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PERONISM TODAY

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Introduction

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On 14 May 1989 the Argentine people will go to the polls to elect a new president, who will take office on 10 December 1989. This will be the first time since 1928 that an elected president will serve out his full term and hand over to a democratically elected successor. For all those who wish to see a decent life for the ordinary people of Argentina, the possibility of improved Argentine-British relations and/or long-term peace and security for the Falkland Islanders, it is vitally important that democracy gains permanent roots in Argentina. Historically, the twin threats to democracy have been the military and the populist corporatism of the Peronists. In 1987-88 the military tried, and failed, three times to challenge the democratic system. Now it is quite possible that the Peronist candidate, Dr Carlos Menem, will win the presidential election. Would his victory be a threat to democracy? This paper will examine the modern Peronist movement and argue that it has fully adjusted to accept the democratic system. A victory by Menem would be a major change in the style of the Argentine leadership and might produce some significant changes in domestic and foreign policy, but it would not be an immediate threat to the system of government.

The two main parties are the Radicals, the *Unión Cívica Radical* (UCR), and the Peronists, the *Partido Justicialista* (PJ). After the discrediting of the military, with their defeat in the 1982 conflict, elections were held on 30 October 1983. The Radical presidential candidate, Dr Raúl Alfonsín, won 52.0% of the popular vote, the Peronist candidate, Dr Italo Luder, won 40.0%, with nine minor candidates winning the remaining 8.0%. President Alfonsín took office on 10 December 1983 for a six year term. At the same time the Radicals gained a narrow majority in the

lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, but the Peronists were the largest party, with half the seats, in the Senate. In the first mid-term elections in November 1985 the Radicals increased, by one, their seats in the lower house and made sweeping gains in the provinces. However, in the next mid-term elections, in September 1987, the Radicals slipped back, losing their overall majority in the lower house, but remaining the largest party. This time the Peronists made major gains in the provinces and, most important of all, their candidate, Sr Antonio Cafiero, became governor of the largest province, Buenos Aires, which contains 37% of the electorate.

Under the terms of the constitution, President Alfonsín could not stand again for a second term, though there was some talk for a while of amending the constitution to create a new post of prime minister, so that Alfonsín could continue in government. The candidate offered by Alfonsín to the Radicals was Sr Eduardo Angeloz, the current Governor of Córdoba: he has been endorsed by the party. Despite his choice by Alfonsín, it is widely believed that Angeloz would move economic policy to the right, with more emphasis on private enterprise. As the Alfonsín government has failed to bring inflation down to acceptable levels or to produce a credible, long-term policy for management of the economy and the external debt, the Radicals entered the electioneering period with opinion polls showing them lagging well-behind the Peronists.

In December 1984 the Peronists had split, with one section known as the *renovadores* (renewalists) walking out of the party congress and holding their own congress in February 1985. The *renovadores* split from the *oficialistas* or *ortodoxos* in being a modernising, democratic group, opposed to the traditional party barons. The party was able to reunite and form a coalition with eleven minor parties in time for the 1985 Congressional elections. One lasting victory for the *renovadores* was the establishment of greater democracy within the party. In particular the *Partido Justicialista* candidate for the presidency was chosen by a United States style, primary election. Ironically this produced an upset when the leading *renovador*, Sr Cafiero, was defeated in the primary by the populist, Dr Menem. After the primary the Peronists were able to put together an electoral alliance, the *Frente Judicialista Popular* (Frejupo), consisting of the *Partido Justicialista* with the *Partido Intransigente*, the *Movimiento de Integración y Desarrollo*, the *Partido Popular Cristiano* and some small provincial parties to maximise support for Menem.

While the middle classes are uncomfortable with Menem's rhetoric and style, he was not a member of the *ortodoxos* group and there is no evidence that he would wish to return to the dictatorial methods of Juan Perón. Indeed, during the military regime in the 1970s, he was imprisoned and this has given him a personal commitment to the maintenance of human rights. Nevertheless, some foreign observers of Argentine politics anticipate a Menem victory with fears that his presidency would lead to a 1950s Peronist-style government. The progress of the election campaign has kept the result of the contest open until the very end. At the beginning of April the Radicals cut the Peronist lead in the polls to 6% from a high of 20% in August 1988. The large number of undecided voters could tip the

contest either way.

This paper will now explore the background to the 1989 presidential elections by considering the growth of the Argentine democratic system, the origins of the Radical and the Peronist parties, and the nature of modern Peronism.

In the last hundred years Argentina has had fifty years of political and economic growth, followed by fifty years of political decline and economic mismanagement. At the end of the nineteenth century, Argentina was a large under-populated area with a rapidly growing economy, comparable to the United States, Canada or Australia. The country became independent from Spain in 1816, but it was not until 1853 that the current democratic constitution, based on the United States federal model, was adopted. (An important feature of the constitution, which still applies today, is that presidents are elected for a single six-year term. They cannot be re-elected immediately for a second term, but must wait until another president's term has been completed.) Only in 1880 did the dispute, over whether Argentina should be a federal or a unitary state, come to an end. This had several times led to civil-war, between the interior provinces and Buenos Aires. It ended when in 1880 General Roca separated out the city of Buenos Aires as federal territory and the capital city. There followed fifty years of constitutional government and increasing democratisation. From 1930 to 1983, the next half century saw unstable government, dominated by the military and the authoritarian populism of Perón.

In the late nineteenth century the export-led economy boomed. The fertile plains of the pampas were fenced off into large estates for meat production and growing wheat. The railways were built from the pampas to Buenos Aires and Rosario, to bring beef and wheat to the two ports, and shipping lines started operating refrigerated ships, supplying fresh meat to Europe. In all these activities, the British provided the majority of the investment and Britain was the main export market. Flows of immigrants, mainly from Spain and Italy, provided the labour. By the 1914 census, 30% of the population was foreign-born and in Buenos Aires, by then a city of 1.6 million, 72% of the adults were foreigners.

In this period of growth, politics was dominated by an oligarchy of the *estancieros*, the owners of large estates. Middle class, reformist opposition led to the establishment in 1890 of the *Unión Cívica Radical*, the Radical Party, and in 1896 a Socialist Party, based on workers in Buenos Aires, was formed. The Radical Party initially refused to take part in the corrupt elections, but the Socialists did win some Buenos Aires seats in Congress. In 1912 a Conservative president, Sáenz Peña introduced electoral reform, bringing in the secret ballot throughout the country and ensuring minority representation in Congress. In the Chamber of Deputies two-thirds of each province's representatives had to come from the party with the largest vote and one-third from the second largest party. The Radicals then decided to participate in the elections and in 1916 their leader, Hipólito Yrigoyen, won the presidency. The Radicals won again in 1922 with Marcelo de Alvear and in 1928 Yrigoyen started a second term.

