a means to arrive to the communist society, the second as a means to further social justice, eliminate poverty, etc.

The Doctrine of National Security is anti-democratic to the extent that it justifies the violation of human rights in order to guarantee collective security.[12]

c) Military interventionism. Understood as a habitual disrespect for the constituted and legitimate order, modern military interventionism began almost capriciously in 1930, but slowly but surely became an ingrained habit, a safety valve of Argentine politics.

"Change," states Aristotle,

> is a matter which needs great caution. . . . When we reflect that the improvement likely to be effected may be small, and that it is a bad thing to accustom men [read the military] to abrogate laws [read the constitution] light-heartedly, it becomes clear that there are some defects, both in legislation and in government, which had better be left untouched. The benefit of change will be less than the loss which is likely to result if men fall into the habit of disobeying the government. . . . It is from habit, and only from habit, that law derives the validity which secures obedience. But habit can be created only by the passage of time; and a readiness to change from existing to new and different laws will accordingly tend to weaken the general power of the law.[13]

There were surely several clearly unnecessary interventions of the military in politics after 1930 (e.g. 1962, 1966). In any case it seems obvious that this fixture of Argentine politics, this permanent disloyal opposition, is one of the greatest obstacles for the consolidation of democracy there. Almost as great an obstacle as the incompetenceof civilians, who have left the door wide open on so many occasions, including 1976.

d) Bad political judgment of Argentines.

It is said that every nation has the rulers it deserves. While this is not always true, in a democracy in which the electors have had the freedom to choose their leaders, they are to be held responsible, to a certain extent, for their actions and policies. Argentines have lacked a sufficient sense of political responsibility in, for example, always backing Juan Peron, no matter what his actions or words were or who

was his running-mate; or in supporting Ongania's leap into autocracy (by tacit consent, obviously —no by votes).

This has been united to an incapacity on the part of Argentines to compromise, agree on basic rules of the game, respect the opposition, know how to be patient and wait for the end of the constitutional term to attempt to regain office, criticize constructively and not dogmatically, not fall into extremes, etc.

Enlightened leaders, true statesmen, or, simply, honest and intelligent politicians, have not abounded. As in every country, but perhaps more so in my own, not a few politicians have seemed to prefer their own personal ambitions to their countrymen's good. Otherwise, it is unexplicable that some of them have not resigned sooner than they did, or have not resigned at all, that they have been intransigent in unessential issues, etc.

Perhaps civic education and responsible and truthful media will be aspects of the solution to this problem.

e) Consensus. Of permanent importance "for constitutional stability [is] the elementary principle which has been again and again suggested - the principle of ensuring that the number of those who wish a constitution to continue shall be greater than the number of those who do not."[14]

A people develop a habit of consensus, of knowing how to bargain, compromise and be transigent when need be, a respect

of others and of their opinions. In Argentina this "social" skill has been lacking. The political culture is "absolute-value, apocalyptic" rather than "instrumental, pragmatic".[15]

Wynia shows, in particular, how "the Argentine state had always been viewed as an instrument employed by narrow, partisan interests to gain advantages for themselves"; the failure of Argentine presidents to gain the confidence and cooperation of the country's entrepreneurs, labor leaders and military limited their capacity to achieve their development policy objectives.[16]

Argentina, unlike Chile, saw a strong bureaucracy and modern government services rise before twentieth-century democratic institutions had stabilized; principal among them, pervasive political party networks and a well-functioning Congress which would allow for a politics of compromise.[17]

f) Defects of the constitution (in the broad sense). The presidentialist zero-sum game does not seem to facilitate stability in a volatile political climate, like Argentina's. The checks and balances which have worked so admirably in the United States to control the powers of the executive, have not functioned in Argentina, which based its constitution on the U.S. charter. Numerous have been the instances (and, unfortunately, one gets the impression that they have increased instead of decreasing) where praetorian checks were preferred to constitutional or legal checks. Ranging from the destitution of presidents to

police torture, from disappearances to tax evasion, the lack of a democratic, legalistic attitude towards the res publica has hurt Argentine democracy. Specific institutions which have often shone for their docility to an abusive executive are the courts (including the Supreme Court) and Congress. A working democratic regime in Argentina will doubtless need a more independent judiciary[18] and more responsible parliamentarians.

Finally, lack of internal party democracy is another obstacle to be overcome.

