

## A BACKGROUND TO PERON'S DISCOVERY OF JEWISH NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

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Months before April 1947, when Britain referred the Palestine question to the UN, the Perón government considered Zionist aspirations and issued the first of a number of instructions that would become Argentina's Palestine policy. Less than its wholehearted support for the Zionists' fondest hope, sovereignty, Argentina was prepared to back a Jewish homeland under certain conditions. And this was so, despite a host of considerations that could be seen to pull in the opposite direction to Zionism: One, Buenos Aires' privileged ties to Britain, whose part in shielding successive Argentine governments from US intervention cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Two, Argentine efforts to cultivate relations with the Arab world, whose voting power at the UN was seen as a way of neutralizing the diplomatic ostracism with which the US and USSR sought to penalize Argentina's wartime neutrality. Three, the cold war, which gave rise to suspicions among many an anti-communist that Zionism might be communistic or serve as a Trojan horse for the USSR. For a government presided over by an alleged 'megalomaniac Nazi' and undoubted anti-communist this would appear as no small transformation.

From the outset it was clear that Argentina had no real interest at stake in Palestine. Although keen to develop friendly links with the Arab world as well as to retain and expand the Argentine Arabs' electoral support, such considerations were dwarfed by Juan Perón's uppermost international priority: relations with the big powers in general, and the US in particular. This being the case, Argentina's stand on Palestine needs to be seen as part and parcel of the Perón government's efforts to reach an accommodation with the US. From this angle, Argentina's Palestine policy was in tune with developments in the country that antedate the end of World War II, notably Perón's estrangement from the more extreme nationalists and developing sensitivity towards issues of Jewish interest. During the war, Argentina had sought a *modus vivendi* with the US, albeit on its own terms. Hence, its attempts were sharply rebuffed by a Washington intent on nothing more nor less than breaking the back of Argentine nationalism, and with its sights set on the military regime's replacement. That the US was quite unsuccessful in accomplishing these goals is largely attributable to Britain's unwillingness to go along with the more unrealistic draconian measures which Washington considered by way of penalties for Argentina's refusal to drop neutrality after Pearl Harbour, and its half-hearted implementation of others. The British standpoint, as voiced by one of its diplomats – press attaché Sidney

Robertson – was that ‘Argentina’s much discussed neutrality...was extremely benign and, on occasion, openly favourable to our Cause.’<sup>1</sup>

With the end of the war confirming the US in the role of a superpower, Britain an enfeebled empire and Argentina a prosperous pariah state, a *modus vivendi* would mostly have to be on Washington’s terms – even if British dependence on Argentine supplies and its extensive interests in that country as well as the postwar contradiction between democracy and communism militated in the Perón government’s favor. This notwithstanding, US secretary of state James Byrnes’ tenure, characterized by his limited interest in Latin America and investing of Spruille Braden with the largely uncontrolled authority to determine US policy towards a relegated region tended to complicate matters. Though not insensitive to US economic and military interests, Braden’s anti-Perón crusade was, nonetheless, dissonant with the former’s eagerness to jump at the opportunity of dislodging Britain from its position of ascendancy over that country and the latter’s wish to exclude from Argentina all non-US military influences. While no softy on communism either, Braden was rightly aware that the Soviet Union, weakened by the Nazi onslaught, was in no position to menace the US, certainly not in Latin America.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, his concerns also appeared detached from Washington’s emerging cold war priority of stronger hemispheric unity, which meant reaching an accommodation rather than antagonizing the Perón government.

Indubitably, the state of play in Argentine-US-British relations provides the framework to judge the development of Buenos Aires’ Palestine policy. This paper, however, is not concerned with the formulation of that policy. Rather it seeks to identify the conditions that made it possible. With this in mind, it attempts to explain what prompted Perón to endeavour to show a degree of sensitivity towards Jewish concerns and how far had Argentina gone down that road by the time the UN began to consider partition. In dealing with these twin objectives, a picture that stresses the significance of the cultural dimension in international relations, i.e., the image of a country that is consumed abroad, especially in other states that are of importance to it, will emerge. Influenced by a host of considerations – including its intellectual, artistic and scientific production, as well as its material wealth, form of government and history – a country’s image is strongly conditioned by the coverage it gets in the foreign media. Even more, the image of a particular state in the press of others with whom it seeks a fruitful relationship can impinge on political and economic relations, and in Argentina’s case it did impinge on these as well as military relations with the US. Hence, Perón’s efforts to improve Argentina’s – and his own – image in the US.

### A. A 'Megalomaniac Nazi's' Concern for Jewish Goodwill?

Aside from Argentina's neutralist stance during World War II – the hallmark of the Anglophile conservatives who ruled the country until the June 1943 revolution<sup>3</sup> – the presence of pro-Axis nationalists among the officers in whose company colonel Perón came to power and the military government's unwillingness to tow the US line without a valid *quid pro quo*, the recognition of Argentine pre-eminence in South America, helped shape the military government's image as a Nazi-fascist regime. Prior to the end of the war, though, Third Reich intelligence had reached the conclusion that Perón was not the pro-German leader they had initially believed him to be. Granted that the cooperative head of the Reichsicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) section responsible for handling Nazi intelligence activities in Latin America volunteered to his US military handlers that Berlin had gained the impression that 'the Ramírez regime did not want to cooperate with the US' Unhappily for the Nazis, though, as the war wore on, the RSHA was forced to conclude that Perón, 'pro-German at first,' had 'subsequently changed.' At the time of interrogation such an admission was less noteworthy than Perón's own statement, made in private in March 1944, that he was seeking to steer the government away from his more extreme nationalist colleagues' 'mad dream,' or his April 1944 review of the country's situation where he derided the nationalists as young and inexperienced, and encouraged the armed forces to think in realistic terms. These provide a different perspective whereof to judge the smashing of Nazi espionage in Argentina, following the diplomatic cut-off with the Axis, as well as earlier reports on Perón maneuvers to take credit for the break or his later advice to Franco's ambassador who, on the occasion of being accredited, was encouraged to stay away from the '*espiantavotos*,' vote-losers, as Perón had been calling the nationalists for quite some time.<sup>4</sup>

The progressive defeat of Nazi-fascism compelled all those who had once been susceptible to the allurements of Berlin and Rome to reconsider their positions.<sup>5</sup> Like others, Perón had been one of them, especially during his study period in Berlin and later stint as military attaché in Rome, from February 1939 till the end of 1940.<sup>6</sup> And, as he himself once remarked to a delegation of Jewish sympathizers – in what was perhaps a self-confession and clever apology for his earlier inclinations – his service abroad availed him of the acquaintanceship of Jewish supporters of such ideologies too.<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding Perón's likely attempt to cloak such attraction underneath the tragic errors of some of Nazi-fascism's victims it is worth noting that he had not been an agent, publicist or broadcaster for the Axis powers. Like

the interrogation of former RSHA officials, German documents – carefully screened by US officials in search of derogatory information – confirmed Argentina's interest in German military aid but failed to yield a storehouse of incriminating material about Perón's belonging to those in Berlin's payroll. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the West German authorities 'confirmed the absolute falsity of several of the key documents' presented by Argentine Congressman Silvano Santander in support of his claim that Perón and Eva Duarte had been bought by the Nazis. Likewise, the allegations of Nazi funding for the June 1943 revolution and/or personal interest free loans for its leaders remained without basis in fact.<sup>8</sup> This being the case, Braden's diagnosis of Nazi megalomania is, perhaps, as questionable as the proficiency in psychiatry of a mining engineer. In stark contrast with his characterization, Braden's British opposite number in Buenos Aires, Sir David Kelly, formed the opinion that Perón was not 'in the least interested' in Nazism – a statement of incontestable accuracy later rather than earlier during Kelly's tenure. That Washington also knew this is illustrated by Perón's dismissiveness of fascism when telling a US diplomat that this was 'at best a temporary system of government (which) today has less and less chance of success since the world trend is toward democracy.'<sup>9</sup>

Clearly, Perón's Nazi label echoed US intelligence assessments of general Pedro Ramírez's regime once it became apparent that it would not sever diplomatic ties with the Axis without assurances that a reward in military currency would be forthcoming. Nevertheless, not all World War II neutrals were accorded similar treatment. In effect, the Franco regime was more successful than Argentina in impressing the US with the need to maintain relations with the Axis, and of course never declared war on its members. Such links included the acquisition of arms and sale of wolfram, the latter being of crucial importance for the continuation of the German war effort.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Braden's recommendations regarding Latin American 'dictatorships and disreputable governments' were applied to those whose nationalism and regional pretensions yielded no such defiance of US interests as that of Argentina with anything like the same vigor. Finally, if in the immediate postwar the US had meted out as harsh a treatment to former Nazi-fascist supporters and admirers, or to their accomplices, as that reserved to the Argentine leader the world would have been rid not only of many an untried war criminal but also of their associates. And, at least according to the memoirs of a former aid to Musa al-Alami, a moderate Palestinian leader whose efforts were undermined by Hajj Amin al-Husaini, the struggle for Palestinian Arab self-determination and independence might well have been far different.<sup>11</sup>

An upshot of the changes Argentina began to witness before the end of the war was its attitude, specifically that of Perón – the country's vice-president during July 1944–October 1945, and elected president since February 1946 – towards antisemitism and the Jewish community, then estimated at 350,000. Lending indirect support to Berlin's assessment, as well as to his own dismissal of ultra-nationalist dreams, Perón responded to a December 1944 enquiry by the Overseas News Agency (ONA), the name the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) donned itself during the war, that the time when the more moderate elements in the armed forces, among which he counted himself, had to tolerate the ultra-nationalists' antisemitic attacks was 'passed and gone'. Surely such a boast was a poor match for Perón's intimation that he still relied on nationalist support.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, anti-Jewish incidents did not fade away into nothingness; nor did the evident impunity enjoyed by its practitioners disappear overnight. However, as the next three years rolled on, the train of events proved Perón's statements to be much more precise than many had at first been prepared to believe.