Although he had been a reformist, Yrigoyen became authoritarian and corrupt in his second term. Both the Radicals and the Socialists split into pro- and anti-Yrigoyen factions and his government was unable to cope with the loss of markets

for Argentine exports, brought about by the Great Depression. In September 1930, President Yrigoyen was overthrown by the military. The coup had the support of the Conservatives and anti-Yrigoyen factions of both the Radicals and the Socialists. The subsequent regimes relied on a mixture of civilian and military support. Elections were held, but with fraudulent practices preventing victories by pro-Yrigoyen Radicals. When they did win control in the provinces, the centre quickly found an excuse for removing the governor and calling new elections. In June 1943, when President Castillo chose a wealthy, pro-British, landowner as his party's candidate for the 1944 presidential elections, the army took over full control. The organisers of this colonels-coup were pro-Axis nationalists, who aspired to Argentine domination of South America.

One of the colonels, Juan Perón, caused surprise soon after the coup, by transferring from the Ministry of War to the obscure Department of Labour. Perón used his position to promote settlements in industrial disputes in favour of the workers, but also to centralise the unions in the *Confederación General del Trabajo* (CGT). Great improvements were made in workers rights, wage levels and welfare provisions. Opposition from a broad coalition of conservatives and democrats led to Perón's resignation and arrest in October 1945. Nine days later massive demonstrations by workers pouring in from the suburbs into the centre of Buenos Aires led to Perón's release. Rather than going directly back into government, Perón obtained greater legitimacy for himself by forming his own political party, the *Partido Laborista*, to contest the elections in February 1946. He won 55% of the vote and gained control of both houses of Congress. In June 1946 Juan Perón took office as president.

The Perón government promoted industrialisation, but at the expense of agriculture and with heavy reliance on protectionism. The labour movement was purged of its independent leaders and the vigorous free press was brought under government control. A new constitution was written to allow Perón to stay in office for more than one six-year term. Opposition political parties were weakened and Peronist organisations established for many economic and social sections of society, to create a corporatist state. In September 1955, after Perón had come into conflict with the Catholic Church, he was overthrown by the armed forces, with widespread support from civilian political leaders and the middle and upper classes.

For the next twenty years the dominant issue in Argentine politics was what role the Peronists could play in the political system. When elections were held in 1958, the Peronists were not allowed to stand. The Radicals chose as their candidate Dr Arturo Frondizi, who favoured the re-integration of the Peronists into political life. The party split, with Frondizi's group being known as the *Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente* and the anti-Peronists led by Dr Ricardo Balbín becoming the *Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo*. Frondizi won the presidency with endorsement by Perón, from his exile, and the support of Peronist voters. By the mid-term elections of 1962, Frondizi had allowed the Peronists to organise again and they won ten provincial governships, along with making a strong congressional showing. As a result the military deposed Frondizi.

A period of rule by civilians, acting under military constraints, was followed by

General Onganía's attempt at a pure military regime, with a modernising, nationalist, *Revolución Argentina*. In the late 1960s many Peronists moved to the left and some left-wing groups became pro-Peronist. Among a kaleidoscope of small groups, several turned to guerrilla activity to promote revolutionary change. The *Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas* (FAP) and the Montoneros were fully Peronist; the *Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación* (FAL) and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* (FAR) were off-shoots from the communists, while the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP) was an anti-Peronist, Trotskyist group. In March 1971 the army installed General Lanusse as president. He pursued tough military action against the terrorists, but he also accommodated to the Peronists, "uniting adversaries in order to fight the enemy".

In March 1973 the Peronists won the first completely-free elections since 1946, when Perón originally had become president. The Peronist candidate Dr Héctor Cámpora was installed as president in May, but he resigned less than two months later and new elections were held in September with Perón himself, this time,

A Simplified Chronology of Argentine Politics

9 July 1816	Independence from Spain proclaimed in Tucuman
1853	The current constitution is adopted
1880	Buenos Aires agreed as the federal capital
1912	The Sáenz Peña Law establishes the secret ballot
1916	Election of the first Radical president, Hipólito Yrigoyen
1922	Election of President Marcelo T. de Alvear (Radical)
1928	Re-election of President Yrigoyen
16 Sept 1930	The military depose President Yrigoyen
1930-1943	Mixed military-civilian regimes exclude Yrigoyen Radicals
4 June 1943	The military take over full control again
17 Oct 1945	Buenos Aires demonstrations lead to Perón's release from jail
26 Feb 1946	Juan Perón elected president, his Labour Party wins Congress
4 June 1946	Juan Perón is installed as president
22 Sept 1955	The military depose President Perón and he goes into exile
1955-1958	Military regimes
23 Feb 1958	Elections without Peronists being allowed to stand
1 May 1958	Dr Arturo Frondizi (Radical) installed as president
29 March 1962	The military depose President Frondizi
1962-1963	President Guido's civilian regime constrained by the military
7 July 1963	Elections without Peronists being allowed to stand
12 October 1963	Dr A Illia (Radical - UCRP) installed as president
29 June 1966	Military depose Dr Illia, Gen. Onganía installed as president
1966-1973	Military regimes
11 March 1973	Peronists win the elections to the presidency and Congress
27 May 1973	Dr Héctor Cámpora (Peronist) installed as president
12 October 1973	Juan Perón installed as president
1 July 1974	Juan Perón dies and Isabel Perón installed as president
24 March 1976	The military depose President Isabel Perón
1976-1983	A vicious military dictatorship conducts the "dirty war"
30 Oct 1983	Radicals win elections to the presidency and the lower house
10 Dec 1983	Dr Raúl Alfonsín (Radical) installed as president

being a direct candidate. From October 1973 to July 1974, Juan Perón had a brief third term as president, until he died and his wife, Isabel Perón, was installed in his place. However, the successive Peronist regimes did not solve the problem of terrorism. They continued the slide into government-supported repression and terrorism by the right against the left, until in March 1976 a military junta again took over.

This junta announced a 'process of national reorganisation', which turned out to be a ruthless 'dirty war' against the left-wing groups, sometimes arbitrary in its impact. *El proceso* covered thousands of 'disappearances' in 1976 and 1977, continuing at lower levels until 1982. While most left-wing leaders were killed or escaped into exile, the regime was facing a sustained challenge from civilian opposition, until it launched an invasion of the Falklands. Defeat in the conflict finally brought disgrace to the military and united the overwhelming majority of civilians against them. Elections were held on 30 October 1983, with Dr Raúl Alfonsín standing for the Radicals and Dr Italo Luder for the Peronists. The presidential results (given in Appendix A) showed striking changes from previous elections. The minor parties were squeezed out, gaining only 8% of the vote between them, and the Peronists, which since 1946 had been the party of the majority, were forced into second place.

1. Argentina: A History of Hope and Disenchantment

The view that "Argentina is a nation with a great future behind it" became widespread in the aftermath of the Second World War. The answer to such a predicament seemed obvious at the time: the ambitious, demagogic, "Nazi-sympathiser and Mussolini-admirer", Juan Domingo Perón imposed his own vernacular version of Fascism on a country that had lost its way, economically and politically, after 1930. That elusive future seemed within grasp for brief moments, when new civilian regimes were installed in 1958, 1973 and 1983, giving rise, especially in 1958 and 1983, to a generalised atmosphere of euphoria. With every ensuing disenchantment, hope of retrieving that promising future has slipped further back.

