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SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FIRST PERONISM (1946-1952)

Abstract: Peronism is one of the most conflictive issues in Argentina's history, still generating contrary positions and heated debates. It is impossible to ignore Peronism as one of the counterparts of Argentina's political culture and it is essential to understand it to achieve full knowledge of the twentieth century's Argentina. One of the characteristics of Peronism is the integration and mobilization of popular sectors previously absent from the political scene. By broadening the support base, incorporating industrialists or landowners, encouraging mass unionism and re-organizing the State, Peronism becomes a populist movement. The purpose of this paper is to study Juan Peron's first presidency between 1946 and 1952, focusing on the outcome of his economic and social policies implemented in Argentina.

Keywords: PERONISM, ARGENTINA, PERÓN'S FIRST PRESIDENCY, A NEW MODEL OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Introduction

The world economic crisis unleashed in 1929 implied an international market disruption that had its correlate in the structures of the national economies. On the one hand, the protectionist measures implemented by most European countries and the United States reduced the international exchanges. On the other hand, during the decades before the crisis, major technological transformations had begun to take place. They revolutionized the production processes and the increasing productivity. Thus, the chain production, the division of tasks in the production process and the new technological advances put into foreground the non-existence of consumer markets with sufficient capacity to absorb the new and growing production of commodities. In this sense, Keynesian postulates, and the new interventionist role assumed by both the American state with the implementation of the New Deal and the countries of Western Europe with the development of the welfare state, promoted the creation of internal markets. In this respect, they adapted to new consumption patterns en masse and contributed to overcoming the economic crisis, through redistribution income and some improvements in working conditions. (Kohan, 2013: 7)

In Argentina, this historical moment which inscribed the emerge and rise of peronism, was marked by deep political convulsions, economic and social. The initial trials matured after the economic crisis of 1929, and since then, the necessary institutions for the management of the economy have been established: the Central Bank, the Regulatory Boards, exchange control, tariff systems and funding from the independent state of foreign trade cycles. A federal co-participation scheme was also introduced for resources, which benefited the more poor provinces.

Due to the increase of the state intervention, capital and currency availability are required to invest in industrialization, public and private business capacity, and a certain minimum degree of state efficiency. In addition to these factors, it has been also recognized the need for consolidation of political leadership that manages to represent contradictory interests of social groups.

In general, the concept of populism involves waste of fiscal accounts because of redistribution and preeminence of spending – whether subsidies and social assistance – in the urban sector of the economy; in other words, it supports the unionized workers of the nascent industries, the middle class, along with the subsidy and protectionism towards the national industry. Meanwhile, the rural sector remains unattended. Despite this, the remarkable economic growth and the increasing public spending on social assistance and industrial subsidy were possible thanks to the increase of the prices of agricultural products from 1945 to 1948. Although the economic development focused on industrialization, even in times of boom of

the ISI model (Import Substitution Industrialization), the sector that sustained the economy was agricultural export Di Tella, 1973: 47).

So, by emphasizing spending only – that is, the excessive incentive of domestic demand – accompanied by an absence of tax collection policies, the economy collapses rapidly, and the inflation grows (Ratliff William, 2007: 4). By putting this aspect of the populist economy in perspective, which in the terminal phases of its cycle end up with high inflation rates, the macroeconomic policies of populist governments showed a lack of concern for the consequences regarding the financial account management.

On the other hand, the social justice was also faced: under this motto a local variant of the Welfare State was formed. In this context, the state acted strongly in regulation of social conflict and the application of mechanisms for their agreement (Romero, 2003).

Argentina before Peron

From the last decades of the 19th century until 1915 Argentina recorded a significant economic growth that placed it among the 10 wealthiest countries in the world¹. This occurred thanks to agriculture, especially the modernization of this sector, achieved by the model of intensive application for that period and the modern technology imported from Europe. Indeed, the beef meat production and the expansion of international trade drove the annual growth rate to 3.7 % and as shown in the Table 1 below, Argentina was in a much better economic situation when compared to its neighbors in Latin America and it was even close to the economic features of Canada and Australia.