Not only did Perón disown the antisemites but, as part of his growing estrangement from the ultra-nationalists, he gradually eased out of government those most clearly perceived as anti-Jewish. Other cleansing measures were taken too. Less than a year after the interview with the ONA journalist, for instance, the Argentine education, war and navy ministries agreed to justify the absence of students and conscripts during the Jewish high holidays as well as took to task a teacher for disregarding the official directive. The year 1945 also witnessed Perón's dissociation from the anti-Jewish attacks of his Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (ALN) supporters. Prior to the February 1946 election, the Delegation of Argentine Israelite Associations (DAIA), the country's Jewish roof organization, was given five minutes a day by six different radio stations to publicize its views on a host of issues – and while it remains to be established whether Perón had anything to do with the green light what can be said is that such broadcasts, which continued after his assumption of the presidency, would have been incompatible with 'megalomaniac Nazism'. Perón also introduced in 1946 what has since become a regular practice among his successors, greeting Argentine Jewry on the occasion of the Jewish high holidays. Moreover, a number of Jewish officials, dismissed from the immigration department during the previous eleven months, were reinstated in their jobs by November 1946, at the time when Perón met with a Jewish community delegation. And, after Buenos Aires' main synagogue was bombed in July 1947, police raided nationalist headquarters and the pro-government press strongly condemned the outrage. By way of contrast, the sole nationalist daily, *La Tribuna*, was closed down.<sup>13</sup>

The triennium's most salient feature, though, was the gradual stripping off of the authority of those most clearly perceived as anti-Jewish, even if the main cause for their downfall was not their Judeophobia. The more extreme nationalists with jurisdiction over matters affecting Jews who by July 1947 had been ditched included general Orlando Peluffo, the foreign and religious affairs minister; general Juan Filomeno Velazco, under whose command the federal police was never able to detain the perpetrators of anti-Jewish attacks, and general Oscar Silva, the presidential military secretary, who had earlier been rumored to have issued orders 'to rigidly prohibit all Jewish immigration.' Not least important, Santiago Peralta, the immigration director since December 1945,<sup>14</sup> was also weeded out. His blatant discrimination against Jews had been brought to Perón's attention by DAIA, the Peronist Argentine Israelite Organization (OIA) and Jewish bodies from abroad.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, though, other less influential ultra-nationalists remained in office, especially at the foreign ministry. Nevertheless, according to someone familiar with the bitterness bred among nationalists by Perón's veering against them, those who survived either did so by concealing 'their nationalism or their anti-Peronism.'<sup>16</sup>

A year before the downfall of Peralta and Silva, or the closure of *La Tribuna*, the changes in sight had led the Latin American affairs expert of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), Máximo Yagupsky, no fan of Perón's, to write under a pen-name that the Argentine leader had 'issued statements condemning anti-Semitism' while 'his reactionary and fascist supporters' seemingly 'no longer have much influence on him.' Some time later, the president of the Argentine Jewish Organization (OJA), Alberto Klein, responded to an AJC questionnaire that since Perón's election the community's social activities were being carried out 'without discriminatory restrictions.' No grave antisemitic incidents had taken place while minor ones – including daubings and tar-bomb attacks against synagogues – were the work of 'a small Nazi-type group.'<sup>17</sup>

Interestingly, such assertions were not substantially different from the later assessment of US diplomats, whether naval attaché J.E. Whatton, the man in charge of liaising with the Argentine armed forces' service least enthusiastic about Perón, or ambassador James Bruce. Writing after the resignation of the above-mentioned officials and the suppression of the nationalist daily, Whatton remarked that too much importance had been given 'to the influence and effect of the ALN and other smaller ultra-nationalist groups. Their antisemitic actions were at best sporadic and are rapidly disappearing...These groups represent a very small portion of the Argentine population...Their efforts are considered to be less well planned and less effective than anti-semitic organizations in the US such as the Ku

Klux Klan, Gerald L. K. Smith or Father Coughlin followers.' As for Bruce, he called into question whether the ALN had ever been influential. In a book admittedly written with the assistance of journalist Ray Josephs, Bruce branded members of the secret military lodge behind the June 1943 coup as 'strongly and militantly nationalist,' yet at the same time 'scorning extremist organizations such as the ALN, which in those days had strong Nazi...support.' While Bruce also asserted that 'rabid' nationalists in the camp of those who took power in 1943 'let loose a wave of anti-Semitic activities' he, nonetheless, acknowledged that 'gradually...those who led the anti-Semitic attacks lost ground as the government made it clear it did not favor the persecution of any racial group'<sup>18</sup>

Whatton's valuable picture merits further attention. While it contained some misleading judgements too, it was not on balance off the mark. Particularly interesting was his comparison between the highly featured Argentine antisemites in his country's press and their proportionally less publicized US counterparts – a contrast which did not escape the attention of others before him. In his communication to his superiors Whatton summed up the situation as follows:

'Anti-semitism is not a policy of the present Argentine government. While there are several anti-semitic individuals of nationalist background in the government who from time to time take advantage of their position to satisfy personal feelings, they do not receive the support of the government in those actions and are not successful to any degree.

Practically all anti-semitism stems in one way or another from nationalist sources. It should be noted, however, that of the total number of nationalists only a small number carry the ideology to the extent of including anti-semitism as a cardinal point of their program. These few are invariably found in small organizations such as the ALN, which...are smaller, less well directed and less effective than similar organizations in the USA. Even in these organizations, anti-semitism appears as incidental to other questions...

...that small kernel of anti-semitism is bitter, but...because it comes from such a small source...it must be considered relatively unimportant. It is a potential threat should ultra-nationalists ever gain control of the government, but such a situation does not appear likely under present circumstances...

At any rate, anti-semitism is certainly not nearly as apparent as it is in the United States.'

While it is beyond the scope of this article to deal with the subject of Argentina's attitude towards Jewish refugees and displaced persons – a

topic at the center of other researchers' concerns – for the purpose of this paper two points need to be stressed. First, despite the fact that this never prevented the trickling in of Jews, the foremost expression of postwar anti-Jewish discrimination in government circles was in the field of immigration. This affected the work of non-Zionist Jewish bodies, concerned with the plight of the holocaust survivors. Jewish visa applicants were discriminated *qua* Jews during Peralta's incumbency. Though generally careful not to spell this out in writing, there is incontrovertible evidence of Peralta's advice to Argentine consular officials that visas for applicants 'of the Jewish faith' were out of the question. But, as noted by Leonardo Senkman, official guidelines on the handling of displaced persons and the country's industrialization plans, which determined its immigration policy, also militated against Jews. Validating this assessment, James Bruce, who served as US ambassador in Buenos Aires at the time of the first 5-year plan of industrialization, later wrote that 'technicians and skilled workers were preferred, and Spanish and Italians would be most easily absorbed.' Bruce also highlighted a further reason for Argentine preferences: the dramatic downward revision of estimates about the labor force needed to fulfil the 5-year plan's goals. For Bruce, the initial figure of '5,000,000 immigrants' had always been 'mostly talk'.<sup>19</sup>

This, as well as later measures to prevent communist infiltration – which worked against many Eastern Europeans, irrespective of creed – helps explain why Jewish immigration was not a post-Peralta priority for Argentine policy-makers. His resignation, though, *à la longue* paved the way for an improvement in the handling of Jewish immigrants, especially those who had entered the country by stealth. In line with Perón's pragmatic response to nationalist malcontents, who were told that such Jews were already in the country, they were one of the largest, if not the foremost, group of beneficiaries of the 1949 amnesty for illegal residents. This, however, was not the end to anti-Jewish discrimination in immigration affairs. Several months after Peralta was forced to step down, a foreign ministry circular to all Argentine consulates, signed by Ernesto Campolongo, the ministry's contentious-administrative division head, singled out Jews for special attention among those allegedly applying for visas under assumed identities.<sup>20</sup>

The second point in need of underlining is that the use of Jewish immigration as a possible yardstick to judge the Perón government's attitude towards Jews is particularly inadequate if uncontrasted with the views and actions of others. Such a comparison can not but show that if the Argentine government was not particularly interested in Jewish immigrants, the same was generally the case with Argentina's Catholic



church, Perón's adversaries and most of Latin America's potential recipients of Jews. The church publicly recommended taking into account the 'religious factor' when considering visa applicants. As for the anti-Peronists, none other than the pro-allied Buenos Aires daily *La Prensa* was mentioned by the AJC's Latin America expert as, coming out against Jewish immigration in 1946 on grounds that the Jews were unassimilable.<sup>21</sup> And while it is true that in May 1947 Radical Congressman Alberto Candiotti, one of the opposition's foreign policy grandees, unsuccessfully requested government clarifications as to whether immigrants were being selected 'according to race, religion or political ideology,' there is no conclusive evidence that a Democratic Union government would, in practice, have made things easier for Jews. Furthermore, most other Latin American countries, the Dominican Republic excepted, were not among the keenest recipients of Jewish immigrants, and their reluctance to act differently was compounded by mixed signs from the US. While general John Hildring, the assistant secretary of state for occupied areas, sought to prod the Latin Americans into taking in displaced persons, US representatives in Latin America, especially the military attachés, appeared more concerned with preventing immigration from becoming a vehicle for communist infiltration.<sup>22</sup> Future research will have to assess whether the impediments encountered by Jewish bodies involved in resettling outside Europe those unwilling to remain there were, directly or indirectly, reinforced by Zionism's view of the holocaust survivors as a natural reservoir of immigrants to Palestine.<sup>23</sup>

Indicative of the prevailing attitude in the other Latin American countries were the findings of various interested parties. Following his September-October 1946 fact-finding trip, the AJC's Latin America expert reported that 'Jewish immigration into Peru is practically impossible,' and 'organized immigration' into Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela was 'out of the question.' Instead, small scale arrivals into these six were possible.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, former US Congressman Herman Koppelman – who toured the region with a view to making some recommendations concerning the future of displaced persons – was told by George Messersmith, the US ambassador in Buenos Aires, that various Latin American republics 'were not interested according to past performance in receiving Jewish immigrants.'<sup>25</sup> Moreover, in spite of his considerably brighter picture of Brazil, a few months after Yagupsky's tour, Argentina's National Defence Council learned that the Brazilians had introduced stricter immigration controls. In consequence of this most Jewish passengers on board a ship calling at Río were barred entry.<sup>26</sup> All this suggests that neither Argentina's Catholic church or the anti-Peronists,

nor Argentina's neighbours offered a radically different scenario for Jewish immigrants, while the role of the US was erratic at best. That the Argentine record did not pale in comparison to others never seems to have been seriously considered by many a stern judge of Perón governments' attitudes *vis-à-vis* Jews. Why so?