In 1958 the rallying cry had been the need for the modernisation of the country. A group of enlightened, technocratically-minded civilians led by the Radical, Dr Arturo Frondizi, believed that a deal with an exiled Perón would provide them with the breathing space necessary to undertake the economic modernisation of the country. A modernising objective was also much proclaimed in 1966, when General Onganía thought the time had arrived to take Argentina out of the doldrums in which "politics" had left her. This messianic leader in military uniform was impatient about politics and politicians, and believed that an agreement between the armed forces and the trades unions, even if the latter called themselves Peronist, would guarantee the "take-off" to economic success. The General Confederation of Labour (CGT), the only Peronist political organisation that survived unscathed since the proscription of Peronism in 1955, gave in 1966 its qualified support to General Juan Carlos Onganía's self-styled "Argentine Revolution".

In 1973, Onganía's attempt to postpone politics to a later stage in his millenium was brought to an abrupt end, when the army decided to remove him. After a brief period under General Levingston, General Lanusse took over. He believed that free elections, with the participation of the much-dreaded and much-hated Peronists, would put a halt to the messianic hopes of both the Right, as embodied in Onganía and his Catholic Nationalists, and the Left, which by then had taken the guise of guerrilla and terrorist groups. The ensuing Peronist administrations from May 1973 to March 1976 proved incapable of sustaining a constitutional framework, in which to develop the values, principles and practices of a democratic lifestyle and culture. The regime was constantly threatened from within by contending predators, who regarded the government as their own hunting ground, and from without by self-styled "popular armies" that seemed to regard the whole country as their hunting grounds.

In March 1976 there was a brief interregnum, lasting barely two months, when it was hoped that General Videla would bring peace by means of the legal repression of terrorism where politicians, and especially the Peronists, had failed. After two months of apparent calm, the military Junta embarked on a terror campaign. In choosing illegal repression to fight a "just war" against subversion, the armed forces were to lose irretrievably the moral support of the nation. Military defeat in the South Atlantic compounded that loss. Dr Raúl Alfonsín understood this, and he won in 1983 by offering peace and prosperity to a nation overwhelmed by the feeling of defeat.

2. The Peronist background

Rather than trying to point out differences between Peronism today and in the 1950s, what is perhaps needed is a reassessment of what Peronism really entailed in the 1950s. The conclusion then will be that it has changed little, and where change has occurred, it has been for the better. Whereas the Radicals enabled the middle classes to challenge the great landowners, Peronism had as its core achievement the incorporation of the urban workers and the rural poor as active participants in the political system. Under the impact of Evita Peron being a political figure in her own right, women also gained their suffrage in 1951. It must be borne in mind that the political upheavals that Argentina has gone through since 1943 are partly the result of the rapidity with which this incorporation was carried out. In the world's older democracies, institutional changes that reflected the economic changes that occurred during the nineteenth century took place at a much slower pace. There is something in the Peronist claim that what took 100 years in Europe, took merely 10 in Argentina. It was too much, too soon: and the wrong reasons were adduced to topple Peronism in 1955.

The second Peronist period (1973-6) had peculiarities all of its own. Guerrilla and urban terrorist activities may have had more to do with Cuban influence and middle class youthful frustrations and delusions than with Peronism as such. After all, there was practically no country in Latin America in the 1970s that did not witness the emergence of such groups. Although much has been made of the Peronist identity of guerrilla and anti-State terrorist groups in Argentina, the truth may be somewhat different. Firstly, it is necessary to understand that no political

grouping in Argentina can pretend to have mass appeal if it lacks some kind of Peronist identity. This the Montoneros and others were quick to recognise. Secondly, with few exceptions, the young men and women who resorted to violence did not come from traditional Peronist backgrounds or from the ranks of Peronist political activists. (If anything, there were more Radicals than Peronists *strictu sensu*.) Thirdly, the only paramilitary organisation that can claim a true Peronist identification was the infamous Triple A, organised with State funds by Isabel Perón's close adviser and at the time Welfare Minister, José López Rega. This self-styled Argentine Anti-communist Alliance recognised, in a brutal fashion, that the self-proclaimed Peronist "guerrillas" who undertook to carry out a "prolonged popular war" against Señora Perón, in reality were not ideologically Peronist. Indeed, after 1976 when the military took over the repression from the Triple-A, many of the junior officers were themselves Peronists. (Support for Peronism among the junior officers is still important today.)

Peronism is an amorphous political being. Many have tried to define its contours clearly, in the process trying to force the colossus into a neat, but a much too small, shirt. If the Montoneros failed in the 1970s to turn it into a "mass revolutionary party", Cafiero's latest exercise, trying to fit it into a tight Social/Christian democratic outfit has, at least for the time being, also failed.

The reasons given by the *renovadores* for the failure of the Peronist administrations in 1973-76 are that (1) Perón was an old man, who died without leaving a political legacy or a proper organisation that would have reflected the changes he had undergone, making him a believer in democratic principles; (2) Isabel Perón misguidedly attempted to shift the Peronist movement to the far right; and (3) the main opposition leader, Dr Ricardo Balbín of the Radical Party, was also an old man, besides being a weak leader, who was incapable of offering an alternative. Thus, the political capability was not there to provide an institutional way out from the anarchy prevailing during Señora Perón's last months in office.

The elections of 1983 marked a new beginning for Argentina's shaken political system: Peronism had to reshape itself without Perón; the Radicals had a new leader; and the Right had a party, the *Unión de Centro Democrático* (Ucedé), willing to accept the rules of the democratic game. For the first time since achieving full integration of all sectors of society, the rules of the political game applied to all, and all undertook to play by them. The only exceptions were small pockets in society, even if (as in the case of the armed forces) some of these pockets possessed significant power.

3. Cafiero: the 'Renewalist' delusion

From the dizzy heights where a nation starved of morality placed Alfonsín, the future for Argentina seemed once again to be full of hope at the end of 1983. What Alfonsín's electoral victory had indeed left behind was the myth that "Peronism and the people" constituted an indissoluble unity, with the corollary that non- or anti-Peronists were equated with being "enemies of the people". Besides, the presumption had been that as sole occupier of the "popular camp", Peronism was unbeatable in free elections. In December 1983, carried away by their enthusiasm

in the face of Peronism's electoral vulnerability, some political analysts, commentators and politicians decreed the "death of Peronism". Whatever else one may read into the electoral results of 1983, it remains an outstanding fact that Peronism's defeat was the greatest boost that Argentina's frail democracy has received. However, the results of the mid-term elections of September 1987 showed that Peronism was not "dead" and that voters had mastered the rules of the democratic game, "punishing" the incumbent when it did not deliver.

