

FAILURE IN ARGENTINA: THE JEWISH AGENCY'S SEARCH FOR CONGRESSIONAL BACKING FOR ZIONIST AIMS IN PALESTINE (1946)

Ignacio Klich

For many years leading US diplomats and policy-makers required little evidence to persuade themselves that Juan Domingo Perón's ascent to power was a Berlin-sanctioned ploy to create an Argentine base for Nazism's eventual post-war triumph.¹ Perón's early admiration of Italian fascist methods, the existence of extreme Germanophiles and pro-Nazis among the military officers with whom he rose to prominence in June 1943 and the exaggerated stories about the arrival in Argentina of Third Reich sanctuary seekers since late 1944 were sufficient proof.² By the same token, the notion that Perón's opponents could not but be 'real democrats,' as US ambassador (and later assistant secretary of state for Latin American affairs) Spruille Braden called them, earned credibility. This was so despite the fact that among the anti-Peronists, not just among those supporting the government, were some of yesteryear's practitioners and beneficiaries of the ballot-rigging variety of democracy. Undoubtedly, however, many Argentines were indeed democrats. At the same time, though, no such stark manichean divide existed. Of course, some of those accusing Perón of being a Nazi had been with him until he moved against the more extreme nationalists. (Witness the case of the not untainted Bonifacio del Carril.³ Little did it matter that Del Carril resigned as undersecretary of the interior in solidarity with that ministry's elbowed out titular-holder, the ultra-nationalist general Luis Perlinger.) Furthermore, whereas *Pueblo Argentino* (25 September 1944), one of the Montevideo periodicals issued by Argentine exiles, proclaimed that the country had already received 'several hundred Nazi German technicians,' today we know that such figures were remote from the truth. Compared to the US and Britain, Argentina was in no position to attract large numbers of German scientists/technicians. It was to the US that several hundred of Nazi Germany's best brains went, not Argentina. This is not to say, however, that scientists and technicians, military men and war criminals did not settle in Argentina. Although Perón was neither in the business of promoting 'such hopeless causes as that of the Nazis in South America' nor an advocate of 'the policy of turning Argentina into a safehaven for Nazi criminals' and collaborators, some of the newcomers were brought by the government. Many were among the beneficiaries from the Argentine élites' traditional high regard for North European immigrants, which was not limited to the Argentine military only. The influx of other tainted Europeans enjoyed varying degrees of sponsorship by the war victors and the

Vatican.⁴ Lastly, a number of them merely sneaked in, as did up to 36,800 of their potential Jewish victims since the 1930s.⁵

While the demonization of Perón and sanctification of the opposition took place, Argentine and other Jews were not above the perilous illusions about a clear divide between the forces of good and evil. In so doing they allowed themselves to ignore many a fact. For instance, in April 1945, after spending several months in Argentina, a respected Zionist envoy, Michael Traub, reported that 'the great and ever-increasing majority of the (Argentine) population is democratic at heart and strongly opposed to the present regime.' Not surprisingly, the emissary also let it be known that 'the underground movement is rapidly spreading throughout the republic and, in collaboration with a number of influential political refugees in the neighbouring country of Uruguay, is putting the government under increasing pressure.'⁶ Had he lived a year longer, Traub would have been able to see for himself how fatally flawed his assessment of the opposition's strength was. For those who survived him, however, the presence of Judeophobes among Perón supporters, and the opposition's use of the argument 'remember Hitler' when campaigning among Jews, were deemed irresistible.⁷ They lent credence to the notion that Perón and Jew-hatred were synonymous, just as the opposition and anti-bigotry could not but be the two sides of the same coin. Concerning the first part of this equation, perhaps the most accurate characterization of the Argentine leader was offered by Sir Reginald Leeper, British ambassador in Buenos Aires from 1946. He described Perón as one who was 'not markedly anti-Jewish' yet did not like Jews 'too much.'⁸ Whatever his true sentiments, though, during 1945-46 practical considerations pushed Perón into distancing himself from the anti-Jewish outbursts of his *Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista* supporters without rejecting their electoral backing. According to US chargé d'affaires John Moors Cabot, the presidential hopeful was also particularly keen to court Jewish favour 'in order to ease the anti-Argentine pressure in world opinion.' As for the second part of the equation, a telling report submitted to the Israeli foreign ministry in 1950 revealed that the *Organización Israelita Argentina* (OIA), a Peronist Jewish outfit, was 'a terrible and dangerous cause of anti-Semitism.' Claiming that Peronist Jews were inflaming the Jew-hatred of other Perón supporters, the report also alerted the ministry to the dangers posed by OIA's ability to foment anti-Jewish feeling among those whom Braden had branded as the 'real democrats.'⁹ If five years after Nazism's defeat this was still likely, surely it must mean that the government's conservative, Radical or even Socialist opponents were not above Judeophobia under certain conditions.

Naturally, the indulgence in dangerous simplifications did not stop here. It extended to other Jewish interests as well. One such area was the question of Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. There, a similar logic led some to infer that, unlike Peronist Argentina's abstentionism at the UN General Assembly vote that sanctioned the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states on 29 November 1947, the country

would have supported Zionism, i.e. voted in favour of partition, if only the Radical (UCR)-led Democratic Union had emerged on top in the February 1946 election.

Two decades ago, archival repositories begun to open their holdings on the wartime and early post-war periods. Stumbling on documents that afford the possibility of differentiating between evidence and wild and fanciful assertions, several historians have since been deflating some such myths. Despite the strong emotions evoked by Peronism, which still blind some of its opponents to facts,¹⁰ there is no need to be enamoured of Perón to candidly admit, as Ernesto Sábato already did in the 1950s, that the opposition erred in its characterization of Peronism and its leader. Nor is it necessary to be insensitive to anti-Jewish attacks to concur with Jerry Knudson's apt observation, made early in the 1970s, that the American Jewish Committee's request to Braden's superiors in December 1945 that the US team up with other countries to stamp out Argentine Judeophobia was 'premature' insofar as 'many of the anti-Semitic stories reported by the press proved untrue.'¹¹ By the same token, long before president Carlos Saúl Menem's rise to power and his October 1991 visit to Israel, the first by an Argentine head of state,¹² there was no need to be affiliated with Peronism to notice that the record towards Israel and the Palestinians of Perón's successors clearly argued against the certainty of Argentine backing for Jewish sovereignty under Democratic Union management.

Truth being stranger than fiction, this paper sets out to prove that without looking at the country's Radical governments of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1980s the validity of such an assumption is questionable. In fact, as early as 1946, when the opposition had an opportunity to prove otherwise, it signalled that Argentina's Middle East policy would have differed little from Perón's evenhandedness towards both sides of the Palestine conflict. The background to this excursion is provided by the exertions of the Jewish Agency to draw Argentina closer to Zionism, not long before the UN was left to grapple with the Palestine question. At the time, the Truman administration had yet to remove from the State Department assistant secretary Braden, the foremost advocate of naked coercion in dealing with Argentine nationalism. In turn, this pushed the now elected president Perón into reliance on Britain and the Arab states, among others, to counter Braden's interference in Argentine affairs.

Peronists, Radicals, and the Palestine Question

Shortly after Moisés Alberto Toff (later Moshe Tov), the Argentine-born director of the Jewish Agency's Washington-based Latin American department, approached Perón in August 1946, and reportedly left government house with the firm impression that he had obtained an unequivocal pledge of support for Jewish statehood, the Agency's man in Buenos Aires, Abraham Mibashan, tried to secure congressional backing for Zionism's fondest hope.¹³ Despite the legislature's lack of any real influence in creating foreign policy in countries with strong presidential systems, the promotion of pro-Zionist resolutions in the various Latin American parliaments had

been encouraged by Nahum Goldmann, the Jewish Agency (US) executive member who supervised political work in the region, from the latter half of 1945. Such pronouncements were deemed useful in creating a current of opinion favourable to Zionism which might eventually be translated into votes backing Jewish national aspirations. Hence, Mibashan, the Buenos Aires-based representative for South America of the Agency and Palestine Foundation Fund (Keren Hayesod), set out to win the Argentine chamber of deputies' approval for a resolution calling on the executive branch of government to back the Zionist cause at the UN. Mibashan wrongly believed that such an objective was perfectly attainable. Although he did succeed in persuading Perón supporters and other congressmen to join forces – a veritable achievement if his reported difficulties in bringing together government and opposition representatives sympathetic to Jewish national aspirations are to be trusted – the efforts of the Jewish Agency representative were not crowned with success.¹⁴

Cautiously, Mibashan's draft proposal avoided any overt reference to Jewish statehood. Instead, it used language that did not stray from British undertakings and urged the Argentine government to back 'the historic claim of the Jews to their national home, in tune with the Balfour declaration of 1917, its ratification at the San Remo conference, and the pact of the League of Nations of 1922,' which was signed by fifty-two countries, Argentina included.¹⁵ This show of sensitivity towards Anglo-Argentine relations notwithstanding, Mibashan's initiative failed to win the backing of the majority of Perón supporters, let alone unanimous opposition support.