### B. Braden and the Instrumentation of Antisemitism

The first answer to this riddle is that after the Nazi genocide, US public opinion, and American Jewry more so, were particularly sensitive to antisemitism, whether officially-linked discrimination or other anti-Jewish manifestations, especially those away from the Río Grande. Hence, the Argentine government's efforts to curb antisemitism, not specified among the undertakings of Chapultepec agreement signatories, were firmly wedded to a Washington-aimed package, in compliance with those accords – as intimately linked to the US as antisemitism and anti-yankee feelings appeared at the time entwined in the mind of many Argentine nationalists. Such efforts stand as confirmation of Perón's just grasp of antisemitism as a malodorous liability harming the government's foremost diplomatic priority – a *modus vivendi* with the US. In keeping with this priority, they highlight his apparent conviction that US Jewry had to be placated to deprive anti-Perón officials in Washington of the benefits of Jewish disquiet. This ushers in the second answer to the aforementioned question, namely that Jewish disquiet was not only useful but also used by those trying to effect Perón's ouster. Proof of its usefulness can be found in the fact that some of the most prominent US Jews joined in the storm of protest aroused by assistant secretary of state Nelson Rockefeller's sponsorship of 'a fascist country(s)' admission to the UN. In effect, the chorus of disapproval in the US press that greeted Argentina's entry in the UN defeated Rockefeller's attempt to set Argentine-US relations on a new footing. In July 1945, for instance, Louis Lipsky, the chairman of the American Jewish Conference, the then umbrella organization of US Jewry, wrote about Argentina's invitation to San Francisco:

'One wondered why the delegations of the US and England were so interested in having Perón's Argentina included among the charter members of the UN at this first session. What political purpose would it serve that could stand the scrutiny of justice? Why could not Argentina be asked to wait a while? The Fascist state of Argentina had written a shameless record of collaboration with the Axis during all the years of the war; even while the conference was being held it was engaged in proving its enduring friendship for nazi Germany by providing a haven of refuge for the nazi criminals and their stolen

property. It served no political purpose to ignore the criminal past of Argentina and to accord it a place among the peace-loving nations without scrutiny of its intentions. In fact, the admission of Argentina did for Argentina what it was unwilling to do for itself. The conference washed away its sins without requiring even a gesture of repentance from the sinner.<sup>27</sup>

That Lipsky's apprehensions were far from unique is illustrated by the fact that for quite some time US Jews appeared to support the efforts of Braden, Rockefeller's successor, to bring about Perón's fall. The ALN's anti-Jewish attacks of October-November 1945 sparked off an AJC approach to the State Department. Secretary of State Byrnes was earnestly urged 'to ask either the combined American Republics or the UN Organization to initiate action calculated to eliminate Nazi anti-Semitism from Argentina.'<sup>28</sup> Less than two months later, *The Nation*, a progressive liberal New York weekly and lobbying body, called for Argentina's suspension from the UN because of its Nazi regime. In its presentation, *The Nation*, whose advisory board included the American and World Jewish Congress (WJC) chairman, Stephen Wise, sought to prove, among other things, that 'the Perón regime adopting the scapegoat strategy of the Nazis has made antisemitism an integral part of its program.' Three months later, Perón's electoral triumph in what a variety of observers believed to have been a fair and clean ballot, was greeted with a renewed request for Argentina's suspension. This time *The Nation* alleged that Perón's electoral strategy had been 'directly copied from his Nazi preceptor, Adolf Hitler.'<sup>29</sup>

Undoubtedly, the snipe by the American Jewish Conference chairman at Rockefeller's attempt to steer the US away from former secretary of state Cordell Hull's big stick, like the requests of the AJC and to some extent that of *The Nation*, vividly exemplified US Jewry's genuine distrust of Perón. Little did it matter that some of their allegations were insufficiently proved, based on rumor as much as on evidence. Without denying the Germanophile sympathies among Argentine military officers – or the opportunities the Castillo government's neutrality afforded for Nazi activities in the country, even after the Nazi party was banned in 1939<sup>30</sup> – it is still fair to say that such allegations had been generally blown out of proportion to the substance. Furthermore, some of these bodies' intervention ran counter to the advice they took from trusted local Jews. Yet if wartime exigencies dictated that the Nazi peril should not be underestimated, rather emphasized, the historian – unlike the chronicler, sensation-mongering journalist or those who write free from the inconveniences of fact – must be prepared to differentiate between truths, half-truths and palpable falsehoods.

Consider, for example, the question of the Argentine members in the German Nazi party. In 1942, their number was estimated by an Uruguayan anti-Nazi campaigner – whose endeavours were encouraged by the US and naturally endeared him to Jews – at 30,000 in Buenos Aires alone. On the other hand, an early postwar writer calculated that there must have been something more than 2,000 Nazi party members in Argentina. More accurately, with the fall of Berlin, the US-captured Nazi party records revealed that before the end of 1942 the total membership (paying and non-paying) for the whole country was 1,489. Inasmuch as the combat literature penned by Uruguay's Hugo Fernández Artucio relied on US intelligence and other sources, the wide gap between their estimates and Berlin's records provides an idea of the problem at hand. In fairness, though, Fernández Artucio's figure was nowhere near the worst exaggeration on the subject; hence, the aura of credibility with which it was temporarily ringed. In effect, according to Waldo Frank, by 1942 the German embassy in Buenos Aires had 'organized 80,000 Nazis in the country.' While it would be too facile to use Fernández Artucio's inaccuracy to extrapolate a more general conclusion, i.e. that all exaggerations concerning Argentina's alleged pro-Axis delinquencies are akin to the more than 20–1 relationship between the estimated and actual number of Argentines in the Nazi party, prudence suggests that no such claims can be accepted without a thorough review of the evidence that has since become available.<sup>31</sup>

Despite their lingering credibility, allegations about Argentina's transformation into a Nazi haven were similarly based on fact, but only up to a point. At the same time, one should not be mistaken about the political utilization of such charges by Perón's adversaries. In effect, the spotlight of publicity was focused so brightly on Argentina's intake of Nazis to further discredit Perón in the eyes of the US public, even if the attitude of nearly all subsequent Argentine governments towards the country's Nazi residents was not too different from his own. On the strength of the documentary evidence that has since become available, the need to hedge these claims with a number of reservations is imperative. While it would be idle to pretend that an influx of tainted Europeans did not take place, such qualifications help put their arrival into perspective:

1. In trying to attract the scientists and technicians that helped in Argentina's industrialization, notably the development of an indigenous aeronautic and armament industry, as well as the nuclear research program, Perón's attempt to achieve a measure of self-sufficiency in these fields was as much inspired by nationalism as justified by the US policy of arming Brazil to Argentina's detriment. Such an attempt not only appeared in step with State Department forecasts of October 1944 about 'Nazi refugee technicians'

coming to aid in the development of Argentina's defence industries but was also in keeping with German reports about Argentine overtures to the representatives of Nazi armament manufacturers in Spain after the diplomatic break with the Axis. In these as in other areas, though, the Argentines of course acted as the allied powers, and, like other developing nations, only succeeded in recruiting the remnants of the much vaster Anglo-American Paperclip and Soviet Osavakim operations. Unconfirmed reports allude to more than 250 aeronautic technicians and Luftwaffe pilots who migrated to Argentina. Even when assuming that all were scientists and technicians, although they were not, and without questioning the accuracy of the figure itself, this would still be about a third of the 642 specialists who according to US statistics were brought into that country under the Paperclip program before 1953. In passing, it is well to keep in mind that Argentine foreign ministry archives show that not all the former military servicemen, industrial and nuclear experts, who offered their services were hired – an indication that usefulness, rather than political affinity, appeared to guide the recruitment drive.<sup>32</sup>

2. As for the hierarchs and other Nazis who came, if assisted by Argentine officialdom – as a number of them were – the latter no doubt flouted a September 1944 assurance to Britain that war criminals would not be allowed in. Nevertheless, the reported entry of such Nazi leaders as Adolf Hitler and Martin Bormann was soon dismissed by US diplomats as the disingenuous work of Montevideo-based Argentine exiles, some of them considered notorious 'for putting in circulation the most sensational and irresponsible rumors.' Moreover, the claim by Simon Wiesenthal, the director of the Vienna-based Jewish Documentation Center, that Perón provided Nazi fugitives with 7,500 blank passports has been discarded as an exaggeration by Jacob Tsur, Israel's first ambassador in Buenos Aires. Similarly, stories about the Peróns having augmented their personal wealth as a result of the Nazi influx, like the earlier ones concerning Berlin's economic inducements to the Argentine colonels in general, and Perón or Evita in particular, should be taken with more than a pinch of salt until such time as reliable supporting evidence becomes available.<sup>33</sup> Undeniably, though, such war criminals as Adolf Eichmann, Edward Roschmann, Josef Schwammberger and Klaus Barbie, to name but a few, landed in Buenos Aires and, in some cases, lived unmolested. While researchers have yet to fully explain what facilitated their unfettered arrival, if the Barbie case is anything to go by, it is not unreasonable to assume that those who had something valuable to trade in were used by US and/or British intelligence and later helped escape. Though Nazi hunters can draw little comfort from the fact that Argentina's complicity would thus be one of many, it is still

important to stress that, conceivably, it would not have been the most significant one.