Between 1983 and 1987 Alfonsín and his party had thought they could govern alone. The illusion of Peronism's death had fostered another, equally misguided, one: the future of Argentina lay in the establishment of a 'Third Historical Movement' led by Alfonsín, which would be the historic continuation of the first such Movement embodied in Hipólito Yrigoyen, and the second one that had supposedly been personified in Perón. The defeat of the Radicals in the mid-term elections of September 1987, where seventeen of the twenty two provincial governorships as well as the lower house of Congress went to the Peronist opposition, put an end to such dreams. The idea that replaced it was that of "consensual politics": the governability of the system could only be ensured by agreement and negotiation. Nine months of labouring away at "consensual politics" concluded in Cafiero's defeat in the *Partido Justicialista* primaries at the hands of Carlos Saúl Menem on 9 July 1988.

But in September 1987 Antonio Cafiero's *renovadores*, like the phoenix, appeared to be emerging from the ashes of Peronism with renewed youth and vigour. The inefficiency and apparent lack of direction of the Alfonsín administration that had started off with populist declamations and in 1985 was forced to steer its economic policies in the direction of orthodoxy, concurred to give the impression throughout 1988 that Peronism was once again unstoppable. But Cafiero fell victim to a two-sided delusion: that Peronist populism, but not Peronism, was a thing of the past, and that therefore Peronism could now become a party defined within a Social Democratic mould. The internal elections in the PJ showed how deluded Cafiero had been.

The military rebellion in December 1988 shocked the whole of society into realising how certain issues could not be postponed forever. In the end, it was a bloody attack on the military barracks in the Buenos Aires suburb of La Tablada, by remnants of the left-wing guerrillas, that forced on the government what three earlier military rebellions had been unable to do. A National Security Council was established at the end of January 1989 to deal with matters of internal security. On it sit the Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Defence ministers, as well as the three chiefs of staff of the armed forces, under the chairmanship of Alfonsín. By bringing in the military on matters of internal security, the NCS contravenes the National Defence Law passed by Congress, which explicitly bars the military from intervening in such matters. This latest development has several implications. In the present context, suffice it to say that it is now more unlikely that restless junior officers will seek through armed revolt to "restore the prestige and moral standing of the army within society as a whole". Clearly this is what the Radicals are betting on, while at the same time the La Tablada episode provided an

indisputable occasion to be magnanimous to the military without appearing to be going back on matters of principle.

Cafiero and his very small group of close collaborators, the *renovadores*, took advantage of the disastrous showing of Peronism in the December 1983 general elections to point out that the defeat had been brought about by those holding on to an obsolete version of Peronism (see Appendix A for a table of the election results). According to this old version, Peronism was not a political party, but a *movement* which interpreted the true will of "the people". The movement had been embodied in the person of the quintessential populist *caudillo*, Juan Domingo Perón, whose decisions were obeyed, never questioned. With Perón dead, a motley group of union bosses and rabble-rousers, survivors from the political wilderness of the 1976-82 years, destroyed the party's chances in 1983. The "marshalls of defeat", according to the *renovadores'* description, had failed to realise the need for the *aggiornamento* of Peronism.

In "the Renewalist interpretation of history", from 1860 onwards Argentina saw the integration of classes and sectors into the political system in a series of successive "waves". In 1880 the geographical integration of the country was achieved and in 1890 the immigrant blue collar workers and middle classes started their political integration via the Radical Party culminating in 1912 with the passing of the law sanctioning universal male suffrage. Finally, in 1945, Perón's great achievement had been the integration of the working classes, born of the process of industrialisation, and of the marginal sectors of society attracted by Evita. Social democracy flourished, at the expense of political democracy and civil liberties. After forty years, the lesson has been learnt, and Peronism is, in this view, the only party capable of bringing about social *and* political democracy.

Political parties in Argentina have reflected a strict class alignment, with the exception perhaps of the 1973 elections in which Peronism received an overwhelming proportion of the middle class (youth) vote. According to that class alignment, the Radicals and other centre parties have received the votes of the upper and middle classes, the self-employed and a proportion of non-unionised workers. These groups constituted the bulk of the 52% of the ballots cast for Alfonsín in 1983. On the other side were the unionised workers, and that stable 15-20% made up by the poorest sectors of society (the inhabitants of the *villas miserias*, shanty towns). For these "forsaken" sectors of society, the only real political alternative in the past forty years has been Peronism. It is true that no administration, civilian or military, since 1955 was able to distribute income with the generosity that Argentina's overflowing coffers allowed Perón in the immediate postwar years.

According to the data available, under optimistic assumptions Argentina is likely to find herself in 1990 with per capita GDP barely exceeding the level of 1970. The very real possibility that rapid growth will remain elusive in the near future indicates that at least in the short term, the predicament of the poor will worsen. This is compounded by the fact that in the last few years Argentina has had unprecedented rates of population growth (1.6 per cent, compared to historic rates below one per cent) which has meant an expansion in the numbers of the poor. The *Plan Alimentario Nacional* (PAN - National Food Plan) distributes

boxes of basic foodstuffs to five and a half million people: almost 20 per cent of the total population of 30 million. For a country that has traditionally prided itself on the absence of hunger, (a popular saying, when things went wrong used to be "At least here we don't know wars or hunger"), this is quite a record. In Argentina today one cannot escape the evidence that the numbers of the poor are high and rising, while the middle sectors have been shrinking.

The poorest have responded more to the hopes awakened by the personalities of leaders than to policy platforms or reform of party structures. In this context, Cafiero offered few guarantees given the close identification between him and Alfonsín. Not only did the president of the PJ appear too often smiling alongside the president of Argentina, he seemed equally prone to frown in the presence of Peronist union leaders. Furthermore, just like the president, Cafiero seemed bemusedly unaware of the demands of the present. His style as Governor of Buenos Aires did not impress: he appointed highly capable men to the provincial cabinet, but he himself did not give the impression of being interested in the everyday running of the largest and richest province in the country. His time was devoted to wheeling and dealing. His overruling concerns were the primaries of the Peronist party and his fight with Menem.

The PJ election primaries of 9 July 1988 were no mean achievement: they represented the abandonment of undesirable traditions within Peronism. In the past, "Perón's finger" decided the fate of candidates for all posts. Of the 1,698,000 PJ affiliates who actually voted on 9 July, 53.4% chose Menem as their party's presidential candidate. What were at stake on 9 July were two different conceptions of Peronism: on the one hand, "Cafierismo" or renewalism; on the other, all those (be it individuals or ideological currents) displaced by the former.

The *renovadores* relied exclusively on their wishful vision of a Peronism modelled perhaps on the US Democratic Party or, even better, on European social democracy. The times seemed ripe for discharging the monstrous shapelessness of Peronism as a "movement" inside which any and every ideology had once been tolerated, or even encouraged, by Perón. The main concern of the *renovadores* was to establish a solid democratic system based on a bipartisan model (although this was never explicitly stated). Extensive discussions and negotiations with the Radicals were a logical outcome of such a strategy, which included a shared commitment to erase once and for all any remaining vestiges of corporatist ploys. Peronism's electoral victory on 6 September 1987 was just as much the result of the disenchantment with the Radical administration as of the new image the *renovadores* were able to convey. This was of a party that, from a position rooted in social justice, was able to offer a serious criticism of the incumbent's economic policies. For the first time, the Peronist party was represented by talented, politically sophisticated and generally reasonable men who played comfortably within the rules of the democratic game.

