



## **Bitter conquest: Zionists against progressive Jews and the making of post-war Jewish politics in Argentina**

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“I believe I speak to your minds, honored delegates, if I place as one of our next goals the conquest of the communities.” – Theodore Herzl to the Second Zionist Congress, 1898.

In his work, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, Ezra Mendelsohn has characterized the course of Jewish politics since 1945 as, “the Jewish version of a familiar twentieth century story, namely the triumph of nationalism,” and specifically of the Zionist movement.<sup>1</sup> This was certainly the case in Argentina, where Zionism and the Zionist parties increasingly came to dominate Jewish communal politics by 1955. Yet, while this phenomenon in many ways paralleled larger trends in the international Jewish world, conditions unique to Argentina’s political setting profoundly influenced the way in which it took place in this far-flung corner of the Diaspora. In particular, the conflict was exceptionally intense and divisive in Argentina thanks to the centralization of the community’s institutional life, the ongoing vitality of Yiddish language and culture in the country which helped contribute to the substantial strength of the non-Zionist left, and finally, the larger national political climate in which it took shape.

At its root, Jewish communal politics in post-war Argentina was guided by the same series of events that affected other Jewish communities in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. For one, the mass murder of nearly six million European Jews and the destruction of that continent’s most vital Yiddish-speaking communities coupled with the dramatic rebirth of a Hebrew-speaking Jewish national state in Palestine just three years later served to shift the locus of power within the Jewish political world away from the European-based Yiddish-speaking parties of the non-Zionist left and towards the revitalized parties of the Zionist movement. More importantly, the rise of Communist anti-Semitism and the turn of the Soviet Union against the new Jewish state after 1948 precipitated the emergence of open hostility

between Zionist Jews and their Communist, or Progressive,<sup>2</sup> Jewish counterparts in a number of Jewish communities during this time.<sup>3</sup> In the early 1950's, this revived Communist antagonism against the Jews crystallized in a series of show trials, first in Prague in November 1952, then in Moscow in January 1953, where Communist leaders accused Eastern European Jews of conspiring with the Zionism, international Jewry, and the United States to undermine the stability of the wider Communist world.

At the same time, the Jews of Argentina were also influenced by a changing political climate at home. In Argentina, the decade immediately following the Second World War witnessed the rise of Juan Perón and the establishment of Peronism as one of the dominant forces in twentieth century Argentine politics. Frequently associated with European fascism by many of his contemporaries, Perón, and the ideology of *justicialismo* he espoused, was actually a significant manifestation of Latin American populism, a political phenomenon common to much of the region during this time.<sup>4</sup> Like other Latin American populists, Perón combined a corporatist conception of the state with ideals of popular democracy and widespread social mobilization, which characterized his first two terms as President of Argentina from 1946–1955. As such, his regime attempted to integrate a number of previously excluded social and political actors, including organized labor, women, the poor, and the country's many immigrant and ethnic groups into its vision of an economically productive and politically independent "New Argentina."<sup>5</sup>

As one of Argentina's most historically independent minority communities, the nation's 250,000 Jews were not immune from this pressure. Initially, Perón attempted to recruit Jewish support for his regime by challenging the hegemony of existing Jewish institutions at the national level, rather than trying to involve himself directly in internal Jewish political disputes. In 1947, he approved the creation of an openly Peronist Jewish organization, the Organización Israelita Argentina (OIA), to which he granted substantial powers as the official intermediary between the community and the state.<sup>6</sup> Yet, when by the early 1950's, the OIA largely failed in its mission to represent the community, because it was unable to attract widespread community support, a more complicated relationship began to develop between the Peronist government and communal leaders. In particular, Perón's consistently close and sympathetic relations with the new state of Israel ultimately provided the basis for a growing cooperation between the community's Zionist leadership and the Peronist state.<sup>7</sup> The sig-

nificance of this increasingly compatible relationship was underscored during a series of events in late 1952, when in the aftermath of the infamous anti-Semitic trials in Prague, the country's Communist Jewish institutions were permanently expelled from the framework of organized Jewish life. As a result of this measure, they were also left exposed to local state repression when Perón began his own crackdown against the Argentine Communist Party less than a year later.

In a recent article on the response of Argentina's left-wing Jewish community to the crisis of the Six-Day War, Leonardo Senkman has commented on the dearth of information regarding the activities of non-Zionist Jews in the country and their conflicts with Zionists during the 1940's and 1950's.<sup>8</sup> Although scholars like Sylvia Schenkolewski have documented a number of tensions between Zionists and non-Zionists over fundraising and communal organization in the years prior to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, no comprehensive study has been done to date on the course of Argentine-Jewish communal politics during the entire Peronist period, which witnessed the eruption of these earlier tensions into open and bitter hostility and the dramatic expulsion of the Jewish Communists from organized Jewish life.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, according to Senkman, scholars have left almost wholly unexplored the larger impact of the Prague Trials in Argentina, as well as "the repercussions on the national identification of the Communist Jews immediately after Communist Jewish institutions were expelled from the Jewish community's representative institutions."<sup>10</sup> The present study addresses this issue by focusing specifically on two of the community's most important institutions, the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina and the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, during the post-war era.

Of all the Argentine Jewish institutions, the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), officially reorganized as the Ashkenazi kehilla of Buenos Aires in 1949, served as the greatest hotbed of political struggle on the "Jewish street." With over 40,000 members during this period, the AMIA represented the country's largest Jewish institution by far, as well as its most democratic, serving as the social and charitable nexus of the Ashkenazi community of Buenos Aires.<sup>11</sup> Among other things, the AMIA was responsible for providing Jewish burials for its members, overseeing the disbursement of charitable funds to various communal institutions, and subsidizing the Jewish school system of the capital through its education council, known as the *Va'ad Hajinuj*. Within the AMIA, an array of political parties competed each year to win seats on its directive council under a rotating system by

which half of the officers were replaced every year. Each male head of household in good standing within the institution was entitled to vote, and election campaigns during the Peronist era generally drew over 10,000 total votes. Traditional Jewish politics formed the basis of the AMIA's political party system, rather than those of the surrounding Argentine society. On the right were various Zionist parties, ranging from the Revisionists and Orthodox-Zionist Mizrahi party on the far right to the General Zionists, organized under the rubric of the Argentine Zionist Federation, in the center. On the left of the political spectrum were the socialist-Zionist labor party of Poale Zion, the socialist-Zionist youth movement Hashomer Hatzair, the non-Zionist Jewish Workers Bund, and the anti-nationalist Jewish Communists, also known as Progressives.<sup>12</sup>

Because the AMIA operated under a winner-take-all system, elections were based on coalition politics, a system that forced the various competing parties to unite into larger alliances around common interests and concerns with other parties. Candidates were organized according to lists, with each slate generally including at least one candidate from each of its supporting political factions. Although tensions were muted between 1946 and 1948, for nearly all sectors of the Ashkenazi community initially supported the creation of the state of Israel, after the turn of the Soviet Union and its Jewish Communist supporters against Israel and the Zionist movement in late 1948, politics within the AMIA and the larger community increasingly revolved around disputes over Zionism. Beginning in 1949 for the first time, Zionists of all ideological tendencies joined ranks within the AMIA to create a united electoral block against non-Zionists and especially against the Jewish Communists. This trend towards Zionist unity persisted in every single election thereafter, until 1957, when following the overthrow of the Peronist regime, the institution passed democratizing reforms that called for elections to be held under a new system of proportional representation that allowed each party to field its own slate of candidates.

