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ARGENTINA AT THE CROSSROADS:  
PATHWAYS AND OBSTACLES TO DEMOCRATIZATION  
IN THE PRESENT POLITICAL CONJUNCTURE

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## ABSTRACT

### Argentina at the Crossroads: Pathways and Obstacles to Democratization in the Present Political Conjuncture

This paper analyzes the current political conjuncture in Argentina. Beginning with a brief description of the ten years that preceded the inauguration of the 1976 military regime, it then examines the policies implemented by the regime between 1976 and 1981. More specifically, it argues that the regime's economic program--unlike those of previous military regimes--together with widespread repression became the main instrument of a project of radically transforming the underlying social structure. According to the military's vision, this structure had nurtured the emergence and prospering of populism, and, consequently, of subversion.

The failure of the military's economic policies to achieve their objectives opened a serious crisis in 1980, which led in the following year to the military breaking its own rules and deposing the recently installed president, General Viola. A new president was appointed: General Galtieri, who tried to recover the initiative by departing sharply from the indecisive course followed by Viola. In the realm of economic policies, Galtieri's cabinet chose to deepen the depression in order to reduce inflation. Galtieri's most daring changes, however, have taken place in the political arena, where he has clearly begun to move in the direction of some type of regime institutionalization.

The paper then explores the obstacles which Galtieri is confronting in his attempt and concludes that while the military's road to a managed retreat is not going to be an easy one, neither are the opposition's prospects of forcing democratization particularly bright.

Finally, in the concluding section, the paper examines the alternative scenarios that might emerge from the present conjuncture. These scenarios are: an institutionalization of military predominance leading to liberalization; a situation of protracted attrition of both the military and the oppositions resulting in an unstable, albeit extended, period of administration of crisis; and a democratic breakthrough which opens the possibility of a thorough and sustained democratization of both the state and civil society.

ARGENTINA AT THE CROSSROADS:  
PATHWAYS AND OBSTACLES TO DEMOCRATIZATION  
IN THE PRESENT POLITICAL CONJUNCTURE

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In this paper, I want to analyze some of the factors surrounding the most recent change of government in Argentina, that is, the ascension of General Galtieri to the presidency.<sup>1</sup> As we examine the first steps of the new president, it is important to note that there seems to be an emerging consensus in recent months--both within the regime itself and the society at large--that the initiative of the military and its associates has been dramatically reduced. After two years of economic crisis and six years of military rule, it appears that the best option for the military regime involves negotiations and its extrication from power under agreeable terms. In discussing the redefined strategies of the military, I would also like to look at the ways in which social and political oppositions could contribute to the following, not necessarily congruent, objectives: (1) the weakening of authoritarian ideologies in Argentine society and of repressive state practices, and (2) the foundation of a political system capable of processing social conflicts, and in doing so, preventing a recurrence of the actions of relevant social forces and political actors which in the past have undermined the principles of democratic representation, popular sovereignty, and generalized respect for the law.

Looking briefly at the contemporary political history of Argentina, we begin with the 1955 military overthrow of Perón's constitutional regime. Three years later, the military leaders held presidential elections in which their preferred candidate, Balbín, was defeated by Frondizi, who had the critical support of a substantial portion of the peronist electorate. Frondizi's regime survived four years; in 1962 (after innumerable planteos and threats that began the day he was elected) he too was ousted by the armed forces. Internal conflict within the military soon forced presidential elections, and in 1963 a new constitutional regime was installed, with the defeated military favorite, Aramburu, having received only 15 percent of the vote--a humble third place. In turn, the new civilian president, Illia, was deposed in yet another military coup which, unlike the previous ones, was carried out by the top leadership of the three branches of the armed forces, making it an unanimous institutional action. Although the new president, General Onganía, envisioned the start of a millenium, with himself forever in power, he too was deposed by his military colleagues following the major social rebellions of 1969. The following three years witnessed both the disintegration of the military regime and the failure to negotiate a compromise between opposition social and political forces and the military. At the end of these three years elections were called, with the parties opposing the military regime receiving 80 percent of the vote and the military's official candidate only 3 percent. Thus, the victorious peronist movement rode into power. The

"second coming of peronism" started auspiciously, only to be plagued later by violent internal feuding, as well as by the renewal of acute conflicts centering on the distribution of income between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The result was the most serious political crisis of the present century for Argentina, setting the stage for another military comeback. In March of 1976, the military--again acting institutionally--easily toppled Isabel Perón's regime, which was already in shambles.

The "Process of National Reorganization" was launched in 1976 as an effort to avoid the historical failures of preceding military regimes. The new agenda sought and partially succeeded in bringing about a profound transformation of the Argentine economy. It also successfully refined the repression and elimination of societal contestations that had begun in 1969, and exterminated the guerrilla groups. Finally, the coup's leader, General Videla, became in 1981 Argentina's first military president to manage an orderly transfer of power to a military successor within the framework, and according to the rules established in advance by a de facto regime. In looking at this recent period of military rule, however, one sees a gradual lessening of the military's hold on the country. The economy began to be plagued by serious problems, in particular the mounting balance-of-payments deficits, a huge expansion of the foreign debt, and a sizable jump in bankruptcies and unemployment. These pressures were compounded by fiscal deficits and inflation, both of which the economic team headed by Martínez de Hoz had failed to successfully eradicate. In 1981, coinciding with General Viola's ascension to the presidency, the economy deteriorated even further. The decline of industrial production as well as other sectors (e.g., construction) and the dramatic rise of unemployment led the nation from depression to crisis, the magnitude of which was unprecedented in 20th-century Argentina.<sup>2</sup> General Viola, who inherited the crisis, witnessed its worsening and did nothing to effectively cope with it. More or less predictably, in December 1981 the regime subverted its own rules in the midst of this severe political and economic deterioration: Viola was unceremoniously fired by the commander in chief of the army.