Submitted on 4 September 1946 by UCR congressman Silvano Santander, a former member of the lower house Anti-Argentine Activities Enquiry Committee as well as a long-time supporter of Argentine Jewry and their concerns,¹⁶ the proposal bore the signature of ten sponsors, the statutory maximum. They included three Peronists (John William Cooke, Cipriano Reyes, and José V. Tesorieri), and three Radicals (Julio Busaniche, Emilio Ravignani, and the already mentioned Santander), as well as four other opposition representatives (conservatives Justo Díaz Colodrero, Reynaldo Pastor, and Julio Vanasco, and Progressive Democrat Mario Mosset Iturraspe). An eleventh subscriber, and one who specifically wanted his association with the Zionist initiative recorded, was lawmaker Edmundo Leopoldo Zara; he had been among the UCR list of parliamentary candidates in the February 1946 election. Additionally, the pronouncements of several other government supporters, whether before, during, or after the debate, indicate that by instinct or calculation Antonio Benítez, Ernesto Cleve, and José Emilio Visca respectively, intervened in ways that were not inimical to the Zionist project.¹⁷ In the month prior to Santander's submission, for example, Cleve had openly declared his support for the 'noble and just cause of securing a free and independent (Jewish) state.' A leader of the telephone workers' tradeunion and former communist militant, Cleve also offered to use 'all the conviction power at my disposal to persuade my bloc and other honourable colleagues in the chamber' that Argentina must be among those supporting the Jewish cause. As a Jew, Cleve's

utterances were probably less remarkable than those of Benítez and Visca. Cleve's main disadvantage, however, was his political closeness to Reyes, an early dissident within the officialist bloc; thus, he was certainly not the right man to influence the majority of government supporters, whether on Zionism or any other issue.¹⁸ As for the two other Peronist lower house members, according to the US embassy in Buenos Aires, Benítez was a nationalist close to the ultra-nationalist federal police chief, general Juan Filomeno Velazco, as well as to a likeminded former justice and education minister, Alberto Baldrich. For his part, Visca had been an acolyte of Buenos Aires governor Manuel Fresco (1936-40), usually associated with the most right-wing faction of the conservative party.¹⁹

On 23 September 1946, nearly three weeks after submission, the proposed resolution came to the floor of the house, with Mosset Iturraspe making the opening statement. The Progressive Democrat lawmaker's presentation received a shot in the arm from Visca, one of the government's storm troopers in Congress. Visca requested that the proposal, described as endowed with 'a spiritual nature and humane sense, in support of a race that has many of its offspring in our country,' be considered without the time-consuming prior referral to the foreign affairs committee. His suggestion was seconded by the Radical Ravignani. Speed was of the essence if such a resolution was to reach the government before the instructions for Argentina's representative at the UN, José Arce, were drafted.²⁰

However, if hitherto everything had seemed to go the Zionists' way, thereafter things began to go awry. The majority bloc's other storm trooper in the chamber, Eduardo Colom, editor of the pro-government Buenos Aires daily *La Epoca*, opposed Visca's suggestion. Without overtly disagreeing with the proposal, Colom argued that the Peronist bloc was against procedural shortcuts. This, though, was unconvincing for congressman Zara. He reminded the house that there had been precedents, i.e. proposals that were tabled without previous consideration by the respective committees. In the circumstances, the issue of whether to go ahead with the proposed resolution had to be put to a vote. The secret ballot revealed that forty-one of the eighty lawmakers present were against immediate consideration. Hence, the proposal would first have to be studied by the lower house foreign affairs committee unless, that is, another vote overturned the previous result.²¹

Bearing in mind that some ten days later the regular period of sessions would be over, Mosset Iturraspe sought to save the situation by requesting a roll call vote. At this stage, though, there was disagreement over a point of order. The divisive issue was whether such a vote was legitimate when a number of those who had participated in the secret ballot had already left the chamber. On this, future justice minister Benítez supported what the proponents of the pro-Zionist statement wanted. Indeed, Benítez proclaimed that regardless of the absence of some of the original voters, the roll call ballot could go ahead. Nevertheless, lower house president Ricardo Guardo disagreed. He ruled that if the chamber expressed unanimous consent there could

be a fresh vote, albeit a secret one. This, however, was opposed by the officialist bloc's Victorio Tommasi. Hence, regardless of Benítez's protestations, the proposed resolution was sent to the foreign affairs committee, from where it failed to return.²²

Judging by the two months that elapsed between the submission of another proposal (this one expressing solidarity with Guatemala's rights over Belize) and its return from the foreign affairs committee, it is clear that the committee's heavy workload, aside from other considerations, rendered unrealistic all hopes that the pro-Zionist statement would be sanctioned by the house before 4 October 1946. On that day Congress adjourned for a nearly three-week recess. Hence, those who sought to defer consideration of the pro-Zionist call until it had received committee approval had, wittingly or otherwise, contributed to its burial.²³

In trying to determine the reasons for such an unfavourable turn of events it is fairly obvious that a greater consensus among the government majority would have spared the proposed resolution the need for prior consideration by the foreign affairs committee. That such a consensus was beyond reach was probably due to three factors.

First, for many Peronist congressmen Zionism was tainted by its apparent closeness to the anti-Perón camp. Long memories were unnecessary to recall that in November 1945 and February 1946 Mibashan had sought to bring Jewish national aspirations to public attention through statements exclusively signed by a veritable 'who's who' of the anti-Perón opposition. This would not have escaped Colom's attention, for example. His paper had poured scorn on a message to the Jewish Agency-inspired International Christian Conference for (Zionist) Palestine by a group of Argentine personalities.²⁴ Its most noteworthy signatories – Adolfo Bioy, José María Cantilo and Nobel peace prize winner Carlos Saavedra Lamas – had all been foreign ministers in past conservative governments.²⁵ *La Epoca's* derisory report was headlined 'Argentine Catholics Partition Arab Land Here without Consulting Owners,' in reference to their stated belief that 'the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine represents an act of historical justice.' Despite this warning shot, the Jewish Agency did not seek to ingratiate itself with Perón's supporters. In effect, less than three weeks before the election, Mibashan sponsored what amounted to a poorly disguised party political broadcast to Argentine Jewry by eleven anti-Perón campaigners. It took the form of a call for support to establish an Argentine Committee for a Free (Zionist) Palestine. Playing on the subject of Judeophobia, which had prompted Jews to claim 'the historical land of Palestine...so that, within the framework of the British commonwealth, Jews persecuted in other countries may find a home there,' the Democratic Union supporters emphasized that Argentina had been 'no stranger to such condemnable (anti-Jewish) movements.' The latter's divisive calls were 'contrary to our democratic Constitution and well-rooted policies of peaceful coexistence.'²⁶

Second, the passionate anti-Zionist sentiments of certain Perón supporters among the Syro-Lebanese collectivity were no secret to ruling bloc legislators. While it is far from certain whether most of the naturalized Arabic-speakers voted for Perón in February 1946, some had actually campaigned for him. One of their arguments in favour of Perón was that a ballot for the Democratic Union was akin to a vote for Zionism. Furthermore, an Argentine Arab Defence Committee for Palestine had addressed notes to all legislators requesting outright rejection of the Zionist petition. While the first time the Argentine Arab body had done so, on 25 September 1946, was two days after the lower house decided to refer the proposed resolution to its foreign affairs experts, both presentations, the second submitted on 6 November 1946, may have had a part in Congress' subsequent failure to deal with the pro-Zionist statement.²⁷