	1850	1913
Argentina	874	2377
Chile	484	1685
Brazil	901	700
Canada	850	3560

Table 1: „GDP per Capita Growth 1850 -1913 (in 1985 US\$)” 2

However, things changed, when in 1914 immigrant waves, mainly Europeans, altered not only the social structure of Argentina but the labor orientation as well. This happened because the immigrants, whose number reached 1/3 of the country's

1 Poblete Vásquez Mario (2016), 418.

2 (2018): „ARGENTINA SYSTEMATIC COUNTRY DIAGNOSTIC (P164150)”, Documents, World Bank Org., xi.

population, were unskilled regarding manual labor. Additionally, certain restrictions on the international trade were imposed because of the WWI and therefore Argentina's annual growth rates declined to - 0.1%.³

But the Great Depression in 1929 deteriorated the economic conditions worldwide and Argentina was deeply affected due to its economic relations with the rest of the world through international trade. From this time on, the governments adopted protectionist economic policies trying to centralize the control over the state's economy, something that did not change for the next decades.

The decade 1930-1940 „is known as the Conservative Restoration and the Infamous Decade". Not only because of the coups that followed the one led by José Uriburu in 1930, but also because of the external and internal policies of the military governments that were not favorable to the country's best interest. Yet, the industrial growth in the 1930s was rapid and based upon the substitution of imports. In fact, in the period from 1930 to 1939, the percentage of industrial production was increased by 13%.⁴ The explanation for that unexpected industrial growth rate resided in the international economic crisis that caused a reduction of the foreign exchange income and consequently generated problems in the industrial imports.

Therefore the government adopted the policy of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). This defensive policy addressed the import restriction obliging the manufacturing sector to grow in order to cover the market's demand. In this respect, small and medium scale enterprises appeared in the suburbs of Buenos Aires and other big cities. However, they lacked qualified working personnel, sufficient capital and advanced machinery equipment. This concentration of manufacturers in big cities was the reason for the big wave of internal emigration that led to the creation of the workers' syndicates which united in 1931 in the General Workers Confederation (Confederación General del Trabajo, CGT). (Salvatore, 2006: 3) In this context, the upper and middle classes saw an improvement in the quality of their life and income, but on the other hand, the working class could not deal with its severe problems and started to organize strikes to defend its rights. Thus, the military governments during the Infamous Decade, in order to avoid strikes, attempted to suppress the workers syndicates by punishing their leaders with imprisonment. These practices from the authoritarian governments' side led to political instability and strengthened the people's desire for the return of democratic elected governments. In such political, economic and social circumstances this wish would be fulfilled by Juan Peron, who assumed the presidency of Argentina in 1946.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

Economic policies of Peron's first administration (1946-1952)

The frame that defined the economic policies of Argentina during Peron's administration was based on the income formation, effective demand, investment, and employment following the Post- Keynesian School according to which both the production and the employment depend exclusively on the spending.

The first aim of Peron's economic strategy was to establish a „semi-closed growth” (Gerchunoff, 1989: 60), with the alliance of the syndicates and the manufacturing sector of the big urban centers. Moreover, it imposed protective tariffs; in other words, the prices of imported goods were increased through taxes. This way, the local products were protected against imported goods. Moreover, it increased the purchasing power of the industrial workers by increasing their salaries on the one side, but on the other, also increased the prices of industrial goods parallel to the prices of the agricultural products. Given that,

- the conditions of the total world trade were improved after WWII,
- a significant amount of stock was accumulated during the wartime,
- the saleable products were easily traded thanks to the elimination of the barriers in the free market activities,

the measure of stimulating the project of non-saleable goods has been proven rather positive for the new government. One of the primary targets of Peron's economic policies was the income redistribution in favor of the workers and the social groups engaged in marginal activities. (Ferrer, 1977: 75) The intention was the participation of the working people in the income generated from the production of goods and services. There were three instruments for reaching this goal:

- the wage policy
- the price control and,
- the exchange rate system.

More specifically, the salary increase had as its counterpart the diminution of the profits and consequently, the debilitation of the investment capacity of the companies. The reason for that was the expansion of the demand due to the amplification of the purchasing power of the workers. Thus, the companies had intensified their production to cover the increase of demand, but without being able, at the same time, to stimulate their investments. The lack of investments in machinery led the manufacturing sector to stagnation; the result was the reduction of employment in the private sector and the simultaneous increase of employment in the public sector.