The events of the last two years, as well as their increasingly quickening pace, might tempt observers to interpret the 1976-1982 period as another example of Argentina's history of chronic institutional instability and recurrent failure to consolidate the political formulae that have been devised since 1955. In the last 27 years, no constitutional regime has been able to complete its term. Military dictatorships have been unable to achieve their proclaimed goals or to influence the selection of their successors. Again we see Argentina, under military rule for the past six years, unable to consolidate the ambitious political and economic changes originally envisioned as goals of the last coup. In an interview recently granted to a Buenos Aires newspaper, the current president, General Galtieri, explicitly advocated the need to reach a political agreement with the opposition.<sup>3</sup> Here the military is haunted by the parallels between the present situation and the 1972-1973 conjuncture, in which President Lanusse tried, and failed, to negotiate the terms of military retreat from power by proposing a "Gran Acuerdo Nacional." I would argue, however, that the present situation is quite different from that of the early 1970s, as well as from similar periods of military extrication in 1958 and 1963. Despite the generalized climate of pessimism and cynicism prevalent in Argentina, this situation may indeed offer the possibility of a break from the cyclical pattern of Argentine political life.

How has this possibility emerged and what might be the constraining factors? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to look at the contexts in which the programs of the post-1976 governments were designed and implemented, and to analyze some of the changes that Argentine society has undergone in the last six years.

The 1976 Coup:  
Economics as Politics<sup>4</sup>

Let me begin by proposing that the bureaucratic-authoritarian model is of little use to us here, both in terms of understanding the causes of the 1976 coup and in terms of the nature of the policies implemented by the emerging military regimes.<sup>5</sup> One sees this clearly in looking at the differences between the projects of the 1966 and 1976 military regimes.

General Onganía's emphasis in 1966 was on changing Argentine politics. The implicit diagnosis was that it was necessary to eliminate the messy and inefficient intermediation of a network of political parties, parliamentary institutions, and corporative brokers in order to fully unleash Argentine potentialities for economic growth. The goal was to replace the system of "black parliamentarism" which had prevailed between 1955 and 1966 with the consolidation of an authoritarian state ruled by a semi-monarchical patriarch who would benevolently acknowledge the interests of the different classes and arbitrate their disputes.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike the new political model, the economic formula attempted by Onganía and his associates in the mid-1960s was not entirely novel. It consisted primarily of reenacting, with some minor modifications, the developmentalist recipes tried between 1959 and 1962. The main goals of developmentalism had been to restore dynamism to the Argentine economy by completing the vertical integration of the industrial sector and the development of the related infrastructure, and therefore giving a central role to foreign capital; i.e., what has been characterized as the "deepening" process. The almost explicit premise was that political exclusion would guarantee the full unfolding of an economic model which emphasized capital accumulation at the cost of the exclusion of vast segments of the popular sector.

Not surprisingly, then, the social protest against Onganía's regime that began in 1969 centered upon the authoritarian nature of the state, the reverberations of authoritarianism in the institutions of civil society (the workplace, schools and universities, the unions, the church, and the family), and the attempted centralization of national political decision-making.<sup>7</sup>

In 1976 the diagnosis of the armed forces was essentially different from that of the 1960s. In fact, the new vision implied a reversal of the way in which economics and politics were perceived to be related. While in 1976, as in 1966, there was an urgent conviction that Argentine political life had to be changed, it was considerably greater in the light of two factors: (1) the anticapitalist overtones of the popular mobilizations of the 1969-1973 period, and (2) the strength of the guerrilla movements. However, unlike in 1966, the economic program became one of the main instruments, together with repression, of a project to radically

transform the underlying social structure--a structure which had, according to the military's vision, nurtured the emergence, prospering, and recurrence of populism and "black parliamentarism." In 1976, we see economic transformation as a means, while in 1966 it was conceived as an end.

It was precisely this perception that made the military in the 1970s reject developmentalism. To the 1976 regime, developmentalism became, malgrè lui, the correlate of populism. Although developmentalist politicians and technocrats advocated the need to restrain the demands of the working class, and to induce changes in the social correlation of forces by favoring the large bourgeoisie, they did not challenge the basic ingredients of the import-substitution process inaugurated in the 1930s. In fact, developmentalism urged both the acceleration and the qualitative expansion of an industrialization process which, allegedly, had provided the material basis for the growth of a working class which lacked discipline, and an urban bourgeoisie which was both inefficient and heavily dependent on permanent state protection.

Just as the military's disenchantment with developmentalism occurred, the appeal of "liberalism" increased.<sup>8</sup> The liberals made a radical critique of post-1930 industrialization, and of the social and political practices associated with it after 1943. They not only challenged the model of class reconciliation adopted by developmentalists (and populists), they also questioned the premise that industrial development should continue to be the dynamic core of a closed economy. The liberal position argued that Argentina had been plagued by two critical problems since the 1930s, and even more since 1943: the deteriorating discipline of the workers, and the inefficiency of large segments of the industrial bourgeoisie. In turn, they blamed these problems both on the policies which had closed the economy, favoring the development of allegedly artificial industries, and on the excessive growth of the state.

The image of the market, in a double sense, became the cornerstone of the liberals' position. On the one hand, it implied the opening of the Argentine economy and its reintegration with the international market by drastically reducing tariffs and eliminating other "distortions" which protected artificial sectors. On the other hand, the image alluded to a drastic reduction of state intervention both in the economy--by restoring the initiative to a private sector conveniently induced to invest--and in the society at large--by eliminating the mechanisms of benevolent state tutelage of the popular sectors in general, and of the working class in particular.

While we lack the space here to analyze the liberal programs implemented between 1976 and 1981, two issues should be touched upon: (1) what were the consequences of the way in which the alleged need to liberalize the economy was justified, and (2) what were some of the impacts of the liberal economic programs upon Argentine society and the patterns of societal response to their effects?<sup>9</sup>

The key to the first question was General Videla's minister of economy, Martínez de Hoz, who was able to hold to his position for five years despite the increasingly evident failure to achieve the proclaimed goals of the program--i.e., to put an end to chronic inflation and to convert Argentina from "an economy of speculation into an economy of production."

