

Peronism in Chile

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THE ELECTION OF Carlos Ibáñez del Campo as president of Chile in 1952 kindled high hopes in the president of Argentina, Juan D. Perón. The two leaders were mutual admirers. Each wished to augment the international influence of his country through closer economic and political ties with the other. Perón, aspiring to extend the scope of his Argentine political system, justicialism, welcomed the assumption of power across the Andes by his personal friend. For his part, Ibáñez regarded his friendship with Perón as a circumstance which might at last enable the two nations to set aside long-standing suspicions and resentments and to integrate their complementary economies. Although these hopes and ambitions were frustrated, and no major political or economic integration between Chile and Argentina was effected, Perón and Peronism did exercise a significant influence upon Chilean politics during the second Ibáñez government.

Ibañism was always a vague political doctrine lacking specific proposals. Whereas Perón had both the capacity and the desire to articulate an explicit political philosophy for his regime, Ibáñez was no program-maker, and he himself called Ibañism "an inorganic force, almost purely sentimental."¹ Its three fundamental characteristics were authoritarianism, nationalism, and hostility to the Chilean "oligarchy."² In all three respects it resembled Peronism. Ibáñez and Perón shared similar aspirations for their respective nations. Among the most important of these were: to end indecision in public life by reducing the effective power of the national legislature; to reform the national economy by curtailing the power of private capitalists in favor of government initiative; and to increase the international standing of their nations by acting independently

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¹ Letter from Ibáñez to Perón, March 25, 1953. Chile, Cámara de Diputados, *Boletín de sesiones ordinarias*, 1956, II (Sesión 21, June 26, 1956), 1232-1234. For an English translation of this revealing letter and one from Perón to Ibáñez, March 16, 1953, see Donald W. Bray, "Chilean Politics During the Second Ibáñez Government, 1952-58" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1961).

² For an extended analysis of Ibañism see Bray, "Chilean Politics."

of the United States. By 1952 Perón had succeeded to a considerable degree in achieving all of these objectives. In contrast, Ibáñez never achieved any of them.

Ibáñez sometimes referred to Argentina, which had been his home during periods of exile, as his second fatherland.³ It had served as the base from which he plotted the overthrow of virtually all the men who followed him in power after his first administration (1927-1931). His announcement from Argentina in November 1950 that he intended to seek the presidency was in keeping with these activities. It turned out, however, to be politically unwise, causing suspicions in Chile⁴ that because the campaign had been launched from Argentina it was financed by Peronist funds.⁵

After being elected to the Chilean senate in March 1951 Ibáñez again visited Argentina. He received considerable attention in the Argentine press which praised his "justicialist doctrine." Motion picture newsreels showed him with Eva Perón visiting projects sponsored by the Argentine first lady.

To marshal support for the general within the Chilean colony in Argentina, an organization called *Acción Social Chilena* was established in Buenos Aires on May 21, 1951. The Peronist labor con-

³ His longest continuous stay there was between July 1931 and May 1937.

⁴ Ibáñez' long-time secretary, René Montero Moreno, professed puzzlement over Ibáñez' motives in announcing his candidacy while visiting Argentina. *Confesiones políticas* (Santiago, 1959), 144.

⁵ Ibáñez' campaign manager, Javier Lira Merino, held that the campaign was modestly financed. Interview, November 17, 1959. Lira failed to respond to a request by the author that he make a written statement regarding Peronist contributions. One person interviewed said he personally knew people who brought "bags" full of money from Argentina for Ibáñez' campaign. Another, a prominent Ibañist, said campaign money from Argentina came not from Perón, but was borrowed from "a bank in Bahía Blanca." Radical Deputy Manuel Ríoseco declared in congress that "documentary proof" that the *Movimiento Nacional Ibañista*, the *Partido Femenino de Chile*, and the *Partido Agrario Laborista* (PAL) had received money from the Argentine ambassador to finance "several aspects" of the Ibáñez campaign "had not been contradicted." Ríoseco alleged that a check signed by the Argentine ambassador for the PAL had been delivered to PAL leader Alejandro Hales. Chile, Cámara de Diputados, *Boletín de sesiones ordinarias*, III (Sesión 37, July 17, 1956), 2141. After breaking with the regime, Conrado Ríos Gallardo, who had been the Chilean ambassador to Argentina, declared in 1956 that Ibáñez had received five million Argentine pesos from Perón as a campaign contribution. *Vea*, No. 891 (May 9, 1956), 17. Carlos Vicuña Fuentes, one of Ibáñez' most bitter enemies, asserted that Perón was the "principal source" of Ibáñez' campaign finances. Vicuña said that Ibáñez accepted the money in "bad faith" in the sense that he did not intend to carry out Peronist objectives in Chile. Interview, September 28, 1959. The historian Francisco Encina did not believe that Peronist funds played a significant part in financing the Ibáñez campaign. Interview, November 20, 1959.