Third, and most significant, even if in private Perón had promised unconditional support for Jewish statehood, as Toff erroneously believed he had, a resolution calling for the country's representative at the UN to act in accordance with Zionist aspirations would have been politically inexpedient at the time. It would have made unnecessary waves, not least because of the publicity that would have accompanied the resolution's adoption. This ran counter to the government's intention not to strain relations with Britain or irritate the Arab states, especially when the US-Argentine feud had yet to be properly concluded. Although possible, there is no specific evidence testifying to intervention by the president or his aides to sidetrack the Zionist initiative. Yet the arguments advanced by the foreign minister and others against the Guatemala statement – a successful Radical project on an issue much closer to home than the faraway Palestine question – make it quite clear that the pro-Zionist proposal was tactically inopportune and did not enjoy Perón's favour. Indeed, foreign minister Juan Atilio Bramuglia told the house that as representatives of the Argentine people they had to refrain from taking sides in international disputes. Likewise, the ruling bloc's Eduardo Beretta sought to impress upon his peers that it was useful 'to avoid such declarations when they boil down to taking sides in litigious issues of an international nature.' In Beretta's view, an expression of support for Guatemalan sovereignty by a house representing the Argentine people in its entirety would not only break 'our evenhandedness' but was also counterproductive to good relations with all sides. According to Beretta, a member of the lower house foreign affairs committee, the defence of Argentine sovereignty required 'our impartiality vis-à-vis the countries which we consider friendly.' Although not spelt out in the debate on the pro-Zionist statement, it would be unsagacious to ignore that the transposition of such arguments to the Palestine question indicates that Mibashan's call was unwelcome to the government. Without an overt rejection of the Zionist initiative, Perón and Bramuglia had sufficient reason to steer well clear of lobbying the officialist bloc of deputies in its favour.²⁸ Thus, some Peronist parliamentarians favoured the proposed statement's prompt consideration while others rejected it.

Richer in political implications, if hitherto unremarked, was the opposition's performance, in particular that of the Radicals. From the outset, they also appeared none too keen to see the pro-Zionist statement passed immediately. Presumably because of this Radical lawmaker Ravnani failed to express unequivocal support for its consideration before Visca rose to speak. Commenting on what had happened with the aborted Palestine resolution and the adopted one on Guatemala, a US embassy observer noted that 'the opposition with its superior parliamentary agility took advantage of unrest in the Peronista bloc and the lack of skill of bloc leaders to obtain, surprisingly, a majority vote for its projects.' If so, this means that regardless of the support Mibashan's initiative received from several Radical congressmen, and that which it could have expected from other UCR politicians,²⁹ the party was far from wedded to the proposed resolution. In fact, the US diplomat was in no doubt that the fate of Mibashan's project was sealed by the opposition. Despite the missing data on the identity and voting of the eighty legislators in attendance, what is luminously clear is that forty-nine of the entire lower house membership were representatives of various opposition parties, namely the Radicals. Of these, forty were in the chamber that day, with all the opposition's absentees (five of them unexpected) belonging to the UCR. Had all forty stood behind Mibashan's appeal the count would have been favourable to immediate consideration and approval of the pro-Zionist proposal. Even without the support of most ruling bloc members it would be idle to suppose that this would not have been the case when two of the resolution's Peronist sponsors were also among those in attendance. Like the government backers, though, the opposition did not join forces in unanimous support for Zionist aspirations.³⁰

Political and electoral considerations provide important clues to an initial explanation of the opposition's less than enthusiastic response to Zionism. The Radicals' attitude in Congress at the time has been generally described as obstructive and provocative.³¹ In the case of Mibashan's initiative, the UCR may well have hindered immediate consideration of the pro-Zionist statement, calculating that blame for the outcome was likely to be laid on the Peronists, rather than pinned on the opposition. Such a spoiling game would have suited well Radicals worried about the efforts of Braden's superiors to normalize relations with Argentina, because in all likelihood it would have stirred up Jews further against Perón. While perfectly feasible, this is no more than a conjecture. Much less uncertain are the parts played by the foreign policy inclinations of the UCR's leading section in the lower house, the apparent marginality of Zionism's friends within Radical ranks, and the Argentines of Arab descent.

Concerning the first of these factors, it is well known that important sections of the UCR, especially – though not only – the Intransigents, were isolationists in international affairs; hence their advocacy of neutrality during World War II. The latter, however, did not prevent some prominent Intransigents from expressing a degree of solidarity with the Allied cause. This notwithstanding, when the UCR-led

Democratic Union began to take shape, the son of Socialist leader Enrique Dickmann let Braden know that he was not optimistic about the outcome. According to the younger Dickmann, the Radicals were never 'allies in the war' and one of their leaders, the Intransigent Amadeo Sabbatini, decorated by Benito Mussolini's Italy, had been 'a Nazi.' Unlike Dickmann, one Agus d'Alora wrote in *Pueblo Argentino* (25 December 1944) that the alleged Nazi had catalogued the military behind the June 1943 coup as 'Nazis,' while Arturo Jauretche, leader of the Fuerza de Orientación Radical de la Joven Argentina (FORJA), more generally described the Intransigents as being 'in panic of being branded as "Nazis."' Perhaps the biggest blow to Dickmann's credibility was inflicted by Socialist leader Repetto's interest in meeting Sabbatini when he temporarily moved to Uruguay. Not surprisingly, therefore, César Tcach has argued that Sabbatini viewed Perón and his following, not the Intransigents or himself, as an appendage of European fascism. While this highlights how inadequate the 'Nazi' sobriquet was to characterize Sabbatini or the Intransigents, it is certainly beyond doubt that nationalism was not the exclusive preserve of Perón and his supporters. Incontrovertible evidence for such nationalism in UCR ranks are Radical reservations on Argentina's adherence to the Chapultepec act, the abstention of UCR legislators when Perón asked Congress to ratify Argentine endorsement of the UN charter and their misgivings about the country's entry into a US-led inter-American defence pact. Against the backdrop of political polarization, Perón's efforts to move closer to the US were matched by the Intransigents' increasing shift in the opposite direction, as if to show that they, not the Argentine president, were the veritable anti-imperialists.³²

Although some wished to explain away such stances as the posturings of a truly democratic party, concerned to deprive Perón of the legitimacy in US eyes that would compel them to live with his rule for six years, the Radicals' wartime record suggested otherwise. Not only had Intransigent leader Elpidio González met president Ramón Castillo to express support for his neutralist foreign policy but in the months prior to Castillo's downfall several Intransigent politicians participated in talks with nationalist and neutralist army officers, among them lieutenant-colonel Enrique P. González and colonel Miguel Angel Montes, on a military takeover. Furthermore, the Radicals' description of the February 1946 election as 'a fight against Naziism' is difficult to reconcile with the fact that Martín S. Noel, slated to become the Democratic Union government's foreign minister, had been part, together with such ultra-nationalists as Mario Octavio Amadeo, Gustavo Martínez Zuviría, general Basilio Pertiné and admiral León Scasso, of the organizing committee of the First Congress of Ibero-American Culture; the latter was called by general Pedro Pablo Ramírez's regime in 1943. Likewise, the Democratic Union's anti-Nazism had not prevented its presidential hopeful, José Pascual Tamborini, an interior minister in Alvear's government rather than an Intransigent, from failing to promise the moves against German interests that Braden so badly needed to vindicate his anti-Perón

crusade. Indeed, immediately after the elections, the Foreign Office was apprised of the “severe headache” in the State Department’ seemingly caused by Tamborini’s display of ‘too much Nationalism’ in off-the-record talks with ‘some of Braden’s under-cover minions.’ Reverting to the Intransigents, they benefited from the election debacle and ensuing party reorganization. In August 1946 the Intransigents won three of seven places on the UCR executive board. A year later, the US assistant military attaché observed that the UCR’s Intransigent wing, ‘which probably is now a majority of the party and includes a number of the most brilliant and energetic professional men in the country’ was second to the organized nationalist groups in their nationalism.³³