Between 1945 and 1949 about 25% of the new jobs were created by the state; as a consequence, on one side the influence of the state over the labor force was increased but, on the other hand, the labor in the public sector was not productive and did not generate wealth. Therefore, the result was the increase of the fiscal deficit

through the expansion of the state's expenditure and the inflationary effect. (Ibid)

In May 1946, the Argentine Trade Promotion Institute (IAPI) was created; one of whose main objectives was to administer the governmental restriction of particular imports with the intention of industry protection from the competition. In the course of those years, and from a growing participation of the National Directorate of Military Manufacturing, which was created in 1941, the area of state production began to develop, which included the Mixed Society of Iron and Steel Industry of Argentina (SOMISA) established in 1947 as the part of the National Steel Plan.

In the objectives of the national economy, agriculture played a strategic role. Given that the Argentine Trade Promotion Institute (IAPI) monopolized the foreign trade, the prices of the international agricultural products increased and the banks (which became public since 1946) granted a part of the agrarian surplus in a form of industrial credit to encourage both the dynamic and the more traditional branches of the industrial sector. (Girbal-Blacha, 2000: 3)

In November 1943 a mandatory reduction of 20% in the current price for land-rentals was granted, to cushion the effects of the problematic financial situation of the tenants maintaining at the same time the extension of contracts and the suspension of eviction lawsuits. The Argentine Agrarian Federation was enthusiastic about these measures that brought resolution to the old problem of land possession for those who occupied it and worked it, an initiative promoted since 1944 by the National Agrarian Council, according to the agrarian principles of 1918.

The strategy implemented there, although suggesting an agrarian reform, actually launched, without desiring it, a process of disinvestment in agriculture, since the successive extensions of the lease contracts only caused the non-productive rotation, with the consequent loss of soil fertility and lower yields. Likewise, there was a lesser commitment of tenants and owners to reinvest, even partially, their income in the field, which they could not dispose of freely. The purpose of the ruling party was to maintain the balance between owners, tenants, and exporters, to avoid the erosion of political power and the tension of the whole system. Thus, without economic incentives, the planted area decreased from 27,598,400 hectares in the agricultural year 1946-47 to 23,577,400 hectares in 1950, between 1946 and 1949 the volume of agricultural production declined by more than 10%.⁵

To achieve the objectives of growing agricultural production, to minimize the social conflict and to make possible the redistribution of income in favor of small and medium industry, Peron had two efficient financing instruments: the IAPI and the reform of 1946. The first commercialized agricultural production, buying at minimum prices from the producer selling on a world market and then paying high prices for cereals. The difference generated was the capital that allowed the implementation of a credit policy that, after the financial reform of '46, was adjusted to the objectives set by the state. However, the low prices that IAPI paid rural producers, the extension

5 Ibid.

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of leases, the freezing of fees, the fees paid for the lease of fields and the increase of rural wages, distorted agrarian relations and reflected in the decrease of the planted area. At the same time, the positions of the agricultural sector versus the state were divided and varied according to the degree of investment diversification of the rural area. However, part of that deterioration was repaired with the official support that came through the credit granted so that employers and owners could pay for the social improvements agreed by the government and the rural workers. Between 1946 and 1950, the Bank of the Province of Buenos Aires - which had mainly agricultural economic base - provided credits that ranged between US\$ 30,000 and 1,750,000 to major livestock companies and real estate companies of that influential province of Argentina. During that same period, the National Bank of Argentina, from its part, granted agrarian loans ranging between US\$ 400,000 and US\$ 1,000,000 to large landowners. However, the rural sector was not left out. The credits of the banks also favored more than fifty agricultural cooperatives, while the financial support for the purchase of cattle and sheep increased in 1947.⁶

A significant number of prominent companies engaged in grain commerce, obtained credits of up to US\$ 2,000,000 during that time, in which the IAPI consolidated its actions in favor of the national industry.⁷

However, towards 1949-50, the international conditions changed, world agricultural prices fell because of the abundant harvests in Europe, Canada and the United States; thus, a significant deterioration in the exchange terms began to influence the Argentine economy, as shown in Table 2.⁸

Year	Foreign Trade Balance	Exports Volume	Imports Volume
1945	86,5	106,1	44,4
1946	96,0	123,0	81,5
1947	101,3	115,0	162,5
1948	117,6	97,3	165,4
1949	101,0	72,5	116,8
1950	100,0	100,0	100,0
1951	97,2	78,6	114,0
1952	73,3	51,0	82,3

Table 2: „Foreign Trade Balance (1945-1952) in millions of USD”⁹

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid, 9.