3. In quantitative terms, Yugoslav and Baltic republic collaborators appear to have been the largest group of tainted European arrivals – the Croats alone numbering 5,000 according to Perón. In effect, Wiesenthal's figure comes closer to the truth if meant to comprise these collaborators too. Included among them were such war criminals as Radislav Ostrowsky and Ante Pavelic, the leaders of the Nazi puppet governments of Byelorussia and Croatia respectively. With the rolling down of the iron curtain, though, their migration was actively encouraged and variously assisted by the US, Britain and the Vatican to protect them from their countries' communist rulers.<sup>34</sup> Unsurprisingly, the US Displaced Persons (DP) act has long been viewed as having allowed into that country Nazi collaborators too. A former US Justice Department attorney has written that 'more than 300 Byelorussian Nazis,' and perhaps 'an even larger number of Ukrainian Nazis' were smuggled in.<sup>35</sup> No figures for their counterparts from other Baltic and Balkan regions have been found. The total, though, could well be below that for Argentina given the encouragement useful collaborators received to migrate to Latin America. To facilitate their admission, early in 1947 assistant secretary of state Hilldring advised the Argentines that the Truman administration believed 'each American republic should enjoy complete freedom of action and independence to solve the refugee question in the way that best suits its interests.' It is therefore no coincidence that Belgrade's subsequent request to be consulted by Argentina about Yugoslav visa applicants, as among the candidates were 'a large number of war criminals,' was politely rejected.<sup>36</sup>

Unlike Lipsky, who at the time of writing may not have realized that the US, like other previous war-participants, would take advantage of the intelligence and scientific brainpower of the vanquished, or that it would eventually offer Argentina a clear greenlight for the absorption of Nazi associates, the presentations of the AJC and *The Nation* glossed over the fact that they knew better. For one thing, the AJC had been advised against such an endeavor by a reliable Argentine Jewish source. Not only did Jedidio Efron, a Jewish Colonization Association official, volunteer that ALN attacks had been exaggerated by newsmen and 'did not have the characteristics of a pogrom,' but he also recommended that 'nothing should be done at this time.' For another thing, had *The Nation* consulted with the State Department and Wise, as it was likely to have done, it could not but corroborate press reports about Perón's public dissociation from the antisemitic outbursts of his ALN supporters. Indeed, he declared participants in anti-Jewish occurrences 'outside all democratic standards

and...not...regular members of any Argentine political force.' Likewise, the interior minister maintained that such 'lamentable' anti-Jewish incidents had earned 'the most complete disapproval of the Government'.<sup>37</sup> Instead, to substantiate its allegations, *The Nation* relied on reports from the *New York Herald Tribune* and *New York Times* (NYT) correspondents in Buenos Aires. According to British diplomats in Argentina, though, the NYT's Arnaldo Cortesi had been manipulated by US ambassador Braden into distorting and exaggerating the real situation. Presumably because of this, Cortesi described antisemitism as 'part of Colonel Perón's political stock-in-trade' — a pitiful misrepresentation repeated by *The Nation*.<sup>38</sup> Like Braden's pooh poohing of reports that did not back him up, the AJC and *The Nation* appeared to act without taking into account what failed to fit into their hardened, though increasingly obsolete, ideas about Perón. Not unnaturally, therefore, the warnings of Waldo Frank went unheeded: A Perón opponent and victim of nationalist violence during his 1942 lecture-tour in Argentina, Frank nonetheless advised *The Nation* that interventionism 'run against the very axioms of Latin American independence.' The same can be said about former under secretary of state Sumner Welles, an ONA board member and informal adviser to the Jewish Agency for Palestine in 1946, when he remarked that 'one need not be an admirer of Colonel Perón' to question the exclusive caricatures of him 'as a dyed-in-the-wool Fascist, as a new edition of Hitler, as a corrupt tyrant, and as a ruthless antagonist of democracy, surrounded and inspired by Nazi agents'.<sup>39</sup>

Parenthetically, the low opinion in which the British held the abovementioned newsmen lends considerable credence to Perón's own branding of such journalists as 'liars and troublemakers.' Braden, however, declared all their 'press despatches factual,' despite the fact that after his first interview in Buenos Aires he informed Washington that Cortesi had misrepresented his statements when attributing to him that 'it was through necessity and not by choice that the US recognized governments such as the present Argentine regime.' Braden's failure to clarify in what way he had been misquoted is in and of itself an indication that Cortesi, who rated the Farrell-Perón government as worse than fascist Italy, may neither have got his words wrong nor out of context. Not unnaturally, Braden did everything to protect Cortesi and others from official reprisals, including the offer of embassy accommodation and transmission facilities, to preserve what he smugly described as their 'courageous reporting' — courageous, that is, inasmuch as they 'had been of utmost utility in weakening (the) position of Perón.'

That Perón's apprehension was shared by Braden's successor in Buenos Aires and others is hardly surprising. Messersmith, for instance, informed

the State Department that 'there has been built up in recent years through distorted and inaccurate reporting by certain people a completely erroneous, distorted and inadequate picture of developments in the Argentine,' and the ambassador encouraged Washington to realize that no thanks were due to those 'who have, with deliberation, distorted developments in the Argentine...to serve purposes of their own.'<sup>40</sup> As for naval attaché Whatton, he wrote that because 'many observers were convinced' that the military regime had been intent 'on installing National-Socialism of the German type in Argentina...many minor incidents which might normally have been overlooked were assiduously reported as evidence of nazism and anti-semitism, in some cases by biased reporters who made no attempt at objectivity.' Again, Whatton's remarks ring like those of some Argentine Jews. In this instance, his reference to biased and unobjective reportage resembled Efron's own reference to the overblown press accounts of the anti-Jewish incidents two years earlier.

Reliable evidence of a degree of coordination between Braden and *The Nation* is not hard to come by.<sup>41</sup> This suggests that misrepresentations by *The Nation* were no accident. Like similar requests by the US Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the Argentine Communist party-sponsored League for the Rights of Man, what should be kept in sight is that the call of *The Nation* was a foretaste of the assistant secretary's own Blue Book.<sup>42</sup> Not unnaturally, Dean Acheson, the then undersecretary, wrote many years later of Braden's bullish temperament and tactics that he would deal 'with the objects of his prejudices by blind charges, preceded by (the) pawing up (of) a good deal of dust.' In the question of Argentina, the assistant secretary's principal pre-election charge, the Blue Book, followed the dust pawed by the submissions to the UN of CIO, the League and *The Nation*. By a significant coincidence, all three were in tune with Braden's earlier recommendation from Buenos Aires that the State Department give thought 'if not to expulsion of Argentina from UN at least to refusing membership.'<sup>43</sup>

Given the expressions of esteem which US Jews naturally heaped on Braden, it is clear that in his campaign to destabilize Perón, the ambassador in Buenos Aires (May – September 1945) and later assistant secretary (November 1945 – June 1947) benefited from the naturally heightened concern of US Jewry and others over allegations of antisemitism.<sup>44</sup> To the extent that he was no stranger to backhanded 'manipulation of persons and events,'<sup>45</sup> including that of US public opinion, it is not unreasonable to assume that Braden also succeeded in stimulating alarm among US Jewish organizations, who no doubt had apprehensions of their own. This also helps explain why the antisemitic writings of Otilio Ulate, a former Costa Rican



president and presidential hopeful, elicited a more serene, though not less effective, response from US Jews. Ulate's US-supported *Diario de Costa Rica* was the mouthpiece of an antisemitic and anti-communist campaign in 1946. In contrast to Perón's progressive disengagement from the antisemites, Ulate wrote that Costa Rican Jews were themselves to blame for antisemitism as they had not settled in the country 'to create wealth but to suck it, and to attempt the absorption of domestic and foreign trade.' Furthermore, Jews had undertaken naturalization 'not because of conviction or love of the country that admits them, but owing to calculation, and with the intervention of local communism.' Having welcomed Ulate during his visit to Washington in March 1946, the State Department responded to later WJC enquiries that no one in the department was aware of an antisemitic campaign in that country. While such a deficiency was subsequently remedied, neither his paper's role in the antisemitic campaign, nor the things he himself penned prevented the anti-communist Ulate from becoming the US candidate in Costa Rica's 1948 elections.<sup>46</sup>

### C. Braden versus Messersmith: The Jewish Dimension

Reading the signs aright, Perón sought to arrest the success of his opponents within the State Department in turning to their advantage US Jewry's misgivings. In attempting to deprive his critics of US Jewish support, the Argentine president came to enjoy the active backing of ambassador Messersmith, who shortly after arriving in Buenos Aires began to distance himself of and eventually clashed with Braden over Perón. From his previous diplomatic outpost Messersmith had viewed the Argentine leader unfavorably and taken issue with the pragmatic defence of him by the representatives of US banking interests in Buenos Aires. Messersmith had even been under the impression that vote-counting after the February 1946 elections was a fraud – a notion which Braden himself helped dispel – and that the British, increasingly dependent on the US, were exceedingly unfair in their uncooperative attitude on Argentina. Once in Buenos Aires, though, Messersmith discovered two things. One, that Perón was a serious anti-communist asset. Two, he found that the success of Perón's economic development plans hinged on the US more than Britain. Without fanfare, Perón seemed ready to continue with the implementation of the anti-Nazi measures, some of which had been so haughtily resisted in the past. As Braden himself admitted, Perón granted the US access to German embassy documents long before other Latin American states took similar action. Not surprisingly, then, Messersmith clashed with Braden. In time, the Perón government fulfilled its Chapultepec obligations, according to the US ambassador with no less enthusiasm than some other Latin American

governments that were not under constant State Department invigilation. Inasmuch as the ambassador's certification that the Perón government was entitled to a clean bill of health was seen by Braden and others as proof that he had either grown soft on fascism or actually sold out to Perón, Messersmith's riposte included the important assertion that he was not prepared to ask the Argentine government 'to do things which we may not have done ourselves and which would go beyond what we have expected of the other American Republics'.<sup>47</sup>

Of special interest is the fact that the Braden-Messersmith feud was also conducted on Jewish territory. Long considered by the British as 'a brusque and honest conservative,' Messersmith had acquired an 'irreproachably militant anti-Nazi reputation' during his service in Berlin and Vienna in the 1930s. Messersmith's foresight when predicting the implications of Hitlerism for the Jews as well as his valuable contacts among US Jewry – who considered his wartime record as that of 'a liberal...and the most militant foe of Nazism' – were useful assets in his new assignment, though by the time he arrived in Buenos Aires his conversion to cold warriorship had begun to fray his earlier record.<sup>48</sup> Helped by Perón and foreign minister Bramuglia, who apparently neglected few opportunities to express their distaste for anti-Jewish discrimination and sharp awareness that antisemitism was harmful to Argentine interests, Messersmith became convinced that a US-Argentine *rapprochement* would also have beneficial effects for the Jews and the extirpation of antisemitism. Apart from their relative failure, the resentment-breeding formulas, such as negative and nonfactual press reportage in the US, tried by some of his colleagues when dealing with Argentine nationalism made more difficult Perón's efforts to shake off the government of those to his right. As part of this process Messersmith occasionally appeared as belittling or denying the existence of anti-Jewishness while actually working behind the scenes to achieve the eradication of its more visible features. Former Congressman Koppelman, for example, was told that 'the policy of the Argentine Government was to select immigrants on the basis of capacity and character and not on the basis of any discrimination as to race or religion.' The ambassador's statement, however, seemed economical with truth inasmuch as responsibility for official policy implementation was lodged at that moment in Peralta's hands. That he knew more than he admitted is, for example, highlighted by his characterization of Peralta as 'an out-and-out antisemite' in a letter to the State Department. Nevertheless, the fact that Bramuglia let Messersmith in on the date when Peralta would be ditched, suggests that the ambassador may have had a part in inducing the departures of Peralta and Silva.<sup>49</sup>