* * *

What befell Argentina in 1973-76 was part of a longer process of disintegration of democracy, with roots in previous years and decades. Yet breakdown was not predetermined: if Juan Peron, the extremists and the military had acted differently, surely the outcome could have been different.

In this paper we have examined closely the causes of the collapse of democracy, confident of only one thing: that there is no simplistic explanation of it. What seemed a hopeful new beginning ended, because of the incompetence of the civilian rulers, with a military regime the likes of which Argentina had never before experienced. Argentines witnessed democratic abdication, not a military revolution. Argentines saw their armed forces fulfill once more their role of guardians of social and economic order. Few imagined, however, the abuses which this time would follow the suspension of the rule of law.

Ideology, more specifically Marxist-inspired ideas, played an important part in bringing down the democratic system. Indeed, events seem to have gone as planned, following the particular logic of dialectics. Divisions were exacerbated and apparently illogical violence continued, even after a popular government was elected. It was all very clear: what left-wing terrorists wanted was a repressive coup d'état. Once it came, they would be able to promote the definitive struggle for liberation and socialism. The military, who had not read up on dialectical logic, played into their hands.

This thesis wants to promote understanding of this fact, so that others, especially those who oppose the present military regime, do not fall into the same trap. It seeks to encourage pardon and consensus, rather than antagonism. This is the only way to break out of the vicious circle of violence.

And this thesis confirms once more that democracy's breakdown in the twentieth century has often to take the Marxist component into account, in order to fully understand what happened.

The habit of military intervention, together with the notion that the security of the nation is above rights of the individual, made the military coup possible.

A relatively weak economic context provided the justification for subversion and aggravated the crisis.

Linz' findings on the crucial importance of political violence and the government's response to it have been confirmed.

The ill-fated cycle of violence should never have been allowed to get out of control—much less should it have been fueled by government acquiescence and participation in it.

Indeed, if one conclusion seems to stand out, it is that democratic structures of institutions are not enough: if an effective democratic spirit, including the respect for the opinions of others and the respect of basic human rights, does not permeate society and is not practiced by the state, in vain will citizens cast their votes and congressmen legislate.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

[1]This right is recognized as being one of the most important human rights: John Paul II, United Nations Address, 2-X-79, no. 13.

[2]J. Messner, Das Naturrecht (Spanish transl.), 911-913.

[3]See Chap. V, 2a, b & c.

[4]See Chap. V, 2 ; and Chap. III, 1.

[5]See Chap. II, 2b.

[6]Ibid.

[7]See Chap. V, 2 g.

[8]See Chap. II, 3.

[9]See Chap. II, 2b.

[10]See Chap. II, 2d.

[11]J. Messner, Das Naturrecht, 899-901.

[12]Social organization and the security of the state exist "only for the service of man and for the protection of his dignity, and . . . [social organization] cannot claim to serve the common good when human rights are not safeguarded.": John Paul II, Address in the Philippines, 17-11-81, The Catholic Register, 7-111-81, p. 14; and Address to the OAS, 6-II-79, quoted in OAS, Report, 27.

[13]Politics, book II, chap. 8.

[14]Aristotle, Politics, book V, chap. 9.

[15]G. Almond & J. Coleman, eds. The Politics of Developing Areas, 37.

[16]Argentina, 253 and 252-5.

[17]A. Valenzuela, Breakdown, v. IV, 18.

[18]Cf. F. Mignone, "Emergency Powers", conclusion.

INDEX OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 2:

POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ARGENTINA, 1973-1976: KEY EVENTS

These key happenings, which influenced the course of events, also give an idea of the seriousness of the crisis (see Figures 2 and 3). These are only some of the many acts of violence which occurred during the period.