Yet the "Cafieristas" failed on the internal front within the party. This was as a result of what the orthodox elements saw as a sectarian, haughty and "non-Peronist" attitude on the part of the *renovadores*. The latter's interpretation of Peronism did not tally with the one still prevailing. They were seen as "too

civilised", "too similar" to the Radicals, too committed to an economic model that was not "Peronist", too keen on squeezing Peronism into what they saw as the "tight shirt" of a social or even Christian democratic party. The *renovadores* looked far more at ease in the company of the Christian Democrats (whose leaders are personal friends of Cafiero's) than in the company of other Peronists. Moreover, the *renovadores* were unable to build a strong base of support within the unions, whose leaders they criticised as "union bureaucrats" and who therefore, not surprisingly, flocked almost en masse towards Menem.

Menem not only provided a more easily recognisable version of Peronism, including a messianic vision which contrasted with the reasonableness of Cafiero's version of the *renovación*, but, more importantly, he was willing to receive everybody with open arms and no conditions. What must be borne in mind is that Menem himself was a founder of the *renovadores* which goes to show that it was partly personal style that set Menem and Cafiero apart. Thus it is not true that Menem represents the authoritarian Peronism of the 1950s, except for the bemusing "magical and mystical" element. The disenchantment with the Radicals' administration rubbed on to Cafiero. "Reasonableness" and "rationality" had brought little comfort to the worse off: it did not seem a bad alternative to choose the candidate who offered something completely different, even if vague in its formulation.

Several prominent members of the Renewalist faction had no qualms in referring privately to Menem's victory as an unqualified disaster for Peronism in particular and for the country as a whole. Why does Menem arise such fears? Will Argentina's future, if Menem is elected president on 14 May 1989, remain firmly in the past?

4. Menem: Back to the Future?

At the beginning of 1988, very few people would have imagined that the Governor of La Rioja would defeat the Governor of Buenos Aires for the presidential candidacy of Peronism. After the initial shock, people are trying hard to adjust to the idea of "Menem presidente". The conclusion seems to be that Cafiero's victory as Governor on 6 September 1987 was more the result of dissatisfaction with the government than a vote in favour of Peronism and Cafiero himself. Now, the self-styled "candidate of hope", Menem, offers to the forgotten sectors of society the possibility of magical answers where technical, or "reasonable" ones are seen as having failed. As Manuel Mora y Araujo has put it in a sober analysis,

Menem embodies a challenge to the whole of Argentine society that can be posed in the following terms: how to integrate into the political system this solid populist and popular-corporatist nucleus which is part of the reality of the country without, at the same time, letting it swamp the rest of society or lead it along economically unviable or politically unacceptable paths. (*El Cronista Comercial*, 11 November 1988).

The signs at present point towards the advisability of cautious optimism. As far as the corporatist element is concerned, the main union-based support for Menem stems from the 'Group of 15'. Although described as "orthodox Peronists", they

are amongst the most reasonable of trades unionists. They represent the workers in the more modern and efficient private sector. They expect a Peronist government to be to a certain extent "their" government, but they are acutely aware of the difficulties that lie ahead. Their orthodoxy in fact, can be more accurately described as such in the economic field. And indeed, the 'Group of 20' unions mainly of the public sector who support the *renovación* can be described as left-of-centre, while they have an obvious vested interest in the survival of an oversize state. Even though the "15" expect a share when the time comes to distribute political posts, this is in tune with a longstanding tradition of clientalistic politics rife throughout all of Latin America.

In the case of the PJ, is it possible to recreate in 1989 the political and economic system of 1946? As far as politics is concerned, there have been enough indicators from the pro-Menem leaders to establish that they are definitely in favour of democracy: they cite the Perón of 1974 as their model, who had changed his discourse dramatically, advocating constantly the values of tolerance and collaboration. Whether the significance of this model has been fully understood by the majority of PJ voters is another matter. Furthermore, it can be argued that PJ leaders are not making enough effort to ensure that the emphasis on democracy is internalised by the voters, as they still address public rallies with old and meaningless slogans. On the economic front, we have yet to see whether Menem would be able to keep trade unionists and businessmen round the same table, to agree the terms of his much-vaunted "social pact".

In 1989 a novel electoral situation presents itself in Argentina, one in which there is an absence of dominating majorities, where the balance of power between the PJ and the Radicals means both have to make an effort to capture the independent voters, at the latest count around 20% of the electoral register. Surveys amongst those who declare themselves "undecided" in political preference indicate a predominance of moderate, centrist expectations. This is the electorate that would back Angeloz were it not for the Radicals' record in government, made worse by the economic chaos Argentina has been in since mid-April 1989. Will he be able to overcome the heavy handicap of Alfonsín's disappointing administration? In January 1989, it was clear to all political observers that three main elements would decide the outcome of the elections: the performance of the economy until May 1989 ; the Peronist style of campaigning (mainly meaning the absence of rabble-like mobs in public); and Menem's ability to keep his mouth shut as much as possible. On the first point, the economy has deteriorated beyond the most pessimistic of forecasts and, on the second, the Peronists have been a model of moderation. The third point has become much less significant given the dramatic economic developments. Although often contradictory and revealing a lack of intellectual subtlety, Menem's utterances have none the less been noteworthy for their moderation. Even in the case of the much-quoted comment on "recovering the Malvinas with blood, sweat and tears" as a possible eventuality, one would be ill-advised to read into it more than a rhetorical flourish in the enthusiasm of a public meeting.

5. Possible scenarios

(a) Political alignments

Smaller parties in Argentina have often given their support to one or another of the larger parties since this is the only way to ensure the access of deputies to the national or provincial legislatures, given the high minimum threshold required under the D'Hont system of proportional representation to secure at least one seat in Congress. In 1946, all parties from the communists to the Radicals, with the exception of the Conservatives, formed a Democratic Union to oppose Perón in the elections, which he nevertheless won. In 1973 most parties, excluding the Radicals but including Frondizi's splinter group *Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente* (UCRI), joined forces with Peronism in the victorious *Frente Justicialista de Liberación* (FREJULI). Before Menem's triumph in the PJ primaries, leaders of several small parties, placed with varying degrees to the left of the spectrum, had talked with Cafiero about joining the PJ in 1989. Menem's candidacy bewildered them, especially the Intransigent Party, PI (a splinter of the UCRI) and the Popular Christian Democrats. After Menem's victory, Auyero was in favour of abandoning the Christian Democratic tradition of electoral alliances with the PJ, and instead saw the chance of occupying the centre-left space in the political spectrum left vacant by the PI's decision to seek an alliance with the PJ. But Auyero was defeated by his party's convention: the issue was not put to the vote of party members. Similar confrontations occurred within the PI before the decision was reached. Thus parties traditionally to the left of centre are now part of the PJ alliance.