federation, *Confederación General del Trabajo*, furnished the group two offices in Buenos Aires free of charge.⁶

A Chilean resident in Buenos Aires, Ginna Maggi Blanco, approached Ibáñez stalwarts in the Argentine capital with the idea of forming an organization to raise money so that the “thousands” of Chilean laborers in Argentina might make a trip home in order to vote for the general.⁷ The plan received the blessing of Rogelio Cuéllar and other Ibañist leaders in Buenos Aires, and a fund-raising campaign was undertaken. Some of the contributions came from these Chilean laborers in Argentina who believed that if Ibáñez were elected the standard of living of workers in Chile would be raised to Argentine levels.

Ibañist intrigue with Perón began even before the Argentine colonel became president. On February 12, 1945, a secret group called *Los Cóndores* was founded for this purpose. Its directors were drawn largely from the leadership of an Ibañist organization called the *Unión Nacionalista* which had been dissolved a few months before. The first head of the group was Professor Guillermo Izquierdo Araya, whom the Falangist (Christian Democratic) journal *Política y Espiritu* once characterized as an “ex-Nazi turned justicialist.”⁸ After Izquierdo left for Buenos Aires on a grant from the Argentine National Cultural Commission, leadership passed to Nilo Rosenberg, Víctor M. Vergara, and Octavio O’Kingston.⁹ In 1948 *Los Cóndores* leaders played a principal role in launching an organization called *Acción Chileno-Argentina*, while Izquierdo founded a corresponding group, *Acción Argentino-Chilena* in Buenos Aires on July 9, 1948.¹⁰

Three years later the *Cóndores* group was implicated in a conspiracy, the so-called Colliguay plot, against the government of President Gabriel González Videla in Santiago. The Army adjutant general at the time, Leonidas Bravo, while not objecting to secret societies *per se*, declared that the “grave thing” about the participation of *Los Cóndores* in the Colliguay episode was that it marked

⁶ Calle Montes de Oca 776 and Calle Alberti 1249. Chile, Cámara de Diputados, *Boletín de sesiones ordinarias*, III (Sesión 37, July 17, 1956), 2141.

⁷ Ginna Maggi Blanco, *Tres presidentes en un andén* (Santiago, 1954), 103. Perón decreed that 500 Chilean workers could go to Chile to vote in the presidential election. *Ibid.*, 149.

⁸ No. 104 (November 15, 1953), 3.

⁹ Alejandro Magnet, *Nuestros vecinos justicialistas* (Santiago, 1953), 162.

¹⁰ The executive committee of *Acción Chileno-Argentina*, headed by Conrado Ríos Gallardo, included Ernesto Barros Jarpa, Jorge Berguno Meneses, Carlos Keller Rueff, Jaime Larraín García Moreno, Guillermo Izquierdo Araya, Eugenio Orrego Vicuña, and Andrés Feliú. *Ibid.*, 163-164.

the "first appearance" in a Chilean revolutionary conspiracy of a "secret society with international contacts."¹¹

Another example of Peronist influence was the energetic feminist movement which arose in the swell of the Ibáñez presidential campaign. The dominant figure in the movement was a Chilean senator, the charismatic but emotionally unstable María de la Cruz Toledo. A personal friend of Juan and Eva Perón, she strove to emulate them and was often referred to as the "Eva Perón of Chile." She openly proclaimed herself a disciple of the Argentine president: "I am a Peronist because I am a justicialist, and Perón is the founder of justicialism. . . . I am an Ibañist because the Ibañist doctrine is justicialism."¹²