Martínez de Hoz became the minister of economy with the longest tenure in Argentine history.<sup>10</sup> His success--in terms of the length of his tenure--was a result of the political ingenuity he displayed in connecting the organicist visions of the military--whereby the subversives were seen as the tip of an iceberg of more extended "cancerous societal tissues" which had to be extirpated altogether--with the justification for persisting in the implementation of economic programs which were supposed to require an extended period to show results. The crux of his argument was that, in turn, the extirpation of "nocive" economic and social practices was indeed going to be a painful process which would require endurance and determination in dealing with the predictable resistance. Inasmuch as complaints coming from nearly every significant social sector were levelled against the economic team, they were portrayed not only as the price to pay for achieving success, but also as a proof that the program was in fact successful, and fair. The stronger the reactions against the effects of the program, the greater the need, he argued, to persevere in implementing painful corrective measures which were, indeed, producing effect, as demonstrated by the reactions of those--workers and entrepreneurs alike--who were reluctant to accept the lessons of how to behave rationally. Thus, the potential removal of Martínez de Hoz became something more serious and threatening than just simply another example of the well-established Argentine practice of firing the minister of economy. In the eyes of the predominant military factions, the stability of the minister came to symbolize the sustained conviction to complete the eradication of subversion, corruption, and disorder at whatever cost was necessary.<sup>11</sup>

In light of the increasing deterioration of the economic situation starting in March 1980, the planned replacement of Videla by General Viola one year later provided the pretext for a much more significant change--namely, the abandonment of the economic objectives and instruments sanctioned by Martínez de Hoz. The series of inevitable devaluations in 1981--each promising to be "the last"--became the symbol of both the reversal of the policies implemented by "Argentina's economic czar," and the indecisive course which followed it.<sup>12</sup>

However, Viola's indecisiveness was not restricted to policymaking in the economic sphere. It also dominated the wider political arenas where the pattern of a military-regime-with-the-initiative prevalent until 1980 was being rapidly reversed. In the face of mounting criticism of the regime's policies, which nearly everyone saw as contributing so decisively to the unfolding of the crisis, the issue of implementing an alternative political strategy, in addition to an economic one, became critical. Viola's response? Again inaction.

Viola's brief period in power, however, did not pass in vain. There are clearly new elements in the political equation, in particular the perhaps irreversible loss of initiative experienced by the military regime during 1981. But just as there are new dimensions, there are also circumstances that seem to echo 1970s political developments. The replacement of Viola by Galtieri in December 1981 in many ways resembled the fate of their colleague, General Levingston. In 1970, the armed forces decided to remove the stubborn Onganía, and Levingston became the second president of the "Revolución Argentina." Nine months later Levingston was, in turn, deposed by General Lanusse who, in becoming the third leg of the military



regime, served only one purpose: to preside over the precipitous and disorderly retreat of the military from power. Similarly, in 1981, Viola, the second president of the "Process of National Reorganization," survived for only nine months in the presidency, and Galtieri, his successor, has become the third president of the present military intervention. The ominous parallels to the 1970 situation have been acknowledged even by Galtieri; he recently declared that extrication of the military from power should not repeat the "mistakes" of 1973, when Lanusse was forced to relinquish power to the military's arch-enemies.<sup>13</sup>

In short, while the current situation recalls a previous historical situation, we find the new president somewhat more savvy than his counterparts of the early 1970s. This is partially a result of the history lesson. Nevertheless, imminent moves on the part of the military regime are likely to contrast sharply with previous history.

In examining this likelihood, one must focus on Galtieri's strategy for military retreat and an avoidance of 1973 revisited, as they currently emerge. This will also later lead me to evaluate some of the changes undergone by Argentine society in recent years and the patterns of societal response to them.

Galtieri's Initial Steps:  
Economic Orthodoxy and Political Abertura

Galtieri's evaluation of Argentina's situation at the time of his ascension to the presidency obviously rested on the assumption that it was Viola's indecisiveness during 1981 that significantly contributed to the deterioration of the military regime. Consequently, the new president acted quickly in an attempt to contrast himself to his predecessor; he wished to appear as an effective and tough decision-maker capable of reversing the trends that had prevailed both in the economy and in the political scene during the previous months.

In the economic sphere, the appointment of Roberto Alemann as minister of economy seemed congruent with the image of hard-liner that Galtieri had cultivated since late 1979. Alemann was not only an outspoken critic of the vacillating and compromising economic measures attempted by Viola and his economic team (which included reimposing some of the instruments associated with "populist economics," such as a multitiered exchange rate). He also attacked Martínez de Hoz' policies, claiming that Martínez de Hoz had not gone far enough in certain areas such as the curtailment of state expenditures.<sup>14</sup> Alemann, predictably, offered austerity: further cuts in state projects, freezes of salaries in the public sector, and an extremely restrictive policy vis-a-vis the industrial sector and the depressed regional economies outside the Pampean provinces. Simultaneously, these sectors were demanding state relief measures to cope with the effects of the economic crisis.

Galtieri also hinted at a radical departure from the road timidly travelled by Viola in the political arena. However, he moved in a direction that surprised most observers, as they recalled his mid-1981 announcement that "ballot boxes will remain unused in the foreseeable future." Instead of condemning the hesitant, and largely ineffectual relaxation

inaugurated by Viola, Galtieri has all but explicitly stated that his will be the last presidential term of the military regime. He is clearly attempting to recover control of the political process by assuming the initiative, setting up the rules and defining the conditions under which a retreat could be manageably implemented. He has promised the sanction of a new statute of political parties for mid-1982. He has even implied that it would fulfill basic opposition demands that parties be allowed to reorganize free from governmental interferences. Furthermore, the president is launching an official party based on (1) the regrouping of provincial conservative politicians who seem capable, in some cases, of manipulating significant clienteles, and (2) the still implicit and hesitant attempt to co-opt some sectors of peronism associated with segments of the union movement and provincial leaderships.

It seems apparent that a successful outcome for Galtieri would mean, on the one hand, reversing the critical situation of the economy (by reducing inflation, the balance-of-payments and fiscal deficits, and, at the same time, revitalizing those sectors of the Argentine economy hardest hit by the crisis, and increasing employment) while on the other hand allowing the eventual holding of elections in 1984. Elections, for the military, must satisfy at least two conditions: (1) agreement by majoritarian parties--i.e., peronism and radicalism--to a list of "guarantees" to limit their policy options and presidential candidates for a future constitutional regime, and (2) the consolidation of a conservative party strong enough to "have a share in the power equation resulting from the elections."<sup>15</sup>

If we turn now to factors that could conspire against Galtieri's success, three appear to be relatively clear.

First, the economic policies inaugurated in 1982, although traditionally favored by important segments of the Argentine bourgeoisie, seem a bitter pill to swallow in the midst of a depression in which, for example, only 59 percent of the productive capacity of the industrial sectors is being used.<sup>16</sup> State austerity obviously means no assistance to those farms outside the Pampean region, to industries, or to banks--both public and private--in virtual bankruptcy. It also means even lower income and consumption levels for those already pressed to the subsistence line, contributing to further recession. Furthermore, Alemann's attempt to reach "inflation zero" by freezing the exchange rate, tariffs, and wages and salaries, sounds strangely, at least in the case of the first two, like a rather populist short-term policy that resorts to inflation-repressing measures, hardly maintainable in the long run.