With the contradiction between democracy and communism recovering the notoriety it had temporarily lost during the anti-fascist struggle, Messersmith also reacted to the conglomerate of insufficiently substantiated allegations against the Argentine government with the anti-communist weapon. Like other US diplomats, he began by questioning whether some measures with anti-Jewish overtones were not taken because of their destinataries' leftist tinge, thereby establishing a dangerous, though not altogether uncommon, difference between the unacceptability of antisemitism when incidental to anti-yankee feelings and the greater leniency to that suspect of being an expression of anti-communism. Increasingly, nationalist anti-Jewishness was explained away in terms of the Jewish presence in the ranks of the left. The same anti-red atmosphere enabled Messersmith and those under his command to dismiss ONA as unreliable because of its links with progressive elements, critical of the US.<sup>50</sup> It also allowed them to deride certain anti-Peronists with misleading suggestions that they were leftists. Take, for instance, the case of Radical Congressman Silvano Santander. Reporting on the opposition's loud-mouth critique of the first lady's intervention in government affairs, and the Radical legislator's role in particular, Messersmith wrote 'that Santander was formerly a member of the National Committee for the investigation of Nazi activities...and also a sub-editor of the newspaper *Crítica* which was pro-Allied and anti-Peronista...Santander is also a member of the Board of Directors of the "League for the Rights of Man," a Communist Party controlled group, and...a friend of Dr. Emilio Troise, one of the leading Communist Party intellectuals' *La Prensa* editor Adolfo Lanús, a former lower house member active on the same anti-Nazi committee, fared no better.<sup>51</sup> Though not the sole examples, the cases of Santander and Lanús rank as evidence of how the change in climate led to the reclassing of some of yesteryear's alliedophiles.

Messersmith's handling of an ONA envoy's visit as well as an AJC enquiry help exemplify the Jewish ramifications of his clash with Braden. Rabbi Samuel Wohl's arrival in Buenos Aires, in June 1946, afforded an early opportunity for the ambassador to raise doubts, albeit cautiously, about the Perón government's alleged antisemitism and, more assertively, on the tactics employed by hyped-up US Jews. What may have been dimly perceived at the time of Wohl's visit emerged more clearly when Messersmith was approached by Jacob Billikopf, a man close to the AJC. A month after his accreditation, Messersmith informed Braden of his conversation with Wohl, a reform rabbi involved in Zionist politics, as highlighted by his position as national president of the American League for Labour Palestine and deputy membership of the Jewish Agency's

administrative committee.<sup>52</sup> According to this communication, Messersmith told Wohl that 'no discriminations are being made presently against the Jews,' and while it was too early to know how things would shape up he nevertheless saw no intention 'on the part of the Argentine Government to in any way persecute the Jews or place them in an inferior position or to discriminate against them.' Aware that the past few months had witnessed antisemitic incidents, Messersmith sought to convince the rabbi that 'what had happened in any demonstrations against the Jews had been the result of the political campaign which was so bitter.' As for Wohl's intention of interviewing Perón with a view to securing a statement on antisemitism, an idea which the rabbi claimed – though the ambassador was incredulous – had been encouraged by some of his local Jewish contacts, Messersmith poured cold water on it. If a meeting took place, he averred, Perón would resent the request for this would mean admitting that a problem existed.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, in an implicit critique of the State Department's May 1946 policy statement on Argentina, the ambassador maintained that some US Jews were getting 'unduly excited' about antisemitism 'in the other American Republics and exaggerated situations.' More pointedly, he asserted that 'in some ways our Jewish friends at home sometimes embarrassed the Jewish people in the other American Republics by trying to get them to stir up matters which the Jews in these countries knew were better left alone.' Bearing in mind that the Braden-inspired policy statement described Perón's 'partially accomplished' aim as the formation of 'a totalitarian state patterned on the doctrines of national socialism,' and under that rubric alleged that he had 'encouraged extreme Argentine nationalism' and 'failed to restrain persecution of the Jews,'<sup>54</sup> it is fairly obvious who, in Messersmith's eyes, appeared to be prodding worried US Jews into exaggerating.

Wohl was in Buenos Aires as part of a wider tour of Latin America to study the various directions in which to expand the Jewish newsagency's services. In his talk with Messersmith he mentioned that the ONA was contemplating the possibility of establishing a US-Latin American forum for discussion of matters of common interest by prominent personalities from both sides. In trying to justify his unenthusiastic response to Wohl,<sup>55</sup> Messersmith seized on the fact that Sumner Welles, one of the foremost critics of Hull and his disciples' interference in Argentine affairs, was an ONA board member to suggest that the former undersecretary was using his US Jewish connections to reach a wider audience. Particularly interesting is the fact that at the time Welles was publicly arguing that despite the anti-Jewish activities of a number of 'Perón's henchmen' Braden was no 'saviour' of Argentine Jewry, as some of those sympathetic to his

activities sought to suggest. In reality, though, Messersmith's foremost target would not have been Welles. Not only had Messersmith been tipped to step into his shoes in 1943 as a possible counter to Hull's big stick towards Argentina but Welles' assessment of Braden's role *vis-à-vis* Argentine Jewry was a milder version of what Messersmith himself was suggesting.<sup>56</sup> Hence, Messersmith's sights appeared set on Braden and his followers among State Department officialdom. And because they were known to allude to US public opinion, as reflected among other things in the press, to justify their stand, Messersmith reminded Braden about ONA's untrustworthiness, which not only placed his unhelpfulness to Wohl in an anti-leftist light but also aimed at pulling the rug from under the assistant secretary's feet.

A few months later, DAIA's protest to the mayor of Buenos Aires regarding anti-Jewish discrimination in the allocation of municipal hospital internships to medical students apparently prompted the AJC to seek Messersmith's advice through Billikopf, one of his old-time Jewish acquaintances. Messersmith's extensive letter to Billikopf not only sought to reassure American Jewry that Perón was no antisemite but also endeavored to bring to their attention that inasmuch as it played into the hands of those opposed to the Argentine president's efforts to set relations with the US on a friendly footing, the anti-Perón slant of US Jewish newspapermen, encouraged by the unnamed Braden, was far from useful. Although Messersmith wrote that the internship affair was a legitimate source of concern, as well as one which he had already brought to Bramuglia's attention and would continue to do so, it was the only 'established' case of antisemitism. All others, including the transfer to remote schools of Jewish teachers in Santa Fé province<sup>57</sup> as well as the assignment of Jewish conscripts to faraway military outposts, remained to be proved as measures specifically targeted at Jews. Bearing in mind the nationalists' attacks against Protestant temples, even the defacement of synagogues was neither exclusive nor government-ordained. Without going into too many details, Messersmith pushed his conviction that neither Perón nor Bramuglia were antisemitic to the point of venturing that 'the present Government is certainly not anti-Jewish,' and, on the whole, the situation of Argentine Jews 'has been and continues very satisfactory.' Messersmith also pronounced himself confident about the future as 'the Government wishes to take and will, in due course, take' action against the nationalists whose support for Perón had, anyway, been wavering since the February 1946 election.

Before concluding, Messersmith suggested to Billikopf what US Jewry might care to do if they sought to help the local Jews. 'I could be lacking in frankness – he wrote – if I did not tell you that I have information that one of the reasons why this nationalist group has been active in the last year in

anti-Jewish attitudes is because they say that some of the things which have been written about the Argentine in the last year or so and which are not factual have in large measure been written by Jews in the United States and in England.<sup>58</sup> A good hint that this originated with Perón or Bramuglia was provided by the ambassador's addition that 'I only mention this because I am told by some who are just as much opposed to discriminations of any kind as I am that it is probably correct that some of the activity of the nationalists has been due to their resentment to certain articles on the Argentine in the foreign press which they do not consider factual' Although in apparent contradiction with another section of the same letter, Messersmith's thinly-veiled message was, nonetheless, accurate in its assessment of the negative impact which *The Nation*-type of exaggerations, and those behind them, had on Perón's maneuvering to marginalize the nationalists. Simply put, the ambassador called on US Jewry not to allow Perón's antagonists to exploit their anxieties.

By way of explanation, Messersmith's covering note to the State Department accented that 'Perón and his associates in the Government are against racial and other discriminations, and they are against any Jewish discrimination' He also relayed Bramuglia's accurate prognosis that Peralta would be out of office before the end of July. Intimating that Argentina compared better than the US, he reaffirmed his belief that some among US Jewry were 'unduly concerned about the situation here and more concerned than the Jews here' – an apparent reference to DAIA president Moisés Goldman and other Argentine Jewish leaders who although alert to antisemitic outrages were careful to avoid misrepresentations when talking with State Department officials and their US Jewish counterparts.<sup>59</sup> In fact, Messersmith went on, 'there is not as much social discrimination against Jews here as there is right in New York or in most places at home' While such a comparison could be easily derided as an attempt to play down Argentine antisemitism, with its more important ramifications among certain local officials, the same point was made before Messersmith's posting to Buenos Aires by one C. Marcovich. A DAIA envoy, Marcovich visited the US and Europe at the Argentine Jewish roof organization's behest. Addressing a DAIA governing board meeting after his return, Marcovich made two revealing points. On the one hand, antisemitism was 'fairly well-entrenched' in the US, even if not government-inspired. On the other hand, like in Europe, there was 'great ignorance about the life of our community' among American Jewry. Having attended a WJC gathering, the DAIA envoy's apparently unqualified statement – no reservations were entered in the minutes of this DAIA meeting regarding the WJC leadership and that of US Jewish organizations – undoubtedly went a long way to validate later statements by Messersmith and Whatton.<sup>60</sup>