The rapid rise of the Ibañist feminist movement was matched by its equally rapid collapse soon after the election. In addition to the nation's early disillusionment with the Ibáñez regime and the expulsion of María de la Cruz from the Senate,¹³ the movement was destroyed by adverse public reaction to the revelation that Perón had subsidized it. During an official visit to Chile he met at the Argentine Embassy with the heads of the *Partido Progresista Femenino*, the *Partido Femenino Chileno*, the *Conferencia Nacional de Mujeres Chilenas*, and the feminine branches of the *Partido Nacional Cristiano* and the *Partido Agrario Laborista* (PAL). Perón offered them 200,000 Argentine pesos to promote their unification and the consolidation of their activities.¹⁴ He entrusted the funds to two Argentine congresswomen who met on February 26, 1953 at the Carrera Hotel in Santiago with five Chilean feminist leaders: María Hamuy, Clementina Gil de Donoso, Julia Román, Delfina Venegas, and María Moll de Escudero. Each of the leaders except María Moll accepted 20,000 Argentine pesos in cash. María Hamuy, national president of the unified party-to-be, accepted the 20,000 peso share on behalf of Sra. Moll of the PAL, who said she could not take it without consultation with the executive committee of her party.¹⁵ Later, when Perón's gift to the five feminist parties was made public, the funds were returned to Argentina.¹⁶

¹¹ Leonidas Bravo, *Lo que supo un auditor de guerra* (Santiago, 1955), 238.

¹² *Vea*, No. 738 (June 3, 1953), 4.

¹³ In August 1953 the Senate voted 16 to 14 to remove María de la Cruz from its ranks. She was ousted because of her loyalty to Perón.

¹⁴ Magnet, *Nuestros vecinos*, 195.

¹⁵ Chile, Cámara de Diputados, *Boletín de sesiones ordinarias*, 1956, II (Sesión 20, June 26, 1956), 1071-1072.

¹⁶ Magnet, *Nuestros vecinos*, 195. Additional Argentine funds had been bestowed upon Chilean feminist leaders sympathetic to Perón by way of the Eva

Despite these political reversals María de la Cruz remained loyal to Perón. He consoled her in 1956 from exile in Venezuela: "Do not forget there is nothing more honorable than to burn oneself in order to illuminate the era in which we live."¹⁷

In February 1953 Perón made a memorable visit to Chile. His invitation was planned before Ibáñez' election and grew out of the two presidents' aspirations to form a bloc of several South American states. It had been hoped that Presidents Velasco Ibarra of Ecuador, Paz Estenssoro of Bolivia, Vargas of Brazil, and Perón would attend Ibáñez' inauguration and discuss the formation of the bloc.¹⁸ In mid-September 1952 the future minister of interior, Guillermo del Pedregal, was sent on an extra-official mission to Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro in the hope of persuading Perón and Vargas to attend the proposed meeting. All the presidents except Vargas reportedly were willing to come to the inauguration.¹⁹ Vargas, who had been trying since March 1952 to secure congressional approval of a military pact with the United States, did not want to endanger that approval by participation in international political maneuvers of the kind proposed by Ibáñez. "We never have and never will support the dismemberment of continental unity," explained Brazilian Foreign Minister João Neves de Fontoura.²⁰ Brazil's rebuff led to the cancellation of the proposed Santiago meeting, and Perón postponed his trip to Chile. In spite of Brazil's expressed disapproval of an entente between Perón and Ibáñez,²¹ the Chilean president, upon assuming office, instructed his ambassador in Buenos Aires, Conrado Ríos Gallardo, to arrange an exchange of visits with Perón.²²

Statements from Ibañists and from Perón himself alarmed Chilean public opinion, even before the Argentine leader had left Buenos Aires. The Chilean who aroused most misgivings over the visit among Ibáñez' opposition was María de la Cruz, who had proved to be an effective vote-getter and who continued as Senator to express Peronist affiliation. Perón sent a shiver through some sectors of Chilean society by pronouncements made to José Dolores Vásquez Murúa, director

Perón Foundation. This assistance was given ostensibly to further the work of certain Chilean educational and public service agencies.