DATE	GROUP, TENDENCY	INCIDENT	DEATHS
1973			
Apr. 1	ERP	Kn: Ret. Adm. F. Aleman. Released.	
Apr. 30	ERP	An: Adm. H. Quijada.	1
Jun. 20	ERP, FAR, MONTONEROS; RIGHTIST UNIONISTS	Gun battle near Ezeiza Airport, B.A.	200-300
Sep. 25	ERP	An: CGT Secretary General J. Rucci.	1
Nov. 22	ERP	An: Ford executive J.A. Swint.	1
Dec. 6	ERP	Kn: Esso executive V. Samuelson. Released after $14.2 mln. ransom paid.	
1974			
Jan. 19	ERP	Assault of Azul, B.A. army regiment. An: commander of regiment.	4
Feb. 27-Mar. 8	POLICE, RIGHT; LEFT	Mutiny of police in Cordoba: provincial gov't palace taken. Leftist governor & vice-governor illegally detained. 1000 people illegally arrested. Congress approves Peron's federal intervention Mar. 8. Shoot-outs.	5
Apr. 28	ERP	An: J. Quiroga, former judge on anti-terrorist tribunal.	1
May 31	RIGHT	An: 3 socialist labor leaders.	3
Jun. 12	ERP	Announcement: rural guerrilla front opened in Tucuman Province.	
Jul. 15	LEFT	An: A. Mor Roig, former Interior Minister.	1
Jul. 31	RIGHT	An: R. Ortega Peña, leader of Peronist Left in Chamber of Deputies.	1
Aug. 12	ERP; ARMY	Attack: 120 ERP members, on Catamarca regiment. Repelled. 16 terrorists reportedly detained and killed.	21
Aug.-Dec.	ERP	An: 12 military officers, in retaliation for "Catamarca massacre".	12

DATE	GROUP, TENDENCY	INCIDENT	DEATHS
Sep. 6	MONTONEROS	Their leader announces they are taking up arms again.	
Sep. 19	MONTONEROS	Kn: Businessmen: the Born brothers. Released. Record ransom paid: $60 mln.US.	
Sep. 27	AAA	An: S. Frondizi, leftist. Brother of former president.	1
Nov. 1	MONTONEROS	An: Federal Police Chief A. Villar.	2
1975			
Feb. 5	ARMY;ERP	Movilization of 3500 men to fight ERP in Tucuman Province.	
Feb. 28	MONTONEROS	An: J.P. Egan, US Honorary Consul.	1
Aug. 28	ERP	Attack against Air Force plane in Tucuman.	14
Oct. 5	MONTONEROS	Attack on military barracks, and an airport, in Formosa Province.	26
Dec. 3	LEFT	An: Gen. J. Caceres Monié and wife.	2
Dec. 23	MONTONEROS, ERP; ARMY	Attack of 200 guerrillas on Monte Chingolo Arsenal in B.A. Province. Repelled.	at least 100
1976			
Feb. 11	LEFT	An: Col. R. Reyes, Chief of Air Defense Artillery Group in Camet.	1
Mar. 15	LEFT	Bomb in General Army Headquarters in Buenos Aires.	1
May 30	LEFT	Kn: Col. J.A. Pita, government mediator with CGT.	
Jun. 18	ERP	An: Gen. C.A. Cardozo, Federal Police Chief, by his daughter's girl friend.	1
Dec. 15	LEFT	Explosion of bomb in Ministry of Defense in Buenos Aires: 14 high-ranking officials and personnel killed.	14

LEGEND: Kn= Kidnapping
An= Assassination
ERP= Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo
FAR= Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias
AAA= Alianza Anticomunista Argentina
CGT= Confederación General del Trabajo
B.A.= Buenos Aires

LAIN SOURCES: Latin American Index & Russell et al.,"Urban Guerrillas"

Figure 2:

POLITICAL DEATHS IN ARGENTINA, 1973-1974

The graph in the following page gives a partial account of the most significant politically motivated deaths in Argentina during 1973 and 1974. Several factors make this graph only an approximate indicator of political violence: a) the only terrorist actions here taken into account are those which caused the death of a victim (either a political right or left wing victim, a member of the security forces, or an innocent by-stander), but not those in which there were no known slayings (e.g. abductions); b) this graph is undoubtedly incomplete, because only two main sources are used, and they are not comprehensive; c) there have undoubtedly been many actions which have never been known.

We deal only with 1973 and 1974 because afterwards the violence was too great (on both sides) and the repression was undercover; there were also information constraints. In any case, the Latin American Index states that in 1975 800 rural guerrillas were killed in Tucuman Prov. from January to August, by the army; LAI puts the toll of political deaths for 1975 at 1000, but that is a very conservative estimate: at least 100 people died in the Monte Chingolo Arsenal attack in December alone.

N.B. In June of 1973 at least 200 people died in the Ezeiza gun battle.

Sources: C. Russell , J. Schenkel & J. Miller, "Urban Guerrillas in Argentina", and Latin American Index, 1973 through 1976.