In addition to the AMIA, the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA) also served as a site of intense political conflict. Originally founded in 1935 to combat rising anti-Semitism, by the time Perón assumed office in 1946 the DAIA had come to serve as the community's larger political representation both before international Jewry and the state, since it was the only Jewish institution to include Jews of virtually all ethnic and political backgrounds in its composition. Although the creation of the OIA in 1947 curtailed its authority vis-

à-vis the state, the DAIA continued to defend Jewish interests at the national level, and more importantly it remained at the forefront of all intra-communal Jewish political activity, overseeing among other things the collection and distribution of funds for the state of Israel, which generated millions of pesos during this time. However, unlike the AMIA, the DAIA did not represent the community democratically, but was an association of institutions. The DAIA's general assembly consisted of two representatives from each of its member organizations, among which were the AMIA.<sup>13</sup> Because Zionist parties or those in sympathy with Zionism controlled the vast majority of Jewish institutions in the country, the DAIA's assembly generally remained a Zionist stronghold, even more so than the AMIA or the "Jewish street." As a result, it was in the DAIA, rather than the AMIA, that much of the increasing polarity and hostility between Zionists and non-Zionists found its fullest expression, ultimately resulting in discriminatory measures against non-Zionists after 1949 and the expulsion of all Progressive Jewish institutions from the DAIA following the incidents of November 1952.

#### **From unity to division: Argentine–Jewish communal politics, 1946–1952**

The first three years of Perón's administration were a time of relative harmony within the world of Argentine–Jewish communal politics (the actions of the OIA notwithstanding). Virtually all the various political parties and factions temporarily united behind the Zionist effort to recreate a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. Instead of Zionism itself, the main sources of contention were centered largely on ongoing disputes over the character of Jewish institutional and communal life according to secular as opposed to national-religious principles. In general, these debates divided the Zionist camp, pitting General Zionists and the Zionist right against their socialist-Zionist and non-Zionist counterparts, led by the Poale Zion, for control over the AMIA and other institutions. In 1946, an alliance of Bundists, Communists, and non-aligned Zionists succeeded in defeating a combined Zionist slate for control of the AMIA. Yet, the following year, a unity list was formed, and in 1948, the annual AMIA elections again placed the General Zionists and their allies against Poale Zion and the non-Zionist left. In fact, the contest between the two Zionist led factions in 1948 was so divisive that the elections were decided by a mere 18 votes out of a total of 6,533 cast in favor Poale Zion and its non-Zionist allies.<sup>14</sup>

However, the overall tenor of Argentine–Jewish politics changed decisively in 1949, as the Soviet Union increasingly turned against Zionism and the State of Israel. Although the Soviets had briefly supported Zionist aspirations in Palestine after the Second World War in order to diminish British imperialism in the Middle East, the onset of the Cold War in Europe brought a return to the previous anti-Zionist position in Soviet foreign policy. As early as September 1948, the Soviet Union published a front-page article in *Pravda* rejecting Zionism and attacking Jews who supported the State of Israel. In addition, Stalin cracked down against the last vestiges of autonomous Jewish political and cultural expression throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In November 1948, he disbanded the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Russia, which had been formed during the Second World War to enlist Jewish support in the struggle against Germany, and the government initiated the arrest, deportation, and murder of hundreds of prominent Jewish intellectual figures, including the noted Yiddish playwright and actor Solomon Mikhoels.<sup>15</sup>

Almost immediately, this new international tension between Communism and Zionism began to undermine the fragile sense of communal unity that had been generated in Argentina in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the struggle for Jewish statehood in Palestine. The first signs of the brewing struggle appeared in early 1949 over the distribution of communal funds to the newly created State of Israel. In 1948, virtually the entire community, including the Communists and other non-Zionists, had joined together to form the United Campaign for Israel, which raised some 44 million pesos in the country (roughly \$5.3 million) to be distributed under the auspices of the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and most importantly the Jewish Agency for Israel.<sup>16</sup> However, as the renewal of this campaign approached in 1949, the leaders of the Jewish Communists now objected to the disbursement of funds through such Zionist bodies as the World Jewish Congress and the Jewish Agency for Israel, claiming that although they supported the reconstruction effort underway in Israel, they opposed the use of communally raised funds to support Zionist organizations. According to the delegate of the World Jewish Congress in Buenos Aires, Jacob Hellman, the Progressives also insisted that the campaign not include references to aliyah or the Jewish religion as a condition for their continued participation.<sup>17</sup> As the campaign's national conference approached in May 1949, a group of Progressives published a declaration in the working class Argentine Yiddish daily *Di Presse*, arguing for an increased “popular” repre-

sentation in the executive committee of the campaign, and outlining a “concrete plan that should guarantee the practical exchange of the money collected in an exclusively constructive and direct way.”<sup>18</sup> When these demands were not met to their satisfaction, the Progressives withdrew from the community-wide effort and founded their own rival “Popular Campaign” for Israel, promising only direct assistance to popular sectors in Israel and not to its Zionist controlled government or international Zionist organizations.

The actions of the Progressive were sharply rebuked throughout the spectrum of communal politics and provided the basis for the series of retaliatory measures that soon followed within the DAIA. In June 1949, the directive council of the DAIA published a formal declaration in favor of the United Campaign, affirming it as “the expression of the will of the entire community, which absolutely manifests in a democratic way the national sentiments, aspirations, and the consciousness of all Jews.”<sup>19</sup> In October, the general assembly of the DAIA went even further, calling upon all Jews to support the United Campaign, and declaring that, “only those persons who have complied with their national obligations towards the United Campaign for Israel shall be able to hold directive positions in the [Jewish] organizations and institutions of the country.”<sup>20</sup> Throughout the country, Zionist Jews voiced their support for the DAIA resolution. Reporting on the dispute, Maximo Yagupsky of the American Jewish Committee wrote to his superiors in December 1949 that, “There is a movement to drive the Communists out of Jewish organizations . . . Zionists have become more moderate in their Zionism and more militant in their struggle against the Communists.”<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, the DAIA’s resolution produced a heated debate within many of the community’s most important institutions, and especially those that contained large numbers of Progressive members. This was especially the case in the AMIA, which convened to hold its general elections in December 1949. More than ever before, the elections were seen as a kind of plebiscite over the DAIA resolution and the recent events affecting the community. Earlier in 1949, the differing Zionist parties within the AMIA had united to change the AMIA’s official status from that of a burial society to a “kehilla,” or community, organized around national-religious principles.<sup>22</sup> Now, they rallied together in defense of the United Campaign and against the Progressives, forming a “National Democratic Block” in the elections that won the endorsement of all Zionist parties from Poale Zion to the Revisionists. In their campaign platform, they called for an expansion of the role of