¹⁷ *Vea*, No. 894 (May 30, 1956), 5.

¹⁸ Whereas Ibáñez considered the chief value of such a bloc to be its function as a multination counterweight to the United States, Perón regarded it as a vehicle for extending his personal power.

¹⁹ *Vea*, No. 722 (February 11, 1953), 4.

²⁰ Magnet, *Nuestros vecinos*, 192.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Vea*, No. 722 (February 11, 1953), 4.

of the Chilean newspaper *La Nación*. The interview, which appeared in the February 15 edition of the paper, quoted Perón as saying that he believed in a "total and immediate unity of Chile and Argentina." "Simple economic unity," he reportedly said, "is not sufficiently strong."

Ibáñez' secretary of government, René Montero Moreno, took exception to the Perón utterance, which he feared would inflame public opinion against the regime. In a telegram to the Argentine president he said: "Your declaration has deeply wounded Chilean public feelings and has been sharply rejected by the three branches of government."²³ According to Montero, Ibáñez and Minister of Foreign Relations Oscar Fenner were in "complete agreement" with the telegram which, when received by Perón, almost caused him to cancel his Chilean trip.²⁴

Perón arrived by train in Santiago on February 20, 1953 accompanied by a large entourage.²⁵ He was greeted at the Central Railroad Station by Ibáñez and all of his cabinet ministers. The next day the two presidents signed the Act of Santiago, establishing a 120-day period in which the two nations were to negotiate a treaty to eliminate all trade restrictions between them.²⁶ Later, speaking to a multitude in front of the presidential residence, Perón "conquered the masses" with his oratory and personality.²⁷

On February 23, Ibáñez and Perón journeyed to Valparaíso by train for ceremonial activities and speech making. The next day as the group continued on to Concepción, María de la Cruz, a member of the binational traveling party, provoked press resentment by tossing Argentine coins from the train to spectators along the way. In Concepción Perón aroused further indignation when he proclaimed that all presidents of Argentina and Chile except himself and Ibáñez had been *vendepatrias* (sellouts).²⁸ The tenor of a balcony speech by Perón in Concepción moved Conrado Ríos Gallardo to tell Argen-

²³ Montero Moreno, *Confesiones políticas*, 217.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 218.

²⁵ The Argentines who visited Chile in conjunction with the Perón visit included Foreign Relations Minister Jerónimo Remorino and his assistants, Secretary General of the *Confederación General del Trabajo* Eduardo Vuletich, Labor Minister José María Freyre, several labor leaders, Interior Minister Ángel Borlenghi, numerous journalists, more than 400 security agents, two congressional deputies, eight army officers, a hotel delegation, and several aviators, San Martín grenadiers, and television technicians. Magnet, *Nuestros vecinos*, 193-194.

²⁶ Article No. 2 of the Acta del Acuerdo. Servicio Internacional Publicaciones Argentinas, *Confraternidad latinoamericana* (Buenos Aires, 1953), 25.

²⁷ Ernesto Würth Rojas, *Ibáñez, caudillo enigmático* (Santiago, 1958), 300.

²⁸ Ricardo Boizard, *El caso Kelly* (Buenos Aires, 1957), 9.

tine Foreign Minister Remorino that it was “inappropriate” and that he “deplored” it.²⁹ Perón’s balcony speeches, however, continued to be received favorably by massed Chilean audiences.

