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The Place of Social Democracy  
in the Argentine Political System

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## THE PLACE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN THE ARGENTINE POLITICAL SYSTEM

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In recent years, the concept of social democracy has gained wide currency among Argentine political elites. After years of contempt, important sectors representing the Radical and Peronista parties, as well as the Left and the intelligentsia, accept this type of ideological identification. This merits some exploration of the historical roots of the social-democratic experience in Argentina and its place in the political party spectrum in the years to come.

Social democracy in Europe was an adaptation of the values of socialism (a universal religion) to the specific conditions of each country. The organized working class soon adopted the ideology, which faced little competition from other well-entrenched political loyalties. The liberal, radical, or Social Christian convictions of some popular sectors were, in a sense, remains of an earlier period, which never became a strongly rooted alternative expression for working-class interests. This is in contrast to what happens in the United States and in many Third World countries. Leaving aside the very special case of the United States, in many parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, some form of populism or radical nationalism successfully competes with socialism, often adorning itself with socialist ideology or tradition. The case of *peronismo* in Argentina is one of the better-known examples.

At the inception of the socialist ideology, Latin American conditions were not ripe for autonomous action by the working class. In fact, conditions were scarcely adequate for consolidating a capitalist bourgeoisie. However, there already existed a tradition and an experience of popular rebellion, from Túpac Amaru to the Mexican Insurgencia and the slave rebellion in Haiti. These rebellions included *caudillista* movements, some of which were quite radical, like *artiguismo*; others, like *rosismo*, were more conservative, although no less successful at mobilizing the masses. In Europe, comparable events were part of a tradition of popular struggles that socialism later incorporated. This is particularly the case of the French Revolution; although the bourgeoisie capitalized on it, its most radical aspects became antecedents of socialist ideology. In other words, socialism is in many ways a meditation on the French Revolution and on the subsequent revolutions of 1830, 1848, and 1871. The popular rebellions and *caudillista* movements in Latin America, in contrast, are relatively devoid of ideological interpreters, and they have not been incorporated into the corpus of a theoretical structure with any pretension of universal validity. For example, the insurgents of the 1810 Mexican rebellion are a part of the Mexican pantheon, but they are hardly known or taken seriously in the rest of the continent. The same applies to the other cases mentioned, which may be celebrated by patriotic nationalism, but never became part of a universalist narrative with theoretical or ideological value.

Those historical events in Latin America were ignored, distorted, or taken as objects of antiquarian interest by Marx and his first followers. They were not considered when formulating the theoretical structure necessary for the struggle for socialism, unlike the conclusions drawn from critical interpretations of the French or even the English revolutions. This attitude was adopted by the first socialists in our continent, mostly in Argentina, Uruguay, southern Brazil, and Chile, where the massive influx of European immigration was very influential.

At the turn of the century in several parts of Latin America, a labor force existed that could be unionized to take collective action against the established order. This labor force was of two types: the European immigrants in countries like Argentina and Uruguay, where it was expected they would copy Australia in reproducing, in "empty zones," political and social conditions similar to those in Europe; and, in Mexico, Peru, northern Chile, and other areas, important concentrations of mining or agro-industrial labor, made up mainly of native laborers with a small component of foreign migrants. These zones were not "empty," and thus intellectuals became more concerned with their local traditions.