It is important to remark that such decisions were not based on any type of programmatic agreement, but simply on the undertaking by the PJ to include candidates from each party on its lists for deputies and town councillors. Clearly the calculation made was that either they joined the PJ and got at least one or two men in, or they were left out in the cold.

Back in 1983, ideology did not matter, nor did policies: if one made an effort to track down policies put forward, the ensuing picture was very similar comparing the Radicals and the PJ. They could both roughly be said to occupy the left-of-centre in the political spectrum, offering a populist, statist formula that was sincerely believed to be able to solve all Argentina's problems. The Ucedé was firmly on the right, while calling itself a centrist party, and there was an assortment of small parties to the left of the Radicals and the PJ, like the PI. In 1989 positions have shifted along the political spectrum. On paper the three main contenders' manifestoes are remarkably similar, advocating stringent orthodoxy to tackle inflation, which by April 1989 had reached the level of 50% a month. The Radicals have moved towards the right, with many prominent Radical politicians finding themselves uncomfortable in the party's new placement. There are important men in the Radicals (for instance the Foreign Minister, Dante Caputo, and the Interior Minister, Enrique Nosiglia) who do not want the Radicals to be identified as a centre-right party. This will prove problematic to the Radical candidate should he win the elections: Eduardo Angeloz is trying to steer the party firmly to the right, more in tune with the ideas and values of its electoral base.

Should he lose there have been suggestions that the UCR, under Alfonsín's chairmanship, would move back to the left of centre.

(b) The electoral system

Executive power is in the hands of an elected president, serving a six-year term. The president is not directly elected, but chosen by an Electoral College of 600 directly elected members, from 23 electoral districts. Each of the 22 provinces and the Federal Capital form an electoral district, having twice as many electors as the combined number of their Senators and Deputies. There are 254 directly-elected Deputies in the Chamber of Deputies and 46 Senators (two per district) chosen by the provincial legislatures. Senators are elected for nine years, with one third retiring every three years, while deputies are elected for four years with one half retiring every two years. Each province has its own constitution and provincial governors are elected for four-year terms.

The electors charged with choosing the president meet separately at the legislature of each province. The system differs from that in the United States in some legal and political details, which could turn out to be important. Firstly, the electors within each province are not chosen by the winner-takes-all method, but by proportional representation. Secondly, the smaller parties may quite easily have enough electors to decide the outcome between Angeloz and Menem. Some of the small parties have committed themselves in advance to one or the other side, but the Ucedé, which is expected to be the third largest party, has refused to do so. Proportional representation makes it more likely that the candidate elected will be the one with the most votes, but the existence of small parties makes it possible, although not probable, for the second-runner to win.

There has been intense speculation on what might happen if neither the Radicals nor the Peronists has a clear majority of 301 in the Electoral College, but in practice in the past the electors have chosen the candidate who received the greatest number of votes. If one of the two major parties is dominant, then we may expect a clear decision from the Electoral College. However, if both the Peronists and the Radicals gain no more than 30% each of the Electoral College, there could be a deadlock. In the event that the Electoral College does not agree on one candidate, the decision is passed on to Congress, where Peronists will hold a sizable representation. In theory Menem might win the largest percentage of the popular vote, while the legislators could vote for Angeloz. But even if the Radicals could muster a majority by gathering votes from the conservative Ucedé and smaller independent parties to vote for their candidate, Peronist legislators could boycott the session which needs an absolute quorum of two-thirds to be valid. All this points to the need for an agreement *before* the Electoral College meets. Until the end of April 1989, neither Angeloz nor Menem were willing to agree to vote for the candidate first-past-the-post, nor did the Ucedé want to announce publicly that its electors would vote for Angeloz. While this is the logical choice for the Ucedé, its leaders fear a backlash from the conservative voters, who have not made up their minds whether their principal worry is a Peronist or a Radical candidate, so dismayed do they feel with Alfonsín's administration.

At the peak of his glory in December 1987, Cafiero seemed ready and willing to

negotiate with Alfonsín a constitutional reform that would ensure the "governability" of Argentina in the future. A bipartisan system of government was thought of as providing the guarantee for institutional stability based on a parliamentary system, with a prime minister as head of government and a president as head of state. The reform would entail:

- the presidential term to be cut from six to four years;
- re-election of the president to be permissible, (it is not allowed at present); and
- the creation of the office of prime minister, chosen not by Congress but by the president, although his actions would be monitored by Congress.

Cafiero had said that one necessary condition for backing such amendments would be an agreement that all parties should back the leading candidate in the Electoral College, whether or not he has an absolute majority. This is something against which Angeloz has firmly set himself. If Menem wins with less than 40% of the vote, constitutional reform may still be on the cards, and this can only be good news for Argentina.

(c) Economic policy.

According to surveys and opinion polls, in 1983 the main concerns of the electorate were moral issues. In 1989, they are economic well-being and the all-pervasive inflation. However, there has been little debate on ways of improving the country's economic performance. Privately, the "Cafieristas" have conceded that the strategy of Juan Sourrouille (Alfonsín's Economy Minister, until 31 March 1989) was the best possible one. Menem is receiving contradictory advice. The man who was first mentioned as Menem's economic mentor, Eduardo Curia, has no experience of policy-making, and the economic plan he proposed in May 1988 was basically an old fashioned plea for protectionism. While Curia said "back to 1948 and let's industrialise", Menem has lately been listening to Domingo Cavallo, an "independent", who as such was included in the PJ's list for deputies and won a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. Cavallo was president of the Central Bank for a short but significant period in 1981, and he can be described as a liberal (i.e. conservative) economist much in favour of the free market, privatisation and foreign investment. Notwithstanding its popularity, the great bang at the beginning of April 1988 announcing the privatisation of the government telephone and airline monopolies has fizzled out. The idea caught the imagination of voters, who despaired over the appalling degree of inefficiency of the telephone system and the constant strikes and monopolistic arrogance of Aerolíneas Argentinas. Cavallo, but not Curia, would press forward with issues such as the reduction of the fiscal deficit and privatisation of State enterprises, while only unions with a vested interest in particular firms oppose plans to privatise them.

As far as the foreign debt is concerned, for the time being at least, bankers have shown a preference for the Alfonsín-style of dealing with the problem: quiet negotiations, undertaken by reasonable men in a civilised manner, with none of the abruptness of a Bernardo Grinspun, Alfonsín's first Economy Minister. Such abruptness and anti-IMF statements uttered more *pour la galerie* is what Menem will have to avoid if he is to gain creditors' trust and confidence, to ensure the flow of funds necessary to carry out his "productive revolution". Bankers prefer the

present situation: capital repayments and interest falling due are not being paid, but not much fuss is made about the fact and it is maintained that the debt commitments will eventually be met. The bankers do not want to be forced into a corner or appear to be giving in under pressure, succumbing to vociferous demagogery. In the end, it will probably be about 25% to 30% of the debt that will be paid, but if the intention not to pay is stated publicly, financial institutions, and private bankers behind them, will withdraw the new loans needed to keep the pretense going. And if that money is not forthcoming, on what basis will domestic investors bring their money back from their much more secure havens in the United States and Europe?