Given the Intransigents’ influence within the UCR – they led the bloc of forty-four, as the Radical representation in the lower house called itself – it is worth remarking upon that none of Mibashan’s UCR sponsors were affiliated to that wing of the party. In fact, they had neither been among the one hundred attending the meetings which formalized the Intransigence and Renewal (MIR) faction in April-November 1945, nor adhered to it later. Quite the reverse. From his exile in Montevideo Santander had provided ample proof of the lively dislike he entertained for some fellow Radicals, the Intransigents in particular. As an outspoken critic, he had accused them of harbouring ‘anti-Republican, pro-Nazi and anti-rupturist ideas,’ and went as far as to compare them with ‘(Josef) Goebbels...or (Gustavo) Martínez Zuviría.’ Not surprisingly, in March 1945 Santander expressed the conviction that a split within the party was inevitable. Considered among the individual Radicals that did not allow themselves ‘to be lulled by the (military regime’s) astute demagoguery, which blinded many of his party colleagues,’ and of course not labelled as one of the ‘dictatorship’s lackeys,’ Santander, like other Argentine temporary residents in the Uruguayan capital, used strong language to characterize the UCR’s record towards the military coup of June 1943. Pouring vitriol on his party’s ‘unscrupulous and do-nothing policy,’ he vehemently urged that Radical leaders proclaim their culpability loudly and clearly. And Santander’s altercations with the Intransigents did not cease after his return to Argentina in August 1945. Needless to say that all this would not have endeared Santander to his particular audience. Nor is it likely that by the time they had managed to gain the upper hand within the UCR representation in the chamber of deputies, those who had only recently been at the receiving end of his outbursts would have succeeded in forgetting them. Thus, one is likely to infer that Santander, like Reyes and Cleve among the officialist bloc, was not the best-suited advocate of Zionism, especially when it came to prodding fellow Radicals into support for Mibashan’s initiative.³⁴

Ballot box calculations also appear to have played their part. In the wake of Perón’s triumph many of the country’s estimated 400,000 Syro-Lebanese who had not done so before drifted towards the ranks of his supporters. As the first political force to have integrated naturalized Arab immigrants into the Argentine political

process, the UCR was probably eager to reverse such a loss.³⁵ If the Radicals set their sights on achieving such a goal, the Intransigents would have been the best-equipped to do so. For one thing, such prominent Intransigents as Jorge Farías Gómez and Carlos and Salomón Nassiff, were themselves of Syro-Lebanese descent. The same was the case with several local UCR leaders in provinces with a significant number of Arab-descended voters. For another, if the latter's crossover had been influenced by the future president's concern for the *descamisados* and social justice, and/or industrialization without foreign domination, Susana Brauner Rodgers has shown that such objectives were articulated by Intransigent writers long before Perón borrowed their terminology without attribution.³⁶ Against this backdrop, it is no coincidence, perhaps, that on the very day when Santander submitted the Zionist proposal, Alberto Candiotti, one of the Radicals' leading lights within the lower house foreign affairs committee and his party's main voice for requesting Bramuglia's presence in the chamber to explain the government's foreign policy, was the chief speaker at a celebration in Congress of Lebanon's national day. A former Argentine consul in Beirut, the Intransigent Candiotti's role in the celebration led to his being honoured by the Buenos Aires-based Lebanese Patriotic Association.³⁷ Truth be told, Candiotti's relations with Argentina's Syro-Lebanese were far from unique. In reality, the unionist Ravignani, one of the co-signatories of the pro-Zionist proposal, cultivated links with the moderate mainstream among Arab-descended Argentines. Nothing illustrates this better than his acceptance of an invitation to join the leadership of the Inter-American Brotherhood Circle in June 1945, a body created and led by Moisés José Azize.³⁸ (Azize was the founder of some of the most important Syro-Lebanese institutional assets in Argentina – including the Syro-Lebanese bank, the Syro-Lebanese immigrant protection association, the Syro-Lebanese chamber of commerce, the Syro-Lebanese daily and the Syro-Lebanese club Honour and Fatherland – and the circle's headquarters were housed at the latter club's premises.)

Taking all these points into consideration, it follows that when the Radicals demanded that foreign minister Bramuglia come to the house to explain Argentina's performance abroad, what they had in mind was to embarrass the government by exploiting the apparent inconsistencies between the official rhetoric and Perón's pragmatic handling of the country's international relations. That the Radicals had no quarrel with the chief executive over Argentina's priorities in the Middle East is suggested by the exclusion of this topic from among the explanations required from the foreign minister.³⁹

An Assessment: Too Tall an Order for the Jewish Agency's Friends

The Jewish Agency improvised when launching this initiative without investing in enough preparatory work. Hence, the proposed statement was submitted too late to produce the desired outcome before the congressional recess, and the odds arrayed against it were not sufficiently considered. Indeed, while the pro-Zionist resolution's

backers included members from most parties, the mix was not right to guarantee a victory. In addition to this, coordination among the Zionists on the one hand, as well as between the Jewish Agency and Argentine Jewry's representative body on the other hand, was plainly defective.

The resolution's list of sponsors, if representative, highlights some of Zionism's chief weaknesses in Argentina. At its simplest, it illustrates the Jewish Agency's lack of sufficient friends among the political force that really mattered, i.e. Peronism. Whereas the conservative and Progressive Democrat legislators lending their names to the Zionist initiative were the totality of both parties' insignificant lower house representation, the Peronists were only a tiny fraction. Put differently, in a house where they occupied 68.8 per cent of the seats, Perón's supporters were obviously underrepresented among the sponsors of Mibashan's proposed statement in relation to congressmen of other political persuasions. From the outset, such lopsidedness was not a good omen. To make matters worse, Zionism was bereft of enough sympathy among the groups that had the upper hand within the two major forces. Mibashan's hopelessly inadequate reliance on people problematic from the viewpoint of their respective parties' mainstreams testifies to this. Hence, the relative ineffectiveness of several of those, like Reyes, who spearheaded the pro-Zionist initiative.⁴⁰ In the Radicals' specific case, it is no accident that the Jewish Agency should have been attracted to Santander. Rather than the 'rusito' Moisés Lebensohn, as historian Félix Luna says the foremost Intransigent apostle was called by fellow UCR politicians, most Radical Jews felt more at home with the pro Allied Alvear and his following, i.e. those ready to collaborate with the conservatives so keenly courted by Mibashan.⁴¹ Also, Santander's anti-Nazi zeal, characterized as somewhat 'delirious' only after his findings were proved to be unsafe, had naturally endeared him to Jews.⁴²

In view of such disadvantages, the result of the lower house vote – thirty-eight legislators in favour of immediate consideration of the pro-Zionist statement, i.e. three shy of a majority – can in and of itself be viewed as an achievement of sorts for the Jewish Agency. Quite apart from the fact that this was not the kind of 'success' Nahum Goldmann had envisaged when recommending such initiatives, an assessment of this nature is unjustified for the time being. Insofar as support for early consideration of the pro-Zionist statement and backing for the adoption of such a resolution are not a priori the same things, be it observed that evidence eliminating the possibility that some of those who sought to avoid the proposed resolution's referral to the foreign affairs committee did so to accelerate its defeat is as yet unavailable. Hence, the Jewish Agency initiative was useful in bringing into the open the existence of friends of the Zionist cause among all political forces, Peronism included, while its failure served to prove that doubts about Toff's reported success with Perón, as most clearly voiced by Mibashan, were not without foundation. But the available evidence does not allow us to argue that the latter embarked upon such a high risk

game just to impress on the Jewish Agency executive that his doubts should not be taken lightly.⁴³

Like others in Argentina and abroad, the Zionists had harboured illusions of an anti-Perón insurrection, led by the increasingly uninfluential Montevideo exiles, and also deluded themselves as to the impossibility of a Perón victory at the ballot box. Against the background of the Jewish Agency's pre-election strategy, exclusively geared towards a Democratic Union triumph, it is clear that Perón supporters would have had reservations towards Zionism. By the same token, the opposition's lacklustre response could not but be very disappointing to the Jewish Agency in general and Mibashan in particular, especially after they had put all their eggs in the Democratic Union's basket. And yet, this was in tune with the past record of many within the UCR, as well as linked to the apparent unsuitability of the Jewish Agency's friends among the Radicals to win Intransigent votes. It was also a probable consequence of the Radicals' wish to recover the support of Argentines of Arab parentage. None of this ever appears to have been noticed by Zionist actors and analysts of the day. Writing on US wartime aberrations vis-à-vis Argentina, Ronald Newton remarked that bureaucrats zealously bury uncreditable episodes in unmarked graves. This, however, was not the case of Washington officials only. Not surprisingly, the congressional initiative was left out from the memoirs of Toff, the Jewish Agency's Latin American department head at the time. In its stead, Toff insinuated that Ravnigani was 'politically unscrupulous.'⁴⁴

Aside from other possible reasons, party priorities seemingly prompted Santander to refrain from insisting on the pro-Zionist statement later. Santander's non-insistence, however, was quite unlike his persistence on the subject of the proposed diplomatic break with *generalísimo* Francisco Franco Bahamonde's Spain.⁴⁵ With the passage of time, the combination of old biases and new priorities led local Jews and Zionists to forget this and other disappointments. Two decades later, for instance, Argentine Jewry was enthused by Santander's efforts to make political capital for the then Radical government by way of organizing a celebration of yesteryear's Anti-Argentine Activities Enquiry Committee.⁴⁶ At the time, no one seemed to remember the opportunism of that committee's first president, or the UCR's record on the pro-Zionist statement and the fact that Santander's own unexpected absence from Congress the day it came to the floor resulted in non-Radical Mosset Iturraspe becoming the principal opposition spokesman for the Jewish Agency resolution.