Little more than a year after his landing in Buenos Aires, Messersmith emerged as the winner. This meant that the administration adopted as its policy towards Argentina the accommodation which Braden had constantly sought to block despite resistance to his prescriptions from prominent Congressmen and the military, as well as business interests. Nevertheless, the joint departure of Braden and Messersmith, and the survival of others who did not immediately move beyond the former assistant's views, at first created the impression of a pyrrhic victory. Yet it took much longer for US Jewish organizations to come to terms with Messersmith's assessment of Perón. Not only did the AJC act in a way that seemed oblivious to some of the things Yagupsky had written in June 1946, presumably one of the reasons for his having used an alias in his *Commentary* article, but three years later there appeared to be those who still equated Perón's benign attitude towards Jews with that of Mussolini's Italy prior to 1937.<sup>61</sup>

The reasons – some of them fairly obvious – for US Jewry's difficulty in breaking the hold of views such as those of Braden can be identified as follows:

1. US Jewry's soul-searching and doubts as to whether everything had been done to spare European Jews of their tragic fate during World War II were natural breeding grounds for alarmism and a tendency to magnify the slightest anti-Jewish occurrence, rather than serene analysis.
2. Negative press reportage about Argentina's wartime neutrality, going back to the conservative government's defiance of the US after Pearl Harbour, took its toll among that country's public opinion, especially Jews, who were heavily represented in liberal and progressive circles. With such a backdrop, Argentina's explicit restrictions on Jewish immigration were judged without due regard to the position of other Argentine political sectors and Latin American governments. Similarly, anti-Jewish attacks by nationalist groups were construed as firm proof of Perón's antisemitism rather than possible signs of political infighting.
3. The rise to superpower status of the US did not come about without repercussions for its inhabitants, Jews included. Naturally, therefore, some US Jewish spokesmen openly admitted their desire 'to serve in a big brother way' their fellow Jews south of the Rio Grande.<sup>62</sup> Contemporary Jewish history being what it was, Braden's interference in Argentine affairs only exacerbated an existing US Jewish inclination to rely on Washington's ability to intervene in other countries' affairs for the sake of endangered fellow Jews.
4. While the struggle against antisemitism in third countries was not devoid of unselfish motivations it could affect the welfare of US Jewry too.

Inasmuch as anti-Jewish restrictions were bound to push up the number of holocaust-survivors who would want to immigrate to the US they were prone to create problems. US Jewry's pride in being part of the leading democracy need not obscure their inability to sway the administration, let alone Congress, to open the country's gates to unlimited numbers of less fortunate European Jews.

5. US Jewry's heedless response to Messersmith's calls for restraint cannot be divorced from the transition from US-USSR cooperation to anti-communism among leading US decision-makers. This naturally strained relations between liberal US Jews and likeminded as well as left-of-center and leftist Latin Americans. Shedding away their association with those who opposed racism and antisemitism was not something readily accepted by many. This was even less agreeable to the supporters of Jewish statehood as it was in those ranks that they found useful friends. Worthy of note is the fact that an important number of gentiles sympathetic to the Zionist cause were suspected and/or accused by US diplomats and others of being leftist or communist. To name but a few, they included Argentina's Adolfo Lanús and Silvano Santander, Colombia's Eduardo Zalamea Borda, Costa Rica's Corina Rodríguez López, Cuba's Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Guatemala's Jorge García Granados, Mexico's Lázaro Cárdenas and Vicente Lombardo Toledano or Venezuela's Pedro Zuloaga. Without ignoring the political affiliation of some of the abovementioned, it is clear that the allegation was spurious in the case of several.

6. Little did US Jewry, especially the supporters of Jewish statehood, suspect that while Peronism was far from a passing phenomenon, Braden was no more than an occasional, though harmful, ally. The aforementioned reasons naturally won for Braden's anti-Perón campaign Jewish and liberal applause. Yet, if Braden was sensitive to antisemitism – he himself having been at the receiving end of hate mail featuring anti-yankee feelings and Judeophobia<sup>63</sup> – in no way can such sensitivity be extended to Zionism too. On the contrary, the opposite may be truer. Although never properly spelled out, there is circumstantial evidence to suspect that ideological and bureaucratic considerations – with anti-communism apparently at the forefront of the former<sup>64</sup> – resulted in Braden not being particularly sympathetic to Zionism. Despite his image as a liberal, it was Braden's incriminating report on Jewish National Fund (KKL) envoy Natán Bistrizky, written at the time when the US-USSR anti-Nazi alliance protected sympathizers and supporters of the Soviet system from anti-communist persecution, that which led the FBI to constantly shadow Bistrizky throughout the region. As such, Bistrizky – and by implication



what he represented as well as those who came in contact with him — became communist suspects long before McCarthyism came to prevail in Washington.<sup>65</sup> Not less important than Braden's assessment of the KKL envoy was his reaction to a very critical report on Zionism, privately submitted to him by one of his former aides so as to avoid incurring the wrath of 'a great many people.' Assuring the author that he would arrange 'to place (it) in hands where it can do the most good,' Braden passed the report on the State Department's Middle East experts.<sup>66</sup>

### Conclusions

Since Pearl Harbour, and as part of Washington efforts to effect the replacement of successive Buenos Aires governments by one that would accept without demur towing the US line, Argentine unwillingness to do so without American recognition and respect for its supremacy in South America led to an increasingly overblown picture of the pro-Axis inclinations of its civilian and military rulers. That much was acknowledged by Sumner Welles, Sir David Kelly, George Messersmith and others who are also on record as taking issue with press reportage of Argentina in their countries. Without denying the existence of a small though influential nuclei of Axis sympathizers in civilian groupings as well as among the armed forces, the available evidence fails to prove that, as far as Perón was concerned, his developing shift away from the nationalists, a process whose origins can be traced back to the second half of 1943, was not genuine. In passing, it is as well to keep in mind that none of the archival material that has so far come to light helps pin down the sinking of a single allied ship in the Atlantic to information relayed by German agents in Argentina. Likewise, the claim that the Axis was behind the military takeover remains without basis in fact. And as for Nazi propaganda in the Argentine press, Sidney Robertson, the British diplomat whose job it was to neutralize it, suggests that this had been largely achieved by 1941. It is therefore questionable whether Argentina ever represented the threat to US security interests, as Hull and his disciples insisted it did.

The development of the war proved right the British prognosis that with the collapse of Nazi-fascism in Europe, whatever perils the allies might have been facing in Argentina would recede. Before the war was over, Perón justly perceived the need for an accommodation with the US. This was crucial for the country's postwar economic development. Hence his progressive estrangement from the nationalists. But neither the prospect of US interests bagging fat contracts, nor US military efforts to dislodge the Germans from their position of ascendancy over the Argentine armed forces since 1899 and to prevent others from taking that role, not even

Perón's anti-communist credentials, at first appeared to be enough to open a new page in Argentine-US relations without some improvement of Argentina's tarnished image in the eyes of US public opinion. And this is where a Jewish angle came into the picture.

Part of the distorted image fed to the US public were the allegations of Judeophobia. And US Jewish alarm, stimulated by media exaggerations and hardened through consultation with State Department officials, was in turn used as an element in the arsenal of the anti-Perón campaigners. Without denying the existence of antisemitism among his supporters, it was simply wrong for US Jews to assume that Perón was beyond change, and that unlike Ulate, he would always represent a threat to Argentine Jewry. With such a background, it is unsurprising that Perón should have come to devote attention to his image among Jews, hoping to allay their fears. And if the importance Perón came to attach to curbing antisemitism suggests that he had a larger than real view of US Jewry's influence, there can be no doubt that Perón's Jewish interlocutors were not too eager to disabuse him of such notions of Jewish power. In fact, though, the change in Washington policy in June 1947 took place without Perón having fully succeeded in his endeavours regarding US Jewry. If anything this suggests that although not powerless, US Jews were not sufficiently influential to prevent the shift in policy from happening. Put differently, their clout had been at its peak when their concerns fitted in with those in charge of the administration's Argentine policy.

Perón's electoral victory in February 1946 was no small reverse for Braden. But the odds arrayed against him could not be underestimated, especially until general George Marshall became secretary of state. Hence, he benefited from the fact that Braden-inspired exaggerations provoked reactions in the opposite direction, such as the hair-splitting and equally misleading difference between anti-US and anti-communist-related Judeophobia. More importantly, the Argentine president's willingness to see US Jewry's disquiet removed from among the factors that could disturb an improvement of his government's image in the US led him wisely to grasp that Jewish representations in support of Zionism might hold a promising opportunity, worth seizing upon.

While it is difficult to establish whether Perón or his aides were *au fait* with the existing and developing connections to Zionism of each of those who partook in the anti-Perón campaign, he appears to have picked the right scent. Without assuming that Perón knew of each of these connections – some of which developed in full after the Argentine government issued its first Palestine instruction – a degree of awareness can be suspected. That this would not have been unjustified is highlighted by the fact that Lipsky

was a member of the Jewish Agency's Latin America committee, the forerunner of its Latin American department; the AJC, a non-Zionist body, was increasingly cooperative with the Jewish Agency; Wise's WJC helped the Zionists throughout Latin America, and *The Nation* was eventually hired by the Jewish Agency to undertake a public relations campaign in support of Zionism at the UN.