the kehilla in the daily life of the community and for its active participation in the United Campaign. "The kehilla," they argued, "should broadly and unconditionally support the construction, consolidation, and development of the state of Israel through its legal world organ by contributing in full measure to the United Campaign and for all the needs of the country."<sup>23</sup> Increasingly isolated from the rest of the community, the Progressives formed their own list, calling for a secular-cultural conception of the AMIA as well as solidarity with Israel, but without mentioning either the United Campaign or its popular rival. In addition, they argued for an increased militancy in the surrounding national life, promising to support, "any communal institutions that have joined in the fight against racism and anti-Semitism."<sup>24</sup> Finally, a third group of non-aligned traditional community activists put forth their own list, also promising to support the United Campaign, but decrying the increased politicization of the AMIA.<sup>25</sup>

As the elections neared, it soon became clear that the Progressives were completely without allies on the Jewish street. Virtually all of the major newspapers opposed them openly. The editors of pro-Zionist Spanish-language weekly, *Mundo Israelita*, called for "Jewish unity against Communist infiltration."<sup>26</sup> A commentator in the mainstream Yiddish daily, *Di Idische Tzeitung* asserted that, "the appetites of the Progressive elements are not small . . . They seek to occupy the administration of the kehilla through an electoral victory in order to carry out a Progressive agenda in the mode of the [Jewish Communist Party] Yevsektzia."<sup>27</sup> Even their erstwhile non-Zionist allies in the Bund decided to endorse the nationalist list. Yet, when the results were tabulated, they came as a surprise to virtually everyone. As expected the "Pink List" led by the National Democratic Block, triumphed, receiving some 5,085 votes. The non-aligned "White List" received an additional 1,236. However, the Progressives, who stood alone for the first time in communal elections, received a startling 3,474 votes, nearly 40% of the total votes cast.<sup>28</sup> According to *Di Idische Tzeitung*, this was a completely unforeseen result, and one that constituted a "great danger for the kehilla of Buenos Aires," since less than two thousand votes had prevented the administration of the community's largest institution from passing into the hands of anti-Zionist elements.<sup>29</sup> The editors of *Mundo Israelita* called upon their readers to, "close the door to the Yevsektzia and awaken the Jewish consciousness of the masses, mobilizing them to action."<sup>30</sup> Equally surprised, the left-wing Zionists of Hashomer Hatzair saw the election differently. Unlike their counterparts, they interpreted it as a sobering condemnation of the di-

visiveness and exclusion practiced by Zionist leaders. “When 40 percent of the electors vote for a list of a single tendency, a tendency that is anti-Zionist,” they claimed in their mouthpiece *Nueva Sion*, “it is not possible to realize a politics of ostracism, but rather only through an intense and unceasing education regarding the progressive character of Zionism . . . [will we] win this 40 percent to our cause.”<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, the DAIA edict prohibiting those who failed to support the United Campaign from holding directive posts within the community remained in force. In June 1950, the Zionist leaders of the AMIA snubbed the Progressives even more, when they refused to send a delegation to attend the inauguration of the “popular” Jewish Folks Theatre (IFT).<sup>32</sup> In addition, fear of Progressive electoral strength likely motivated AMIA leaders later in June to scrap a proposed plan to revise the AMIA’s electoral system in favor of proportional representation, and to postpone the general election of 1950 until October 1951.<sup>33</sup> Although nearly everyone in the community agreed that reform was needed, it seems that Zionist leaders could not imagine how to implement it without allowing the Progressives to increase their representation. As a result, the only real reform of the AMIA’s electoral system enacted was to change the system used to identify the lists. Instead of by color, identification would be by number. Many Zionists, it appears, had reasoned that some people had voted Progressive in 1949, because the Progressive color that year was the same blue used by the Zionist left in 1948.

A more substantial reason for the surprising showing of the Progressives in the AMIA elections of 1949 was perhaps the persistence and vitality of Yiddish in Argentina, which provided Communist Jews with a legitimate means to express Jewish identity in the absence of religious or nationalist beliefs. As a popular and largely secular Jewish language, Yiddish was an essential ingredient for Progressives, as well as their Bundist counterparts, in an ideology that preached Jewish liberation through the victory of world socialism. The editors of the Spanish language *Mundo Israelita* knew this, and their editorials initiated a campaign to disparage the language and its supporters. One editorial published in June 1950, claimed that Yiddish was nothing more than a cover for the anti-Jewish activities of a Progressive “fifth column.”<sup>34</sup> A second contended that Yiddish was not even a fundamental component of Jewish society. “To affirm that Yiddish,” the editors wrote, “or Yiddish culture, represents the patrimony, the sum of the values created and maintained by the Jewish people, is a shameless pretension. In the said language we have only created literary works, and these, as great

as their merit may be, cannot be said to reflect or be representative of an integral culture.”<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, they argued, the widespread use of Yiddish in Argentina had prevented the establishment of good relations between East European and Sephardic Jews.<sup>36</sup>

### **From division to exclusion: Argentine–Jewish communal politics, 1952–1955**

Tensions continued to remain high between Zionist Jews and their Progressive counterparts during the course of 1951 and 1952, until November of that year, when events in Eastern Europe again seriously altered the balance of communal politics. On November 20, 1952, Communist authorities in Czechoslovakia arrested fourteen members of the Czech Communist Party, who were accused of espionage and of being agents for an international world Zionist conspiracy involving the state of Israel, the World Zionist Organization, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.<sup>37</sup> At the center of the plot was the former Secretary General of the Czech Communist party, Rudolph Slansky, who ultimately “confessed” to plotting with Zionist leaders to overthrow the Communist Czech state. Of the fourteen accused, Slansky and ten others were Jews. The entire proceedings had an ominous tone of anti-Semitism throughout. On December 4, 1952, eleven of the so-called conspirators, including Slansky, were hanged following a trial that echoed “the spirit of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*,” the infamous anti-Semitic forgery Russian secret police had written late in the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

The incident outraged the Jewish world. In Argentina, the Jewish press condemned the action, and the editors of *Di Idishe Tzeitung* contended that, “The government of Prague through the intermediary of its judges, has shown itself loyal to the anti-Semitic tradition of Hitlerism.”<sup>39</sup> *Di Presse* called the event, “a monstrous calumny against the Jewish people,” and *Mundo Israelita* claimed the accusations against Zionism were “ignominious and capricious.”<sup>40</sup> Only the Progressives, in their weekly *Tribuna*, attempted to defend the actions of the Czech government. An article that appeared on December 4, 1952, noted that none of the accused had denied the charges and that Slansky had even confessed, not all of the accused were Jewish, and, most important, “the accused were not convicted for being Jews, but rather for conspiring in the service of imperialism against the popular regime.” “The smoke screen,” they continued, “the smoke screen of the

dollar – raised in turn against the Prague Trials – should not confuse the Zionist masses nor their well inspired leaders.”<sup>41</sup>