In summary, the anti-Peronists' absence of enthusiasm for Mibashan's proposed statement proves, if proof were still needed, the Jewish Agency's imprudence when prior to the election it set its sights on finding friends solely among the Democratic Union. Little could be gained by failing to recruit earlier such Peronists as Tesorieri. A tradeunionist who had been among the first to gather information about Nazi activities in the country, Tesorieri had signed an October 1943 statement urging a break with the Axis.⁴⁷ The opposition's performance also raises serious doubts, if it

does not put paid altogether to the notion that had Perón been defeated in February 1946 Argentina would have been more obliging to Zionist appeals. Inevitably, the fact that the evenhandedness advocated by Perón long outlived his governments by four decades to the 1980s, not only confirms its logic but also tends to suggest that regardless of who occupied the Argentine presidential palace, the *Casa Rosada*, this position was invariably considered to serve Argentine interests, not just Perón's, in good stead.⁴⁸

NOTES

- * The author wishes to thank Judit Bokser-Liwerant and Eduardo L. Ortiz for bringing to his attention two otherwise unavailable sources.
1. Spruille Braden papers, Columbia University, New York, N.Y., Correspondence, Diplomatic (CD) 1945 Argentina A-B, Spruille Braden to Ellis Briggs, Jr., 28 July 1945.
 2. *Diario Popular* (Montevideo), 21, 26, 28 and 29 September 1944; *El País* (Montevideo), 21 September 1944; *Espejo Diario* (Montevideo), 22 November 1944; *Pueblo Argentino* (Montevideo), 25 September 1944, 25 December 1944, 25 June 1945, 25 July 1945; *Voz Argentina* (Montevideo), April 1945 (Fourth week); *Crítica Libre* (Montevideo), 23 June 1945. British, Canadian and US diplomats treated most of these reports as fairly doubtful, to say the least. The British deemed the stories 'in the Montevideo opposition newspapers especially *Espejo Diario*' to be 'purely fictional.' For his part, the Canadian chargé d'affaires in Buenos Aires alerted his superiors that 'some reserve must be held for some of the data given, particularly in papers of irresponsible nature.' The reasons for his lack of confidence were twofold. On the one hand, such publications were 'largely issued by communist groups,' a possible reference to *Pueblo Argentino* editor Rodolfo Ghioldi; on the other hand, *Espejo Diario* editor E.D. Tarradellas had been involved in lieutenant-colonel Tomás Ducó's abortive putsch of February 1944, while at the same time 'double-crossing the movement by being on close terms with General (Luis) Perlinger, pro-fascist Minister of Interior.' (If reports on Perón having staged Ducó's revolt to impress upon the Argentine opposition and the US how well in hand he had the situation are anything to go by, Tarradellas may have been even less trustworthy than the Canadians imagined.) As for the US, their first secretary in Montevideo declared that stories published 'in *La Voz de Mayo*, *Pueblo Argentino* and the *Baltimore Sun*, and subsequently in *Mundo Libre* and *El Diario Popular*, originated with Enrique Jurgues. The latter's reliability was 'seriously questioned,' presumably because of the false information he had previously fed to the Argentine lower house Anti-Argentine Activities Enquiry Committee. Also dismissed as 'entirely untrustworthy' were later reports about the alleged landing in Argentina of the foremost Nazi supremos. Obviously eager to translate the Axis' defeat into the political demise of the Farrell-Perón regime, the small though vociferous group of exiled Argentine politicians, some twenty in number according to Socialist leader Nicolás Repetto, were also the innocent victims of bogus reports. Such fabrications were churned out, among others, by British disinformation experts. In effect, according to Ronald Newton, since the latter half of 1944 stories about Nazi leaders fleeing with their gold by submarine or other means had been broadcast to Germany by the *Deutscher Soldatensender*, a radio station based near London. Aimed at demoralizing German public opinion, and shortening the war's duration, such broadcasts had a large and indirect impact on two unintended audiences, the US and Perón's opponents. This was so because of a bad lapse in Anglo-American coordination, as well as among various US agencies themselves, wrote Newton nearly ten years ago. Such research, however, remains unknown to, or disbelieved by many among the Argentine intelligentsia; that much is, among other things, illustrated by the film *Pobre mariposa*. Set in 1945, the movie's acclaimed scriptwriter, Aída Bortnik, echoed the discredited stories in the Montevideo-based dissident press by naming the Nazis that were later known to have entered Argentina. Successful in portraying the beliefs of some alliedophiles, Bortnik left no doubt, however, that such stories were absolutely veracious. Hence, she later chided Argentine Jewry for not making more noise about the Nazi infiltration. Though not a historian, Bortnik's complaints are an intimation that forty years after the end of World War II, the weeding out of exaggerations from truths has yet to be undertaken by many of

- those emotionally or otherwise touched by this subject. Breckinridge Long papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Argentina 1944, J. Kenly Bacon to Philip Bonsal, 3 March 1944; National Archives (NA), Washington, D.C., RG 226, Box 1144, File 104019 (hereafter 1144/104019), Edward Sparks to Secretary of State, 10 October 1944; RG 165, 929/OPD 336 Germany, Aide mémoire from British embassy (Washington), 28 May 1945; RG 59, 862.20235/3-2546, Dawson to Secretary of State; 862.20235/3-2946, John Cabot to Secretary of State; 862.20235/2-2347, Albert Bender to W. Haraldson; National Archives of Canada (NAC), Ottawa, Records of External Affairs, RG 25, 3294/7276-40, Kenneth Kirkwood to Hugh Keenleyside, 15 November 1944; Kirkwood to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 28 November 1944; Kirkwood to Norman Robertson, 16 December 1944; 2856/1607-40, R. Bissing to Frederick Soward, 14 December 1944. Nicolás Repetto, *Mi paso por la política: De Uriburu a Perón* (Buenos Aires, 1957), p. 290; Ronald C. Newton, "Indifferent Sanctuary: German-Speaking Refugees and Exiles in Argentina, 1933-1945," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (Coral Gables), November 1982, pp. 415, 417. For Bortnik, see *Pluralismo e identidad: Lo judío en la literatura latinoamericana* (Buenos Aires 1986), p. 109.
3. NA, RG 266, 866/75641, Hugh Millard to Secretary of State, 11 March 1944. Mario Amadeo, *Ayer, hoy mañana* (Buenos Aires, 1956), pp. 19-20, 22-24, 111-15; Bonifacio del Carril, *Memorias dispersas: El coronel Perón* (Buenos Aires, 1984), pp. 16-20, 38-39, 60-61, 91; Cristián Buchrucker, *Nacionalismo y peronismo: La Argentina en la crisis ideológica mundial (1927-1955)* (Buenos Aires, 1987), p. 281. Whereas four decades later Del Carril reminisced that the Movimiento de la Renovación, the small nationalist group which he had presided over and whose motto Perón lifted *ad literam*, had included individual supporters of the Allies and of the Germans, this is not how things were seen by the US embassy in wartime Buenos Aires. Indeed, the US first secretary reported that while 'the movement is not pro-Nazi...the majority of the members are.' Without denying that many *movimentistas* were pro-Allied, the US diplomat nonetheless asserted that 'practically all of the many members who were given governmental posts were of totalitarian ideology.' Unlike Del Carril, Mario Amadeo refrained from accusing Perón of Nazism, especially after becoming disgruntled with the colonel. Together with such Montevideo-based exiles as Gregorio Topolevsky, Amadeo later became involved in Perón's overthrow. In September-November 1955, he held the successor government's foreign affairs portfolio. Also, during the presidency of Arturo Frondizi, a former supporter of the Committee against Racism and Anti-Semitism, Amadeo represented the country abroad. Nevertheless, his democratic credentials were never more than skin deep. As Amadeo himself candidly wrote, he had abandoned the military regime's diplomacy in disgust on two occasions, in the wake of Argentina's severance of diplomatic ties with the Axis and on the eve of its war declaration against Germany and Japan.
 4. The notion that scientists and technicians working for Nazi Germany and her allies would help develop the country's defence industries is consistent with the aspirations articulated by various military men, Perón included, as well as requests in that direction put forward (even after the diplomatic cutoff with the Axis) by an Argentine military envoy in Spain to the Madrid representative of Nazi arms manufacturers. Among those who were lured to Argentina were 'some highly competent scientists,' a mixture of mid-career professionals and others nearing the end of their productive lives, including Manlio Abele, Kurt Fraenz, Richard Gans, Hans Joachim Schumacher, Walter Selmann-Eggeberth and others. This, however, should not obscure the fact that an Argentine probe conducted after Perón's overthrow established that aeronautic engineering expert Kurt Tank and physicist Ronald Richter, two of Perón's most publicised acquisitions, wandered through British and/or French research facilities before going to Argentina. Apparently, Richter's name also appeared in an Anglo-American list of sixty physicists, some forty of them hired by the US. But US agencies and private enterprises appeared to have no use for Tank, Richter, etc. Thus, when the Germans involved in Argentina's infant aeronautics industry became frustrated with the rudimentary local conditions and sought to leave, their expertise opened doors for them in India and Egypt, rather than the countries which the Canadian ambassador in Buenos Aires reported as their first choice, notably the US and Canada. Ripken to Joachim von Ribbentrop, 28 July 1944, in *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtiges Politik 1918-1945* (Göttingen), VIII, p. 261; NAC, RG 25, 3238/5710-A-40, L.R. LaFleche to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 22 January 1953. *Casos de la segunda tiranía* (Buenos Aires, 1958), pp. 45, 53-54; Ignacio Klich, "A Background to Perón's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," in Margalit Bejarano, Rosa Perla Raicher, Silvia Schenkolewski and Leonardo Senkman, eds., *Judaica Latinoamericana: Estudios Histórico-Sociales* (Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 203-205; Ronald C. Newton, "Disorderly Succession: Great Britain, the United States and the "Nazi Menace" in Argentina, 1938-1947," in Guido di Tella and