Long before Perón’s visit Chilean concern over Peronism had appeared. During the first months after Ibáñez’ inauguration members of congress voiced suspicions of Peronist influence upon the regime when cabinet ministers requested the constitutionally required authorization to leave the country in order to visit Argentina. Authorization was always granted, but opposition groups took these opportunities to criticize the government for alleged Peronist leanings. Deputy Baltazar Castro satirized this procedure by suggesting that the attempt to deny a Chilean official permission to travel to Argentina for fear he would return afflicted with justicialism was comparable to advocating that no ambassador to the Vatican be named for fear that he would return an ordained priest.³⁰

By mid-1953 the issue of Peronism had begun to recede in Chilean politics. Facing congressional opposition, the administration’s grandiose plan for a Chilean-Argentine customs union unceremoniously collapsed. Other reasons for the abatement of the Peronism issue were the political demise of María de la Cruz and Senator Guillermo Izquierdo Araya’s denial that he was a justicialist.³¹

But Chilean alarm over Peronism rose again in April 1955 when Ibáñez established a labor office in the presidential palace. This act was interpreted by some as a Peronist innovation. Ibáñez placed his naval aide-de-camp, Commander Jorge Ibarra, at the head of this office with the mission of organizing a labor movement loyal to the president.³² A few days before this Eduardo Vuletich, secretary general of the Argentine *Confederación General del Trabajo*, and several other Peronist labor leaders visited Chile. Vuletich said that his group had come merely to savor Chilean lobsters and wine and to be entertained by the girls at the “Bim Bam Bum” burlesque theater.³³ Their real mission, however, was to organize a Chilean arm of Perón’s international labor confederation, the *Agrupación de Trabajadores Latino-Americanos Sindicalistas*, better known as ATLAS.

²⁹ Würth Rojas, *Ibáñez*, 303.

³⁰ Chile, Cámara de Diputados, *Boletín de sesiones ordinarias*, 1953, I (Sesión 6, April 2, 1953), 159.

³¹ Izquierdo declared that he “could not affiliate himself with a non-Chilean political movement.” *Vea*, No. 765 (December 12, 1953), 51.

³² Chile, Cámara de Diputados, *Boletín de sesiones extraordinarias*, 1954-55, V (Sesión 86, April 26, 1955), 5337.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5331.

Both the appointment of Ibarra and the visit by the Vuletich group aroused angry protest from the opposition parties and from the Chilean labor confederation, CUTCH. CUTCH leader Clotario Blest declared that the Vuletich group did not represent the "authentic workers" of Argentina, "but merely a group of betrayers of their class . . . at the unconditional orders of dictator Perón."³⁴ ATLAS made no significant inroads into the Chilean labor movement. Similarly, the Ibarra labor office experiment met with scant success and was soon abandoned.

In late 1955 the theme of Peronism returned with renewed force. Journalist Raúl González Alfaro reopened discussion with a series of twenty-three articles published in the Radical newspaper *El Debate* between December 8, 1955 and January 28, 1956.³⁵ After the fall of Perón in September 1955, more than a score of Chilean journalists went to Argentina to gather information on the late dictatorship and its overthrow. González Alfaro remained in Buenos Aires after the others had returned to Chile, hoping to find documentary evidence of Peronist penetration in his country. A member of one of the more than two hundred commissions established by the new Argentine regime to investigate the Perón government telephoned González that such records had been found. Apparently Perón had taken special pains to preserve the records of his "imperialistic adventures" so that if he were one day forced from power he would not fall alone, and all who had obtained some benefit from his government would be implicated.³⁶

The series of articles by González, although full of innuendo and supposition, contained sufficient tantalizing fact to cause a congressional investigation of Peronism in Chile. A group of three deputies headed by Florencio Galleguillos Vera went to Buenos Aires to gather data. Upon completion of its studies and interrogations the commission issued a report which was presented to the Chamber of Deputies beginning on June 26, 1956. The commission brought together much information already known about Peronism in Chile but failed to reveal anything startlingly new. The report established that several politicians, journalists, labor leaders, and others had accepted Argentine money for propagandizing on behalf of the Perón government. The Galleguillos commission did not criticize

³⁴ *Ercilla*, No. 1041 (April 12, 1955), 6.

³⁵ The most significant of these articles were republished in Ricardo Boizard's book *El caso Kelly*.

³⁶ González identifies the informant as François Boizard, *El caso Kelly*, 159-160.

those who had courted the Perón regime in order to make business profits through trade with Argentina. On the other hand, to hold justicialist views or to be an admirer of Perón was a ground for condemnation. The commission did, in fact, take on the appearance of an “Un-Chilean Activities Committee.”