On that same day, the DAIA convened an extraordinary general assembly to discuss an appropriate communal response to the trials. As the foremost Argentine Jewish institution, the DAIA was largely responsible for representing the political position of Argentine Jewry in matters of international Jewish concern. The president of the DAIA, Ricardo Dubrovsky, told those gathered that just as they had fought against the anti-Semitism of the right, so they must now fight against the anti-Semitism of the left, adding that the community should “fight with dignity, without using the fight as a political weapon against anyone.”<sup>42</sup> Immediately afterward, the secretary of the DAIA, Benjamin Rinsky, asked the assembly to approve a resolution prepared earlier by directive council. The resolution stated that,

The DAIA, as the representative institution of the Jewish collective of the country . . . united with world Jewry, and as a integral part of a nation respectful of human rights: the nation of Argentina, rejects with all the force of its spirit the false accusations of Prague, crossed with the mark of anti-Semitism and racist demagoguery, and declares that the intent of establishing an official anti-Jewish politics in Prague does not have to be tolerated by the Jews . . .<sup>43</sup>

According to the DAIA’s own minutes, a heated debate then followed between supporters of the resolution and Progressive delegates, who claimed that such a resolution would violate the statutes of the DAIA. The DAIA, they said, “does not have the right nor the competency to intervene in the internal affairs of other peoples or countries.” Noting the dissent of the Progressives, one of the Zionist delegates, Dr. Leon Lapacó, then suggested a similar resolution, which included an additional paragraph deliberately worded against the Progressive opposition “The Extraordinary General Assembly of the DAIA,” it read,

. . . acknowledges with profound consternation that there exist certain Jews who justify the anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish provocations of Prague. The same assembly declares categorically that such action destroys Jewish unity in the benefit of foreign interests. It makes a call to public opinion in order that in the defense of the honor and dignity of our community, such elements be separated [from the DAIA].<sup>44</sup>

Several Zionist delegates immediately called upon the assembly to approve the Lapacó resolution, with president Dubrovsky adding, “Either

we are Jews or we are not. Either we are with the state of Israel or we are not . . . This is the crossroads, and those who do not think so will not be able to continue with those who do . . .” The measure passed by a wide margin, with only five votes against it and six in favor of a less incendiary text.<sup>45</sup>

The publication of the resolution of December 4th in the Jewish press unleashed an intra-communal war. The editors of *Mundo Israelita* hailed the decision, while a commentator in *Di Idische Tzeitung* remarked, “It is not any wonder that men see them, [the Progressives,] as a great evil, because it is astonishing that in such a moment there should be found Jews who should justify the fairy tales of anti-Semites.”<sup>46</sup> Even the Bund, a non-Zionist party and a former ally of the Progressives on the Jewish street, expressed its enthusiasm for the measure. In describing the stormy assembly of December 4th, the editors of its mouthpiece, *Undzer Gedank*, noted that, “In relation to the Prague Tribunals, our community has displayed itself to its true form. Its reaction this time was not – as in many other cases – only a strong or weak echo of other communities. This time, it was instinctive, spontaneous and a bold one . . .” Regarding the Progressives in particular, they observed, “Much anger was directed against Jews who had only loving words for the Stalin–Hitler Pact and now found not one word of protest in relation to the devilishly dramatized trial against the whole Jewish people. There is no place for such people in the Jewish community.”<sup>47</sup>

The Progressives responded to the assembly with an article in *Tribuna* that sharply condemned the DAIA. Arguing that, “This is not the first time that such extraordinary assemblies such as that of last week, have adopted resolutions repugnant to the spirit of the Jewish collective in Argentina,” author Luis Goldman claimed that, “The DAIA is entering the road of its own decomposition, the anti-patriotic road of servitude to Anglo-Yankee imperialists which is the true road that drives anti-Semitism.” “While the entire Argentine people,” he continued, “finds itself engaged in the struggle national sovereignty, against the threat of Yankee imperialism . . . it is not possible to conceive that an entity which is supposed to be the expression of the sane, patriotic, and unified sentiments of the Jewish community, is converted into a tribunal of defenders of espionage, of defenders of those who betray their patria . . .” He then suggested that, “The Jewish masses, be they Zionist, Peronist, or Communist will be compelled to . . . decree the liquidation of the DAIA as the representative of the Jewish collective in order to allow for the creation of a Federation

authentically representative of the national, patriotic, Argentine, anti-imperialist, and pro-peace feelings of our collective.”<sup>48</sup> The Goldman article raised a furor in the DAIA, incensing Jewish leaders for its insinuations of disloyalty, and intensifying already frenzied passions against the Progressives.

In response to these accusations, the Zionist leaders of the DAIA stepped up their campaign against the Progressives. In a special assembly of the directive council on December 15, 1952, they drafted a resolution which stated that, “In light of the anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist derivations of the trials recently carried out in Prague . . . the general assembly of the DAIA . . . has resolved that only those institutions that are in solidarity with the spirit of the declaration that in this sense was adopted by the said general assembly shall be able to belong to this delegation.”<sup>49</sup> On December 21, 1952, the general assembly approved the declaration by an overwhelming majority. Almost immediately, hundreds of Jewish institutions throughout the capital and the interior pledged their support for the resolution, including the AMIA. However, as loyal Communists, the Progressives were unable to adhere to the document, and in February 1953, four Progressive institutions and one non-Progressive one, all of which had refused to support the DAIA declaration of December 4, 1952 were formally and indefinitely expelled from the DAIA.<sup>50</sup> Among other things, one result of this excommunication, an effective *herem*, was to deny the Progressives henceforth the benefit of DAIA protection against anti-Semitic attacks; they were also cut off from communally raised funds. Already on January 5, 1953, the executive council of the AMIA’s *Va’ad Hajinuj*, which disbursed subsidies to communal schools, formally “separated” five educational institutions associated with the Progressive block from the body of its membership.<sup>51</sup>