9 „Economic Bulletin for Latin America”, CEPAL org. Vol.1, No. 1, 1956, 30.

The agrarian sector took advantage of the conjuncture and hardened its claims against the government. On the other hand, the fall in agricultural prices in the world market significantly reduced the high profits obtained by the IAPI. The United Kingdom and the United States remained the main destinations for the exports, but since 1948 the terms of trade had deteriorated, and the economy had suffered the impact. The Argentine economy of the 1950s faced external and internal imbalances.¹⁰ The financial readjustments promoted inflation, which was increasing steadily, as shown in the Table 3 below.

INDICATORS	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952
GDP at cost factors	11.1	5.5	1.4	1.2	3.1	6.6
Marketable GDP	7.4	0.2	6.8	5.6	6.7	10.9
Non-marketable GDP	12.1	6.9	0.1	2.7	2.4	5.8
External terms of trade	137	140	124	122.4	116	90.3
Internal terms of trade	102	96	85	80.6	85.1	72.8
Public sector credits	37.2	31.9	3.5	10.3	22.6	12.5
Private sector credits	30.6	15	4.3	14.4	5.6	1.6
Public expenditures/GDP	23.2	35.4	28.7	26.5	26.1	26.5
Fiscal deficit/GDP	5.8	13.4	9,8	5.5	4.5	5.6
Real interest rate	17.3	14.9	15.9	12.9	24.6	16.8
Inflation	3.6	15.3	23.2	20.4	49	31.2
Total inflationary tax	4.4	4.6	11.5	9.2	10.4	10.8
Private inflationary tax	3.6	3.8	9.2	7.7	8.5	8.8
Trade balance	107	90	160	142.8	304.8	455

Table3., „Economic Indicators of Argentina: 1947-1955” (Gerchunoff, 1989: 62-63)

¹⁰ Ibid.

Social policies and Eva Peron Foundation

The path traveled by policies for social assistance in Argentina was, between 1880 and 1952 long and winding. The conservative liberal elite lived during the last years of the XIX century, in an uncomfortable and conflictive way since the proposals of reformist liberalism were only partially developed and unsystematic. The massive arrival of immigrants, essential for the development of the model economic-political elite, nurtured the ranks of the urban proletariat under conditions of life on the edge of survival. Poverty seemed then an omnipresent danger, stoking the need to transcend the limits of philanthropic charity to develop a true social assistance system regulated by the state itself. (Ross, 1993) On that ground, the social justice constitutes a fundamental principle of Peronism, from 1946 to 1955, during the first and second mandate. The association of Peronism and social justice undoubtedly contributed to maintaining support majority to the movement throughout its years of ban, from 1955 to 1973.

However, the concrete management of Peronism in the field of social welfare has been obscured by the propaganda of Peronists and anti-Peronists: on one hand the former, by making bombastic defenses and on the other the latter, by denigrating and / or denying the achievements of Peronism. In general, well-being consists in the satisfaction of human needs, particularly those relating to food, clothing and medical care. In fact, the way to satisfy the human needs depends on the mode of production and in order to be effective, welfare systems must allow the redistribution of the wealth. Hence, the lower the redistribution goes, the more efficient the system.

Regarding the social policy of Peron's first mandate, it was understood that civil and political rights had to be complemented by social and economic rights. Apart from that, economic security had to be considered a key to political citizenship, while economic misery would imply the impossibility of exercising the same politics. For example, the constitutional right of individuals to be protected in cases of decrease, suspension or loss of their ability to work promotes the obligation of society to unilaterally take charge of the corresponding benefits or to promote mutual aid regimes.¹¹ The 1949 Constitution states that every elder has the right to comprehensive protection, in case of helplessness; it is up to the State to provide such protection, either directly or through the institutes and foundations created.¹² The priority of the government is the re-composition of the lowest pensions and family allowances. The social security benefits account for two things: on the one hand, the redistributive imprint that the government assigned to social security itself and the important role of social security in the redistribution of national income.¹³

¹¹ Constitución Nacional de 1949, Art. 33, inc. 1.7. cited in Dvoskin Nicolás (2017).

¹² Ibid, 11.

¹³ Ibid, 19.

