

during the time of academic review he gave a low grade to a politically influential student." Both the negative political and educational effects of the *Reforma* lead Walter to cautiously advise its advocates to re-examine the consequence of their actions as the movement enters its sixth decade.

The value of this thoughtful, balanced, carefully-researched study is limited only by the author's serious misconceptions concerning Argentine nationalism. This extremely complex subject has assumed many expressions, only one of which is a sort of creole variant of Italian Fascism or Spanish Falangism. By gratuitously assigning all Argentine nationalists to the right of the political spectrum, Walter misses the whole point about the Perón period and many of its antecedents. Moreover, excessive credence to *Reformista* versions of Argentine history leads him into some unfortunate traps, such as arguing that students who favored Argentine intervention on the side of Great Britain and the United States during the Second World War were somehow true "anti-imperialists," while those who favored the maintenance of Argentine neutrality were not. At the same time, careful examination of published U. S. State Department documentation might have tempered some of the more spectacular assertions the author makes concerning the Revolution of 1943.

University of Illinois

MARK FALCOFF

*El 45: Crónica de un año decisivo.* By FÉLIX LUNA. Buenos Aires, 1969. Editorial Jorge Álvarez. Los Argentinos. Illustrations. Tables. Notes. Pp. 637. Paper.

Félix Luna offers two reasons for writing this book. "Whether we like it or not," Luna informs his compatriots, "we still live in the era of 1945." Luna hopes that all Argentines will accept Peronism as a part of their heritage, an acceptance he facilitates by portraying Perón as less the instigator than "the agent of a process which . . . had to arrive," and by confessing to his own initial misperception of the phenomenon. Luna's second motive is more personal:

Perhaps [the author] (like so many others of his age) with fewer prejudices and less conditioning might have been a Peronist in 1945, although it would have been difficult to continue being one later; perhaps this book is subconscious compensation for that instance of turning away from the revolutionary process I always wished to serve.

Luna appears in this book in two guises. Each chapter ends with

a vignette of his activities in those days: a university student participating in street demonstrations, Intransigent Radical organizations, and his father's campaign for a governorship on a ticket headed by Perón's opponent. The second guise is not so cleanly detached from the narrative. Luna has continued to be active in Intransigent Radical circles, serving the Frondizi and Guido administration and writing *Dialogues With Frondizi* (1963). In 1945-1946, most Intransigents were attracted to Perón's policies yet unwilling to break with the parent Radical Party which they someday hoped to control. Luna believes that the Intransigents were developing an alternative better than either Peronism or its opposition: more democratic than Perón's while more progressive than the *Unión Democrática* which Luna characterizes as an anachronism. Thus, interwoven in the historical narrative one finds a justification of the Intransigent viewpoint and, with some reservations, of Intransigent strategy.

Lacking an Intransigent candidate in 1946, however, Luna is convinced that the Argentine public chose well in choosing Perón. "Fundamentally," the Peronist revolution "consisted of the acquisition of a sense of power by the working class." In incorporating the working class into the body politic, Perón had to confront the entire nation with its new reality: its no longer pastoral economy, its growing nationalism, its need for social justice. Although Perón could resort to demagoguery, his "historic function," we are told, was to force Argentina to confront the truth about itself and to abandon "conventional wisdoms, fictions, or complicities." It was Perón's role "to document—to proclaim—all that was false in Argentina," which included *entreguismo*, resistance to change, indifference to industrialization, political improvisation and snobbishness, traits which Luna imputes to those who ruled Argentina from 1930 to 1943 and who would have ruled her again had Perón not triumphed in 1945-1946.

There are difficulties with this interpretation, in the first instance because it distorts the record of the conservative governments of the 'thirties. There are students of the Argentine economy (Carlos F. Díaz Alejandro for one) who believe that on balance Agustín Justo's policies contributed more to long term industrialization than Perón's. If Argentines are to recoup some sense of national unity, it will require not only a nonpartisan reassessment of 1945-1946 but of 1934-1935 as well. Secondly, Luna ignores the extent to which Perón's political strategy required a rhetoric and a pattern of policy-making which proved counterproductive to continued industrialization, and thus to greater welfare, and which clouded—rather than exposed—the post-war reality. The volume of industrial production did not regain its

1947 level until 1955; per capita GNP did not find its 1947 mark until 1958. The search for an explanation for this post-1947 stagnation invariably brings one back to policies enunciated in 1945-46, years in which Perón used public policy to win labor's allegiance without alienating the Army's.

To examine politics without considering the end result of this process—the way a government allocates scarce resources—is to tell only half the story. This is a particularly surprising omission in one associated with Frondizi, for many of the difficulties Frondizi's administration confronted had their origin in the myth, which Perón inculcated in the Argentine public in 1945-1946, that the country could have industrialization, mass consumption, social welfare *and* nationalism simultaneously. While Perón may have helped Argentina confront its social question, it is difficult to believe that he clarified the economic issue. (Castro has been far more frank with his public.) Stated another way, Luna errs in seeing the crisis of the 'forties too exclusively in terms of the incorporation of the lower classes. There was also a massive economic transformation to deal with, and to accomplish both simultaneously (without a genuine revolution) is very difficult indeed.

Gross interpretations aside, Félix Luna has written probably the most complete and balanced account of what happened in the year following March, 1945. The book sparkles with revelations, such as that on the eve of that first October 17 Perón wanted nothing so much as to retire from public life, marry Eva, and write his memoirs. Given Luna's lifelong involvement in party politics, it is not surprising that he handles this material best. For a complete picture of what transpired among military officers, one still should turn to Robert Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928-45*. Both books draw extensively on recent interviews with those who were prominent actors in the events of these years; in Luna's case this includes a 1969 interview with Perón. With these accounts, the books through which most North Americans gained their impression of Perón's ascent to power (George Blanksten's, Robert Alexander's) are definitively laid to rest, along with those Argentine polemics which tried to pass as history (e.g., the final chapter of José Luis Romero's *Las ideas políticas en Argentina*).

Cornell University

ELDON KENWORTHY