For Menem to have any hope of succeeding in the economic field, he will have to create an atmosphere of confidence in business circles. Some inroads have been made in this direction, with the establishment of the *Movimiento Industria Nacional* within the Argentine Industrial Union (the UIA, or employers' federation). But the real test will come when Menem reveals his attitude towards foreign financial institutions and the debt problem. To obtain genuine capital resources, which are essential to re-establish the volume of investment lost in the past decade, Menem would have to continue the present trend towards increasing economic efficiency. This requires elimination of the existing maze of sometimes contradictory regulations, which only encourage a system based on bribery and corruption. Furthermore, Menem needs to implement a "social pact", which is credible enough to persist beyond the quarterly life span that previous such schemes have had. This would guarantee that the immediate drop in inflation is more than a temporary respite, as in the case of Alfonsín's Austral Plan in 1985 and the Primavera Plan in August 1988.

Obtaining investment resources will depend on the progress achieved in adjusting debt servicing, in attracting new foreign investment and in rescheduling existing loans. In the case of foreign investment, some studies have estimated that it would have to increase tenfold compared to 1984 figures to fill the existing gap, assuming that all obstacles to such a flow of capital from abroad were overcome. In Menem's case, it is clear that he would welcome foreign capital. (Peronism in government was not economically xenophobic). The problem is will it come if he is the president? At present, the answer is negative. To compound the situation, there is little if any hope of domestic capital presently invested abroad returning to Argentina, until the level of inflation is reduced and government bureaucracy is dismantled, to create the necessary confidence and stability.

Angeloz has made explicit statements in the direction pointed at by the above recommendations. In the case of Menem, there is little doubt that it will take a lot more to persuade both foreign and domestic businessmen. The psycho-political climate created after a possible Peronist triumph may not be conducive to inflows of capital. For this to occur, and Menem would be the first to welcome foreign investment, it will demand a degree of self-control and restraint in addressing the problem that the Peronists are unlikely to show if one is to go by their past record. Should Menem persist beyond his first six months in pursuing untidy demagogic recipes, then in the economic front his victory at the polls will mark a step

backward as far as a solution to Argentina's longstanding economic grievances is concerned. Alfonsín's administration may not have carried out any of the above, but at least until April 1989 the groundwork seemed to have been established. The dramatic collapse into hyper-inflation now puts this into doubt.

(d) Foreign policy.

Argentina has a longstanding tradition of neutrality and isolationism in hemispheric affairs. This goes back to 1889 and her stand in the Pan-American Conference held in Washington. Furthermore, the Calvo and Drago Doctrines at the turn of the century were aimed at limiting the reach of President Monroe's Doctrine: from early days Argentina aspired to hemispheric hegemony, and saw the USA as her rival in the area. Argentina's neutrality in both World Wars had not been calculated to please Washington. Events since the 1982 South Atlantic conflict show poignantly that the western powers have relatively little interest in Argentina (while, for instance, this is not the case with Brazil) and thus feel able to look down on her or dismiss her altogether. It would be a great tragedy if Menem's hairstyle and sartorial choice which make him look slightly ridiculous, are taken as an excuse to write Argentina off, yet again.

There is definitely ample scope for imaginative solutions in the non-aggressive foreign policy arena. Should either the Peronist Governor of the Province of Mendoza, José Bordón, or the Peronist presidential candidate in 1983, Dr Italo Luder, become Menem's Foreign Minister, he may well prove more reasonable than Caputo, more willing to smooth the way to the table of negotiations rather than indulge in arm-twisting at the United Nations. There seems to be consensus in political circles of every denomination on the need to start "talking" with the UK, on the need to pick up the pieces after the disastrous adventurism of Galtieri. Every one concedes in private that a declaration putting an end to hostilities is long overdue. Menem's image of "a man of the people" may prove an asset: many in Argentina believe that he, more than any other politician, could get away with declaring an end to hostilities and the disposition to negotiate without conditions (in the British sense, that is, that sovereignty is simply not mentioned on the agenda). But he would have to do it while riding high on the wave of popularity that may take him to the *Casa Rosada*.

If decisions are not taken early, it seems almost unavoidable that some newly elected officials will start making irritative statements for the sake of being provocative. Some regard the irritation of the British (or the Americans) as quite worthy in itself: such statements are calculated to gain points domestically, regardless of their international repercussions. Should this kind of atmosphere prevail, it will make the task of reasonable men that more difficult. Moreover, the message as far as the Falkland Islanders is concerned, will appear to be that their views, opinions, wishes and interests are of little, if any, consideration. It must be said that the whole of the political establishment has proved lacking in its task of educating, or even informing, public opinion. Anyone coming from Britain will be shocked at the apparent indifference to, or sometimes ignorance of, the existence of the Islanders. As long as Argentine public opinion is not made aware of the importance that the British government attaches to this issue, the latter's apparent

obdurateness in refusing to negotiate will be seen simplistically in Argentina as the last roars of the colonial monster.

6. Conclusions.

The first six months of a Menem administration are bound to elapse in a carnivalesque atmosphere, where untidiness and lack of direction will seem to prevail. After all, Peronism will be in power again after a gap of thirteen years: there will be enough cause for its supporters to celebrate. From approximately June 1990 onwards, there are two possible scenarios. According to the first one, the serious task of government begins, the *renovadores* gain positions around Menem and he realises that it is time to put the house in order. By then, the economic situation will have deteriorated even further, because Alfonsín's outgoing administration will be overtaken by an overwhelming feeling of despondency at having lost. Just as happened after September 1987, they will cease to care about the day to day business of running the country that in any case seemed out of control by the end of April 1989. Argentina will be allowed to drift, and by June 1990, the party over, Menem will be able to appeal to popular sacrifices to repair the damage done to the country by the Radicals. An orthodox economic policy will once again be refloated, with populist consent. This may still prove the best of all possible worlds. But Menem will not have had enough time to persuade the conservative voter of his U-turn, and thus this voter will continue to vote for the Radicals and Ucedé especially, while the United Left (an electoral alliance that includes the Communist Party) will grow at the expense of Peronism. The fact worth taking into consideration is that whoever wins in 1989, the Left will grow in 1991.

The second, less probable, scenario is that the lack of direction will continue beyond the post-electoral period. The *renovadores* are shunned and in-fighting in the PJ, led by rival factions of union bosses, makes the system ungovernable. The IMF stops the flow of new money, everybody else follows suit. The world sits back and watches while Argentina sinks further into chaos. Beyond this, it is pointless to speculate.

If one contemplates Argentina today, it is not too difficult to sink into a deep pessimism. But it is important to distinguish the reasons for such feelings, and one need not dig too deeply before the possibility of a Peronist victory stands out as an important one. Yet, even if the Radical candidate wins, and it is not impossible, he will face a dire situation. What is reassuring is that notwithstanding the Peronist irritant factor, and Radical inefficiency, the Argentine people's commitment to democracy remains unabated. In this sense it is relevant to point out that the undoubted and unfailing moral support that Alfonsín received, for instance in the USA and Western Europe, made a great contribution towards strengthening democracy in Argentina. If Menem wins the election and this is badly received internationally, it might strengthen nationalist reactions to the detriment of democratic values.