Furthermore, the National Constitution of 1949 contains the statement about the need for special education of rural youth, with agricultural guidance. (Gutiérrez, 1999: 312) Moreover, old feminist desires crystallized in the period - the most important, the feminine vote in 1947 – at the same time as it was incorporated into the ruling movement through the female Peronist party and the Eva Peron Foundation (FEP). Its position that placed it in the interval between being an institution of private law and public interest (as declared by the law of creation) did not make it state. As a Peronist political entity, it had to be governed by the party authority whose principle of order was dictated by Peron. When Congress assigned a budgetary item by law, Peron vetoed that determination because it would imply the entry of the FEP to the state comptroller, which deprived its autonomy and autarky that were essential for its political and social performance. In fact, the FEP gained an enormous political value and orchestrated the development of effective social assistance playing the role of a secondary state agency, destined for this purpose. (Ibid: 313)

The FEP carried out an action in various fronts, such as:

- direct social aid,
- distribution of goods and money through various channels,
- maintenance of an infrastructure of healthcare institutions by redistributing resources obtained through the State and the contribution of the salaried sectors of society.

The historical importance of the enormous work undertaken by the FEP lies in the fact that all their interventions claimed and legitimized the right to social assistance. These are the main works carried out by the FEP:

- 21 hospitals in 11 provinces and a health train touring the whole country.
- 5 polyclinics in Buenos Aires and the Polyclinic for Children.
- 181 stores, with basic consumer items to low prices for families.
- Transit homes for homeless women and children.
- 5 nursing homes, where older adults were assisted.
- University and children's cities.
- More than a thousand schools throughout the country. (Gerchunoff in Damián, 2002)

The home and the family are the center of female activity, while women are seen as biological and social reproductive. Peronism will understand motherhood as a political and decisive role in demographic recovery. Thus, the State will regulate the public sphere, and it will be the public interests of the State that will define private activities. That function was assigned by the State to the female sector of the population and was valid for both urban and rural women. (Ibid: 314)

In any case, the appearance and direct participation of Eva Perón in the political life of Argentina – especially during the first presidential term of her husband General Juan Domingo Peron – was of great socio-cultural significance for the emanci-

pation of women in the hitherto conservative Argentina but also in Latin America. The best confirmation of this thesis is the existence of numerous scientific literature that deals with the historical-political and cultural analysis of Eva Peron and her contribution to Peronist doctrine.¹⁴

Education and public health in the First Five-Year Plan (1947-1951)

Faced with a diagnosis that presented a high percentage of school dropouts and illiteracy, the Peronist government set out to create the necessary means to extend education to all sectors of society. Thus, education constituted one of the central chapters of the First Five-Year Plan (1947-1951). In particular, the Chapter III of the „State Governance” section refers to Education, with two main bills: the one referring to the bases for primary, secondary and technical education, and the one referring to university education. In the first project, a fact to highlight was the creation of the National Education Council, which would be divided into three sections:

1) Primary education;

It was established that Primary education would be compulsory, free – including the provision of supplies and books – and gradual and in places where there were no schools, education would be taught through temporary courses or boarding schools and semi-boarding schools. School attendance would also be facilitated, for example through the availability of means of transport. Through these means the State would guarantee that the population had access to the education.

2) Secondary education and

3) Technical education.

This last item, undoubtedly one of the main pillars of Justice Education, contemplated the creation of three types of schools: Technical Training Schools, Technical Improvement Schools, and Specialization Schools called Higher Technical Schools.

Another very important aspect was that cooperation was established between large companies and the State in order to grant scholarships for technical education in its three degrees. Regarding university education, the creation of the University Statute stands out. It is worth clarifying that one of the great milestones of the Justicialist Work in university matters, the National Workers University (Today Na-

14 On this occasion, only a few key references about Eva Peron will be mentioned: Waldmann, Peter, *El peronismo, 1943-1955*, Ed. Hyspamérica, Buenos Aires, 1981; Torre, Juan Carlos, *Nueva Historia Argentina. Los años peronistas (1943-1955)*, Buenos Aires. Sudamericana, Tomo VIII., 2002; Senén Gonzáles, Santiago, „Eva Perón y las organizaciones sindicales”, en *Todo es Historia*, Buenos Aires: N° 419, Edición Especial: „A 50 años de la muerte de Evita”, 2002; Rubín, Sergio, *Eva Perón, Secreto de Confesión*, Ed. Lumen, Buenos Aires, 2002; ROSANO, Susana, *Rostros y máscaras de Eva Perón*, Ed. Beatriz Viterbo, Buenos Aires, 2006; Ottino, Mónica: *Evita y Victoria*, Grupo Editor de América Latina, Buenos Aires, 1990.