Between 1910 and 1917, the revolutions that took place in Mexico, China, and Russia quickly adopted anti-imperialist and anticapitalist components. The effect that the Russian Revolution has had on the world should not make us put aside the other two, especially—from a Latin American perspective—the Mexican Revolution. Just as a previous generation thought that the *Zeitgeist* had settled in France when the Bastille fell—ignoring the siege of the Alhóndiga of Granaditas in Guanajuato—a subsequent group considered the Russian revolution part of a historical world process and the Mexican Revolution as an episode of local interest with no theoretical value. I do not pretend here to deny the importance of the French or the Russian events, but the level of conceptual and theoretical elaboration of which Russia and France have been the object, in comparison with Mexico, even in Latin America, is simply part of the cultural dependency that affects this part of the world. In any event, after World War I, the social-democratic ideology found two important rivals that operated on the same intellectual and labor groups and that had a greater ability to reach the rural and marginal masses. They were Leninist socialism and revolutionary nationalism.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, social democracy in Argentina was consolidated into a Socialist party, which slowly integrated the anarchists and revolutionary Syndicalists. It was flanked by a Communist party, which was oriented to reform and popular fronts. With some hindsight, one can see that socialism in Argentina already suffered from certain shortcomings that hindered its penetration into those parts of the country that were less touched by European immigration. A certain dogmatism made it difficult for socialism to capture a part of the electorate of the popular party of that time, the Unión Cívica Radical. But until the advent of *peronismo* the Socialist party projected itself as the political spokesman for the country's organized working class and intellectual lower middle class, following the social-democratic model.

### The Conjuncture of 1943

When the military took over in 1943, strongly supported by the Radical Right, various alternatives existed for those who were oriented to social reform based on working-class political action:

(1) The classic social-democratic model, as in the British Labour party, strongly tied to trade unions and in which the lower middle class and the intellectuals are the main leaders and activists. A variety of this model was a Popular Front in alliance with a moderate Communist party and the Radicals. Until this point, the situation in Argentina and Chile was close to the classic social-democratic model. The ideology was more rigid in the case of Argentina, a country that could pretend, more than Chile, because of its migratory influx, to be a transoceanic reproduction of European countries or Australia and New Zealand.

(2) The Mexican-Aprista model, which involved the formation of popular political parties with leaders from the middle class, the bourgeoisie, or even the military, and support from weakly organized but mobilized trade unions. It was thought that this model was appropriate for lesser-developed countries with an important Indian component. The Radical party in Argentina, apart from what it could have been at the peak of Yrigoyen's popularity, did not appear to follow this model, but rather represented a centrist force with which alliances could be established. It did not seem to be sufficiently committed to social change, although it did guarantee democratic consolidation.

(3) The Leninist or revolutionary socialist model was frozen by soviet foreign politics but was practiced in some places like China, although during the war it still lacked the visibility that it later acquired. In some countries in the area there were groups sharing this ideology, but without enough backing, as the only country that had practiced it successfully no longer encouraged it. This, however, could change in any moment, in which case the model would acquire a greater potential. It was, in any case, more likely to be applied in the lesser-developed countries.

(4) Popular caudillismo, which was strong in the last century in the Río de la Plata and other parts of the continent, could be reactivated with a charismatic civil or military leader. However, there were no actual examples of this type, save an attempt at "military socialism" in Bolivia or the "*tenentismo*" partially expressed through Vargas in Brazil. One could also imagine a local version of fascism as a "third force" between capitalism and communism. But fascism was seen by most intellectuals, except in certain Catholic and nationalistic sectors, as being right-wing and reactionary.

The particular social tensions that existed in Argentina during the Second World War—together with the industrialization that the country was experiencing, which needed protection to consolidate the growth induced by the war—produced a real mutation in the political party system. Before the war the Argentinian system was very much like Chile's, recognizing European models. On the Left, the so-

cialist gamut had electoral following in Chile, and a not negligible one in Argentina. On both sides of the Andes *radicalismo* was in the middle. The Right had a strong electorate in Chile, although it resorted to some vote purchasing; in Argentina it was weak, but capable of putting up a fight in some provinces. The party system survived in spite of disturbances in Chile and overcame the merely temporary impact of *ibañismo* in 1952. In Argentina, on the other hand, in 1943 there emerged from the military sector a new political project which was headed by Perón and supported by an elite of a very heterogeneous ideological composition. The majority of the leftist intellectuals, directly or indirectly tied to the previous socialist pole, firmly opposed what they saw as an American reproduction of European fascism, with the same ability to fill the plazas and mobilize against the centers of high finance and international capitalism. Among the more militant old trade unionists there was also considerable opposition, although a number of them sided with the new movement. Their support reflected the access of the masses, which had not previously been incorporated into the system. Given their migratory nature or their previous passivity, the masses were favorably disposed to paternalistic authority, which Juan B. Justo had labeled "*política criolla*." They were, actually, Creoles, defining the term loosely to include also the sons and daughters of foreigners who wanted to reaffirm their nationality against the excessive Eurocentrism of the Left, from social-democrat to anarchist to Communist.