- D. Cameron Watt, eds., *Argentina and the Great Powers, 1939-46* (London, 1989), p. 128; Roger Gravil, "Foreign Interference in Argentina in the mid-1940s," paper presented at the Conference on Contemporary Societies in the Comparative Perspective: Eastern Europe and Latin America in the 20th Century, Warsaw, 29 May-1 June 1990, p. 8; *Página 12* (Buenos Aires), 10 May 1992; Eduardo L. Ortiz, "Army and Science in Argentina: 1850-1950," in Paul Forman and J.M. Sánchez Ron, eds., *Science and the Armed Forces*, forthcoming.
5. Such a figure is arrived at by subtracting the number of Jews in Argentina's 1947 census from the best scientific estimate available for the country's Jewish population that year. Unless census underreporting can be exclusively ascribed to other causes, the exercise provides a useful approximation to the real number of illegal Jewish entrants, and one which would supersede other much lower figures of those whose situation had to be legalized by a Peronist government amnesty. Haim Avni, *Argentina y la historia de la inmigración judía (1810-1950)* (Jerusalem, 1983), p. 517; Sergio dellaPergola, "Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry," in Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merkx, eds., *The Jewish Presence in Latin America* (Boston, 1987), pp. 89 and 96. While the history of such illegal arrivals remains to be written, the difficulties encountered by those who sought legal entry are documented in Leonardo Senkman, "Argentina's Immigration Policy during the Holocaust (1938-1945)," *Yad Vashem Studies* (Jerusalem), 1991, pp. 155-88.
 6. Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Jerusalem, ZS/694, Report on Argentinian Jewry by Michael Traub, April 1945.
 7. American Jewish Committee papers, YIVO, New York, N.Y., AJC offices Latin America 1948, Máximo Yagupsky to John Slawson, 26 February 1948.
 8. Public Record Office (PRO), Kew, Foreign Office, FO 371, 51808/AS 8012, Reginald Leeper to J. Victor Perowne, 20 December 1946. Joseph Page, *Perón: Una biografía (1895-1952)* (Buenos Aires, 1984), p. 112; Robert D. Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina* (New York, 1987), p. 221.
 9. Israel State Archives (ISA), Jerusalem, 2574/17, Moshe Tov to Walter Eytan, 7 March 1950. Forwarded by the anti-Peronist Tov, the identity of s/he who penned this report was concealed. The catalogue of insinuations, plain unsubstantiated allegations and/or sheer imprecisions therein contained renders use of this document on the OIA hazardous. Nevertheless, its anti-Peronist vehemence lends credence to the warning about potential anti-Jewishness in conservative, Radical and Socialist ranks, just as the memoirs of Angel Gallardo, a participant in Argentina's 1890 revolution and president Marcelo Torcuato de Alvear's top diplomat (1922-28), offer some shining examples of the xenophobic and anti-Jewish sentiments tolerated by previous Radical governments. One such example is the case of the 'judío (Daniel) Antokoletz,' who lost the headship of the political division during Gallardo's stint as foreign minister. According to the latter, the ministry's most sensitive division could not be entrusted to a foreigner and a Jew. Thus, when Antokoletz sought to counter Gallardo's assertion that non-Argentines should not be in that ministry's payroll by alluding to his earlier naturalization, the top diplomat retorted: 'You are still a foreigner, just as you continue to be Jewish despite being baptised.' Angel Gallardo, *Memorias para mis hijos y nietos* (Buenos Aires, 1982), pp. 365-66. For signs of anti-pluralist views affecting Jews among Argentina's other democratic forces, see Allan Metz, "La encuesta de la revista *Claridad* de marzo de 1939," *Coloquio* (Buenos Aires), 23 (1990), pp. 35-37.
 10. Haim Avni, for instance, provides an example of this not excluding academic writers too. Consider Avni's reference to Braden's Blue Book on Argentina as 'attesting to Perón's close ties with the Axis.' Against this claim, non-Peronist sociologist and historian Carlos Escudé posited long before joining those advising president Carlos Saúl Menem's foreign minister that the Blue Book 'attempted to substantiate (former secretary of state Cordell) Hull's rhetoric about the Argentine-Axis cooperation,' and was largely based on discredited FBI reports. For their part, two scholars not unsympathetic to Braden, Leslie Rout and John Bratzel, have recorded Cabot's blunt description of the Book as 'a very slanted account of the cooperation between the Argentine authorities and German spies in an effort to smear Perón.' Many years later, the US chargé d'affaires in Buenos Aires at the time of the Blue Book's release told Rout and Bratzel that its factual errors were minor, but the conclusions drawn from the information were nonetheless unjustified. Furthermore, Callum MacDonald has advanced the view that research for the Book was 'unable to achieve its primary purpose which was to uncover financial links between Perón and the Nazis.' Dispassionately, Bryce Wood has recorded Braden's observation that one of his aides, Carl Spaeth, felt that the US 'did not have a good court case.' Lastly, Roger Gravil has characterized the Blue Book as 'defamatory.' To sum up, the Book sought