tional Technological University), was included in the Second Five-Year Plan despite the fact that the law that created it was from 1948. (Fonte, 2018: 155-182)

Regarding the health, the general principles embodied in the First Five-Year Plan (Primer Plan Quinquenal) were initiative of the Minister of Health Ramón Carrillo, who laid the foundations for a new concept of the health organization which tended to transform the organization and operation of the public health services system. Regardless of its successes or failures, the care and preservation of the physical and moral health of the population was one of the main goals of the government of Juan Domingo Peron. The provisions of the First Five-Year Plan and the Minister's proposals were the foundations that gave shape to the new health system. The new policy had as its main axis the centralization of the provision of services, promoting the gradual unification of the medical, health and social assistance, so that the National State would take over the provincial health systems. The idea was to achieve a „Regional unit” in which the health plans included even the places most forgotten of the territory.

According to the Minister's conception, two pillars were established:

- The first was the Public Health Organization, which created a Sanitary Code, describing as a general principle the need to provide medical assistance to all the inhabitants of the country, promoting the gradual unification of medical and social assistance.
- The second project consisted of a Construction Plan, habilitation and functioning of the health services and was divided into two parts:
 1. The first, called „Social Assistance”, established the distribution in all the country, by provinces and territories, of general hospitals and urban and rural health, urban centers of specialized assistance, health units and workers' hospitals, trauma centers and work accidents, etc. It also included the aspects of motherhood and childhood, mental alienation, neuropsychiatry, endocrinology, drug addiction and chronic diseases, tuberculosis and leprosy and semi socialization of medicine (institution of the family doctor and open healthcare system)
 2. The second part of the project was a list of the „Institutes of Research and Treatment”, something that constituted further proof of the intention of the government to extend its action to other areas, such as medicine school, work, etc.

This integrating project was also evidenced in the fifty-nine paragraphs that established the bases of the action national, through the Ministry of Public Health. (Hirschegger, 2007: 62-63) Furthermore, the medicine was divided into three types.

1. Care or curative medicine, which considered disease as a fait accompli, generated and developed within the biological sphere of the individual, without the influence of other spheres or origins. This type of medicine was at the time of two classes: horizontal, related to the number of beds per hospital, and vertical, in terms of the services provided by the other healthcare centers.

2. The second type of medicine was health, which considered „the biophysical environment (climate, temperature, germs and parasites) as a direct factor of the disease.
3. Finally, social medicine, which took into account „socio-environmental indicators (unhygienic living, ignorance of hygiene, irrational and insufficient food, unhealthy work), as indirect health factors.”

Without discarding the above, social medicine was considered superior to the others, as it sought the true causes of evils, being also „eminently preventive”. (Ibid: 135-159)

Unionism – strengthening of trade union movement and its influence on socio-political and economic development of Argentina

In 1943, several of the main unions established an alliance with a group of young Army officers, in order to promote the historic program of the Argentine labor movement, from a Ministry of Labor. The alliance was led by Colonel Juan D. Peron who was appointed Director of the Department of Labor a month later and managed to raise the hierarchy of the organization to Secretary of State (December 2, 1943). From the Secretary of Labor, Peron, with the support of the trade unions, developed much of the union program: created the labor courts and enacted the Decree 33.302/43, extending compensation for dismissal of all workers. (Man in Paula, 2009: 29). Thanks to this regulation more than two million people were benefited with retirement. Additionally, the Statute of the Country Pawn and the Statute of the Journalist were sanctioned while the Polyclinic Hospital was created for railway workers; at the same time private employment agencies were prohibited. Technical Schools were created aimed at workers. In 1944, 123 collective agreements that reached more than 1,400,000 workers and employees were signed and in 1945 another 347 for 2,186,868 workers.