Could the Argentine Left have reacted differently to the threat that originated from the secretary of labor in the military regime? The possibility should certainly be admitted. There is the nearby example of Chile, in which the Left knew how to react successfully against a similar populist challenger, General Ibáñez, with a mixture of alliance, negotiation, and opposition. In any event, and without denying the possibility or even the desirability of a different reaction, the fact is that the cards were dealt in such a way that it was difficult for the Argentinian parties and groups leaning toward socialism. We must keep in mind the fact that the ideological distortion caused by the European model at the intellectual level generated a "demonstration effect" that was much stronger in the Río de la Plata than in the rest of the continent. Also, the enormous impact of foreign immigration, unequalled in any other part of the world, had created a great political void not only in the elite but also in the popular sectors. For decades not only the great majority of the bourgeoisie and the skilled working class had been foreigners for the most part little integrated into the system of civic participation. This vacuum of participation debilitated, even made impossible, the emergence of a strong progressive bourgeois party, which Juan B. Justo wished to see as much as a socialist one. In its place there was a conservative landowners' party and a Radical party anchored in the middle class, neither of which was originally linked to the urban bourgeoisie. The foreign origin of the masses also weakened the bond between the working class and the party system which could represent them in Congress, which gave clay feet as much to the Socialist as to the Communist party.

Peronismo demonstrated that it did not have a great respect for the system of public liberties and balance of powers. Its authoritarian aspects were evident from the start, were, in fact, inherent in its origin in the military dictatorship of 1943. One of its first victims was the Partido Laborista, the principal partisan organ that carried the popular movement to power. Some of the old trade union leaders, unlike the foreign-oriented Socialist party, which was also more closely patterned after the French or German centralized models than the highly federative one practiced in England, had thought to reproduce the British experience but with a nationalist emphasis. Before assuming power, Perón dissolved the Partido Laborista, without much reaction. Later he tightened control over other aspects of national life by closing down most independent newspapers in 1950 and controlling the radio stations and, later, television, so that the opposition had access only on rare occasions.

These were years of particular discredit to the social-democratic model in Argentina. It was reduced to the confines of a Socialist party that had been converted into a minor member of a coalition of the Center Right and included a Radical party that had become a channel for conservative interests and military conspiracies. After the fall of Perón in 1955, this political scheme continued, even worsened. Many social-democrat politicians were converted from persecuted to persecutor, some of them demonstrating a particular harshness toward the popular "mistaken" masses and an excessive flexibility in the presence of new military regimes that would save the country from the return of *peronismo*.

### Changes in the Ideological Climate

As the sixties moved on, the impact of the Cuban Revolution and events in France in May 1968 were strongly felt. The severe erosion of the Soviet model caused by more information about its repressive practices made its erstwhile advocates align themselves with more radical models, like the Chinese, or with the popular movements of the Third World. This realignment, in spite of its leading to Messianism, had a positive component: it was the first reaction against the fixation with European models. The conclusion was not long in coming: *peronismo* was the way to social revolution in Argentina. The natural versatility of this movement responded and soon an extreme left-wing sector was formed among the real or self-proclaimed *peronista* activists. The shift toward *peronismo* was massive among the intelligentsia and the students and resulted in violence and a return to power in 1973. *Peronismo* became a broad coalition that accommodated the extreme Left and the extreme Right.

This is not as strange as it seems, above all if one reexamines certain historical events. This coexistence of extremes occurred in the last century in Mexico with Iturbide and, on a few occasions, with Santa Anna. In Argentina, *rosismo* also showed this characteristic by unifying the remains of Dorrego's liberal populist federalism with the conservative landowners and ultramontane Catholics. In Europe these strange alliances are less frequent. Their greater incidence in the Third World is due to its

uneven development and the coexistence of very different social systems. Incongruent social structures are superimposed and their ideological expressions coexist creating strange alliances.