Unlike the good old times of Martínez de Hoz, everyone in Argentina is talking about impending deadlines--June or even March of this year--for visible results. It must be viewed as somewhat paradoxical that at a time when the armed forces are seemingly willing to accept substantial cuts in military expenditures and a rather drastic dismantling of the state enterprise system (concessions that they refused to make four years ago), an economic program even more orthodox and strict than that of Martínez de Hoz has been unveiled when the resolution of its main supporters was weakened and as the political resources of the military regime were diminished.

While the first major stumbling block to success concerns internal contradictions in Galtieri's economic package, the second involves

external incompatibilities. The hard-line economic policies being pursued could be seen to be in direct conflict with the present political conjuncture--i.e., a conjuncture in which the regime is outlining an opening that within a few years might lead to a situation in which the military yields power to groups that could hardly be their preferred successors. This has been underscored by none other than Alemann himself, who recently has declared that his program and a redemocratization process are intrinsically incompatible.<sup>17</sup>

One example of this contradiction can be seen in the reaction of foreign firms to the suggested privatization of the subsoil. Rather than displaying a renewed interest in investment, they have implied that favorable conditions of exploitation granted today could be reversed if civilians come to power. The military regime clearly faces some difficulty in convincing key economic actors of the eventual continuity of the present policies.

The third major obstacle to a successful fulfillment of Galtieri's strategy concerns the political arena itself. As suggested above, the task of creating, or sponsoring, a strong conservative movement has been one in which post-1955 military regimes have a consistent record of failure.<sup>18</sup> There are few indications that the present conjuncture is fertile breeding ground in this case either. The prestige of the military regime is at an all-time low even among the eventual constituencies of a conservative movement. But, in any case, it is difficult to imagine that such a party could be successfully launched from outside the regime without the state resources, financial and otherwise, required to build clientelistic networks as was done in Spain with the UCD and in Brazil with the PDS.

These three factors pose major obstacles to the managed retreat of the military envisioned by Galtieri. In the next section I would like to examine what factors, in turn, might condition and limit the actions of the oppositions.

#### The Impact of the Policies of the Military Regime Upon Social and Political Oppositions

The failure to achieve most of the proclaimed objectives of the "first leg" of the process of "national reorganization"--that is, the set of policies initiated by General Videla--should not lead us to conclude that the policies implemented between 1976 and 1981 have had no impact on Argentine society. In fact, the emergence and unfolding of the military regime resulted in a series of substantial transformations in Argentine society and can be seen as bringing to a close the era that began with the 1955 overthrow of Perón. Two of these changes are particularly relevant to an analysis of Argentina at its current crossroads, and critical to any postulation of future trends: first, the erosion of the peronist myth, and second, the effects that the 1976-1981 economic policies, along with state repression, have had upon Argentine society. I will deal briefly with each of them.

In looking at the place of peronism in the political scene since the 1976 military coup, it is clear that the coup dealt a serious blow to its prospects for future power. While the party today remains a critical

ingredient of the political scene, its traditional function as the main articulating mechanism of an opposition seeking to undermine successive civilian and military regimes is no longer reinforced by the popular conception that the party offers a viable alternative. This is largely due to the fact that the peronist regime, which had come to power with massive popular support in 1973, was considered a complete failure only three years later. Its rapid disintegration created a political vacuum that permitted military intervention and the simultaneous erosion of what remained of the peronist myth.

As De Riz points out in reference to the 1976 coup "...it had never been so easy for the armed forces to occupy the presidential palace. Nobody was in it."<sup>19</sup> By 1976, the peronist regime found itself in a situation where, on the one hand, the model of class reconciliation embodied in the "Social Pact" celebrated among the major entrepreneurial association, the General Confederation of Labor, and the state, had failed to consolidate. This resulted from the fact that the Social Pact was sabotaged not only by the bourgeoisie but also by the union movement. On the other hand, the attempted establishment of an effective parliamentary system also ended in total failure. Although Perón managed to completely reverse the historical trend of antagonism between his movement and the main opposition group, the Radical Party, this became rather meaningless, since the main locus of political conflict moved into the peronist movement itself. As a result, instead of compromise and parliamentary bargaining, violence and terrorism became the main weapons used by most of the contenders lodged both in the party and in the state apparatus--i.e., the left-wing guerrilla, the unions, and the paramilitary right wing increasingly interpenetrated with the police and the security forces.

Peronism's internal warfare gradually neutralized all of the actors operating within it. The political influence and prestige of the guerrilla groups, the Montoneros, declined sharply after the successful palace coup against president Cámpora in July 1973 and Perón's condemnation of their tactics prior to his death in 1974. In addition, during 1975 the guerrillas suffered a series of severe military defeats, and at the time of the 1976 coup they were already in disarray. The ambitions of the paramilitary right wing were also thwarted as its attempt to gain full control of the regime in mid-1975 was blocked and all of its major figures were purged from both the government and the party. Finally, the unions, which by default had become Isabel Perón's major base of support, actually served to finalize the regime's demise through their assertion of power. They succeeded in placing their candidate for minister of economy, Cafiero, but then, only a few months later, openly sabotaged the moderate austerity measures he proposed, forced his resignation, and squandered the last chance that the peronist government had to survive.

The confrontations within peronism did more than diminish support for Isabel's regime. They also made painfully evident that the peronist slogans which had so effectively helped to undermine the civilian and military regimes of the 1955-1973 period were hardly viable pillars of an alternative structure. Peronism's effectiveness as the main articulating mechanism for a defensive alliance that successfully blocked the projects of its opponents was not matched by a comparable capacity to launch its own program, much less to implement it once in power.<sup>20</sup>

The military regime we see today, as in 1970-1973, is increasingly alienating friends and foes, and thus might provide a convenient target for a peronist movement leading a popular opposition that rallies around the banners of social justice and political opening. However, the hope that such a circumstance could lead to the establishment of a solid basis for a relatively strong institutionalized regime is now even more remote than in the early 1970s.

The second critical area of change I wish to examine concerns some of the political effects of the 1976-1981 economic policies. The nature of these effects is due both to the intended results of the policies implemented by the military government and to the unintended impact that the 1980-1981 economic crisis has had upon the different classes and segments in Argentina.