Within this framework, a period of high growth for the unions began. In 1949 a new constitution was sanctioned, discussed by the opposition to the Peronist government, which would be repealed by the military coup of 1955. The Constitution of 1949 incorporated in art. 37, for the first time, the rights of the worker in Argentine constitutionalism. Here is a fragment of Peron's speech from the terrace of the Teatro Colón announcing the new labor legislation. (Ibid)

„I finish announcing the most transcendent work of our socially oriented conquests: the Rights of the Worker. Until now, Argentine worker legislation had rested on unstable and indeterminate foundations. A law, not created to constitute its foundation, had been receiving aggregate upon aggregate without succeeding

in structuring a true social legislation. Until our days, the right that workers have to a better life and to a better organization of work and rest has not been stabilized in clear, inconvenient and inalienable principles. Today we give Argentine legislators and jurists the bases on which they will build the future Argentine legislation, to establish, once and for all, as an indelible milestone of justice, the right recognized by the State of individuals”.¹⁵

The Constitution of 1949 had also established legal equality between men and women, which was lost when it was repealed in 1955 and it would only be recovered in 1985. (Man in Paula, 2009: 30)

Peronism took advantage of the trends developed by the labor movement in the 1930s that were suitable for its social plan, and at the same time got rid of an „old guard union” with claimed autonomy. Besides, it left behind some leftist militancies, who insisted in alternative approaches. Homogeneity has continued and it has been rebuilt since then from above and from power, taking advantage of State resources: economic, organizational, political. Meanwhile, the communists, socialists, anarchists and trade unionists who did not join Peronism tended to disappear or to perform deeds of political opposition as minority and marginal. The same fate ran the Peronists who tried to maintain their political-union autonomy.

The Peronist victory allowed a transformation of the state. It is true that accelerated changes after 1946 had important precedents, the quantitative development and the strong will for planning induced substantive alterations following the changes made in the period 1943-1946. The labor movement was considered the backbone of the Peronist Party. The unified CGT acquired enormous power. Its affiliates passed 80,000 in 1943, to 1,500,000 in 1947 and 4,000,000 in 1955. It participated in the cabinet meetings while in Parliament, a third of the deputies corresponded to the union branch, which functioned as a bloc. Law 14,250 on Collective Labor Agreements was enacted, consolidating the central role of collective bargaining in labor relations, by establishing that collective labor agreements were binding on all workers, unionized or not. (Ibid.)

The peronization of the working class and a large part of the popular sectors, created, in addition, a visibility of the national state that was not understood only by its bureaucratic and institutional growth. The state as an organic totality became an ob-

15 Ministerio de la cultura argentina: <https://www.cultura.gob.ar/el-decalogo-de-los-derechos-de-los-trabajadores-de-1947-10159/>.

„Termino de anunciar la obra más trascendente de nuestras conquistas de orientación social: los Derechos del Trabajador. Hasta ahora la legislación del trabajador argentino había descansado sobre bases y cimientos inestables e indeterminados. Una ley, no creada para constituir su basamento, había ido recibiendo agregado sobre agregado sin alcanzar a estructurar una verdadera legislación social. Hasta nuestros días no se había estabilizado en principios claros, inconvenientes e irrenunciables el derecho que los trabajadores tienen a una mejor vida y a una mejor organización del trabajo y del descanso. Entregamos hoy a los legisladores y a los juristas argentinos las bases sobre las cuales han de construir la futura legislación argentina, para fijar, de una vez por todas, como un jalón imborrable de la justicia, el derecho reconocido por el Estado de los individuos”. (Fragmento del discurso de Perón desde la terraza del Teatro Colón). (The translation to English is mine).

ject of popular mentality identified with Peron. Additionally, the Peronist labor movement established a special bond with Eva Peron and the Foundation Eva Peron (FEP) was among the most notable and significant institutions of political society.

The Peronist policy towards the unions was dual: moderate coercion and the replacement of the most oppositional unions; and, great concessions to the less militant. Example of measures taken by Peron in the Secretariat: In 1944 the law of payments to holidays was extended to all public holidays; it was regulated on the work of minors and apprentices; it was established that fluctuations in the cost of living should be reflected in wages.