Some congressmen refused to accept the political equation that pro-Peronism equalled anti-Chileanism. Deputy Ernesto Aranedo Rocha, an Ibañist of the *Partido del Trabajo*, while allowing that Perón had “committed many errors” and condemning him for his “imperialistic ambition,” declared:

I have to recognize that the administration of President Perón in Argentina swept out foreign interests and returned basic services like navigation, railroads, and telephones to that nation. Moreover, he raised the economic and social level of the people. . . . If Perón had continued in this manner he would not have fallen because he would have continued to receive the backing of the Argentine people . . . , and the dictatorship of Sr. Perón was replaced by a worse dictatorship of the armed forces, the Church, and the conservatives.³⁷

Deputy Sergio Ojeda D. of the PAL agreed that the methods used by Perón to propagate his doctrines in Chile had been a “grave error,” but he quoted extensive words of praise for Perón which had been delivered in the Chilean Senate by former President Arturo Alessandri Palma. He concluded: “The foreign monopolists and exploiters of great public utilities trusts were expelled from the country. . . . From that fact comes all of the shouting. That was the problem at bottom. . . . From that fact come the anathemas of ‘usurper’ and ‘dictator’.”³⁸

After the downfall of Perón Chile opened its doors to thousands of his followers in keeping with its traditional acceptance of political exiles. In the main, the large group of Peronist exiles behaved well in Chile, caused no great public concern, and stayed out of local politics. Eventually all but a few drifted inconspicuously back across the Andes.

Quite different was the impact of six refugees who arrived during March 1957 in Punta Arenas in the far south seeking political asylum. The group had bribed its way out of the Río Gallegos prison in southern Argentina. It consisted of high-ranking personalities of the former regime: Jorge Antonio, a Syrian whose friendship with Perón had enabled him to make a fortune in the import business; Guillermo

³⁷ Chile, Cámara de Diputados, *Boletín de sesiones ordinarias*, 1956, III (Sesión 37, July 17, 1956), 2131.

³⁸ *Ibid.* (Sesión 38, July 18, 1956), 2284.

Patricio Kelly, ex-head of the strong-arm *Alianza Libertadora Nacional*; Héctor J. Campora, former president of the Chamber of Deputies; John William Cooke, ex-head of the Peronist party;³⁹ José Espejo, former head of the *Confederación General del Trabajo*; and Pedro Gómez, a former Peronist Deputy.⁴⁰ The Argentine government requested extradition of the six escaped Peronists, alleging that they were "common criminals," but the Chilean Supreme Court ruled that extradition was warranted only in the case of Guillermo Kelly, who was accused of having committed murder while leading a raid against the Communist Party headquarters in Buenos Aires.⁴¹

On September 29, 1957, shortly before his extradition, Kelly walked out of a Santiago penitentiary disguised as a woman.⁴² Despite a manhunt described as the "greatest . . . recorded in the judicial history of Chile,"⁴³ Kelly managed to flee the country. His escape caused congress to turn wrathfully upon the government. The Chamber of Deputies voted to impeach Minister of Foreign Relations Osvaldo Sainte-Marie and Minister of Justice Arturo Zúñiga Latorre for allegedly having had foreknowledge of the escape and for not having taken proper steps to prevent it. President Ibáñez' ire over the impeachment of two of his cabinet ministers led to a change of political direction for his government. Once again the issue of Peronism had altered the course of events on the Pacific side of the Andes.

During the second Ibáñez government Argentina joined the United States and the Soviet Union as a third major political system actively seeking adherents in Chile. The techniques employed by Perón to spread his doctrine in Chile were similar at many points to those used by the United States and the USSR. He invited politicians, labor leaders, intellectuals, and others to his capital for subsidized inspection of his state; he attempted to "plant" commentaries favorable to his government in the local press; and he carried out campaigns aimed at specific sectors of Chilean society. Although the Soviet Union was no less a dictatorship, and the United States was making no less an effort to influence Chilean public opinion, it was

³⁹ In Chile Cooke exhibited a handwritten document, signed by Juan Perón, reading: "In case of my death, I delegate the command of the movement to John William Cooke." *Vea*, No. 970 (April 18, 1957), 4.