As mentioned above, one of the main goals of the policies implemented since 1976 has been to reduce the role and responsibilities of the state within the global society, and to fully restore initiative to producers and consumers who, ideally, would operate in an atomized market structure.<sup>21</sup> The corollary was that the main tasks to be undertaken included both (a) inducing (or forcing) the members of the different social classes to abandon the long-established practice of acting collectively to seek the protection and tutelage of the state (el calor y el amparo del estado), and (b) destroying the mediating mechanisms that enabled individuals to advance claims as collectives, and to pressure the state.

Between 1976 and 1981 this double task of disarticulation was carried out with a degree of conviction and energy unparalleled in Argentine history. It affected industrial entrepreneurs and professionals, as well as workers, small rural producers, and shanty-town dwellers. However, there were two factors which made the working-class movement the primary victim of the social atomization pursued by the military regime. The first--to make a slight theoretical digression--is perceptively described by Offe and Wiesenhal: in any capitalist society, labor is inherently atomized within each individual firm, while capital is already integrated under a unified command.<sup>22</sup> This is why a process of atomization which weakens the associational capabilities of all classes while stopping short of the abolition of capitalist relationships--the latter being something completely alien to the intentions of Argentine-style liberals--is bound to reduce the bargaining power of the workers considerably more than those of their employers.

The second factor was more closely related to the specific modalities of the pattern of emergence of the working class as a collective actor in Argentina. This emergence was embodied in the development of a nationally-extended union movement which reached the possibility of advancing broad working-class demands through its peak organizations. In turn, the cohesion of the union movement had been enhanced by the ideological cement provided by peronism, and by the nurturing that the state gave to its organizational network since the mid-1940s. Hence, it was not accidental that breaking the back of organized labor became one of the foremost concerns of post-1976 policies. And, as El Economista put it rather bluntly, the military government did not rely only on repression and regulation of the activities of labor organizations. It also sought to eliminate (or

greatly reduce) the fiscal, tariff, and credit privileges that the industrial sector had enjoyed since the 1930s:

...In order to destroy the omnipotence of the unions, actions were not restricted to the legal and institutional spheres: pressure was brought upon the sector in which union activities thrived, i.e., manufacturing. (August 28, 1981)

The implicit premise here was that industry, largely free from the pressures of external competition, had a structural tendency to adjust prices to costs. This, then, made it possible for management and labor to agree on wages (and prices) excluding the interests of other parties such as government, clients, and consumers. As Canitrot points out, Argentine liberals argued that "protectionism [was] both the ultimate culprit for the legitimation of unions, and the cause for their vigorous development since the 1930s."<sup>23</sup>

As a result, the measures undertaken since 1976 were directed toward both repressing the unions and undermining the structural foundations of their power. The repression reached unprecedented levels and, contrary to what El Economista implied, it was not limited to legal measures.<sup>24</sup> Simultaneously, the industrial sector was gradually forced to reckon with external competition; effective protection became negligible in late 1979. At the end of Martínez de Hoz' "five-year plan" in 1980, the effects were clear: a small drop in industrial output--from 117.1 in 1975 to 114.1 in 1980 (with 1970=100)--was paralleled by a dramatic 26 percent reduction in industrial employment.<sup>25</sup>

The industrial sector faced a year of reckoning in 1980. The largely unexpected rise of real interest rates beginning in late 1979, combined with the increasing commitment of the government to its anti-industrialist policies, turned what was already a serious financial situation for the sector as a whole into a crisis.<sup>26</sup> However, the crisis was not limited to the industrial sector; the entire Argentine economy became prostrated, confronting Martínez de Hoz and his associates with the failure of their policies. In March 1980, the collapse of the major private bank highlighted the seriousness of a problem that affected the whole financial sector; their expanding portfolio of loans was more than proportionately matched by the increasing size of deudas incobrables (bad loans). In fact, by 1980 all of the features of the crisis which was to hit the following year were already in place. The country was faced with a sharp increase of bankruptcies in all sectors of the economy (including agriculture), a foreign debt which almost tripled between 1977 and 1980 (from 9.6 billion dollars to 27.1 billion despite the fact that Argentina's oil imports are insignificant), a growing balance-of-payments deficit, and (also in contrast with the 1976-1979 record) a dramatic rise in unemployment.<sup>27</sup>

In March of 1981, when Videla stepped down from the presidency, Martínez de Hoz' program had reached a dead end. The policies had resulted in an economic crisis which left no sector untouched. An additional significance of this was that the reactions generated by the implementation of the economic program revealed the resilience of Argentine society, particularly the kind Martínez de Hoz had sought to eradicate. Each of the social sectors again directed its demands toward the state, this time insisting

on both the implementation of measures of immediate relief, and the enactment of a program of state-induced economic reactivation. The recurrence of the well-entrenched social practices of seeking el calor y el amparo del estado is proving to be an element of continuity within contemporary Argentina. However, the old practices are being expressed through new mechanisms; this suggests an element of change as well, which might prove to be of great relevance in the immediate future.

Different sectors of the urban and agrarian bourgeoisies have assumed a leading role in demanding changes in the policies of the military regime. This could be seen as ironic: in 1976 the Argentine bourgeoisie had widely supported the emergence and consolidation of the military regime, together with its repressive and exclusionary measures. The present bourgeois practices and their societal impact are not only an indication of the extent to which their interests have been hurt by the 1976-1981 economic program, but also a reflection of the weakness of the working class and popular resistance to policies that have affected them in an unprecedented fashion. The combination of repression, intended economic transformations, and economic crisis have seriously damaged potential workers' protest movements. As Delich points out, the 1976-1980 years marked the longest period of union inactivity since 1943.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, although workers' protests have been rising in 1982, it is hard to imagine that they could reach the levels of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This certainly does not mean that workers will remain totally paralyzed. But it does indicate that the deterioration of the bargaining power of the working class--a circumstance reflected in a shift of workers' demands from wages, working conditions, and union redemocratization to employment and job security--has resulted in a subordination of their contestations to the stronger, and hitherto much less repressed, protests of a bourgeoisie calling for a reactivation of the economy.