The ideological political convergence around *peronismo* in 1973 is one of the most extreme cases of this kind of alliance. Social democracy was visibly absent, and the concern for democracy was very tenuous, as large sectors of the alliance considered it a simple bourgeois ploy. Some favored authoritarian solutions; others thought that "true democracy" would naturally emerge after the revolution. A great many of the country's intelligentsia and students participated in this ideological frenzy, certainly no worse than others that have affected humanity. Reality dealt hard blows to the participants in this collective enthusiasm, first in the form of the eruption of the internal contradictions of the coalition, where the right-wing sector asserted itself, and later in the form of military repression.

The self-examination that the Argentine intellectual generation put itself through at the beginning of the eighties produced a general disillusionment with the prescribed Marxist nationalist or *peronista* -type revolutions and a reevaluation of democracy. It was no longer believed that a dialectic or some other metaphysical mechanism guaranteed the final objective. This, added to a concern for social change, should result in social democracy. Many sectors disillusioned by the Soviet or Chinese experiences, or even by the Cuban experience, and not prepared to emulate Third World leaders, look at European social democracy as an example of a genuine third position between savage capitalism and totalitarian communism.

Similar events have occurred in other countries in the area. In *aprimo* and parties like Acción Democrática in Venezuela and Liberación Nacional in Costa Rica, the progressive access to power and the execution of moderate political reforms make them look for legitimization to the social-democratic sources of their ideology, and to the prestigious European paradigm. In Brazil the political inheritors of *varguismo*, principally in the Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB), define themselves more and more as social democrats. Similar tendencies are expressed in the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT) and in the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT).

On the other hand, social democracy in Europe has abandoned the Cold War rigidity of the fifties. It has slowly adopted pragmatic strategies, including electoral alliance with the Communists, and it has opened communications with popular nationalist movements and Leninist revolutionaries, such as those in Nicaragua. Concurrently, some socialist movements in southern Europe, such as Spain's, which hardly a decade ago aspired to a "Mediterranean" identity that included the Libyan or Palestinian revolutions, have adopted the political ideology and practice of European social democracy. During these decades, social science theorizing has been redefining the role of the working class in the political system. Few now think that the working class is the harbinger of the New Jerusalem, destined to represent humanity because of the disappearance and proletarianization of the remaining classes. Far from that, technological development has increased middle-class jobs in the private sector, threatening to re-

duce the working class to a permanent minority; to avoid this it is necessary to incorporate the middle class and the technical sectors in a socialist project.

Political parties in Argentina began to reactivate in the early eighties, addressing new militants to the nuclei they had maintained during the long and sometimes desperate fight for democratic recovery. Within this awakening the political sectors that were active in the intellectual community were incorporated. They had already been through a revision and reconsideration of their previous strategies. What kind of a panorama did they face?

The rediscovered value of democracy made *peronismo* unattractive, in spite of its strong popular and labor component. The classic *peronismo* of Perón's first presidency was little concerned with public liberty and had a bad record in cultural and university matters. The fact that it represented labor and trade unions was minimized by social science revision of the working-class role and by the authoritarian or bureaucratic nature of the unions. The Radical party appeared to have a more democratic tradition, in spite of its history of involvement with the military during the resistance against Perón's authoritarian regime. The links with the military forged by some Radical party leaders were seen as occasional attempts to overcome totalitarian tendencies in the *peronista* governments, not as part of a permanent model. By contrast, relations of some of the *peronista* leaders with the military were seen as the result of a major convergence of attitudes that sought to re-create an alliance between the armed forces and the people. The Left was seen as a dinosaur, repeating old precepts.