Yet what began as an internal struggle within the Jewish community, soon spilled over into national politics. Faced with their growing isolation on the Jewish street, the leaders of the Progressives reached out to the small but influential group of Peronist Jews who comprised the Organización Israelita Argentina as a potential ally against the Zionists and the exclusionary politics of the DAIA. In the AMIA election campaign of November 1952, the editors of the Progressive *Tribuna* noted among other things that the isolation of Peronist Jewish groups like the OIA from the mainstream of AMIA politics was a sign of the lack of democratization within the community more generally.<sup>52</sup> Then, in the aftermath of the Prague Trials, they stepped up their campaign, accusing the Zionist leaders in the DAIA of behaving in an anti-patriotic

manner and against the interests of the Peronist state. Initially, the leaders of the OIA attempted to avoid taking sides. However, when the Progressives again alleged, following the infamous Doctors Trials in Moscow in January 1953, that “in place of identifying themselves with the anti-imperialist struggles of the Argentine people, the directors of the DAIA have converted the institution into a tribunal in defense of espionage,” the leadership of the OIA felt obliged to respond.<sup>53</sup> In a declaration to the Jewish press, they condemned the Prague and Moscow trials. They also said that the OIA, “does not maintain any link with certain sectarian groups who appear to respond to international directives and whose mouthpiece is ‘Tribuna’ . . . The OIA responds in an unconditional manner to the “justicialist” movement, and it recognizes as the only and indisputable chief, general Juan Perón.”<sup>54</sup> The Progressives labeled this action as “lamentable,” adding that “as Argentines and as Peronists, the directors of the OIA should neither sympathize with Zionism, nor support the servile submission to Yankee espionage and its reactionary current.”<sup>55</sup>

Through their accusations, the Progressives now threatened to involve the national government directly in a matter that had previously been strictly the province of Jewish politics. On January 27, 1953, Perón himself intervened. He summoned a Jewish delegation led by AMIA president Moisés Goldman, DAIA vice president Jacobo Bronfman, as well as the directors of the OIA, into his office, where he expressed his sympathy with the local Jewish community during this difficult moment and guaranteed that no anti-Semitic ramifications of the Prague and Moscow trials would be permitted in Argentina.

It is a sad tragedy [he added] that certain frictions between the great powers have made a scapegoat out of the Jew. In the face of the threat of new repression, there is only one road to save the threatened Jews: to facilitate their departure to Israel and to the nations of the free world. In this sense, the doors of the Nation are open for whichever person who suffers this disreputable persecution, and if it should become necessary, my government will adopt the appropriate measures.<sup>56</sup>

Faced with the virtual meltdown of Jewish politics in Argentina over the question of Zionism and the Slansky Trials, it seems that Perón had decided to make his unambiguous support for the Zionist position public and to indicate that this support would continue in the future.

The announcement stunned the Jewish community, which had not expected such a strongly worded speech. It earned Perón the respect

and admiration of Jewish leaders in Argentina and throughout the world. "In this crucial hour for the Jewish community," wrote the editors of *Mundo Israelita*, "when in its own bosom it has discovered traitors and turncoats, the encouraging words of general Perón fill us with rejoicing and deserve our gratitude."<sup>57</sup> According to *Di Presse*, Perón's stance had generated broad acclaim among Jews everywhere, and especially in Israel, where the government "expressed the maximum enthusiasm for the words of our President."<sup>58</sup> His stand also likely gained Perón important political concessions from Argentine–Jewish communal leaders. When Perón traveled to Chile in February 1953 in order to effect closer economic relations between the two countries, he was accompanied by AMIA president Moisés Goldman, who lobbied Chilean Jewish leaders to support the effort.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, according to Maximo Yagupsky, when less than a year later, Perón decided to crack down on the Argentine Communist Party, including its Jewish contingent, he met with leaders of the DAIA and other Jewish organizations to inform them of his intentions and to ask that they refrain from protest.<sup>60</sup>

Perón's moves against the Communist Party came as part of a larger reaction against political opponents following the explosion of a bomb at a Peronist rally in April 1953. As early as June 1953, agents of the Federal Police closed the offices of *Tribuna*, and in November, police intervened against a number of Progressive Jewish institutions, including the Jewish Folks Theater (IFT), closing them down indefinitely.<sup>61</sup> Using a 1941 law banning the use of Yiddish in public acts as a pretext, municipal authorities refused to issue the necessary permits that would allow the organizations to operate legally. In addition, they arrested several prominent Jewish Communist leaders, including Tobias Herschauge, treasurer of the Idisher Cultur Farband, the leading Progressive Jewish institution in the country, and Samuel Shmerkin, the legal representative for *Tribuna*.<sup>62</sup> The Progressives appealed to the community for help. However, the DAIA and other Jewish organizations declined to protest the actions, claiming that their rejection of the December 4, 1952 resolution had led to the Progressives being "excluded from the DAIA," and to their being considered no longer members of the Jewish community.<sup>63</sup> In response to such indifference, the editors of *Tribuna* accused community leaders of behaving like a "Judenrat," and of "encouraging the intervention against Progressive Jewish institutions and the subsequent imprisonment of their most prestigious leaders."<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, they argued,

Each time the directors of these democratic institutions confront the complicated tangle of regulations required for police authorization of a determined social activity, the functionaries of the state ask the opinion of the DAIA before acceding to them. As a consequence, a strong understanding is clearly visible between the supposed representatives of Judaism and the executors of state repression. This had its proper name in the times of the ghetto under Gestapo occupation, and here it continues.<sup>65</sup>

Among other things, they claimed this state sponsored repression worked to the benefit of Zionist leaders within the community by impeding the ability of the Progressives to communicate their ideas openly and effectively on the Jewish street. In April 1954, for example, municipal authorities in the Federal Capital prevented Communist Jews from staging an event in commemoration of the eleventh anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising while a larger DAIA sponsored ceremony held at the same time, which included Israeli ambassador Arie Kubovy on the speaking agenda, proceeded without difficulty.<sup>66</sup>

Although the leadership of the DAIA flatly denied any link between its actions and those of the Peronist state, evidence from the archives of the World Jewish Congress suggests that communal leaders were eager to distance themselves from their Communist counterparts as state repression against them increased and to diminish the influence of Progressives within communal institutions. In a dispatch dated October 27, 1954, the WJC's Argentine representative, Marc Turkow, commented on the crucial importance of the AMIA elections of 1954. "There is no danger that the Communists list should win," he wrote; "what counts is the number of votes they receive. The fear is that the national block might win the elections with an absolute number of votes, but that the left with very good organization and active campaigning can get in their votes that would put the community in an uncomfortable place with the regime."<sup>67</sup> The problem was that while Progressive organizations had been effectively expelled from the DAIA in accordance with the December 1952 resolution, large numbers of Progressives still continued to militate within Argentina's Jewish institutions, especially the AMIA. In fact, in the AMIA elections of 1953, a dispute among several important Zionist parties had contributed to a substantial increase in Progressive electoral strength, a development that considerably distressed Zionist leaders.<sup>68</sup>

As a result, Zionist leaders took great care to cultivate positive relations among their various factions and even with the non-Zionist