In short, the present conjuncture combines several elements in somewhat paradoxical and novel ways. I want to emphasize two corollaries of this situation which will, in all likelihood, have a significant influence upon the patterns of the alternative political formulae which might emerge in Argentina. First, the growing deterioration of the military regime has not been matched by a parallel strengthening of the opposition. The emerging, but still weak, opposition may not be capable of forcing the military to make significant political concessions. This could hurt the possibility of an effective redemocratization, since it is unlikely that the military would accept it unless forced to do so by the oppositions. Political processes tightly controlled from above would hardly result in a return to a parliamentary democracy in Argentina. However, in the long run, this situation of generalized power deflation might also constitute an asset. A relatively weak democratic opposition--thus incapable of staging a successful blitzkrieg capturing the top state positions--would then have to revert to what might initially seem to be a less attractive alternative: a gradual buildup of democratic institutions and safeguards and a war of attrition against authoritarian myths and values. This alternative route might prove to be doubly advantageous. It could be the only effective way to dissolve the cynicism and political apathy that have become so prevalent among the Argentine population since the successive failures of what initially seemed to be magic political solutions, whether authoritarian or populist. Power deflation could also help to prevent the repeat of

the 1972-1976 cycle--i.e., a situation combining the mistaken belief on the part of the victorious antimilitary front that the demise of the authoritarian regime guaranteed the consolidation of democratic institutions and practices, and the retreat of the military into a position of external, hostile, watch-dogs of parliamentary and popular representative institutions.

Second, there seems to be a widening gap between economy and politics. The regime is committing itself at a quickening pace to a process of political liberalization--or as the military prefer to call it, a "gradual democratization." The obvious interlocutores here are the political parties. However, the economic crisis that is hitting Argentina tends to relegate to a secondary position those issues which might be the primary subject of negotiations--as well as the substance of conflicts--between the military regime and the political opposition. Consequently, there is a serious risk that most of the population might regard negotiations and conflicts over political matters (such as the future institutional roles of the parties and the military, the establishment of a more independent judiciary, and the examination of practices of state repression) as totally unrelated to the more pressing economic problems that they are presently confronting. This could make the establishment of strong and stable foundations for democracy much more difficult. I would like to explore the effects of these and other trends in the last section of the paper, where I will analyze the alternative scenarios that might emerge in Argentina in the coming years.

#### Alternative Political Scenarios

It seems highly unlikely that the present political situation in Argentina will lead to either a complete reversal of the abertura and a further recurrence of políticas duras (with or without Galtieri presiding) or, alternately, to a precipitous and disorderly retreat of the military with the political opposition triumphantly occupying a deserted governmental arena. The range of probable scenarios does not include these two extremes, and the future will likely yield less dramatic outcomes without clear-cut results.

The first alternative would involve an institutionalization of military predominance by putting an end to the de facto military regime and devising a constitutional framework that would, directly or indirectly, allow the armed forces to retain decisionmaking powers over general policy matters. This alternative could assume a variety of formats, ranging from Galtieri eventually becoming the next constitutional president, with the acquiescence of the major parties, of a transitional regime, to a conditioned transfer of power to the parties. In any case, the essence of this alternative would not necessarily be the commitment of the armed forces to stop every change, political or otherwise, but their attempt to control the content and pace of such changes.<sup>29</sup> This would be achieved through a limited liberalization primarily consisting of (a) a significant expansion of the public arenas of policy contestation resulting from the lifting of most restrictions affecting the freedoms of speech, assembly, and press, and the elimination of illegal state practices, and (b) the institutionalization of the regime via the formation of a government of national unity or the celebration of preempted elections merely aimed at legitimizing concertations, agreements, or impositions--on either candidates or policy matters, or both--which would be essentially the outcome



of nonelectoral mechanisms. The most important consequence of resorting to either of those devices--and itself the third ingredient of the liberalization formula--would be that the officials appointed or "elected" in such a manner, especially the president of the republic, would not be accountable to the general electorate or to its elected representatives. Rather, the members of the executive branch of government would remain largely accountable to their "big electors," and principally to the armed forces.

The liberalization formula, in any of its variants, would deliberately ignore the preferences (and interests) of a majority of the Argentine population. This is to be deplored not only because of the fact that it would entail continuing the transgression of the principle of popular sovereignty. Actually, after six years of military rule, it is again becoming evident that nondemocratic regimes in Argentina have not merely resulted in the political and economic exclusion of the majority; they have also proved to be quite ineffective mechanisms of decisionmaking. Nondemocratic regimes have not provided reasonably effective, stable, and consensual mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts among the different sectors and segments of the bourgeoisie, and the individuals and organizations controlling the upper echelons of the state apparatus.

The second scenario would also involve the maintenance of military predominance, but without the armed forces succeeding in consolidating or institutionalizing any regime pattern. Hence, the military would be forced to explicitly invoke and use physical force as the primary basis for the imposition of their political authority. This situation, which I call an administration of crisis, would be characterized by certain trends which were inaugurated in 1980 becoming a relatively permanent feature of Argentine society. These trends include the lack of solution of the economic crisis, and a crisis marked by the syndrome of depression, unrestrained inflation, growing unemployment, and expansion of the foreign debt. These symptoms are aggravated by the perception--prevailing among both domestic and foreign capitalists--that solutions are unattainable in a country where "everything has been tried and has failed." On the political front, the military would be unable to impose any specific formula, and, simply to insure survival, would endeavor to forge temporary, shifting, alliance with opportunistic sectors of the different oppositions. The main features of this scenario would be an overriding concern with the control of naked power and increasingly shrinking governmental spoils, and a recurrent inability to devise patterns of compromise among adversary social sectors in civil society. Political participation, already at a low level since 1974, would be further discouraged and repressed, and politics would be restricted to short-term high-level deals among various (and possibly feuding) military factions, sectors of the bourgeoisie and of the union movement, and, perhaps, a limited number of politicians--all of this with no opening of the political system.

The "administration of crisis" syndrome could come about in two ways. It could be caused by the deterioration of Galtieri's regime before either the implementation of any of the varieties of liberalization or any real democratic breakthrough takes place. This possibility seems greater in March 1982 than in December 1981, since most of the optimism surrounding Galtieri's ascension to power has evaporated--with Alemann's economic

program having deepened the crisis without yielding any positive result. This situation could also arise from the temporary implementation of any of the possible liberalization formulae, and the subsequent failure to consolidate it.