### The Alfonsinista Period

The maturation of the socialist intelligentsia in the country coincided with an open-mindedness toward new strategies in the Unión Cívica Radical sector, headed by Raúl Alfonsín. For years he had fought to direct the Radical party more to the left, overcoming its profound anti-*peronismo*, and had tried to increase its electorate from the steadfast 25 percent that, with a few fluctuations, it had polled for decades. The possible incorporation of many modernized leftist sectors created a promising perspective. The independent Left could claim more than 10 percent of the total electorate, as shown in the 1973 elections, where parties calling themselves leftist had won almost that much (to which one must add those included in the Cámpora vote). Naturally, not all the Left would join *radicalismo*. But if 10 percent could be added to the traditional 25 percent, they would provide a basis from which to fight *peronismo*, which in the 1973 presidential election had polled (with some allies) 50 percent of the national total. As the campaign developed during 1982 and 1983, two things happened: (1) it became more certain that Alfonsín would get his 25 percent, plus 10 percent of the votes from the renovated Left; (2) the Right, which had obtained almost 20 percent in 1973 by adding its many sectors, in the majority voted for Alfonsín, even if it did not like the radical leader's new partners. So in 1983, the

Right retained only 5 percent of the total vote in its own parties, thus helping Alfonsín to the presidency. The *peronistas* lost ten percentage points from the 1973 base. They lost not only the Left, which had joined the Frente Justicialista of 1973, but also some of their traditional electorate, which had been won over by the *alfonsinistas*.

Alfonsín's victory helped consolidate democracy for two main reasons: first, his party had clearer democratic convictions; second, it guaranteed the military and the Right a smoother transition than did *peronismo*. This second reason deserves careful consideration.

Toward the end of the military dictatorship, there was talk of a "military–trade union pact" by which military and trade union bureaucrats would cooperate in maintaining oligarchical control over the corporate system and predominant interest groups. The Unión Cívica Radical was seen as the party of civil propriety and ethics, determined to dismantle the harmful structures of the de facto corporatism that the country had endured for so many decades. In this perspective, *peronismo*—the main voice of the bureaucratized trade unions—could be seen as occupying a position to the right of the Radicales. The latter appeared more leftist, although not extreme, and above all more inclined to introduce changes to the existing corporatist power structure.

This perspective is, in my view, wrong, although it reflects part of the truth. It overemphasizes the purely political aspects of the Argentine social structure, leaving aside the economic and class components. It also ignores the fact that practically all of the military coups that have taken place in the country since 1945 have been directed against existing or foreseeable *peronista* governments. The military has never worried about a Radical party victory; at most it has been nervous about a government like Frondizi's in 1962 or Illia's in 1966 being too weak and therefore allowing a *peronista* return. The main conflict in Argentina is not between the military or corporate establishment on one side, and a democratic, moral force on the other; it is, rather, between the right-wing military-business sector and the popular movement, mainly *peronista*, which includes most trade unions. In this confrontation the Radical party remains in the middle, with occasional alliances in either direction. When it sides with *peronismo* and other forces against the military dictatorship, it leans toward the Left. When, as in the 1983 presidential elections, it confronts *peronismo*, it is undeniably leaning to the Right.

So is the "military–trade union pact" a mere illusion? Not necessarily. Since *peronismo* is the main historical opponent of the military—like *aprismo* in Peru—it is necessary for it to seek to coexist with its adversaries in order to reach a truce. The Radical party does not have to make such a pact because no one suspects that it would attack the foundation of the military-business structure. The *peronistas*, on the other hand, could easily slip into a confrontational policy because of the social structure of their support. It is true that the *peronista* threat affects the business sector more than the military. But the two are connected, and in spite of appearances the business sector of the Right is

more important than the military, even in a country as affected by militarism as Argentina. The reason is that the machine that propels the military to intervention is fed, in great part, by the fear that spreads among the dominant classes of what a *peronista* government would do to them.