⁴⁰ *Hispanic American Report*, Vol. X, No. 3 (March 1957), 149. Blanca Luz Brum, "La gran evasión," *O cruzeiro internacional* (December 1, 1959), 68-77.

⁴¹ *Hispanic American Report*, Vol. X, No. 9 (September 1957), 485.

⁴² Interview with Carlos Vicuña Fuentes, Kelly's defense attorney, September 28, 1959.

⁴³ *Hispanic American Report*, Vol. X, No. 9 (September 1957), 485.

justicialism and not Communism or “North Americanism” which congress investigated at great length. A Chilean could be a Marxist or an “agent of U.S. imperialism” and still retain public approval or at least toleration, but he could not do so as a justicialist. This was true, not because justicialism was inherently a less attractive doctrine for many Chileans, but because Argentina was a neighbor of Chile. Behind justicialism loomed the traditional military threat of Argentina.⁴⁴ Another barrier which confronted justicialism was the common Chilean prejudice against citizens of Argentina. A sociological study made in 1957⁴⁵ indicated that Argentina was the Latin American country which Chileans held in lowest esteem.

In spite of these considerations Chile was, Alejandro Magnet admitted,⁴⁶ the foreign nation most susceptible to Peronist penetration. The answer to this seeming contradiction is that insofar as Chileans *were* receptive to the Perón regime, they were motivated largely by admiration of Juan and Eva Perón and of Peronism as a political system, rather than by affection for Argentina or for Argentines in general. The Chilean feminist leaders were particularly influenced by the masculine charm of Juan Perón.

Peronism found its Chilean leaders among middle-class groups. And Perón’s balcony speeches in Chile demonstrated that the Argentine *caudillo* could also evoke an enthusiastic response among members of the lower class. Peronism failed to make significant inroads, however, into the Chilean labor movement. An important factor in this failure was the effective resistance of the predominantly Marxist leadership of organized labor in Chile. The fight against Peronism was spearheaded by the Radical Party, whose traditional espousal of constitutional, democratic procedures made it the logical leader. Unfortunately, however, the nature of the anti-Peronist campaign violated the spirit of those democratic principles which the Radicals and the two other traditional parties, the Liberals and the Conserva-

⁴⁴ Perón enjoyed little success in winning adherents for justicialism among Chilean military officers. Retired Colonel Iván Berger Iguait, who had been the Chilean military attaché in Argentina, testified before the Galleguillos committee that former Minister of Defense General Abdón Parra Urzúa, and the Argentine army minister had formulated a plan to draw the armed forces of their two countries into a close “community.” Chile, Cámara de Diputados, *Boletín de sesiones ordinarias*, 1956, II (Sesión 20, June 26, 1956), 1095. Such a plan, if it did exist, was abandoned. Chilean officers almost as a body remained cool toward Perón. They well remembered that Perón had served as a spy in Chile during the years 1936-38. See Würth Rojas, *Ibáñez*, 296.

⁴⁵ Alain Girard and Raúl Samuel, *Situación y perspectivas de Chile en Septiembre de 1957, una investigación de opinión pública en Santiago* (Santiago, 1958).

⁴⁶ *Nuestros vecinos justicialistas*, 189.

tives, professed to be protecting from totalitarianism. In particular the careless tendency to identify admiration for Argentina with subversion unjustifiably compromised the reputation of some Chileans.

Paradoxically the political elements most receptive to the foreign doctrines of Perón were the most nationalistic groups in Chile. The Ibáñez forces had failed not only to forge a national movement but even to articulate a doctrine. By default the more nationalistic Ibañists turned to the comparatively concrete formulations of justicialism. While it is true that many Chileans abetted the Peronist cause simply for reasons of political opportunism or for material reward, others were prompted by feelings of deep frustration. For them adequate solutions to pressing national problems were not attainable within the context of conventional Chilean political practices.