- to prove Perón's close connection with Nazi Germany. Inescapably, though, it signally failed to accomplish this, whether conclusively or more modestly, beyond reasonable doubt. Granted that the Argentine military regime turned to Berlin for the weapons that Washington denied it when Perón was the war minister's secretary. Nevertheless, to this day Perón's not improbable role in the amateurish mission entrusted to one Osmar Hellmuth remains shrouded in mystery, with German documents being exceptionally inconclusive on exactly how much the war secretary knew or was taken in by the planners of that unsuccessful mission. NA, RG 59, 862.20235/6-1446, Robert Murphy to James Byrnes. Carlos Escudé, *Gran Bretaña, Estados Unidos y la declinación argentina, 1942-1949* (Buenos Aires, 1983), pp. 190-4; Leslie B. Rout, Jr. and John F. Bratzel, *The Shadow War: German Espionage and United States Counterespionage in Latin America during World War II* (Frederick, 1986), p. 386; Bryce Wood, *The Dismantling of the Good Neighbor Policy* (Austin, 1985), p. 110; Callum A. MacDonald, "The Braden Campaign and Anglo-American Relations in Argentina, 1945-6," in Di Tella and Watt, p. 150; Gravil, p. 21; Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration* (Tuscaloosa, 1991), p. 177.
11. For Sábato, who had no sympathy for Perón, see *Tres revoluciones (Los últimos veintiocho años)* (Buenos Aires, 1959), pp. 66-71. For the American Jewish Committee initiative, see Jerry W. Knudson, "Antisemitism in Latin America: Social Change in Argentina," *Patterns of Prejudice* (London), November-December 1972, p. 24; Klich, pp. 202 and 205.
 12. Ignacio Klich, "Challenges to Jewish Life in Latin America: Argentina," in William Frankel, ed., *Survey of Jewish Affairs, 1991* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 224-25; *Latin American Weekly Report* (London), 10 October 1991.
 13. ISA, 2267/20, Moisés Toff to Jewish Agency executive, 14 November 1946.
 14. CZA, Z5/373, Circular letter of Nahum Goldmann, 31 October 1945; Z5/1087, Abraham Mibashan to Goldmann, 3 September 1946; Z5/1296-I, Report by Gustavo Gutiérrez, 19 September 1946.
 15. *Diario de Sesiones* (Buenos Aires), Cámara de Diputados (D), 4 September 1946.
 16. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 17 and 25 July 1946.
 17. CZA, Z5/1087, Mibashan to Goldmann, 3 September 1946. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 4 September 1946.
 18. Ernesto Cleve to Abraham Isaac Bokser, 5 December 1946, in A.I. Bokser, "El problema judío frente al parlamento argentino," Liga Americana pro-Liberación Judía (Sección Argentina), Buenos Aires, n.d., p. iv. "Argentina e Israel: Una tradición que nos honra," DAIA-OSA, Buenos Aires, 1975, p. 14; Cipriano Reyes, *La farsa del peronismo* (Buenos Aires, 1987), pp. 133-34.
 19. Washington National Record Center (WNRC), Suitland, Md., Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Buenos Aires embassy, 500 Río Conference, Guy Ray to Secretary of State, 8 August 1947. Félix Luna, *Perón y su tiempo: La Argentina era una fiesta 1946-1949* (Buenos Aires, 1984), p. 296.
 20. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 23 September 1946.
 21. *Id. ant.*
 22. *Id. ant.*
 23. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 19 July 1946, 13 September 1946.
 24. Convened by the American Christian Palestine Committee (ACPC), the conference met in Washington on 1-2 November 1945. It brought together representatives from all the Jewish Agency-inspired pro-(Zionist) Palestine committees outside the US, with the Latin American contingent the conference's largest. Insofar as no such committee was established in Argentina until the second half of 1946, the message was meant as a substitute for the absence of an Argentine representation at the conference. Zionist Archive and Library, New York, N.Y., World Committee for (Zionist) Palestine (WCP) - Committee of Eight, Memorandum of WCP, 28 April 1946; ACPC IX/6, Report of Activities by Rachele Sefaradi-Yarden, 1 October 1945-30 November 1946.
 25. Harold F. Peterson, *La Argentina y los Estados Unidos: 1914-1960* (Buenos Aires, 1985), p. 287.
 26. CZA, Z5/1087, Press release by World Committee for (Zionist) Palestine, 15 February 1946. *Hoy*, 2 November 1945; *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), 2 November 1945, 8 February 1946; *La Epoca* (Buenos Aires), 7 November 1945; *Argentinisches Tageblatt* (Buenos Aires), 3 February 1946; *Di Presse* (Buenos Aires), 3 February 1946; *La Razón* (Buenos Aires), 4 February 1946; *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 9 February 1946.
 27. In contrast to the Argentine Arab Defence Committee's requests, ten other bodies made representations to the lower house in favour of the proposed resolution. In chronological order, those listed in the Argentine congressional record were the Entre Ríos Anti-Racist Society, the Paraná Sephardic Association, the Villa Clara Jewish community, the Villa Clara tradeunion *Obreros Oficios Varios*, the Concordia Popular Zionists,

- the Entre Ríos Jewish societies, the Paraná Jewish Women Society, the Paraná Youth Centre *El Faro* and the Paraná branch of the Argentine League for the Rights of Mankind. Additionally, a Revisionist Zionist outfit, the Argentine section of the American League for Hebrew Liberation, lobbied congressmen in favour of the pro-Zionist statement and also met with Joaquín Díaz de Vivar, the lower house foreign affairs committee's Peronist chairman. That all the preceding were not emulated by other more important Jewish bodies was probably due to the leadership of Argentina's Jewish representative body (DAIA) rightly perceiving the *cul-de-sac* Mibashan's probe could lead into. While DAIA honoured the sponsoring legislators, president Moisés Goldman first sought to dissuade Mibashan and Santander from launching this initiative. Later DAIA was seen to discourage Jewish enquirers from urging Congress to pass the resolution. For example, late in October 1946, when the Jewish Anti-Tuberculosis League consulted DAIA as to whether it should petition a favourable decision on the pro-Zionist resolution, the advice it received was not to do so as DAIA would act in its favour 'at the right time.' CZA, Z5/1087, Mibashan to Goldmann, 5 September 1946; DAIA papers, Buenos Aires, *Actas de Consejo Directivo*, 31 August 1944-7 November 1946, pp. 166, 189; Reynaldo Pastor to Bokser, 2 December 1946, in Reynaldo A. Pastor, *Mi lucha por la libertad* (n.p., n.d.), p. 143. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 6, 11, 23, 25 and 29 September 1946; 1, 3 and 23 October 1946; 6 November 1946; Rufino Marín, "Honorable Diputado," Liga America pro-Liberación Judía, 19 August 1946; Bokser, pp. iii-v.
28. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 20 and 25 September 1946.
 29. The pro-Zionist statements of another Uruguay-based Radical in exile, Agustín Rodríguez Araya, when the First Latin American Zionist Congress met in Montevideo on 10-15 March 1945 intimate that the Jewish Agency could count on him to lobby some UCR legislators. See *Primer Congreso Sionista Latinoamericano* (Buenos Aires, 1946), pp. 50, 112-14.
 30. NA, RG 59, 835.032/10-1646, R. Kenneth Oakley to Secretary of State. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 23 September 1946.
 31. Page, pp. 193-94.
 32. Braden papers, CD 1946-7 A-D, Emilio Dickmann to Braden, 10 November 1945. Repetto, pp. 289-90; Alberto Conil Paz and Gustavo Ferrari, *Política exterior argentina 1930-1962* (Buenos Aires, 1971), p. 195; Miguel Angel Scenna, *F.O.R.J.A.: Una aventura argentina (De Yrigoyen a Perón)* (Buenos Aires, 1983, Second edition), p. 356; César Teach, "Sabbatinismo: Identidad radical y oposición disruptiva," *Desarrollo Económico* (Buenos Aires), July-December 1988, pp. 186-87; Susana Brauner Rodgers, "El nacionalismo yrigoyenista (1930-1943)," *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* (Tel Aviv), July 1990, pp. 87-88, 94-95.
 33. Long papers, Argentina 1944, Bacon to Bonsal, 3 March 1944; PRO, 51809/AS 1206, Robert Hadow to Perowne, 25 February 1946; 51809/AS 1212, David Kelly to Foreign Office, 26 February 1946; 51809/AS 1262, Kelly to Foreign Office, 1 March 1946; NA, RG 226, 866/75641, Millard to Secretary of State, 11 March 1944; RG 59, 710 Consultation 4/7-2147, Ray to Secretary of State; WNRC, 500 Río Conference 1947, Oakley to Secretary of State, 25 July 1947; 800, Report by J. L. Corbett, 22 August 1947. Peter G. Snow, *Argentine Radicalism: The History and Doctrine of the Radical Civil Union* (Iowa City, 1965), pp. 59-60, 62-63; Conil Paz and Ferrari, p. 156; Pablo José Hernández, *Conversaciones con José María Rosa* (Buenos Aires, 1978), pp. 99-100; Mario Rapoport, *Gran Bretaña, Estados Unidos y las clases dirigentes argentinas: 1940-1945* (Buenos Aires, 1980), p. 198; Emilio Perina, "4 de Junio, 1943: Común denominador de incertidumbres, recelos y desconfianzas," *Todo es Historia* (Buenos Aires), June 1983, pp. 40-44; Luna, *Perón y su tiempo*, pp. 305-6; Helvio I. Botana, *Memorias: Tras los dientes del perro* (Buenos Aires, 1985), pp. 279, 297; Robert A. Potash, *El ejército y la política en la Argentina 1928-1945: De Yrigoyen a Perón* (Buenos Aires, 1986), pp. 266, 274-75; Mario Rapoport, *Política y diplomacia en la Argentina: Las relaciones con EE.UU. y la URSS* (Buenos Aires, 1987), pp. 94, 103-4; Miguel Angel Scenna, "El radicalismo: noventa años de historia," in Félix Luna, ed., *500 años de historia argentina: El radicalismo* (Buenos Aires, 1988), pp. 106-107. Botana's memoirs provide interesting insights into UCR legislator Raúl Damonte Taborda. The first chairman of the Anti-Argentine Activities Enquiry Committee, set up in June 1941 to investigate Nazi operations in the country, Damonte's editorial control over the Botanas' daily *Crítica* manifested itself in a neutralist line since February 1943. Moreover, when Perón sought to lure the Radicals into an electoral compact, Damonte toyed with the idea of being the colonel's running mate. Not surprisingly, therefore, Helvio's Montevideo-based *Crítica Libre* (23 June 1945) described those who collaborated with the military regime as having 'their origins in past enquiry committees,' while *Pueblo Argentino* (10 May