In answer to this analysis it is said—to paraphrase Arthur Koestler—that one is not responsible for unsolicited support. It is asserted that the situation of the Unión Cívica Radical in Argentina is comparable to that of the Socialist party in France, which opposes a business-based Right and an authoritarian Left, that is, the Communist party, which is more involved with the trade unions than is the Socialist party. The role of the Communist party in France would be played by the *peronistas* in Argentina. The comparison is partly valid, but something must be kept in mind. In France, although it is true that Mitterrand is, in a certain sense, to the right of communism, he confronts to his right no less than 50 percent of the electorate and its corresponding political party structures and interest groups. In 1983 in Argentina hardly 5 percent of the electorate was to the right of the *alfonsinista* vote. In 1987, 13 percent, including provincial parties, occupied this position, but that is still very little. In any event, abandoned by some of the voters from the Right, plus others from the Left, the Unión Cívica Radical lost the election in 1987.

Another comparable case is Peru, where the *apristas*, led by Alan García, got 50 percent of the vote while the Izquierda Unida, on the Left, won 25 percent. But to the right of *aprista* there remains another quarter of the electorate, which is represented by the right-wing Partido Popular Cristiano and the Center Right group, Acción Popular. *Aprismo* is certainly more right wing than the Izquierda Unida, but it maintains a strong foothold in the popular and trade union sectors, such that one can still talk of a social-democratic option adapted to Peruvian conditions. Flanked by a party or group of parties on the left, it resembles the Socialist party in France. In contrast, the Argentinian Radical party faces too many votes to its left (or toward the bottom of the social pyramid), at least 50 percent, and very few to its right (or the top of the pyramid), 5 percent in 1983, and 13 percent in 1987, including the provincial parties.

It is also argued, returning to the theme of military-civilian polarization, that Alfonsín took the military to the courts, jailing most Junta members. It is possible that under a *peronista* government greater limits would have been imposed, in one way or another, or pardons or amnesty would have been extended, in my judgment, not only because of the existence of right-wing sectors in *peronismo*—which cannot be denied—but also because the greater presence of anti-status quo elements in *peronismo* makes it potentially dangerous to the ruling classes and forces its leadership to soft-pedal on actions that might infuse panic in many levels of the military-business sector. The Radical party government, on the other hand, just because it knows that it does not instill panic in the business community, can undertake to do a specific job on certain military sectors.

### Toward a New Coalition

It is a fact that right-wing groups still exist within the *peronista* party in quantities not equaled in the Radical party. How does this agree with my earlier statement that *peronismo* is generally more to the left than the Radical party? The answer should be obvious: in both cases it has to do with coalitions between social actors, and with particular conditions in Argentina that, as with many countries of the Third World, favor the creation of very heterogeneous alliances in the popular sector.

Social democracy requires the combination of at least two elements: a unionized working class, and a group of intellectuals with a strong technical component (technocrat, or, in other words, Fabian). Without these two components there can be democracy, sometimes even social improvement, but not a social-democratic project. Admittedly, it could be argued that it does not matter if there is no "social-democratic project" if democracy is consolidated and offers some social improvement. If the *peronistas* were in power, they probably could not do more in terms of social improvements, given the limitations set by international economic conditions. Have not François Mitterrand or Felipe González had to take steps backwards, even to the point of confronting sectors of the working class and the trade unions?

The argument is cogent; after all, for some reason, the majority of the social-democratic intelligentsia have rallied around Alfonsín. They see in him more respect, greater freedom, a better guarantee that the democratic institutions of the country will be consolidated, starting with the ones that operate in the party itself. For the intelligentsia the consolidation of democracy has definitely been accepted as a precondition of any form of socialism. That is not enough, of course, but in no way should the institutional system be endangered, nor should it be argued that it is a bourgeois democracy, and therefore questionable and replaceable by one that is more genuine.

*Peronismo*, although its leadership levels have been notably renovated, still maintains strongly intolerant characteristics. This, in part, reflects the authoritarianism typical of the most humble levels of Argentinian society, although it is also derived from the participation of the intellectual right-wing sectors. In certain provinces and in various trade unions the renovation has not been very thorough. *Peronismo* needs more time to eliminate the many elements that are clearly harmful to democracy in daily life, in the institutions it controls, and in cultural affairs. This last area is particularly important to the intelligentsia, because it deals with their area of activity. The tendency to purify *peronismo* exists, but it is neither automatic nor inevitable. It must be generated as much from inside the *peronista* movement as from outside, by those who would be disposed to collaborate with a thoroughly modernized *justicialismo*. It must be purified of certain components that might have been inevitable in previous stages of national development—that were necessary to form a triumphant coalition like that of 1943–1946—but are harmful today for political as well as ethical and ideological reasons.