## NOTES

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1. D. Dilks (Ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan* (London 1971), 642-4, 650, 654 and 675; Earl of Halifax, *Fullness of Days* (London 1957), 256-7; Sir D. Kelly, *The Ruling Few* (London 1952), 299-305; S.R. Robertson, *Making Friends for Britain* (Buenos Aires 1948), 73; J.M. Blum (Ed.), *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace* (Boston 1973), 290-2; C. Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (London 1948), II, 1409-19; S. Welles, *Where Are We Heading?* (London 1947), 169; Laurence Duggan, *The Americas* (New York 1949), 105; T.M. Campbell and G.C. Herring (Eds.), *The Diaries of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.* (New York 1975), 24-5, 172, 174, 265.
2. Blum, 611
3. M.A. Cárcano, *La fortaleza de Europa* (Buenos Aires 1951), 192-6; Kelly, 114, 287-9 and 302; Robertson, 63.
4. National Archives (NA), Washington, State Department records, 740.00116EW/10-2045, Report on the interrogation of Theodor Paeffigen; M. Rapoport, *Gran Bretaña, Estados Unidos y las clases dirigentes argentinas* (Buenos Aires 1980), 206-7; D. Kahn, *Hitler's Spies* (London 1978), 324-7; R. Josephs, *Argentine Diary* (London 1945), 330; J.M. de Areilza, *Memorias exteriores* (Barcelona 1984), 25.
5. Third Reich documents show that before the Axis' defeat became a certainty even the ultra-nationalists among the Argentine military were having to revise their unrealistic expectations concerning Germany. Immediately after their takeover, in his first meeting with the German chargé d'affaires, the Argentine foreign minister volunteered that despite their Germanophilia most officers were in favor of a diplomatic break with the Axis in order to put an end to US ostracism and the penury of weapons. Three weeks later, the presidential secretary, colonel Enrique González, shared with a Berlin intermediary the Argentine armed forces' fear of becoming embroiled in a war with Brazil for which they were not prepared. González enquired whether in the eventuality of a flare-up Germany might be in a position to deliver 800-1,000 planes as well as raw materials and knowhow for local production of ammunition. He also asked if Berlin could destine 25-30 U-boats to the protection of the Argentine coastline while the Japanese did the same with the Chilean. Needless to say that González's interlocutor was unable to answer to such unrealistic requests. What Germany was prepared to do, though never got down to actually doing it, was to transfer some weapons to Spain to replace others that the Franco regime would, in turn, pass on to the Argentines. Meynen to German foreign ministry, 5 June 1943; Schellenberg to Kl. Wagner, 1 September 1943, in *Akten zur Deutschen*

- Auswärtigen Politik* (hereafter *Akten*) (Göttingen 1979), VI, 144 and 467; J. Von Ribbentrop to Hitler, 27 January 1944, in *Akten*, VII, 370.
6. T.L. de Tena, L. Calvo and E. Peicovich, *Yo, Juan Domingo Perón* (Buenos Aires 1986), 26–9; E. Crawley, *A House Divided* (London 1984), 65–6.
  7. While Perón volunteered no names he may have known of Giorgio del Vecchio, an ardent fascist and prominent Jew whose patriotism was praised by Mussolini in 1939 despite his government's anti-Jewish campaign since 1937. Given his diplomatic investiture, it is not improbable that Perón should have also come in touch with the foreign ministry's political director, the Italian consul in Berlin or others among the Duce's most prominent supporters whose spouses were Jewish. NA, 835.4016/3–1447, G. Scherer to G. Marshall. M. Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews* (Oxford 1978), 228 and 235.
  8. R. Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina* (New York 1987), 143; C.A. Macdonald, 'The Politics of Intervention,' *Journal of Latin American Studies* (Cambridge), 12, 2, 375–7.
  9. Kelly, 310. NA, 835.00/4–1145, E. Reed to Stettinius.
  10. C.J.H. Hayes, *Wartime Mission in Spain* (New York 1976), 220–5; Sir S. Hoare, *Ambassador on Special Mission* (London 1946), 250–1, 256–61; A.B. Fox, *The Power of Small States* (Chicago 1959), 147–79.
  11. C. Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey* (London 1984), 51–3, 65.
  12. NA, 835.00/1–2545, J. Landau to N. Rockefeller, ONA's board of directors included Abba Hillel Silver, the Jewish Agency (American section) and American Zionist Emergency Council chairman; Jacob Blaustein, chairman of the non-Zionist American Jewish Committee (AJC), as well as former undersecretary of state Sumner Welles. With the AJC distancing itself from this news organization late in 1945, ONA became more of a Zionist endeavour.
  13. DAIA, Buenos Aires, *Actas de Consejo Directivo*, 13 September and 4 October 1945, 11 February, 7 March, 10 July and 3 October 1946. JTA, Buenos Aires, 6 November 1946. Washington National Record Center (WNRC), Suitland, US embassy in Buenos Aires, 800, G. Ray to Marshall, 28 July 1947. 'El pensamiento del Presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío', DAIA, Buenos Aires, 1954, 11.
  14. The files of the Third Reich's Ibero-American Institute show that Peralta was in touch with Berlin at least since 1934, and had offered the institute his services. NA, 740.00116EW/10–1845, D. Poole to Byrnes. Further evidence of Peralta's antisemitism in his *La acción del pueblo judío en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires 1943).
  15. HIAS papers, YIVO, New York, XIII Argentina 17, M. Turkow to A.L. Harris, 9 November 1946; XIII Argentina 19, Report on HIAS delegation visit, 13 May 1947. Author's interview with Pablo Manguel, 19 July 1984.
  16. P.J. Hernández, *Conversaciones con José María Rosa* (Buenos Aires 1978), 123. If the reminiscences of G. Patricio Kelly, a former ALN leader and poacher turned game-keeper, are anything to go by, as Perón changed face the ultra-nationalists were kept under surveillance while the security services took advantage of their concerns. H. de Dios, *Kelly cuenta todo* (Buenos Aires 1984), 7–24.
  17. A. Temkin, 'Argentina: The Choice before Perón,' *Commentary* (New York), June 1946, 20, AJC papers, YIVO, AJC offices Latin America 1947, Klein to AJC, 9 May 1947.
  18. WNRC, 800, Whatton report on antisemitism in Argentina, 24 October 1947. J. Bruce, *Those Perplexing Argentines* (London 1954), 111 and 303.
  19. L. Senkman, 'Política internacional e inmigración europea en la Argentina de post-guerra,' *Estudios migratorios latinoamericanos* (Buenos Aires), December 1985, 117; Bruce, 113.

20. Institute of Contemporary Jewry (ICJ), Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Oral History Interview with Moisés Goldman, 11(171); NA, 835.044/7-1949, T. Maleady to Marshall; Pedro Catella papers, privately held, Campolongo circular letter to Argentine consulates, 21 April 1948. According to Maleady, the anti-Peronist press only saw the amnesty as a possible vehicle for legitimizing the earlier entry of 'war criminals.'
21. JTA, Buenos Aires, 12 February 1947. AJC papers, Latin America-US Government, Yagupsky to S. Segal, 14 January 1946.
22. WNRC, 800, Assistant military attaché's report on communist organizations, 25 September 1946.
23. P. Grose, 'The President versus the Diplomats,' in W.R. Louis and R.W. Stookey (Eds.), *The End of the Palestine Mandate* (London 1986), 42.
24. AJC papers, AJC visits, Yagupsky's Latin American tour report, 4 September - 29 October 1946.
25. Harry S. Truman Library (HST), Independence, Central Files, State Department memorandum to M. Connelly, 3 April 1947.
26. Argentine Foreign Ministry Archives (AFMA), Buenos Aires, Political Division (PD), National Defence/947, J. Tasso to P. La Rosa.
27. L. Lipsky, *Memoirs in Profile* (Philadelphia 1976), 579. Although such criticism was also echoed by Welles, a constant advocate of greater realism *vis-à-vis* Argentina, it was more useful to the followers of former secretary of state Hull. From his hospital bed Hull tried to torpedo Rockefeller's efforts advising the US delegation in San Francisco that Argentina had not yet made itself worthy of joining the UN. Welles, 176; Duggan, 115; Hull, 1405-6; Blum, 439, 456-7; B.B. Berle and T.B. Jacobs (Eds.), *Navigating the Rapids* (New York 1973), 530; C.E. Bohlen, *Witness to History* (New York 1973), 206-7; Campbell and Herring, 341-4, 346-7; W.A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin* (New York 1975), 455-6.
28. NA, 835.4016/11-2845, J. Proskauer to Byrnes.
29. 'A Request for the Suspension of Argentina from the UN,' The Nation Associates, New York, January 1946, 7. Herbert Lehman papers, Columbia University, New York, 465, F. Kirchwey to Lehman, 2 April 1946.
30. R.A. Humphreys, *Latin America and the Second World War* (London 1981), I, 32, 154-55.
31. H. Fernández Artucio, *The Nazi Underground in South America* (New York 1942), 87; A. Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere* (New York 1967), 66; 'Nazi Party Membership Records,' US Senate, Washington, March 1946, I, 47-8; W. Frank, *South American Journey* (London 1944), 124.
32. Escudé, *Gran Bretaña, Estados Unidos y la declinación Argentina* (Buenos Aires 1983), 156; T. Bower, *Blind Eye to Murder* (London 1981), 127-9; C.G. Lasby, *Project Paperclip* (New York 1975), 5 and 161; J.J. Sebrelli (Ed.), *La cuestión judía en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires 1968), 21. Ripken to German foreign minister, 28 July 1944, in *Akten VIII*, 261; AFMA, PD, Switzerland 9/947, B. Llambí to J. Bramuglia, 26 June 1947; C. Desmarás to Llambí, 4 September 1947; Various 2/947, E. Agusti to Bramuglia, 30 October 1947.
33. Escudé, 157-8. NA, 862.20235/3-1346, 3-2456 and 3-2946, Byrnes to US embassies in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, W. Dawson to Byrnes and Cabot to Byrnes; 862.20235/3-147, 3-347 and 3-1347, P. Bonsal to Marshall, Messersmith to Marshall and Bonsal to Marshall; AFMA, PD, United States 11/947, Messersmith to Bramuglia, 3 March 1947; Desmarás to P. Radio, 7 March 1947. Author's interview with Jacob Sur, 27 June 1983. T.E. Martínez, 'Perón and the Nazi War Criminals,' Wilson Center, Washington, 1984, 13.