The third alternative would be a democratic breakthrough. This would open the way for a prolonged period of trial and error, possibly resulting in both a gradual strengthening of democratic institutions and practices and the successful containment of authoritarian myths and ideas within the different social arenas. I should emphasize here that democratization is qualitatively different from an aggregation of liberalizing steps. Democratization involves crossing two thresholds: the celebration of elections with uncertain outcomes and with no restrictions on participation and candidates, and the accountability of the executive before elected representatives or the general electorate.<sup>30</sup>

It is almost impossible to imagine that the Argentine military would voluntarily yield to democratization. Thus, in order to bring about a democratic breakthrough, the opposition will have to take actions forcing open elections and resulting in the formation of an accountable and representative government. Only a government with these attributes will have the chance of achieving stability; no other formula could result in the creation of authoritative and legitimate institutions independent from the will--and shifting moods--of the armed forces. However, to assert that a democratic breakthrough which results in the installation of a representative government constitutes a prerequisite for democratization is not to say that this condition alone could guarantee its successful consolidation. As implied above, the installation of such a government would be only the initial step toward the eventual reconstruction of democracy in Argentina. I would like to mention several additional factors that would increase the likelihood of achieving this goal.

First, in order for democracy to be possible, in the process of successfully forcing a democratic breakthrough and thereafter, the oppositions will have to combine a strategy of "war of maneuvers"--aimed at accelerating the demise of the military regime--with one of "war of positions"--alternately designed to contribute to the consolidation of a democratic regime.<sup>31</sup> More concretely, this would involve acknowledging that the establishment of parliamentary democracy might make somewhat easier the generation and strengthening of democratic practices and anti-authoritarian values in the society at large. However, it would neither imply nor guarantee this outcome. This, in turn, would require a commitment to a democratic ideology that has often been absent in parties and unions, as well as in civic and entrepreneurial associations. This hesitancy arises from the strength of paternalism, the emphasis upon hierarchical decisionmaking, and the lack of tolerance for either social and cultural pluralism or the open manifestations of dissension.

The major political and economic actors would likewise have to do away with the "sense of urgency" that has pervaded Argentine politics since 1955. This political climate has been associated with, among other things, a tendency to dismiss as irrelevant any objectives short of immediately achieving power. Examples of this can be found in the initially successful attempts, led by two retired military officers (Aramburu and Manrique

respectively), to create conservative parties in the 1960s and the 1970s. These parties received over 15 percent of the popular vote in the 1963 and the 1973 presidential elections. Although they fell considerably short of winning the elections, the fact that they captured approximately one-sixth of the electorate in their first attempt did not constitute an altogether inauspicious start. However, the performances of Aramburu and Manrique were widely dismissed as little more than outright failures, thus reenforcing the authoritarian proclivities of conservative forces.

Another manifestation of this sense of urgency is the belief that changes and the successful realization of individual goals are instantaneously and magically possible, requiring no more than the unfolding of the political will of a given actor. Such a delusion tends to pervade vast sectors of the population in instances of political euphoria. In the last decade, the protagonists of this often-tragic political fantasy have changed, Perón, the military, the technocrats, and the guerrillas all having had their turn.<sup>32</sup> Obviously, these fantasies discount the capabilities of other actors to resist and to block them.

Second, the success of democracy will depend on a capacity to gradually build a political formula based upon the recomposition of the patterns of accommodation and compromise that had prevailed in Argentina until the emergence of Onganía's military regime in 1966. These patterns neither froze, nor tried to freeze, social conflicts; they were based, at least implicitly, on the dual recognition of the inherently conflictive nature of social organization, and the ultimate impossibility of predetermining the outcomes of interactions between social groupings.

However, the pre-1966 formula--largely as a result of the exclusion of the peronist party--failed to institutionalize compromise.<sup>33</sup> This led, as noted above, to the emergence of "black parliamentarism,"--that is, a de facto dual political system in which parties and parliamentary institutions became vehicles for purely symbolic practices, and the major social actors, the military, the bourgeoisie, and the labor movement, continually relied upon their capability to threaten the survival of democracy as the major tactic for achieving their policy goals. The institutionalization of compromise would thus require the agenda of redemocratization to include the obviously difficult task of bridging the gulf which has historically separated formal procedural democracy and "substantive" democracy in Argentina.<sup>34</sup> Such a bridge may become especially difficult to erect in the near future; the current crisis, and its underlying causes, have deteriorated the Argentine economy in such a way that all social actors, and especially the popular classes, would have to accept the possibility that eventual progress toward the achievement of political democracy might not immediately bring about progressive social and economic changes.

Third, the reconstruction of democracy will require political parties to modify some of their long-established practices. More specifically, it is difficult to see how democracy can be sustained if peronism's emphasis upon social justice and income redistribution is not paralleled by an equally strong concern for the respect of individual civil and political rights. Likewise, nonperonist parties, and especially the Radical party, could adopt practices more closely reflecting the antiperonist orientations and values of the middle classes (such as support for multiple unionization,

and opposition to the paternalistic and tutelary practices of peronism). This could help to reverse the nonperonist parties' failure to provide a democratic outlet for the antiperonist sentiments of the middle classes. This failure has resulted in a reinforcement of the already existing tendencies of those sectors to renounce whatever democratic ideals they upheld, and has pushed them in the direction of giving support to the authoritarian social movements associated with the emergence of the military regimes in 1966 and 1976.

From all of the above, it should be apparent that democratization is not likely to succeed in Argentina. Democratization would require the accumulation of a series of favorable circumstances, each of which is in itself difficult to bring about. However, the awareness that Argentina has reached such a low point--after all of the magic solutions have been tried and failed--might result in some collective recognition of the need to purposely construct democracy both in the state and in society. It would probably help if the country's major social and political forces learned a lesson from the past: the 1955-1966 years were the period during which Argentina last experienced political peace and respect for its social diversity together with a moderate degree of economic growth. Those were years also in which most regimes, and even some members of the military, actively sought to establish a democratic formula.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Since this paper does not intend to offer more than an impressionistic analysis of the present conjuncture, I will omit bibliographical references not directly used in the text.

<sup>2</sup>Industrial production fell 15 percent with respect to 1980, which had already been a year of negative growth.

<sup>3</sup>La Nación, February 22, 1982.

<sup>4</sup>Here, I am partially paraphrasing Adolfo Canitrot's perceptive characterization of what he called "The Economic Plan as a Political Project." See his "Teoría y práctica del liberalismo. Política anti-inflacionaria y apertura económica en la Argentina, 1976-1981," Estudios Cedes (Buenos Aires), 3:10 (1980).