Let us return to the thesis that social democracy requires, besides a consolidated democracy, a mechanism for social reform. This mechanism, undoubtedly limited by the external and internal conditions of the economy and class structure, must always be as bold as possible. For this it must have the strength of the trade unions directly incorporated into the party or indirectly allied with it. At the very least, a large portion of the trade unions should favor the social-democratic movement, and the rest, although they may support a different party, should not strongly oppose social democracy. For this reason, the Radical party is not an adequate expression of social democracy in Argentina, in spite of the intentions of some of its leaders. I am not criticizing concrete measures, including the excessively recessionist economic policy it has adopted. Spain and France have also at times adopted similar policies under social-democratic governments. What is important is whether or not the two indispensable elements we previously referred to, that is, the intelligentsia and the trade unions, are in the political-partisan "house" that we are examining. They are not part of the Radical party, which is therefore not a social-democratic force. But neither are they both present in *peronismo*. Where to go then? To one of the small groups of the purer Left? These are too minor fight too much among themselves to become important leaders in the project. It is necessary to take them into account, however, and not only those with explicit social-democratic conviction, so as to utilize their enthusiasm and power of mobilization.

For the moment, the continuation of another Radical presidency better guarantees democratic stability. It also prevents *peronismo* from prematurely assuming power and gives it time to transform itself permanently. In the long run, *justicialismo* is a more adequate channel for social democracy, not as the only party representing the project, but as one component in a new alliance that should include an explicitly socialist sector, electorally smaller, but not negligible. What is required is not a mere coalition between *justicialismo* (43 percent of the national vote in 1987, including local schisms) and the Left (7 percent divided almost equally among intransigents, social democrats, Trotskyites, and Communists, one part of which is not usable due to its extremism). What is necessary is that from *justicialismo*, or from a sector of the renovated Left, a powerful appeal, as shattering of party structures as was of *alfonsinismo* at its height, be made for participation in a new project.

To summarize, the social-democratic model does not have an adequate place in the party spectrum in Argentina today. It is legitimate enough, though, for individuals with that ideology to militate in the Radical party, strengthening its role as defender of an incipient democracy; or in *peronismo*, so that it can thoroughly renovate its structure; or in the various self-proclaimed leftist parties, helping them to adapt to the national reality. But eventually the next step must be taken, the formation of a coalition around *justicialismo* and the trade unions, both partially renovated, and with an infusion of socialist ideology based on Latin American intellectual traditions, not European. The project can only function if a wide appeal is made to the intellectual sector, the young as well as the technocrats, to con-

verge with the parties of the popular area. This would in no way mean a rebirth of the Frente Justicialista de Liberación (FREJULI) of 1973, although it would involve many of the people that supported it. In 1973 the FREJULI combined, in a very traditional populist way, the extreme Right and the extreme Left, with mutually manipulative intentions and great violence. Few had a clear conception of the democratic system, although Perón, at least in speeches, demonstrated an excellent knowledge of its basic tenets, which he had absorbed during his exile in Madrid. The same cannot be said of some of his actions, for by surrounding himself with advisers and friends like López Rega, he directly contradicted his acquired faith in democracy.

But the conditions under which the FREJULI was formed and acted are better left to future historians to ponder. The difference between the FREJULI and what is proposed here is evident. Extreme positions would no longer be present, or would be extremely minoritarian, although some individuals who supported them in the past might reappear after a change of heart. There would no longer be a mythological belief in the working class but, instead, a conviction of the necessity of its organized presence. The concessions that everyone must make to consolidate the whole would be easier if a highly federative structure, guaranteeing areas of autonomy, predominates. As for the intellectuals, they should bear in mind that as social democracy had to make concessions to social reality to be able to take root in Europe, similar but different adaptations must evolve in Latin America.

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