Bund as the elections to AMIA approached in November 1954. In their campaign propaganda, they argued that enforcement of the ban against Progressives was the only way to guarantee the safety of the community against those would align it with the Soviet Union and denigrate Argentine Jewry's "national honor."<sup>69</sup> According to *Mundo Israelita*, the Progressives were dangerous "red missionaries of assimilation and unconditional agents of Moscow," who hid behind the façade of peace, solidarity, and democratization in communal politics.<sup>70</sup> An advertisement placed by the DAIA in *Di Idische Tzeitung* warned against the "conquest of the kehilla by anti-Jewish forces."<sup>71</sup> "Remember," claimed another nationalist ad, "that the elections of the kehilla demonstrate how many Jews are for a healthy national Jewish life . . . Do not let our community be identified with the Progressives who hide themselves behind various masks."<sup>72</sup> For their part, the Progressives railed against the *herem*, calling for reestablishing harmonious relations within the community, the re-incorporation of Progressive schools into the Va'ad Hajinuj, and the immediate realization of proportional elections in the AMIA, which would enable the Prgressoves to win a substantial representation in the AMIA's directive council.<sup>73</sup>

Yet, despite the militancy of the Progressive campaign, the results of the election showed the Jewish street to be very much behind the Zionists, who won decisively with a total of 8,083 votes against 3,787 for the Progressives.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the Progressives were defeated in every single barrio of the capital except one.<sup>75</sup> Following the publication of the results, Zionists of all political stripes expressed their approval. According to the editors of *Mundo Israelita*, "If the election leaves much to be desired from the point of view of participation, its result is more satisfactory in that it reveals a notable progress of the Jewish consciousness among those who did vote."<sup>76</sup>

This Zionist victory was further bolstered by the AMIA elections of 1955. In October of that year, a record number of AMIA members went to the polls in the first communal election following the overthrow of the Peronist regime by a military coup a month earlier. In the wake of the "Liberating Revolution" and the end of Peronist restrictions, both Zionists and Progressives argued for a democratization of the AMIA through badly needed electoral reform and the implementation of proportional elections. However, for the Zionists, "Loyalty to the Jewish people," "loyalty to the State of Israel," and the maintenance of the "national discipline of the community," were leading issues on the agenda.<sup>77</sup> As for the Progressives, popular mobilization against the danger of anti-Semitism, against the rearmament of West Germany,

and for the establishment of a “friendly coexistence in our community,” constituted the top three items of their program.<sup>78</sup> In addition, a third group of unaligned and traditionalist Jews ran their own slate of candidates with a Zionist platform, but protested against the continuing Zionist political domination of the directive offices. The elections were an enormous triumph for the Zionist list, which received 62 percent of the votes, 10,172 of the total 16,562 votes cast. The Progressives received only 4,638, while the proponents of the third list gained 1,648.<sup>79</sup> The Progressives still attempted to claim victory, asserting the majority of AMIA members who did not vote at all in the elections, “were neither moved nor convinced by the propaganda of the ‘national’ program.”<sup>80</sup> Such efforts rang hollow in the face of the actual numbers. Zionist conquest of the kehilla was now complete.<sup>81</sup>

### **Conclusion: the conquest of the community**

Thus, by the end of 1955, the Zionist parties had achieved political control of the Argentine–Jewish community and its major institutions. This “conquest of the community” in many ways paralleled the larger triumph of Zionism in the Jewish world after World War II. However, this conquest was also late. The peculiarities of communal politics in Argentina had delayed it for nearly a decade in what became an extremely intense and divisive struggle. The centralization of much of the community within the AMIA and the DAIA, as well as the ongoing vitality of the Yiddish-speaking non-Zionist left in Argentina, had forced Zionist leaders to engage in an increasingly bitter campaign to win the hearts and minds of the Jewish masses. One of its effects was the ostracism of the Progressives from both communal institutions and funding, which was catalyzed by the Prague Trials of 1952. With the imposition of this *herem*, Zionists left no doubt that, as they saw it, unity and democracy in Argentine Jewish communal life extended only to those sectors that supported the principle of Jewish national identity. For the most part, the Jewish street agreed. Although the Progressives made some inroads in the AMIA elections of 1953, the elections of 1954 and 1955 provided a clear Zionist mandate and signaled the final victory over the anti-Zionist forces of the Jewish left.

As had happened in other Jewish communities, this conflict was driven primarily by events overseas, especially by the rise of Communist anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe. At the same time, Jewish communal politics in post-war Argentina were also deeply influenced by local conditions, and became increasingly intertwined

with the politics of the Peronist state policy after 1952. For one, the emphasis on Zionist unity within the community provided the basis for close relations between communal leaders and the regime around the issue of Argentine–Israeli relations, which were consistently positive under Perón. More important, the expulsion of the Jewish Communists from the DAIA in December 1952, though not inspired by the state, succeeded in exposing Communist Jewish institutions to a brutal state repression, one, which after 1953, facilitated their marginalization even further. Ultimately, the hard realities of Peronist Argentina exacerbated an already heightened intolerance for political dissent within the Jewish community and contributed to diminishing Jewish political diversity. In the case of Argentina increased Jewish politicization during the post-war era did not necessarily go hand in hand with increased democratization. Instead, ongoing contact with Perón’s corporatist state led to increased Jewish political centralization, whose final product was radicalization, conflict, and exclusion.

### Acknowledgements

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### Notes

1. Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 145.
2. During this period, Communist Jews in Argentina and elsewhere commonly referred to themselves as Progressives. Although many Zionist groups objected to this usage, claiming they too represented Progressive ideals, I have chosen to discuss the Jewish Communists in the terms that they themselves used. Therefore, the word Progressive in this essay explicitly refers to Jewish Communists and their affiliated institutions.
3. For a case study of the Jewish community of Australia, see W. D. Rubenstein, “The Cold War, the Australian Jewish Community, and the Marginalization of the Jewish left, 1942–1960,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 41 (1995), 373–390. See also Adina Cimet’s work on Mexico, *Ashkenazi Jews in Mexico: Ideologies in the Structuring of a Community* (Albany: state University of New York Press, 1997); and “The Last Battles of Old-World Ideologies in the Race for Identity and Communal Power: Communists vs. Bundists vs. Zionists in Mexico, 1938–1951,” *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*