34. AFMA, PD, Holy See 2/946, L. Castiñeiras to Cooke, 2 June 1946; Castiñeiras to Bramuglia, 13 July 1946. In his second letter the Argentine ambassador to the Holy See reported on a conversation with the Vatican secretariat of state's Mgr. Giovanni Montini about the Holy Father's interest in the emigration of Italians and of 'all those Catholics' who could not return to their homes. De Tena *et al*, 85–8; J. Loftus, *The Belarus Secret* (New York 1982), 106–8. Aside from anti-communism, the Holy See's soft spot for Pavelic may be explained by his regime's Catholic identity, O. Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* (Cambridge 1986), 148; A. Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators* (London 1973), 323–36.
35. M. Wischnitzer, *To Dwell in Safety* (Philadelphia 1948), 271–2; Loftus, 105.
36. AFMA, PD, Argentine International Policy 4/947, L. Luti to Bramuglia, 19 February 1947; United States 14/947, La Rosa to P. Diana, 17 October 1947; Yugoslavia 14/947, F. Pirc to Bramuglia, 27 November 1947; Desmarás to Pirc, 22 December 1947. The letter to immigration director Diana concerned the agreement reached at the presidential office regarding former pro-Axis Yugoslav premier Milan Stojadinovich's entry in Argentina.
37. AJC papers, AJC offices Latin America 1945–46, Yagupsky to Segal, 24 October 1945; NA, 835.4016/12–1245, Memo of T. Mann–J.W. Wise conversation. H. Avni, *Argentina y la historia de la inmigración judía* (Buenos Aires 1983), 497; R. Weisbrot *The Jews of Argentina* (Philadelphia 1979), 229.
38. Escudé, 185. Although Nora Pines, Perón's ONA interviewer in 1944, does not appear to have come to the attention of the British, following her expulsion from Argentina in 1948, the AJC's Yagupsky described her as having been part of Braden's 'intelligence service,' That Pines and her boss, the New York-based Jacob Landau, belonged to the Braden camp is also suggested by the fact that while US chargé d'affaires John Cabot, in charge of the Buenos Aires embassy after Braden's transfer, referred to her as one who 'would not knowingly misrepresent the facts,' during Messersmith's service ONA and Pines came to be viewed as neither 'quite safe friends of the US' nor trustworthy. AJC papers, AJC offices Latin America 1948, Yagupsky to M. Halperin, 21 April 1948; NA, 811.91210/8–746 and 6–2546, Cabot to Byrnes and Landau to L. Halle; WNRC, 891, S. O'Donoghue to Marshall, 3 January 1947.
39. *The Nation* papers, Harvard University, Cambridge, MS 56, Frank to Kirchwey, 27 October 1944, Welles, 197.
40. S. Braden, *Diplomats and Demagogues* (New Rochelle 1971), 325–331, HST, PSF, Braden to State Department, 30 June and 1 July 1945; WNRC, 800, Messersmith to Marshall, 24 March 1947. In this letter Messersmith took strong issue with a US Catholic magazine's characterization of Perón as a fascist paranoiac, too close to Braden's own diagnosis not to be recognized. Like Messersmith, the British ambassador also lashed out against US newsmen and those in Britain who emulated them. Kelly, 288 and 295.
41. *The Nation* papers, MS 56, Kirchwey to Braden, 11 January and 21 August 1946; NA, 835.00/2–2846 and 3–146, J. Cabot to Braden and Cabot to Byrnes; 111.12 Braden, Spruille/3–2646, L. Shultz to Braden; Spruille Braden papers, Columbia University, New York, Correspondence Diplomatic 1946–7 A–D, M. Cody to Braden, 1 March 1946.
42. Robert A. Taft, Jr. papers, Library of Congress, Washington, Argentina, n.d.; *The Nation* papers, MS 56, Kirchwey's introductory letter for G. Bermann, 10 January 1946. If the undated memo on Argentina in the Taft papers is right, Braden coordinated his campaign with CIO's Latin American Committee and also used it to leak his views on Argentina to the press. In the case of the Argentine League for the Rights of Man such coordination can be suspected to have taken place through the intermediary of *The Nation*. This suggests that the letter of introduction which the League's Bermann took with him to

- London, at the time when all three bodies were campaigning for UN rejection of Argentina's credentials, was part of the same Braden-inspired effort.
43. D. Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York 1969). Braden to Stettinius, 11 July 1945, in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1945, 9, 391-3.
  44. Braden papers, H.B. Swope to Braden, 23 April 1945; Correspondence Diplomatic 1946-7 W-Z, Braden to M. Waldman, 6 October 1945; Correspondence Braden-Resignation 1947, J.B. Lightman to Braden, 11 June 1947; AJC papers, Latin America-US Government, Waldman to Braden, 14 September 1945; NA, 825.00/2-1346, Landau to Braden; 111.12 Braden, Spruille/3-446, Wise to Braden; 835.4016/3-747, Landau to Braden.
  45. S.N. Rawls, 'Spruille Braden: A Political Biography,' Ph.D. Thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 1976, 17.
  46. J. Schifter, *Costa Rica 1948* (San José 1982), 126-9, 146.
  47. NA, 835.00/8-1646, Messersmith to Acheson.
  48. British embassy in Washington, 5 September 1943, in H.G. Nicholas (Ed.), *Washington Despatches* (Chicago 1981), 241; S. Shafir, 'George S. Messersmith,' *Jewish Social Studies* (New York), January 1973, 32-41; K. Moss, 'George S. Messersmith and Nazi Germany,' in K.P. Jones (Ed.), *US Diplomats in Europe* (Santa Barbara 1981), 113-26.
  49. HIAS papers, XIII Argentina 19, Notes on off the record conversation with Messersmith, 15 April 1947; NA, 835.00/5-2147, Messersmith to C. Lyon.
  50. NA, 812.91210/1-2546 and 2-2746, Messersmith to Byrnes. Both letters, written during the last leg of his ambassadorship to Mexico, dealt with ONA's close association with the Latin American News Agency (ANLA), an organization critical of Messersmith's support for the right-wing backed presidential candidature of Ezequiel Padilla rather than that of Miguel Alemán, who enjoyed ANLA's sympathies. Messersmith's role in driving a wedge between ONA and ANLA not only can be seen as incidental to the ambassador's activities to deprive Alemán of Jewish and other US support but also needs to be seen as part of the new anti-communist tide which forced such established US Jewish bodies as the AJC to cut off their association with progressive Latin American elements. The outcome of this was that ONA severed its connections with ANLA while the AJC cut off its association with the Mexican Anti-Racist Committee (CCR), supportive of Alemán, which the AJC had helped fund since its inception in 1944. ANLA's Elena Vázquez Gómez was the CCR's secretary while Latin American Workers Federation leader Vicente Lombardo Toledano, a CCR vice-president, was according to Messersmith the USSR's foremost asset in Mexico. Furthermore, inasmuch as Messersmith also suspected that ANLA, and by implication ONA, might be receiving Soviet support, the envoy recommended placing ONA under intense scrutiny. AJC papers, Overseas Committee minutes, 19 June 1944 and 24 July 1945; Mexico 1944-47, 58, Vázquez to J. Slawson, 16 January 1946; Slawson to Vázquez, 28 January 1946; Waldman to J. Blaustein, August 1946. NA, 812.91210/5-2246 and 5-2946, J.W. Carrigan to R. Geist and Geist to Carrigan.
  51. NA, 835.00/8-246, Messersmith to Braden; WNRC, 500, O'Donoghue to Marshall, 16 January 1947.
  52. NA, 032/5-2246, Landau to Halle, JTA, Cincinnati, 18 April 1946.
  53. NA, 811.91210/6-2746, Messersmith to Braden.
  54. WNRC, 710, Acheson to Cabot, 8 May 1946.
  55. NA, 032/5-2246, Halle to Landau; 811.91210/6-346, Byrnes to US diplomats in Latin America. In his letter, secretary of state Byrnes asked US diplomats to help Wohl.
  56. Welles, 184; British embassy in Washington, 5 and 18 September 1943, in Nicholas, 241 and 248.

57. In contrast, Braden's office recorded that a YWCA board member who visited Buenos Aires mentioned that 'Jewish teachers in the public school system are now being transferred to outlying rural schools' and 'Jews are not permitted to take examination in the medical school or to serve internships in the hospitals.' No corrections were appended. Hence, this summary of what the YWCA visitors reported, prepared by Braden's office exaggerated the importance of both episodes in that it created the false impression that what was happening to a significant number of Santa Fé province Jewish teachers was the rule in the whole country, as well as extending to all the Argentine territory the anti-Jewish discrimination in Buenos Aires municipal hospitals. NA, 835.00/3-1347, Memo of YWCA-Braden conversation.
58. NA, 835.00/5-2147, Messersmith to Billikopf. Messersmith told Israelite Congregation president Roberto Mirelman, whom he met at Billikopf's suggestion, that the Argentine government had complained to him about the anti-Peronist propaganda penned by 'some US Jews,' following the publication of a critical NYT article by Josephs, the man who later assisted Bruce in writing his book about Argentina, AJC papers, AJC offices Latin America 1948, Yagupsky to M. Himmelfarb, 3 March 1948.
59. NA, 835.00/1-2745, Memo of Rockefeller-Goldman conversation. According to this, the DAIA president's comments 'were somewhat guarded' and did not specifically mention antisemitism.
60. DAIA, *Actas de Consejo Directivo*, 14 March 1948.
61. AJC papers, Latin America, J. Hochstein to Segal, 15 August 1949.
62. AJC papers, Latin America-US government. Draft report of Waldman-Braden conversation, 26 February 1948. Latin American Jewry's other self-proclaimed big brother were the Zionists. N. Bistrizky, *Del judaísmo y el sionismo en Latinoamérica* (Buenos Aires 1949), 144.
63. Braden papers, Correspondence Miscellaneous, G. Salas to Braden, August 1945; Excerpts from an anonymous author's diary, 27 August 1945; F. Alderman to J.M. Bustillo, 27 August 1945; Anonymous letter to Braden, n.d.; Logia Falucho to Braden, 1 September 1945; Rama to Braden, 17 September 1945; Anonymous letter to Braden, 18 September 1945.
64. Braden as well as Loy Henderson, considered by most supporters of Jewish statehood as an anti-Zionist, were the chief opponents to the establishment of an Office of Research and Intelligence, which would have taken away from them responsibility for being the sole purveyors of regional intelligence research within the State Department. While it would be reading too much into Braden's words to suggest that he fully shared Henderson's views about the incompatibility of support for the Zionist cause with other US interests, it is worth noting that he recalled having 'always liked Loy, but I've liked him better ever since that (October 1945) day.' Braden, 346-51; Acheson, 159-60.
65. NA, 800.00B Unión Sionista de Cuba/1-2 and 4, Braden to Hull, 18 January and 6 April 1944.
66. As likely as not, Braden's reluctance to see Moisés Toff when the latter came to take over the Jewish Agency's Latin American department helm may also be ascribed to his possible lack of sympathy to Zionism. While Toff brought greetings from one of Braden's anti-Peronist correspondents, former Socialist Congressman Enrique Dickmann, and expressed appreciation for his record on Argentina, Toff's wish to meet him was ignored. Braden papers, Correspondence Diplomatic 1946-7 W-Z, H.B. Wells to Braden, 30 October 1945; Braden to Wells, 9 November 1945; Correspondence Diplomatic 1946-7 Q-V, Toff to Braden, 4 January 1946; Braden to Toff, 11 January 1946.