The success of Peronism depended on two main causes: the coercive power it exercised and the internal divisions between the leaders and the base. Although the measures adopted by Peronism did not represent a radical change in the economic structure, they did imply great advances in the conditions of working class labor. Although many authors affirm that there was no ideologization of the labor movement during the period studied, Peronism implied new forms of political and social relations, not only between the state and the unions but also between the workers. In this way, not only was the political scene modified, with the appearance of new actors such as the unions, but also the daily lives of workers in general. (Tifni, 2009: 3) Essentially, the dramatic transformation in the field of political society, although in this area nothing is definitely stable, was the cause that gave Peronism its great effectiveness due to the establishment of its own political society. (Acha, 2004: 199-230)

Final assessments

Peronism managed the popular classes by giving them a degree of effective participation; naturally refraining from social reforms or limiting them so that they were acceptable to the most powerful groups of the society and economy. However, since the country's situation could not provide with the bourgeoisie, that constituted the basis of the European model, peronism had to resort to the popular classes formed as a result of the great internal migration. But this meant more than a simple change of ideologies. With successes and errors, Peronism pursued the class alliance and the social pact under the figure of the third position, equidistant from the extreme positions that dominated the geopolitical scene at that time. With this, Peron's policy was looking for a model to overcome the purely agro-export production matrix, laying the foundations for industrialization. (Germani, 1973: 17)

Peronism was different precisely in the essential fact that it forced to tolerate some effective participation, although limited, in fairness, to gain popular support. The originality of the national-popular regimes in South America resides concretely in the nature of this participation.

In line with the international trends New Deal implemented by Roosevelt in the United States and capitalism in the form of a welfare state in Western Europe after

1945, Peronism relied on an ideology that considered alternative capitalism based on conciliation and harmony between the classes, like it was announced by Peron himself in his speech given in Rosario in August 1944:

***„We want the exploitation of a man by a man to disappear from our country and when that problem disappears we will equalize a little the social classes so that there are not, as I have already said, people too poor or too rich in this country”.
(Cited in James, 2006: 39)¹⁶***

Thus, there was the possibility of building just national capitalism. The reproduction of capitalist social relations of production was compatible with the promotion of equality, since it was possible to achieve harmony between the interests of capital and labor thanks to the intervention of the State. A distinction was made between exploitative and inhuman capital embodied in the international predatory capital and its domestic ally conspiring against the independent development of the country, and a progressive and socially responsible person necessary for the development of the national economy. Hence, Peron’s administration considered that it was possible to build national capitalism. Ultimately, the classes had common interests, since both the national capitals as the workers defended the national development.

The Peronist government appropriated the current issues on the international agenda such as development and its association with industrialization, and the working class played a fundamentally role in it, so it was gradually integrated socially and politically. This progressive integration implied the concept of democracy and citizenship when considering not only its formal political aspect that was concretized in the right to vote, but also to broaden its social and economic bases.

The combination of various ideological currents was articulated and it gave way to a discourse on development that emphasized the national and the popular and on „social justice”, which generated a broad consensus on the desirability and the need for development and the inescapable path to industrialization.

In short, Peronism appropriated the current issues on the international agenda, such as development, industrialization and the communist threat, and sought alternatives within the capitalist system itself to face the problems that threatened its continuity. And this made possible the construction of a nationalist economic doctrine in which the national industrialization and the strengthening of the national and regional political position.

¹⁶ „Queremos que desaparezca de nuestro país la explotación del hombre por el hombre y que cuando ese problema desaparezca igualemos un poco las clases sociales para que no haya como he dicho ya en este país hombres demasiado pobres ni demasiado ricos.” [Discurso pronunciado por Perón en Rosario en agosto de 1944]. (The translation in english is mine).



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ДРУШТВЕНО-ЕКОНОМСКА ДОСТИГНУЋА ПРВОГ ПЕРОНИЗМА (1946-1952)

Апстракт: Перонизам је једно од најконтроверзнијих питања у историји Аргентине, које још изазива супротне ставове и жестоке дебате. Немогуће је игнорисати перонизам као једну од претпоставки аргентинске политичке културе и неопходно је разумети га да би се постигло потпуно познавање Аргентине двадесетог века. Једна од карактеристика перонизма је интеграција и мобилизација народних сектора који су раније били одсутни са политичке сцене. Проширењем базе подршке, укључивањем индустријалаца или земљопоседника, подстицањем масовног синдикализма и реорганизацијом државе, перонизам постаје популистички покрет. Сврха овог рада је проучавање првог председничког мандата Хуана Перона између 1946. и 1952. године, са фокусирањем на исход његове економске и социјалне политике спроведене у Аргентини.

Кључне речи: ПЕРОНИЗАМ, АРГЕНТИНА, ПЕРОНОВ ПРВИ ПРЕДСЕДНИЧКИ МАНДАТ, НОВИ МОДЕЛ ДРУШТВЕНО-ЕКОНОМСКОГ РАЗВОЈА.