- 5 (1994), 59–84. Unlike Argentina, the Ashkenazi Jewish community of Mexico had a much greater left-wing orientation in which Communists, Bundists, and Zionists all vied for influence within Jewish communal institutions in a three-way struggle for power. Ultimately, however, the creation of the State of Israel and the increasingly antagonistic stance of the Soviet Union toward it enabled the Zionists to predominate in a community where they had previously been only a minor political force.
4. For more on Peronism within the context of Latin American populism, see among others Michael Conniff, *Latin American Populism in Comparative Perspective* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982); and Gino Germani, *Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Inc., 1978).
  5. For more on Perón and organized labor, see Miguel Murmis and Juan Carlos Portantiero, *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Argentina Editores S.A., 1971); David Tamarin, *The Argentine Labor Movement, 1930–1945: A Study in the Origins of Peronism* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985); and Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946–1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For Peronist efforts to mobilize other social groups, refer to Mariano Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón: Propaganda, rituales políticos, y educación en el régimen peronista (1946–1955)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia Argentina, 1993).
  6. For more on the creation of the OIA, and its efforts to establish itself as the community’s representative institution, see Leonardo Senkman, “El peronismo visto desde la legación israelí de Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949–1954),” *Judaica Latinoamericana* II (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992); Jeffrey Marder, “The Organización Israelita Argentina: Between Perón and the Jews,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20, No. 39–40 (1995), 125–152; and Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel y los judíos: Encuentros y desencuentros, mitos y realidades* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere, S.A., 2001). See also my own PhD dissertation, *The Jews and Perón: Communal Politics and National Identity in Peronist Argentina, 1946–1955* (PhD Dissertation: The Ohio State University, 2002).
  7. For more on the relationship between Perón, Israel, and the Argentine–Jewish community, see Ignacio Klich, “The First Argentine–Israeli Trade Accord: Political and Economic Considerations,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 20: 39–40 (1995), 177–205; “Equidistance and Gradualism in Argentine Foreign policy Towards Israel and the Arab World, 1949–1955,” in David Shenin and Lois Baer Barr, eds., *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1996); and Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel y los judíos*.
  8. See Leonardo Senkman, “Repercussions of the Six-Day War in the Leftist Jewish Argentine Camp: The Rise of *Fraie Schtime*, 1967–1969,” in Eli Lederhendler, ed., *The Six-Day War and World Jewry* (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2000).
  9. See Sylvia Schenkolewski, “La conquista de las comunidades: el movimiento sionista y la comunidad Ashkenazi de Buenos Aires (1935–1949),” *Judaica Latinoamericana* II (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992). See also her doctoral dissertation,

- The Zionist Movement and the Zionist Parties in Argentina, 1935–1948* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press and Hassifriya Haziyonit, 1996); and, “Zionist Political Parties in Argentina from the Revolution of 1943 to the Establishment of the State of Israel,” in David Shenin and Lois Baer Barr, eds., *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1996).
10. Senkman, “Repercussions,” 169.
  11. The AMIA was originally founded in 1894 as the capital’s Ashkenazi burial society, or Chevra Kadisha. In 1941 it was incorporated as a mutual aid society, and in 1949 it was formally designated as the Ashkenazi kehilla of Buenos Aires. Ashkenazi Jews accounted for approximately 80% of the Argentine–Jewish population during this time. For more on the AMIA and the early history of Argentina’s Jewish community, see Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*, Trans. Gila Brand (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991); Victor Mirelman, *Jewish Buenos Aires, 1890–1930: In Search of an Identity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990); Eugene Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982); and Bernard Ansel’s unpublished dissertation, *The Beginnings of the Modern Jewish Community in Argentina* (PhD Dissertation. University of Kansas, 1970). See also, Judith Elkin’s excellent synthetic work, *The Jews of the Latin America* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1998).
  12. For an excellent study of the various Zionist political parties in interwar Poland, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915–1926* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). See also his *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983). For more on the history of the Jewish Workers Bund, see Bernard Johnpoll, *The Politics of Futility: The General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917–1943* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967). For specific information on the activities of the Bund in Argentina, see Israel Laubstein, *Bund: Historia del movimiento obrero judío* (Buenos Aires: Acerva Cultural Editores, 1997).
  13. By 1955, the DAIA contained some ninety member institutions from the capital of Buenos Aires and an additional sixty-five more from Jewish communities in the interior. See Haim Avni, “Argentine Jewry: Its Social Position and Organization,” Part II, *Dispersion and Unity* 13/14 (1971), 164–165.
  14. See the results of the election in *Mundo Israelita* (MI) 1 Jan. 1949, 4; *Di Idishe Tzeitung* (IT) 27 Dec. 1948, 4; and *Di Presse* (DP) 27 Dec. 1948, 3.
  15. For more on this see, Nicholas Rapoport, *Stalin’s War Against the Jews* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), especially Chapter 7. See also Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews, 1948–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Peter Brod, “Soviet-Israeli Relations 1948–1956: from Courtship to Crisis,” in Robert Wistrich, ed., *The Left Against Zion* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1979); and Jonathan Frankel, “The Soviet Regime and Anti-Zionism: An Analysis.” In Ezra Mendelsohn, ed., *The Essential Papers on Jews and the Left* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).
  16. See Rein, 128. For more on the activities of the United Campaign, see also Joseph (Jorge) Goldstein, *The Influence of the State of Israel and the Jewish Agency on Community Life in Argentina and Uruguay Between 1948–1958* [Hebrew] (PhD Dissertation: Hebrew University, 1993).

17. See Hellman's letter to Dr. I. Schwartzbart of the World Jewish Congress in New York, 4 Jul. 1949, in the Files of the WJC. American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio, MS COL 361, Box H25, Folder 16.
18. See "Undzer vort tsum kumindiken fareynikte kampeyn," DP 6 May 1949, 3.
19. See the "Deklaratsie fun der DAIA in sheykhes mitn fareyniktn kampeyn 1949," in IT 4 Jun. 1949, 5.
20. See the text of the DAIA's "Declaración" regarding the meeting of October 29, 1949 in *Mundo Israelita* 26 Nov. 1949, 2.
21. See the memorandum from Maximo Yagupsky to Dr. Saul Segal of the American Jewish Committee, dated 3 July 1953, in the files of the AJC, YIVO Archives, New York, RG 347.7.2, FAD-2, "Yagupsky."
22. For more on this, see Schenkolewski, "La conquista de las comunidades." See also the announcement of the formation of the kehilla in MI 16 Apr. 1949, 2.
23. See their platform in IT 16 Dec. 1949, 8.
24. See the platform of the "Blue List," in DP 17 Dec. 1949, 10.
25. See the ad for the "White List," IT 15 Dec. 1949, 8.
26. MI 10 Dec. 1949, 3.
27. IT 18 Dec. 1949, 8.
28. IT 19 Dec. 1949, 4; DP 19 Dec. 1949, 1; MI 24 Dec. 1949, 8.
29. IT 20 Dec. 1949, 4.
30. MI 24 Dec. 1949, 3.
31. *Nueva Sión* 23 Dec. 1949, 3.
32. MI 10 Jun. 1950, 8.
33. MI 29 Jul. 1950, 7.
34. MI 17 Jun. 1950, 3.
35. See the editorial, "El idish, efecto y no causa de la supervivencia judía," MI 5 May 1951, 3.
36. See MI 21 May 1949, 3.
37. For more on their arrest and trial, see Rapoport, 140.
38. *Ibid.*, 143.
39. IT 26 Nov. 1952, 4.
40. DP 19 Dec. 1952, 4; MI 6 Dec. 1952, 2.
41. See the article by Rubén Sinay in *Tribuna*, 4 Dec. 1952, 11.
42. See the *Actas Asambleas* of the DAIA, 4 Dec. 1952.
43. See the text of the resolution in the minutes of the DAIA, *Actas Asambleas*, 4 Dec. 1952.
44. DAIA, *Actas Asambleas*, 4 Dec. 1952.
45. For a published report of the assembly of December 4, 1952, see MI 6 Dec. 1952, 2; and IT 5 Dec. 1952, 4.
46. See "Bildlach fun der general farzamlung fun der DAIA," by P. Niemoi, IT 8 Dec. 1952, 5.
47. See *Undzer Gedank*, Jan.-Feb. 1953.
48. See Luis Goldman, "La DAIA por el camino de su descomposición," *Tribuna* 11 Dec. 1952, 12.
49. See the text of the resolution in MI 20 Dec. 1952, 2.