- 1945) labelled Damonte as an outright Peronist. For the British, however, Damonte's zigging and zagging was the hallmark of an 'unscrupulous' politician.
34. Gabriel del Mazo, *El Radicalismo: El Movimiento de Intransigencia y Renovación (1945-1957)* (Buenos Aires, 1957), pp. 53, 58-59; Félix Luna, *El 45: Crónica de un año decisivo* (Buenos Aires, 1986, Fourteenth edition), pp. 365-66; Tcach, p. 187; *Pueblo Argentino*, 25 March 1945, 25 April 1945, 25 June 1945.
 35. Indicative of the UCR's appeal among the Syro-Lebanese in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s were president Alvear's rewarding of a Radical militant, the Lebanese-born Jorge Sawaya, with his nomination as Argentine consul in Beirut; the coming into being of an UCR *Agrupación Descendientes de Sirio Libaneses pro Candidatura Dr. Hipólito Yrigoyen*; the presence of Lebanese-descended José Kairuz among FORJA's founding members, and the fact that Elías Llugdar's Santiago del Estero constituency voted him to become an UCR lower house member in 1942. Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto, Buenos Aires, Consular Division, Syria 1/926, Decree, 25 March 1926; Moisés J. Azize papers, privately held, Gabriel Kairuz to Moisés Azize, 14 September 1928, 10 October 1928. Scenna, *F.O.R.J.A.*, p. 68; Alberto Tasso, *Aventura, trabajo y poder: Sirios y libaneses en Santiago del Estero (1880-1980)* (Buenos Aires, 1989), p. 194; Ignacio Klich, "Criollos and Arabic Speakers in Argentina: An Uneasy *Pas-de-Deux*, 1888-1914," in Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, eds., *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (London 1992), p. 254, n. 26.
 36. Del Mazo, pp. 53, 77-78; Brauner Rodgers, pp. 84-85, 92. For Farías Gómez, see Klich, "Criollos and Arabic Speakers," p. 255, n. 30.
 37. Among Candiotti's postings prior to Beirut was Lemberg. As Argentina's consul general during World War I, his assistance to Galician Jews victimized by Russian soldiers won him the Lemberg Jewish community's praise, according to David Sheinin. See David M. K. Sheinin, "Argentina's Early Priorities in the European War: Compliance, Anti-Semitism, and Trade Concerns in the Response to the German Invasion of the Netherlands," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, (Toronto) Vol. 16, No. 31, p. 23.
 38. Luna, *El 45*, p. 386; *Diario Siriolibanés* (Buenos Aires), 30 June 1945; *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 4 September 1946, 22 January 1947; *El Misionero* (Buenos Aires), 11 September 1946, 18 September 1946, 16 October 1946; *La Bandera Árabe* (Buenos Aires), 23 October 1946.
 39. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 5 February 1947, 5 March 1947.
 40. If Mibashan's recruitment of Reyes was due to an unspelled (and unattained) desire to enlist the support of all wings of the ruling bloc, Reyes' particular attractiveness to Jews may have had something to do with his alleged anti-clericalism and anti-Francoism, as well as his openly defiant attitude towards Perón. Two years later, however, when Reyes stood accused of conspiring to overthrow and assassinate Perón, his earlier association with Mibashan, as well as the undoubtedly staunch anti-Peronism in Zionist and US Jewish circles, apparently inspired the inclusion of the Jewish Agency and some US-based Jewish bodies among those implicated in the plot, with an improbable list of plotters, aiders and abettors publicized in one officialist press organ. That the last word on this affair, though, has yet to be uttered is intimated by the fact that while Reyes and others referred to the operation as a government laid trap, US intelligence assets allowed ambassador James Cabell Bruce to ascribe responsibility for the concoction of the plot to the Soviet diplomatic representation in Buenos Aires. James C. Bruce papers, Maryland University, College Park, Md., V-2-1, "Handshakes and Ill Feelings," typed manuscript, n.d., pp. 134-5. Luna, *Perón y su tiempo*, pp. 47-52; Reyes, pp. 151-73; Lila María Caimari, "El lugar del catolicismo en el primer peronismo," paper presented at the I Encuentro de los Argentinistas Europeos, Madrid, 29-31 May 1991.
 41. Del Mazo, pp. 77-78; Luna, *El 45*, pp. 67-68, 110-15; *Pueblo Argentino*, 10 January 1945. Attacking the military government as 'foreign to the national spirit,' the *manifiesto de los líderes* included seventeen Jewish signatories. An earlier statement by Entre Ríos and Santa Fe province Radicals, transcribed in the abovementioned Montevideo periodical, denounced as 'high treason' the acceptance of government appointments by UCR members. This bore the signatures of not fewer than five Jews, including Nehemías Resnizky, Pedro Schapira, Benjamín Schwartzman, as well as José and Mauricio Ulanovsky. None of this certainly means that, *Lebensohn* apart, Jews were to be found nowhere in Intransigent ranks. Though fewer in number, the delegates to the Intransigents' first national congress, held in August 1947, included David Blejer, Santiago Guerscovich, Mariano Wainfeld and José Kaplan.
 42. Before the end of 1946, however, Santander's efforts to revive the Anti-Argentine Activities Enquiry Committee did not prevent him from joining forces with other legislators calling on Perón to allow the return

of the deported sailors of the German pocket warship *Admiral Graf von Spee* who had married Argentine women. NA, RG 59, 735.00/2-2454, US embassy (Buenos Aires) monthly summary; L. Werz to Jorge Giraldes, 12 December 1955, in Carlos von der Becke, *Destrucción de una infamia: Falsos "documentos oficiales"* (Buenos Aires, 1956), p. 316. Luna, *El 45*, p. 56; *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 25 July 1946, 19 December 1946.

43. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to show that Perón offered qualified support for Jewish national aspirations, Toff reported to the Jewish Agency executive that the president had pledged Argentine backing for statehood without ifs and buts. For his part, Mibashan wrote that Argentina would not compromise other interests for the sake of Zionism's fondest hope. CZA, Z5/1087, Mibashan to Goldmann, 5 September 1946; ISA, 2267/20, Toff to Jewish Agency executive, 14 November 1946.
44. Moshé A. Tov, *El murmullo de Israel: Historial diplomático* (Jerusalem, 1983), p. 94; Newton, "Disorderly Succession," p. 130.
45. Like Santander, the supporters of the pro-Zionist statement comprised some of the most articulate parliamentary critics of the Franco régime and its relationship with Peronist Argentina, e.g. Cleve, Díaz Colodrero, Mosset Iturraspe, Pastor and Reyes. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 27-28 September 1946, 15 January 1947; Raanan Rein, "Franquistas y antifranquistas en la Argentina peronista," paper presented at the I Encuentro de Argentinistas Europeos.
46. Alex L. Easterman papers, Institute of Jewish Affairs (IJA), London, Jewish Communities, Marc Turkow to Gerhart Riegner, 15 March 1965.
47. *Diario de Sesiones*, D, 26 July 1946.
48. Ignacio Klich, "Latin America and the Palestinian Question," *IJA Research Report*, January 1986, pp. 23-28.