<sup>5</sup>The limited usefulness of the BA model also extends to the other "coups of the 1970s," i.e., the Uruguayan and Chilean cases.

<sup>6</sup>I discuss the features of 1955-1966 "black parliamentarism" below. See also Liliana De Riz, Retorno y derrumbe: el último gobierno peronista (México, 1981) and my "Unions and Politics in Contemporary Argentina," in J. Carriere (ed.), Politics, Industrial Relations, and the Labour Movement in Latin America (London, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup>As has been pointed out by several authors, all of the major outbreaks of popular discontent between 1969 and 1973 took place outside the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires.

<sup>8</sup>Of course, we should bear in mind that Argentine (and Latin American) usage of the concept of liberalism is different from the one prevalent in English-speaking countries.

<sup>9</sup>Martínez de Hoz' program went through several stages. In addition, its antistatist posture was compromised both by "external" as well as intrinsic restrictions. The external restrictions had to do with the emphasis of the military on not fully dismantling the state-enterprise system and on increasing defense expenditures. The intrinsic restrictions were associated with the fact that state intervention became even more crucial for enforcing the nonmarket coercion of the labor force (for example, through the suspension of bargaining mechanisms) and for manipulating several key variables, such as the exchange rate.

<sup>10</sup>This could be seen as an ironic rebuttal to those who have traditionally attributed the country's poor economic performance since the late 1940s to the instability of economic policymaking teams. Actually, the longest tenure in the ministry of economy has resulted in Argentina's most severe economic crisis of the century.

<sup>11</sup>This was the reason why Martínez de Hoz kept tirelessly repeating that his were the economic policies of the armed forces.

## REFERENCES

<sup>22</sup>In their "Two Logics of Collective Action: Theoretical Notes on Social Class and Organizational Form," in Political Power and Social Theory, vol. 1 (1980), Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesensthal state that "Workers cannot merge; at best, they can associate in order to partly compensate for the power advantage that capital derives from (its) liquidity.... In the absence of associational efforts on the part of the workers, the conflict that is built into the capital/wage labor relationship is bound to remain very limited.... The formation of the unions and other forms of workers' associations is not only theoretically, but also historically, a response to the 'association' that has already taken place on the part of capital...." (see p. 74)

<sup>23</sup>See Adolfo Canitrot, "Teoría y práctica....," op. cit., p. 7. Canitrot's arguments have also contributed to the rest of the discussion in this section.

<sup>24</sup>During the 1976-1980 period, the union movement suffered the purge of several thousands of second- and third-rank leaders and plant activists-- a widespread mechanism was the "disappearance" of persons often based upon lists prepared by the management of private firms and public enterprises. The military also decreed the shutdown of the General Confederation of Labor and the passage of a law banning the formation of any third-level association; the prohibition of all activities of the 62 Organizations (the top-level peronist labor association); the indefinite suspension of bargaining mechanisms; and the drastic curtailment of the economic power of the unions through the transfer of most of their social services (obras sociales) to the state.

<sup>25</sup>See Adolfo Canitrot, "Teoría y práctica....," op. cit., p. 70. The index went from 119.2 in 1975 to 88.2 in 1980. (1970=100)

<sup>26</sup>Real interest rates are determined by the difference between nominal interest rates and inflationary rates. The evidence given by Canitrot in "Teoría y práctica....," op. cit., Tables 2 and 10, demonstrates how the indebtedness of the private sector jumped in association with the rise of real interest rates:

Quarter	Nominal Rate of Interest	Inflationary Rate	Real Rate of Interest	Loans from Domes- tic Banks to Pri- vate Firms
1978 I	36.8	28.1	6.8	
II	26.4	26.3	.1	26,607.2
III	24.6	19.3	4.4	
IV	24.2	27.7	-2.7	
1979 I	23.2	31.4	-6.2	26,309.7
II	22.4	26.9	-3.5	27,688.7
III	25.6	27.3	-1.3	28,874.0
IV	23.6	11.0	11.4	37,045.9

## REFERENCES

Quarter	Nominal Rate of Interest	Inflationary Rate	Real Rate of Interest	Loans from Domes- tic Banks to Pri- vate Firms
1980 I	19.4	14.2	4.6	41,032.0
II	18.1	15.5	2.3	42,215.7
III	20.2	9.8	9.5	46,291.0
IV	18.0	14.3	3.2	49,718.3
1981 I	28.3	14.1	12.4	

<sup>27</sup>The major entrepreneurial association, the Unión Industrial Argentina, has estimated total unemployment in late 1981 at nearly 1.8 million. (Cf. Latin America Weekly Report, March 12, 1982).

<sup>28</sup>Francisco Delich, Desmovilización social, reestructuración obrera y cambio sindical (unpublished manuscript).

<sup>29</sup>An example of this type of limitation can be inferred from the statement that the armed forces would be allegedly prepared to accept the implementation of economic policies ranging from "Martínez de Hoz to Gómez Morales or Pugliese." (Cf. El Economista, February 12, 1982) Gómez Morales, a moderate peronist economist, was minister both in the early 1950s and the mid-1970s and has in the past consistently advocated policies combining fiscal restraint and a mild version of monetarism. Pugliese, a Radical politician, and also a minister of economy in the 1960s, is a member of the more conservative wing of the party.

<sup>30</sup>See Philippe Schmitter, "Speculations about the Possible Demise of Authoritarian Regimes and its Possible Consequences," Latin American Program Working Paper no. 60 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1980), for a list of criteria which, if met, would qualify a given regime as democratic. I have borrowed from him in characterizing the attributes of both liberalization and democratization.

<sup>31</sup>I refer here to Gramsci's metaphor.

<sup>32</sup>A recent example of this type of conception has been given by an official of the National Commission of Labor--the more opportunistic and promilitary wing of the labor movement--quoted by The Washington Post. (April 7, 1982) In the wake of the Argentine-British conflict, he enthusiastically declared that "... Argentina is a country where twenty years of history could happen in one day."

<sup>33</sup>In the 1955-1966 period, the peronist party was banned and Perón was not allowed to return from exile. Since 1957, however, the peronist unions have operated more or less freely and have become the backbone of the oppositionist labor movement.

<sup>34</sup>Substantive democracy can be defined as the outcome of the largely informal mechanisms which have made possible proposing, and partially satisfying, demands for the establishment of more egalitarian patterns of social organization.