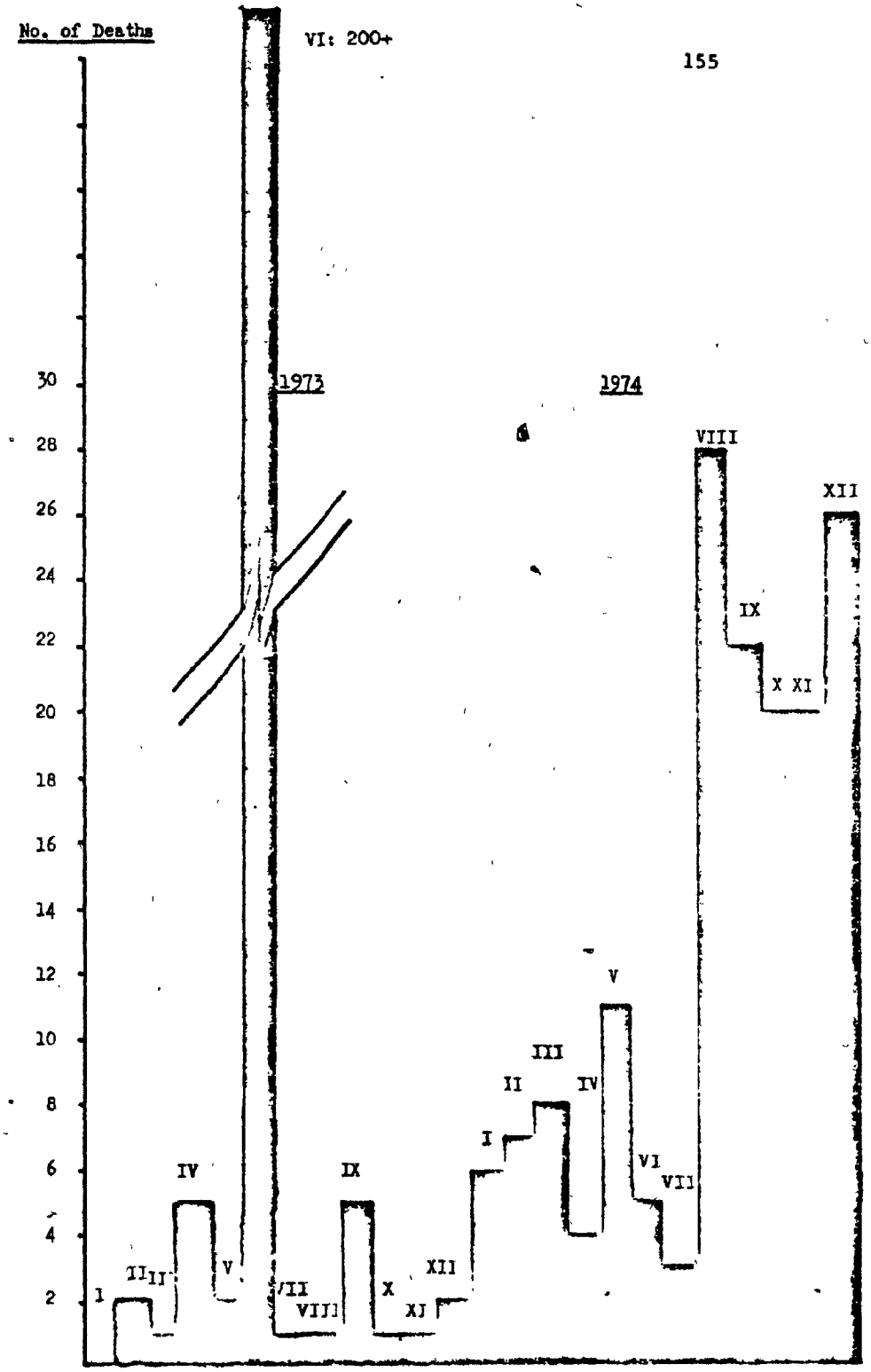
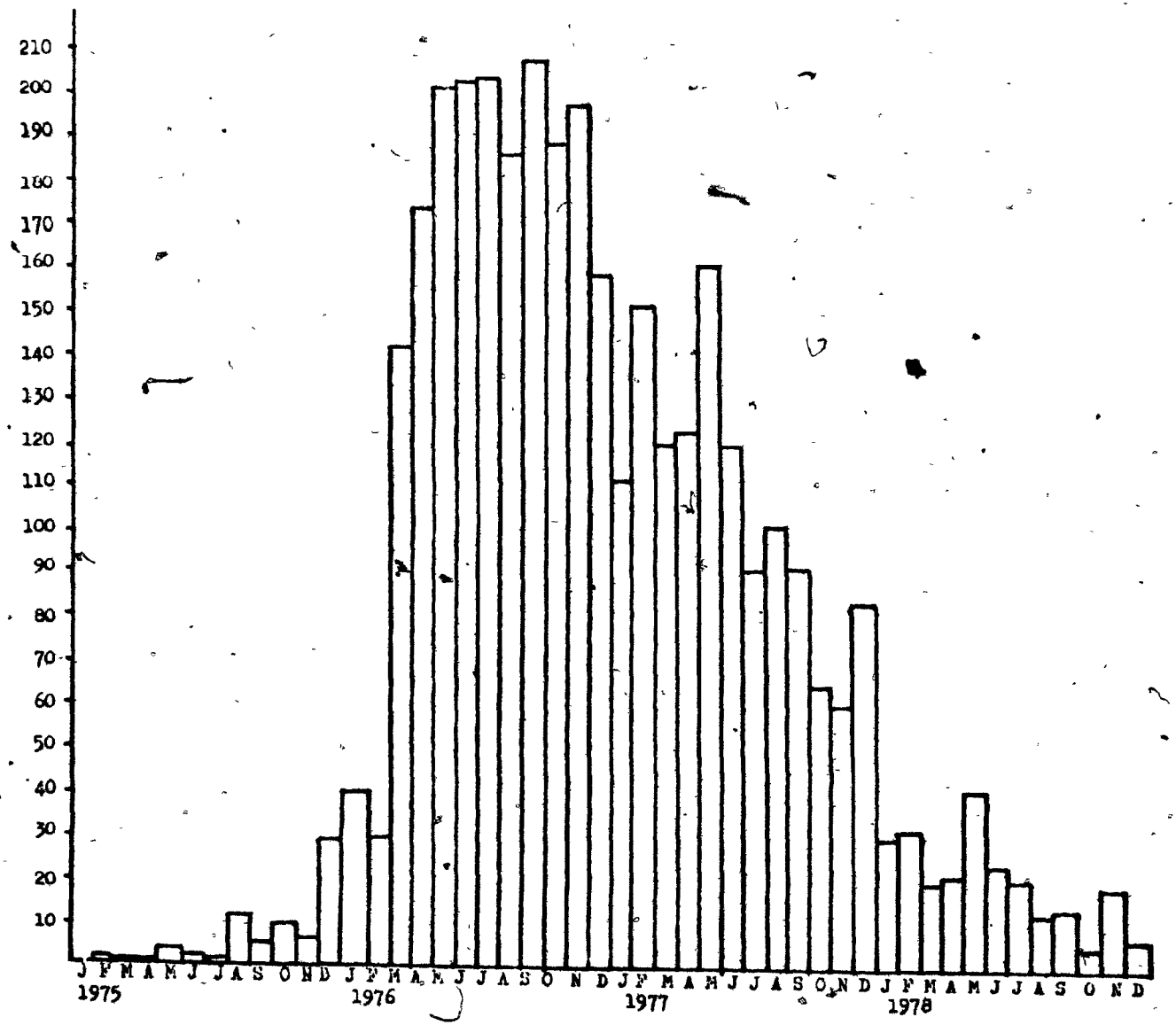

No. of Deaths
VI: 200+
1973
1974
30
28
26
24
22
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
I
II
III
IV
V
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
XII
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X XI
XII

Figure 3:

DISAPPEARENCES: partial list, 1975-78.

The graph in the next page accounts for approximately 3500 missing people, in the time period in which they allegedly were kidnapped, presumably by government security forces. Its sole value is to give and idea of the number of abductions and their distribution in time: it is impossible to know how accurate the numbers are, at least for now. (The Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, an Argentina-based institution, which put out this graph, also submitted to President Videla a list of 4881 persons who disappeared between 1975 and October 1978; the Assembly claims to have sworn statements supporting each disappearence. I do not know why this graph takes only some 3500 disappearences into account.)

Source: Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos, Buenos Aires, 1979.


210
200
190
180
170
160
150
140
130
120
110
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D
1975
1976
1977
1978

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