It has been said that the real difference between Peronists and Radicals is solely one of style. This would have been true had Cafiero been the PJ's presidential

candidate. It was clear then that behind the irritating and untidy Peronist style, the hidden policies were very similar to those espoused by the Radicals. It would have been easier then to say that the style was different, but the substance was basically the same. With Menem, the differences of style could carry over into more populist policies, although the present economic situation would make their implementation practically impossible. In Argentine politics, style is not just something superficial to be dismissed: it is not a question of "designer" politics. Even in 1983 the Peronists had people shouting abuse in the streets to their political opponents and espousing intolerance as desirable political behaviour, with politicians making incendiary speeches about enemies of the people and candidates from other parties being physically attacked. So far, in this election, it is a great relief that such behaviour has not been repeated. The political propriety of the Radicals themselves has also been far from a model to emulate. There has been an increasing whiff of corruption about their administration. However, the respect for freedom of expression and all the other political liberties has been exemplary. Alfonsín has an excellent record in the promotion of democratic values and this has done much to strengthen the system.

In the case of Argentina, as in other Latin American countries, friends in other parts of the world will be wise in maintaining a policy of attentiveness comprised of sympathy. There are grounds for hope, particularly when one considers the changes achieved by other countries. France last had an attempted coup in 1961, Italy in 1970, Portugal in 1975 and Spain in 1981. Portugal was ruled by a repressive, corporatist, civilian regime with military backing from 1933 to 1974; Spain had a similar regime from 1939 to 1975; and Greece had a vicious military dictatorship from 1967 to 1974. We now take it for granted that all these Southern European countries are developing into stable democracies. Argentina is now undergoing the same transition. If Angeloz wins the election, it will be the first time since 1928 that one elected president has served his term and been replaced by another freely elected president. If Menem wins, it will be the first time ever that a freely elected president from one party is replaced by a freely elected president from a different party. There is no evidence that any significant section of civilian society has lost its faith in the democratic system. Thus there is not the political base for the military, which was required before coups occurred in the past. Equally there is no sign that Peronism now presents any threat to democracy. On the contrary, Peronism has now adapted itself by taking on board a firm commitment to the democratic system, even within the party's own internal decision-making. Whoever wins on 14 May, it is not unreasonable to hope that the result will be another milestone on the road to permanent consolidation of democracy in Argentina.

Appendix A: Results of 1983, 1985 and 1987 elections

Percentages obtained by the Radicals (UCR), the Peronists (PJ) and the third largest party (labelled as "others"). In the case of the Federal Capital and the Province of Buenos Aires, "others" refers to the conservative Ucedé. In all other cases it refers to local provincial parties.

1983 Presidential Elections

	President		Deputies			Governors		
	UCR	PJ	UCR	PJ	Others	UCR	PJ	Others
Federal Capital	64	27	49	24	9	-	-	-
Buenos Aires	51	42	49	40	4	52	40	-
Catamarca	47	44	42	42	10	36	40	16
Chaco	47	48	46	48	-	46	47	-
Chubut	51	41	48	41	5	40	39	14
Córdoba	56	40	55	39	-	56	39	-
Corrientes	34	28	31	26	21	21	23	47
Entre Ríos	50	44	48	43	-	49	41	-
Formosa	37	45	37	45	14	28	43	23
Jujuy	35	49	33	48	15	26	47	24
La Pampa	41	41	40	40	13	32	41	20
La Rioja	41	56	41	55	-	40	57	-
Mendoza	58	37	55	35	5	47	36	13
Misiones	50	48	50	48	-	50	47	-
Neuquén	45	22	39	21	34	20	23	55
Río Negro	54	40	53	35	-	53	37	-
Salta	45	45	42	45	7	27	51	17
San Juan	40	31	38	30	25	21	30	39
San Luis	49	41	45	41	7	37	41	15
Santa Cruz	44	52	44	50	-	40	56	-
Santa Fe	50	43	46	41	4	40	41	10
Santiago del Estero	41	49	37	48	9	31	49	14
Tierra del Fuego	50	39	35	35	19	-	-	-
Tucumán	42	52	40	51	-	37	52	-

Source: percentages worked out on Interior Ministry official figures.

1985 and 1987 Mid-term Elections

	Deputies in 1985			Deputies in 1987			Governors in 1987		
	UCR	PJ	Other	UCR	PJ	Other	UCR	PJ	Other
Federal Capital	43	25	10	39	24	18	-	-	-
Buenos Aires	41	37	10	38	45	6	40	46	-
Catamarca	51	44	-	41	54	-	41	54	-
Chaco	48	44	-	46	50	-	46	50	-
Chubut	43	35	17	37	45	8	39	48	6
Córdoba	52	36	-	47	44	-	49	44	-
Corrientes	25	19	49	25	18	44	-	-	-
Entre Ríos	47	40	-	43	48	-	44	49	-
Formosa	45	45	6	48	51	-	46	53	-
Jujuy	34	24	21	36	43	14	34	44	16
La Pampa	44	40	9	42	54	-	42	54	-
La Rioja	42	52	-	34	61	-	34	62	-
Mendoza	53	26	15	36	46	15	36	45	14
Misiones	55	39	-	46	48	-	47	47	-
Neuquén	40	24	28	29	11	46	29	9	47
Río Negro	53	28	-	38	34	21	39	35	21
Salta	35	35	23	27	52	20	29	54	21
San Juan	45	27	20	19	44	23	-	-	-
San Luis	48	45	-	33	51	8	33	52	7
Santa Cruz	48	39	-	47	50	-	48	50	-
Santa Fe	40	35	9	27	42	14	28	44	14
Santiago del Estero	49	46	-	43	51	-	44	51	-
Tierra del Fuego	30	35	22	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tucumán	45	44	-	34	26	19	34	25	20

Source: as above.

Appendix B: Results of the *Partido Justicialista* primaries held on 9 July 1988

Electoral District	% for Menem	% for Cafiero
Federal Capital	48.0	51.5
Buenos Aires	51.9	47.7
Catamarca	97.0	2.7
Chaco	50.3	49.3
Chubut	65.9	33.7
Córdoba	30.7	69.0
Corrientes	48.9	37.9
Entre Ríos	55.7	43.8
Formosa	46.3	53.4
Jujuy	62.9	36.3
La Pampa	53.7	45.9
La Rioja	97.9	1.7
Mendoza	74.5	21.3
Misiones	50.6	49.1
Neuquén	80.8	16.7
Río Negro	72.0	27.6
Salta	44.8	54.3
San Juan	87.3	12.4
San Luis	55.2	44.3
Santa Cruz	75.8	24.0
Santa Fe	54.9	44.6
Santiago del Estero	36.3	63.3
Tierra del Fuego	77.8	21.9
Tucumán	65.3	39.2
TOTAL:	53.4	45.8

Source: *La Nación*, 11 July 1988.

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