50. These included the Idisher Cultur Farband (ICUF); Centro Cultural I. L. Peretz; Federación de Sociedades Residentes Israelitas en la Argentina; Escuela Dr. Haim Zhitlovsky, and Hogar Cultural Scholem Aleichem. The first four were Progressive institutions that openly opposed the DAIA declaration. The latter was a non-Progressive institution that failed to respond affirmatively to the DAIA by February 1953. IT 12 Feb. 1953, 6. MI 14 Feb. 1953, 5.
51. MI 10 Jan. 1953, 2. IT 6 Jan. 1953, 2. Thirty-five non-Progressive schools had earlier broken all ties with the Progressives on December 18, 1952. IT 19 Dec. 1952, 4. For more on Jewish education in Buenos Aires during this period, see Efraim Zadoff, *Historia de la educación judía en Buenos Aires (1935–1957)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Milá, 1994).
52. *Tribuna* 27 Nov. 1952, 12.
53. *Tribuna* 2 Jan. 1953, 2.
54. MI 24 Jan. 1953, 5. This announcement appears in Yiddish in IT 23 Jan. 1953, 4.
55. *Tribuna* 29 Jan. 1953, 12.
56. The text of Perón's speech is contained in *El pensamiento del presidente Perón sobre el pueblo judío* (Buenos Aires: DAIA, 1954), 31. See also the correspondence from the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires, which reports on the meeting. Refer to Ambassador Albert Nufer's telegram to the Department of State, 28 Jan. 1953, National Archives (NA), College Park, MD, RG 59, 835.413/1-2853; and the dispatch from Robert Martindale, 29 Jan. 1953, NA, RG 59, 835.413/1-2953. For more on the subject of Argentine-Soviet relations during the Peronist era, see Mario Rapoport, "Argentina and the Soviet Union: History of Political and Commercial Relations (1917–1955)," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 66 (1986), 239–285; and Aldo César Vacs, *Discreet Partners: Argentina and the USSR since 1917*, Trans. Michael Joyce (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984). For more on the history of Communism in Argentina more generally, refer to Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *Breve historia de las izquierdas en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, S.A., 1990).
57. MI 31 Jan. 1953, 3.
58. DP 31 Jan. 1953, 4.
59. See the memorandum from Yagupsky to Segal, 3 July 1953, cited above. See also MI 28 Feb. 1953, 1, which reports Goldman's presence in Chile with Perón.
60. See Yagupsky's letter to Dr. Segal dated 31 May 1954. AJC Files, Yagupsky. See also the memorandum from Maurice Perlzweig to the Political Department of the World Jewish Congress, 29 Jun. 1955, which mentions the meeting as well. WJC Files, AJA, MS COL 361, H28/8. According to Yagupsky, Perón even asked DAIA leaders to present a list of prominent Jewish Communists to the police, though they apparently refused this request.
61. See *Tribuna* 25 Jun. 1953, 11; 2 Jul. 1953, 12; 7 Jan. 1954, 12; and 14 Jan. 1954, 12.
62. See *Tribuna* 29 Jun. 1954, 11; 5 Aug. 1954, 12; and 30 Sep. 1954, 12. Herschauge, in fact, prior to his arrest was listed as one of the Progressive candidates for the AMIA elections in 1953. See *Tribuna* 22 Oct. 1953, 23.
63. See the DAIA's response to a petition from the Idisher Cultur Farband in MI 19 Jun. 1954, 4.
64. See the editorial, "El Judenrat actua," in *Tribuna* 12 Nov. 1953, 12.
65. *Tribuna* 11 Nov. 1954, 11.

66. See *Tribuna* 22 Apr. 1954, 12; IT 29 Apr. 1954, 4; and IT 2 May 1954, 4. See also the comments in *Tribuna* 6 May 1954, 10, on the DAIA event. The presence of the Israeli ambassador was not coincidental. Raanan Rein has argued that the Israeli embassy actively facilitated isolating the Progressives; See Rein, 192, n.55. See also Goldstein, *The Influence of the State of Israel*.
67. In addition, Turkow stressed the direct involvement of the DAIA in the election campaign, a first in AMIA politics, and a factor he deemed of "great importance." See the letter from Marc Turkow to Dr. Shwartzbart of the WJC in New York in Yiddish, dated 27 October, 1954, AJA MS COL 361, H29/1.
68. For the results of the AMIA elections of 1953, see IT 26 Oct. 1953. In the 1953 election, the Zionist slate, led by a General Zionist, Samuel Rabinovich, received some 8,576 votes against some 4,970 for the Progressives.
69. See, for example, the series of ads for List #1 in IT 29 Oct. 1954, 3.
70. See the editorials, "Los progresistas y su exclusión de la comunidad," MI 4 Sep. 1954, 3; and "Unidad judía contra las fuerzas negativas," MI 23 Oct. 1954, 3.
71. IT 27 Oct. 1954, 3.
72. IT 29 Oct. 1954, 3.
73. *Tribuna* 21 Oct. 1954, 12.
74. IT 1 Nov. 1954, 1.
75. The lone exception was Villa Lynch, which was a long-time stronghold of Progressive supporters. See the breakdown of election returns by neighborhood in IT 1 Nov. 1954, 1.
76. MI 6 Nov. 1954, 3.
77. See the platform of the National Democratic Block. IT 18 Oct. 1955, 5. MI 15 Oct. 1955, 4.
78. See *Tribuna* 6 Oct. 1955, 11; and IT 9 Oct. 1955, 6.
79. See the results in IT 31 Oct. 1955, 1.
80. *Tribuna* 3 Nov. 1955, 12.
81. This fact was further underscored in the AMIA's general elections of 1957. Following a series of democratizing reforms in 1956 which adopted a system of proportional representation, no less than eight different Zionist parties went to the polls in 1957, and together received just over 78% of the total votes cast. Moreover, given the variety of new options for dissenting votes, a large number of AMIA members bolted from the Jewish Communists who received a mere 16% of the total votes (2,886). Following the disappointing results of 1957, the Communists refrained from participating in subsequent AMIA elections. For more on the 1957 results, see Avni, "Argentine Jewry: Its Social Position and Organization," 195.